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**CRUCIAL CWC MEETING TODAY AFTER LETTER OF 23 CALLING FOR CHANGE**

# Facing dissent within, Sonia offers to quit, sets off chorus of support for herself, Rahul

Not the time to ask for change when India facing threat, say CMs Amarinder, Baghel, Gehlot; PCC chiefs join in

**MANOJ CG**  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 23

FACING A slew of critical questions put on record by 23 senior leaders in an unprecedented letter to her, as reported by *The Indian Express* Sunday, Congress president Sonia Gandhi, ahead of the crucial Congress Working Committee meeting Monday, signalled she is "not willing" to continue as interim Congress president.

This set off a well-coordinated chorus of support for her and son Rahul Gandhi in the form of letters and statements from across state units led by Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, his Chhattisgarh counterpart Bhupesh Baghel and Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot.

The party's leader in Lok Sabha, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, sent her a letter pledging full support to her and Rahul and so did



Sonia, Rahul Gandhi in January this year. PTI file

several PCC chiefs: Kerala's Mullappally Ramachandran; Karnataka's D K Shivakumar; **CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

**MORE REPORTS**  
PAGE 6

**IDEA EXCHANGE**

'Non-Gandhi Cong chiefs couldn't restore lost ground. That's the reality. Letter will help BJP'

**ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY**  
LEADER OF CONGRESS IN LOK SABHA  
PAGE 12

## Top leader, one of 23, had sent two earlier letters to Sonia on same issues

Never opposed Sonia, want debate on key issues: signatories

**MANOJ CG**  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 23

THE UNPRECEDENTED letter by 23 senior Congress leaders to party chief Sonia Gandhi seeking far-reaching changes in the way

the party is being run was not the first such communication to Gandhi.

A top leader, who is a signatory to the letter, had sent two letters to her earlier during the lockdown outlining the same concerns.

While there was no response to those letters, Gandhi is learnt to have spoken to Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad after the receipt of the third letter — signed by him as well as 22 others  
**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

## Letter vs letter: show of loyalty via copy and paste

**SANDEEP ASHAR & MANOJ CG**  
MUMBAI, NEW DELHI, AUG 23

AHEAD OF a crucial Congress Working Committee meeting on Monday, a letter to Congress party president Sonia Gandhi declaring "complete and unwavering sup-

port" to the Gandhi family was circulated among Congress MLAs and MPs across states.

The letter, first written by Leader of Congress party in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury to Congress president Sonia Gandhi, declares "unequivocal and complete faith" in her  
**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

BUSINESS AS USUAL

BY UNNY



## For the first time, farm sector set to grow even as GDP sees a contraction

**HARISH DAMODARAN**  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 23

APRIL-JUNE may be the first time that India's economy would contract year-on-year since the government started coming out with quarterly estimates of GDP from 1996-97. But the data for the quarter, to be released by the National Statistical Office on August 31, could also show GDP falling for the first time in spite of agricultural production going up.

The country's GDP registered an annual decline, at minus 5.2%, last in 1979-80. But that year also recorded negative growth for agricultural GDP, at minus 12.8%. Even the previous GDP contractions of 0.3% in 1972-73, 3.7% in 1965-66, and 1.2% in 1957-58 were accompanied by farm output falling by 5%, 11% and 4.5% respectively.

The first quarter of 2020-21 (April-March) may turn out differently.

Most investment banks and rating agencies are predicting the economy to shrink this fiscal, with the Reserve Bank of India's

**EXPLAINED**

**Could be historic, not desirable**

INDIA'S GROWTH fortunes have been tethered to agriculture. All years of GDP contraction, the last one in 1979-80, were farm sector-led. April-June 2020 could be the first time when the economy will shrink despite agriculture notching up decent growth. It would be historic if this extends to the rest of the fiscal. But it would not be desirable — agriculture can only support, not lead, growth.

latest survey of professional forecasters pointing to a median estimate of minus 5.8%. The first  
**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

## Pak says Dawood name on list is as per UN, does not mean admitting he is there

**SHUBHAJIT ROY**  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 23

IN A turn of events that had been expected by New Delhi, Pakistan on Sunday stepped back from its acknowledgment — which became public on Saturday — of the presence of terrorist Dawood Ibrahim on its soil.

Dawood, one of the most wanted men in India, figured in a list of 88 individuals published as a Statutory Regulatory Order



Accused of 1993 serial blasts in Mumbai

(SRO) by Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs to escape blacklisting by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF).

On Sunday, however, the Pakistani Foreign Ministry in a  
**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**



## INDIA CROSSES 3 MILLION MARK

An 800-bed Covid-19 treatment centre, on the grounds of the College of Engineering, Pune, was inaugurated on Sunday. The total number of Covid-19 cases in the country has crossed the 3-million mark. Pavan Khengre

## Phase 2 trials of Oxford vaccine could begin at 3-4 sites this week

**EXPLAINED**

**'NOT ALL WILL GET VACCINE QUICKLY, NEED STRATEGY'**  
PAGE 11

**ANURADHA MASCARENHAS**  
PUNE, AUGUST 23

PHASE 2 human clinical trials of the Oxford University-AstraZeneca vaccine candidate for Covid-19, manufactured by Serum Institute of India, will begin in the coming week.

Three-four trial sites have demonstrated the requisite preparedness, and doses of the candidate vaccine could be administered as early as Monday or Tuesday, top officials at the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) said.

The government has allowed

fast-tracking of regulatory clearances for the vaccine against the novel coronavirus; the final approval was related to certification from the Directorate General of Health Services' Central Research Institute in Kasauli, Himachal Pradesh, for use of the investigational product in Phase 2/3 clinical trials.

The trials can begin simultaneously at all sites that are prepared, ICMR officials said. Four  
**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

**KEY PLAYERS KNOCK ON INDIA'S DOOR FOR VIALS, SYRINGES**  
PAGE 10

### TRACKING INDIA'S COVID CURVE

**174** DAYS SINCE PANDEMIC BEGAN  
**CASES: 30,44,940**  
**RECOVERED: 22,80,566**  
**DEATHS: 56,706**  
TESTS: 3,52,92,220 | DOUBLING RATE: 30.76\*\*



KEY STATES TO WATCH	TOTAL CASES	SURGE IN 24 HOURS	7-DAY AVG GROWTH*	DOUBLING RATE**
■ Maharashtra	6,71,942	14,492	2.01%	35.91
■ Tamil Nadu	3,73,410	5,980	1.69%	42.63
■ Andhra	3,45,216	10,276	2.94%	24.48
■ Karnataka	2,71,876	7,330	3.08%	23.41
■ Uttar Pradesh	1,82,456	5,217	2.83%	25.43

\* Compounded Daily Growth Rate over last 7 days \*\* Calculated over 7-day growth

CASE FATALITY RATIO	POSITIVITY RATE	DAILY IN, DAILY OUT
7 DAYS EARLIER: 1.93 NOW: 1.86	7 DAYS EARLIER: 8.84 NOW: 8.63	DETECTED TODAY: 69,239 RECOVERED TODAY: 57,989
Deaths as a ratio of positive cases (in %); indicator of progress in averting deaths	Positives against number tested (in %); indicator of the spread of disease	Becoming sick vs recovering; more recoveries for 14 days may signal the peak

Data as on August 22, released by Union Ministry of Health, ICMR and states. Often daily numbers include data from previous days. As such, trends based on daily numbers are indicative, not definitive

## No Internet, school comes home in rural Sikkim

### LOCKDOWN LESSONS

CHANGING CLASSROOMS  
AN EXPRESS SERIES

**ESHA ROY**  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 23

SOMETIME IN April, with Covid forcing schools shut, Indra Mukhi Chhetri, a maths and science teacher in a rural area of South Sikkim district, began worrying about her students. While schools were expected to conduct online classes, Chhetri

knew that would be a non-starter considering these were areas with little or no phone connectivity, let alone Internet.

"I was really worried. The people in my village are mostly farmers, very poor. This makes education an even bigger priority for children in these areas than those in urban centres," says Chhetri, who teaches at the VCGI Senior Secondary School in Ravangla.

So every day, Chhetri begins her rounds of the village at 9 am, visiting her students "one by one" and taking impromptu classes — maths to science and English to general knowledge.

While the Sikkim government has launched the Sikkim Edutech App to help students



A class being held in Posaakey village, East Sikkim. Express

from Class 9-12 cope with the learning loss, it's the junior students and those in far flung areas

who were left with little support. It's into this vacuum that teachers such as Chhetri have

stepped in to ensure that children don't miss out on learning. As more teachers reached out to their students, visiting them personally with resources, word spread of the simple, yet effective, teaching programme, all the way up to Gangtok. Last month, when the lockdown was lifted, the government formally adopted the programme, calling it "home-schooling for elementary education".

"The teachers were doing this arbitrarily. We decided to issue guidelines and make the system more structured," says Director, Elementary Education, Bhim Thatal, adding that all of Sikkim's 10,252 government school teachers have been  
**CONTINUED ON PAGE 2**

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## Dawood name

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### According to Balram Singh

But some leaders interpret her signal to step down as the return of Rahul Gandhi as Congress president. "From Sonia to Rahul after 20 years and then Rahul to Sonia and then Sonia to Rahul...how will the country take it? We respect her and have a huge regard for her...we are certainly not against her but at the same time we also need to understand how the country is thinking now," a senior leader said. "How the party responds to our letter is also an indication of how serious it is about its future."

Asked what would be the

Sonia Gandhi, he said, should continue to helm the Congress as long as she wanted and Rahul should, thereafter, take over as he was competent to lead the party. Baghel said Sonia and Rahul are the only "ray of hope" for bringing the country out of the present crisis. Former Rajasthan Deputy

Senior leader Ashwani Kumar said the issues that required to be addressed can be addressed under the leadership of Sonia Gandhi. "Only a year ago, party persons literally begged her to lead the party and she agreed as a call of duty. It is wrong to question her unifying leadership at this stage. I am of the view that under the present extraordinary circumstances, political adventurism cannot be the way forward," he said.

"Some of the parents were worried about coronavirus and didn't want the classes in their homes. But at the same time they wanted their children to study. So this was the best possible solution," she says.

FULL REPORTS ON  
[www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)

"We write to you today with a heavy heart and in light of recent reports over concerns raised by some leaders about Congress's leadership. We, the members of Parliament representing the length and breadth of the country, have heard and read with dismay and disbelief the Youth Congress said in a resolution.

Amarinder Singh, in his statement, said there was a bid by "some Congress leaders" to "challenge" the Gandhi family leadership of the party and argued this was not the time to raise such an issue, given the

Sonia Gandhi, he said, should continue to helm the Congress as long as she wanted and Rahul should, thereafter, take over as he was competent to lead the party. Baghel said Sonia and Rahul are the only "ray of hope" for bringing the country out of the present crisis. Former Rajasthan Deputy

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the Congress will be back. We respect their view but we agree, India is changing and we need to respond."

## Letter vs letter

Partnership, and says that the Congress party is safe only in the hands of Sonijai and Rahulji".

The letter comes hours after the *Indian Express* reported that senior Congress leaders, including five former Chief Ministers, several Congress Working Committee members and sitting MPs, wrote to Sonia Gandhi

Manickam Tagore, Lok Sabha MP from Virudhunagar in Tamil Nadu, said on Twitter, "We are Lok Sabha members present in different parts of the country and we can't sign in one letter so our leader in Lok Sabha wrote first we are following it. It's more voice than 23." Varsha Gaiikwad, Congress MLA and Minister of School Education, Maharashtra, posted the letter with the message, "My heartfelt letter to Smt. Sonia Gandhi ji urging her to consider all Congress workers' humble appeal."

Some other Lok Sabha MP who posted the same letter an

However, Mahendra Nath Pandey, Minister of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, expressed his optimism about the high number of skilled youth in the country. "Our skilled youth will be able to play an important role in accelerating the development journey of India. To accelerate self-reliance and Skill India Mission of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, to connect the youth in the country with new employment opportunities, our ASEEM portal will surely give impetus to our continuous efforts to bridge supply and demand in the market. Our skilled workforce will ensure increased productivity and better outcomes for our industries," Pandey told *The Indian Express*.

"Some of the parents were worried about coronavirus and didn't want the classes in their homes. But at the same time they wanted their children to study. So this was the best possible solution," she says.

The letter comes hours after an *Indian Express* reported that senior Congress leaders, including five former Chief Ministers, several Congress Working Committee members and sitting MPs, wrote to Sonia Gandhi

It further states, "Now at a time when the country faces grave threat from the BJP-RSS and their fascist government, to raise the bogey of a 'leadership crisis' at the behest of some interested parties is only a 'manufactured

The Education Department meticulously mapped out the

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0-50 Good

ANAND VIHAR

Satisfactory

51 AQI

Pollutant: NO2

51-100 Satisfactory

IGI (T3)

Satisfactory

91 AQI

PM: 10

101-200 Moderate

SHADIPUR

Satisfactory

63 AQI

PM: 10

201-300 Poor

DWARKA-SECTOR 8

Satisfactory

57 AQI

PM: 10

301-400 Very Poor

401-500 Severe

## DAY AFTER PORTION OF UNDER-CONSTRUCTION STRUCTURE COLLAPSED

## Flyover collapse: NHAI, Gurgaon police launch probes

SAKSHI DAYAL

GURGAON, AUGUST 23

A DAY after a section of an under-construction elevated road on Gurgaon's Sohna Road collapsed, both the National Highways Authority of India (NHAI), which was constructing the structure, and Gurgaon Police have launched separate probes into the matter.

"A high-level committee of the NHAI will probe. It seems that a portion between pillars number 10 and 11 of the structure gave way, causing the mishap," said an official from NHAI.

NHAI sources, speaking on the condition of anonymity, said preliminary investigation has indicated that quality of the concrete used in the crushed segment may be responsible, and that there is a need for testing by a third party. The NHAI is coordinating with an institute for the purpose, officials said.

For now, to prevent further problems, officials plan to cordon off the area and place sandbags under the portion that is still suspended to prevent any

further collapse. The collapsed stretch will be removed only in the next 15 days, after a proper method is devised for removing it without any further damage.

The elevated road, once constructed, will be 4.75 km-long and will connect Subhash Chowk on Sohna road to Badshahpur. Officials said 29% of the work on it has been completed so far.

Speaking about the collapse on Saturday night, residents of the area had compared the incident to an "explosion" and said they felt "tremors".

According to officials from NHAI, the incident took place around 9.30 pm, when a 40-metre stretch between pillar numbers 10 and 11 collapsed. As there was no work underway at the time, and the collapsed stretch was within the barricaded area, there were no fatalities. Police officials, however, said two persons sustained minor injuries but only needed first aid treatment.

Teams of NHAI, Gurgaon Police, civil defense and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) were rushed to the spot.

On Sunday morning, the stretch was reopened to traffic,



Two persons were injured when the under-construction flyover collapsed in Gurgaon's Sohna road on Saturday night. *Gajendra Yadav*

though barricades that surrounded the construction site had been widened. No labourers were working on the stretch on Sunday morning.

"Preliminary information indicated that two people had sustained minor injuries in the collapse and this was cross-verified with the help of the duty roster. No construction work seems to have been underway at the time of the incident; the workers were preparing to change shifts, which happens around 10-10.15 pm," said Assistant Deputy Commissioner Prashant Panwar, who visited the site of the collapse late Saturday night.

Police said they had received a complaint regarding the matter from RTI activist Mahendra Kumar. "An FIR will be registered if allegations are found to be credible, but as of now we are still probing the complaint," said Dinesh Kumar, SHO of Sadar police station.

ACP (Sadar) Aman Yadav said, "The complaint is being investigated. Simultaneously, NHAI has also lodged its own probe into the matter, which it is conducting internally."

## BRIEFLY

## Supplementary Nutrition Food menu revised

*New Delhi:* Mishri, or sweet candy, would be provided to children, pregnant and lactating women in place of jaggery as part of the supplementary nutrition food (SNF) from next summer, Delhi women and child development minister Rajendra Pal Gautam said on Sunday. The change in the policy was decided based on feedback that jaggery melts during summer and may get infected with bacteria. Gautam said the SNF menu was revised from May 20, and the Panjiri and Pushtik Ladoos provided as part of the menu were replaced with wheat dalia, raw black chana, jaggery and roasted black gram. This was delivered to 5 lakh beneficiaries through Anganwadi centres.

## Portable Covid facility set up in Ghaziabad

*Ghaziabad:* A 10-bed portable Covid facility set up by the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) was inaugurated by Union health minister Dr Harsh Vardhan in Ghaziabad's Nehru Nagar on Saturday. According to NDRF officials, the L3 facility has been made using light weight material which can be dismantled and transported to another area as needed. The facility has been set up as a joint venture with CSIR-Central Building Research Institute (CBRI), Roorkee. According to officials, the medical paraphernalia has been sponsored by CBRI, while the beds and testing machines have been provided by NDRF. Ghaziabad has reported a total of 7,290 cases and 67 deaths due to Covid-19.

## Work begins to revamp public swimming pool in Gurgaon

*Gurgaon:* Work on revamping the only public swimming pool in Gurgaon's Kamla Nehru Park, which has been lying in a state of neglect for several months, began on Sunday, with officials saying the work will cost Rs 3.5 crore. The project includes converting the swimming pool into a 6-lane facility, with the area surrounding it having seating for 50 people. **ENS**

## At traders' meet, CM raises demand to restart Metro

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 23

CHIEF MINISTER Arvind Kejriwal requested the central government on Sunday to allow Metro services to resume in Delhi on a trial basis, even if Metro services in other cities are not permitted to operate immediately.

"We want to reopen the Delhi Metro. Even if Metro services are not allowed elsewhere under the Centre's unlock guidelines, Delhi Metro should be allowed to run. We hope the Centre will take a decision on this soon," Kejriwal said.

He made the remarks during an online interaction with traders. The demand to restart Metro services was also made by several participants at the session, which lasted around 50 minutes.

In response, Anuj Dayal, executive director of DMRC, said, "The DMRC shall be prepared to commence operations whenever directed by the government. All necessary guidelines in place to combat the spread of the Covid-19 shall be implemented, and all efforts shall be made to make travel safe for our valued commuters."

During the online session



CM Arvind Kejriwal made the remark during an online interaction with traders on Sunday. *Twitter*

with traders, Kejriwal said the state government was exploring the idea of creating portals for the city's prime markets and industrial hubs.

"Through this portal, Delhi's wholesale market and industries can put their products and receive orders from the whole world. We can call it 'Delhi Bazaar', where people can market their products," he said.

A government statement later said, quoting the CM: "Delhi government to launch online 'Delhi Bazaar' for traders. The whole

world will know what goods are manufactured or sold in Delhi."

Services on the 389-km Metro network across Delhi and NCR had come to a halt on March 22 due to the imposition of lockdown to curb the spread of Covid-19. The shutdown has adversely affected the finances of the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC), which announced pay cuts for its employees on August 18.

The DMRC had earlier written to the Centre requesting it to defer the payment of its loan installment for 2020-21.

## After HC intervention, pvt school waives tuition fee for 2 students

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 23

A PRIVATE school has waived tuition fees for two students for September after they approached the Delhi High Court twice over being denied access to online classes.

*The Indian Express* had reported earlier this month that the HC issued a showcause notice to Richmond Global School, Paschim Vihar, after two students in classes V and VII had

filed a contempt petition against the school, through their father, for not letting them attend online classes despite a court order.

Following this, the school submitted that the students were given links to online classes and other activities, and parents were told the outstanding amount that was due was subsequently cleared by them on August 6.

"... considering that the petitioners were forced to litigate, initially by filing a writ petition and thereafter a contempt petition, the school shall waive one

month's tuition fee of the petitioners. If the students have missed any examinations or class tests, etc, the school shall make appropriate arrangements...so they do not suffer in any manner," read the final order by Justice Pratibha Singh.

The school has now waived tuition fee of Rs 1,500 for September for both children.

"They re-joined their online classes this month but we are still waiting for study material for the months they lost," said the father of the children.

## CFO killed as speeding car runs into bike

SAKSHI DAYAL

GURGAON, AUGUST 23

THE CHIEF Financial Officer of a multinational company was killed in a road accident in Gurgaon after a speeding vehicle rammed a divider and crossed over to the wrong side of the road, hitting him while he was on his way to Greater Noida on his Harley Davidson bike.

According to police, the incident occurred around 6 am near the Phase 2 Rapid Metro Station. The man, 49-year-old Alok



Alok Gupta

Gupta, was a resident of BPTP Park Life in Sector 57 and the CFO

at Delta Energy Systems.

In his complaint to police, his friend Rahul Malik said they left their homes around 5.45 am to travel to Greater Noida on their bikes, and were wearing "protective gear".

"As they crossed the Phase 2 Rapid Metro Station, however, a Ford Figo car that was speeding on the other carriageway, from the direction of Shankar Chowk towards Golf Course Road, rammed the divider and, breaking through the fencing, entered the other carriageway, before ramming into the victim's bike,"

said Subhash Boken, PRO of Gurgaon Police.

In his complaint to police, Malik, who was on his bike behind the victim, said the bike fell down due to the impact and Gupta sustained serious injuries. Malik called for an ambulance and took his friend as well as two people from the car to a hospital.

"Gupta succumbed to his injuries during the treatment, while the two from the car are still being treated," said Aman, SHO of DLF Phase 2 police station.

Police have so far not shared details of who was driving the car.

## IN LOVING REMEMBRANCE OF A FRIEND &amp; A MENTOR



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# 4 THE CITY

FROM UP'S BALRAMPUR

## More explosives, ISIS flag recovered from house of arrested 'operative'

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 23

A DAY after arresting an alleged Islamic State operative, the Delhi Police Special Cell said they had recovered a substantial quantity of explosives and an ISIS flag from his house in Uttar Pradesh's Balrampur.

Mustakeem Khan (36), alias Abu Yusuf, was arrested following a late-night exchange of fire in Central Delhi's Ridge Road area on Friday. Police said they had recovered a pistol and two improvised explosive devices (IEDs) packed in pressure cookers from his possession.

A team of Special Cell's New



Spot where explosives were recovered Saturday. Praveen Khanna

Delhi Range took Khan to his village, Badhiyaa Bhausaahi, where he runs a cosmetic shop. "A brown jacket containing three explosive packets and a blue jacket containing four explosive

packets, which were removed safely, were found. Each packet was wrapped with transparent tape, and contained explosives and ball bearings, with electric wires coming outside of it," DCP

(Special Cell) P S Kushwah said.

Police have said Khan planned to carry out a "lone wolf" attack at a heavy footfall area in the national capital. "An ISIS flag, a leather belt containing around 3 kg of explosives, 8-9 kg explosives in four different polythenes, three cylindrical metal boxes containing explosives and electric wires wrapped with transparent tape, and two cylindrical metal boxes in which ball bearings were pasted were recovered from his house," he said.

Also among the recoveries are three lithium batteries, two mobile chargers and a table alarm watch attached with electric wires, Kushwah said.

Police have said Khan had

planned a strike in the national capital on August 15, but could not do so due to heavy security arrangements.

According to police, Khan was first handled by Yusuf-al Hindi, the ISIS chief of India operations, who was killed in Syria in 2017. After that he was handled by Abu Huzaifa Al Bakistani, a resident of Pakistan, who was killed in a drone strike in Afghanistan in July 2019.

Later, another handler instructed him to carry out strikes, the police official had said. He had tested a small IED near the burial ground in his village. After successful testing, he used the same method to make two pressure cooker IEDs.

## Picked for national award, he once said no to promotion

SUKRITA BARUAH  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 23



Surender Singh (left) and Jyoti Arora are among 47 to be selected for the annual National Awards to Teachers

SEVEN YEARS ago, Surender Singh became eligible to be promoted from a primary teacher to a TGT (Trained Graduate Teacher), who can teach students from class VI to X. The North MCD school teacher turned down the opportunity because he wanted to "continue working for the holistic development" of younger children. This year, he became one of 47 teachers from across the country to be selected for the Ministry of Education's annual National Awards to Teachers.

The ministry's Department of School Education and Literacy released the final list of selected teachers for the prestigious award Thursday. Two of the 47 teachers selected are from Delhi — Jyoti Arora is the principal of Mount Abu Public School in Rohini Sector 5, while Singh has been a teacher with schools of the North MCD for the last 21 years.

The 714 primary schools run by the North MCD are resource-strapped and cater to children from economically strained families, who in most cases are first-generation learners. Singh, who teaches at a school in Northwest Delhi's Sarai Pipal Thala, has an exceptional track record.

The last five times he has been in charge of fifth-graders in his school, 166 of his students cleared the entrance to Rajkiya Pratibha Vikas Vidyalayas — exclusive resource-rich schools run by the Delhi government, to which admissions take place through competitive entrance exams. This is an average of 33.2 students per year from a class making it to these premier schools.

Whenever it is time for his fifth graders to appear for their RPVV entrance exam, Singh oversees aspects of their exam process — he fills up their application forms, speaks to parents, and even hires a bus on the day of the exam to ferry all the students to their centre.

He is notably proud of his students' achievements in one particular year. "In 2015-2016, I had a class of 57 fifth graders, of which 42 were admitted to RPVV Civil Lines, six had been admitted to RPVV BT Block Shalimar Bagh, and two cleared the entrance examination to Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya," he said.

That same year, 56 of his students received merit scholarships from the MCD. Every year, the MCD holds merit scholarship exams for all students of class IV and V, of whom 2,500 from the 714 North MCD schools win Rs 1,000 and a certificate. In the last 10 years, 323 of his students have won the scholarship.

Singh said the achievements of his young students are built by creating an emotional attachment with them: "Most of the

children in our schools live in jhuggis, a lot of them are exposed to harsh experiences from a young age. We need to build an emotional relationship with them, like the one we have with our children. When we do that, they share all their problems and it becomes possible to help them. I also counsel parents and create hope in them about what regular schooling can do for their children. This increases their involvement and dedication in education as well. In the 16 years I've been at my school, the number of students has increased from 300 to 600," he said.

Arora, meanwhile, has been principal of Mount Abu School for 19 years. "I am fond of experimenting with many new things in my school, but among the initiatives I'm most proud of is our dedication to the 27 sustainable development goals which are reinforced in our students in all kinds of ways — in charts across the school, in competitions, in assembly. We have also designed our own curriculum from KG to class XII just dedicated to this area of global citizenship."

## Man stages robbery at jewellery store, held

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 23

A 40-YEAR-OLD jeweller allegedly faked a robbery at his shop in Chandni Mahal to get insurance money and get away without paying EMIs on three business loans, police said Sunday.

The accused, Abhijeet Samanta, had taken loans worth Rs 61 lakh from three banks. Due to the lockdown, he was unable to make much sales and as a result, couldn't afford to pay the EMIs on the loans. Finding himself in a spot, Samanta allegedly staged the robbery along with his friends Farhan (38) and Munna (28).

According to police, the robbery was reported on Friday morning. Samanta had alleged that a burqa-clad woman came to his store and robbed Rs 50,000 cash and gold jewellery at gunpoint. The woman tied Samanta's hands and legs with rope and also took gold from a locker inside the shop.

While scanning the CCTV footage from the shop and nearby areas, police found the behaviour of the accused and the complainant suspicious.

DCP (Central) Sanjay Bhatia said, "In the footage, Samanta could be seen checking the entrance of his shop before the accused came. It looked as if he was waiting for the woman. He also told us that the woman slapped him and then tied him. The details didn't match with the footage. We questioned Samanta for more than six hours."

Samanta allegedly confessed and told the police that his friend Munna had worn a burqa to stage the robbery. Another friend Farhan, who is a property dealer, helped arrange a fake gun to make the robbery look genuine.

According to police, Samanta was hoping that the banks will waive his loan after the robbery.

Police have arrested the three men and recovered the fake jewellery placed by the accused in the shop.

## Submerged since last week, Delhi village awaits action as crops suffer



At Rawta Village in outer southwest Delhi. Abhinav Saha

SHIVAMPATEL  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 23

VINOD KUMAR (45) stood knee deep in water surrounding his house since Wednesday in outer southwest Delhi's Rawta village. He was looking for the lid of an overhead water tank in his house that the wind had blown away; it was later found floating among trash nearby.

A few metres away, Kripal Singh (45) had put sandbags around his stable for buffaloes. A day later, he frantically set up a motor to pull out water that was seeping inside. "Otherwise the stable would have collapsed with us and the animals inside," Singh said, as village residents gathered around him nodded.

Around them was about 1,000 acres of farmland submerged in a mix of wastewater and rainwater overflowing from the Najafgarh drain since earlier this month, after monsoon showers began, village residents said.

Following Wednesday's heavy rain that lashed Gurgaon — 158 mm in 24 hours — water began seeping into homes in Rawta and a few other adjoining villages in Haryana and Delhi. Water lev-

els continued to rise on Sunday, according to residents. Fields closer to the drain were severely flooded, with two tractors almost completely submerged, they said. Farmers claimed they have disconnected electricity supply in fields closer to the drain as they are unable to access their fields for most part of the year.

"The fields are usually waterlogged around this time every year, and about 500 acres of land around the drain is submerged in water for all 12 months, but homes had not been affected until now," said Rajnish Phalswal, a resident. Farmers said there was no certainty when fields would dry again, with some estimating weeks or months, and claiming that it all depends on stopping the overflow from drains.

On Friday, catfish and other species of fish were being caught in waterlogged fields by residents and people from nearby areas as they kept a watch for snakes.

Ramesh Singh (56) estimated that nearly every farmer would have suffered a loss of about Rs 30,000 per acre of field, including their investment and returns on the harvest of about Rs 3,000 per quintal of dhan. "We would have to stop sowing dhan if this con-

tinues. There is also uncertainty about our wheat crops that we sow in November, because even then, sometimes, water from the drain enters our fields," he said.

Residents of the village claimed they have made several representations to government officials, local MLA Gulab Singh and West Delhi MP Parvesh Sahib Singh, but no steps have been taken to control the problem.

MP Parvesh said he has raised the issue in the past with the Chief Minister and Lt-Governor. He claimed the district magistrate had prepared a report according to which around Rs 60 crore was required to build an embankment to stop the overflow, but the Delhi government did not provide funds for it. Since the funds allotted to him is Rs 5 crore per year, he said he cannot assist.

An official from MLA Singh's office said efforts to create an embankment were made in 2015 but some villagers protested against it and work could not be completed. The official said Singh visited the village on Saturday and had a meeting with the residents. "Pumps are being set up to remove the water and work will also be undertaken to solve the problem," he said.

The problem faced by this village is a result of steps taken after the 1978 floods in Delhi when embankments were built along the Najafgarh drain to prevent the city from flooding in the future, as per an official of the Delhi Irrigation and Flood Control Department.

However, Rawta village lies in a 5.5-km stretch, along the 57-km-long drain, where the embankment was not built by the then Delhi administration. "The area was supposed to act as a balancing reservoir at the time of floods to prevent the population in dense areas of the city from getting affected. The area around Najafgarh lake is a low-lying area, and it was planned at the time that flood water would collect here and not proceed further," the official said.

In the long term, officials said the issue would only be solved by talks between Delhi and Haryana, and through the medium of the National Green Tribunal, which is presently hearing a matter to determine if the Najafgarh lake is a wetland or a private land. "If the lake is found to be a wetland, then the land of the farmers in Rawta and other villages in Delhi and Haryana would be acquired by the government," the official said.

ARANYA SHANKAR  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 23

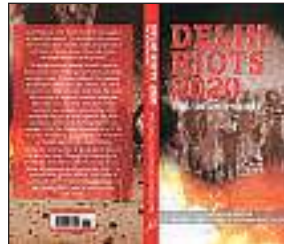
AUTHORS OF the *Delhi Riots: An Untold Story*, which was withdrawn by Bloomsbury Saturday, said they have sent a "notice" to the publisher by email saying the move invites "civil and criminal liability", even as Gurgaon-based Garuda Prakashan announced it would now publish the book.

Bloomsbury had withdrawn the book, due out in September, after backlash over the announcement of a launch event with BJP leader Kapil Mishra among the "guests of honour". The book has been authored by Delhi University teachers Perna Malhotra and Sonali Chitalkar, and advocate Monika Arora.

"We have gone through the book and we will be publishing it in both English and Hindi. It was curtailed because of international pressure but we believe in freedom of expression. We want that the truth must come out. It will hit stands within 15 days," said Ankur Pathak, one of the founders of Garuda Prakashan.

In an email to Bloomsbury Sunday, the authors equated the Black Lives Matter protest in the US with their own experience, reminding the publishers that "Brown Lives Matter too".

"You can kill the supply of the



The book will be published by Garuda Prakashan, one of the authors said

book but not the idea and not the truth. Bloomsbury may we tell you that Brown Lives Matter and Brown women matter too. We have the fundamental right of freedom of speech and expression... On our behalf, please inform Bloomsbury UK not to succumb under international pressure of agenda driven lobbies. If internationally Black Lives Matter than in India Brown lives matter too," they wrote.

Mishra had given a speech in Northeast Delhi on February 23, seeking that the protesters against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act be removed from a site in the area, a day before the riots broke out. On Sunday, he tweeted copies of the notice and wrote: "Authors have sent a notice to Bloomsbury. It will be followed by a legal action.

Criminal breach of trust will be punished legally."

Bloomsbury Spokesperson Kunal Jalali did not respond to calls and texts. In its statement on Saturday, it had said: "In view of very recent events, including a virtual pre-publication launch organised without our knowledge by the authors, with participation by parties of whom the publishers would not have approved, we have decided to withdraw publication of the book."

In their letter, the authors wrote that they were informed "on phone" that the book was being withdrawn "due to pressure from Bloomsbury UK, which in turn was pressurised (sic) by the social media campaign on Twitter", but that no official communication to this effect had reached them yet.

They pointed out that the publishing house had "signed a contract with the authors", communicated "over the past three months... through emails, SMS, WhatsApp" and "finalised the draft". They also said the e-invite of the book launch was "out in public domain" and that Bloomsbury had "full knowledge of this book launch and the guest list".

Arora said, "We waited but they have still not communicated to us, so we have decided to go ahead with Garuda (Prakashan)."

## Delhi sees highest single-day spike this month as new cases touch 1,450 mark

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 23

THE CAPITAL recorded 1,450 fresh Covid cases on Sunday — the highest single-day spike in August so far. The city also reported 16 deaths, taking the toll to 4,300 and the overall cases since the outbreak to 1,61,466.

Sunday was the second day to record more than 1,400 fresh cases, seeing 38 cases higher than Saturday's count of 1,412. This was also the second highest spike in the 24-hour case count since July 18 when 1,475 people tested positive for the virus in a day.

Since July 18, the daily record of cases has been fluctuating, reaching a low case count of 613 on July 27. In August, it has




Covid testing at Ashok Nagar, Sunday. Abhinav Saha

largely remained above 1,000 cases per day and not below 600.

In terms of testing on Sunday, there were 6,261 RT-PCR/CBNAAT/TrueNat tests done in Delhi, in addition to 12,470 rapid antigen tests. There

### CORONAVIRUS IN THE CAPITAL



TOTAL CASES		Total	Vacant
1,61,466		14,117	10,550
HOSPITAL BEDS			
VENTILATORS		1,231	774

	Daily cases	Recoveries	Deaths	Tests
Aug 22	1,412	1,230	14	19,435
Aug 23	1,450	1,250	16	18,731
Total	11,778*	1,45,388	4,300	14,31,094

\*Total active cases

are 11,778 active cases in the city after recovery of 1,250 patients over the last 24 hours. There are 5,896 patients in home isolation, 3,617 at hospitals and 815 at Covid care and health centres.

About 3,589 beds at Covid care centres were occupied by

persons under quarantine, including travellers who came through Vande Bharat Mission and Bubble flights.

The city has done 14,31,094 tests so far and is conducting 75,320 tests per million, as per the government bulletin.

## To register construction workers, welfare board to hold 70 camps across capital

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 23

THE WELFARE board for construction labourers in Delhi will hold 70 camps across the capital between August 24 to September 11 to register workers engaged in this sector and extend the mandated benefits to them under a Central Act.

The decision of the board was announced by Labour Minister Gopal Rai on Sunday. The Delhi High Court, which is hearing a PIL on the alleged irregularities in the board, has been pushing the government to bring more workers under the safety net.

The camps will be held across 70 schools, Rai said. Earlier, the board had agreed to engage lawyers from the Delhi State Legal



The registration camps will be held across 70 schools. Archive

Services Authority (DSLSA) for the purpose of verification of application forms received from workers. "To speed up the process, detailed information has been given to all 70 MLAs, trade unions and agencies so that they

can join hands and help construction workers with registration," Rai said at a press conference.

Separately, the government is also accepting online registrations and applications for renewal of memberships from workers

who stopped receiving benefits as officials did not keep track of those disappearing from the rolls of the board.

"During the registration process, the physical verification of construction workers will also be done immediately. This way, construction labourers will not have to worry about visiting Delhi government offices for physical verification," Rai said.

Every state has one such welfare board, which runs an array of welfare schemes for them, funded by the cess collected from projects under the Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Cess Act, 1996. Under the Act, a building worker is eligible for registration only if he or she has been engaged in building or construction work for not less than 90 days during the preceding 12 months.





# Shri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara University Dharwad

## Realising the Devotional, Socioeconomic and Health Aspirations of people of Karnataka

**S**HRI Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara University established under the Shri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara University Act 2018 is in existence since December 19 2018 as a State Private University of Karnataka State, of unitary nature at Sattur, Dharwad. The University has been sponsored by Shri Manjunatheshwara Educational Society (SDME). Ujire. Dakshina Kannada District. Karnataka a premier non-profit educational organization, under the sacred aegis of Shree Kshetra Dharmasthala and under the able guidance of its distinguished President. Dr. D. Veerendra Heggade who is the Chancellor of the University. Dr. (Prof.) Niranjan Kumar. a renowned Plastic Surgeon is leading the University as Vice-Chancellor and Lt.Col. U.S. Dinesh(Retd.) is the Registrar of the University. Shri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara University is ranked 12th amongst newly constituted Universities in the All India University Ranking by IIRF 2020. Shri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara University is the only Private University which has incorporated digital examination by e-pads from its inception wherein the students write their examinations on e-pads making it easy for them. It is also well received by the evaluators who carry out digital evaluation with "zero error correction". The results announcement is also very fast compared to the conventional methods.

*Shri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara University presently has 5 Constituent Institutions, all of which run Health Sciences Courses. The Constituent Colleges are:*

- SDM College Medical Sciences & Hospital, offering MBBS and Post Graduate (MS & MD) degrees in 20 Specialities in various Pre-Clinical, Para Clinical and Clinical subjects, as well as Fellowships, B.Sc. Allied Sciences and Certificate Courses.
- SDM College of Dental Sciences and Hospital, Dharwad offering BDS and Post Graduate (MDS) Degrees in 9 specialities. Diploma Courses and Fellowship programmes.
- SDM College of Physiotherapy, Dharwad offering BPT and MPT Post Graduate Courses in five subjects.
- SDM Institute of Nursing, Dharwad offering B.Sc. and M.Sc. Nursing programmes.
- SDM Research Institute of Biomedical Sciences, Dharwad a World Class Research Centre for stem cell research and therapy offering M.Sc. (Biomedical Courses) and Certificate Courses.
- The University also offers Ph.D. programmes in various specialities.



**Dr. D. Veerendra Heggade, Hon'ble Chancellor,**  
Shri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara University

### CONSTITUENT UNITS OF SHRI DHARMASTHALA MANJUNATHESHWARA (SDM) UNIVERSITY:

**SDM College of Medical Science & Hospital:** SDMCMS&H was established in 2003 under the leadership of great visionary Dr. D. Veerendra Heggade, the President of SDME Society. As the Chancellor of SDM University, his dream was to start a Centre of Excellence for Medical Education and healthcare for the people of North Karnataka region at affordable cost. Under the able guidance of the Chancellor and the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Niranjan Kumar, the institute provides Vidyadana and Aushadhadana to the needy people.

All excellent facilities of SDMCMS&H are spread over in 70 acres of lush green land with unique architectural Buildings. The Medical College admits 100 students for MBBS Course and 98 students for Post Graduate in various subjects. The Medical College is recognized by Medical Council of India, New Delhi and it is preparing for NABH and NAAC accreditation. The College has modern laboratories, spacious class-rooms, state of the art Museum. The skill Lab is equipped with latest mannequins and BLS, ECLS and ACLS courses are conducted regularly. The ambience of library is very conducive for studies and it has 16,500 books, National and International Journals.

Two hospitals have Total 1,200 beds comprising general and specialty hospital service with 1500 OPD patients daily. The hospitals are equipped with specialized OTs, different ICUs. It also provides super specialty training to



**Dr. Niranjan Kumar, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor,**  
Shri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara University

the students and healthcare service to the patients. Conferences, workshops and Seminars are regularly conducted. SDMCMS&H has stood as an epitome of excellent patient care and a quality Medical Education Centre.

**SDM College of Dental Sciences & Hospital (SDMCDS & H):** The Dental College was founded in 1986 with a mission to Oral health of the local population. Since its inception as one of the very few stand-alone dental colleges, the SDMCDS & H has moved from strength to strength and it provides both therapeutic service and dental education.

The Dental College is recognized by the Dental Council of India, New Delhi and it admits 100 BDS and 45 MDS students. The College is situated in 23 acres of land with most modern buildings and has 363 dental chairs for the teaching and training. Residential hostels provides very conducive living environ-



**Shri Dharmasthala Manjunatheshwara University, Sattur, Dharwad**

The college also has the collaboration with the Tufts University, School of Dental Medicine, Boston, USA between 2006-2010. The College also organized the residential program on Master of Clinical Dentistry in Prosthodontics offered by the Faculty of Dentistry, King's College, London, UK.

**SDM College of Physiotherapy:** The College established in 1996 endeavors to impart high quality physiotherapy education. The research and education knowledge is based on the experienced and highly qualified faculty members. Physiotherapy services are widely used in healthcare organizations. Community, sports and workplace settings, schools and private practices. As an institution of scholars, researchers, teachers and students, the mission of SDM College of Physiotherapy, in the public service is to advance and transmit knowledge and translate research into service. The College offers bachelors, masters and Ph.D. degrees. The experienced faculties of the college provide rigorous academic, clinical and research experiences in a state-of-the-art infrastructure. The college trains the students exceptionally well in pursuing a long and rewarding career in physiotherapy.

**SDM Institute of Nursing Sciences:** The Nursing Institute was established in 2006 with a view to train Nursing Professionals to meet the demand for high quality Nursing care in hospitals and Institutes in India and abroad. Competent, compassionate nursing professionals distinguished by liberal art education, evidence based Practices, clinical reasoning, safe patient care and committed to

the profession is the institute's motto.

The Nursing Institute was established by the SDME Society under the Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, Bangalore. Since 2019 the Institution is functioning under Shri Dhar-masthala Manjunatheshwara University, Dharwad.

The institute offers B.Sc. (Nursing) and M.Sc. (Nursing) in five specialties which is recognized by the Indian Nursing Council, New Delhi and the Diploma Nursing Course run by the institute is recognized by the Karnataka State Nursing Council, Bangalore.

SDM Institute of Nursing Sciences has secured 8th position among the top Nursing Colleges, according to a survey conducted by Higher Education Review Magazine- December 2019. The institute has state-of-the-art facilities set up as per the INC standards. Students have a conducive environment for learning and co-curricular activities. The institute has the support of a world class parent medical college and 1,200 bedded ultra-modern clinical facilities located within the campus.

**SDM Research Institute of Biomedical Sciences (RIBS):** SDM RIBS is an independent teaching and research institute started in 2019 with the vision of developing a vibrant research institute contributing significantly to knowledge intensive, innovative solution oriented strategies for societal and medical tribulations. The institution is not only intending to offer academic programs in the line of new National Education Policy in collaboration with industry but also aimed to conduct re-search in the advanced and emerging areas of modern science. The Institute offers post graduate and hands-on training programs in Biomedical Sciences with an objective of nation building through indoctrination of culture of passion & commitments among students and researchers by igniting their minds for innovation through quality concepts, skill and intellectual property development. In the pursuit of Institute's teaching and research in biomedical sciences. The institute always looks for strategic collaborations with local and international institutions and industry. The institute has established specialized research facilities with experienced faculty / researchers to unravel the mysteries of various unmet medical needs through innovative thinking, creative problem solving and cutting edge technologies.

M.Sc. (Biomedical Science) starting at SDM RIBS from the academic year 2020-21 is a two-year program.



*Hon'ble Chancellor*  
**Dr. D. Veerendra Heggade**

# SHRI DHARMASTHALA MANJUNATHESHWARA UNIVERSITY

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**UG Degree :** MBBS

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- Advanced Cert. in Medical Micro Lab Technology (1 Year)



### SDM COLLEGE OF PHYSIOTHERAPY, DHARWAD

(Recognized by Govt. of Karnataka)



**UG Degree :**

**BPT**

**Duration :** 4 Years + 6 months internship

**Eligibility:** 10+2/PUC or Equivalent with minimum 45% PCB

MPT Postgraduate degree in 5 specialities and Ph.D. Programme



### SDM COLLEGE OF DENTAL SCIENCES & HOSPITAL, DHARWAD

(Recognized by DCI, New Delhi)



**UG Degree:** BDS

Duration : 4 Years + 1 year Internship

**Eligibility :** NEET qualified and Admission through KEA Counselling.

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**Duration :** 2 Years

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- Community Health
- Child Health
- Obstetrics & Gynaecology
- Mental Health & Psychiatric Nursing

**B.Sc. Nursing**

**Duration :** 4 Years

**Eligibility :** Must have passed 10+2 in Science with 45% aggregate in Physics, Chemistry, Biology & English

**Diploma in Nursing (GNM)**

**Duration :** 3 Years,

**Eligibility :** Must have passed 10+2 or its equivalent with 40% aggregate preferably Science (PCBE) or any other stream (Arts, Commerce) with English (Certified by Karnataka State Nursing Council)



### SDM RESEARCH INSTITUTE FOR BIOMEDICAL SCIENCES (SDM RIBS), DHARWAD

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**Duration: 2 Years (4 Semesters)**

**Eligibility:** Must have passed bachelor's degree of min. 3 years duration in biomedical sciences (Biomedical Science / Biotechnology / Molecular Biology / Biochemistry / Microbiology / Botany / Zoology / Genetics / Home Science / Chemistry with Biological subjects)

or

Passed bachelor degree in BE / B.Tech majoring in biotechnology / Medical / Dental / B. Pharm / B.Sc. Nursing (3 or 4 years) / Pharmacology / Animal Sciences, Life Sciences from reputed and recognized University / Board with not less than 50% marks Aggregate.

**Contact Details** | +91 836 2321127 /26/25/24 | [sdmuo@sdmuniversity.edu.in](mailto:sdmuo@sdmuniversity.edu.in) | [registrar@sdmuniversity.edu.in](mailto:registrar@sdmuniversity.edu.in) | [sdmuniversity.edu.in](http://sdmuniversity.edu.in)

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# 6 GOVT & POLITICS



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



## FACT VS FAKE

ON THE lines of the Press Information Bureau at the Centre, the Public Relations Department of the Kerala government has started a fact-check section to identify "fake news and fake information on Covid pandemic". What has triggered a row is the department's move to expand the exercise to all news related to the state government; it now plans to set up fact-check cells in every district. The Pinarayi Vijayan-led government has come under fire over the move, with critics terming it as censorship.

## CAUGHT UNAWARES

THE POLITICAL storm over the letter to Congress chief Sonia Gandhi by 23 top party leaders caught many senior Congress leaders unawares. Some leaders from states such as Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand made frantic calls since the morning, not necessarily because they wanted to be signatories, but because they were not asked at all. One leader said, "I didn't even know and I know so many of these people well. Does my opinion not even count?" Some leaders, however, are happy that they did not know. "It allows us to stay quiet and not take a side. Let the chips fall where they may," a leader said.

## SCHEME SYNERGY

SEEING THAT many of their initiatives in social welfare schemes overlap, and the complementary nature of many of their other schemes, the Ministry of Tribal Affairs and the Ministry of Rural Development have agreed upon a convergence of their schemes to "improve the economic opportunities for tribal women". For the synergy of these schemes, a joint communication has been signed by Secretary, Ministry of Tribal Affairs, Deepak Khandekar, and Secretary, Ministry of Rural Development, N N Sinha.

## Nadda asserts NDA unity, reiterates Nitish will lead Bihar campaign

SANTOSH SINGH  
PATNA, AUGUST 23

REITERATING that the NDA would go to polls in Bihar under the leadership of Chief Minister and JD(U) chief Nitish Kumar, BJP president JP Nadda on Sunday asserted the strength and unity of the BJP-JD(U)-LJP alliance in the state.

This comes amid the tussle between the JD(U) and the LJP, with senior leaders of both parties trading barbs on several occasions. Speaking on the last day of the two-day meeting of the BJP's state executive through the virtual medium, Nadda expressed confidence about the NDA's prospects in the upcoming Assembly polls. "One knows the result when BJP, JD(U) and LJP come together... We will work for every booth as our job is to add value to our alliance partners," he said.

Nadda said the pandemic was likely to stay till the year-end and one had to live with the health threat. "After Covid and floods, we have to deal with the upcoming Bihar polls. We have to take proper care of ourselves while campaigning. Door-to-door campaigning becomes very effective



JP Nadda

### 'Congress govt betrayed people in Rajasthan'

*Jaipur:* BJP national president JP Nadda on Sunday accused the Congress government in Rajasthan of inaction, betraying people and failing to provide relief to them during the lockdown. "The Ashok Gehlot government has proved inactive during the lockdown. Instead of providing relief, the government has betrayed people," Nadda told the party's Rajasthan unit on Sunday.

PTI

in the current circumstances," he said, and praised the state party unit for staying connected with its workers online.

## HARYANA EX-CM AMONG LEADERS WHO WROTE TO SONIA

# Hooda says internal matters of Cong, Selja says no one above party

VARINDER BHATIA  
CHANDIGARH, AUGUST 23

AMONG THE 23 senior Congress leaders who wrote to the party's interim president Sonia Gandhi, calling for a "full time and effective leadership" and several major organisational changes, is Haryana's two-time chief minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda.

This comes a year after the campaign for the Haryana Assembly polls during which Hooda had publicly voiced his disagreement with the Congress and had even said that the party had "lost its way" and was no longer the "old Congress".

Addressing a "Parivartan rally" in his stronghold Rohtak in August 2019, he had declared himself the chief ministerial candidate "with or without

### CMs VOICE SUPPORT



**At a time when the bedrock of strength is under threat, it is important... to unitedly behind the Gandhis...**

AMARINDER SINGH  
PUNJAB CM



**Gandhi family has kept the party united and in the time of crisis, we need them... (if) party falls apart, then history will not forgive us...**

ASHOK GEHLOT  
RAJASTHAN CM



**In the country's current crisis situation, Sonia-ji and Rahul-ji seem like the only ray of hope...**

BHUPESH BAGHEL  
CHHATTISGARH CM

## Day after, Kurien says intention behind letter only to strengthen party

SHAJU PHILIP  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUGUST 23

FORMER RAJYA Sabha Deputy Chairman P J Kurien, one of the signatories in the letter to the party's interim president Sonia Gandhi by its top leaders, said on Sunday that the Congress has to be strengthened.

"Either Rahul or Priyanka should become the party president. If they are not willing to assume the office, the party should look at another suitable person, who can be a consensus candidate or elected," he told *The*



P J Kurien

*Indian Express.*

He said elections should be held at all levels of the organisation to strengthen the party and all those leaders who are keeping away from the party should be brought back.

"The intention behind the letter was only to strengthen the party. It has no other motive. The present uncertainty is not good

for the party. If Rahul is ready, he should become the party president. There should be steps to activate the party," said Kurien.

State Congress president Mullappally Ramachandran, however, said public statements on leadership change are uncalled for. "Congress is a political party with a high amount of internal democracy and diverse views are always allowed in party forums. The open position taken by the leaders in a subject like leadership change of AICC is against this spirit of internal democracy... This is not the style of functioning of the Congress," he said.

Congress" and had also announced a manifesto on his own.

Supporting the government's move to revoke the special status of Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370, he had said he "will not compromise on patriotism and self-respect".

On Sunday, however, Hooda refused to comment on the letter sent to Sonia about a fortnight ago by top Congress leaders.

"These are the party's internal matters and I do not comment on them in the media," he said.

Haryana Congress chief Kumari Selja, however, said party leaders must not forget that whatever they are is because of the party.

"It is an internal party matter and whatever happens, let us see in the working committee. I

don't think anyone should go public. If there is anything that anyone has an issue with, I think nothing happens in a day. Everybody has been part of it," Selja told *The Indian Express*.

Without taking any name, she added, "This is the time when everyone has to come together and fight against what is being unleashed in the country by the BJP government rather than behaving in such a manner. I always say that whatever we are, it is because of the party. Let us not forget that. No individual is above the party."

About the letter sent by the 23 senior Congress leaders, she said, "I do not know what they have written. This is a newspaper report. I can't come to a conclusion or form an opinion solely on the basis of a newspaper report."

## Hope Rahul returns as Cong chief before Bihar polls: RS MP

SANTOSH SINGH  
PATNA, AUGUST 23

SENIOR CONGRESS leader and Rajya Sabha MP Akhilesh Prasad Singh, who was the only leader from Bihar among the 23 signatories of a letter to interim party chief Sonia Gandhi, has pitched for the return of Rahul Gandhi to the president's post and hoped it would happen before the Assembly elections in the state.

Singh said the leaders who wrote the letter had raised the common concerns of party leaders and workers.

"Our letter does not criticise anyone but talks about broader is-



Akhilesh Prasad Singh

ssues of revival and strengthening party structure. Now that there is CVC meeting, we hope Rahulji becomes AICC president before Bihar polls and state leaders also get some powers," he added.

"I am used to putting forward my views candidly. When we had met Rahulji about a month ago... I had told him... people from the panchayat to national level wanted him to return as AICC president."

## Rajasthan received over Rs 1,200 cr from cow surcharges in 2 yrs: Govt

DEEP MUKHERJEE  
JAIPUR, AUGUST 23

THE RAJASTHAN government received more than Rs 1,200 crore from taxes levied for cow protection in the last two years, according to data provided by the state's Gopalan Department in response to a question in the state Assembly.

The state earned a total revenue of Rs 1,252.9 crore from such taxes during 2018-19 and 2019-20, the department stated. The government received Rs 266.13 crore as taxes levied on stamp duty for the purpose of cow protection in 2018-19, while this revenue increased to Rs 291.98 crore in 2019-20. Similarly, in 2018-19, the revenue from taxes levied on liquor for cow protection amounted to Rs 270.12 crore which increased to Rs 424.68 crore in 2019-20, according to data.

The government has distributed grants of Rs 645.79 crore in the last two years to cow shelters across the state. As per the data, the grants have been distributed to 1,836 shelters till March 31.

Meanwhile, the Ashok Gehlot-led Congress government in Rajasthan Friday introduced The Rajasthan Stamp (Amendment) Bill, 2020 in the ongoing Assembly session, which, apart from the purpose of conservation of cow and its progeny, also seeks to use the surcharge on stamp duty, not exceeding 20 per cent of the duty chargeable on such instruments, for Covid relief and mitigating natural or manmade calamities.

"The money will continue to be spent on the welfare of cows, but apart from that, now the remaining extra funds will be spent on natural calamities," Parliamentary Affairs Minister Shanti Dhariwal said.

## Uttarakhand BJP to form dist committees to tackle party workers' grievances

LALMANI VERMA  
DEHRADUN, AUGUST 23

WITH ONE-AND-A-HALF years left for the BJP-led government to complete its tenure in Uttarakhand, the party Sunday decided to form district level co-ordination committee to address party workers' grievances about the local administration and the police.

The committee also discussed the possibility of a cabinet expansion in the near future and the issue of four MLAs facing accusations of indiscipline.

BJP's Uttarakhand president Bansidhar Bhagat said five-member committees — under district presidents and including local party legislators and senior party workers — will be formed in all the districts. The announcement came after the state core committee meeting, which was attended by Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat, party national vice-president Shyam Jaju, joint general sec-



Uttarakhand CM Trivendra Singh Rawat

retary (organisation) Shiv Prakash, Union minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank, Lok Sabha MPs Ajay Bhatt and Tirath Singh Rawat, in Dehradun.

"Workers often complain that the local police inspector, SP or DM is not listening to them. A discussion on this issue was held on priority today so that workers' complaints can be resolved," Bhagat said.

Sworn in as CM in 2017, Rawat is yet to make his first cabinet expansion despite repeated demands by MLAs. Bhagat said the CM has to consult Union Home Minister Amit Shah on the matter before taking a decision.

Bhagat said the four MLAs facing allegations of indiscipline will be issued a warning.

## 'FOCUS IS TO STEADILY BUILD TILL 2024'

# AAP looks to expand footprint, eye on Uttarakhand, Goa

DIPANKARGHOSE  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 23

THE RULING party in Delhi and the primary Opposition in Punjab, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is looking to expand its footprint to other parts of the country.

Earlier this week, AAP's national convener Arvind Kejriwal announced that the party intends to fight the Assembly polls in Uttarakhand, make a push in Goa and contest local body elections in places like Mumbai and Ladakh apart from the MCD elections in Delhi.

Senior party leaders involved in chalking out the strategy said that in terms of identifying states to fight elections in, the party is following some markers.

The first, they said, is that the states that the party will seriously

target are small states, with elections more than a year away in 2022. "It is not like an experiment to fight elections has not been made before. Punjab was successful but at other places, the response wasn't great. This time the focus is on building an organisation where we see shoots first. The AAP already has a footprint in Goa, and in all of these states, their size allows us to try and build grassroots workers everywhere," a senior leader said.

The second marker, the party leaders said, is that most of these states are places which have swayed between two parties and the AAP sees an opportunity to provide a third alternative. "That is why Punjab was successful, when in a first attempt, we became opposition, and were disappointed not to form the government. People wanted a third voice



Sanjay Singh, Bhagwant Mann

after the Akalis and the Congress. In Goa, our campaign is about how leaders of the BJP and the Congress are the same, and keep switching sides. In Uttarakhand, there is no credible opposition to the BJP," a senior party leader said.

Apart from its strategy in these small states, the AAP is trying to step up its activities in the politi-



cally significant Uttar Pradesh, with party MP Sanjay Singh travelling through the state. "In Uttar Pradesh, we know putting up a credible challenge is very far away. But if you have national ambitions, you need to set your foot in Uttar Pradesh. In the elections there in 2022, the aim will only be to win a few seats if possible, to get our-

selves into the Assembly. Singh is a good speaker too and is from near Firozabad and he has clearly got under the BJP government's skin," a leader said.

Two days ago, in an apparent reference to Singh, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said in the Assembly that a "namuna" from Delhi is raising questions on what the state government did to tackle Covid-19.

While the AAP's decision to explore its national prospects has again raised questions about how the party will navigate the intricacies of evolving positions on issues such as caste, sources said that over the past two years, especially with its return to power in Delhi, it is clear that the AAP's selling point is health and education.

"What will happen this time is that we will look for good state-level leaders to help lead cam-

paigns to navigate through the intricacies of the state. Bhagwant Mann has become big in Punjab, and Sanjay Singh's reputation is growing in UP. But what is clear from our ground reports is that people relate AAP and Kejriwal with hospitals and schools. That is why you are seeing the campaign to distribute oximeters throughout the country called Oxymitra," a party source said.

In places where the party is unable to contest state elections because of lack of leadership or grassroots workers, it is looking at local body elections. The AAP is likely to fight local polls in Ladakh and Mumbai. "The focus is to steadily build till 2024, to be in a position to take a call and become a voice in Parliament. To grow, we cannot afford to have just one MP in Lok Sabha," a senior AAP leader



# EXPRESS NETWORK

## BRIEFLY



A residential society in Ahmedabad, Sunday.

### GUJARAT

#### Nine dead after second straight day of heavy rain

Ahmedabad: Nine people were killed in seven districts on Sunday as torrential rain continued to batter the state for the second consecutive day. Six of them drowned, while three died in house collapse incidents, even as the total casualties reported from across the state in two days went up to 21, according to state-government officials. Thirteen teams from the Disaster Response Force (NDRF) have already been deployed in different states while another two NDRF teams and 11 teams from the State Disaster Response Force (SDRF) are on reserve. **ENS**

### MADHYA PRADESH

#### Five of family found hanging at home

Tikamgarh: A retired government employee, his wife, and three other family members including a four-year-old boy, were found hanging at their home in Madhya Pradesh's Tikamgarh Sunday. Police said the initial probe suggested the family members died by suicide. No note was found at the spot. After being alerted by neighbours, police found Dharamdas Soni (62), his wife Poonam (55), son Manohar (27) and daughter-in-law Sonam (25) hanging from a ceiling, and a four-year-old grandson hanging from a window grill. **PTI**

### HARYANA

#### Woman held for beating up mother-in-law

Chandigarh: A woman in Sonapat was arrested Sunday after a video in which she is seen beating her 82-year-old mother-in-law went viral, a police official said. Along with the woman — an auxiliary nurse midwife — her mother has also been arrested. A police official said the 82-year-old woman's son had lodged a police complaint. The video of the incident was filmed by the elderly woman's grandchildren, police said. In the video, her daughter-in-law is seen hitting her with a dustpan. She was allegedly forcing her to do chores, police said. **ENS**



ITBP personnel walked around 45 km, carrying an injured woman on a stretcher, from Lapsa, a remote village, to Munsyari in Pithoragarh, Uttarakhand, on Saturday. **ANI**

## 15-hr rescue in Uttarakhand: ITBP team carries injured woman 45 km

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
DEHRADUN, AUGUST 23

IN WHAT turned out to be a 15-hour rescue operation, a 16-member team of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) personnel walked over 45 km carrying an injured woman on a stretcher from a remote, mountainous location near the Line of Actual Control (LAC) on the bor-

der in Pithoragarh district on Friday and got her admitted to a hospital in Munsyari.

According to an ITBP official, the control room Friday morning received information that 26-year-old Rekha Devi, a resident of Lapsa village near the China border, was in need of urgent medical assistance after she fell from a hillside.

The woman had fallen from a hillside and suffered injuries on

her legs on August 20, but she could not be rescued for two days as a helicopter could not land in the area, an ITBP spokesperson told PTI.

Thereafter, a total of 10 personnel from the force's 14th battalion stationed in Lilam reached the village where the woman was admitted in the hospital in Munsyari, said Nilabh Kishore, IG, ITBP.

Seeing that Rekha's condition was worsening, the ITBP

team put her on a stretcher and started their journey.

Later, six more personnel joined them and helped them carry the woman on the stretcher across the slippery terrain.

"ITBP personnel trekked for over 15 hours to cover a 45-km distance and get the woman admitted in the hospital in Munsyari," said Nilabh Kishore, IG, ITBP.

(WITH PTI INPUTS)

### 44 VANDE BHARAT TRAINSETS

## Rlys: Outing of prices at qualification stage among reasons for cancellation of tender

AVISHEK G DASTIDAR  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 23

THE OUTING of prices offered by three prospective bidders is among the reasons why the global tender for manufacturing 44 Vande Bharat trainsets had to be cancelled, the Railways announced on Sunday.

"While processing the bids, it was found that for some reason the bidders had furnished information that indicated financial information as well, which is not needed at the qualifications stage," Chairman, Railway Board, VK Yadav said during a media interaction.

"...to maintain highest standard of transparency, we decided to cancel the tender," he said.

## Panel formed to probe Telangana power plant fire

Hyderabad: Expressing anguish over the fire accident at Srisailem hydro-electric power plant, which killed nine people, Chairman and Managing Director of Telangana State Power Generation Corporation Ltd (TS-Genco), Prabhakar Rao on Sunday said a committee has been constituted to ascertain the cause of the mishap and suggest preventive measures. He said efforts were being taken to resume operations at two units at the plant in another 15 days. **PTI**

Sources told *The Indian Express* that as per prices indicated by three bidders, the company in a joint venture with China's CRRC had quoted the lowest price and a well-known Indian rolling stock manufacturer bid second lowest.

Attached to the e-tender document among the instructions to the bidders is the line that says, "All the mandatory fields of the techno-commercial bid details and financial rate page have to be filled up by the tenderers." Sources said the companies might have construed that they were being asked to furnish prices as well.

Yadav did not reveal the names of the bidders whose prices were discovered. "We don't know why they did that because standard instructions are issued for these two-packet tenders and

### TABLIGHI JAMAAT EVENT: HC QUASHES FIRs

## Stranded since March, 29 foreign nationals hope to go home soon

SADAF MODAK  
MUMBAI, AUGUST 23

TWO DAYS after the Aurangabad bench of Bombay High Court quashed FIRs against 29 foreign nationals in connection with a Tablighi Jamaat gathering in Delhi amid Covid-19 restrictions in March, the men said they would be approaching the trial court to get possession of their seized passports to return to their countries.

The foreign nationals from countries such as Ivory Coast, Tanzania, Iran, Djibouti and Ghana, are currently staying at Ahmednagar in private accommodation arranged by local residents after their release from jail in June. Many of them were in jail for two months.

Most of them came to India before March 10 as part of a religious group to study Islam, they have told the high court. They have also submitted that they had informed local authorities, including the police, regarding their visit.

After the Jamaat gathering in Delhi came under the spotlight, Maharashtra Police booked foreign nationals, including these 29 men. The police have said they were propagating Islam and had violated visa and lockdown guidelines. They were booked under

Epidemic Diseases Act, Foreigners Act and IPC sections pertaining to the spread of infectious diseases.

A division bench of Justice TV Nalawade and Justice M G Sewlikar Friday quashed the FIRs against them, observing that there was no evidence in connection to these charges. The court also said that during a pandemic, instead of being more sensitive towards "our guests", they were lodged in jails.

Mensa Ismail Yusuf, 50, works as a small-time trader in Ghana. He said local authorities approached the group on March 30 about their travel history while they were staying at a mosque in Nevasa taluka of Ahmednagar. "We were kept in institutional quarantine for over two weeks. On April 17, officials came and took our phones and passports and told us that we will be taken to a hospital. But instead, we were taken to a jail," he said.

From then till their release on June 17, Yusuf said none of them were able to contact their families back home. He added that no police officer has explained till date why they were booked. "Our phones were with the authorities and since we did not know we were being taken to jail, we could not inform our families. We requested prison authorities to allow us to

speak to our family members but they said it would require the court's permission," said Yusuf, who is on his first visit to India.

Most of the people in the group cannot speak English and faced difficulty in communication.

He said they faced difficulties in the congested jail in Parner and due to lack of space and also ended up spending the month of Ramzan and Eid in jail. Yusuf added that the families of some of them tried to contact the consulates of their countries, but did not get any information.

Now, the group hopes they can return home soon. The state government can file an appeal before the Supreme Court against the quashing of FIRs.

Lawyers Mazhar Jahagirdar and Zafar Pathan, representing the foreign nationals, said many others belonging to Tablighi Jamaat, had chosen to plead guilty and pay a fine to be able to return home sooner than wait for years for completion of the trials.

These men, however, chose to file a plea before the high court, seeking quashing of FIRs filed against them, they said. "We will now file a plea before the trial court for return of their passports. It will take some time to complete the procedures," Pathan said.

### MEERUT

## Pirated NCERT books seized: Police search for local BJP leader, nephew

AMIT SHARMA &  
AMIL BHATNAGAR  
MEERUT, NOIDA, AUGUST 23

A DAY after pirated NCERT books worth Rs 60 crore were recovered from a godown in Meerut, the Special Task Force (STF) seized pirated NCERT books worth Rs 10 lakh from Amroha on Sunday.

Following the raid in Meerut, police had arrested four persons and booked local BJP leader Sanjeev Gupta and his nephew Sachin as the main accused. Police are yet to arrest them.

"After the raid in Meerut, we found evidence of another such printing press in Amroha. A raid was carried out in Gajraula area and the duplicate books were seized. Prima facie, it appears that the same accused were managing this press as well but it remains part of the investigation. There is a possibility that more such fake operations were being carried out in west UP and similar raids will be made as per the gathered evidence," said SP (STF) Kuldeep Narain.

According to Meerut police, there are only four printing press in UP that have been authorised by the NCERT to publish books.

"There is no authorised printing press for publishing NCERT books in Meerut, but this illegal business of publishing and sale of books on this scale was continuing for over five years," said Senior Superintendent of Police (Meerut) Ajay Sahni.

Gupta, who has been removed from the post of the vice-president of BJP's Meerut unit and suspended from the party, has said that he has become "a victim of BJP's inner politics".

"I will come out with valid documents authorised by the NCERT to publish these books. I have fallen victim to party's inner politics," said Gupta over the phone before going into hiding.

Meanwhile, the BJP district unit said Gupta has been suspended as the party "believes in zero tolerance on corruption and crime".

"No anomalies on crime and corruption are tolerated by the party leadership which is why we have suspended Sanjeev Gupta. Nobody has got the right to denigrate the party's image and fill his or her own coffers with illegal means," said BJP Meerut unit chief Sanjeev Singhal.

## 2 brothers among three killed in clash over land dispute in UP

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
LUCKNOW, AUGUST 23

THREE PEOPLE, two of them brothers, were killed and seven were injured in a clash over a land dispute in Jaunpur district's Firozpur village on Sunday.

The deceased were identified as brothers as Ram Chandar (65) and Bajnaath (62), who were involved in the dispute for over a decade, and their distant relative Ram Khilawan (62).

According to the police, Ram Chandar had moved court, which recently passed an order in his favour. A team of police and revenue officials then visited the village and handed over the possession of the land to Ram Chandar, said Additional Superintendent of Police (Jaunpur) Dr Sanjay Kumar.

On Sunday, the 65-year-old started construction work on the land. On coming to know about it, Ram Khilawan and his associates arrived at the spot, even as

Ram Chandar's supporters also gathered there.

A clash occurred after heated arguments, with both sides pelting stones and assaulting each other. The police went to the spot after receiving news of the violence, and used mild force to bring the situation under control. Sixteen people from both sides were detained for questioning. The injured are undergoing treatment at the district hospital. Their condition is stable, according to doctors.

### 'DREAM OF APPEARING FOR CIVIL SERVICES EXAM'

## In Kerala, migrant's daughter tops BA exam, earns CM's praise

SHAJU PHILIP  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,  
AUGUST 23

WHEN 21-YEAR-OLD Payal Kumari topped the BA Archaeology and History exam at Mahatma Gandhi University last week, it would have been a proud moment for her father—a school dropout who migrated to Kerala from Bihar 23 years ago.

The daughter of Pramod Kumar and Bindu Devi has come a long way from her days as the odd-girl-out in a Malayalam-medium school to earning plaudits from the Kerala Chief Minister himself.

"I want to tell children in my parents' village—Gosaiyami in

Sheikhpura district—about my hardworking days. I want to inspire them to pursue studies. Also, this would be a great morale booster for scores of peers from migrant families settled in Kerala," said Payal.

On her mind now are higher studies at JNU and the civil service examination. "I want to join a PG course at JNU or any other premier institute in the country. I want to become a government employee to serve ordinary people. Civil service exam is also in my thoughts," she said. Payal and family's story is not too different from that of other migrants, known as "guest workers", who have been ensuring that their wards are educated in Kerala's schools and colleges. And in a state struggling to fill its school benches

amid a low birth rate, these children of migrant workers have been welcomed warmly.

Payal's father Pramod, 47, first boarded a train to Kerala in 1997, when migrants from north Indian states were just trickling in. He landed a job as a helper at a sanitaryware shop in Kochi, where, every morning and evening, he would see schoolchildren in their uniforms.

In 2001, he brought his family to Kochi and, one by one, admitted his three children to school.

"I had been inspired by the importance of education given by Kerala parents. When I decided to bring my family to Kochi, my sole intention was to ensure education for our three children. Those were

really tough days as I was the sole breadwinner with a monthly income of Rs 1,500," said Kumar. He now earns Rs 17,000 as a salesman in a paint dealer's outlet.

Payal, too, had her struggles. "It had been very difficult to learn Malayalam in the initial days. Nobody was at home to clear doubts of classes. But teachers helped. Initially, I had not been good at studies. But, I slowly picked up over years to become a rank-holder in the degree course," she said.

As her father struggled to run a family with meagre income, her school and college teachers stepped in. "While in school, teachers helped me financially as my father could not meet all expenses. Later, at Marthoma Women's College in

Perumbavoor, where I did my degree course, the teachers and management helped to meet the financial needs. In my first year, a teacher, Lisy Kurian, bore the entire fee and also gave pocket money as well," she said.

On Saturday, CM Pinarayi Vijayan tweeted: "Spoke to Payal Kumari. She is the topper of this year's BA Archaeology & History exams of MG university. What makes her success special is the fact her parents are guest workers. This is a matter of pride for our State. Congratulations Payal."

Her elder brother Akash, 23, is now working with a private firm as an accountant after completing BCom. Sister Pallavi, 19, is pursuing her graduation.



Payal Kumari (second from left) with her family. **Express**





*The Indian* **EXPRESS**

FOUNDED BY

RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

## LETTER AND SPIRIT

Congress high command could make this moment more about itself, less about the party. Or it could listen to the voices within

THE LETTER SENT to the Congress chief, Sonia Gandhi, by 23 senior leaders, including former chief ministers, sitting MPs, the Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, former Union ministers and CWC members, ahead of a crucial working committee meeting, is unprecedented. This is the first time that so many leaders have put down their grievances against the high command on record and called for sweeping changes in the way the party is led and how it functions. In recent times, the disquiet within the party over its rout in successive elections at the Centre and failure to form or maintain governments in states, or to prevent young and ambitious leaders from leaving the party, has been an undercurrent. Anyone asking the leadership to reflect on the party's disarray and decline has been painted as disgruntled. The simmering unease within the party has been attributed to a predictable generational divide. But the signatories to the letter, as this newspaper has reported, include representatives of different generations in the Congress, as well as those who have been in the party for long and held important posts in the organisation apart from ministerial office. This time, the voices are far too diverse and too many to be ignored.

The letter brings the crisis to the fore and also offers the Congress high command an opportunity — one that it would fritter away or lose if it were to respond by making this moment more about itself, less about the party. Though worded carefully, the letter has specific suggestions for recasting the organisation. It has called for an elected Congress Working Committee and a full-time leadership, engaged and available at the AICC and PCC. In a rejection of the high command culture and the practice of nomination to leadership positions, it speaks of an “institutional leadership mechanism” to “collectively” guide the party. Whether the Congress brass listens to these voices and how it responds to them will decide the party's future course. What is clear is that it can no longer go back to Congress-as-usual, with the current ad-hoc arrangement that has proved unable to stanch the party's drift or halt its decline. The party could seize the moment and revert to an older organisational form, when elections to the PCC, AICC and even the post of Congress president were the norm. It needs to promote a leadership that is ambitious for responsibility and ready to be held accountable for performance.

It is for the Congress to decide how to run its affairs. But its crisis within has a bearing on the health of the wider polity. The Congress continues to be India's premier opposition party — it is the only party besides the ruling BJP with a footprint across the country. The Opposition space shrinks when the Congress declines. In a time of large parliamentary majorities, the importance of that space, the need for its vitality, has increased. The question is whether or not the Congress is willing to step up to its role.

## A DEEPENING ALLIANCE

Delhi needs to confront reality of shared interests of Beijing and Islamabad, and address its consequences

THERE WERE NO dramatic announcements from the meeting between the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Shah Mahmood Qureshi and his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, late last week in the Chinese island province of Hainan. It was about the further consolidation of the all-weather partnership between Islamabad and Beijing across a broadening range of issues — from economic and commercial to the political and security. What makes this round of Sino-Pak strategic dialogue significant is the rapid deterioration of India-China ties amidst the unresolved military standoff in eastern Ladakh. India has had to cope with the consequences of the China-Pak partnership that can be traced back to the mid 1950s. Yet, Delhi has continuously underestimated the deepest sources animating it. To make matters worse, Delhi has always over-determined the prospects for its own partnership with China and its ability to transcend the Sino-Pak alliance.

For Delhi, the immediate concern is about intensive Sino-Pak political coordination on Kashmir. China has lent strong support to Islamabad's efforts to mobilise international condemnation of Delhi's constitutional changes in Kashmir since late last year. The joint statement issued after the talks between Wang and Qureshi saw China reaffirm its criticism of India's “unilateral actions” in Kashmir. As part of the commitment on both sides to support the “core interests” of the other, Pakistan expressed support for China's repression of the majority Muslim community in Beijing's far western province of Xinjiang. The point here is not about Pakistan's double standards in raising human rights concerns about Kashmir and supporting China in Xinjiang. Hypocrisy is very much part of international relations. The real story is about the deep foundations of the Sino-Pak alliance that transcend religion and are tied to shared interests of the two nations in containing India.

India, however, has been reluctant to confront this central reality — which continues to express itself in multiple ways. These range from the construction of the Karakoram Highway through Kashmir in the 1970s to the expansive China-Pakistan Economic Corridor of the present and from Beijing's nuclear and missile assistance to Pakistan in the 1980s to the integration of Pakistani naval forces and bases into China's ambitious Indian Ocean strategy. Even as it fends off their coordinated attempt to put India in the international dock on Kashmir, Delhi must prepare for a full range of other contingencies — from Sino-Pak joint support to insurgent groups in India's Northeast to probing India's other internal, regional and international vulnerabilities. Recognising the challenge of the Sino-Pak alliance is necessarily the first step in any Indian strategy to cope with it in the days ahead.

FREEZE FRAME

E P UNNY



# Remembering Arun Jaitley



ARVIND SUBRAMANIAN

If GST and IBC could be rehabilitated, it would help the economy. And also be a fitting tribute to Jaitley

IT IS HARD to believe that a year has passed since Arun Jaitley's death. On that sad occasion, I wrote: “We consequently mourn for him deeply. But we also mourn for ourselves, conscious that his sharp mind, sober head, and restraining hand will forever be unavailable as India navigates its uncertain economic and political future.”

A year later, the future now seems even more uncertain; the economic and political challenges have proved joltingly more severe than anticipated; India has faced more challenges than anyone imagined to its health, institutions, federal relations, and national security; and, as a result, we have missed Jaitley's presence even more than we feared.

He was one of the vanishing species of politicians who are centrists by temperament and disposition as much as ideology; and who, for that reason, could practise the fading art of politics as the banging of heads and forging of compromise without deploying sordid means.

Consider the best aspects Jaitley's legacy which, of course, was not without blemishes of omission and commission. Among the achievements of the current government, he played a particularly important role in two critical reforms. He shepherded the Indian Bankruptcy Code (IBC) through Parliament, opening up the prospect that India would finally address the long-standing problem of what I called “capitalism without exit.”

Second, his strenuous efforts to secure bipartisan support smoothed the way for the passage of the Goods and Services Tax (GST). And his leadership ensured that the GST Council, like its Yashwant Sinha-created predecessor — the Empowered Committee of State Finance Ministers — functioned in a democratic, consensual spirit.

The best illustration of his role was in 2017 when CPM-run Kerala stood firm but isolated on the issue of gambling taxation. Kerala's personable and well-intentioned Finance Minister, Thomas Isaac, said he had no choice but to leave the negotiating room, at which point, in a truly Bollywood moment, Jaitley pleaded for him to stay. The strategy worked: Isaac stayed, and Jaitley was able to forge a compromise that met Kerala's needs, while preserving unity within the Council. If the GST was a tribute to India's cooperative federalism, Jaitley was its agent and embodiment.

However, as Jaitley's health and influence declined, the reforms that he spearheaded began to falter. Today, the GST Council is riven by a trust-deficit, the GST is on the verge of becoming discredited, while the IBC has been consigned to some netherland of zombie-dom. Even so, the decline is not terminal and

the GST and IBC can yet be resuscitated.

For the GST, the immediate priority is to rescue the compensation discussions, which have become trapped in obscure legalities. This is a distraction because the spirit of the compensation commitment was clear: The Centre guaranteed states annual revenue increases of 14 per cent. It is up to the Centre to will the means, and resist recourse to legal legerdemain to avoid or delay compensation. The integrity of reforms like the GST is tested in difficult times such as now. And to pass the test, the Centre will have to incur costs.

This is counterfactual speculation but had Jaitley been alive, he may have been able to preserve enough trust to persuade the states to accept a lower compensation this year, in view of the parlous state of revenues all around. But now states will not engage in that discussion, fearing that compensation might be diluted even beyond the crisis. If this stalemate continues, each revenue-starved state could start to impose its own GST rates, beginning as a trickle and soon leading to the flood that results in many taxes and several balkanised markets, undermining the dream of one economic India. At that point the GST would be dead.

Such an outcome is too horrible to contemplate; it must be avoided at all costs. The government needs to restore trust between the Centre and states by unconditionally and expeditiously making good on its compensation commitment to the states, as it has been trying to do recently.

The other major GST reform would be to simplify the rate structure along the lines I had originally proposed: Three rates with no cesses. The system has paid the price of proliferating rates and cesses and arbitrary and irresponsible rate cuts in 2018-19. If that persists, the GST will be consumed by its own complexity. (One defence of the GST: Faulting it for poor revenue performance is unfair because revenues have suffered from very weak economic growth and those rate cuts.)

On the IBC, a short history is both instructive and could help us move forward. In 2014-15, when the challenges of the financial system became evident, I proposed that the government create a Bad Bank that could (a) remove bad loans from the banks, thereby quickly restoring them to health; and (b) resolve bankrupt firms by auctioning them to the highest bidder.

The government rejected that approach — my dream boss Jaitley over-ruled my suggestion — for three reasons. First, at that time the RBI was reluctant to acknowledge the severity of the Twin Balance Sheet problem and until late-2015, continued with the extend-and-pretend strategy. Second, the

broader economy seemed to be doing well or so the official GDP numbers (mis)led us into believing, sucking out the oxygen of policy urgency. Third, the government was acutely sensitive to the suit-boot-sarkar critique and did not want to be seen as allowing promoters to buy back their firms at a discount, should they win in the auction.

As a result, the executive decided to pass the buck for bad debt resolution to a judiciary-based process, by enacting the IBC. The RBI under Ujit Patel then took on the commendable task of implementing it, ensuring that delinquent debtors were actually sent to the bankruptcy courts in a rules-based, timely manner via the famous February 12 circular.

But several problems materialised. In particular, the *mahaul* of “stigmatised capitalism” led the government to disallow defaulting promoters from the auctions. Promoters responded initially by delaying proceedings for years through judicial appeals. Then in 2019 they convinced the Supreme Court, with the government's acquiescence or support, to scupper the February circular, on the procedural grounds that the RBI had overreached its mandate.

Once the pandemic is behind us, the government will consequently need to chart a new way forward. One option, which Josh Felman and I have proposed, would be to adopt a broad resolution strategy, employing both judicial and executive processes. On the judicial side, the government should take advantage of its improved political strength to revamp the IBC, allowing promoters (except wilful defaulters) to be part of the resolution process. That would make the IBC less vulnerable to their stymieing efforts, expedite resolution, and also help maximise value from assets.

On the executive side, the government could recognise that the power and real estate sectors are sui generis, and cannot be handled through the IBC. Instead, bad banks should be established to resolve these debts. In other words, the debate of IBC versus bad banks should be set aside: They should not be seen as complements, not substitutes as they were earlier.

If the GST and IBC could be rehabilitated along these lines, this would go some way in getting the economy back to a path of gradual recovery in the post-pandemic period. It would also be a fitting tribute to Jaitley, a small consolation as (a paraphrased version of) Simon and Garfunkel's plaintive plea plays in our ears: “Where have you gone Arun Jaitley, Our nation turns its lonely eyes to you.”

*The writer is professor, Ashoka University, and former chief economic adviser, Government of India*

## DIGNITY AMID COVID

Mental and physical well-being of elderly requires special focus during pandemic



MALA KAPUR SHANKARDASS AND ANUPRIYO MALLICK

ACCORDING TO DATA of the Centre for Disease Control in the US, nearly 25 per cent of all those who have died of COVID-19 are more than 55 years old. However, it is not just the direct effects of the virus that increases mortality and morbidity among the elderly. Measures like social distancing, self-isolation and travel restrictions have a disproportionate effect on their lives, especially in matters relating to healthcare access.

Asking the elderly to self-isolate is one of the most effective COVID-19 prevention strategies. But strong intergenerational ties and issues related to living arrangements can make physical distancing difficult for older persons. About 88 per cent of elderly people in India live with their children. So their risk of contracting the infection from family members remains high. Living with the extended family may allow the elderly to access healthcare services, but a growing body of scholarship shows that it leaves them vulnerable to abuse and mistreatment. On the other hand, for the 17 million who don't live with their extended family, or have made arrange-

ments to live separately due to COVID-19, life is lonely. They have difficulty in accessing food, water and basic services.

Technology and internet connectivity play an important role in navigating social distancing restrictions and maintaining access to essential care, services, and important information. In India, only 7 per cent of older people have smartphones. The literacy rate among this segment is also low, further limiting access to technology and important information.

Reports have indicated that the lack of access to healthcare services could aggravate physical disabilities, hinder the effective management of communicable diseases and lead to mental ill-health problems amongst the elderly. Outpatient treatment of nearly all major non-communicable diseases has been severely affected due to COVID-related restrictions. Older people seem to be missing out on treatment for illnesses. Medical check-ups have become infrequent. All this is likely to show up in the mortality and morbidity rates among the elderly.

The precarious nature of economic work of

older persons and inadequate salaries means that more than 80 per cent of such people in the workforce are either partially or fully dependent on others, who are anyway facing difficult circumstances. In its first relief package, the government announced a one-off payment of Rs 1,000 and an increase in the pension for 30 million widows and senior citizens. But this will reach only to about 20 per cent of the older people. There was no support for senior citizens in the second relief package.

Healthcare schemes like the Ayushman Bharat Yojana should have special provisions for the elderly. Tele-health and mobile home-based health care check-ups should be conducted for them. Direct subsidies to pensioners, especially in healthcare matters, can also help them tide over these difficult times. Such measures are essential to the right of a dignified life.

*Shankardass is Associate Professor, Maitreyi College, Delhi University and Mallick is with the Eastern Institute for Integrated Learning in Management. Views are personal*

## AUGUST 24, 1980, FORTY YEARS AGO

### OPTIMISM ON ASSAM

THERE IS A chance that the deadlock in Assam will be broken soon. Manipur Chief Minister Dorendra Singh met the Union Home Minister Zail Singh and told him that he had a clear picture of the situation after a meeting with the agitators in the state. Congress General Secretary Shyam Sundar Mohapatra who was also present at the meeting said that there should be no sense of despondency. There will be fresh talks on Assam, and they will be successful.

### AASU PROTESTS

THE ALL ASSAM Students Union strongly condemned the arrest of some of its leaders and

said that this was against the Centre's assurance that all repressive measures against the leaders associated with the movement on the foreign nationals' issue will be stopped. The carrot and stick policy of the state smacked of the state administration's double dealing on the issue and would only vitiate the atmosphere for meaningful talks on the matter.

### MAGAZINE SEIZED

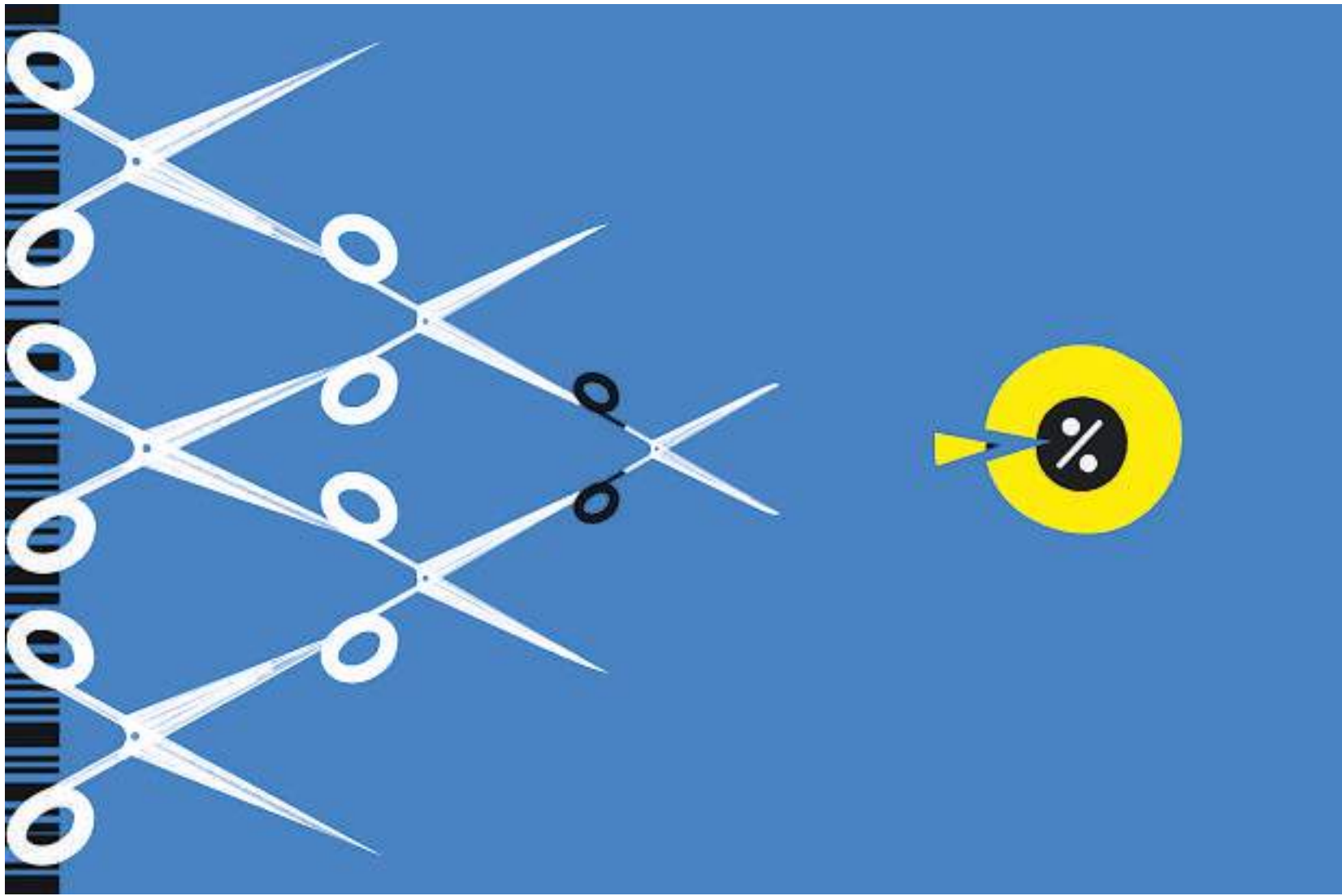
THE POLICE RAIDED the office of the Kisan trust and an East Delhi Press and seized 400 copies of *Asli Bharat*, a Hindi weekly published by the trust. Madhu Limaye, Lok Dal General Secretary, said that the police entered the premises of the trust without any

search warrant and seized copies of the magazine. This attack on the freedom of press was totally unjustified he said and alleged that the government was using such incidents to wash off its responsibility for the Moradabad violence.

### COP TURNS SADHU

B N SWAMI, FORMER chief of the Central Bureau of Investigation, has turned into a sadhu under the name of Swami Vishwanand. In Ujjain to attend the Kumbha Mela Swami, said he had taken the step to bring about emotional integration in the country. He currently lives with his Guru, Gita Ramdas, in Delhi.





C R Sasikumar

# The builder of common ground

If our quest to create one market in India is achieving success, if cooperative federalism can be seen in action in the GST Council, it owes in large part to the contribution of Arun Jaitley



NIRMALA SITHARAMAN

THIS DAY LAST year, former Finance Minister Arun Jaitley, who heralded the Goods and Services Tax, passed away. The introduction of GST is a major reform that the Indian economy had waited for over a decade. From midnight, July 1, 2017, the unimaginable happened — all of India became one market, interstate barriers disappeared, multiple taxes were subsumed to become one, double taxation was eliminated, the cascading effect of taxes got mitigated. Recounting the benefits that this single tax has given us is the best tribute we can pay Jaitley today.

Prior to this date, when the GST was being evolved, the contributions made by the Empowered Committee of State Finance Ministers and its chairmen — Asim Dasgupta, Sushil Modi, Abdul Rahim Rather, K M Mani and Amit Mitra — are well recognised. With his affable nature, Jaitley built on the mutual trust, so required in the critical years, when the decades-long efforts were reaching a crescendo.

## What did the GST do?

GST subsumed 17 different taxes and 13 cesses. It ensured that there were no more queues of trucks and no more state barriers.

In the pre-GST era, the total of VAT, excise, CST and their cascading effect led to 31 per cent as tax payable, on an average, for a consumer. An example is of the entertainment tax — it was being levied at 35 per cent in some states while it was 110 per cent in others. High tax rates were the norm and placed a heavy burden on the consumer. In its first two years, as the collections improved, the GST Council, in each of its meetings, kept reducing the tax burden on consumers.

Even at introduction, items which were in the 31 per cent or more tax slab in the pre-GST era were brought down to the 28 per cent tax rate. This rate slab has been further pruned drastically. Most items have been brought in the 18 per cent, 12 per cent or even 5 per cent category. Cinema tickets, shown earlier as an example of high tax ranging from 35 per cent-110 per cent, are now at 12 per cent or 18 per cent only. Most items of daily common use are in the zero to 5 per cent slab. Restaurants and construction services are at the 5 per cent slab now. Construction of residential complexes is at 5 per cent and affordable housing is at 1 per cent. In short, today, we have 480 items in the nil or 5 per cent tax rate, 221 items are at 12 per cent and 607 items in the 18 per cent rate. Only 29 items are in the 28 per cent tax rate. The loss of revenue, due collectively to the reduction in rates, has been more than Rs one lakh crore annually.

An analysis by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) observes that since the roll out of GST, the rate changes have brought down the GST incidence from 14 per cent to 11.6 per cent.

Several other concessions were brought in. Taxation threshold for goods was increased to Rs 40 lakh. The composition limit was increased from Rs 75 lakh to Rs 1.5 crore.

For manufacturers, composition tax rate was lowered from 2 per cent to 1 per cent. The composition scheme was extended to services as well. Special lower rates without Input Tax Credit (ITC) were prescribed for construction and restaurants. Again, as per an RBI calculation, the weighted GST rate at present is 11.6 per cent. The revenue neutral rate determined at the time of GST introduction by its own committee was 15.3 per cent. This explains the revenue loss stated above. The consumer pays less tax now under the GST.

The tax base has widened in the last three years. Today, there are 1.2 crore GST assesseees compared to 65 lakh at the time of introduction of the tax regime. The average revenue collected per month for the nine months (July-March) in 2017-18 was Rs 89,700 crore. In the next year 2018-19, this per month average revenue collection rose by 10 per cent to Rs 97,100 crore. In FY 2019-20, the revenue per month was Rs 1,02,000 crore. This steady increase was despite the various concessions and rate reductions mentioned above.

In some cases, rate reductions have resulted in unintended consequences, such as inversion. Manufactured goods in lower slabs have suffered due to inversion in the duty structure. This has led to a situation where imports are getting incentivised. The competitiveness of domestic industry, particularly MSMEs, is being challenged. Items such as footwear, fabrics, readymade garments, bicycles, ink, pharma, medical equipment and many others suffer because of inversion in rates. "Job works", as a category which brings in value addition and employs more people, also suffers from the inversion of tax rates. The total estimated refunds due to the inverted duty structure are at around Rs 20,000 crore a year.

## Compliances & simplification

Small units are kept out of GST. Businesses up to an annual turnover of Rs 40 lakh are GST exempt. This was at Rs 20 lakh at introduction. Manufacturing units with a turnover up to Rs 1.5 crore can avail of the composition scheme and pay just 1 per cent tax. The earlier limit for manufacturing units was Rs 75 lakh with a 2 per cent tax rate. Service providers can also avail the composition and pay a flat 6 per cent tax.

GST is an IT-enabled platform. Accounting and billing software is provided free to the small taxpayers. Those with nil return to file can do so with an SMS. Since the registration is completely online, the refund process is also fully automated. The Centre is the only refund disbursal authority and no physical interface is required.

## GST and agriculture

Substantial concessions are extended to the agriculture sector under GST. Agricultural inputs such as fertilisers, machinery have seen a considerable reduction in rates. Other inputs such as cattle/poultry/aquatic feeds are kept at the nil rate. Agricultural produce such as vegetables, fruits, flowers and food-grains are exempt from GST. Dairy products — milk, curd, lassi, buttermilk — are also exempt. Minor forest produce such as lac, shellac and sisal leaves are also exempt. Silk cocoon, raw silk, wool, jute fibre are nil rated. In the pre-GST era, many of these were in the 5 per cent slab.

Service inputs to agriculture are similarly treated. Farm labour, renting and leasing of agricultural machinery, fumigation, pre-conditioning, ripening, waxing, retail packing and labelling are exempt from GST. Storage

and warehousing of agricultural produce are also exempt. Before the introduction of GST, many such items were taxed at a standard rate of 15 per cent.

## GST and MSME

Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) have consistently received sensitive treatment under the GST regime. More than 35 items, which fell in the 28 per cent slab when the tax regime was rolled out, are now in the 18 per cent slab. The slab for seven items has been brought down from 28 per cent to 12 per cent while that of six others has come down to 5 per cent from 28 per cent. Items that have large employment creating activities, rough diamond/precious stone sorting and polishing for example, have seen a GST reduction from 3 per cent to 0.25 per cent. Services rendered by MSMEs have also received such sensitive treatment. Restaurants, amusement parks, catering services, online educational journals and periodicals have seen varying levels of reduction.

## The GST Council

Jaitley had described the Council as "the first experiment with the federal institution". He rightly had felt that "it is a body that has behaved with utmost responsibility." The Council has had 40 meetings till date and the 41st is slated to be held on August 27. The compensation cess collection was slowing in FY 2019-20 and there were delays in payments to the states. Also, with COVID-19 lockdowns and consequential deferrals in tax payments, compensation payments to the states is a concern that the Council has taken cognisance of. Compensation cess is levied only on luxury or sin goods — tobacco products, coal, aerated water and automobiles.

The 41st meet of the GST Council will have a single agenda — compensation payments to the states. In the Council meeting held on January 3-4, 2017, Jaitley as the chairperson "assured that compensation to states shall be paid for 5 years in full within the stipulated period of 5 years and, in case the amount in the GST Compensation Fund fell short of the compensation payable in any bi-monthly period, the GST Council shall decide the mode of raising additional resources including borrowing from the market which could be repaid by collection of cess in the sixth year, or subsequent years."

In the Council's seventh meeting, held on September 22-23, 2016, responding to the then Finance Minister of Haryana, Chairman Jaitley "...observed that the Council would now decide upon compensation and the States had also been empowered in the Council."

In our quest to create one market in India, the Centre and the states have collectively pooled their fiscal rights in a healthy federal body — the Council. There are challenges — revenue generation and robust technological support are the two obvious immediate concerns. The coronavirus has not deterred the assessee. The states have shown maturity and understanding. The spirit of collective responsibility and statesman-like thinking have kept mutual trust and confidence high. The much talked about cooperative federalism is actually in action in the GST Council. The late former Finance Minister Arun Jaitley shall always be remembered for his contribution in making India a single market.

The writer is Union Finance Minister

## WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

"Be it New Delhi's excesses in besieged India-held Kashmir, or the matter of asserting Pakistan's role in Afghanistan, or, of course, the CPEC project, it has always been in the common interest of Beijing and Islamabad to cooperate with each other."  
—DAWN

# Breach of procedure

Why Supreme Court should act, suo motu, to stop miscarriage of justice in Prashant Bhushan case



DUSHYANT DAVE

CONTEMPT LAW IS strictly procedural and its procedures must be complied with. However, they appear to have been followed in breach in *Prashant Bhushan*. Where contempt is committed in the face of the Supreme Court (SC) or a high court (in its presence or hearing), the Court initiates proceedings forthwith. In *P N Duda v. P Shiv Shanker*, the SC held that "...cognisance for criminal contempt could be taken by the court by three methods namely, on its own motion, or on the motion of the Attorney-General or the Solicitor-General or on motion by any other person with the consent of the Attorney-General or the Solicitor-General."

The contempt proceedings against Bhushan for his tweets reflect an extraordinary assumption of jurisdiction by the SC, where none existed. On July 9, 2020, a petition was filed by Mahek Maheshwari, advocate, for contempt based on the tweet against the CJI, with an application for exemption from producing consent of the Attorney General (AG) or the Solicitor General (SG), sitting on a motorbike. The matter was listed on July 22 before the Bench presided over by Justices Arun Mishra, B R Gavai and Krishna Murari, which passed an order, inter-alia, stating, "this petition was placed before us on the administrative side whether it should be listed for hearing or not as permission of the Attorney General for India has not been obtained by the petitioner to file this petition. After examining the matter on the administrative side, we have directed the matter to be listed before the Court to pass appropriate orders. We have gone through the petition... We take suo motu cognisance of the aforesaid tweet also apart from the tweet quoted above and suo motu register the proceedings... We issue notice to the Attorney General for India and to Mr. Prashant Bhushan, Advocate also."

The order thus acknowledges that: Maheshwari's petition was the basis of the proceedings; the petition was defective absent the consent of the AG; yet, it was placed on administrative side and decision was taken to place it before the Court for orders; the decision on administrative side was taken by the same three learned judges; yet, suo motu cognisance was taken; and, notice was undoubtedly issued to the AG. The whole exercise to assume jurisdiction was unauthorised, illegal and without jurisdiction.

It is surprising that a tweet made on June 29 goes unnoticed till July 22 to be suddenly taken up as suo motu contempt. There is more than what meets the eye.

The SC has committed a grave error on its administrative side in doing what it did. On the one hand, it allows a defective petition of Maheshwari to see the light of the

day while on the other, it dismisses summarily his application for copy of administrative order to take suo motu cognisance citing archaic O13R7 of its rules as also the application for impleadment filed by eminent citizens stating, "There appears no reasonable cause to receive the instant application for registration". This has never been done and cannot be done as per the law.

The illegality does not stop here because despite having issued notice to the AG, the SC singularly failed to hear him and take his assistance throughout the hearing on August 5, before deciding by its judgment dated August 14, 2020, that Bhushan stands convicted of contempt of Court. The notice issued to the AG was not a formality. Rule 10 of the Rules to Regulate Proceedings of Contempt of Supreme court, 1975 expressly provide: "The Court may direct the Attorney-General or Solicitor-General to appear and assist the court."

During the hearing on August 5, I had requested the Court to hear the AG first since under the Advocates Act, 1961, he has a right to prior audience, to which the Court said that I should argue first. After hearing at length, during which the AG was throughout participating, the Court ordered that the judgment is being reserved. I pointed out that the AG has been issued notice and he must be heard. This was ignored. Yet again the SC amended its order dated August 20 the next day to reflect the appearance of the AG. The judgment on conviction deserves to be set aside on the ground of not just the violation of rules but also on account of the gross impropriety in the conduct of proceedings and in failing to get the required assistance of the AG.

The illegality goes further. The second tweet on which Bhushan has been convicted was not and could not have been the subject matter of any administrative decision to initiate suo motu contempt proceedings. In its July 22 order, the Court recorded: "Apart from that, another tweet has been published today in *The Times of India*, which was made by Shri Prashant Bhushan on June 27, 2020."

Now, besides the fact that an old tweet mysteriously surfaced in *The Times of India* that morning, (since the tweet was made on June 29, 2020), there was no question of taking that into consideration because no prior decision on administrative side was taken to initiate suo motu contempt on it. It was not a case of contempt in the face of the Court. This tweet, therefore, could never have been the basis of initiation of contempt against Bhushan much less the basis of the judgment of the conviction. The SC has acted beyond its powers and contrary to the rules and the established practice.

Conviction of Bhushan is founded on gross illegalities and serious jurisdictional errors. One can only hope and trust that the Supreme Court as an institution, and the Court comprising of all the judges, would act suo motu to stop gross miscarriage of justice and ensure that a citizen is not deprived of his liberty by its wrongful decisions and orders.

The writer is President, Supreme Court Bar Association. Views are personal

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### BHUSHAN'S CASE

THIS REFERS TO the report, 'Judgments judges deliver, their conduct, determine public esteem, not a tweet' (IE, August 21). The majesty of the law is because of its moral authority, and not dependent on fear of contempt among the public. Punishing Prashant Bhushan when a large number of contempt cases are pending against the instrumentalities of government presents a glaring contrast. In the eyes of the public, the Supreme Court's *ratio decidendi* that Bhushan's two tweets have shaken the pillar of Indian democracy goes against the the aphorism: "Justice must not only be done, but must also be seen to be done."

I R Murmu, New Delhi

### BIHAR POLLS

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'The corona election' (IE, August 21). So far, the elections in Bihar appear to be one-sided as the opposition is in disarray. However, the role of muscle and money power could be minimal on account of the pandemic. The voter turnout is expected to be low, unless the Election Commission assures people with regard to health and provides transportation to the polling booths. The EC also ought to ensure that equal air time is allotted to all contesting parties.

Deepak Singhal, Chennai

## IDEAS ONLINE

ONLY IN THE EXPRESS

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● DIGITAL ROUTE TO HEALTHCARE: K MADAN GOPAL AND SURYAPRABHA SADASIVAN

www.indianexpress.com

## THE KHADI WAY

THIS REFERS TO the article, 'Listen to the weaver' (IE, August 21). With my own experience after visiting several handloom expos and state government emporia, which are the primary sellers of handlooms from the states in Delhi, I can conclude that the reasons for their low sales are less awareness among people and that being too expensive, they cater only to the rare rich people. So, to compete with the power loom-produced cheap cloth, selling at the highest level is not possible at the highest price. Just like khadi has turned to be a brand in the last few years, handloom can do great wonders if government support is provided in the right direction.

Dimpy Bhatia, Delhi



BIHAR  
7 engineering colleges may lose 205 contractual teachers

SANTOSH SINGH  
PATNA, AUGUST 23

MORE THAN 200 teachers posted in Bihar under the Central government's Technical Educational Quality Improvement Programme (TEQIP) face an uncertain future as there is no word from the Centre or the Bihar government about regularising their jobs even as the programme's tenure is scheduled to end on September 30.

The latest iteration of TEQIP — a joint project of the HRD Ministry and the World Bank — was implemented in Bihar in 2017 with an aim to improve the quality of technical education across the state. According to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) the Bihar government had signed with the Centre at the time, the teachers recruited for engineering colleges in Bihar would be absorbed by the state after TEQIP's tenure ends.

In Bihar, 205 assistant professors were recruited and posted at seven engineering colleges under the scheme — Motihari College of Engineering, Muzaffarpur Institute of Technology, Bhagalpur College of Engineering, Darbhanga College of Engineering, Gaya College of Engineering, Nalanda College of Engineering and LNJP Institute of Technology, Chhapra — overall, catering to about 5,000 students.

A teacher from Motihari engineering college, said, "Bihar's rank is the lowest in terms of technical education and it needs TEQIP to maintain a 1:15 teacher-to-student ratio, as well as the quality of education..." Without TEQIP teachers, these seven colleges would be left with 142 teachers."

Brijesh Mehrotra, additional chief secretary in the state's science and technology department, told The Indian Express: "We have requested the Centre for an extension of the project. It is an MHRD-World Bank project and all teachers are contractual. It is entirely up to the Centre to take a call on it. The programme relates to 17 states — Bihar being one of beneficiary states."

Asked about the state's MoU regarding extending services of assistant professors, Mehrotra said: "We will have to see the MoU clauses. But even for contractual appointments, there are issues such as reservation policy. We are waiting for the Centre's response."

SUSHANT SINGH RAJPUT CASE

Uddhav backs police, never interferes in issues of law and order: Sanjay Raut

MANOJ MORE  
PUNE, AUGUST 23

SHIV SENA MP Sanjay Raut on Sunday said Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray never interferes with police action in law and order issues and added that the Opposition parties are making false allegations against state Cabinet Minister Aaditya Thackeray in connection with the Sushant Singh Rajput case.

Asked if the Supreme Court's ruling to hand over the case to the CBI is an embarrassment for the Maharashtra government, the Shiv Sena leader told The Indian Express, "No, I don't think so. Too much noise was being made over the death of a celebrity... Supreme Court has nowhere in its order questioned the honesty of Mumbai police, which makes it clear Mumbai police were on the right track. Some parties wanted to gain publicity from the issue. The Bihar government too joined the issue."

Raut said the state government had confidence in the ability of Mumbai Police. "Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray never interferes in law and order issues, he backs his police force... If the government had handed over the probe to CBI when Mumbai Police had not even completed the inquiry, it would have been an insult to our police," he said.

Accusing the BJP of playing politics over the issue with an eye on the Bihar polls, he said the

I&B Ministry comes out with guidelines for resuming shoots

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 23

UNION INFORMATION and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar on Sunday announced detailed standard operating procedures (SOP) for media production as the government allowed shooting for films, television and digital arena across the country.

Shooting was banned when the lockdown was imposed in March. Maharashtra was the first state to allow resumption of production in May in accordance with certain guidelines.

Javadekar said "the SOP follows international norms" and it "will help give a fillip to the industry which has been affected due to coronavirus for close to six months now and people will welcome this move by the ministry". He said it is also aimed at boosting the economy as the film and television sector provides employment to a large number of people.

"The general principles be-



Prakash Javadekar

hind the SOP will help create a safe working environment for cast and crew in the industry," Javadekar said, adding that the "SOP ensures adequate distancing at shoot locations and other workplaces and contains measures, including proper sanitisation, crowd management and provision for protective equipment".

Contact minimisation, said Javadekar, "is at the core of the SOP".

"Covid-related stigmatisation or unruly behaviour shall be dealt with strictly in coordination with the local authorities" under the SOP. The SOP and the guiding principles have been prepared in consultation with the ministries of Home and Health, the government said.

THE S.O.P

- Face masks mandatory for all, except actors in front of the camera
- Minimal contact and sharing of props; sanitisation before and after use
- Shots, locations, production and catering arrangements to consider distancing norms



- PPEs for stylists, makeup artists
- Covid coordinator/supervisor to keep record of red/orange/green zones, travel history, medical history and health status of cast and crew; tasked to ensure Arogya Setu compliance

Gujarat: Nine Covid hospitals denotified after demand drops

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
AHMEDABAD, AUGUST 23

GUJARAT REPORTED 1,101 new cases of coronavirus on Sunday, taking the total cases in the state to 86,970. Also, 14 deaths were reported taking the toll to 2,919.

As many as 60,808 tests were conducted on Sunday. A total of 17,56,133 tests have been conducted in the state so far.

Among the new cases, Surat reported 248 and Ahmedabad 177. These two districts reported five deaths each on Sunday.

With bed occupancy at designated Covid-19 hospitals

showing a decline, the Ahmedabad Municipal Corporation (AMC) de-notified nine designated Covid-19 hospitals and reduced the number of beds reserved for Covid patients in two hospitals on Sunday.

The decision was taken at a review meeting chaired by additional chief secretary of forests and environment, Rajeev Kumar Gupta. After de-notification, beds released by AMC will now be available for treatment of non-Covid patients.

However, the AMC has retained the rights to again notify these hospitals for any future need, if it may arise.

Quiet immersion of Ganesh idols in Mumbai

Mumbai: Many Mumbaiikars Sunday bid adieu to Lord Ganesh by immersing idols in artificial ponds in absence of access to the sea in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Many households follow the tradition of immersing the idols one-and-a-half day after Ganesh Chaturthi. It was a quiet send-off for Lord Ganesh amid curbs.

CM Uddhav Thackeray visited some areas in the city to take stock of the immersion plan. He visited a mobile artificial pit on a truck and an idol collection centre in South Mumbai. PTI

Mumbai woman suffers miscarriage due to Covid-19 in first trimester

TABASSUM BARNAGARWALA  
MUMBAI, AUGUST 23

A FIRST trimester miscarriage in a Mumbai resident is being linked to the SARS-CoV-2 virus after tests found the infection had travelled into the umbilical cord, placenta and possibly caused inflammation in the foetus.

"To our knowledge, this is the first case demonstrating persistence of SARS-CoV-2 infection in a tissue weeks after clearance in the throat swabs... the virus not just survived in the tissue but is replicative in the placental cells," stated a research paper submitted last week by the National Institute of Research in Reproductive Health (NIRRH) — a research arm of the Indian Council of Medical Research — in collaboration with ESIS (Employees' State Insurance Scheme) hospi-



FRONTLINE SCREENING

Police personnel at a Covid-19 antibody test camp in Kolkata on Sunday. Partha Paul

DELIVERY MECHANISM

Waiting for vaccine, key players knock on India's door for vials and syringes

PRABHA RAGHAVAN  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 23

AS SEVERAL candidates in the global Covid-19 vaccine race inch closer to the regulatory approval stage, India is being tapped by both domestic and international players for the supply of ampoules, vials and syringes — products key to the delivery of the vaccine.

Major players in the industry such as German-Indian pharma glass and packaging joint venture Schott Kaisha have been pre-contracted to supply millions of vials a month to Serum Institute of India (SII), while the Indian arm of German pharma packaging giant Gerresheimer has been approached by Bharat Biotech.

Mumbai-based Borosil Glass Works has also been asked to submit samples for Indian and key foreign vaccine makers to run quality tests.

Among syringe makers, Hindustan Syringes and Medical Devices (HMD) and BD India, the Indian arm of the New Jersey-based medical equip-

ment major, are receiving queries and orders from governments as well as agencies like the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and GAVI, The Vaccine Alliance.

With companies looking at packing as many as 10 doses in a single, preferably tubular borosilicate glass vial, they are quick to dismiss concerns of a potential shortage. At the same time, firms said they have been gearing up for a demand spike, with some working on expanding their production capacity.

India has the capacity to manufacture "more than" 2 billion units of these vials, according to industry sources.

Mumbai-headquartered Schott Kaisha has already begun supplying approximately 5 million multi-dose vials to SII on a monthly basis specifically for Covid-19 vaccines. This supply is above and beyond the vials it already supplies to the Pune firm for making vaccines for immunisation programmes, said its director Rishad Dadachanji.

The firm, which has the ability to supply a little over 1 billion doses, has received queries from

the US, Europe and Russia and has sent batches of its vials for clinical assessment.

"We are supplying vials to a mix of companies both in India and abroad and we are also discussing with some governments directly to meet their requirements," Dadachanji told The Indian Express.

"Our machines are flexible. So, from most of our lines, we can produce anything from a small chromatography vial all the way up to a 30 or 50-ml vial," he said.

Borosil, meanwhile, is looking at expanding its annual capacity of 250 million vials and can increase it by a third a year, said its managing director Shreevar Kheruka.

"Right now, no one is talking about numbers. They want to test the glass and the stability of the products," he said, adding that, in the end, capacities would be blocked on a first-come-first serve basis.

Gerresheimer's India arm is also currently doubling its capacity to make multi-dose borosilicate vials to around 300 million pieces from the current

150 million.

"Several vaccines are under clinical trials here and so we are expecting a higher demand in India because of this. Companies like Bharat Biotech are in touch with us regarding availability and validation of our facility," said Khasim Saheb, Managing Director, Primary Packaging Glass-India, Gerresheimer. "At this point of time, we are in discussions and multinational companies are also blocking capacity from us."

The firm is expecting "at least" 30-40 percent of its capacity to be used for producing vials for the Covid-19 vaccine.

While it is "very difficult" to assess the actual demand for these vials, initial estimates put it at a billion doses, according to Saheb. And the demand from Indian manufacturers for global supplies will be "not less than" vials for an estimated 1.5-3 billion doses.

At the same time, HMD, which owns DispoVan and Kojak brands of syringes, and BD, are waiting for word from the government.

For, while most vial-makers

MP Health Minister tests positive, 7th in cabinet

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
BHOPAL, AUGUST 23

Madhya Pradesh Health Minister Prabhuram Choudhary on Sunday said he has tested positive for the coronavirus.

He shared the information on his Twitter handle.

Choudhary is the seventh minister in Madhya Pradesh, besides Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, to test positive for the infection.

"My COVID-19 test report came out positive. I request those who had come in my contact to undergo a coronavirus test. Those in close contact should quarantine themselves," he tweeted. "With your prayers and blessings, I will return amidst you soon to serve the people," he said.

‘Odisha’s low fatality rate reflects our success in managing the pandemic’

ODISHA HEALTH Minister NABA KISHORE DAS speaks to AISHWARYA MOHANTY on the state's battle against Covid-19.

Covid-19 testing has been ramped up and the daily case count is rising. What are the major challenges?

So far, we have been in a position to control Covid and manage it well. I will not say that we have been fully successful, but we have controlled it. If you look at the fatality rate in Odisha, it is very low which reflects our success in managing the pandemic.

In many rural districts, there is a lack of ICUs as per the official Covid website. With cases rising in rural districts, any plan of action for those with no medical facilities?

We have formed technical committees to deal with critical care in the state and they can say what to do and what not to. It is their area of expertise. If you see the management of Covid, only 10 per cent of patients need ICU in the state. Asymptomatic patients do not require anything. It is only the management of the doctors and the technical committee. So we have got a technical committee, sufficient numbers of beds, hospitals, drugs and we are able to control that.

The budget allocation for healthcare this year was increased by 14 per cent, but with the pandemic, how has the budget shaped up with respect to the transformative facilities the state planned?

The pandemic has affected us, but, like yesterday we inaugurated an ICU and maternity hospital in Jagatsinghpur. We are planning and going stage by stage. The pandemic has defi-



nately affected the budget, but we have 34 Covid-dedicated hospitals, more than 7,000 beds and for every district, we have a monitoring committee and for every panchayat, a quarantine centre. We have a micro strategy from the gram panchayat to the state level. The state's machinery has been deployed meticulously and strategic implementation is carried out phase-wise.

There have been instances of lack of maternal care facilities when ambulances could not reach villages and pregnant women suffered. How is the government planning to deal with such situations?

My department is preparing a plan for more ambulances. We take immediate action whenever such an issue comes up. We hope within a short time, we will be able to manage all these things. FULL INTERVIEW ON [www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)



# THE INDIAN EXPRESS, MONDAY, AUGUST 24, 2020

# E. EXPLAINED



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#ExpressExplained

If there are questions of current or contemporary relevance that you would like explained, please write to [explained@indianexpress.com](mailto:explained@indianexpress.com)

## CORONAVIRUS DASHBOARD

### COVID-19 VACCINE TRACKER

## Beyond the limelight, the other vaccine candidates

ROUGHLY TEN vaccine candidates for the novel coronavirus, most of them being developed by big pharmaceutical companies, are creating the highest buzz around the world. But other coronavirus vaccines are being developed in dozens of countries. Here are some countries that have recently approved human trials of vaccine candidates you might not have heard of:

**CUBA:** The state-run Finlay Vaccine Institute in Havana has got the approval to start human trials of a vaccine called Soberana 01. The vaccine is likely to be tested on more than 600 people, and the results of the trials are expected only by February next year. It is not immediately clear whether the vaccine has got approval for only phase-1 and phase-2 trials, or for phase-3 trials as well.

**TAIWAN:** Adimmune Corp has become Taiwan's first company to begin human trials of its experimental vac-

cine. The phase-1 trials are expected to begin soon at the National Taiwan University Hospital. About 60 volunteers are likely to be injected.

**NORTH KOREA:** It has said it is developing a novel coronavirus vaccine which is already in human trials. But since little verifiable information comes out of that country, not much is known about this vaccine.

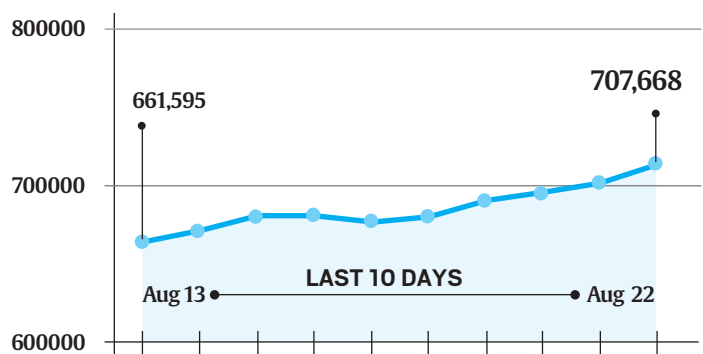
**GERMANY:** A vaccine candidate being developed by German company Curevac has just moved into phase-2 human trials after completing phase-1. It has just had a blockbuster opening at Nasdaq, its initial public offering soaring almost three times on the first day of trading.

**ELSEWHERE:** Turkey is developing more than half a dozen different vaccines. Multiple vaccines are being developed in Thailand, Egypt, Nigeria and Kazakhstan as well.



## INDIA ACTIVE CASES

707,668



Note: The August 22 figure in this graph is based on government update on August 23

**INDIA TOTAL CASES**  
3,044,940

Source: Ministry of Health & Family Welfare, updated at 11 pm on August 23

**WORLD TOTAL CASES**  
23,279,446

Source: Johns Hopkins University, updated at 11 pm on August 23

## In T cells, clues why some immune responses stronger

RESEARCHERS HAVE catalogued the T cells of people who have recovered from mild cases of Covid-19. Their analysis, published in Cell Reports Medicine, sheds light on what a successful immune response to SARS-CoV-2 might entail, and has implications for vaccine development.

The immunity response to SARS-CoV-2 can be via both



**PAPER CLIP**

NEW RESEARCH

antibodies or T cells. The researchers used a technique called CyTOF, which characterises T cells according to the proteins they contain. They said they found discovered intriguing patterns in the SARS-CoV-2 specific T cells that may explain how these patients recovered from Covid-19.

Source: Gladstone Institutes

# ‘Not all will get vaccine quickly, need to come up with strategy’

Dr GAGANDEEP KANG, one of India's leading medical scientists and former Chair of an ICMR panel on Covid drugs and vaccines, explains the challenges of vaccine development before a nationwide audience on Zoom



### On optimism about a vaccine emerging by early 2021

I think it is highly likely, but it is not guaranteed. Until you actually have efficacy data on a vaccine, it is impossible to say whether a vaccine will work in humans or not. We have very encouraging data on immunogenicity, we have encouraging data from some studies in primate models, that seem to indicate that some of the vaccines that have been evaluated in those systems do prevent severe disease. So that's all very good, but we have been led astray by animals studies before, so until we have data from humans, I would not be taking bets on it.

### On a vaccine (including the Russian vaccine) reaching people

I don't think I would call the Russian vaccine a vaccine that is ready for prime time. It's a vaccine that first went into humans on the June 17. It's been through accelerated phase-1 and phase-2 testing, which means it's in a very small number of people. We know that the vaccine is not causing severe reactions and it is immunogenic. So just the fact that the vaccine has been licensed by one regulator does not tell us that this vaccine will work to prevent disease. We need phase-3 efficacy trials in order to do that. That's true for the vaccine licensed in China as well; without efficacy data I wouldn't think about having that vaccine.

In terms of how quickly will we get the vaccines, if we find that the Oxford vaccine works — and that is in phase-3 trials — given that Serum Institute of India has already started to make the vaccine, I think that would be the first one where we would see that we have data that would allow us to confidently think about using it.

In terms of pricing... when vaccines first start out, and if they are made by multinational manufacturers, the cost is in several hundreds of dollars, and for India we know that if a vaccine is more than \$3 a dose, we are going to be unable to take it. So the price that has been quoted for the Serum vaccine, in the order of Rs 900-1000 a dose, might be something that we could think about. That of course is a starting price; all vaccines start out expensive and then once you start to make lots and lots of the vaccine, you can bring prices down quite a lot.

### On the logistics of supply and accessibility

This is the really complicated piece of the puzzle. I think people think that if we find that we have a successful vaccine, it will be at your friendly neighbourhood doctor tomorrow. It will not. It takes time to make a vaccine and the reason why vaccine manufacturers are now trying to buy facilities, book time at the manufacturing facilities, is because they want to be able to make the vaccine even before it is proven safe and effective. So this is called at-risk manufacturing, and this is what Serum Institute has done, and this is what a lot of companies around the world are doing. They are making doses of vaccines sufficient to get it out the door as soon as the vaccine is licensed after efficacy data are obtained. That is the fastest way to get to the market but the whole process of regulation takes time. It will take time to review the dossiers, it will take time to get the vaccine licensed, and once the vaccine is licensed we have to think about the logistics of distribution... You need something that fits in with your cold chain infrastructure, you need to be able to buy the vaccine, you need to land the vaccine, you need to distribute the vaccine, you need to train staff in how to give the vaccine.

### On whether the sense of security around vaccines still in the pipeline is misplaced

The first thing is, is the vaccine going to work? And in what proportion of people, and



Dr Gagandeep Kang in conversation with Amitabh Sinha, Resident Editor, *The Indian Express*, Pune.

for how long, will that protection last? Now, the USFDA and the WHO have said a point estimate of 50% — which means that in the clinical trial you should have at least 50% of the disease prevented through the vaccine. That actually means from the size of the US trials that the lower bound of efficacy may be as low as 30% and that is still acceptable to the regulator. So we are looking at a vaccine that prevents a reasonable proportion of disease and that reasonable proportion is about half.

Now, how long will this vaccine give us protection? We have other examples of vaccines where the protection does not last very long. Will it be months? Will it be years? We don't know yet; we'll have to wait for the results of the trials. The current follow-up that is planned in many of the trials is only one year, and within one year it's unlikely that you are going to have a large number of re-infections. But it is certainly something that we will need to track.

On false assurance... you will feel like you will have an armour and are protected if you have been vaccinated, and that is a problem. I think if we had a correlate of protection — among the people who are vaccinated, if you had a signal that you could describe, antibodies for example, and you knew those antibodies correlated with protection — then you'd be a lot more confident in saying how well the vaccines are working. Until we have that kind of information, I think even after vaccination, we'll have to proceed with caution and warn people that even though they have been vaccinated, protection may be incomplete.

### On whether 40-50% efficacy is better than no vaccine

That's right. Remember these are first-generation vaccines. If you understand how they work, then we can look at improving their performance. We can add things like adjuvants to

them, see if that increases the proportion of people who are protected, or the duration of protection. Given that in this situation we are going to have lots of vaccine candidates, we could very interestingly also think about the possibility of mixing vaccines...

### On the importance of phase-3 trials

You want people to be able to trust the health-care system, you want people to believe that doctors and scientists

and researchers are doing their best to make sure that we get high quality, safe and effective preventive strategies. Any time you get people that short-cut the system, that don't follow the process, that plays undue risk, it becomes a problem. So we have the Chinese and the Russian vaccines as examples of where the system has been short-circuited in a way. And what that leads to is people being unsure whether these are really quality effective products or not. I would not advise that, one way or the other, you need to prove that a product works before you use it. Now there are regulatory mechanisms that allow you to do these emergency use authorisations, but then the requirement becomes a very high bar of following up everybody who receives the vaccine, to ensure that at least after licensure — if it is an accelerated licensure — you actually treat the vaccinated people like they are in a phase 3 efficacy trial. You still have to follow them up, you have to make sure that they are safe, that nothing goes wrong. If we do things that way, then I think addressing one problem quickly and damaging the entire system is not a good way to go.

### On countries signing advance deals that may make vaccines inaccessible to others

The world has seen this before. We saw it with H1N1 when WHO tried very hard to establish a global allocation mechanism, but it

## AUDIENCE QUESTIONS

### On the idea of 'herd immunity' and if a vaccine is really necessary

You can prevent disease happening in the future by being naturally infected... The problem comes that it's not always possible to predict who will develop severe disease and who will not. If there was a guarantee that everybody would have only mild disease, maybe we wouldn't bother so much. In the case of coronavirus, this is an unpredictable disease: In many people it is asymptomatic, in many people it is mildly symptomatic, but it also kills some people and we don't understand what leads to this severe disease in some people. So that's why we think a vaccine is a good idea.

### On fast-track approval to Russian vaccine and if India can do the same

National regulatory authorities function by their rules. There are provisions in the rules for accelerated approvals or emergency use authorisations, so licensure can be given at an earlier stage than is usually done... Because a regulator's responsibility to a product is through the entire life cycle of the product, it does not stop with licensure. So if a regulator gives an emergency use authorisation, they have a responsibility to get post-licensure data. Then they will need to continue to collect data on safety and efficacy for the vaccine that they have just licensed.

got so few doses of vaccines from the manufacturers that it almost wasn't worth their while to invest a lot of time and effort in distributing those...

The implementation partner for delivering vaccines is the GAVI Alliance. Now will multinationals, will the successful makers of vaccines provide vaccines to the global allocation mechanism? These are the negotiations that are happening now and the idea is from the global pool there will be distribution of vaccines around the world. Now the counter to that is we are all looking after ourselves first and not thinking about global good is something that we are seeing. Governments have a responsibility to their citizens and in the US they have gone to the extent of saying we want to buy your company, that might potentially have a product we are interested in, we will fund you to do your trials. In some ways, what you would like is for everybody to be a good global citizen and share resources so that people around the world who need them the most get them quickly, but that clearly is not happening. We need to do our best but then the way to think about it is, there aren't 800 million people in the US, so if we do wind up with the US having 800 million doses of successful vaccines, they are not going to be able to use it all. So I am assuming that they will give it away and at least some countries in the region will get access to those products.

It's a worry and something that we need to be thinking about. We have one of the largest populations in the world, there is no way that the Indian population is all going to be able to get the vaccine quickly, so we need to be thinking about our populations and coming up with a clearly communicated strategy about how we will vaccinate, whom we will vaccinate and when. I believe the committee that is chaired by Dr Vinod K Paul is doing precisely that.

### On whether every vaccine needs a phase-3 trial in India before it is made available

When you have a product that is licensed in a different country and that country has what is known as a stringent regulatory authority, then getting a vaccine licensed in India requires a very small trial in India. These are called bridging studies. You can do it in less than 100 participants and if the immunogenicity data from that study is similar to what was done in the place where the vaccine was licensed, the vaccine can be accepted. When the vaccine is a novel product that has not been licensed elsewhere, then you will need larger-scale studies. Given that the ChAdOx1 vaccine is in phase-3 studies... it's likely that by the time the studies are done in India, there may be phase-3 efficacy data and the data that Serum generates now from their 1,600 participants can be used for submission for Indian licensure.

### On implications of future vaccine development

I think many of the new vaccines we are developing are actually based on pretty old technologies. In the 1950s we got cell culture that allowed us to make polio vaccine, rotavirus vaccine. In 2010 when we got DNA sequences and... that was the first time we started to use new technologies, reverse vaccinology approaches to make vaccines. Since then, in terms of licensing vaccines, the new technology has really been the Ebola vaccine where we had the first viral vectored vaccine being licensed. We have not so far had an RNA vaccine or a DNA vaccine licensed. We have not had new adjuvants available, we have not tried prime-boost strategies, so if these are all learnings from this pandemic, I think that is what is going to change the face of future vaccine development.

Transcribed by Mehr Gill

EDITED EXCERPTS

VIDEO: [youtube.com/watch?v=Zx6sBH7Y0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zx6sBH7Y0)

# Congress in turmoil: past occasions, and what's different now

MANOJ CG

NEW DELHI, AUGUST 23

AS MANY as 23 Congress leaders have written to party chief Sonia Gandhi calling for installation of a "full-time and effective leadership" that is both "visible" and "active" in the field, revamp of the party organisation, elections to the Congress Working Committee, and establishment of an "institutional leadership mechanism" to collectively guide the party's revival (*The Indian Express*, August 23). This is not the first time that the Congress has seen such turmoil. But the current crisis differs from previous ones in many ways. What is significant is that Sonia has not faced any challenge to her style of functioning in the last two decades. Her initial years as Congress president did see challenges to her leadership but once those were dealt with, she has had a smooth run.

### How is this different from past crises?

It is rare in the Congress for a group of lead-

ers as diverse at this — both geographically and demographically — to collectively call for a change in the way the party is being run now. The Congress has not seen such a coordinated dissent in its recent history, at least since Sonia established her firm grip on the leadership in the beginning of 2000. But it is also because the party was in power for 10 years from 2004 to 2014. Tensions had been simmering in the party since the 2014 Lok Sabha defeat, and there had been murmurs against Rahul Gandhi, but the disconnect between him and the top leaders have now reached a point where it had to come out in the open in some way or the other.

### When was the last time the party saw this kind of turmoil?

The 1990s was a decade of turmoil for the Congress. The days before Sonia's ascension as Congress president in 1998, and the months after that until 2001, were filled with intrigue. In fact, the crisis in the Congress began soon after the demolition of the Babri Masjid in December 1992. Several leaders



In 1999, Pawar, Tariq Anwar, Sangma rebelled against Sonia. *Express Archive*

came out against then Prime Minister P V Narasimha Rao, holding him responsible for not being able to protect the mosque.

There was mistrust between Rao and veterans like Arun Singh and N D Tiwari right from the beginning. At the Tirupati AICC session of the Congress in April 1992, Singh won by the highest margin when elections were held for the CWC. Another strong leader, Sharad Pawar, too won much to the chagrin of

Rao, who was Congress president as well as Prime Minister. In a deft move, he asked the entire newly elected Working Committee to resign on the pretext that there was not enough representation of women and Dalits.

Rao reconstituted the CWC and included Singh in the nominated category. Trouble arose again after the demolition of the Babri Masjid. Sonia, who was not in politics then, was seen as tacitly backing those waging a rebellion against Rao. This resulted in Singh's ouster from the Cabinet and suspension from the party. The party split with Singh and Tiwari forming the Tiwari Congress.

The Congress defeat in 1996 led to another turmoil. Rao resigned and Sitaram Kesri took over as Congress president. But Kesri faced opposition; in fact, the Congress saw an election to the post of party president during his time in 1997. Both Pawar and Rajesh Pilot contested against Kesri, who routed them. But Sonia's signal that she was willing to enter active politics changed everything. Party leaders teamed up against Kesri and finally managed to remove him from the top post.

Sonia took over as Congress president in March 1998, but the party plunged into crisis again a year later, just before the Lok Sabha elections. Senior leaders like Pawar, P A Sangma and Tariq Anwar raised a banner of revolt which led to their ouster from the party. Before she could consolidate her position, Jitendra Prasad threw a challenge to her in 2001 when he contested (unsuccessfully) against her for the post of Congress president.

### What about turmoil before the 1990s?

**INDIRA ERA:** Indira Gandhi had to face many challenges. The party's most significant split till date took place in 1969, when she crossed swords with the old guard — known as the Syndicate. The difference is that in 1969 and in 1977 when the party faced a split, it was Indira Gandhi who was leading the rebellion and not at the receiving end.

In 1969, the tussle between PM Indira and the Syndicate came to a head when she threw her weight behind independent candidate V V Giri in the President elections. The party's official candidate Neelam Sanjeeva Reddy lost

and the party split after then President S Nijalingappa expelled Indira from the party. In 1977, the Congress's defeat post-Emergency triggered another crisis when the then party president K Brahmananda Reddy and Y B Chavan, its leader in Parliament, turned against Indira. The party split once again with Indira engineering it. In fact, the party had suffered a split even before the elections with Jagjivan Ram and others like H N Bahuguna forming a new party, Congress for Democracy.

**RAJIV ERA:** Rajiv Gandhi came to power with a landslide mandate after the assassination of his mother Indira. But within hours, trouble began. Revelations about the Bofors gun deal were the trigger. V P Singh, who as Finance Minister had raised questions about the HDW submarine deal, took a strong position on the Bofors deal as Defence Minister. He was removed from the Cabinet and later expelled from the party. He launched the Jan Morcha, which attracted many disillusioned Congress leaders and emerged as the rallying point for disparate Opposition parties. In the 1989 Lok Sabha elections, Rajiv was defeated.



New Delhi





# 12 IDEA EXCHANGE

## NEWSMAKERS IN THE NEWSROOM

# ‘Non-Gandhi Cong chiefs couldn’t restore lost ground. That’s the reality. Letter will help BJP’

Leader of Congress in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury says the 23 leaders who wrote the letter could have raised their concerns at CWC, blames Mamata’s actions for rise of BJP in Bengal, calls BJP “majoritarianism” in PAC an “affront to parliamentary system”, and says “Modi spell”, internal issues behind Cong problems

**MANOJ C G: As many as 23 leaders of the Congress have written to party chief Sonia Gandhi calling for sweeping changes. Your views?**

In the history of the Congress, non-Gandhis have also held the post of party president and the party has always encouraged it. P V Narasimha Rao and Sitaram Kesri are recent examples. In reality, none other than a member of the (Gandhi) family has ever made any significant achievement. There lies the problem. After Rao, till Sonia Gandhi took over the reins, the Congress could not succeed in restoring lost ground. We cannot deny that stark ground reality. That needs to be understood.

I cannot subscribe to the views expressed by these leaders... because it is a collective failure. Now... after the failure, some of our leaders are trying to heap all the allegations upon the Gandhi family and Rahul Gandhi. By doing that they are simply strengthening the argument made by the BJP. They are offering extra fodder to the BJP. Sonijaji has the potential and she can play a pivotal role in stitching a national alliance against the BJP.

**MANOJ C G: But what about the concerns that they have raised?**

I am not in a position to brush aside all their concerns. They certainly enjoy that right being party leaders. But one thing I want to say is that they are all senior leaders of the party. They have all contributed to the Congress. All these senior leaders have enjoyed good proximity with Sonijaji and Rahul Gandhi. They had more access to Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi than leaders like me. Why did they feel the need to write this kind of letter?... They would have got ample opportunity at the CWC on Monday to speak their mind... Everything could be discussed. She would have immediately conceded their demand if they wanted to discuss all these issues. This kind of letter has been written unnecessarily... This will not help the party much. They could have easily raised all these issues before Sonijaji and Rahul or in the forum. This will simply help the BJP.

**MANOJ C G: What have the past few months been like for you?**

The pandemic has dramatically altered our lives. Once the lockdown was announced, hundreds of thousands of migrant workers from my district and my state West Bengal, who were working in other states, found themselves in a difficult situation. I was in Delhi at the time and I got an indication from many such labourers that they are deprived of many things. They did not have money in their pockets or even food. They were desperate to return to their native villages. They were fearful about the uncertain future. There was immense frustration.

Many such migrant labourers began to contact me for assistance. I wanted to help these people. I set up an office at my residence in Delhi and employed a few people — my friends, my staff, people who worked at my house — to take calls from those affected by the pandemic. Their duty was to collect the names, phones numbers and places where these workers were calling from. I am virtually a BPL (Below Poverty Line) Member of Parliament. I did not have the financial resources to help these people. So I began to contact the local collector, MLA, MP and influential people from the regions the workers belonged to. I sought their cooperation. So I have been engaged in these activities for the past few months. The work satisfied me and helped people.

**LIZ MATHEW: Parliamentary committees have become a source of conflict between the Congress and the BJP. As Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), what has your experience been like?**

The discussions in standing committees or PACs are held without inhibitions or without any obligation to any party. That is why, over the decades, standing committees have been considered as mini-Parliament. But these days unsavoury situations have been emerging. I am not here to accuse this side or that side, but in a healthy parliamentary democracy every issue concerning the country and its people should be discussed. Parliament is a forum for debate, discussion, dissent. Given the majority that the ruling party has, it is incumbent upon them to run everything. If anything is considered a violation of parliamentary norms that is different. But if somebody is creating problems out of vengeance, to muzzle the voice of an individual or political party, I think this is not desirable.

**LIZ MATHEW: With a majority in the House, the BJP also has majority in most of the committees. How does that play out?**

The government has been bulldozing



Leader of Congress in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury at the Idea Exchange session



Deputy Associate Editor Manoj C G moderated the exchange with Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury

legislations. These (legislations) need to be discussed thoroughly for the sake of the nation. As PAC Chairman, the day we initiated our legislative business, I said we should conduct discussions on Covid as it relates to the interest of common people. That we must sensitise and urge the government to take more and more active measures. But some newspaper reported that the PAC Chairman is eager to discuss PM CARES fund. But I did not have any evil intention. The newspaper reporter had asked me whether I was going to discuss the PM CARES fund. I had told the reporter that I did not have such an intention but if during the course of discussion someone asks what funds have the Ministry of Health or state governments received from PM CARES to deal with the pandemic, that is a different issue. But that response ruffled the BJP’s feathers.

Later, when I proposed in the meeting that we all should think about discussing the Covid situation, they (BJP members) started protesting vehemently. They said that the PAC does not have authority to discuss the issue. I tried to persuade them that the PAC has the right to take up any issue suo motu. There are a plethora of instances of this. Even the 2G spectrum case first came to lime-light in a suo motu manner. But they said there should be voting... I was vehemently opposed. Now, as a single member from the Congress in the PAC, of course I will be defeated in a vote.

Now, the same issue is being discussed in the Standing Committee on Home Affairs. So yes, I agree that the (BJP’s) majoritarianism is also visible inside the PAC. Various issues are literally bulldozed. One after another, the government is making announcements in the middle of a pandemic, without taking Parliament into confidence. It is certainly an affront to the parliamentary system. The government may argue that it is an

## WHY ADHIR RANJAN CHOWDHURY

One of the Congress’s only two MPs from West Bengal and its state chief for four years, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury was seen as a surprise choice for leader of the party in the Lok Sabha. However, in his long political career, Chowdhury has built a reputation for tenacity and for being a mass leader who has held his own against the CPM, Trinamool Congress and now BJP onslaught in the state. As Chairman of the



Public Accounts Committee, he has been critical of BJP for “undermining” parliamentary panels

extraordinary situation. Yes, we agree it is, but it is also a fact that the government could have had a short discussion with MPs. Was it impossible?

**SANTANU CHOWDHURY: Will the Congress and the Trinamool join hands in the West Bengal Assembly elections to take on the BJP?**

In 2011 (Assembly elections), with the help of the Congress party Mamata Banerjee came to power. We helped them a lot at the time. But once she came to power, she started showing her true colours. *Idhar Modi hai udhar Didi hai* (Like PM Modi in Delhi, there is Mamata Banerjee in West Bengal). He doesn’t listen to anyone and she changed her colours after coming to power. She did *atyachaar* (atrocities) on the Congress party. Her aim: to remove the Congress and every other political party from West Bengal. Today the BJP has 18 MPs from Bengal, it cannot be denied... But who is responsible for this? We all have to think about it. The Congress protected the secular space in Bengal. Mamata Banerjee started working to bring Bengal in her *kabza* (possession)... Because of this, the secular space began to shrink and the BJP made inroads into Bengal... And now the BJP is emerging as the main opposition against Mamata Banerjee. It is very unfortunate, but what should we do?

**VANDITA MISHRA: It’s been a year since Sonia Gandhi was declared interim president of the Congress**

**party. You are yet to resolve the leadership crisis in the Congress. What will be the way forward?**

Discussions have been going on. There is an internal problem in the party. The way we plan to move forward, we have not been able to do it because we are engaged in asymmetrical political warfare. There is a Modi juggernaut, there is a Modi spell... We don’t have the same resources. After losing two consecutive Lok Sabha elections, our party has been weakened. To move forward from here is a big challenge for us. They have the resources, a well-oiled machinery along with the Modi juggernaut. We will have to wait a little, but that does not mean that we will sit quietly. Today, there is no party as vocal in its criticism of the BJP like the Congress is. There is a need for all opposition parties to come together and for that our interim president is enough. All opposition leaders respect Sonia Gandhi. With her as the interim president, we have never felt that we can’t fight. Rahul Gandhi is there, he does all the work... We see him taking on Modiji every day. But Sonia Gandhi’s personality works as a centrifugal force to bring the Opposition together. She is the best bet for us in the current situation.

**SWEETY KUMARI: What are your views on factionalism in your party?**

It is an ominous trend, switching of loyalties. The BJP may rejoice at the situation. In Bengal, Mamata Banerjee may do so too. A number of our MLAs moved to

the Trinamool. Through fear parties get people to switch sides. Here (in Delhi) the CBI is used for everything, in Bengal the CID or police. It is the same syndrome. This is very dangerous for democracy. We go to people asking for votes based on our party. Then, right after winning, we sell ourselves. We have to introspect... These MLAs should have banners on their chest declaring ‘For Sale’ or ‘Not for sale’. This is what it has come down to.

Mamata Banerjee did this in Bengal to weaken our party. Now, people are leaving her party to join the BJP. That is why it is said that snake bite kills the snake charmer... This is political burglary, luring MLAs from other parties and then ensuring they don’t fight polls. It’s dangerous.

**ATRI MITRA: Following the demise of Somen Mitra, who will become the president of the Congress in Bengal?**

The BJP has gained some momentum in West Bengal. Till a few years ago, the BJP’s name was alien for the people of West Bengal. Bengal was never about communal or caste politics, but now, there has been a shift in the political discourse. People are discussing who will rule West Bengal — Mamata Banerjee-led TMC or the BJP? It’s a tragedy for us.

The Congress and the Left parties were talking. But with the demise of Somen Mitra, the talks have been stalled. We are hoping that as soon as the president (of the state unit) is appointed, the talks will begin again. This is a compulsion for the Left parties and the Congress, if we want a favourable result in the polls. I feel both parties will have to work together. The process to appoint a president is underway.

**HARIKISHAN SHARMA: Following the outbreak of Covid-19, first the government suspended the MPLADS fund and now it plans to convene Parliament without Question Hour. As an MP, do you feel less empowered?**

I would say (we have been) disoriented. For us (MPs), MPLADS (Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme) is a big weapon. The fund is not for a small area. My constituency has seven Assembly segments and over 14 lakh voters. We use the funds to donate computers to schools, build classrooms, construct roads etc... As soon as Parliament convenes, the Congress will oppose this move (to suspend MPLADS). If you ask BJP MPs in private, they will also express their anger towards the move.

The most important thing in Parliament is Question Hour, where you can get answers to 20 questions from 20 different topics. If you get to know about 20 issues every day, you will be well

aware. Question Hour, Zero Hour and Private Member’s Bill are the rights and assets of individual MPs. Suspending Question Hour is not right. We will raise this issue in Parliament. I have already conveyed my concerns to the Speaker.

**AAKASH JOSHI: In its second term, with the Ram Temple in Ayodhya and the abrogation of Article 370, it seems the BJP has set the agenda for the larger political discourse, because of which real politics is not happening outside Parliament. How can you counter it?**

We counter the BJP every day. Today, the Chinese have entered Indian territory and captured land. The Chinese government is unilaterally deciding boundaries. But are we discussing it? No. They (the BJP) have diverted our attention with Article 370 and Ram Mandir. They are asking people to boycott Chinese goods. It is a reactive measure. The common people of the country are being misled.

Article 370 has been abrogated but has there been any respite from terrorism?... One year has passed. Has the situation changed? Has even one Kashmiri Pandit returned? Nothing has happened.

**KRISHN KAUSHIK: But despite these issues, the popularity of the Prime Minister remains high. Isn’t that a failure of the Congress party?**

Modiji is a good communicator and knows how to win the hearts and faith of people. He doesn’t do any work but he knows how to win... If Modi gives a (report card) of his work, then his image will break. He has been PM for over six years now, but has he ever appeared before the Indian media? No, because the media will burst his balloon. So he knows the art of gaining people’s trust and till the time he continues to do so, he will win. But, at the same time, we will also continue to work to displace him from his position. Of course, we (the Congress) have some shortcomings. The day we can overcome those we will achieve our old status again.

**KRISHN KAUSHIK: But again, the situation will remain the same. What will the Congress do differently now?**

The situation now is not permanent, it’s transitory. Slowly, questions are being raised. Earlier, everyone thought Modi is Tarzan, now they have realised Xi Jinping is a bigger Tarzan. Our Prime Minister goes to Ladakh and makes a point, and there is only a spokesperson’s response from the Chinese side. Sitting in Delhi, the Chinese ambassador says that India should not make such a mistake again, and, in Beijing, our ambassador requests China to begin talks. So now the common people are asking questions. As these questions increase, Modiji’s position will also weaken.

Yes, he (PM Modi) is popular. We (the Congress) do everything, but the message doesn’t reach the grassroots. There are faults in our organisational structure. That is the difference (between the BJP and Congress). And, as this difference reduces we will begin to taste success.

There is a need for all Opposition parties to come together... Rahul Gandhi is there, he does all the work. We see him taking on Modiji every day. But Sonia Gandhi’s personality works as a centrifugal force to bring the Opposition together. She is our best bet in the current situation



## TOP OF THE WORLD



Mount Sinabung spews volcanic material on Sunday. AP

### INDONESIA Sinabung volcano spews new burst of ash

A RUMBLING volcano in western Indonesia on Sunday unleashed an avalanche of scorching clouds down its slopes. Authorities are closely monitoring Mount Sinabung on Sumatra, one of Indonesia's main islands, after sensors picked up increasing activity in past weeks. The volcano in North Sumatra province was shooting smoke and ash more than 3,280 feet into the air on Sunday morning, and hot ash clouds traveled 1 km southeast, Indonesia's Volcanology and Geological Hazard Mitigation Center said. Villagers were advised to stay 5 km from the crater's mouth.

### PERU 13 crushed to death as police raid club party

AT LEAST 13 people were crushed to death or asphyxiated as playgoers tried to flee a Lima nightclub raided by police because it was open in violation of restrictions imposed to fight the coronavirus pandemic, officials said. At least six were injured, including three police officers, as around 120 people tried to escape the Thomas Restobar club on Saturday night as police arrived to break up a party on its second floor, national police and government officials said. Neighbors had alerted police about the raucous event at the club in the Los Olivos district of the Peruvian capital.

### MALI Coups leaders meet mediators

A KEY meeting on Saturday between Mali's coup leaders and mediators from West Africa's regional bloc seeking a return to civilian rule ended after just 20 minutes. Tuesday's overthrow of Mali President Ibrahim Boubacar Keita has been condemned abroad, but celebrated by many in a country battling an Islamist insurgency and months of political unrest. A delegation from the 15-nation Economic Community of West African States earlier arrived in the capital, Bamako, for talks aimed at reversing Keita's ouster.



## BELARUS PROTESTERS FLOOD MINSK

Tens of thousands of protesters demanding President Alexander Lukashenko step down flooded into Minsk on Sunday, at one point staging a demonstration near his residence, as the Belarus Army warned the crowd it would respond to any unrest. *Reuters*

### AS 'BLACK LIVES MATTER' PROTESTS CONTINUE

## Another Black man shot dead by police in US

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
LAFAYETTE, AUGUST 23

COMMUNITY ACTIVISTS said they will present their frustrations and demand racial justice from the leaders of a Louisiana city on Sunday, following a night of violence that erupted after police shot and killed a Black man.

Dozens of people took to the streets of Lafayette on Saturday in response to the death of Trayford Pellerin, 31. On Friday night, officers followed Pellerin on foot as he left a convenience store where

### Rival protesters clash in Portland

POLICE OFFICERS were hit by rocks and bottles during a protest in the Oregon city of Portland late on Saturday, police said, and there were clashes between rival groups of demonstrators in the city's

downtown area earlier in the day.

In a Twitter post, police said they had declared a riot for the gathering around a city building that houses offices including police. **REUTERS**

he had created a disturbance with a knife, Louisiana State Police said. Stun guns failed to stop him, and the officers shot Pellerin as he tried to enter another convenience

store, still with the knife, according to a news release.

The shooting was captured on video, and the state ACLU condemned what it described as a

"horrific and deadly incident of police violence against a Black person." Both the ACLU and the Southern Poverty Law Center quickly called for an investigation.

Saturday afternoon's protest started peacefully, but violence broke out as night fell — leading to officers clearing the crowd with smoke canisters, Trooper Derek Senegal said.

Officials said at a news conference late Saturday that fireworks had been shot at buildings and fires set in the median of a road where demonstrations had taken place.



### Pak PM aide says Nawaz Sharif an absconder, UK approached for his extradition

SAJJAD HUSSAIN  
ISLAMABAD, LAHORE,  
AUGUST 23

THE PAKISTAN government has declared former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, currently in London for treatment, an "absconder" and approached the UK government for his extradition.

Adviser to the Prime Minister on Accountability and Interior Shahzad Akbar said that Sharif's four-week bail on medical grounds expired in December last year.

"The government is treating him (Sharif) as an absconder and has already sent a request to the British government to extradite him," Akbar was quoted as saying by *Dawn News* on Saturday.

The 70-year-old three-time premier, who was sentenced in a graft case by an accountability court, informed a court in Lahore last month that he was unable to return to the country as his doctors had told him not to go out due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Akbar said the government was also looking into the guarantees given by Shahbaz Sharif, who was supposed to escort his elder brother back to Pakistan after his medical treatment. **PTI**

# Trump says US could 'decouple' and not do business with China

'If they don't treat us right, I would certainly do that,' he says

JAN WOLFE  
WASHINGTON, AUGUST 23

US PRESIDENT Donald Trump, in a Fox News interview airing Sunday, raised the possibility of decoupling the United States' economy from China, a major purchaser of American goods.

In a video excerpt, Trump initially told interviewer Steve Hilton "we don't have to" do business with China, and then later said about decoupling: "Well it's something that if they don't treat us right I would certainly, I would certainly do that."

Trump entered into a high-stakes trade war with China before reaching a partial Phase 1 trade deal in January. Trump has since shut the door on Phase 2 negotiations, saying he was unhappy with Beijing's handling of the pandemic.

In June, Steven Mnuchin, the United States Treasury Secretary, said a decoupling of the US and Chinese economies will result if American companies are not allowed to compete on a fair and level basis in China's economy. **REUTERS**



Trump has shut the door on negotiations for a Phase 2 trade deal with China, saying he was unhappy with Beijing's handling of the pandemic. *Reuters*

## Trump campaign releases ad for Indian-Americans featuring Modi

Washington: Aiming to woo Indian-American voters, the Donald Trump campaign has released its first video commercial that includes short clips from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's speeches and Trump's historic address in Ahmedabad.

Modi and Trump addressed a huge crowd in Ahmedabad

during the US President's visit to India in February this year.

"America enjoys a great relationship with India and our campaign enjoys great support from Indian-Americans!" Kimberly Guilfoyle, national chair of Trump Victory Finance Committee, said in a tweet releasing the video commercial. **PTI**



House Speaker Nancy Pelosi

## US House passes Bill to reverse changes blamed for mail delays

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON, AUGUST 23

WITH HEATED debate over mail delays, the House approved legislation in a rare Saturday session that would reverse recent changes in US Postal Service operations and send \$25 billion to shore up the agency ahead of the November election.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi recalled lawmakers to Washington over objections from Republicans dismissing the action as a stunt. President Donald Trump urged a no vote, including in a Saturday tweet, railing against mail-in ballots expected to surge in the Covid-19 crisis. He has said he wants to block extra funds to the Postal Service.

"Don't pay any attention to what the president is saying, because it is all designed to suppress the vote," Pelosi said at the Capitol.

The daylong session came as an uproar over mail disruptions puts the Postal Service at the centre of the nation's tumultuous election year. Millions of people are expected to opt for mail-in ballots to avoid polling places during the coronavirus pandemic.

### Trump told to pay \$44,100 in Stormy Daniels legal fees

Los Angeles: A California court ordered US President Donald Trump this week to pay \$44,100 in attorney fees to porn actress Stormy Daniels to pay for her legal battle over her effort to cancel a hush money deal brokered to keep her quiet about their sexual relationship a decade ago. The order in Superior Court in Los Angeles determined Daniels won her lawsuit against Trump over the agreement that was signed 11 days before the 2016 presidential election. As a part of that deal, the losing party would pay the lawyers fees. **AP**

The recordings were first reported by *The Washington Post*. The Associated Press then obtained the recordings.

The recordings came to light just a day after the late Robert Trump, brother to Maryanne and the president, was memorialised in a service at the White House. Later, the president was dismissive of the recordings.

"Every day it's something else, who cares. I miss my brother, and I'll continue to work hard for the American people," Trump said in a statement. "Not everyone agrees, but the results are obvious. Our country will soon be stronger than ever before." **AP**

## Former London home of Maharaja Duleep Singh's son goes on sale for £15.5m

ADITI KHANNA  
LONDON, AUGUST 23

A SPRAWLING mansion in the heart of London which was the former family home of Maharaja Duleep Singh's son, Prince Victor Albert Jay Duleep Singh, has gone on sale with a price tag of 15.5 million pounds.

Duleep Singh, as Maharaja Ranjeet Singh's youngest son, was the last Maharaja of the Sikh Empire including Lahore in the 19th century until he was exiled to England when his empire came under the British Raj.

His son, Prince Victor, was born in London in 1866 and was taken under the wing of Queen

Victoria as his godmother.

Many years later when he caused a stir in English society with his mixed-race marriage to Lady Anne Coventry, the daughter of the 9th Earl of Coventry, the British authorities leased a "grace-and-favour" mansion in The Little Boltons area of south-west Kensington to the newly married couple as their new marital home.

"This substantial former grace-and-favour home of the exiled Crown Prince of Lahore has been designed to provide excellent proportions and benefits from high ceilings, large living spaces and a 52-ft rear garden," said Jeremy Gee, Managing Director of Beauchamp Estates, which is organising the sale. **PTI**

### MARKETS, BARS AND RESTAURANTS ARE CROWDED AGAIN

## In China, where Covid began, life is starting to look normal

JAVIER CHERNÁNDEZ  
AUGUST 23

IN SHANGHAI, restaurants and bars in many neighbourhoods are teeming with crowds. In Beijing, thousands of students are heading back to campus for the fall semester. In Wuhan, where the coronavirus emerged eight months ago, water parks and night markets are packed elbow to elbow, buzzing like before.

While the United States and much of the world are still struggling to contain the coronavirus pandemic, life in many parts of China has in recent weeks become strikingly normal. Cities

have relaxed social distancing rules and mask mandates, and crowds are again filling tourist sites, movie theaters and gyms.

The scenes of revelry stand in stark contrast to the early days of the pandemic, when China was its center and the government imposed sweeping lockdowns.

Now, after months of travel restrictions and citywide testing drives, locally transmitted cases of the virus in China are near zero, according to official data. On Sunday, China reported no new locally transmitted cases for the seventh consecutive day.

China's leaders, hoping to stimulate the economy, are eager for people to get back to



Revellers at a concert in Chongli, Hebei province, last week. AP

work and start shopping and travelling again. China still prohibits most foreigners from entering the country, for fear that they could bring the virus.

While China is not the only place where restrictions have eased, the return of some normalcy has become a point of national pride and fodder for the

### Nod for emergency vaccine use

Beijing: China has authorised emergency usage of Covid-19 vaccines developed by some select domestic companies, a Chinese health official has said.

An emergency use authorisation, which is based on Chinese vaccine management law, allows unapproved vaccine candidates to be used among

country's vast propaganda apparatus. The state news media is pointing to the return of large gatherings and classes as evidence of China's superior re-

sponse to the virus, especially compared with the United States and other Western countries whose officials are still struggling with it. **NYT**



# 14 ECONOMY

**AUDIT FIRMS AVOIDING INDUSTRIES SUCH AS REAL ESTATE, JEWELLERY, NBFCs**

## Greater scrutiny, lack of procedural clarity turn auditors wary of some clients

**KARUNJIT SINGH**  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 23

TOP AUDITS firms and audit professionals are concerned about lack of clarity on appropriate auditing procedures and disproportionate punishments for auditors in the wake of increased scrutiny on the profession after major corporate collapses, such as that of IL&FS. The National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) recently barred three auditors for their role in auditing IL&FS Financial Services (IFIN) in FY18 for terms ranging from five to seven years, including former CEO of Deloitte Haskins and Sells Udayan Sen.

The NFRA is also considering initiating disciplinary action against audit firm BSR & Co, after concluding in an audit quality review report that the firm did not follow standards of accounting while issuing and audit report for IFIN for financial year 2017-18.

Veteran auditors at top audit firms said there was a sense of uncertainty among auditors on procedural expectations from regulators. "There is a serious

### 3 KEY POINTS

**1** The NFRA recently barred three auditors for their role in auditing IFIN in FY18 for terms ranging from five to seven years, including former CEO of Deloitte Haskins and Sells Udayan Sen

**2** Veteran auditors said there was a sense of uncertainty among auditors on procedural expectations from regulators

**3** Firms are being more careful in selecting clients and are avoiding clients from certain industries considered to be at high risk for default, or likely to have multiple layers of transactions for which audit evidence is unlikely to be available

concern and uncertainty across the audit profession as recent orders by the NFRA have set new expectations and interpreted

compliance with laws and standards in what some professionals believe is different from the past without first setting out expectations and holding the profession accountable to the new NFRA expectations," said PR Ramesh, former chairman, and partner at Deloitte India.

Citing an example of the lack of clarity on procedure, Ramesh said that auditors had long sought clarification from regulators on what qualified as management services which they are not allowed to provide to clients, an issue which has cropped up in one of the recent orders by the NFRA barring an auditor for seven years. He noted that the NFRA has classified certain advisory services as management services in recent orders, which was not in line with international standards.

"Professionals have thus far been following what is laid out by the ICAI (Institute of Chartered Accountants of India), the IAASB (International Auditing and Assurance Standards Board), and the QRB (Quality Review Board). Professional bodies globally and in India have not found anything

seriously wrong in these procedures to which the NFRA has now objected," said Ramesh, who is also a member of the committee on enhancing audit independence formed by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs.

Sudhir Soni, national director and partner—assurance services, SR Batliboi & Co, said that auditors were concerned about the possibility of the imposition of disproportionate penalties by regulators.

"There is an issue of proportionality of liability. While an enterprise being audited may be liable to pay a penalty or is able to compound its offence, the auditor could be barred from providing audit services leading to large-scale disruption for its other clients and for employees of the audit firm," said Soni.

He suggested that regulators consider penalties, such as increased supervision of firms and restrictions of new clients and financial penalties based on the fees charged by auditors, unless an auditor is proven to be complicit in fraud.

Audit firms are being more careful in selecting clients and are avoiding taking clients from

certain industries that are considered to be at high risk for default, or likely to have multiple layers of transactions for which audit evidence is unlikely to be available.

"There is an enhanced focus on diligence while accepting a client for the purposes of audit. Auditors certainly do not intend to work with anyone having governance issues and hidden agendas," said Kaushal Kishore, partner at BSR & Co.

Kishore and other experts also noted there was a gap between stakeholder expectations and what a statutory audit entails. "Auditors are working under an audit framework and not an investigative framework. In a normal circumstance, identifying fraud is not an auditor's responsibility, unless there is an indication of fraud based on normal diligence," said Kishore.

Another senior auditor, who did not wish to be quoted, said that auditors were avoiding taking clients from industries such as real estate, gems and jewellery and NBFCs as these clients were perceived to be high risk.

Full report on [www.indianexpress.com](http://www.indianexpress.com)

## India's burgeoning omnichannel space to see more competition with Tata Group's planned super app

**ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU**  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 23

INDIA'S SUPER app battle — which currently has companies like Reliance Jio, Amazon, Paytm, Flipkart Group — is expected to see a new entrant in Tata Group which is chalking up plans to launch an omnichannel digital platform bringing together its various consumer businesses.

"It will be a super app, a lot of apps in apps and so on... We have a very big opportunity... The Tata Group, depending upon how you count, touches several hundred millions of consumers in India, if you take consumers who are walking in everyday into a Tata facility... How do we give a simple online experience connecting all of this, and at the same time a beautiful omnichannel experience? That is the vision," Tata Sons chairman N Chandrasekaran was quoted as saying by the *Financial Times* newspaper.

While details of Tata Group's super app have not emerged, sources indicated that the service could be developed by the group's newly formed entity Tata Digital.

Among the goals of Tata Digital, which was incorporated last year, is "building a world-class platform out of India to serve the

**While details of the app have not emerged, sources said it could be made by Tata Group's new entity Tata Digital**

Indian consumer". The Tata Group houses various consumer firms under its umbrella, including in segments such as groceries, multi-brand retail stores, airlines, hospitality, watches and jewellery, electronics, lifestyle, food and beverages, satellite television, consumer finance, among others. These include brands such as Tata CLiQ, Starbucks, Westside, Croma, Star Bazar, Tata Sampann, Vistara, Titan, Tanishq, Zara, TataSky and Taj Hotels. An e-mail query sent to Tata Sons seeking details of the proposed super app did not elicit a response.

The super app concept first emerged in China and southeast Asia where internet companies like WeChat, Gojek, Grab leveraged the opportunity of customer traffic on their platforms that originally came for social media and communication need by offering these customers additional services such as shopping, payments, cab booking, food services, etc.

This led to increased revenue realisation for these companies.

In India, Paytm, Flipkart Group-owned PhonePe and Rjio are evolving into super apps. According to consultancy firm RedSeer, a country or a region becomes super app-ready when its large base of the population is smartphone first instead of desktop and the ecosystem of apps customised to local needs is not evolved.

Super apps mainly serve as a one-stop shop for a wide range of products and services, and apps like WeChat and Gojek bundle together these services on a single platform to offer a uniform user experience to their users for a variety of products and services. In addition to increased revenue realisation, a super app also gives the company vast amount of customer data, which can be harvested to tailor consumer experiences and offerings.

Currently, in India, Reliance Industries is offering a bouquet of services ranging from content streaming, shopping, payments, messaging, games, cloud services, etc under its Jio umbrella. PhonePe has gone for a brown-field approach by typing up with companies like Swiggy, Ola, Grofers, Ajoio, Decathlon, Delhi Metro, booking.com, etc to offer these services from within its own app.

## 412 infra projects show cost overruns of ₹4.11 lakh crore

As many as 412 infrastructure projects have been hit by cost overruns of over ₹4.11 lakh crore owing to delays and other reasons, the latest MoSPI report for June 2020 said

**1,683** Total projects worth ₹150 crore and above monitored by the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation (MoSPI)

**979** Projects whose neither year of commissioning nor tentative gestation period has been reported

**₹20,65,336.20 crore:** Total original cost of implementation of the 1,683 projects

**₹24,77,167.67 crore:** Anticipated cost of implementation of all projects

**₹4,11,831.47 crore:** Overall cost overruns, i.e. 19.94 per cent of original cost

**₹11,21,435.29 crore:** Expenditure incurred on all projects till June 2020, 45.27 per cent of anticipated cost

Source: MoSPI/PTI



**471:** Number of projects that reported time escalation, of which:

**127:** delayed by one to 12 months

**112:** delayed by 13 to 24 months

**127:** delayed by 25 to 60 months

**105:** delayed by 61 months and above

**43.34 months:** Average time overrun of all projects

## Under scanner of probe agencies, Sterling Group yet to be named wilful defaulter by many banks

**GEORGE MATHEW & KHUSHBOO NARAYAN**  
MUMBAI, AUGUST 23

THE SLOW pace in the recovery of loans has come to the spotlight with some banks not reporting the wilful default by Gujarat-based Sterling Group to credit information companies (CICs).

Sterling Group is one of the largest corporate loan defaults involving about Rs 15,600 crore. The number will go up if the amount claimed by operational creditors is taken into account. Banks are required to file details of all defaults to CICs under the CIC (Regulation) Act. While many banks including Bank of India and IDBI Bank have declared the account as wilful defaults, some banks have not done so even after six-seven years.

When the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) took up the matter with Indian Overseas Bank (IOB), the latter informed it had initiated action for classifying the account as wilful defaulter but had kept the same in abeyance due to receipt of a one-time settlement (OTS) proposal. The borrower had not paid the amount fully to the bank and had filed an appeal be-

fore the Supreme Court seeking extension of time, on which orders are awaited, the RBI said in an RTI disclosure dated August 13.

The RBI and the Sterling Group did not respond to emails sent by *The Indian Express*.

As per the RBI, the matter was taken up with the bank (Punjab National Bank) vide email dated June 10, 2020, but due to inconsistency in the bank's reply, clarification has been sought from the bank. The final status in the matter will be communicated once the response from the bank is received, the RBI said in the RTI reply to Capt Sukhpal Singh.

In the case of Bank of Baroda (BoB), the RBI said "the complaint had been taken up with BoB and is under process." Andhra Bank (now merged with Union Bank), BoB and State Bank of India (SBI) have claimed they are parallelly pursuing a compromise settlement offer made by the group for settlement of dues in all the group accounts. Banks have now said they are planning to take the group to the Debt Recovery Tribunal (DRT) for recovery of funds and simultaneously, consider an OTS at a huge discount.

According to Union Bank, it is in the process of filing a suit in the

DRT against the guarantors and borrowers for recovering dues to Andhra Bank and consortium banks. Andhra Bank earlier initiated insolvency proceedings against the company and National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) permitted OTS, the bank said in its RTI reply.

The promoters of the group Nitin and Chetan Sandesara, who are believed to be abroad, have come under the scanner of the Enforcement Directorate (ED) for alleged money laundering of Rs 14,500 crore.

Last year, the ED filed its chargesheet in the case and alleged that loan funds were diverted for non-mandated purposes, layered and laundered through a web of multiple domestic as well as offshore entities.

The agency alleged that the Sandesaras used their employees' names and incorporated 249 domestic and 96 offshore shell companies. According to the ED, the group was engaged in round-tripping of SBLC funds to the tune of Rs 4,500 crore by violating conditions laid by the RBI while sanctioning the loan.

The Central Bureau of Investigation too has booked Sterling Biotech, its directors Sandesara

brothers, Dipti Chetan Sandesara and a few others in connection with an alleged Rs 8,100 crore bank fraud case. The OTS amount received from promoters is Rs 204 crore till date. "This is a pitance and it raises doubts about the seriousness and willingness of the borrower to repay the depositors money," said a banker who requested anonymity.

Interestingly, banks have not made any effort till date to exercise their first ranking charge on the oil consignments from Sterling's Nigerian oil firm SEEPCO to India. As per the RTI disclosure, Andhra Bank has not seized any oil shipments coming from SEEPCO, Nigeria to India. Although earlier loans remained unpaid to the consortium of lenders led by SBI, two guarantees were offered to SEEPCO so that it could borrow from overseas.

So far, the ED has attached Indian and overseas assets worth Rs 9,778 crore of the Sandesaras. A Delhi court is scheduled to hear the ED's plea to declare Sandesara brothers fugitive economic offenders. In the last two months, the agency questioned senior Congress leader Ahmed Patel three times in connection with its cases against the brothers.

## ‘Cost of new export scheme to far exceed NITI estimate of ₹10,000 cr/yr’

**ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU**  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 23

THE OUTLAY for a key scheme, under which exporters will be reimbursed for all embedded taxes paid on inputs consumed in outbound shipments, could be "much higher" than the NITI Aayog's much-curtailed estimate of Rs 10,000 crore a year, GK Pillai, former commerce and home secretary, who now heads a panel to fix the refund rates, told FE.

Although Pillai refrained from offering a precise estimate of the allocation under the Remission of Duties and Taxes on Exported Products (RoDTEP) scheme, he

said the committee's intention is not to leave out any event that causes tax content in exports. All the imposts that are not subsumed by the goods and services tax (GST) will be built into the RoDTEP rates, in a potential relief for exporters battered by the pandemic.

The government had envisaged an annual allocation of about Rs 50,000 crore under the RoDTEP scheme to make exports zero-rated. This new scheme is to replace the extant Merchandise Export from India Scheme - under which exporters were granted benefits worth about Rs 45,000 crore in FY20 -- from January 2021. **FE**

## Local lockdowns, low industrial activity push Jul fuel consumption down

**ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU**  
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 23

THE RECOVERY of diesel and petrol consumption in India to pre-COVID levels slowed in July on the back of lower demand due to state-level lockdowns, low industrial activity and reduced movement of private vehicles, according to a report by the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC).

The consumption of diesel fell 19.3 per cent to 5.5 million metric tonnes (MMT), as against 6.8 MMT in July 2019 and down

**The consumption of ATF also remained subdued at 233 TMT in July, down 64.5% from consumption of 658 TMT in July 2019**

12.7 per cent from June 2020, signalling a slowdown in the recovery of diesel consumption to pre-COVID levels. The recovery of petrol consumption too slowed in July with consumption of around 2.3 MMT, the same as in June but down 10.3 per cent from consumption of 2.5 MMT in July 2019.

The consumption of diesel hit a low of 3.3 MMT and that of

petrol fell below 1 MMT this April, as a result of the lockdown to curb the spread of COVID-19.

A PPAC release said "Weekend lockdowns and other restrictions imposed by state and district administrations to curtail the spread of COVID-19 has affected the consumption of HSD (High Speed Diesel)," noting that the industry was operating at only around 70-80 per

cent of capacity due to subdued demand.

Petrol consumption was adversely affected by low demand in urban areas, which were more impacted by the spread of COVID. Rural demand was the key propeller of consumption of both diesel and petrol, with agricultural activity driving diesel consumption.

The PPAC noted that movement of vehicles had reduced significantly with many people working from home, and schools, colleges and recreational activities being closed. Weekend lockdowns by local au-

thorities, as well as generally low levels of travel on weekends were also key reasons behind low petrol consumption.

The consumption of aviation turbine fuel (ATF) also remained subdued at 233 thousand metric tonnes (TMT) in July, down 64.5 per cent from consumption of 658 TMT in July 2019.

The PPAC noted that travellers were only taking unavoidable trips and that measures by state governments to curb the spread of the coronavirus disease had resulted in a moderation in the growth of domestic flights.

### BRIEFLY FTAs: Norms to enforce 'rules of origin'

**New Delhi:** The Department of Revenue has notified the 'Customs (Administration of Rules of Origin under Trade Agreements) Rules, 2020' for enforcement of 'rules of origin' provisions for allowing preferential rate of customs duties on products imported under FTAs.

### ‘Don't read too much into green shoots'

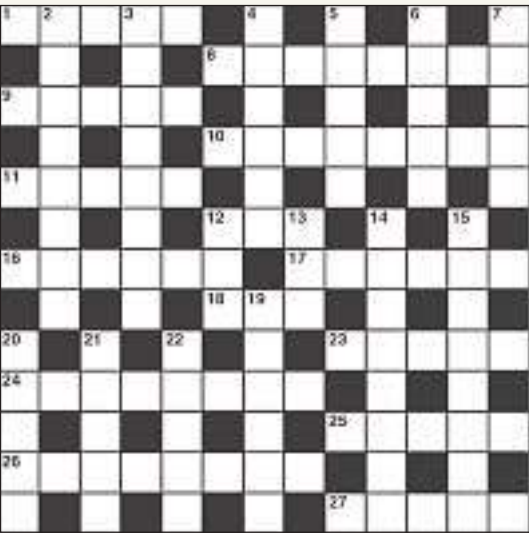
**New Delhi:** Calling 'green shoots' of economic revival as a mechanical rebound, former Reserve Bank Governor D Subbarao says India's short and medium term growth prospects continue to remain grim. **PTI**

### TikTok to challenge Trump's order

**Bengaluru:** TikTok said on Saturday it plans to file a lawsuit on Monday against President Donald Trump's executive order prohibiting transactions with the short video app and its parent ByteDance. **REUTERS**



CROSSWORD 4205



- ACROSS
- 1 Loveless sailor staggers round bars (5)
- 8 Fabric produced only when ready money is shown first (8)
- 9 Put up with being unseated? (5)
- 10 Garbled report I get on a city in Africa (8)
- 11 He has reached his majority - and is in the majority (5)
- 12 I leave the earth for the sun (3)
- 16 Tried corporal punishment - didn't work (6)
- 17 Unwilling to make up a piece of poetry? (6)
- 18 Go unsteadily in the reverse direction (3)
- 23 Buy another drink? It's a pleasure! (5)
- 24 Shoes are in order for the beach (8)
- 25 A nasty accident on the tennis court? (5)
- 26 One challenged perhaps to have a second helping (8)
- 27 Being stupid I upset Anne (5)
- DOWN
- 2 Poison counter (8)
- 3 Lion and mule collapsed on the floor (8)
- 4 Top style musical party (6)
- 5 Sound of fire in the channel (5)
- 6 Feature of barley may be used to make bread (5)
- 7 King size is unusually large (5)
- 12 Hit a ball right up. Heavens! (3)
- 13 In general, a wise rule (3)
- 14 Take over pilot (8)
- 15 He kills a couple of fools in the end (8)
- 19 Stop translating Sartre (6)
- 20 A team apart (5)
- 21 Heartbroken lover's converse (5)
- 22 It's said to be cold in the country (5)

Solutions Crossword 4204: Across: 1 Admonition, 6 Race, 10 Aesop, 11 Chain gang, 12 Well well, 13 Cadet, 15 Regards, 17 Science, 19 Scratch, 21 Renewal, 22 Attic, 24 Assailed, 27 Eloquent, 28 Paste, 29 Nest, 30 Polo player, Down: 1 Air, 2 Messenger, 3 Nepal, 4 Tickets, 5 Oracles, 7 Award, 8 Eight bells, 9 Inaction, 14 Crustacean, 16 Reticule, 18 New Jersey, 20 Heave to, 21 Risotto, 23 Tours, 25 Impel, 26 Rear.

OVER THE HEDGE by Michael Fry & T Lewis



CALVIN & HOBBS by Bill Watterson



MARVIN by Tom Armstrong



JUMBLED WORDS

Given below are four jumbled words. Solve the jumbles to make proper words and move them to the respective squares below. Select the letters in the shaded squares and jumble them to get the answer for the given clue.  
Discussion is an exchange of knowledge; an \_\_\_ an exchange of ignorance.  
-Robert Quillen (8)

EGLAE

EPRYNU

BIURT

EERRGM

SOLUTION: EAGLE, BRUNT, PENURY, MERCER  
Answer: Discussion is an exchange of knowledge; an argument an exchange of ignorance. -Robert Quillen

SUDOKU 4210

Difficulty Level 5s  
Instructions  
To solve a Sudoku puzzle, every digit from 1 to 9 must appear in each of the nine vertical columns, in each of the nine horizontal rows and in each of the nine boxes.

SOLUTION SUDOKU 4209

Difficulty Level  
1s = Very easy; 2s = Easy; 3s = Medium; 4s = Hard; 5s = Very Hard; 6s = Genius

**New Okhla Industrial Development Authority**  
Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida - 201301 (U.P.)  
Website : [www.noidaauthorityonline.com](http://www.noidaauthorityonline.com)

**E-TENDER NOTICE**  
E-Tenders are invited from firms/contractors registered with UPLC Lucknow for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on NOIDA Authority's official website: [www.noidaauthorityonline.com](http://www.noidaauthorityonline.com) & <https://etender.up.nic.in>. Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/amendments & corrigendum etc.

S.No.	Job no/Work name	Amount
1.	77/D(H)/DD(H)-I/2020-21, D/o RSP (P/f of special art work on underpass sector-18), Noida	Cost Rs. 44.28 Lacs
2.	79/D(H)/DD(H)-I/2020-21, D/o Parks (P/f of special art work at Sector-14A Entry Point), Noida	Cost Rs. 25.33 Lacs
3.	138/D(H)/DD(H)-II/2020-21, D/o Parks (P/f of special art work at Ship Hatt in sector-33A), Noida	Cost Rs. 37.13 Lacs

Which can be uploaded by date 31/08/2020 upto 5.00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on date 01/09/2020 at 11.00AM.

Office Director (Hort.)  
Sector-39 Noida

**CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA**

**NOTICE**  
M/s Swami Sarees Pvt. Ltd. has been deposited laminated original title deed of following Commercial properties against exposure in M/S Swami Sarees Pvt. Ltd. to SBI, SME Town Hall Chandni Chowk Delhi Branch, Property No.1045 (old 572), First floor, Kucha Natwan, Chandni Chowk Delhi-6 in the name of Smt. Manju Bala and Smt. Nisha Rani measuring area Northern side of 41.80 Sq. Mtrs. & Southern side of 32.60 Sq. Mtrs. Property No.1045 (old 572), Second floor, Kucha Natwan, Chandni Chowk Delhi-6 in the name of Smt. Manju Bala measuring area of 88.61 Sq. Mtrs. Property No.1045 (old 572), Third floor, Kucha Natwan, Chandni Chowk Delhi-6 in the name of Smt. Manju Bala measuring area of 83.61 Sq. Mtrs.

M/s Swami Sarees Pvt. Ltd. through its Director Mr. Deepak Goel wishes to create change for existing loans/credit facility from State Bank of India, Branch, SME Town Hall Chandni Chowk, Delhi Branch Code 30139. Additionally, the notice should specify that in case any party has any claim towards the said relevant property(ies), the same should be lodged with the interested party and also with the above stated branch of State Bank of India, within 15 days from publication of this notice.

**EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY**  
**E-TENDER NOTICE**  
e-Tender No. 2020/WP/Mech/BSL/ROH/WT-09 (Open), e-Tender (open) are invited on behalf of the President of India with following details.

1. Name of the work with its location : "Composite Work (Civil, Electrical & Mechanical) involving Extension of sheds, Construction of store building, Heavy duty concrete flooring, Track Work, Electrification and illumination works, Procurement and commissioning of specified Mechanical Machineries & Plant and other associated Civil & Electrical works in connection with "Augmentation of ROH capacity and improvement of existing maintenance facilities and infrastructure of ROH depot at Bhusawal, Central Railway." 2. Approximate cost of the work : ₹23,96,44,496.99, 3. Earnest Money to be deposited : ₹13,48,200/-, 4. Date & Time for closing of e-tender : 21.09.2020 upto to 13.00 hrs. 5. Website particulars and notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen and downloaded : Tender can only be down loaded and Bided from IREPS website : [www.ireps.gov.in](http://www.ireps.gov.in). For any other information please contact office of Chief Mechanical Engineer/Workshop Projects, Indian Railways, Chamber Bhawan, 3rd floor (Mech. Deptt.), J.C. Road, Patna - 800001

Chief Mechanical Engineer/WPI/ECR/Patna  
PR/0548/WPO/Mech/T/20-21/40

Head Office, Star House 1, Risk Management Department, Information Security Cell, 3rd Floor, East Wing, C-5 - B Block, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Bandra (East), Mumbai 400 051.  
Email: [security.information@bankofindia.co.in](mailto:security.information@bankofindia.co.in).

**Tender Notice**  
Bank of India invites response to REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP) for Empanelment of Information Security and Audit Service Providers (ISASPs) Particularly for Information Security Cell (ISC) & Information Systems Audit Cell (ISAC) and for other departments on need base, through online e-Tendering process @ [www.msiccommerce.com](http://www.msiccommerce.com). MSTC Ltd. (A Government of India Enterprise).  
Last date for submission of response to RFP: 21-09-2020 by 3.00 pm.  
Full details are available on the Bank's Corporate Website: [www.bankofindia.co.in](http://www.bankofindia.co.in) under "Tender" Section from 24.08.2020.  
Amendments / Corrigendum, if any, will be published through MSTC portal only.

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**NOTICE INVITING e-EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (e-EOI)**  
e-TENDER NO.: B&R / NO / NEW JOB / EOI / 01  
Applications for Expression of Interest (EOI) is invited from Reputed, Resourceful and Experienced Agencies meeting prescribed Qualifying Criteria for "EMPALEMENT OF PROJECT CONSULTANT FOR PROVIDING MANNING AND DESIGN CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR DESIGN OF ROBUUNDER PASS (RAIL FLYOVERS(RFO) / VIADUCT ETC. IN VARIOUS RAILWAY PROJECTS AND OTHER PROJECTS INCLUDING DESIGNER SUPERVISION DURING EXECUTION". Sub Head : Preliminary Survey & Soil Investigation, Preparation of Soil Investigation Report , Designing ,Preparation of Drawing of Major & Minor Bridges /Crossovers /Underpass /ROB / RUB / Structural Girder /PSC / RCC Girder and other Allied Works, Pre -Tender Assistance and Providing Designer supervision during Execution In Various Railway Projects and Other Projects.

Date of hosting in CPP Portal : 24.08.2020.  
Last Date of submission of Bid: 07.09.2020 upto 17:00 Hours.  
Interested Bidder(s) will have to be enrolled & registered with the Government e-Procurement System; through logging on to <https://eprocure.gov.in>.  
Addendum / Corrigendum, if any, shall be hosted in Company's Website:[www.bridgeroof.co.in](http://www.bridgeroof.co.in) and CPP portal: <https://eprocure.gov.in> only.

**King George's Medical University U.P.**  
Chowk, Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, India-226003  
Ref. No 16/Notice/E.E(E/M)/20 Date: 22.08.2020  
**Tender/Inviting Notice**  
Online bids are invited under two e-bid system latest by 02.09.2020 to supply, installation, commissioning, operation of Liquid Medical Oxygen vessels & supply of LMO along with conversion of existing compressed medical oxygen manifold system to liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) system at R.A.L.C Campus (New LMO Installation) at King George Medical University U.P. Lucknow, their authorized Company/contractor may apply on the terms and conditions as per Tender document & short details of the equipments, EMD & DD can be view at KGMU website. Tender will be available on <http://etender.up.nic.in>.  
[www.kgmcinidia.edu](http://www.kgmcinidia.edu)/[www.csmmu.in](http://www.csmmu.in)  
(Executive Engineer)  
(Electrical/Mechanical Department)

**WESTERN RAILWAY**  
**ADDENDUM TO EOI**  
In reference to the Expression of Interest called regarding Development of Udhna Freight Handling Railway Terminal as a Common User facility for multi cargo, multi modal operation including provision of additional freight/ parcel handling line, covered warehouse, open stacking area (including containers), mechanization of handling systems and truck parking terminal on a PPP model, the following addendum may please be noted: **The last date of submission of Eoi response is extended till 05.09.2020 up to 15 hrs.**  
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**HIMACHAL PRADESH STATE ELECTRONICS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LIMITED**  
IT Bhawan, Mehli, Shimla -171013  
Tel. No. 0177-2623259  
2623043, FAX:0177-2626320  
Website : [www.hpsecd.in](http://www.hpsecd.in)  
No. HPSECD/CC/Manpower/2K20- Date: 21/08/2020

**TENDER NOTICE**  
e-Tenders are invited from eligible biddHPSECD invites RFEs for empanelment firms for providing Manpower to various Corporations/ Boards/ Societies and Departments of Government in the State. **Last date for submission RFE is 08/09/2020 (upto 01:30PM).** Detailed Tender Document is available on HPSECD website [www.hpsecd.in](http://www.hpsecd.in).  
0338/HP General Manager (Technical)

**Classifieds**  
**PERSONAL**  
I, Mahendra Pal S/o Daryayil Lal Manchanda R/o A-4/305, Printers Apts, Sector-13, Rohini, Delhi-110085 changed my name to Mahender Pal Manchanda 0070711910-1  
I, Urmila Devi Manchanda W/o Mahender Pal Manchanda R/o A-4/305, Printers Apts, Sector-13, Rohini, Delhi-110085 changed my name to Urmila Manchanda 0070711911-1  
I Indermeet Singh S/O, Late Atam Singh Juneja R/o M-194, South City - 1, Gurugram, Haryana - 122001 have changed my name to Indermeet Singh Juneja 0040545739-1  
I, A.P. Madaan S/o Mohan Lal R/o B-672 Camp No-4, Jwalapuri, Delhi-110087 changed my name to Atam Prakash 0070711909-1

**LOST & FOUND**  
I Kamla Devi W/O, Late Prem Singh Rathour R/o B-356, Vikas Vihar East, Vikas Nagar, Uttam Nagar, Delhi -110059 have changed my name to Kamla Rathore for all purposes. 0040545785-10

"IMPORTANT"

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**ANDHRA PRADESH INTEGRATED IRRIGATION AND AGRICULTURE TRANSFORMATION PROJECT**  
(World Bank Aided Project)  
**Request for Bids (National Competitive Bidding)**  
Tender Notice No.01/2020-21, Dated: 17.08.2020.  
The Superintending Engineer, Irrigation Circle, Chittoor District, Pin Code: 517001, Andhra Pradesh invites Bids from the intending Bidders for various works of 1) Rehabilitation of Mangasamudram tank Cascade No.05 in Mangasamudram Village in Chittoor mandal in Chittoor District - Rs.123.70 lakhs, 2) Rehabilitation of Kapila Cheruvu Cascade No.07 in Jenebada village in Chittoor mandal in Chittoor District - Rs.90.80 lakhs, 3) Rehabilitation of Diguva Chenganna cheruvu (Independent) in P.Yellampate village in Irula mandal in Chittoor District - Rs.40.95 lakhs, 4) Rehabilitation of Mahadevamangalam tank (Independent) in Mahadevamangalam village in G.D.Nellore mandal in Chittoor District - Rs.66.40 lakhs, 5) Rehabilitation of Veera Raghava reddy cheruvu (Independent) in Putramaddi village in Irula mandal in Chittoor District - Rs.66.60 lakhs, 6) Rehabilitation of Naraganli tank Cascade No.09 in Naragallu village in Gudipala mandal in Chittoor District - Rs.199.30 lakhs, 7) Rehabilitation of Charavakaniipalli Cascade No.19 in Enuguvipalli village in Penumuru mandal of Chittoor District - Rs.14.87 lakhs, 8) Rehabilitation of Bangaracka Cheruvu Cascade No.10 in Vasanthapuram (V) in Gudipala(M) in Chittoor District - Rs.147.50 lakhs, 9) Rehabilitation of Pedda cheruvu Nellore (Independent) in Nellore village in G.D.Nellore mandal in Chittoor District - Rs.71.73 lakhs, 10) Rehabilitation of Kotha cheruvu (Independent) in Navabupeta (V) in Kakada (M) of Chittoor District - Rs.155.70 lakhs, 11) Rehabilitation of Gumma Samudram tank in Burakayalakota village in Mulakalacheruvu mandal of Chittoor District - Rs.93.20 lakhs, 12) Rehabilitation of Baysappu Reddiyeri Cheruvu (Independent) in Gundlur(V) in Kalikeri(M) of Chittoor District - Rs.74.60 lakhs and 13) Rehabilitation of Veerappa cheruvu Cascade No.20 in Sarimadugu (V) in Guramkonda(M) of Chittoor District - Rs.56.00 lakhs under "Andhra Pradesh Integrated Irrigation and Agriculture Transformation Project (APIATP)" from Dt. 24.08.2020 to Dt. 30.09.2020 upto 05.00 PM.  
For complete details visit us at : [www.apetprocurement.gov.in](http://www.apetprocurement.gov.in)  
For queries - Contact no - 08572232932. Sd/- (M. Surendra Reddy),  
Superintending Engineer, W.R.Dept., Irrigation Circle, Chittoor.  
DIPR No.265/PP/CI/ADVT/1/12/2020-21, Dt. 21/08/2020

**THE TAMILNADU COOPERATIVE MILK PRODUCERS' FEDERATION LIMITED**  
AAVIN ILLAM, 3-A, Pasumpun Muthuramalinganar Salai, (Chamiers Road) Nandanam, Chennai- 600 035.  
Ph : 044 - 23464500, Fax : 044 - 23464505, E-mail : [avindgmeng@yahoo.co.in](mailto:avindgmeng@yahoo.co.in), [avaintenders@avin.tn.gov.in](mailto:avaintenders@avin.tn.gov.in)  
TENDER NOTICE DATED : 21.08.2020  
The TCMFPL Ltd., invites **TWO PART TENDERS** by way of OFF LINE / E-SUBMISSION from the reputed Manufacturers / Suppliers for following works / Items for Various Metro Dairies / DCMPLs under Schemes / Federation own funds.

Name of the Items / Works	Pre-bid Meeting	Tender Submission	Technical Bid Opening
1. SKL Capacity Bulk Milk Cooler, Genset and its accessories -69 Nos. for various DCMPL Dairy, Ambattur	03.09.2020 11.30 AM	15.09.2020 Upto 02.00 PM	15.09.2020 2.15 PM
3. Metal seal for DCCP & various DCMPLs			
4. Plastic seal for various DCMPLs			
5. 10 KL Tri purpose Centrifuge Cream Separator -1 No. For Tirunelveli DCMPL			
6. 30 MKL Storage Silo - 1 No. For Karur DCMPL			
7. Imported 284 TR Evaporative Condenser - 1 No. for Ambattur Dairy			

Document sale between 26.08.2020 to 14.09.2020 from 11.00 A.M. to 3.00 P.M. cost: Rs.2,000.00 + 18% GST and Rs.100.00 extra by post.  
For downloading tender documents, EMD and other details, refer website [www.tenders.tn.gov.in](http://www.tenders.tn.gov.in) and [www.avainmilk.com](http://www.avainmilk.com) for full line / [www.tntenders.gov.in](http://www.tntenders.gov.in) for E-submission. Tender documents can be downloaded at free of cost.  
DIPR/3151/TENDER/2020 Deputy General Manager (Engg.)

**For All Advertisement Booking**  
**Call : 0120-6651214**

**EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY**  
**E-TENDER NOTICE**  
ई-सीआर-सीएओ-कॉन-उत्तर-ई-निविदा-26-20-21 निविदा 20.08.2020-E-Tender Notice No.-ECR-CAO-CON-NORTH-ETN-26-20-21. E-Tender is invited on behalf of the President of India for the under mentioned work.  
1. Name of work : Transportation assembling erection launching girders of Major bridges, 322 (5x30.1 m OWG), 325(4x12.2m composite girder), 329 (2x30.5 m OWG), 332 (3x6.1 m PSC slab), 341(3x6.1 m PSC slab), 346 (3x6.10m span PSC slab), 347 (1x18.3M PG), 349 (3x30.5m OWG), 351 (4x6.1m span PSC slab), 352 (2x30.5m OWG), 356 (1x30.5m OWG) of HIR-VKNR section and Br. No. 7, 7B1 of NKE-GAH section and its allied works in connection with doubling of NKE-VKNR and GC of NKE GAH section. 2. Approx cost of the work : ₹9,29,24,708.11. 3. Earnest money: ₹6,14,600/-, 4. Date and time for closing of tender : 11.09.2020 at 14.30 hrs. 5. Website particular, Notice board location where complete details of tender can be seen and addressed of the office from where the tender form be purchased etc. : The above E-Tender, E-Tendering document alongwith full information is available on website i.e. <http://www.ireps.gov.in> and also can see in the office of CAO/Con/ECR,MHX,Patna. Note : Tenderers are requested to visit the website <http://www.ireps.gov.in> atleast 15 days before last date of closing for latest corrigendum/corrections etc in response to this E-Tender. CAO/Con/North/ECR/Mahendrughat, Patna  
PR/0547/CON/Engg./T/20-21/44

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16 SPORT

INTERVIEW: KL RAHUL

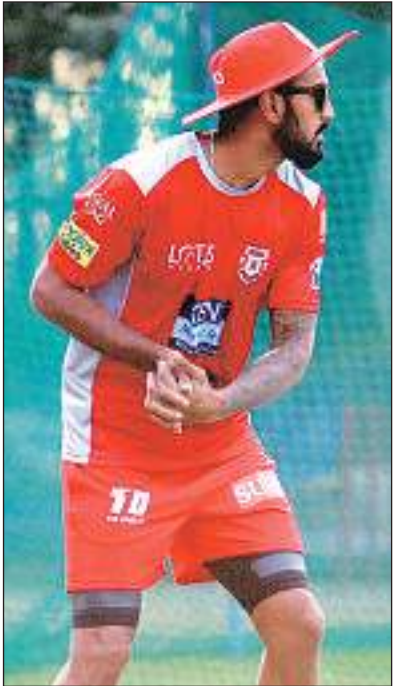
‘I had nightmares... What if I don’t have the same cover drive as before’

DEVENDRA PANDEY  
MUMBAI, AUGUST 23

DURING THE lockdown, KL Rahul had the occasional nightmare about losing his batting skills. The what-if scenarios scared him but those five months also helped him assess what he did well in the past, what he needed to change, and also made him grateful for what he has. Before going to the UAE to play in the IPL, Rahul spoke about his lockdown fears and hopes for the near future. Excerpts:

**How did you handle the lockdown days?**  
It was very difficult as it went along but early on, it seemed like a break from cricket, some well-deserved rest as we all thought it would last a month. But once the lockdown extended and it became difficult to train or even go out, it began to change. But when you see so many less-privileged people struggling and going through lots more trouble, you realise that your troubles weren’t much. We are sitting at home with family - it was a blessing and luxury not available to many. It was difficult to see all that suffering. The lockdown taught us to be grateful for what we have, to our loved ones, and for all the opportunities we have got.

**With so much time at your disposal, did negative thoughts creep in?**  
I did get anxious sitting at home. My fear was that I would get lazy, so I trained at home during the day. I made a plan for a day and tried to stick to it. But initially, I didn’t bother as I felt I deserved to be lazy and that I can wake up at whatever time I want to. Even if I didn’t train, it was acceptable for me because my body needed that break after years. Later on, I told myself I needed to plan my day, be it doing household work or getting up at a particular time. Most days, I stuck to my plan. I didn’t want to waste my time watching TV. I cooked, walked my dog and designed clothes for my brand.  
Once or twice I did have sleepless nights thinking what if once I get back to playing



KL Rahul will be leading Kings XI Punjab in the upcoming IPL season in the UAE. *File*

cricket, I am not the same player. That was a bit scary but luckily in Bengaluru, we got a few practice sessions and that made me feel good.

**How did you feel in your first few batting sessions post lockdown?**  
Couple of nights, I had nightmares. I woke up with the feeling, ‘oh s\*\*t, what if I can’t pick line and length of the ball? What if I become slower? What if I don’t have the same cover drive as before?’ All these question marks were there. And the first session didn’t help: all those fears came true. I batted so badly in that session it was scary. But after three sessions, I started to feel better and it made me happy.

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KL RAHUL ON GETTING BACK IN THE GROOVE

**You are going to lead Kings XI Punjab. What does captaincy mean to you? Is there any template that you follow?**  
I always played the game thinking as if I’m the captain. At the ground, I always think of what I would have done in a particular situation. Whom I would have bowled in a situation? I was always proactive in my head and it’s just an extension of that. I know it will be harder than I think. I am not going in with any expectations, like I have played cricket so many years. I will get on the field and try to make decisions in the moment. You can’t plan too much because it could be confusing.

**Did you learn from watching captains like Dhoni, Virat or Rohit?**  
Yes, yes. Dhoni’s calmness and belief showed in backing players who had the potential to be matchwinners. Virat’s passion in the way he leads, the way he wants the boys to be better and better. Rohit always plays with a passion and backs players.

**What was your reaction when you heard about Dhoni’s retirement?**  
Like the rest of the country I too was emotional, we all would have wanted to play some more cricket with him. As I said, his calmness was insane and valuable in the dressing room.

**Now in his absence, are you looking for more opportunities behind the stumps?**  
I enjoyed whatever challenge was thrown at me for the last seven-eight months. Be it play-

ing a different role or to bat at any position. Whatever the team needs me to do, I will do it.

**Will you be keeping in the IPL?**  
Yes, I will love to do wicketkeeping. We have so many options of wicketkeeper-batsmen, if I feel I need more time or need to be on the field to manage. Standing behind the stumps is a good way to do it as one gets a full 360-degree view, it’s easy to know what is happening. It’s a good place to be.

**What will be your biggest challenge in the UAE?**  
It will be difficult and different. This is the best we can do, considering the situation. Honestly, we are not worried now about the bio-bubble or lack of spectators. We have to adapt to the situation and it’s a good story to tell 15-20 years down the line. We need to utilise the three-week training period there well.

**How did the session with Anil Kumble go?**  
He was asking how I was feeling and what other players were feeling, how is our mindset. We spoke about how to remove early nerves from the players and give them confidence.

**In this long break, did you introspect on your Test match batting?**  
Not really. I did sit and think about what I was doing right for the past six-seven months, what were the problem areas and though I didn’t come to any conclusions, I made a mental note that these are the things which are helping me perform consistently and these are the things which are not helping me perform consistently.

**And finally, how many pairs of shoes do you own? The other day, Shreyas Iyer posted a pic of more than a hundred!**  
I certainly have more than that, for sure. I love shopping. I have my own clothing line. I enjoy doing these things because it helps me switch off from cricket. It’s exciting to design clothes.

Pak on the ropes, Ali stands tall with unbeaten century

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE  
AUGUST 23

PAKISTAN SKIPPER Azhar Ali scored a trenchant unbeaten 141, a slap on the face of his critics, but his effort could only offer a hint of respectability to the tourists’ first-innings effort. In response to England’s 583/8 declared, Pakistan were restricted to 273 with James Anderson completing his first five-wicket haul of the year, a haul that leaves him two wickets away from his 600th.  
But at one point, even 200 had seemed distant. They were 30/4 before stumbling to 75/5 and it seemed England would consign Pakistan to humiliation. Then Ali intervened with adequate support from wicket-keeper batsman Mohammad Rizwan, who is rapidly enhancing his reputation as Pakistan’s late middle-order enforcer.

Ali had, so far, endured a torrid time in the series, batting as if he were a novice to the English conditions, tormented both by swing and seam. But a minor tweak went a long way in helping him rekindle his touch. He slightly opened up his stance, which reduced his tendency to play across the line of the delivery. The flick is his favourite stroke, but here it was also his undoing. Subsequently, he regained his judgment outside the off-stump and the balance when flicking. He also restrained from stabbing at deliveries outside the off-stump, another failing of his in the series.  
In the initial stages, he only scored through the leg-side. Flicks and clips were his staple shots as he gradually sculpted his innings. Once in his 30s, his confidence regained, he began venturing for more runs through the off-side, which came mostly through slap-cuts towards backward point and dabs through third-man. And when the spinner Dom Bess got a rare chance to bowl, he cut him twice for boundaries before sweeping him.  
England gave him early jitters — he survived a string of near-misses and lbw shouts. In the alacrity to dismiss the skipper, England exhausted all their reviews by the 28th over. But thereafter he bedded in and completed his 17th Test hundred with a thumping cover drive. It was a knock that emblazoned clarity, determination and skill.  
Offering him support was the tigerish



Azhar Ali (141\*) shared a 138-run stand with Mohammad Rizwan (53). *Reuters*

Rizwan. He is in the fine tradition of hard-nosed Pakistani wicket-keepers. He copped a blow, saw off shaky passages of the game and lend an invaluable company for Ali. He defended stoutly and attacked opportunistically. He was especially severe on Jofra Archer, and every time he bowled slightly short he would cut and slash him. A blistering six off Bess brought him his second half-century of the series. Finally, it took Chris Woakes to terminate the 138-run union when he had Rizwan caught down the leg-side for a busy 53.  
The day began disastrously for Pakistan, with Anderson removing Asad Shafiq with a millimetre-perfect out-swing, just before the first of the many rain-breaks of the day. This was Anderson’s fourth wicket for 13 runs in 33 deliveries, and the 597th of his career. His 600th loomed on the horizon, but thereafter England and Anderson were made to sweat for the wickets. The veteran seam-bowler bowled as menacingly as he had this year, but wickets were not forthcoming. He was wretchedly unlucky too, as three catches were dropped in two overs off his bowling in the latter stages of Pakistan’s innings.  
**BRIEF SCORES:** England 583/8 declared leads Pakistan 273 in 90 overs (Azhar Ali 141 not out, Mohammad Rizwan 53; James Anderson 5/56) by 310 runs.

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