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UNION HEALTH MINISTER

Ayodhya mediation: 4 proposals saw some light till talks failed

SEEMACHISHTI
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 4

ATTEMPTS TO find a settlement in the Ayodhya dispute by the Supreme Court-appointed mediation committee continued till the last minute of the deadline, with intense talks towards the end of July holding out a tantalising hope that a “breakthrough” could be achieved. After a firm proposal submitted by those asking for the mosque did not elicit any response from those asking for the temple, the committee tried to get a consensus on what it called “the four elements” (see box) for arriving at a deal. But, with some of the contesting parties not agreeing to these propos-

als, the committee had to report to the Supreme Court that the proceedings had “failed”. Based on detailed conversations with the sides involved in the mediation, *The Indian Express* has learnt that the side asking for a mosque submitted a proposal in a sealed envelope, during the committee's second meeting in Faizabad, for a mosque and a temple adjacent to each other within the disputed area. It also gave a detailed layout for the same. But the proposal was a non-starter as it elicited no response from the side asking for the temple. Thereafter, the mediation committee tried to break the logjam by formulating four essential elements for a possible deal,

THE ALMOST FOUR

- Freeze status of all places of worship as per 1991 Act, or as on August 15, 1947
- Ask ASI to streamline process of declaring mosques as ‘monuments’
- In lieu of Babri Masjid, give alternative land and funds for a mosque elsewhere
- Repair, refurbish, restore “about 20 mosques” in Ayodhya

which were underpinned on the premise that the mosque would be completely relocated outside

the contentious area. Though some sides did warm up to the four elements, an agreement could not be reached on the same. The three-member mediation committee was led by a retired Supreme Court judge, Justice FMI Kalifulla, and had Art of Living founder Sri Sri Ravi Shankar and senior advocate Sriram Panchu as members. The first of the four elements suggested for a breakthrough was that all parties agree to freezing the status of all places of worship, and to make a formal request to the Supreme Court to push for a freeze on all such matters on which there may be some litigation in courts. This proposal meant ensuring that

KASHMIR CLAMPDOWN

Srinagar hears midnight knock: Omar, Mufti under arrest, Internet snapped

Bar on public movement; schools shut



Forces out on Srinagar streets on Sunday night. AP

Govt looks at land laws to dilute Art 35A

P VAIIDYANATHAN IYER
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 4

WHILE THE Centre has held the Kashmir card close to its chest despite a flurry of action over the last few days, top state government officials have been exploring options to modify Article 35A, which confers special rights to the permanent residents of Jammu and Kashmir.

The options include creating categories of land and allowing outsiders to purchase land in certain cases, and placing restrictions on the quantum of land based on the usage. To curtail misuse, they said, Article 35A can borrow from land laws in hilly states such as Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand.

A government source said, “There are issues about selling

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Before jail over CSR, govt should have seen this data

Total spend by firms has gone up in the last 5 yrs from 70% to over 90%

SANDEEP SINGH
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 4

THE AMENDMENT to the Companies Act, introducing harsh penalties including jail term for non-compliance on CSR (corporate social responsibility), comes at a time when firms have been successively improving their record on the front. Data sourced from Prime Database (a leading provider of data on capital market), shows that in the last five years, the total CSR spend of companies has progressively jumped

from 70% to over 90% now. According to the data available for 224 companies for the year 2018-19, against a required CSR spend of Rs 4,366.8 crore, the firms spent an aggregate of Rs 3,994 crore or 91.5% of the requirement. The percentage stood at 79% in FY’16, 83.8% in FY’17 and 83.2% in FY’18. Data further shows that both the number of companies eligible for mandatory CSR spending and their total spend have shown a significant rise. While the amount stood at Rs 6,446

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

EXPLAINED
E.
Surprise move

WHILE some call the mandatory CSR spend clause itself regressive, there is no impact assessment either on whether the sums spend under it are actually effective. Penal provisions on top of it, despite improvement as shown by this data come as a surprise.

VIEW FROM THE TOP



WHAT'S NEXT

- AUGUST 6:** Spacecraft to raise itself into a higher orbit
- AUGUST 14:** Break from Earth orbit, head to Moon
- AUGUST 20:** Slated to enter an orbit around the moon

- SEPTEMBER 3:** Vikram lander, inside which Pragyaan rover is housed, will separate from the spacecraft and descend into a lower orbit around the moon
- SEPTEMBER 7:** Lander and rover to attempt a touchdown on the lunar surface

	2018-19	2017-18	2016-17	2015-16	2014-15
No. of companies considered for the analysis*	224	1077	992	911	849
Required CSR spends	4,366.82	10,364.78	9,668.51	9,088.06	8,201.51
Shortfall in spends	372.56	1,740.91	1,565.06	1,883.41	2,444.63
CSR spends as a percent of required CSR	91.47	83.20	83.81	79.28	70.19

* Firms listed on NSE and obligated to spend on CSR and for which CSR details were available in Annual Reports
CSR spend figures in ₹ crore; Source: Prime Database

CWC to meet Aug 10, Deora puts up Pilot, Scindia names

MANOJ CG
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 4

AS THE Congress announced Sunday that it would hold a meeting of its Working Committee on August 10 to appoint a new president in place of Rahul Gandhi, the party's leadership crisis took another turn with names of someone from outside the Gandhi family being suggested for the top post. Former Union minister Milind Deora said on Sunday that he was of the view that “young leaders like Sachin Pilot and Jyotiraditya Scindia can lead and invigorate the party”. “My view is that the party must put its best foot forward. It is very clear now that a member of the Gandhi family will not become party president. They have made

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

Assam dists panic, notices at night for NRC hearings 300 km away

ABHISHEK SAHA
SONTOLI (KAMRUP), AUGUST 4

ON SUNDAY, Abu Sama and Abu Bakkar boarded a packed bus with their young children and wives, hoping to make it to a hearing of the National Register of Citizens (NRC) in Jorhat, over 300 km away, scheduled for Monday. The daily wage labourers were among the hundreds of people in at least two districts of Lower Assam, Kamrup (Rural) and Barpeta, to have received “sudden” notices to appear for NRC hearings in far-off towns within the next few days, starting Monday.

The notices started arriving Saturday night. With the short deadline adding to the panic, and the government tight-lipped, villagers across the two districts hired vehicles to make the long travel, many of them for the first time in their lives. The bus Sama and Bakkar



At Sontoli, one of the trucks hired for hearings. Abhishek Saha

boarded was hired for Rs 30,000 by those served notices in their village. Other families were seen clambering onto Tata Sumos and pick-up trucks, headed apart from Jorhat, for towns like Dibrugarh, Sivasagar and Golaghat. Referring to Sontoli, a local police officer said, “It seems al-

most every house has received a notice in this area.” A few of his colleagues too had got notices, he added, and had applied for leave. In adjoining Goroimari, where many received notices too, there was panic selling to arrange money for travel.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

Ponzi scam: IMA founder may have kept bribe records

JOHNSON TA
BENGALURU, AUGUST 4

INVESTIGATIONS BY a Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the Karnataka police into a nearly Rs 1,400 crore scam, where over 40,000 investors in a firm called I Monetary Advisory Ltd have been cheated through a ponzi scheme dubbed as sharia compliant, have revealed that the firm's founder, Mohammed Mansoor Khan, maintained records on his computer of bribes he paid officials.

The names of several top police officers who served in the eastern jurisdiction of Bengaluru city, where the IMAGroup is located, are present in the records maintained by the alleged scamster, multiple police sources familiar with details of records

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

THE GOVERNANCE PAGE

HOW A BIOMETRIC SYSTEM IS REDUCING CHAOS ON RAILWAY PLATFORMS

PAGE 12

Indian men mark arrival in badminton's speediest, strongest, toughest event

PAGE 1 ANCHOR

SHIVANI NAIK
MUMBAI, AUGUST 4

SIX YEARS ago, coaches Pullela Gopichand in Hyderabad and Uday Pawar in Mumbai told their respective wards Saatwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty that their future lay in ditching singles ambitions and embracing dou-

bles. On Sunday, they became the first-ever Indians to win a Super 500 championship, beating reigning world champions Chinese Li Junhui and Liu Yu Chen 21-19, 18-21, 21-18 at the Thailand Open. This is India's first top title in what is badminton's speediest, strongest and toughest event to crack — the men's doubles, dominated by the powerful and blitzzy Indonesians, Chinese, Koreans and Danes. “I watched with tingling excitement as two young Indians



Shetty (left), Rankireddy after their win at Thailand Open in Bangkok. Courtesy BAI

showed a lot of wisdom and brains as well as control over the shuttle,” gushed India's foremost doubles player, 86-year-old Nandu Natekar, watching from Pune. “There are always four very fast players on court in doubles at the topmost level. To see two of them being Indian was a fabulous treat,” he added. India has always seen the solo artists winning big — besides two All-England singles champions in Gopichand and Prakash

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2

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WEB EXCLUSIVE

WHY AIR INDIA HAS CAPPED FARES ON SRINAGAR-DELHI FLIGHTS TO UNDER RS 7000

The advisory by Jammu and Kashmir government asking tourists to leave the valley area has created a sudden spurt in sale of flight tickets out of Srinagar. The airline announced that it was holding the maximum fare at Rs 6,715 for its Srinagar to Delhi flights and at Rs 6,899 for its Delhi to Srinagar flights till August 15

VIDEO OF THE DAY



CHANDRAYAAN-2 SENDS IMAGES OF EARTH

ISRO released images of Earth captured by the spacecraft

FULL COVERAGE



KASHMIR: AMIT SHAH MEETS AJIT DOVAL

Centre "willingly creating a sense of panic", says Mehbooba

EXPRESS AUDIO

Why are communities banning mobiles for young women?

NEW EPISODE EVERYDAY

Following a recent ban on mobile phones by the Thakor community in Gujarat, this episode dives into how such bans are justified by community leaders

FROM PAGE ONE

Omar, Mufti

from midnight tonight & the process has already started for other mainstream leaders. No way of knowing if this is true but if it is, then I'll see all of you on the other side of whatever is in store. Allah save us."

Minutes earlier, at 11.12 pm, Mufti tweeted: "Hearing about internet being snapped soon including cellular coverage. Curfew passes being issued too. God knows what awaits us tomorrow. It's going to be a long night."

Earlier in the day, J&K's Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) issued a notice to the former chief minister in the J&K Bank recruitment case and the NIA summoned former Independent legislator Engineer Rashid to Delhi.

The notices added to the confusion and panic in the

Valley. Paramilitary forces remained deployed across Kashmir, while satellite phones have reached civil administration officials. On Sunday evening, a directory with the satellite numbers of administrative officials appeared on social media.

In Jammu, all schools, colleges and academic institutions have been advised to remain closed on Monday.

The ACB notice, dated August 3, was delivered to Mufti at her residence. The notice sought to know if she had verbally or otherwise endorsed the recommendations made by ministers in the PDP-BJP government for appointments in J&K Bank

Mufti, who tweeted the letter, said the notice was part of an attempt to "browbeat leaders" in the state.

Late evening on Sunday, after an all-party meeting

which he presided over at his residence, NC chairman Farooq Abdullah said, "The modification, abrogation of Articles 35A, 370 and unconstitutional delimitation or trifurcation of the state would be an aggression against the people of Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. All parties would be united in their resolve to protect and defend the identity, autonomy and special status of Jammu and Kashmir." He said the leaders have sought an audience with President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The meeting was attended by, among others, Omar, PDP's Muzaffar Hussain Beig, J&K People's Conference chief Sajjad Lone, IAS officer-turned-politician Shah Faesal, Congress leader Taj Mohideen and CPI(M)'s M Y Tarigami.

The tension had been building through the day, with non-Kashmiri cricketers sent back. All-rounder Irfan Pathan, who is the mentor of the J&K cricket team, and his support staff flew back on Sunday. "In two days, we have sent back 115 people, including 100 players from Jammu," said Jammu and Kashmir Cricket Association Chief Executive Officer Syed Aashiq Hussain Bukhari.

Director, Tourism, Nisar Wani said 98% of the tourists who were present in Kashmir have left.

A senior CRPF officer in Srinagar said "everything has been finalised regarding deployment" and that they are waiting for "further orders".

Rumours also continued to do the rounds due to the spire of official orders appearing on social media, including one by "District Police, Baramulla" seeking the presence of all officials and officers in proper uniform "for further duties", including some with "bag and baggage".

Another order, from Deputy Commissioner, Kargil, Baseer-ul-Haq, asked district officers and sub-divisional magistrates not to leave stations "under any circumstances", "without prior approval". "No officer shall keep his/her mobile phone on switched off mode," read the order. Haq said it was a "routine order" and had "nothing to do with any situation".

The District Magistrate of Anantnag ordered petrol dealers to not conduct any "sale of petrol/diesel without permission".

Art 35A

agricultural land in many hilly states. So, this can be kept out of bounds. But land may be sold for businesses, and other activities, based on the local employment these will generate. "These are options being explored," a top state government source told The Indian Express.

According to the sources, these are ideas "not to be acted upon immediately", but which can be undertaken without having to abrogate Article 370 of the Constitution, which recognises the special status of Jammu and Kashmir.

For the state's residents and political parties, any dilution of Article 35A will be an assault on the state's autonomy and an attempt to change the Valley's demography.

A top official said one of the reasons why the government continues to be the biggest employer in the state is because companies and outsiders cannot purchase land. This has led to many state government rules being bent and subverted just to give permanent employment to residents in all institutions and establishments funded

by the state, an official said. Article 35A — currently under challenge in the Supreme Court — has been "a big deterrent in attracting private investment, and creating more jobs", another official said. But NC leader Omar Abdullah said "lack of private investment" is a ruse. "In the past, land has been leased to private companies on a long-term basis," he pointed out.

The sources said the government would like to get on board parties in the state on Article 35A. "Attempts will be made to talk to parties. We need to discuss how this would benefit the people," a source said.

Citing the example of Himachal Pradesh, an official said Section 118 of the HP Tenancy and Land Reforms Act, 1972, restricts transfer of land to a person who is not an agriculturist of the state. Under Rule 38-A of the HP Tenancy and Land Reforms Rules, there are limits on the quantum of area for building a residential house, construction of a shop, industrial projects, socially useful activities and public use facilities.

Ayodhya

the Places of Worship (Special Provisions) Act, 1991 — which prohibits "conversion of any place of worship as of any place of worship as it existed on the 15th day of August, 1947, and for matters connected therewith or incidental thereto" — applied to Ayodhya. It also meant explicitly accepting that the Act would apply to the Kashi Vishwanath temple-Vishwami mosque complex in Varanasi, and the Shahi Idgah and adjacent Krishna Janmabhoomi temple at Mathura. Therefore, accepting the present status of these two disputed sites as settled.

The second "element" was requesting the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) to streamline the process by which mosques are declared 'monuments', and by which they are not to be allowed for regular worship.

The third "element" was providing alternative land to Muslims in lieu of the contentious 1,350 sq m of land where the Babri Masjid stood, and funds to the Sunni Waqf Board to build a mosque "anywhere" in the country.

The last involved repair, refurbishment and restoration of "about 20 mosques" in Ayodhya which are in a state of disuse and disrepair.

All of these elements were discussed, and formed the core of the efforts by the committee for at least a "partial settlement", so as to convey to the Supreme Court some contours of an agreement. But by July 31 afternoon, it was clear this would not happen.

For the 'Hindu' side, if a blanket assurance under the Places of Worship Act was not acceptable, those sticking to their negotiating position on the 'Muslim' side said the land on which a mosque once stood could not be given away for any other purpose.

With the mediation committee telling the Supreme Court it had failed, Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi said day-to-day hearings would start on the matter from August 6.

A petition asking for live-streaming of the court hearings is to be heard on Monday morning.

CSR

score in FY'15 for 849 companies, it was Rs 10,115 crore in FY'18 for 1,077 companies. While data is available only for

224 companies as of now for 2018-19, they have spent 4,525 crore.

India Inc has termed the government's decision to impose prison sentence over CSR as retrograde and sought a relook. Industry participants say the move is also strange given the improved compliance. "I think in the first couple of years several companies struggled to spend as they did not have a mechanism in place. However, over the last couple of years, most large companies that are profitable have beaten the requirement of 2% of average net profit of last three years for CSR spend. I am not sure what motivated the government, but such moves take us behind," said Naushad Forbes, co-chairman of Forbes Marshall.

The number also shows that the number of companies spending their full CSR funds has also been improving. While nearly 62%, or 526 companies out of 849 in its study, had unspent CSR amounts in 2014-15, this number had come down to 50% in 2015-16, further falling to 45% and 39% in FY'17 and FY'18 respectively. In 2017-18, 422 companies out of the 1,077 companies under study had unspent CSR funds.

Pranav Haldea, Managing Director, Prime Database, admitted that the data had to be taken with some scepticism as no one knows how most of the companies were doing CSR, and there was no impact assessment. But, he added, "these things can't be mandated and it has to come from your own social commitment". Calling the amendment a step in the wrong direction, he said, "The move to impose prison term is ridiculous. We can't have these things as mandatory and if the companies pay their tax dues, that is good enough."

The amendment to the Companies Act, passed last week, specified that unspent CSR funds be transferred into an escrow account. It also said that any unspent annual CSR funds must be transferred to one of the funds under Schedule 7 of the Companies Act such as the Prime Minister's Relief Fund.

The amendment to Section 135 of the Companies Act adds, "If a company contravenes the provisions of sub-section (5) or sub-section (6), the company shall be punishable with fine which shall not be less than fifty thousand rupees but which may extend to twenty-five lakh rupees and every officer of such company who is in default shall be punishable with imprisonment for a term which may extend to three years or with fine which shall not be less than fifty thousand rupees but which may extend to five lakh rupees, or with both."

Shah meet

At around 2 pm, Additional Secretary (Kashmir Division) Gyanesh Kumar met Shah. The Home Minister is learnt to have discussed the current situation in Kashmir with him. "The discussion was largely about law and order and safety of citizens owing to the security threat input received recently regarding Kashmir. I do not think the issue of Article 35A or 370 was broached," a Home Ministry official said. Kumar, himself, was not available for comment, nor did the Home Ministry give out any information.

The meetings came ahead of the Cabinet meeting scheduled for Monday morning as well as Parliament, where the issue is likely to be raised by the Opposition.

The Congress has demanded that the PM make a statement in Parliament on what was happening in Kashmir, while accusing the Modi government of preparing for some "misadventure" in J&K. Former home minister P Chidambaram said he does not wish to anticipate what "misadventure" the government was planning. But "those (journalists) covering the Home Ministry know that in the last 24 to 48 hours it is indeed preparing for some misadventure".

CWC

that amply clear. I think, based on interactions with workers and voters, there seems to be a general view that young leaders like Sachin Pilot or Jyotiraditya Scindia can lead and reinvigorate the party," Deora told The Indian Express. "I also believe that appointing either of them will end any ambiguity in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh about the party's local leadership. This will further strengthen the governments of Ashok Gehlot and Kamal Nath," he added.

Earlier, several leaders, including Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh, had suggested that Priyanka Gandhi Vadra take over as the Congress president.

Others too spoke out. While Lok Sabha MP Shashi Tharoor said the CWC should appoint an interim president and then hold internal elections to senior leadership positions which would allay all concerns, veteran leader Karan Singh said there must be a generational change. If the party can find a younger leader, "it would be good idea", he told PTI. On Priyanka, Singh said, if she agrees, he would welcome her, and that she will be a "unifying force".

However, the elders in the Congress continue to hold out against the idea that the party needs a young leader. "What we require is somebody who can take the entire party along and take to the people the party's vision and philosophy," a senior leader said on the condition of anonymity.

Many were guarded. "Milind Deora has expressed his opinion. In the Congress, everyone has the right to put forth their views. Since the date of the Working Committee has been announced, it will be only appropriate that I place my views before the CWC," former Union minister Jitin Prasada told The Indian Express.

Asked whether the seniors would agree to a young leader as president, Deora said, "I am not aware, but I am echoing what a very senior leader like Captain Amarinder Singh has said... After the Gandhi family, I think these two individuals (Pilot and Scindia) have the potential to motivate the cadre and voter."

"Amarinder Singh is one of the seniormost leaders... If he has no aversion to working with a younger leader, we should all put aside our petty insecurities... I am sure that all leaders will have no aversion to work alongside leaders like Pilot or Scindia," he said.

When pointed out that Karan Singh had also favoured Priyanka, Deora said, "I would be most happy if she became president but as far as I understand, that is not an option. If the Gandhi family has decided that they don't wish to become president, that is a decision that we as a party should accept and move on."

IMA founder

found on Khan's electronic gadgets said. With the SIT moving to ob-

tain custody of Mansoor Khan on Thursday — for the first time after the IMA founder was brought back to India from Dubai 10 days ago — investigations are expected to focus on the alleged payments documented by Mansoor Khan on his computer.

"A lot of details have been found but these are of no use as evidence unless they can be corroborated through investigation. Once Mansoor Khan is interrogated, the veracity of the alleged payments can be verified," SIT sources said.

Police sources said that as per the records found from the electronic gadgets, the payments Khan allegedly made to police officers, including IPS officers, range from Rs 3 crore to Rs 20 crore. "Of the nearly Rs 1,400 crore that was collected from investors by the IMA Group, we have been able to account for only around Rs 400 crore," an SIT source said.

"Since Khan was dealing with huge amounts of payments in cash... he maintained detailed records of the payments," a police source said.

In audio and video messages released while he was in hiding for over a month in Dubai, Mansoor Khan claimed to have been cheated by politicians and officials who extorted funds from him to enable his firm to continue. "Many people were successful in bringing me down. I have details of all those who harassed and extorted and I will place it all before the judiciary. If I name the people now, they will finish my family. When we give black money, there is no record or receipt but funds have to be returned," Khan said in a video released in June.

"There are a list of names and if you can do it, take your funds from them," he stated in the video message in June.

The SIT and the ED have extensively questioned former Congress minister Zameer Ahmed Khan over a payment of Rs 9.38 crore he allegedly received from IMA. Zameer Ahmed has claimed that his financial transactions with the IMA founder were over the sale of a piece of prime land he owned in the heart of Bangalore in 2017-18.

The SIT has also served notices to former Congress MLA R Roshan Baig after Mansoor Khan alleged that he paid Rs 400 crore to Baig, which the politician never repaid.

The SIT has served a notice on three policemen who served in the Bangalore East division, who provided a clean chit to IMA's operations a few years ago, to appear before it on Friday for investigations. IPS officer Ajay Hillori, who was the DCP East, is among the officers summoned.

"A clean chit was given by these officials to IMA saying the firm does not come under the ambit of the Karnataka Protection of Interest of Depositors (KPID) in Financial Establishments Act, 2004, despite the police having no powers to verify the firm under the KPID Act," police sources said.

This initial clean chit given by the Bengaluru city police — specifically the East division — was followed by a clean chit given under the KPID Act by an Inspector General of Police at the Criminal Investigation Department in Karnataka in 2018. The Assistant Commissioner and Deputy Commissioner of the Bangalore Urban Revenue Department followed suit — issuing clean chits to IMA's ponzi investment scheme — citing police reports from the city police and the CID.

The SIT has in its investi-

gations found that the Assistant Commissioner for the Bangalore North revenue division L C Nagaraj was paid a bribe of Rs 3.5 crore by Mansoor Khan and the Deputy Commissioner, IAS officer B M Vijayshankar, was paid Rs 1.5 crore.

Both the Assistant Commissioner and the Deputy Commissioner were arrested last month by the SIT and part of the funds collected as bribes have been recovered.

Badminton

Padukone, Saina Nehwal and P V Sindhu have tasted Olympic glory.

But the alchemy of power, speed, work ethic, motivation and two men who could combine winningly just didn't happen. "Either just one talent cropped up or it was tough to get two guys to complement each other," says Gopichand.

In Saatwik-Chirag, India have unearthed world-class talent as they came through a draw which had the top six pairings of the world.

"What we saw with Saatwik-Chirag is Indians able to match and counter speeds of opponents and able to defend and counter-attack," explained former doubles player and now coach Vimal Kumar.

The 22-year-olds play aggressive badminton, going toe-to-toe with the best in the world and maintaining a relentless pace of punishing exchanges as seen in top doubles. On Sunday, the Indians dominated in the first set, absorbed the loss in the second and masterfully thwarted the Chinese to prevail in one of the most entertaining matches featuring a pair of Indians.

Chirag comes from a Mumbai family of hoteliers, the Shetty's, and chose badminton ahead of a promising academic career. A 6'1" who adapted to crouch at the net when paired with Saatwik and who can cleverly dictate the game as a playmaker, Chirag boasts a steady defence to go with his own attacking power from the forecourt.

Saatwiksairaj is India's biggest talent in doubles with a monstrous smash from the backcourt. Born to a physical education teacher from East Godavari district in Andhra, the big-shouldered lad can power through rival defences like a battle tank, but showed tremendous dexterity at the net against the Chinese.

"Their win in the semis against the Koreans was against players who are hero-worshipped by youngsters. But our Indian boys knew you can't respect an opponent too much if you plan to beat them," said Uday Pawar, Chirag's coach in his formative years who took the decision to steer him towards doubles.

Unlike tennis doubles, where fitness demands are decidedly easier than for singles, badminton doubles demands a skill-set that's high on pace and power, besides net play and reflexes. The margins are very small and Saatwik-Chirag's breakthrough signals India's entry into a discipline that is considered the most entertaining art form with crazed following in Korea, China and Indonesia.

Uday Pawar recalls another year when he called Chirag, who was sitting in his room brooding after a third straight first-round loss in Singapore. "I asked him, thakaa hai kya (Are you tired)? He said, no. So I blasted him: 'Toh room mein baithke kiske aane ka intezar kar raha hai (Then what are you doing sitting in your room and waiting)? Go book a practice court and train.'"

Classifieds

PERSONAL

I, Vijay Pal Singh R/o. Flat No. 404, Olive Tower, Gulmohar Residency, Ahinsa Khand-2, Indrapuram, Ghaziabad, U.P.-201014 have changed my minor son's name from Akshar Singh to Akshar V Singh for all future purposes. 040506124-1

I, Siddharth S/o Om Kumar R/o Ff-10, Module-13, Vardan Apartment, Abhay Khand-3, Indrapuram, Ghaziabad have changed my name to Siddharth Chaudhary for all purposes. 040506187-1

I, Ravi Sonik S/o Raj Kumar Sonik R/o 24CUA, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi-7, have changed name of my son from Aryaan Sonik to Aaryaan Sonik for all purposes. 040506086-1

I, Raj Maitrey S/o Kaushal Kumar Sharma R/o A-59, First Floor, South Extn, Part-2, New Delhi-110049, have changed my name from Raj Maitreya to Raj Maitrey. 040506093-1

I, Preeti Girhotra W/o Satish Girhotra R/o 524 Gali Hardeva Village Dhirpur Delhi-110009, have changed my son's name from Anurag Girhotra to Anurag Girrotra. 040506080-1

I, Hitesh Kumar S/O Shankar Lal R/O 2376/T-23/A, Mandi Extn, Narela, Delhi-110040. Have Changed My Name To Hitesh Goyal. 040506200-3

I, Gopika Valsan, Daughter Of S A Sivalasan, Resident Of No 12, Officers Mess, Air Force Station Naraina, Brar Square, Delhi 110010, Has Changed My Name From Gopika Valsan To Gopika Nair Vide Affidavit DL31847290683987 Dated 3/07/2019, At Delhi. 50152715-1

I, Babita Chaudhary W/o Om Kumar R/o Ff-10, Module-13, Vardaan Apartment, Abhay Khand-3, Indrapuram, Ghaziabad have changed my name to Babita for all purposes. 040506187-2

I, Aseem Atri R/O A-227, Majlis Park, Adarsh Nagar, Delhi-110033. Have Changed My Child Name Sudiksha To Sudiksha Atri. 040506200-1

I, Chander Prakash Khaneja S/o Ramesh Chander Khaneja R/O H. No. 3C/108, NIT, Faridabad informs that in 10th class marksheet of my minor daughter my name is wrongly mentioned Chander Khaneja but my correct name is Chander Prakash Khaneja for all purposes. 040506187-3

I, Vijayesh Lal R/o A-701, Antriksh Nature, Sector-52, U.P 201301. Have changed my minor son's name from Prakhhar Jonathan Lal to Prakhhar Lal for all future purposes. 040506095-1

I, Neha Kaur W/O Tirlok Singh R/O Wz-629/G, Srinagar, Galino.2, Shakur Basti, Delhi-110034. Have Changed My Name To Neha Daphu. 040506200-2

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WILL BE PLACED BEFORE DELHI CABINET THIS WEEK

Funding nod for WiFi project, bus shelters to get hotspots

SOURAV ROY BARMAN
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 4

THE DELHI government's long-pending WiFi project is one step closer to reality with the Expenditure Finance Committee (EFC) granting expenditure sanction, a prerequisite for it to get Cabinet clearance.

The committee cleared the project — under which around 11,000 hotspots will be installed across Delhi — during its sitting on August 2, a senior official said.

The project, which has seen a long delay, was among AAP's major poll promises.

Since taking office, it has assessed various models for implementing it, including internet vouchers with the dense pene-

tration of 4G data in the country.

The government, in its annual budget for 2019-20, has set aside Rs 150 crore for the project. However, an official privy to the latest development said the cost has been revised to Rs 99 crore.

"The EFC has granted clearance. It is likely to be placed before the Cabinet this week," the official said.

It is learnt that around 4,000 bus queue shelters will double up as wireless internet hotspots under the project, apart from 100 hotspots in each Assembly constituency.

The Delhi government has estimated that up to 150 people will be able to access the web at a speed of 50 mbps at every hotspot, while the data limit will be fixed at 150 GB per user

in a month.

"Users will be able to access the internet through One Time Passwords," an official added.

The Delhi government's advisory body, Dialogue and Development Commission of Delhi, had announced in June 2016 that the first 1,000 WiFi hotspots will come up in areas across East Delhi. But the proposal did not materialise.

The project was initially with the IT Department, which had even engaged a private consultancy firm to chalk out a blueprint.

In May 2018, the government entrusted the PWD with its implementation, only to face resistance as the department's officials initially cited "non-availability of sufficient staff" and lack of expertise in this field.

The PWD had later pitched for the internet vouchers model, urging the government to keep the changed situation in mind with the advent of 4G. However, the idea was shot down by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

Meanwhile, a separate tender for 1,397 new bus shelters will soon be floated, a transport department official said.

According to the outcome budget, the government has fixed December 31, 2019, as the deadline for floating tenders for WiFi in public places.

The expected date for commissioning the pilot phase of the project is March 31, 2020, while the deadline for its complete launch is September 30, 2020.

The Assembly polls are due in Delhi in another six months.

Curtains for Darya Ganj book market

ASHNA BUTANI
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 4

LIKE EVERY Sunday for the last 40 years, street vendors at the Darya Ganj book market take their place on the footpaths — this time, without their books.

Following a Delhi High Court order last month to the North Delhi Municipal Corporation to shut all markets on Netaji Subhash Marg, as the civic body told the court that it was a no squatting, no hawking zone, the market has been shut.

The civic body is now exploring options on relocating the book market. "We are exploring options and hope to find something mutually acceptable in a



The market shut following an HC order. Prem Nath Pandey

meeting this week," said North body Commissioner Varsha Joshi.

In the meantime, booksellers are left in the lurch as their livelihood depends on the Sunday market. Subhash Chandra Agarwal (80), one of the first booksellers in the market, said:

"Around 250 vendors rely on this market. But it is more than just us — students from across the city, poor children who cannot afford books elsewhere come here because they get books starting at Rs 10."

A sense of nostalgia fills the road as some booksellers recalled their meetings with former CM Sheila Dikshit and writer Khushwant Singh. Agarwal remembers a young man who asked him for books but did not have the money to buy them.

"I gifted him the books. After many years, he became a government official and came back to us. He told us that the book market is responsible for his success," said the vendor. A few metres down the road, four girls

preparing for IAS examinations scour through the bigger bookstores for History books. Booksellers make Rs 2,000-Rs 10,000 depending on their stock. "Bundles of books are packed and stored in the bylanes of Darya Ganj. If the market is shifted, then we will have to pay a huge amount to transfer the books every week. Besides, we are too old to lift so many books and travel," said Kamar Saeed, who has been selling books for 40 years.

Supporting the vendors, Lata, vice-president of SEWA Delhi Union, said: "A market cannot be evicted without a proper survey. Besides, this is a very peaceful and historical market, held once a week."

AIIMS docs call off protest over NMC Bill

New Delhi: AIIMS resident doctors called off their protest against the National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill after a meeting with Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan early Sunday morning. Doctors will resume work Monday.

"Met the delegation of AIIMS RDA... and reiterated that NMC Bill is a big change in the field of medical education which will be a blessing in better health services to 130 crore people," Vardhan tweeted. The AIIMS doctors' body said, "We were assured by the minister that RDA and students' union AIIMS (New Delhi) representatives will be consulted before framing the Bill's regulations."

Resident doctors at Safdarjung Hospital also called off the protest. The Federation of Resident Doctors' Association has also decided to call off the strike at 9 am on Monday. **ENS**

Kin of woman killed by stalker demand SC/ST Act be added

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 4

A WEEK after a 21-year-old woman was stabbed to death, allegedly by a man who was stalking her, in South East Delhi's Sarai Kale Khan, over 500 people held a silent protest and demanded "justice" for the woman at India Gate Sunday evening. The woman's family, along with members of Gadge Youth Brigade, held a candle march from Bikaner House to India Gate.

On July 26, the woman was stabbed multiple times by the accused, Mohammed Munsair (25), near the Bhogal bus stand. The accused was arrested after bystanders caught him, said police. The victim's brother said: "My sister supported the family... After her death, we thought the police or government would help us but nobody apart from our community members helped us. We want the SC/ST Act to be added in the case... we deserve justice."

"We have investigated the case and charged the accused with 302 IPC. We haven't added the SC/ST Act because the accused attacked the victim to exact revenge after she rejected him," said Additional DCP (South East) Kumar Gyanesh.

Protesters also demanded compensation for the family and that one family member be provided a government job. Police said a chargesheet is yet to be filed.

Government of India
Public Enterprises Selection Board
invites applications for the post of
CHAIRMAN & MANAGING DIRECTOR
IN
ANDREW YULE & CO. LTD.
Last date of receipt of applications in
PESB is by 15:00 hours on 9th October, 2019
For details login to website
<http://www.pesb.gov.in>

Government of India
Public Enterprises Selection Board
invites applications for the post of
DIRECTOR (TECHNICAL) in
CENTRAL MINE PLANNING & DESIGN
INSTITUTE LIMITED (CMPDIL).
Last date of receipt of applications in
PESB is by 15:00 hours
on 20th September, 2019.
For details login to website
<http://www.pesb.gov.in>

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INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR AVAILING WHITE LABELLING OF THE ELECTRICAL AND AUTOMATION PRODUCTS OF LARSEN & TOUBRO

Schneider Electric India Private Limited ("SEIPL") invites Expression of Interest ("EOI") from LV switchgear manufacturers in India for availing white labelling product manufacturing services from SEIPL, in compliance with the modifications provided in the order of the Competition Commission of India dated 18 April 2019 ("CCI Order"), approving the acquisition of the electrical and automation ("E&A") business of Larsen & Toubro ("L&T") by SEIPL and MacRitchie Investments Pte. Ltd. The CCI Order is available at:

https://www.cci.gov.in/sites/default/files/Notice_order_document/Public1.pdf

The white labelling product manufacturing services being offered by SEIPL is subject to the terms and conditions as set out in the CCI Order including the following:

- The white labelling product manufacturing service is being offered by SEIPL only for the existing product range, owned and manufactured at L&T plants, of the Five Products of L&T (Air Circuit Breakers ("ACB"), Moulded Case Circuit Breakers ("MCCB"), Overload Relays, Contactors, and Switch Disconnector Fuse ("SDF")).
- The white labelling services for the Five Products of L&T can be availed for a period of 5 years for sale solely in the Indian market.
- The pricing and allocation of quantity for the white labelling contract will be governed as per the CCI order and monitored by the Monitoring Agency-Moore Stephens Singhi Advisors LLP appointed by the CCI.
- At the end of the 5 year period for the white labelling service, a single LV switchgear manufacturer shall have the option to enter into a non-transferable, non-sub licensable, non-exclusive technology license solely for manufacture and sale in India with SEIPL for any of the Five Products of L&T for which it has availed of white labelling, subject to the quantity/duration and other terms & conditions as set out in the CCI Order at a reasonable commercial royalty rate for a period of 5 years. Such technology license to the third party LV switchgear manufacturer shall be in accordance with the terms and conditions of the CCI Order.

Interested LV switchgear manufacturers are requested to respond to this invitation for expression of interest by submitting their details at:

<https://www.schneider-electric.co.in/en/about-us/whitelabelling/whitelabelling.jsp> by 5th Oct.

2019, i.e., 2 months from date of publication of EOI. Specific product ranges available for white labelling will be shared with interested parties post registration at the link set out above.

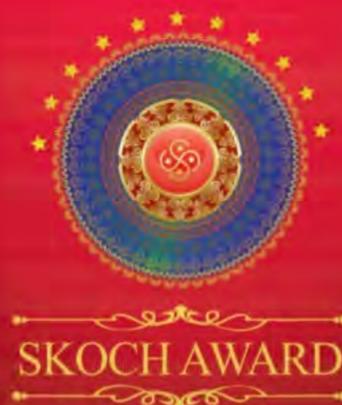
For further details, please contact us at: whitelabel.support@se.com



Ngikya Gohain, MD, RSLDC, Government of Rajasthan receiving SKOCH Award from Sameer Kochhar, Chairman, SKOCH Group and Gursharan Dhanjal, Managing Director & Group Editor, SKOCH Group in presence of Team RSLDC

DEPARTMENT OF SKILLS, EMPLOYMENT & ENTREPRENEURSHIP, RSLDC

**PLATINUM
SKILL RAJASTHAN**



**INDIA'S HIGHEST
INDEPENDENT HONOUR**

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SALUTE THE SOLDIER



NK PREM NATH SINGH, LNK SHAMBHUSHARAN RAY, SEP RAGHU NANDAN PRASAD

In proud memory of the gallant martyrs of 21st Battalion, The Bihar Regiment, who laid down their lives while repelling an attack on the LOC on this day in 2013. The exemplary courage displayed by these brave hearts ensured that the sanctity of the LOC was maintained. Your gallantry will continue to serve as an inspiration for us. We, the fraternity of the "Veer Biharis" salute you.

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Telephones: 0135-2763808, & Fax- 0135- 2763508
CIN No. U40101UR2001SGC025866

Addendum
Amendment 2 of E tender notice No-30/EE (M)/MB-II/18-19: (Procurement of 02 Nos HVDF coated Runners for 76MW Francis Turbine.) invited by the office of the Executive Engineer (Maintenance), MB-II, Chinyalisaur (Uttarkashi) have been uploaded on e-procurement portal <http://uktenders.gov.in> and website "www.uttarakhandjalvidyut.com"
Other Terms & Conditions shall remain unchanged. Details of subsequent addendum/corrigendum/cancellation etc. may be obtained from the e-procurement portal <http://uktenders.gov.in>
प.सं. 412 दिनांक 03.08.2019 Executive Engineer
"Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

MAULANA AZAD INSTITUTE OF DENTAL SCIENCES
(An Autonomous Institute under Govt. of NCT of Delhi)
MAMC COMPLEX, B.S. ZAFAR MARG, NEW DELHI-110002
Contact No. 011-23233884, 23235211, Ext. No. 1155, 1156 (Academic Branch)

Vacancy for the post of Senior Residents (Dental) in various Dental Specialties under Residency Scheme
Applications are invited for recruitment of Senior Residents (Dental) under residency scheme in the following Specialties/departments:

Specialty/Department:
Senior Resident: Conservative Dentistry, Periodontics, Public Health dentistry, Prosthodontics, Oral Medicine & Radiology.

The details of eligibility criteria, number of vacancies, terms & conditions of recruitment, fee payable for application, date of written exam and interviews etc. are available at the web-site of MAIDS (www.maids.ac.in).
Last date of receipt of application- 26.08.2019.

Sd/-
Director-Principal, MAIDS

DIP/Shabdarth/0460/19-20

From IIT-D, software to predict glass strength

EXPRESSNEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 4

CRACKED PHONE screens and shattered windscreens may soon be easier to address with researchers at IIT-Delhi having developed a first-of-its-kind machine-learning software for "predicting and optimising glass compositions". The software, Python for Glass Genomics (PyGGi), has been made to enable researchers and companies to "easily predict glasses with superior properties like scratch resistance and crack resistance". One of the project investigators (PI), Professor N M Anoop

Krishnan from the Civil Engineering Department, said, "Understanding and predicting the composition-structure-property relationship is key... Through this software, once it is determined if the glass is breakable and scratch-free or not, it can be used for things like phones, car screens, window panes etc. This will then help in designing unbreakable glass or bulletproof glass. This is a first-of-its-kind software in the world," he said.

Professor Hariprasad Kodamana from the Mechanical Engineering Department, who is the second PI, said, "PyGGi will be constantly updated to meet all challenges in the field."

Next month, AIIMS to shift its OPD to Masjid Moth facility

ASTHA SAXENA
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 4

THE ALL India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) is all set to move its main out-patient department (OPD) into a more spacious facility at Masjid Moth by next month. "Work on the new OPD block is complete and it will start functioning from September," Dr Randeep Guleria, Director, AIIMS told *The Indian Express*.

The block will also house a high-end diagnostic lab, which will reduce waiting time for patients. "Most of them would be able to get the reports the same

day, depending upon the test... The patient will not have to come back to collect the test report," said Dr Aarti Vij, spokesperson, AIIMS.

At present, the average number of patients visiting the OPD each day is 9,300. This is expected to increase to 10,000 with the inauguration of the new block.

"The waiting time for OPD consultation will be reduced with the inauguration of the new block. Many specialties that were running on a restricted basis (two days a week) will be able to enhance their OPD timings. All these departments will have more space," added Dr Vij.

In a reply to a question in the Lok Sabha, the hospital said new facilities/blocks — Surgical Blocks, National Cancer Institute at Jhajjar, Mother & Child Block, New Private Ward, Burn & Plastic Surgery, Geriatrics Block and New OPD Block — have been approved at AIIMS.

It further stated that 670 faculty doctors are working at present against the sanctioned strength of 1,042. Besides faculty doctors, 958 junior residents and 1,350 senior residents are in position for patient care. Also, 56 faculty doctors in the grade of assistant professors have been appointed on a contract basis.

BRIEFLY

Will fight as independent, says Lamba

New Delhi: AAP's Chandni Chowk MLA Alka Lamba Sunday said she may resign the primary membership of the party but added that she would want to continue as an MLA. "I have decided to contest 2020 elections as an independent candidate," she said.

Man shot at

New Delhi: A 21-year-old man was shot at, allegedly by his friend, in North West Delhi's Jahangirpuri Saturday. Police suspect it was a case of accidental firing.

Man held for stabbing wife

New Delhi: A 56-year-old woman was allegedly stabbed by her husband in South Delhi's Sangam Vihar Saturday. Police said the accused, who suspected his wife was having an affair, has been arrested.

Two held for cop's murder

New Delhi: Police have apprehended two men for allegedly killing a 40-year-old Delhi Police head constable in South East Delhi's Jaitpur last year. **ENS**

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU
HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT
TAMIL NADU ROAD SECTOR PROJECT II

BID NOTICE NO. TNRSPP II/EPC04 (BW)/2019-20/01, Dated.05.08.2019

- The Superintending Engineer (H), TNRSPP II on behalf of Governor of Tamil Nadu invites bids for "Upgrading Vridhachalam - Parangipettai Road (SH 70) km 0+000 to km 35+800 (Balance Works)".
- The bid document is available from 05.08.2019 at 15.00 hours and should be submitted online in the website www.tntenders.gov.in.
- Kindly refer the Invitation For Bid (IFB) uploaded in www.tntenders.gov.in for details.
- A non-refundable fee of Rs.10,000/- (inclusive of tax) is required to be paid (as defined in ITB 6.3 of the bidding document) towards the cost of the bid document.
- Pre-bid meeting will be held on 16.08.2019 at 11.00 hours at the office of the PROJECT DIRECTOR, TNRSPP-II, CHENNAI.
- Deadline for online submission of bids: on or before 11.00 hours (1ST) on 09.09.2019.
- Date of online Technical Bid opening: at 11.30 hours (1ST) on 09.09.2019.

Superintending Engineer (H),
(For and on behalf of the Governor of Tamil Nadu)
Tamil Nadu Road Sector Project II, Chennai-28.
TNMB Building, 1st Floor, 171, South Kesavaperumal Puram,
Off Greenways Road, R.A.Puram, Chennai- 600 028. Tamil Nadu, India.
Telephone No: +91 44 24951072. Fax :+91 44 24952414
Email: tnrsp1@gmail.com Website: www.tnrspp.gov.in

DIPR/2662/Tender/2019

Pipelines for 13 colonies to benefit 2 lakh residents

EXPRESSNEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 4

WATER WOES could soon end for 13 unauthorised colonies in South Delhi's Deoli with Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal flagging off work to lay pipelines in the area Sunday. Around 2 lakh residents are set to benefit from the Rs 14.40-crore project, scheduled to be completed in 12 months. Kejriwal, however, said the government would try to complete it in six months.

A statement issued by the government said once the pipelines are laid, filtered drinking water would be provided through an underground reservoir at Okhla Industrial Area Phase I. Speaking at an event in Sangam Vihar, the Chief Minister said that along with the installation of water pipelines, work will begin soon on construction of roads and sewage connections. "If in four years (since 2015) Kejriwal



Kejriwal inaugurates the pipeline project, Sunday. *Gajendra Yadav*

can get water supplied to your homes, then why couldn't the BJP and the Congress do it in the 30 years before that? It is because they had wrong intentions," he claimed. He also hinted that the area could soon be registered as an authorised colony.

Residents said Deoli and nearby Sangam Vihar have faced "acute water shortage" for more than two decades.



Arvind Kejriwal
Chief Minister, Delhi

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Arvind Kejriwal
Chief Minister, Delhi

Launch of
Oral History Programme
(Documenting voices of the people)

of
Delhi Archives
in collaboration with
Ambedkar University Delhi

by
Manish Sisodia
Deputy Chief Minister, Delhi

Monday, 5 August 2019 at 4:00 PM
C.D. Deshmukh Auditorium, India International Centre
Main building, Max Muller Marg, New Delhi

Dip/Shabbardarh/00074/19-20



The history of a place is incomplete without the lived experiences its people. Tracing the personal journeys of common people will help us chart the journey of Delhi, which no history book can offer. The story of Delhi is not just about epic wars and the fall and rise of kingdoms, it is also about those intimate details, the songs, festivals, the recipes, the businesses that define the everyday culture of Delhi.

It is important to question and understand what constitutes our knowledge of history. An oral history project is a step towards inclusion. With the documentation of oral history through anecdotes, stories and experiences of citizens, the Delhi Archives shall bring forth a holistic story of Delhi.

I congratulate the Delhi Archives for taking on this programme with great enthusiasm and hope that their efforts may pay off.

-Manish Sisodia
Dy. Chief Minister, Delhi

Panel Discussion at 3.00 PM

Topic: Mapping Delhi through Oral Histories, potential and possibilities

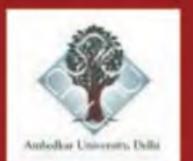
**Sh. S. Irfan Habib, Sh. R.V. Smith,
Dr. Denys Leighton and Ms. Usha Purie**

Moderated by Sh. Sohail Hashmi

To contribute to the project, Please write to us:
ddarchives@nic.in



- An initiative of the Delhi government to map the journey of Delhi through voices of the people
- Important step to help scholars and researchers in filling the gaps of history
- 100 interviews will be conducted in a span of two years
- First phase to focus on the elderly women to map their relationship with Delhi
- Create an oral history archive for the public of anecdotes, songs, experiences, festivals, villages and businesses of Delhi



6 HARDLOOK

REAL ESTATE CRISIS

1.06 LAKH
FLATS INCOMPLETE

10-YEAR
WAIT FOR FLATS

₹4,000 CRORE
DUES TO GREATER NOIDA AUTHORITY
BY VARIOUS BUILDERS

₹15,000 CRORE
DUES TO NOIDA AUTHORITY
(APPROX)

6,000 CASES
PENDING WITH RERA

THE FACADE

Defaulting builders and desperate homebuyers — an all-too-familiar script in Noida and Greater Noida could see a twist after a Supreme Court intervention. AMIL BHATNAGAR and ANANYA TIWARI look for its echoes on the ground

ON JULY 23, the Supreme Court cancelled Amrapali Group's registration under the Real Estate Regulatory Authority (RERA) and appointed the National Buildings Construction Corporation (NBCC) to complete construction of 42,000 flats that buyers had been promised six years ago. The judgment concluded a nine-year legal battle waged by homebuyers — though when they get possession remains to be seen.

The landmark decision highlighted that the company had allegedly siphoned money paid by homebuyers as advance — while some of it was diverted to set up new housing projects, part of it was used to pay for "personal" expenses by some Amrapali officials, such as buying villas.

Testimonies by authorities, real estate experts, public courts and homebuyers *The Indian Express* spoke to suggest Amrapali's case is only the tip of the iceberg.

Of the hundreds of small and big builders that were instrumental in the real estate boom in Noida and Greater Noida in the new millennium, several firms are now embattled, leaving thousands of homebuyers in the lurch as at least 1.06 lakh flats that should have been delivered by now lie incomplete — in some cases only as blueprints.

Jaypee Infratech Limited, the real estate division of Jaiprakash Associates Limited which changed the infrastructural landscape of Greater Noida during the Mayawati regime in 2007, is currently awaiting the Supreme Court's response on its plea against a National Company Law Appellate Tribunal decision. Jaypee had proposed an ambitious 'Wish Town' in Noida with projects that were due between 2011-2012. Till date, almost 22,500 buyers are yet to get the keys to a new home.

Unitech Group, a Forbes Global 2000 company, has left almost 16,000 homebuyers out in the cold. The Centre has again suggested that NBCC be appointed to complete pending projects. Unitech MD Sanjay Chandra, meanwhile, continues to be lodged in Tihar Jail.

Besides these real estate giants, several other companies are facing trouble, with more than 21,000 flats awaiting completion, RERA figures suggest. According to officials, these include Omaxe, Supertech, Lotus Projects promoted by 3C Group, Unnati Fortune Holding Ltd and Logix Group, which have projects across Noida and Greater Noida.

According to sources in the Greater Noida Industrial Development Authority (GNIDA), 2.6 lakh flats were to be constructed in 200 sanctioned projects, of which almost 1.30 lakh were not given completion certificates for different reasons in Greater Noida alone.

In UP RERA, around 16,000 cases by homebuyers were registered in RERA courts out of which 10,000 had been resolved until August. A majority of these are confined to the western UP regions of Noida, Greater Noida and Ghaziabad. Four courts have been set up under the UP RERA to deal with homebuyer woes. A defaulter list uploaded by GNIDA, meanwhile, has listed 155 projects by more than 50 builders that had to submit dues ranging from Rs 4 crore to Rs 4,000 crore.

The spiral

"Companies such as Amrapali, Jaypee



The Amrapali Dream Valley project in Noida Extension. On July 23, the Supreme Court cancelled Amrapali Group's registration under the Real Estate Regulatory Authority. Photos: Gajendra Yadav

had access to a lot of money and that is where, ironically, the problem began. Properties were highly leveraged because of private equity money. Also, there was large amount of land purchase without any track record of most builders being able to actually deliver. When markets liberated, several builders, due to their political access, kept on leveraging projects as a result of which a crisis broke out. By 2014, market forces started showing signs of problems," said Pankaj Kapoor, MD, Liasas Foras, a real estate data analytics company.

According to Greater Noida authority officials, not all builders are deemed willful defaulters like Amrapali. "We must acknowledge that there was a slowdown in the real estate sector after 2008, which impacted construction and various other activities. Not all builders wilfully defaulted... But yes, some builders also went on the alleged cheating and fraud path," said Narendra Bhushan, CEO GNIDA.

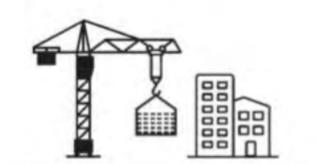
Yogesh Kumar Goyal, a CA and lawyer who handles cases for UP RERA, said, "This is like the 2008 real estate bubble in the US. In 1998, the government liberalised the housing loan policy, and banks started giving out lots of loans so all sectors connected to real estate would grow. Now that banks started to easily finance house loans, builders started to misuse it, diverting funds before completing projects. But the issue is also why banks continued to give out loans, without taking into account the status of construction."

Several builders, however, maintain projects are on track. "All our projects are on time. We have delivered more than 22,000 units in the last three years. We are committed to delivering 10,000 units in the current financial year," said Supertech chairman R K Arora. A

consumer court had recently ordered Supertech to pay compensation to a couple whose flat was delayed.

A senior official from the Omaxe Group claimed: "Most of our houses in Noida and Greater Noida have been delivered. There may be some here and there that are pending. But unlike some big companies where buyers have booked flats and haven't received them, we have no such problem."

The interpretation of "ongoing projects" as mentioned in the RERA Act is another contentious point, with stakeholders suggesting builders often take advantage of the ambiguity. As per the Act, completion/occupancy certificates from RERA are required to declare a project complete. However, builders applied



Besides these real estate giants, several smaller companies are facing trouble, with more than 21,000 flats awaiting completion, RERA figures suggest. A senior official said Noida and Greater Noida authorities must also be held accountable for the crisis

for such certificates even before projects were wrapped up. The option to apply for the certificate online was discontinued by UP RERA last year, after it was found that many companies would upload irrelevant documents, and in the absence of manual checking, some would even get approval.

A senior official in the regulatory organisation claimed Noida and Greater Noida authorities must also be held accountable for how certificates were issued. "The authorities could have, and should have, kept a check on the progress of the projects," the official said, echoing the Supreme Court's observations.

The wait

KK Kaushal, a petitioner in the Amrapali case, recalls feeling relieved when the SC judgment was announced. At the helm of the campaign against the builder for six years, Kaushal was active on Twitter; made a Telegram group of thousands of homebuyers; organised candlelight marches; and also made regular court appearances.

"It's great that the SC has passed a buyer-friendly judgment and it will go a long way, but funds are still a question. The fact remains that NBCC will have to get thousands of crores to clean this mess. Plus they are also being considered to finish other projects. Will the cost come down to the government exchequer or to us?" said the 37-year-old, who works in a private firm and had invested over Rs 15 lakh for an Amrapali Dream Valley flat.

Pramod Kumar, an investor in a 2BHK at a Jaypee Noida property in Sector 133, said: "NBCC required 66% votes of lenders, in this case bankers and homebuyers, in their bid to take over Jaypee's projects. They did not receive the required votes at the time. There

is no denying that there might be trust issues when it comes to NBCC managing the task. Every asset (of defaulting firms) needs to be liquidated so the money is used to finish the flats."

Dr Sarita Punia, who lives in Delhi and retired as the chief medical officer from Safdarjung Hospital, had invested in a 3C's Lotus Panache flat in Noida's Sector 110 in 2010. She was supposed to get possession six years ago. Asking why some homebuyers were being bailed out and others weren't, she said: "We, too, need an organisation like NBCC or another government intervention." Her frustration was shared by Prashant Agarwal and his wife Bhavana Agarwal, both chartered accountants in their 30s, who booked a flat at a Supertech project near Yamuna Expressway in 2011, paying almost the entire Rs 16 lakh for the studio apartment.

Punia said that several buyers of Lotus Projects have been offered 'fit-outs' in which the organisation claims the flats will be provided with basic necessities but without completion certificates. "We paid for a full flat and not a fit-out," she said.

What next

With the judiciary taking the lead, various other agencies such as NCLAT, NCLT and RERA have also initiated action against builders. An FIR was filed against the Omaxe director and officials in March after they failed to deliver a flat in time. In December 2018, 3C directors Nirmal Singh, Supreet Singh and Vidur Bharadwaj were arrested by the Delhi Police's Economic Offences Wing. Logix Group had to give up 4,000 of its flats to another construction company, ATS, so they could be finished in time.

The UP RERA has emerged as another avenue where consumers can lodge cases since the authority also has judicial powers. But its hands are full. Currently, Supertech has 324 cases pending in UP RERA while Jaypee has 200 and Supertech Township has 75. Almost 25 cases of Omaxe group were resolved and 18 are pending. 3C group has 25 cases remaining.

"At present, 1,340 projects are registered with RERA, and our effort is to ensure all consumers get flats. Powers that RERA has include Section 7 under which we can deregister a builder group if it has not performed to the expectations of the homebuyers and is a defaulter. We also have a conciliatory court where amicable solutions are reached," said Rajive Kumar, Chairman RERA.

According to RERA officials, an integrated website for online solutions and real-time updates on redressal mechanisms are also being planned.

The GNIDA is also attempting course correction. Its CEO said: "We are issuing recovery certificates to builders and are also cancelling projects as deterrence. Several builders have come up with solutions and proposals to finish delayed projects. We will sit them down and analyse the feasibility."

Ritu Maheshwari, the Noida Authority CEO, said: "Amrapali and Unitech alone have dues worth Rs 8,000 crore. But every case is different and we will see each on its own merit... We might cancel projects which have not taken off."

With 42,000 incomplete flats, Rs 19 cr in account, NBCC has task cut out

MALLICA JOSHI

THE SUPREME Court's order that 42,000 incomplete flats, which were to be built by the beleaguered Amrapali Group, will now be completed by the National Buildings Construction Corporation (NBCC) may have prompted homebuyers to heave a sigh of relief but is also raising questions that few have answers to.

In private, officials at NBCC talk about how they may have bitten off more than the public sector enterprise can chew. Only days after the SC appointed NBCC to complete Amrapali's projects, the Centre told the court that the body was ready to be the project consultant for the 16,000 incomplete houses under the Unitech Group.

Over the past five years, NBCC has taken on several big redevelopment projects across the country. This includes the Pragati Maidan redevelopment project as well as the redevelopment of three out of seven government pool residential colonies in Sarojini Nagar, Netaji Nagar and Nauroji Nagar.

"The biggest challenge is to make sure that there are enough funds to drive these projects. With the others, the government was the one paying NBCC to carry out projects. This case, however, is very different as these projects have been handed over to us because the original builders either siphoned off money or faced other financial challenges. Those things have not changed and getting enough money to build these houses is not going to be an easy task," said a senior Housing and Urban Affairs ministry official who did not want to be named.

NBCC officials confirmed that only Rs 19 crore have been deposited in the escrow account for the Amrapali project so far. According to the plan submitted by NBCC in the Supreme Court, it needs upwards of Rs 7,700 crore to complete the project, along with an 8% fee. While the SC has said that money from sale of Amrapali's assets can also be used to fund the projects, along with pending payments from homebuyers, how much of the shortfall can be met is yet to be seen. The corporation will not be using its money to fund the project.

"There is some apprehension that the sale of assets is not going to be an easy task as the real estate market is in poor health. In such a scenario, to expect that everything will go off smoothly is an over-estimation. On top of that, thousands of homebuyers are now looking at NBCC to come through but it may take longer than what they expect," said an official on condition of anonymity.

7 GOVT & POLITICS



DELHI CONFIDENTIAL



SHIFTING HOME

RAMLAL, RSS pracharak who served as the BJP general secretary (organisation) for almost 13 years, has now vacated the accommodation provided by the party. Though the RSS took the decision to withdraw him from the BJP mid-July, Ramlal stayed put at the 9, Ashoka Road premises provided by the party for over a fortnight. He is learnt to have vacated the premises late last week. That modest accommodation is now being prepared for the party's new general secretary (organisation) B.L. Santosh, who is currently staying next door at 11A, Ashoka Road.

ON TRIAL MODE

RAJYA SABHA Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu is trying to experiment with enhanced e-functionality in the communications with members of the Upper House. Rajya Sabha Secretary General Desh Deepak Verma, along with BJP's Vinay Sahasrabudhe and Congress's Jairam Ramesh, has been roped in to finalise the way ahead. Both Vinay and Jairam have got an electronic display attached to their seats where they get the parliamentary papers on the fixed devices on their seats at the click of a button. Though the experiment is very primitive, their experiences are likely to be an input for the way ahead on enhanced approach towards a paperless Upper House.

REJIG IN ROSTER

IN THE latest rejig of the Supreme Court roster, cases related to arbitration, insolvency and bankruptcy have been moved from Justice Rohinton F. Nariman's court. Nariman is considered an expert in commercial laws and has passed several landmark verdicts recently, ironing the creases and developing the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code. He now has family law cases in his roster instead. While arbitration cases are now divided between five judges, including CJ Ranjan Gogoi, insolvency and bankruptcy cases are listed before four judges, including Justices R. Banumathi and Arun Mishra.

'MCI was plagued by corruption, led to diminishing respect for medical profession'

Union Health Minister HARSH VARDHAN speaks to ABANTIKA GHOSH on why NMC Bill is a historic reform. Excerpts

You called National Medical Commission Bill a historic legislation in Parliament, but doctors have been very upset about it. What do you have to say to those who did not get a direct audience with you but still nurture doubts about many aspects of the Bill?

The National Medical Commission Bill, 2019 is in line with Hon'ble Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of providing universal healthcare to each and every citizen of India. I have no doubt that the NMC Bill, 2019 will go down in history as the biggest reform of the 21st century in the field of medical education. It is student-friendly and aims to rid medical education of vested interests that were subverting qualitative improvements. The Medical Council of India (MCI) was plagued by corruption and had become the reason for the diminishing respect of medical profession in the country. Replacing it with the NMC has been one of the greatest achievements of my life.

As I have been an ENT surgeon for 35 years, I would like to assure all doctors that if they haven't already realised the benefits of the Bill, they will definitely realise the benefits in the near future. The reluctance to accept the need for change is natural and human, sometimes there are vested interests in maintaining a status quo. All this is now a thing of the past as NMC Bill has been passed... It opens up new horizons for the medical fraternity. I am honoured to have been a part of piloting this Bill...

The Bill has a provision for a limited licence to practice modern medicine which some people say is actually the contentious bridge course

with a different name. What do you say to concerns that it will encourage quackery?

The provision for a cross-pathway bridge course has been completely deleted in the Bill. The provision for Community Health Providers (CHP) is confined to professionals related to modern medicine and having qualifications prescribed by NMC. These qualifications will be prescribed in regulations framed after careful analysis of the deficiencies required by CHPs and the curriculum of the allied health professionals being considered. They will be finalised after public consultation and debate. Quacks will have no role in this scheme of things. The punishment for quackery has actually been enhanced to up to one year of imprisonment and fine of Rs 5 lakh.

There are concerns that the provision of fee fixation for just 50 per cent seats would end up compromising merit as only those who can pay will be able to afford the rest of the seats

Please understand that there was no provision for fee fixation by MCI. In view of this glaring omission, the Supreme Court had to appoint committees in each state to regulate the fees until a system was put in place. NMC Bill has introduced fee regulation by the government for the first time. It is unprecedented and a most welcome step.

In a federal polity, it is not appropriate for the central government to assume control of 100 per cent seats. States are free to bring amendments about the remaining 50 per cent seats as per need since medical education is in the concurrent list. However, directly and indirectly through the states, the Centre does have the power to



regulate fee structure in all medical colleges. I think that is cause enough for celebration as it ends the misery of students who were at the mercy of a corrupt system.

The main problem in medical education is the demand and supply gap. How will the Bill tackle that?

The Bill simplifies procedures and eliminates repeated inspections. NMC is also mandated to reduce the cost of medical education, thereby facilitating setting up of more medical colleges. Our government has already increased 28,000 MBBS seats and 17,000 PG seats in the past five years, which is a record of sorts. We have rationalised teacher-student ratio, simplified physical infrastructure requirements of medical colleges, taken a number of steps to increase the availability of faculty and reformed the process of inspections of

colleges. The result has been that the approval percentage of new colleges has gone up very significantly after formation of the Board of Governors of MCI and 37 new colleges were approved this year as against 21 last year. We hope to see an era of even more rapid growth with the setting up of NMC. If we are able to maintain this trend, then we are hopeful of achieving doctor-population ratio of 1:1000 within the next 7-8 years.

On the final year MBBS exam being the licentiate

exam, PG entrance the screening test for foreign graduates, there are some who feel that standards of medical education across states are not uniform and, therefore, such a system would end up giving undue advantage to students from some states

Instead of trying to stop our doctors from going abroad, we would prefer to focus on increasing the number of seats and improving working conditions in the country. Given the size of our population and the vast opportunities our country presents, I have no doubt that we will see a net brain gain rather than brain drain in the years to come

On the contrary, it will ensure uniformity of standards throughout the country. All citizens need to be treated by good doctors.

Leaders from Tamil Nadu have been agitating in Parliament against NEET, alleging that it is discriminatory against rural Tamil-speaking students. How would you address their concerns?

This issue has already been decided by the Supreme Court.

Despite a relaxation in norms that used to bar profit-making sometime back, only a few private hospitals have come forward to open medical colleges. Why? How do you intend to rope them in?

The major reason for hesitation on part of private hospitals to set up medical colleges was the arbitrary, unpredictable and rent-seeking approach of MCI. However, things will change incredibly now. NMC is proposed to be totally transparent and objective in its approach and genuinely in-

terested persons will have no reason to refrain from investing in medical education infrastructure. This will help us tap the vast medical education infrastructure already available...and add to the number of MBBS seats.

How will you stop medical brain drain? The best Indian doctors work abroad.

I have no doubt that doctors working in India are among the best in the world. Those who go abroad also excel there and earn a good name for our country. Instead of trying to stop our doctors from going abroad, we would prefer to focus on increasing the number of seats in the country and improving working conditions in the country. We would like to welcome OCI doctors and even foreign doctors to come to India and engage in practice, teaching and research. Given the size of our population and the vast opportunities that our country presents, I have no doubt that we will see a net brain gain rather than brain drain in the years to come.

I congratulate the Hon'ble Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, who is our guiding light, for his vision on universal healthcare, the ambitious targets that he has set forth for us to achieve and most of all for the PM Jan Arogya Yojana which is popularly called Ayushman Bharat that has already benefited crores of citizen from the economically weaker section and changed their lives. I am a mere foot soldier and here to implement Modi ji's dream of a disease-free, healthy India. Notwithstanding the steep challenges ahead, I am committed to ensuring good health for each and every Indian.

FULL INTERVIEW ON www.indianexpress.com

UNNAO RAPE CASE

Political plot behind arrest, have faith in SC, CBI: Sengar

MANISH SAHU
LUCKNOW, AUGUST 4

JAILED UTTAR Pradesh MLA Kuldeep Singh Sengar, who is accused in the Unnao rape case, said on Sunday that his arrest is the result of a political conspiracy.

Sengar, who has been expelled by the party after a murder FIR was filed against him and nine others in connection with the July 28 accident that left the rape victim injured and her two aunts dead, said that he has "faith in the God, Supreme Court and the CBI", which is investigating the case.

"Sab rajneetik dal ke logo ki saazish hai jinke dukaane band ho gaye... Mujhe aap par bharosa hai. Kuch nyay karwaiye... Main BJP ka karyakarta tha, aur mein jis dal mein rehta hoon bahut imandari se rehta hoon (This is a conspiracy of political party workers whose shops are now closed... I have faith in you, help me get some justice... I was a BJP worker and I work honestly with whichever party I am associated with," he told reporters while being taken from Sitapur jail to Delhi, where he will be produced before a court following the transfer of cases to the capital.

Asked about the rape and murder conspiracy allegation made by the victim and her family, the MLA said that it was easy to make allegations.



UP MLA and Unnao rape case accused Kuldeep Singh Sengar being brought to Delhi to appear before court. PTI

On being told that the condition of the rape victim and her lawyer — also injured in the accident — was critical, Sengar said, "I pray to God that they recover soon".

On Sunday, a three-member team from the CBI reached Sitapur jail and questioned Sengar for the second consecutive day. The agency also carried out raids at more than 15 places in connection with the accident case. The CBI has taken in its custody the video footage of CCTVs installed at Sitapur jail to identify those who visited Sengar.

Sengar and nine others, including his brother Manoj and Arun Singh, the son-in-law of state minister Dhunni Singh, are accused in the accident case.

'NO CHANGE IN VICTIM'S CONDITION'

Lucknow: Doctors at KGMU Trauma Centre on Sunday said there was no change in the condition of the rape victim and her lawyer. Both continue to remain unconscious and their condition is critical but stable, said the doctors. The rape victim is on ventilator support and has developed pneumonia, they said, adding that she has fever and medicines are being administered to control her blood pressure, they said. ENS

Kerala: IAS officer who ran journalist over sent to jail, then to hospital

SHAJU PHILIP
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
AUGUST 4

KERALA IAS officer Sriram Venkitaraman, who has been arrested on charges of running over a journalist in a drunk driving incident, was lodged in a sub-jail on Sunday after a magistrate court remanded him in judicial custody for two weeks. Later in the night, he was shifted to the prison cell at a government medical college following a report by the jail doctor.

In the early hours of Saturday, a speeding car allegedly driven by an inebriated Venkitaraman rammed into a bike journalist KM Basheer was riding. Basheer, chief reporter with Malayalam daily Siraj, died on the spot. Police lodged a case against the IAS officer and initiated legal proceedings almost 10 hours after the incident following protests from mediapersons.

Venkitaraman, presently the director of State Survey and Land Records Department, has been charged under the non-bailable Section 304 of IPC, pertaining to culpable homicide not amounting to murder.

On Saturday night, the magistrate court remanded him in judicial custody, but the officer continued to stay at KIMS, a private hospital. After the accident, Venkitaraman was taken to a govern-

ment hospital, where the doctors found that he had not sustained any serious injury. But, he later moved to KIMS Hospital where he was kept under observation.

As per law, a person remanded in judicial custody has to be lodged in the police cell at a government hospital if required. However, Venkitaraman stayed in a deluxe room at the private hospital, prompting journalists to threaten a sit-in in front of KIMS Hospital.

With protests mounting, police on Sunday evening decided to produce the officer before first class magistrate S R Amal. The magistrate, after examining the report from KIMS Hospital, directed that Venkitaraman be sent to the sub-jail.

CPM leader and state minister G Sudhakaran said IAS officials who engage in drunken driving at midnight are "idiots". "There are several other IAS officials in Kerala like Venkitaraman," he said.

Leader of Opposition in Assembly Ramesh Chennithala said Venkitaraman should be suspended from service. "Police made serious lapses and the IAS officer is trying to wriggle out of the case using his influence as a bureaucrat. The government should come out with a statement on his health condition. He should not be allowed to holiday in a private hospital," said Chennithala.

Goa govt orders probe after doctor accused of trials on patients

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PANAJI, AUGUST 4

GOA HEALTH Minister Vishwajit Rane has ordered a probe against a doctor attached with Goa Medical College following allegations that he is involved in foreign-funded clinical research conducted on patients in hospitals run by the state government.

On Saturday, Goa daily Herald published a report that stated that Dr Amit Dias, a lecturer in Goa Medical College's Preventive and Social Medicine department, was allegedly misusing his official status and conducting foreign-funded research on patients who visited state-run hospitals at Mandur and Santa Cruz and Goa Medical College.

Dr Dias is also alleged to have sanctioned his own research as he was the member of the ethics committee of Goa Medical College, showing serious ethical conflict. While the research seems to have got funding, no research paper has been put out to the ethics committee.

Rane said there were previous complaints against Dias. "They pertained to serious lapses in the use of medical infrastructure. I have asked for a file on all the complaints against him."

According to Rane, there was a case several years ago on clinical research being conducted without keeping the ethics committee in the loop and without following proper protocols. "In that case, we had taken action against several doctors and the final inquiry is still on. Several threads seem to be connected."

Rane said the ministry had also asked for a complete report on all the lectures and other medical duties performed by the doctor.

"This needs a full inquiry and I shall be able to speak when all the details are in. This is a very serious matter," he said. "Conducting clinical trial outside of the protocol and unethically has serious consequences. This needs to be studied properly before any action can be thought of," the minister added.

Dias could not be reached for his comments.

PM to party MPs: Shun negativism, work with positive approach

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 4

PRIME MINISTER Narendra Modi on Sunday asked his party MPs to shun negativism and focus on Jan Bhagidhari and Jan Niti (people participation and people policy) overlooking politics.

"Negativism has occupied some significant space in our system which needs to be shunned," the Prime Minister was quoted as saying by a minister who was present at the meeting. "He called upon the MPs to shun negativism and work with positive approach to achieve better out comes."

The Prime Minister was also believed to have stressed on the importance of striking a coordination with every stakeholder in the political sphere and at one point also advised the MPs to pay attention to their health and other personal issues as well.

Modi was addressing the BJP MPs in the concluding session of two-day Abhyas Varga or training programme in the capital.

He asked the MPs to be part of solutions and utilise the schemes and technology for benefit of the people. "Don't be pessimist and try to win over the people with your conduct and social initiatives," he said, according to the minister.

In order to take benefits of various welfare schemes of the gov-

ernment to targeted sections of society, the BJP's top brass has asked its ministers to hold monthly dinner meetings with party MPs and update them about the schemes.

Incidentally, the issue of Jammu & Kashmir did not figure during the last day of the meeting. In fact, BJP president Amit Shah, who was supposed to address a session, did not do so except a brief address during inauguration of the meeting. Shah was learnt to have spent considerable time in his office in the Parliament House complex where he held meetings with officials.

Earlier in the day, BJP vice-president Vinay Sahasrabudhe held a session on how to hone their approach and attitude to be an effective parliamentarian. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh too addressed the MPs about the BJP's contribution to national politics. BJP Bengal unit chief and party MP Dilip Ghosh is also learnt to have made a presentation about the political situation in the state.

BJP general secretary (organisation) B.L. Santosh addressed the party MPs about the relationship between party's elected representatives and the party organisation. Party general secretary and Rajya Sabha MP Anil Jain too addressed the party MPs about the ongoing membership drive and the role of individual MPs.

Amarinder tries dinner diplomacy to tackle dissent

KANCHAN VASDEV
CHANDIGARH, AUGUST 4

TWO DAYS after several ruling party MLAs voiced their anger against the government at the Congress Legislative Party (CLP) meeting in Punjab, all eyes are now on the dinner Chief Minister Amarinder Singh is hosting for the lawmakers on Monday.

The Chief Minister announced the dinner during the CLP meeting on Friday. While the meeting was called to chalk out floor strategy for the ongoing Assembly session, it turned into a platform where many MLAs

EXPLAINED CM's challenge: Resentment at home

CAPT AMARINDER Singh faces a challenge in the form of the voices of discontent within his government. The major grouse of his partymen remains that the bureaucracy is ruling the roost, political feedback is not taken, and a perception of quid pro quo with Akalis is gaining ground. It remains to be seen if the Chief Minister will be able to silence his critics within the government.

expressed resentment against the government on several issues. It was then that Amarinder stated that he would listen to

them during the dinner, adding that the party should focus on floor strategy at the CLP meet. Sources in the Congress said

that Monday's dinner could also turn out to be an outburst session. The major grouse MLAs aired on Friday was that the government was going soft on former Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal's family. They claimed that Badal's transport and cable businesses were flourishing at the state government's cost, said sources.

A few MLAs are also against the short session called by the government. They argue that the brief session denies them the chance to raise issues concerning their Assembly segments. Gidderbaha MLA Amrinder Singh Raja Warring raised this is-

sue in the CLP meeting and appealed that the Assembly session be extended.

Some ministers, it is learnt, are upset at not being invited to the dinner organised by the Chief Minister during the visit of his Rajasthan counterpart Ashok Gehlot to Chandigarh last week. "It was shocking that while bureaucrats were a part of the dinner meeting, no minister or Congress leader was invited. The government had to talk to him about water sharing with Rajasthan, but even Water Resources Minister Sukhbinder Singh Sarkaria was not there. Many are upset," said a Cabinet minister.

8 EXPRESS NETWORK



NORTH Alleged thief lynched by villagers, four arrested

Jaipur: A 30-year-old man in Rajasthan's Sawai Madhopur district was beaten to death after he reportedly stole a motorcycle, police said, adding that four people have been arrested in connection with the incident. According to the police, the incident took place late on Friday night near Raneela village in

Sawai Madhopur's Bamanwas area. "Prima facie it appears that several people had gathered in the area from where the body of Khushiram was recovered. A case of murder has been registered and we have arrested four people," said Manish Tripathi, Additional SP, Sawai Madhopur. **ENS**



Sculptors at work ahead of the Durga Puja festival at Kumartuli in Kolkata on Sunday. **PTI**

EAST India tests all-weather, all-terrain missile in Odisha

Balasore: India test-fired a sophisticated all-weather and all-terrain Quick Reaction Surface-to-Air Missile (QRSAM) from a test range in Odisha on Sunday. The state-of-the-art missile has been developed by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) for the Indian Army. The air defence

system, QRSAM, was test-fired at 11.05 am from a mobile truck-based launch unit at complex 3 of the Integrated Test Range at Chandipur, sources in the DRDO said. The missile is equipped with counter measures against jamming by aircraft radars, they added. **PTI**

WEST 22-year-old food delivery executive stabbed in Mumbai

Mumbai: A 22-year-old food delivery executive was stabbed to death by two unidentified persons in Vikhroli suburb of Mumbai, police said on Sunday. The incident took place at Ferroz Shah underpass on Eastern Express Highway, an official said. "Tejram Kariram Ram, working with Red Chilly hotel in the area, was returning

after completing a delivery when he had an argument with two people. They stabbed him and fled," the official said. Ram was rushed to a nearby hospital where he was declared dead on arrival, he said. A murder has been registered at Vikhroli police station. Investigation is on in the case and police is looking out for the accused. **PTI**

SOUTH 12 farm labourers dead, 3 injured as truck rams auto

Hyderabad: At least 12 farm labourers, including 9 women, died when the auto-rickshaw in which they were travelling collided head-on with a truck in Mahbubnagar district of Telangana on Sunday evening. At least 15 farm workers belonging to Kothapalli village of Midgel

mandal in Mahbubnagar district were returning to their homes in the three-wheeler after working at the farms when the incident occurred on Sunday. Twelve workers died on the spot while three others were critically injured and they have been shifted to a hospital. **ENS**

KASHMIR CLAMP DOWN

Ready to respond to any misadventure: Pak

Indian Army offers Pak to retrieve bodies of intruders

SAJJAD HUSSAIN
ISLAMABAD, AUGUST 4



Imran Khan

PAKISTAN ON Sunday warned India that it is ready to respond to any "misadventure or aggression" by the Indian forces, as the country's top civil and military leadership discussed the sudden spike in tensions with New Delhi during a meeting of the National Security Committee.

Prime Minister Imran Khan called the National Security Committee (NSC) meeting after the Army alleged that India used cluster bombs to target the civilian population in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir.

The Indian Army on Saturday termed as "lies and deceit" Pakistan's allegations that Indian troops used cluster bombs targeting civilians along the Line of Control. The NSC meeting was attended by Defence Minister Pervez Khattak, Foreign Minister Shah Mehmood Qureshi, Interior Minister Brig (Retd) Ijaz Shah, three services chiefs, chief of ISI and other senior officials.

A statement issued by the PM Office after the meeting said that Pakistan is "ready to defend itself against any Indian misadventure or aggression" and will continue to provide all out "diplomatic,

moral and political support" to the people of Kashmir.

The meeting criticised "Indian actions which would have adverse implications for regional and international peace".

"Pakistan reiterates that Kashmir is a long standing unresolved international dispute which needs peaceful resolution. Pakistan therefore urges India to come forth to resolve the issue in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people," it said.

It said that the recent "buildup of forces" is adding "fuel to fire".

"The forum strongly condemned such Indian strategy at this time when Pakistan and the international community are focused on resolving the Afghan conflict," the statement said.

"The recent Indian measures will increase the levels of violence and turn this area into a flashpoint and a destabilising factor in the midst of two strategically capable neighbouring countries," it said. **PTI**

THE INDIAN Army has offered Pakistan to retrieve the bodies of intruders who crossed the Line of Control (LoC) into Kashmir's Kupwara district a few days ago.

The offer comes days after the Army foiled an attack by Pakistan's Border Action Team (BAT) on a forward post along the LoC, which led to severe retaliation by Indian troops against Pakistani Army posts.

Colonel Rajesh Kalia, a Srinagar-based defence spokesperson, on Sunday confirmed that the offer was made to Pakistan. "Yesterday (Saturday) evening, Indian Army offered to Pakistan Army to retrieve the dead bodies of their personnel in Keran Sector for their funeral. Pakistan Army yet to respond," Kalia said in brief statement.

Kalia told *The Indian Express* he will provide further details when he will have any update.

"We want them to take their bodies back. But, there is no posi-



An all-party meeting in Srinagar on Sunday. **Shuaib Masoodi**

itive response so far," another Army officer in Srinagar said.

Kupwara SSP Ambarkar Shriram Dinkar said the situation in Keran is now "calm".

On Saturday, the Army said that an attack by the BAT "on one of the forward posts in Keran sector" had been foiled, resulting "in neutralising of five to

seven Pakistan regulars/terrorists".

The BAT attempt was made on the intervening night of July 31 and August 1.

Army officials had said that four bodies of "possibly SSG" commandos or "maybe some of terrorists" have been sighted on the Indian side of the LoC.

MP man: 'spy' held in Pak is my brother

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KHANDWA, AUGUST 4

A MAN from Madhya Pradesh on Sunday claimed that the Indian national recently arrested in Pakistan, allegedly for "spying", was his mentally-challenged brother who has been missing for the last two months.

However, Khandwa district police said they had no information about any such person missing from the district.

Police in Pakistan's Punjab province had last week claimed to have arrested an "Indian spy", Raju Lakshman, in the town of Dera Ghazi Khan. Speaking to PTI, Dilip Pindare, a resident of Indawadi village in Khandwa district, has claimed the person arrested by Pakistan police was his mentally-challenged brother.

"Two persons in civil dress had come to our house yesterday (Saturday). They showed us pictures on their mobile phone. The person seen in the picture is Raju, who is my mentally-challenged elder brother," said Pindare.

Khandwa SP Shivdayal Singh told PTI that district had no information about the same. "We don't have any information about any such person missing from the district," said Singh.

Kunal Kamra show put off over threat of disruption

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
AHMEDABAD, SURAT

A MUMBAI-BASED entertainment company was forced to cancel a show of stand-up comedian Kunal Kamra on Saturday in Surat, after some people showed up at the venue and threatened to disrupt it. The show was scheduled at 9 pm at Shree Surti Modhvanik Wadi in Surat when around 7 pm some people came and told the organisers they would not allow the show to go on.

When contacted, Mubin Tisekar, producer of the show and owner of The Entertainment Factory, which was bringing the first Kamra show to Surat, told *The Indian Express* that the people who threatened them even stopped the ticket-holding crowd from entering the show venue.

"Yesterday, when we were setting up equipment, some people came around 7 pm and began taking away our instruments and our sound system and said they would throw tomatoes and eggs at Kamra and would not allow him to perform," Tisekar said.

Speaking to *The Indian Express*, Mahidharpura Police Inspector P A Arya claimed that the organisers had not taken police permission to host the show. "The programme was on Saturday and there was some problem between those setting up the sound system for the show organisers and some of local youths. The issue was later sorted out through mutual understanding," Arya claimed, adding, "The organisers had booked the hall online and not taken police permission for the show." He also claimed that "the standup comedian artist did not come."

RAIN WREAKS HAVOC IN MAHARASHTRA



Rescue operation on as Godavari river overflows after heavy rain in Nashik. **Yatish Bhanu**

Three dead, four injured in Mumbai

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
MUMBAI, AUGUST 4

ATLEAST three people died and four others were injured in rain-related incidents in Mumbai on Sunday.

The Indian Meteorological Department's (IMD) Santacruz weather observatory recorded 204 mm rain and the facility at Colaba recorded 142 mm rain in 24 hours (from 8.30 am Saturday to 8.30 am Sunday).

A woman and her son were electrocuted in Golibar Nagar, Santacruz East, on Sunday afternoon after they came in contact with a live wire. Mala Nagam (52) touched an iron rod outside her door, not knowing that it had come in contact with the wire, police said. Sanket (26) was electrocuted while trying to save his mother.

Local residents rushed them to V N Desai Hospital, where

doctors declared them dead on arrival.

A 20-year-old Dharavi resident, Mohammed Mehmood Shaikh, is suspected to have been swept away on Sunday morning when he went to attend the nature's call near a creek. "The spot from where he went missing is usually used for open defecation. Local residents say he may have slipped. It has been raining heavily," a civic official said.

In Rajiv Gandhi Nagar, Dindoshi, Goregaon east, landslide damaged 5 to 6 houses and four people received minor injuries.

According to officials, there were no casualties as the houses had already been evacuated. "Before this incident took place, we had moved about 50 people from this place and on Sunday another 50 people were shifted. The injured were taken to Jogeshwari trauma hospital," said an official.

1,800 families moved to safety in Pune

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
PUNE, AUGUST 4

MORE THAN 1,800 families in Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad were moved to safety as rainfall inundated the cities on Sunday.

In Lonavala, a 10-year-old boy died and his nine-year-old sister was injured when the wall of their neighbour's house collapsed on them in Hanuman Tekdi.

Pune received 45.9 mm of rainfall between Saturday morning and Sunday evening and the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast continued downpour in the region over the next four days. The situation has led the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) to deploy a total of eight teams in Raigad, Thane, Mumbai, Pune and Nashik.

In Pune, the district administration has announced a holiday for schools and colleges on

Monday and NDRF teams are working on relief and rescue operations.

The Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC) shifted at least 625 families from near Mula-Mutha river and other low-lying areas. In Pimpri-Chinchwad, municipal authorities evacuated 1,200 families from flood-affected areas, mostly slums located near river banks and nullahs.

District Collector Naval Kishore Ram urged residents to remain indoors on Monday. "At least 1 lakh cusecs of water has been released from several dams in the region, which have been filled to capacity by the rain, causing flooding in low-lying areas of Pune and Pimpri-Chinchwad. We have announced that schools and colleges across the district will remain closed on Monday. I also urge residents to stay indoors," said Ram.

UP removes Sonbhadra, DM, SSP over firing incident

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
LUCKNOW, AUGUST 4

NEARLY TWO weeks after 10 people from Gond community were killed over a land dispute in Umbha village of Sonbhadra district in which the village pradhan is the main accused, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday removed the District Magistrate and Senior Superintendent of Police, besides taking action against 13 other officials, including circle officer and beat-in-charge.

While a departmental inquiry has also been initiated against DM Ankit Kumar Agrawal and SSP Salmantaj Jafertaj Patil, the CM announced that Additional SP Arun Kumar Dixit will be charged under IPC sections for getting the land vacated for the pradhan.

Adityanath also ordered an FIR against the wives of two retired IAS officers from Bihar — Asha Mishra, wife of Prabhat Kumar Mishra, and Vineeta Mishra, wife of Bhanu Pratap Sharma — "for wrongfully getting the land that belonged to the society registered to themselves in 1989".

The CM said the decisions were taken after two committees, one headed by Additional Chief Secretary (Revenue) Renuka Kumar and another headed by ADG (Varanasi) Braj Bhusan submitted their reports.

Announcing that the disputed land will be distributed to people of the villages, he said that an FIR will be soon lodged against Assistant Accounts Officer of Sonbhadra Rajkumar who has been suspended.

Veteran journalist Kanti Bhatt dies at 88

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
GANDHINAGAR, AUGUST 4

VETERAN GUJARATI journalist and columnist Kanti Bhatt died in Mumbai at the age of 88 on Sunday, days after he suffered a stroke.

Born on July 15, 1931, Bhatt hailed from Zanzmer village in Bhavnagar district of Gujarat. He had done his Bachelor of Commerce from the Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda (Vadodara). Following his graduation, he spent nearly 10 years in Malaysia, handling the business of his uncle.

Bhatt started his journalism career in the late 1960s as a financial journalist in Mumbai. He later became a freelance journalist and also wrote columns for various publications. Bhatt gradually rose to prominence as a prolific columnist who wrote on diverse subjects.



KANTI BHATT
1931-2019

He must have written more than 45,000 articles in the course of his journalistic career. Bhatt was also the founding editor of one of the leading Gujarati magazines, *Abhiyan*, which he launched with his wife Sheela, also a veteran journalist and member of the Editors Guild of India. Sheela Bhatt has also worked as an editor with *The Indian Express*.

Ashu, a journalist who considers Bhatt his mentor, said the

veteran journalist had a tremendous passion for writing and reading articles on diverse subjects. He also spoke of Bhatt's wish to write a novel. "He had never written a novel. And on his last birthday, July 15, he told me that he wanted to jointly write a novel with me," Ashu said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed grief over Bhatt's demise. In a tweet, Modi said, "The world of readers has suffered a big loss due to the death of columnist and journalist Kanti Bhatt whose column used to make the mornings informative."

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, too, expressed his condolences. "Shree Kantibhai Bhatt has a priceless contribution to Gujarati journalism and column writing. Kantibhai impressed a number of generations through his personality and writing skills. His death has created a void that can't be filled," he said.

Assam dists panic, notices at night for NRC hearings 300 km away

NRC state coordinator Prateek Hajela did not respond to calls or messages regarding the notices.

The notices come three days after the Assam government tabled in the Assembly district-wise data of exclusion from the draft NRC published last year — defying a Supreme Court order against it — to underline that in districts bordering Bangladesh the exclusion percentage was lower than in areas with indigenous populations.

Lawyers and activists said the far-off locations for hearings were in contradiction of the SC's April 10 order asking the NRC authorities "to ensure that no inconvenience is caused to the persons required to attend the hearing and to see that they are not required to travel long distances..."

The SOP for the claims and objections round of the NRC ap-

proved by the Supreme Court also states that, "The LRCR (Local Registrar of Citizen Registration) will ensure that the applicant is served the notice at least 15 days prior to the date of hearing."

According to local officials, in Chaomoria Revenue Circle, under which Sontoli falls, at least 25,000 notices had been served.

Sivasagar is one of the districts where scores of families have been told to appear to for hearings. An official said he had been told that the "legacy data" used by several families in Kamrup (Rural) for enrolment in the NRC had been found to have been used by some others in Sivasagar.

Some district officials said they were unclear about the exercise while others said it could be an attempt to clarify cases in which the disposing officer during the "claims and objections"

round of the NRC updation process had certain doubts. There was also uncertainty over how many such notices had been served across the state.

Most of the families The Indian Express spoke to said they had no idea why they had got the notices. Sama said, "My name is in the NRC. But for some reason, we have been called. Last night at around 10, we were delivered the notices by the village headman. Jorhat is very far... we have never been there."

Bakkar said he and his family members too are in the NRC. "People here are in panic. We don't understand why we are being called."

A local social worker in Sontoli, who did not want to be named, said 25 vehicles carrying people had left the village already and another three buses were

scheduled to leave. He said administration and police officials had helped arrange the vehicles.

Maizan Nessa of neighbouring Goroimari said she had sold her nose ring for Rs 900 Sunday morning to pay for travel to Golaghat, around 400 km away. Her brother Kanchu Miya, who also got a notice to appear in Golaghat, sold his goat for Rs 1,330 and cattle for Rs 3,500. "Do you know what will happen at the hearing?" asked a worried Nessa.

A glance through the notices shows they are of two types — "RN 1.1", which says the mentioned persons will be re-verified, and "RN2.1", which says the legacy data used by the family had to be re-verified and anyone responsible for the family members mentioned had to be present at the hearing.

Many who have got notices said they had earlier attended hearings as part of the "claims and objection" rounds, as witnesses for people who sought inclusion or against whom objections had been received. But others said they had not been called for any hearing earlier.

Ashraf Hussain, a social worker in Lower Assam's Barpeta, said in the district's Chenga circle alone around 500 notices had been served. "We are helping people who cannot afford transportation cost by collecting money. We have also arranged for volunteers to travel with them and a few activists will be present at the hearings."

Hussain added, "People are confused. Most are illiterate and have not travelled outside their village or district. Also floods have ravaged these areas."

FROM PAGE ONE

TELLING NUMBERS

The extent of groundwater over-exploitation, state by state

GROUNDWATER resources are over-exploited in 1,186 out of 6,881 "assessment units" (blocks, talukas, watersheds etc) in the country, the Jal Shakti Ministry said in reply to a question in Lok Sabha. This was as assessed in 2017, and translates to 17%, or one in every six of these units. All these over-exploited assessment units are in 17 states and Union Territories. Punjab has the highest extent of over-exploitation at 79 per cent of its blocks, followed Rajasthan, Delhi, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, each at 50 per cent or more. Tamil Nadu, which has the highest number of blocks (1,116 firkas), also has the highest number of over-exploited units at 462 firkas, or 40 per cent. In Maharashtra, where the Marathwada region is drought-hit, 3 per cent of the talukas are over-exploited. In Uttar Pradesh with 830 units (820 blocks and 10 cities), 11 per cent are over-exploited. In the eight Northeastern states none of the assessment units (districts and blocks) is over-exploited.

STATES WITH HIGHEST GROUNDWATER DEPLETION, 2017

State	Total units	Semi-critical		Critical		Over-exploited	
		Units	%	Units	%	Units	%
Punjab	138	5	4	2	1	109	79
Rajasthan	295	29	10	33	11	185	63
Delhi	34	7	21	2	6	22	65
Haryana	128	21	16	3	2	78	61
Himachal	8	1	13	0	0	4	50
Tamil Nadu	1,166	163	14	79	7	462	40
Telangana	584	169	29	67	11	70	12
All India	6,881	972	14	313	5	1,186	17

Note: The units assessed are blocks in Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan; Mandals in Telangana; Districts/Valley in Himachal; Firkas in Tamil Nadu; Tehsils in NCT Delhi Source: Jal Shakti Ministry

THIS WORD MEANS

AREA 51

What is this US facility, where aliens supposedly visit? What to make of the 'plan' by 2 mn people to storm it?

ON SEPTEMBER 20, at 3 am Pacific Daylight Time (3.30 pm IST), some two million people plan — or claim to plan — to storm a US Air Force facility called Area 51. On a Facebook event titled "Storm Area 51, They Can't Stop All of us", two million people have clicked "attending" and another 1.4 million have clicked "interested".

A 38,400-acre facility, Area 51 is in Southern Nevada. Officially known as the Nevada Test and Training Range, Area 51 is part of the Nellis Air Force Base and is used as a training centre for the US Air Force. The name originates from its location of the Nevada map.

CONSPIRACY THEORIES: With the facility shrouded in secrecy, several conspiracy theories have emerged over the years. Several Americans believed it was where the government hid bodies of aliens and UFOs, some believed it was where the government held "meetings" with extraterrestrials, and others speculated it was where the government developed "time travel" technology.

The CIA, according to official documents, has been using the facility since 1955 to develop and test supersonic aircraft and stealth fighter jets. It was only in 2013 that the CIA published declassified documents admitting that the Area 51 is a secret military site. This was following a Freedom of Information request filed in 2005 by Dr Jeffrey T Richelson, a senior fellow at the George Washington University National Security Archive.

THE FACEBOOK EVENT: As the announcement about the planned storming gained popularity online, the US Air



Nevada Test and Training Range. AP

Force issued a statement warning against any attempt to enter the high security premises. "Area 51 is an open training range for the US Air Force, and we would discourage anyone from trying to come into the area where we train American armed forces. The US Air Force always stands ready to protect America and its assets," said the statement, as quoted by *The Washington Post*.

It is unlikely that people will be able to enter Area 51, which is heavily guarded round the clock. The airspace above the facility is also out of bounds for civilian aircraft and special permission is required before flying through its airspace.

Those behind the Facebook event, too, have made it clear that they have no intention of entering the facility and it was a mere joke. A pinned post on the Facebook event page now has a clarification: "Hello US government, this is a joke, and I do not actually intend to go ahead with this plan. I just thought it would be funny and get me some thumbs uppies on the internet."

SIMPLY PUT QUESTION & ANSWER

Why aren't cars selling?

Not just cars, sales of trucks, tractors and motorcycles too are down. The NBFC crisis has caused a liquidity crunch, and customers are postponing the decision to buy. What does this mean for the economy?

SANDEEP SINGH & ANIL SASI
 NEW DELHI, AUGUST 4

LEADING AUTOMOBILE manufacturers announced a sharp decline of up to 50 per cent in their domestic sales in July with the market leader Maruti Suzuki reporting a 36 per cent drop in sales during the month.

Hit by the liquidity crunch for non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and a dip in consumer sentiment, July became the twelfth out of the last 13 months in which the auto sector has seen a decline in domestic sales.

Manufacturers are now going for cuts in production, and the industry that is one of the biggest job creators in the country is starting at a deep-rooted slowdown and job losses across its value chain.

Where is the decline?

The drop in sales is happening across all segments. If passenger vehicles ales witnessed a fall of 18.4 per cent in the quarter ended June 2019, the commercial vehicle segment witnessed a 16.6 per cent decline. The two-wheeler segment too, saw a drop in sales by 11.7 per cent during the quarter.

In fact, the 18.4 per cent drop in passenger vehicles sales in the quarter ended June 2019 was the worst quarter for the industry in the last 18 years since Q3 of 2001-02, when sales fell 27 per cent.

Even the tractor industry, which had bucked the broader downturn in the auto sector to post a third consecutive year of double digit growth up until March 2019, has seen a steady slide since then, recording the biggest monthly fall in production in June 2019.

Tractor sales have consistently fallen since March 2019, amidst weak farm sentiment; with volumes seeing a double-digit decline over the past three months, and the worst number of an over 32 per cent decline in production in June 2019.

Why are car sales falling?

Industry insiders feel that while the pressure on NBFCs and the liquidity squeeze in the market is a big factor, the decline in customer confidence is the other factor that is leading to a continuous slide in sales of passenger cars.

According to these sources, a third of the retail sales of Maruti Suzuki — the country's largest carmaker — were funded by NBFCs, and a liquidity crisis for the NBFC sector has



Maruti Suzuki factory in Manesar, Haryana. The carmaker reported a 36 per cent drop in sales in July. Amit Mehra/Express Archive

led to a drop in sales for lack of funding for customers.

Customers are also postponing their purchase decisions due to various considerations, including an expected fall in GST rates, and the hope that the transition from BS-IV to BS-VI may lead to big discounts between January and March 2020. Customers are also expecting monthly discounts in the coming festive season.

However, company officials say that they do not expect the trend to be reversed in the near future.

Why is there a decline in the sales of commercial vehicles and tractors?

The NBFC liquidity stress has been playing a part in the decline in sales of vehicles across segments, as NBFCs are significant lenders in the tier II and smaller towns.

Tractor sales have been further hurt by weak farm sentiment, the slowdown in the rural economy, and fears of a worse than average monsoon this year. This comes amid the third advance estimates of crop production indicating a slide in rabi production. Kharif sowing has remained weak so far.

Truck sales have been hurt by changes

made by the government in the axle load norms. Industry officials said that a significant decline in the sales of commercial vehicles has been visible ever since the increased axle load has become effective. The industry has been calling for a scrappage policy and other policy support measures to revive demand.

According to data released by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM), overall, the commercial vehicles segment registered a decline of 9.53 per cent in April-June 2019 as compared to the same period last year. While the medium & heavy CVs declined 16.60 per cent, LCVs declined by 5.06 per cent during the quarter.

What does this situation indicate?

The sharp decline in sales numbers of the leading manufacturer shows the decline in consumer sentiment and indicates an overall slowdown in the economy. The drop in sales over the last one year has led major manufacturers to cut production, and has put pressure on the overall automotive sector, including the automobile ancillaries.

Last month, Ashok Leyland shut its

manufacturing plant in Pantnagar, Uttarakhand, for nine days until July 24 because of weak demand for commercial vehicles. The plant, which can manufacture 1.5 lakh units annually, was earlier closed intermittently for some seven days between June 17 and June 29.

Tata Motors is learnt to have decided to close its Pantnagar facility in July for a couple of days in order to ensure improvement in productivity.

Maruti Suzuki has cut vehicle production for the last seven months, including in July 2019.

There have already been job losses across the value chain of the automobile sector, including in the dealerships and ancillaries. The continuing decline in sales is now expected to put pressure on manufacturers to cut down on their costs, and reduce headcounts.

And how are two-wheelers faring?

The two-wheeler segment — the more affordable form of motorised mobility and an indicator of consumption demand in the hinterland — has also seen a slowdown.

Hero MotoCorp, the world's largest two-wheeler manufacturer and the market leader in India, Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India, the second biggest two-wheeler player in the Indian market, and TVS Motor Co, all reported a clear drop in dispatches in the months leading up to July.

What happens in the auto segment from here on?

The outlook for the rest of the year will depend on multiple factors, including the progress of the monsoon and the festive season offtake, as well as improvement in the liquidity situation.

Like tractors, the drop in two-wheeler volumes is a key indicator of rural distress. In the two-wheeler segment, motorcycle sales are predominantly dependent on rural India; people in rural areas prefer motorcycles to scooters given their sturdier structure, better performance, and lower operational costs, especially in the economy segments.

The continued sluggishness in two-wheeler volumes is worrying, given that India, despite now being the world's biggest two-wheeler market, still has a very low penetration level of two wheelers. Only about 102 out of every 1,000 people have two-wheelers in India — less than half the penetration levels in Indonesia (281) and Thailand (291).

Why Medical Commission Bill bothers doctors

ABANTIKA GHOSH
 NEW DELHI, AUGUST 4

ON THURSDAY, Rajya Sabha passed the National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill that seeks to overhaul the medical education regulatory infrastructure. Since then, doctors have struck work in Delhi and other cities. What is the Bill about and why is it controversial?

Bill status

An earlier version of the NMC Bill was introduced during the previous Lok Sabha and later referred to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare. It lapsed with the dissolution of that Lok Sabha. In the current session, the Bill was reintroduced with changes based on the Committee's recommendations. After Lok Sabha passed it, it was sent to Rajya Sabha with two new amendments and passed. It is now headed back to Lok Sabha, where the government enjoys a brute majority.

Licence to practice

Section 32 of the NMC Act 2019 allows the proposed NMC, which will replace the Medical Council of India, to grant "limited li-

cence to practice medicine at mid-level as a community health provider". The Indian Medical Association (IMA) sees it as encouraging quackery. In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on July 30 calling for the Bill to be redrafted, the IMA wrote: "We are deeply concerned about granting non medical 'persons connected with modern scientific medical profession', licence to practise modern medicine... This is nothing but legalising and promoting quackery in India... Who will guarantee that these 'legalised quacks' will work in villages only?... National Medical Commission Bill will open the floodgates for licencing 3.5 lakhs 'legalised quacks'. This amounts to 'licence to kill'."

Bridge course

Doctors have expressed concerns about the licence mentioned in Section 32 being another name for a contentious "bridge course". Such a course has been proposed in the original version of the Bill. It would have allowed practitioners of homeopathy and Indian systems of medicine to go on to practice allopathy. In the new Bill, the bridge course has been dropped as per the recommendations of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health and Family Welfare, which wrote: "The

Committee is of the view that the bridge course should not be made a mandatory provision in the present Bill. However, the Committee appreciates the need to build the capacity of the existing human resources in the healthcare sector, to address the shortage of healthcare professionals so as to achieve the objectives of the National Health Policy, 2017... The Committee, therefore, recommends that the State Governments may implement measures to enhance the capacity of the existing healthcare professionals including AYUSH practitioners, BSc (Nursing), BDS, B Pharma etc to address their State specific primary healthcare issues in the rural areas."

Exit examination

The original Bill had proposed a licentiate examination for doctors, and the IMA had expressed concerns about it then too. The new Bill proposes a single exit exam - the final MBBS exam, which will work as a licentiate examination, a screening test for foreign medical graduates, and an entrance test for admission in postgraduate programmes. It also provides for just one medical entrance test across the country

In the letter IMA wrote: "The Bill condenses final year MBBS exam, Licentiate

exam, and PG NEET into one examination. This effectively removes the opportunity to reappear for PG selection. Moreover, the examination being objective in nature, increases the workload and stress level of the students manifold. Allowing foreign medical graduates to take the same examination will be an injustice... The current system allows medical graduates to practise irrespective of the status of his/her PG NEET."

Arguments in favour

Dr KS Reddy, president of the Public Health Foundation of India and former professor of cardiology at AIIMS, said: "The NMC Bill opens the path to a long awaited reform of medical education... Mid-level health workers like Community Health Providers are very much needed but their training programmes, competencies and roles have to be clearly defined to differentiate them from medical graduates. The Allied Healthcare Professionals Bill, which is to be examined by the Standing Committee, is the right place to position them. A common exit examination is needed for standardisation and postgraduate course selection but must be preceded by a college level testing of practical clinical skills as a qualifier for the theory based NEXT (National Exit Test)."

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The assault case against a rapper, and the US govt's curious interest

NEHA BANKA
 KOLKATA, AUGUST 3

AN ASSAULT case against American rapper ASAP Rocky, tried in Stockholm, has captured the public imagination with celebrities including US President Donald Trump campaigning for his release. On Friday, on conclusion of a trial conducted in the Stockholm District Court since July 30, Rocky was released from jail, with the court allowing him — and two others tried — to leave Sweden ahead of the verdict on August 14. Rocky has since reached the US.

What is the case about?

The alleged assault happened on June 30 and charges were formally pressed after three weeks in detention. ASAP Rocky, 30, whose given name is Rakim Mayers, and his associates Bladimir Corniel and David Rispers pleaded not guilty to charges of assaulting a 19-year-old resident of Stockholm.

Video footage published by the tabloid Aftonbladet appeared to show Rocky and his associates fighting with two men. As the video circulated, clips were posted on ASAP Rocky's Instagram account showing a security guard telling locals to stop following the artist. This was to publicly provide Rocky's version of the events, to show that Rocky and his associates had been acting in "self-defence". Rocky went on to perform at the Smash Festival in Stockholm, only to be arrested that evening.

How did the case proceed?

On July 25, the rapper was formally charged by Swedish prosecutors who said the "events in question constitute a crime... despite claims of self-defence and provocation." They said Rocky and his associates "deliberately, together and in agreement" hit the alleged victim with a bottle.

During a trial hearing on August 2, prosecutors asked the court for a six-month sentence for Rocky. Presiding judge Per Lennerbrant ordered Rocky and his associ-



Rapper ASAP Rocky outside the Stockholm court last week. IT News Agency via Reuters

ates to be released from detention pending the final verdict.

Rocky missed scheduled performances in Norway and Poland, throwing into jeopardy his plans of performing live across Europe to

promote his 2018 album, 'Testing'. Rocky's lawyer, Henrik Olsson Lijja told The New York Times in an interview that a Swedish court had determined Rocky to be a flight risk and had hence decided to extend his detention. Rocky appealed his detention in the Supreme Court of Sweden, which rejected it.

Why is there so much interest?

The conversation surrounding the case has had less to do with the alleged assault than with the government and celebrity campaign on his behalf. While he was in detention, US politicians held a press conference on July 17 and called for the State Department and the embassies of the US & Sweden to work to free him.

On Friday, two leaked documents surfaced on Twitter. One of these was written by Robert O'Brien, US Special Presidential Envoy for Hostage Affairs, addressed to the Swedish Prosecution Authority on July 31, days before the trial in ASAP Rocky's case ended. In fact, US media reported that

O'Brien was in Sweden to monitor the trial. In his letter, O'Brien wrote that the US government "wants to resolve this case as soon as possible to avoid potentially negative consequences to the US-Swedish bilateral relationship", implying that diplomatic relations between the two nations would face "negative consequences" if ASAP Rocky's assault charge was not resolved quickly.

The second leaked letter dated August 1 showed the response by Sweden's Prosecutor-General, Petra Lundh to O'Brien's letter. "No other prosecutor, not even I, may interfere with a specific case or try to affect the prosecutor responsible. Furthermore, when a person is charged and the case is brought before a court, only the court can decide, during or after the trial, whether or not to release the person or decide on supervised detention," wrote Lundh.

How has President Trump been involved in the case?

The decision to send the government

hostage negotiator is being seen as an indication of Trump's personal involvement in the developments of the case. The letters follow Trump's repeated public demands for Rocky's release and his attempts at intervening by discussing the case with Swedish prime minister Stefan Löfven. In one of his many tweets on the case, Trump said he had even offered to pay Rocky's bail. The Swedish justice system does not have provisions for bail.

On July 25, Trump tweeted, "Very disappointed in Prime Minister Stefan Löfven for being unable to act. Sweden has let our African American Community down in the United States. I watched the tapes of ASAP Rocky, and he was being followed and harassed by troublemakers. Treat Americans fairly! #FreeRocky"

After the latest court order, Trump tweeted: "ASAP Rocky released from prison and on his way home to the United States from Sweden. It was a Rocky Week, get home ASAP ASAP!"



The Indian EXPRESS

FOUNDED BY
RAMNATH GOENKA

BECAUSE THE TRUTH INVOLVES US ALL

NEW DELHI, OLD LINE

Once again government at Centre sends message to Valley: It alone will decide, give no explanations

WHAT HAS unfolded over the last few days in Kashmir flies in the face of the claims by the NDA government, and Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself, of winning over Kashmir with love, dialogue and good governance. It is the government's responsibility to reassure the people in times of crisis. But on full display since August 2 is exactly the opposite. Through a series of orders, some of them half-denied, and some implemented despite denials — the evacuation of NIT students, for example — the government has contributed to the spread of panic and uncertainty in the Valley and in the minds of other Indians, almost as if this was the intention. Most astonishing of all was the abrupt cancellation of the Amarnath Yatra, citing a terrorist threat emanating from Pakistan, and the swift evacuation of tourists and pilgrims from the Valley. Callously, the order asking them to leave immediately did not address the apprehensions of the people of Kashmir, thus conveying the crude and brute message that the government was not concerned about them, even as they rushed to petrol pumps and ATMs to stock up. Only weeks earlier, officials had been eager to project the situation in the Valley and at the LoC as much improved, with cross-border infiltration having come down drastically. The U-turn may be based on fresh information, and it is true that the Centre must have the room to take decisions for reasons not always in full public view, but calling off the pilgrimage to Amarnath is virtually an admission that the government cannot prevent terrorist attacks. This, despite the security presence in the Valley, and a new and technologically advanced security deployment specially designed for the pilgrimage.

Over the years, the yatra has become synonymous with the Centre's assertion and demonstration of control over Kashmir. But here is a government that sends in more troops to the Valley, but at the same time, sends out the message that even with close to 4,50,000 troops there, it cannot offer security to pilgrims. In the absence of credible information, all manner of rumours — that plans are afoot to trifurcate J&K, or do away with the state's special constitutional status, among others — have spread. The silence of the government and the top echelons of the party has been conspicuous, especially given that its leaders communicate ceaselessly on social media on other matters.

Whatever lies behind the government's decisions of the last few days — whether it is preparation for contentious and polarising constitutional change, or a strategic assertion of statehood in response to the cosying up of the US with Pakistan towards a deal with the Taliban in Afghanistan — the fallout in the Valley cannot be good. That the government has chosen not to offer any explanations even to the leadership of the two main parties, who command a following among Kashmiris in their own right, is a mistake. Showing separatist politicians their place is one thing. But making a show of contempt for mainstream politicians is ill-judged. Any gains New Delhi has made in the past in the Valley have depended heavily on widening the stakes in peace and increasing the number of stakeholders. Now, an unfortunate impression is gaining ground that the Centre is again narrowing and centralising the decision-making process. Without the support of the Kashmiri people, Delhi's disconnect with the Valley can only increase.

CURE IN PROGRESS

New medical authority to replace MCI is welcome. But it will have to connect several dots, learn from past experiences

SEVERAL MEDICAL emergencies in the past five years, including the AES outbreak in Bihar in June, have shone the light on the deficiencies of India's healthcare sector. It's clear that the country lacks quality medical professionals at the panchayat and district levels. Medical research in the country has not kept up with the changing disease burden. Dogged by several controversies in the past 15 years, the internal regulator of the medical profession, the Medical Council of India (MCI), has failed its mandate of "ensuring excellence in medical education". The National Medical Commission (NMC) Bill — passed by the Rajya Sabha last week — that envisages an overhaul of the country's medical education system, therefore, promises to address a critical challenge. However, the 25-member NMC, that will take over the regulation of medical education from the MCI, will need to connect several dots to fulfil its promise.

The government will appoint 20 members of the new regulatory body. This has not gone down well with the Indian Medical Association (IMA). Controversies over the MCI elections and the agency's tarnished record have, no doubt, exposed the frailties of self-governance. But the IMA's fears of further compromise in standards are not unfounded, given that past experience shows that the party in office often rewards its loyalists whenever the government arrogates to itself the task of constituting a body of professionals. The search committee mandated by the Bill to recommend the names of the NMC's non-elected members must, therefore, go strictly by the new agency's credo: "Enforcing high ethical standards in medical services".

Clause 32 of the Bill provides for granting "limited licenses" to 3.5 lakh community health providers (CHPs), who can then operate at the primary healthcare level and prescribe preventive medicines. Given the dearth of MBBS doctors in rural and far-flung areas, this measure could fill a major void in the country's healthcare system. The IMA, however, apprehends that the move would "result in quackery", especially because the Bill does not delineate the qualifications of the CHPs. Past initiatives to integrate CHPs in the healthcare systems of states have produced mixed results, at best. For instance, the Chhattisgarh government's scheme — launched in 2001 — to place such medical practitioners in the state's healthcare system lasted only four years. Courses introduced for CHPs did not get the required traction because the students were reportedly not sure of their career path. Assam has had similar experiences with CHPs. The process of framing rules of the new legislation should, therefore, be attentive to such experiences.

What investors really want



VIKRAM S MEHTA

Modi 2.0 must move the needle towards meeting necessary conditions for incentivising investment

BUSINESS SENTIMENT IS grim. Few corporates have the financial capability to invest; even fewer the desire. The reasons are several but the common thread linking all corporates is a concern about the direction and predictability of the policy and regulatory environment. There is a lack of confidence in the ability of the leadership to convert the political promise of "ease of doing business" into bureaucratic performance. There is a "trust deficit". The government will have to bridge this deficit to realise its economic growth strategy.

The government's objective is to grow the economy to USD5 trillion by 2025. Given that the current size of the economy is USD2.7 trillion, this means it will have to grow at an annualised rate of 8 per cent over the next five years. This is a credible, albeit ambitious, objective. It has been achieved before and there is no fundamental or structural block to securing such a rate again. The twist is investment. Growth cannot be sustained at the 8 per cent level without reversing the current declining trend in private investment (and exports). This fact has been acknowledged by the Chief Economic Adviser in the Economic Survey and by the FM in her budget speech. Both have stressed the need to revive "animal spirits" to catalyse the virtuous cycle of investment, jobs, productivity, exports, consumption and growth. Investment is the centrepiece of their growth strategy.

The question, therefore, is: What must be done to resuscitate investor sentiment? At a macro level, the answer is clear.

Investors look for macroeconomic stability and a supportive regulatory and policy environment. They are incentivised to invest when inflation is under control, the fiscal deficit is within prudential limits and the external account is broadly in balance. They want connected and efficient infrastructure and the easing of supply side "factor market" constraints. This means expeditious processes for land acquisition, flexible and unshackled labour policy and deepened capital markets unlogged from the choke of NPAs. They also want competitive tax rates, simplified procedures and transparent and fair mechanisms for dispute resolution.

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The issue is whether these are sufficient. I am not so sure. I believe there is a subtler condition that needs also to be met. The corporate leader must believe that promise will indeed convert to performance. His subjective preference is a non-quantifiable but important driver of investment decisions.

I was involved with a large multinational for many years. What struck me was that investment decisions were often driven by personal perceptions. The investment proposals were, of course, subject to rigorous economic and geopolitical analysis. Empirical data was gathered on the market, competition, costs, prices and regulations. Scenarios were built to capture the consequences of the unexpected. Sensitivity analysis was carried out to define the range of possible outcomes. But when the analysis was finally presented for a decision, the discussion often focused on the intangibles of geopolitical, bureaucratic and regulatory risk. And the decision was often driven by the leadership's perceptions of these risks than by the hard numbers presented to them.

I was at the helm of the company at a time when China was the flavour of the international investor community. I found myself continually battling perceptions. People knew more about India than China. But what they "knew" about India was mostly negative. Their perception was it was tangled in an undergrowth of red tape, bureaucratic encumbrance and regulatory uncertainty. On the other hand, what they knew about China was positive, albeit limited. They did not understand the investment environment. They did not speak the language; and Chinese culture was an enigma. But they "knew" China offered a huge market with massive potential. This perception (and, of course, reality) was an important determinant of the final decision.

India also offered a large market and potential but unfortunately perception militated against a positive decision. On at least two occasions, an investment proposal for India was turned down in favour of a project in China even though the projects were similar and the earning power of the former was

higher than that of the latter. The reason was the subjective predilections of the corporate leaders.

UPA 2 will be remembered for the ignominy of corporate scandals. The telecom and coal scandals showed up the nexus between corrupt politicians and opportunistic businessmen. It was crony capitalism at its worst. The banking crisis has its genesis in this nexus. Modi 1.0 broke this nexus decisively. It ended what Raghuram Rajan has referred to as "relationship based capitalism" in which the quid of corporate "hospitality" was exchanged for the "quo" of political favours. It redefined the nature of engagement between government and business. Today few, if any, corporate houses can be confident of extracting favours from the political leadership.

Modi 2.0 should carry forward this reset in the terms of engagement. It runs no risk in forging a collaborative relationship with business. There might have been a public backlash had it sought such a relationship in the aftermath of the scandals that shook the UPA government.

Modi 1.0 moved the needle somewhat towards meeting the necessary conditions for incentivising investment. The GST, RERA, the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Act, the improvement in the "ease of doing business" index, digitisation etc were welcomed by the business community. More was expected but the initiatives were appreciated. Modi 2.0 should now push this needle further.

Business and government occupy different spaces. But they have interlocking interests. The walls separating the two should therefore be perforated. The FM has called for such a perforation. She made explicit in her budget speech the government's interest in bringing private industry into a partnership relationship with it. She should follow that up with assurances that government does not regard every businessman as a tax dodger; or every business bent on gaming the system. That, instead, it wants to build a relationship based on trust and mutuality of interest.

The writer is Chairman and Senior Fellow, Brookings India



SURBHI GUPTA

SISTERHOOD OF SURVIVORS

We need more shows that place the experiences of women at their centre

IT'S ALMOST TWO weeks since the second season of *Big Little Lies* came to a close. The disappointment of viewers is pretty well-known. The second season was somewhat tame compared to the first season that opened and ended with a murder. Apart from the stellar cast that includes Oscar-winning actors Nicole Kidman and Reese Witherspoon, what drew attention towards the mini-series was that it had women and children at the centre of the narrative, with the men mostly playing side roles. When I first heard about the show, it seemed like just another story with a murder mystery — perhaps with desperate housewives. But the seven-episode long first season was an essential watch because it threw light on issues we all know of — domestic violence and sexual abuse, school bullies and pregnancy from rape — but rarely talk about.

The disappointment over its plot aside, in its second season, *Big Little Lies* was still a powerful reminder that we need more shows that put the experiences of women at the centre. And they work with audiences, who having crossed over the #MeToo wave, are more aware and sensitive.

The first season, aired in 2017, turned out to be prescient. Just six months later, the Harvey Weinstein scandal brought the hitherto hushed-up reality of sexual abuse and



The show gives a face to different types of mothers — the one who sacrifices her career, the one who doesn't want to, the single mother and the soccer mom. And we aren't asked to judge any of them.

harassment in Hollywood into the open. And there were ripples all over the world, including India. We were witness to the abuse Celeste (played by Kidman) faced at the hands of her husband Perry. In season two, he isn't there and she misses him. There is a poignant scene when the therapist asks Celeste to remember the abuse, and she does so painfully and quietly. The therapist asks her to imagine what if her best friend Madeline (played by Witherspoon) experienced the same trauma. This time, she explodes with rage and fury.

Moments like these make the show telling. It's a chilling exposition of the fact that sexual abuse often comes hand in hand with gaslighting — a phenomenon in which the abuser makes the victim question her own reality. For someone who is on her way out of an abusive relationship, the aftermath can be hard. It is normal to think of the past with a tinge of nostalgia — that comes from a belief that "it couldn't have been that bad".

The show gives a face to different types of mothers — the one who sacrifices her career, the one who doesn't want to, the single mother and the soccer mom. And we aren't asked to judge any of them. Mothers can be competitive, it is natural for them to want the best for their children. We did belittle petty

fights and rolled our eyes when Madeline snapped at people. But the show is a reminder that we must stop sneering at such "flawed women", and take notice of the friendships they strike. This season was an ode to female solidarity and sisterhood.

The show takes the issue of mothering further with a courtroom drama for the custody of Celeste's twin boys. She was subjected to a witch hunt, when the photographs of her sexual relations with various men, outside the realm of her home, were used to judge her as a mother.

Big Little Lies also has Jane, essayed by Shailene Woodley. In season one, there was an air of mystery to her. She had recently moved to Monterey in California and found herself surrounded by the "rich people's club". Her world revolved around her son Ziggy, who, it was later revealed, was born out of rape.

Woodley's character gives weight to the second season. While cinema has dealt with sexual assault and rape, a conversation between the mother and her eight-year-old son about such violence is still rare. Woodley also translates the hesitation victims of assault face with intimacy in a manner that is touchingly human.

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FREEZE FRAME

EP UNNY



AUGUST 5, 1979, FORTY YEARS AGO

CONG UNITY TALKS
KARNATAKA CHIEF MINISTER Devraj Urs has conveyed to Maharashtra Chief Minister Sharad Pawar that if he is serious to bring about unity among Congressmen in the state, he should step down from his present position. A source said that Pawar might make a statement after the state legislature was prorogued towards the end of the next week. He also said that there was a possibility that unity talks might be resumed after the Bangalore session of the pre-split AICC to be held on August 18. A source said that Vasant Rao Patil and Nasikrao Tirpude, Congress and Prajatantra Congress leaders respectively, had made in abundantly clear

that there could not be any progress in the unity talks unless "Pawar climbs down from power".

IIAS, SIMLA TO STAY
WITHOUT YET GOING into the long-term education policy, the new government is considering immediate steps to change a few decisions of its predecessor. The Indian Institute of Advanced Studies at Simla is likely to stay. The Desai government had decided to wind it up by September 1, following an expert committee's report that the performance of the institute was below expectations. This recommendation was, however, challenged by many scholars who argued that the origi-

nal objectives of the institute — to be like Princeton or the All Souls' College at Oxford — were all right but they had gone awry because of too much governmental control.

IA PLANE CRASHES
AN INDIAN AIRLINES Avro-10 flight coming from Pune to Bombay carrying 41 passengers and four crew members, crashed on a hill at Kiroli village at about 9 pm. (According to UNI, all 45 persons are feared to have been killed). The aircraft was on the radar screen up to 11 miles from Bombay airport. After this, it suddenly vanished. Soon after 9 pm, a truck driver stated to have informed the Mumbai police in Thane district about the crash.

11 THE IDEAS PAGE

WHAT THE OTHERS SAY

“The end of the INF nuclear treaty is a bad step that could be followed by a worse one.”
— THE GUARDIAN

Helpless in Unnao

State institutions have been complicit in denying justice to the victim



Prakash Singh

THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE system of the country is “virtually collapsing” and “as it is slow, inefficient and ineffective, people are losing confidence in the system”. This was stated by the Justice Malimath Committee (2000-2003), which had been constituted to recommend reforms in the criminal justice system. Thanks to certain lobbies, the salient recommendations of the Committee were never implemented. Meanwhile, the system continues to go down a slippery slope.

There could be no greater indictment of the system than the fact that the Supreme Court had to intervene in a case of alleged rape to ensure that justice was done to the victim. Under normal circumstances, it should have been possible for the matter to be disposed in a satisfactory manner at the thana level. However, there was complete failure at all levels of administration, particularly in the police.

The facts about the Unnao case are as follows. A minor girl is gang-raped, allegedly by an MLA, Kuldeep Singh Sengar, his brother and accomplices, on June 17, 2017. The police register a case of kidnapping, but the MLA is not named in the FIR. On April 3, 2018, her father is brutally assaulted, allegedly by Sengar’s men, for refusing to withdraw the complaint. The police, in a bizarre twist to the case, arrest the her father for alleged illegal possession of firearms. She attempts to immolate herself outside the chief minister’s residence on April 8, 2018. The very next day, her father dies in judicial custody. There is widespread outrage. On April 12, three days after her father had succumbed to the injuries, four days after her attempted suicide and more than nine months after the gruesome incident, a case of rape is finally registered against the MLA under the IPC and Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act. The MLA is not arrested even at this stage, and the case is handed over to the CBI.

The CBI arrests Sengar on April 13, 2018, but the travails of the aggrieved family do not end. The family is said to have sent 35 written complaints to the police and administration over a period of one year, saying they would be targeted by the henchmen of the jailed MLA. But police do not take any effective action. On the contrary, they register an FIR against the woman, her mother and uncle on December 27, 2018 for having submitted forged documents to show that she was a minor at the time of the alleged rape. On July 12, 2019, the woman and her relatives send letters, among others, to the Chief Justice of India, alleging that the MLA had threatened them

with dire consequences if they did not settle the sexual assault case with the accused. And, on July 28, 2019, the car in which the woman was travelling is rammed by truck under suspicious circumstances. Her two aunts are killed. The woman and her lawyer, who was also in the car, suffer grievous injuries. The security personnel provided to her inexplicably did not accompany her during the journey. The truck’s number plate was found defaced. The woman is presently struggling for life.

Sengar, who was in the BSP and then in the Samajwadi Party before getting elected on a BJP ticket in 2017, is in jail, hoping to be released on bail one day and then, perhaps, acquitted for want of evidence.

The handling of the case by UP Police has been, to say the least, disgraceful. The sequence of events clearly brings out that the local police was hand in glove with the politician, trying to protect him at every stage and causing harassment to the woman and her family. Senior officers in the home department cannot escape responsibility either. The case dragged on for nearly two years. There was enough time to diagnose the problem and take corrective action. However, that was not done. Supervision was inexcusably lax and complicit. It was regrettable on the part of the police to have said, even before forensic examination, that the car crash prima facie seemed to be an “accident”.

The CBI has not covered itself with glory either. It is true that the agency filed chargesheets as far back as July 2018 — one charging the MLA with abduction and rape and a second one charging four people of the murder of the woman’s father. A third chargesheet was filed against the legislator for planting weapons on the woman’s father. The CBI should have taken steps to ensure that important witnesses were not intimidated, much less eliminated. And why could trial in the chargesheeted cases not begin?

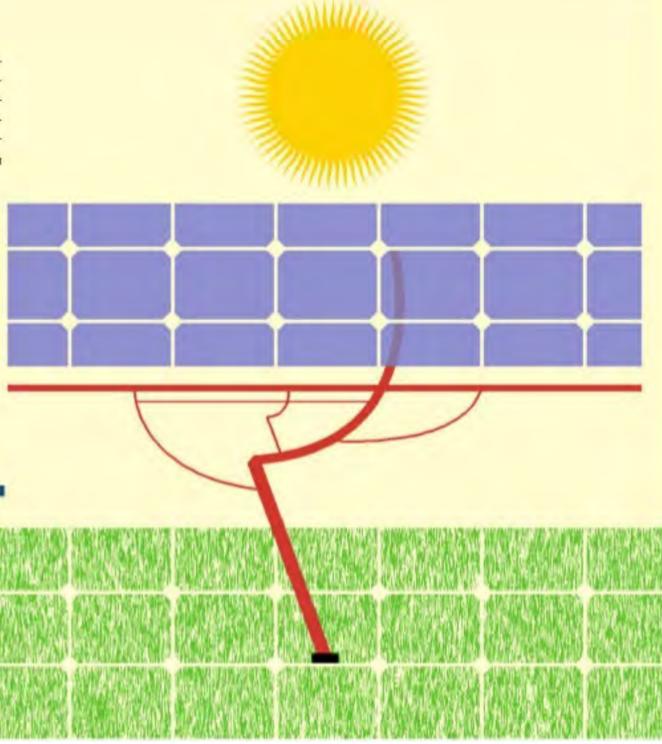
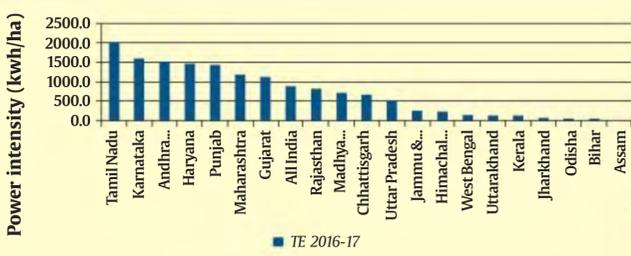
Fortunately, the Supreme Court issued a slew of directions on August 1, transferring the trial of rape and other related cases to Delhi and ordering that the trial be completed within 45 days. It has also directed the CBI to complete investigation into the accident case in 14 days and ordered the UP government to pay an interim compensation of Rs 25 lakh to the survivor. The CRPF has been asked to provide protection to the victim, her family and the lawyer.

The Supreme Court has been trying to depoliticise the police. It gave directions which, if sincerely implemented, would have insulated police from external pressures. Why are the states being allowed to trifle with them? The apex court needs to introspect if the monitoring and implementation of its directions has been adequate.

Similarly, the Witness Protection law has yet to be passed by the Centre. It has been on the anvil for several years. It should be enacted without further delay.

The writer is chairman, Indian Police Foundation

POWER INTENSITY IN INDIAN AGRICULTURE (KWH/HA)



CR Sasikumar

In the shade of solar trees

Helping farmers produce solar energy can help realise the government’s target of doubling farmers’ incomes



FROM PLATE TO PLOUGH
BY ASHOK GULATI

(almost 3,000 pages) and 619 recommendations. These volumes contain a wealth of information, but I doubt any government can implement 619 recommendations even in five years. My humble submission to our friend Ashok Dalwai and his team is that they will do a great national service if they bring out a summary of 14 volumes in 20-25 pages, and prioritise just five to 10 recommendations from a laundry list of 619.

But, let us get back to the FM’s statement on the annadata becoming the urjadata. This one policy has the potential to double farmers’ incomes within a year or two. How? Here are the details.

The PM has also set a target of producing 100 GW of solar power by 2022. He wants the country to be one of the frontrunners in the International Solar Alliance for clean energy. So far, the model that has been adopted to develop solar power is inviting bids from large business players. And big players did enter, ranging from Mahindra and Mahindra to the Adanis and so on. Some of them, who entered early into power purchase agreements (PPA) with state governments, had to burn their hands when the costs came down and state governments forced them to revise the costs of PPA downwards, upsetting their economic calculations. But this model of generating solar power was not very inclusive. The land is locked for solar panels for almost 25 years, and the benefits go only to a few investors.

The alternative model is to help farmers produce solar power on their lands, making annadata an urjadata. After all, farmers occupy the largest chunks of land in this country. This model will be much more inclusive and can help augment their incomes significantly. There are two variants of this: One, replace all pump-sets, especially diesel ones, with solar pumps and the excess power generated through solar panels can be purchased by state governments at a price that gives the farmer a good margin over his cost of producing solar power. Second, encourage farmers to grow “solar trees” on their lands at a height of about 10-12 feet in a manner that enough sunlight keeps coming to plants below. Under this variant, the farmer

can keep growing two irrigated crops as he has been doing, but the solar tree generates a lot of excess power that can be purchased by the state government. The power generated under the second variant is multiple times more than under the first variant, and therefore the income augmentation can also be several times more than under the first variant.

At ICRIER, we did a global survey on this and found that it is being practised in many countries from Japan to China to Germany, and India is ripe for this. The problem is of mobilising enough capital to instal these solar trees. In one acre you can have 500 solar trees in such a manner that even tractors can move through those and farmers can keep growing their normal two crops. It does not impact their productivity as there is ample sunlight coming from the sides for photosynthesis. The second pre-condition is that the state should be ready to do the power purchase agreement.

The current LG of Delhi, Anil Bajjal, got excited about this idea and wanted to implement it in Delhi’s agri-belt as a demonstration plot. After several meetings with him and his team, the Delhi government actually announced a policy to that effect. As per their calculations, 500 trees can be put on an acre of farmer’s land; the investment in solar panels (trees) will be done by other business people. The only thing that the farmer has to assure is that for 25 years he will not convert his land to other uses. The economic calculations suggest that farmers can be given Rs one lakh/acre per annum as net income, with a six per cent increase every year for the next 25 years. This can easily double their income. He does not have to mobilise capital for solar panels. That is done by other business, who also make profit in the process.

Given that power consumption per hectare in Indian agriculture is still very low (see graph), this holds great promise for several poorer states. Can the Modi government unleash this revolution of solar power and double farmers’ income?

The writer is Infosys Chair professor for Agriculture at ICRIER

In one acre you can have 500 solar trees in such a manner that even tractors can move through those and farmers can keep growing their normal two crops. It does not impact their productivity as there is ample sunlight coming from sides for photosynthesis.

VIEW FROM THE NEIGHBOURHOOD



A weekly look at the public conversations shaping ideas beyond borders — in the Subcontinent. Curated by Aakash Joshi

KASHMIR CENTRESTAGE

BETWEEN DONALD Trump’s claim that Narendra Modi asked him to “mediate” the Kashmir dispute, and the new NDA government’s seeming determination to abrogate Section 35A and Article 370, as promised in the BJP’s manifesto, Kashmir is front and centre in the discussions in the Pakistani media. A cursory reading between the lines of newspaper editorials and opinion articles makes the conundrum for Rawalpindi and Islamabad clear.

On the one hand, as Moonis Ahmar puts it in an article in The Express Tribune, “Pakistan must be careful while accepting American mediation offer on Kashmir, as it will question Pakistan’s stance that the Kashmir conflict needs to be resolved according to the aspirations of the Kashmiris and as per the UNSC resolutions.” But, there appears to be an argument in favour of international interference (or mediation, depending on your point of view), articulated by Dawn in its editorial: “The fact is that unless the Kashmir issue is addressed, peace in the subcontinent will be a distant dream. And it is also a fact that bilateral attempts to address the Kashmir question and restart dialogue have hit a brick wall, thanks mainly to Indian arrogance and intransigence.”

Two developments over the last month seem to be affecting the discourse in Pakistan around Kashmir. First, is the claim by Trump that Modi asked him to intervene in Kashmir. Trump’s statement, despite the vehement denials by New Delhi’s foreign policy establishment, seems to have energised the commentariat in Pakistan into encouraging the internationalisation of the Kashmir issue. Second, New Delhi’s policy stance in the Valley seems to provide some fodder for this endeavour. The decision to re-imagine the constitutional, federal structure of Kashmir vis a vis the Indian state, and the demographic insecurities and concerns that engenders as well as the accusations of human rights violations by Indian security forces, seem to be one of the justifications of the first aspect of the narrative.

ROHINGYA DILEMMA

SINCE The influx of Rohingya refugees to Bangladesh, the media in the country has been critical of Myanmar for its treatment of the Muslim minority community, as well as called for the repatriation of the refugees back to Rakhine State. However, as the July 25 editorial in The Dhaka Tribune shows, the issue is far from a simple one. It welcomes the arrival of “high-level delegation

from Myanmar to convince the Rohingyas to return home” but acknowledges that “sadly, the overall task remains more complicated than one of simple persuasion”.

The editorial contends that “recent satellite images” show that Myanmar is ill-prepared for the refugees to return home and that the country is still not open to human rights organisations, journalists and international watchdogs.

The editorial argues: “Ethnic cleansing operations on a scale that took place in Rakhine state cannot and should not be swept under the rug, and it is a duty of the whole world to ensure that justice is served for the crimes that were committed. It may seem convenient to ignore the humanitarian complexities of the Rohingya crisis in favour of a speedy solution, but Bangladesh has so far not taken the easy way out, sheltering a million refugees while our own resources are stretched to breaking point. We cannot just give up on these refugees now.”

TRIPLE TALAQ LESSONS

SINCE The Easter terror attacks in Sri Lanka, the country’s Muslim minority has been under siege, and at the receiving end of the state and security forces’ unwelcome attention. Ameen Izzadeen, a Sri Lankan journalist and activist argues in The Daily

Mirror on August 2 that there are lessons to be learnt for the country’s Muslims from the criminalisation of triple talaq in India.

The article begins with recounting how in Islam — in both the Quran and the Hadith(s) — the practice of triple divorce in one sitting is a legal and religious violation. In Sri Lanka, like in India, Muslims “are embroiled in a debate over Muslim Marriage and Divorce Act (MMDA) reforms. The reforms are called for because the law and the lacuna in it bring misery to Muslim women, instead of offering them the law’s protection.”

Izzaden argues that religious leaders in Sri Lanka must begin the process of reforms in marriage laws, making them more gender-equal, lest they give the state an opportunity to interfere in the community’s affairs. The article acknowledges that by and large, religious leaders of the community are progressive and “civic-minded”, yet there are some moulvis that are resistant to reform. To them, he says: “The Muslim scholars who entertain fears about MMDA reforms must realise there is nothing un-Islamic about setting 18 as the minimum age for bride and groom. Overhauling the corrupt Qazi court system is also an Islamic duty. They need to realise their opposition to reforms is in conflict with the country’s constitution and several progressive laws.”

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MORALITY, POLITICS

THIS REFERS TO the article, ‘A familiar despair’ (IE August 1). The week long political drama in Karnataka came to an end with the BJP-led government coming to office. Political analysts have been criticising these developments. But this is not the first time that such a development has taken place. The main reason of this phenomenon is the lack of morality in public life. To single out the Karnataka case as a case of political debasement is unfair.

Ravi Mathur, Ghaziabad

DIGNITY MATTERS

THIS REFERS TO the article, ‘Taking down patriarchy’ (IE, August 1). The writer notes how abolishing triple talaq will give “real freedom to Muslim women who were subjugated to exploitation and terror”. Sure we have laws that prohibit dowry and other such diabolical practices but are we really a dowry/domestic violence-free country? Real freedom doesn’t merely comprise laws but the ability and freedom to step out of oppressive conditions. The new law surely takes away the absolutely unacceptable right of a man to divorce his wife at his convenience by simply uttering three words but does it guarantee a woman a life of dignity and respect?

Devanshi Bhati, Delhi

APT PANACEA

THIS REFERS TO the article, ‘Healthcare is ailing’ (IE, August 2). The National Medical Commission is not a one stop solution for all the ails of the medical and hospital sector. But it is still a step in the right direction. There are differences of opinion of some of its provisions. But those

LETTER OF THE WEEK AWARD

To encourage quality reader intervention, The Indian Express offers the Letter of the Week award. The letter adjudged the best for the week is published every Saturday. Letters may be e-mailed to

editpage@expressindia.com or sent to The Indian Express, B-1/B, Sector 10, Noida-UP 201301.

Letter writers should mention their postal address and phone number.

THE WINNER RECEIVES SELECT EXPRESS PUBLICATIONS

should be sorted out amicably. We all want medical education in our country to be world class, and to stop the brain drain in the medical profession. Balancing out the poor patient doctor ratio is equally critical. The provision for community doctors in the new NMC bill would go a long way in meeting this requirement.

Bal Govind, Noida

LOVE OF FOOD

THIS REFERS TO the editorial, ‘Eat, pray, love’ (IE, August 2). Zomato has taken a principled stand that none has the right to communalise food or the business of catering. This refreshing,

SS Paul, Noida

12 THE GOVERNANCE PAGE

MAKING TRAVEL IN GENERAL COMPARTMENTS MORE CONVENIENT

How a biometrics-based token system is reducing chaos on railway platforms

Issued 3 hours before train leaves, ensures only genuine passengers get on, cuts out 'reservation' by touts

AVISHEK G DASTIDAR
& ATIHK RASHID
NEW DELHI, PUNE, AUGUST 4

BOARDING 'general' compartments — in which seating is not reserved — especially in long-distance trains leaving major cities, has always been an ordeal for passengers. The massive mismatch between the numbers of travellers and the available seats drives people to queue up on platforms up to 10 hours in advance. Chaos at the time of boarding has led to stampedes and even deaths in the past. The Railway Protection Force is employed routinely to prevent fights among groups of passengers. Gangs of touts 'reserve' seats for a price, and those who can't pay suffer.

The Western and Central Railways have introduced a new Biometric Token System (BTS) that seeks to streamline the process of boarding unreserved coaches. Tokens are issued on a first-come, first-served basis, after accepting biometric information of individual passengers. Passengers with valid tickets are required to place their fingers on a scanner, and are issued a token with a serial number against their biometric data. Passengers must queue up and enter the compartment in the order of their serial numbers.

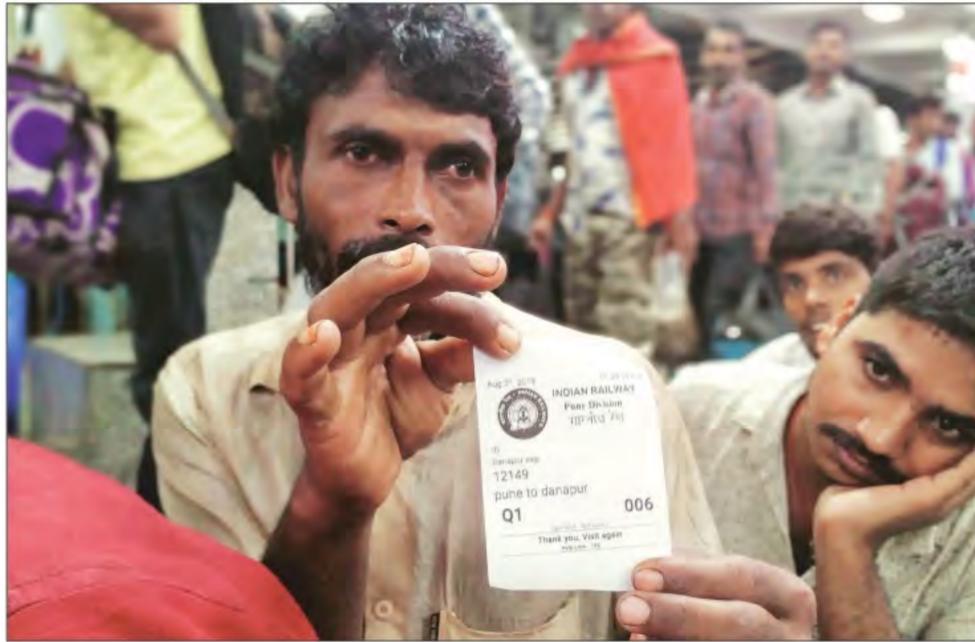
The tokens are issued three hours before a train's departure. The use of biometrics cuts out the touts, and helps genuine passengers. "The data (captured in the machines) will be used to analyse the pattern of crowds and the patronage of trains. In case of a mishap, we will have details of the passengers, and with the help of this (biometric information) we can prevent black marketing of unreserved tickets," Ravinder Bhakar, spokesperson, Western Railway, said. The biometric data will be stored locally with the authorities for a year, Bhakar said.

D Vikas, Divisional Security Commissioner, Pune, said: "Since we started this system, the unmanageable crowds have been transformed into well-managed, disciplined groups... We started with two counters at either end of the platform; both counters were manned by RPF staffers who possessed good personalities and soft skills. The system was also cost-effective, as an average of Rs 20 was spent on each train."

A senior RPF officer pointed out that since the issuance of tokens begins only three hours before departure, "passengers don't have to wait for 8-9 hours in queues".

Authorities in Western Railway and Central Railway said the Railways hoped to expand the token system to the rest of the country soon.

The initial experience with the system has underlined some issues and generated



A passenger on Pune's railway station showing his token before boarding the Pune Danapur Express. Atikh Rashid

THE SOLUTION

BTS MACHINES IN MUMBAI

- CST-Lucknow Pushpak Express
- Vasco-Howrah Amravati Express
- Bandra-Jaipur Superfast Express
- Mumbai Central-Ahmedabad Jn Karnavati Express
- Mumbai Central-Amritsar Golden Temple Mail
- Mumbai Central-Ahmedabad Jn Gujarat Mail
- Bandra Terminus-Kalka Paschim Express
- Bandra Terminus-Hazrat Nizamuddin Maharashtra Sampark Kranti Express
- Bandra Terminus-Muzaffarpur Jn Avadh Express

What is Biometric Token System

THE WESTERN and Central Railways have introduced a new system by which passengers travelling in the general coach, where seats are not reserved, are given a token roughly three hours before the train's departure. These tokens are given on a first-come, first-served basis, and carry a serial number on them, which governs the order in which passengers will board the train. The use of biometrics

(fingerprint) rules out touts and ensures only bonafide travellers receive a token.

While some creases need to be ironed out, the initial evidence suggests that the use of BTS has brought a semblance of order to the otherwise unruly process of boarding an unreserved coach. In the past, there have been several episodes when the commotion around boarding has led to passengers getting hurt.

user feedback. Some passengers have suggested that the tokens should be given along with the tickets themselves — this, they have said, would obviate the need to reach the station three hours before the train's departure in order to get a token.

There are some teething problems as well. On August 1, when *The Indian Express* visited Pune Jn station, passengers of the 12149

Pune Danapur Express leaving Pune at 8.55 pm, complained that the token-issuing machine had "heated up" and stopped functioning after dispensing just 98 tokens.

The initiative is also not sufficiently well known yet. Many passengers continue to queue up separately hours before the trains' departure because they are unaware of the biometrics-based tokens.

'With 5G, more people will be dependent on network, so security will be very important'

THE USE of 5G technology was one of the key issues discussed between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and US President Donald Trump ahead of the G-20 meet in Osaka in June. To better understand what is at stake, *Karishma Mehrotra* spoke to information security expert V KAMAKOTI, a member of the National Security Advisory Board and a professor of computer science and engineering at IIT Madras.



THE POLICY INTERVIEW

V KAMAKOTI

Information Security Expert

What does 5G technology enable?

Centuries ago, in Industry 1, the focus was the steam engine with mechanical engineering. Industry 2 required more electricity to run engines and machines. Industry 3, where we are now, is the electronics game. What we are looking forward to in Industry 4 are things like distributed processing, robotics, 3D printing, artificial intelligence, and big data. It will be distributed computing, trying to do activities that are distributed in nature.

What do we mean by 'distributed' activities? Say, I am a surgeon sitting in Chennai and I want to do two different surgeries in two different places on the same day. I can have a robotic setup in these locations and do robotic surgery.

So far, we have had human-to-human communication and human-to-machine communication. In Industry 4, it will also be a machine-to-machine. Two autonomous vehicles or two drones can do collaborative work.

Why does 5G bring up more urgent security concerns than before?

5G is taking technology closer and closer to mankind. When we looked at 2G, the mobile phone was used just for voice communication. We never dreamt that we would use mobile devices for anything else. Now, we rarely talk on our phones compared to (the) other activities (we do on them).

As we go towards 5G, a lot more of our livelihoods will depend on the network, so the issue of security becomes more significant.

In addition, the scale will be bigger, the number of towers will be bigger, the number of devices will be bigger, and when something goes wrong it becomes irreversible. Just like if you distribute one million phones and want to take them back, it will be difficult.

What is the global concern over Huawei?

The United States claims that it has security concerns in deploying (Chinese-owned) Huawei because of spyware and malware — what you would call back doors that could leak data from the installations. So the US has banned Huawei equipment to be deployed in that country.

Two things can happen if I have back door: I can leak information from a place to

another place of my choice. Secondly, I can gain control over the equipment and stop it from functioning.

So, how should India manage these concerns?

Fortunately or unfortunately, the entire narrative of 5G is now being looked at through this 'Huawei or not-Huawei' issue. But the narrative should be, at the first stage, what do we need to do when we try to bring in unknown equipment — hardware or software? This should be the first question we need to answer. Huawei or not is for the next stage.

The unknown system problem is that it is very easy to find out if the system does what I want it to do, but it is difficult for me to find out whether the system will not do what I don't want it to do.

We need to create a comprehensive framework for our requirements. In this, there will be technical issues, as well as the notion of trust and countries' past record. Each sector will have its own do's and don'ts, whether it is power, transportation, finance, entertainment, aviation, or defence.

Also, this is where indigenisation of technology comes in. If we focus on building technologies here (in India), I will have very, very clear access to my hardware and my software.

How will I be secure if I don't even know what is inside my chips? In the mobile phone you are using, there are one billion transistors, and your Android operating system that is running, is one million lines of code. With one million lines of code running on one billion transistors, you don't know what could happen.

FROM STATES REFORMS TRACKER

RAJASTHAN High Court seeks to move away from paper

THE RAJASTHAN High Court issued an administrative circular requesting all advocates to share their email addresses so that they may be sent the cause list by email instead of using paper. In the circular, the court said that if lawyers were to join this initiative and opt for emails instead of regular mail, one crore pages a year will be saved in the Rajasthan High Court alone.

BIHAR CCTV cameras for safer, secure Patna

TO KEEP a watch on crime, including sexual harassment, the Bihar government has been installing CCTV cameras at key locations in the capital, Patna. The government intends to replicate the move in other towns and cities subsequently. Over 300 CCTV cameras have already been installed. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has said that 'third eye technology' can be a major tool in the hands of police to check crime and prevent terrorist activities, besides monitoring traffic.

HARYANA Policy to address the shortage of doctors

A DRAFT government policy aims to address the shortage of doctors in the public health sector. The policy is expected to result in the creation of either a separate cadre for specialists or a sub-cadre within the Haryana Civil Medical Services, along with new, "more robust" pay scales. The draft policy also mentions the possibility of a financial incentive of Rs 20,000 to be given to diploma holders, and Rs 25,000 to degree holders.

A village shows a state how to save water

RAAKHI JAGGA
MANSA, AUGUST 4

IN MARCH 2016, Kothe Aspal, a small village in the Mansa district of Punjab, saw the construction of soak pits in every house with the hope of conserving water. The district falls in that part of the Malwa region of Punjab where the groundwater is unfit for drinking. Mansa is provided with canal water for drinking purposes. As such, in every village home where most water use happened — be it for washing dishes or bathing — a soak pit was made to collect water, clean it and hope-fully add to the water table. Three years later, the dried hand pump of the village school is not dry anymore, and that small exercise of making soak pits is finally paying off.

The way a soak pit cleans water is by passing it through a bed of stones and then allowing it to seep underground. This resulting increase in the water table yields water that, although not fit for drinking, is good



Hand pumps in Aspal Kodhe village of Mansa are no longer dry. Gurmeet Singh

enough for other routine use. This has reduced the village's dependence on the canal water.

Kothe Aspal's success is being recognised at the national level with even the Union Ministry of Rural Development honouring it for constructing soak pits and running them successfully, informs Apneet Riyait, the deputy commissioner of Mansa.

Looking at the success of this project, 53 new soak pits are being constructed across Mansa district. Further, while the initial round of funding was derived from the funds allocated under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme, this time Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited has decided to partially fund (roughly 30 per cent of Rs 8,400) the construction of soak pits under its Corporate Social Responsibility mandate.

"Though small but this effort holds great significance at a time when Punjab's groundwater table has receded and many of its blocks have been overexploited," says Riyait.

SOIL HEALTH CARDS IN MAHARASHTRA

Win-win in Kolhapur: falling fertiliser cost, rising yield

PARTHA SARATHI BISWAS
KOHLAPUR, AUGUST 4

TWO YEARS ago, Pradip Patil, a sugarcane farmer with 1.5 acres of land in Kolhapur, decided to get the soil of his farm tested under the government's soil health card scheme.

The result surprised Patil. The soil health card issued to him showed that his land had adequate levels of nitrogen, but the levels of potassium and phosphorus were significantly above normal.

Like many farmers in his village and *taluka*, Patil had been using a set formula for fertilisers. In the light of the soil test results, however, the local agriculture assistant convinced him to slightly reduce the amount of urea (a nitrogenous fertiliser), and substantially cut superphosphate and Muriate of Potash (MOP).

Doing this brought down the overall fertiliser input cost for Patil — more importantly, the productivity of his land improved.



"The cost of fertiliser came down by Rs 2,000, and my per-acre yield increased by 10 tonnes. Instead of the 45 tonnes that I harvested earlier, I was able to harvest 55 tonnes that season," he said.

Since then, Patil, who intercropped vegetables such as cauliflower and brinjal with sugarcane, has started tailoring his fertiliser use as per the soil health card. "Our village is

CYCLES OF SOIL HEALTH

All India	Samples tested	Cards issued
First Cycle (2015-17)	2.53	10.73
Second Cycle (2017-19)	2.73	11.43

Figures in crore

Soil Health Cards being given in Kolhapur. Express

lucky. All 100 acres of land has been tested and villagers have been issued soil health cards," he said. All farmers were now reaping the double benefits of lower costs and higher outputs, he said.

Soil health cards were rolled out across the country in August 2015 after Prime Minister Narendra Modi made it a key agenda item. Soil samples are tested for the

three macronutrients (nitrogen, potassium, and phosphorus), and the micronutrients boron, iron and zinc, along with organic carbon. The soil health cards tell farmers about the nutrient content of their land, and guide them in using fertilisers better. Some 2.59 crore soil health cards have been distributed in Maharashtra in two cycles since 2015.

Patil agreed to test his soil two years after the scheme was introduced, responding to sustained efforts by state and local officials.

Mahavir Latkar, the district soil survey and testing officer, said 12 lakh soil health cards were issued in Kolhapur after training sessions were held for farmers, including coaching on how to read the cards. The path ahead is "not easy", Latkar said. "It will require change in the farmers' mindset. As of now, I can say we have managed to educate only 50 per cent of the

farmers in the district." Even so, the fall in fertiliser usage in Kolhapur is encouraging. The reported usage of urea in the district fell from 66,200 tonnes in 2017-18 to 61,400 tonnes in 2018-19. In Maharashtra as a whole, urea consumption for 2018-19 was 2 lakh tonnes less than the 23.70 lakh tonnes in 2017-18.

The state Commissionerate of Agriculture is now working towards linking Aadhaar and phone numbers of farmers to their soil health cards. This, would allow the government to issue "fertiliser advisories" on the line of weather advisories, said Ashok Bankhele, deputy director (soil testing) in the Maharashtra govern-

ment. Four advisories will be issued — one each before the start of the Rabi and Kharif seasons, and one each in the middle of both seasons.



Incremental Performance in 2017-18

IN NUMBERS

India's healthiest states

In NITI Aayog's Health Index released in June, Andhra Pradesh stands out among the 21 large states for being not just the frontrunner in the base year (2015-16), but also for being the most improved state in the reference year (2017-18). Bihar, UP, MP, Odisha, Uttarakhand stand at the other end of the spectrum

INCREMENTAL PERFORMANCE*	ASPIRANTS (2015-16)	ACHIEVERS (2015-16)	FRONT-RUNNERS (2015-16)
Not Improved	Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar	West Bengal	Kerala, Punjab, Tamil Nadu
Least Improved		Chhattisgarh	Gujarat, Himachal Pradesh
Moderately Improved			Maharashtra, J&K, Karnataka, Telangana
Most Improved	Rajasthan	Haryana, Jharkhand, Assam	Andhra Pradesh

Incremental Performance in 2017-18

TOP OF THE WORLD



Franky Zapata takes off on a hoverboard. Reuters

UK-FRANCE

Frenchman 1st to cross Channel on hoverboard

FRENCH INVENTOR Franky Zapata on Sunday succeeded in crossing the English Channel on a jet-powered hoverboard he designed, zooming over the Strait of Dover in just over 20 minutes. After a previous bid in July that ended with him falling into the sea, Zapata took off from Sangatte, just outside Calais in France, on a little platform powered by five small jet engines and carrying kerosene in a backpack. Flanked by three helicopters, he reached Britain after a stop on a boat halfway through the 35-km crossing to refuel, before landing safely in Saint Margaret's Bay, close to Dover.

PHILIPPINES

Toll rises to 31 in boat accidents

Manila: Rescuers recovered more bodies in rough seas where three ferry boats capsized after being buffeted by fierce winds and waves off two central Philippine provinces, bringing the death toll to 31 with three missing, the coast guard said Sunday. Coast guard spokesman Armand Balilo said the dead were mostly passengers of two ferries that flipped over in sudden wind gusts and powerful waves Saturday off Guimaras and Iloilo provinces. Sixty-two other passengers and crew were rescued.

INDONESIA

Tens of millions affected by power blackout

Jakarta: Tens of millions of people on Indonesia's heavily populated Java island were affected by a widespread electricity outage Sunday after disruptions at several power plants, the state utility PLN said. The shutdown hit parts of the sprawling capital Jakarta — home to some 30 million people — and forced the temporary closure of its new mass rapid transit system. Passengers were safely evacuated from several MRT carriages when the power went out, according to the system's operator.

GUN VIOLENCE ROCKS U.S. AGAIN, 30 DEAD WITHIN 24 HOURS



Shoppers exit with their hands up after the mass shooting at a Walmart in El Paso, Texas, on Saturday. Reuters

Police say Texas mass shooting racially motivated; toll rises to 20

Suspect held; authorities examine his 'manifesto' decrying 'Hispanic invasion'

JULIO-CESAR CHAVEZ
EL PASO, AUGUST 4

POLICE AND FBI investigators in Texas searched for clues on Sunday to explain what drove a young gunman from the Dallas area to kill 20 people at a Walmart store hundreds of miles away in the border city of El Paso. Texas Governor Greg Abbott said Saturday morning's rampage appeared to be a hate crime, and police cited a "manifesto" they attributed to the suspect as evidence that the bloodshed was racially motivated.

The US attorney for the western district of Texas, John Bash, said federal authorities were treating the massacre as a case of domestic terrorism. "And we're going to do what we do to terrorists in this country, which is to deliver swift and certain justice," Bash told reporters at a news conference on Sunday.

The shooting immediately reverberated on the US presidential campaign trail, with several Democratic candidates denouncing the rise of gun violence and repeating calls for tighter gun control measures.

On Twitter, US President Donald Trump branded the shooting "an act of cowardice," adding, "I know that I stand with everyone in this country to condemn today's hateful act. There are no reasons or excuses that will ever justify killing innocent people."

Police said the suspect opened fire with a rifle on shoppers, many of them bargain-hunting for back-to-school supplies, then surrendered to officers who confronted him outside the store.

The massacre came just six days after the last major outbreak of US gun violence in a public place — a food festival in

TRUMP STAYS OUT OF SIGHT AT GOLF COURSE

AS THE US reeled from two mass shootings in less than a day, President Donald Trump spent the first hours after the tragedies out of sight at his New Jersey golf course, sending out tweets of support awkwardly mixed in with those promoting a celebrity fight and attacking his political foes. He was due to return to Washington Sunday evening. Trump will be carefully watched for his response as authorities investigate whether the El Paso shooter left behind an anti-immigration manifesto that echoes the president's headline rhetoric about the border.

California where a teenager killed three people with an assault rifle and injured a dozen others before taking his own life in a hail of police gunfire.

Police said the suspect in Saturday's shooting was a 21-year-old white male from Allen, Texas, a Dallas suburb some 1,046 km east of El Paso, which lies along the Rio Grande across the US-Mexico border from Ciudad Juarez.

Multiple news media outlets, citing law enforcement officials, named the accused assailant as Patrick Crusius.

El Paso Police Chief Greg Allen said investigators were examining a "manifesto" from the suspect indicating "there is a potential nexus to a hate crime".

A four-page statement posted on 8chan, an online message board often used by extremists, and believed to have been written by the suspect, called the Walmart attack "a response to the Hispanic invasion of Texas". REUTERS

Gunman kills 9 in under a minute in Ohio, then shot dead by police

STEVE GORMAN
LOS ANGELES, AUGUST 4

A GUNMAN wearing body armor opened fire in Dayton, Ohio, on Sunday, killing nine people and wounding 27 others, authorities said, in the second mass shooting in the US in less than a day.

Police officers who were on routine patrol nearby arrived on the scene in less than a minute and shot the attacker dead, likely preventing a much higher casualty toll, police and the city's mayor said.

"In less than one minute, Dayton first responders neutralised the shooter. I'm just still completely amazed at the heroic nature of our police depart-



At the site of the shooting in Dayton, Ohio. AP

ment," Mayor Nan Whaley said at a news conference.

Assistant Police Chief Matt Carper told reporters the shooting began at 1 am local time in Dayton's Oregon District, a historic neighbourhood popular for its nightclubs, restaurants, art galleries and shops.

The motive behind the shooting was not immediately clear, and investigators believe the individual had acted alone, Carper said. The authorities said they had identified the shooter but were not yet disclosing his name.

Ten people were killed, including the assailant. REUTERS

32 mass killings in US this year

This year, there have been at least 32 mass killings — defined by the Justice Department as three or more killings in a single episode — in the US. Here are some of the most deadly shootings in 2019:

JULY 28: GILROY, CALIFORNIA

A garlic festival in an agricultural community turned deadly when a 19-year-old man opened fire with a semiautomatic rifle, killing 3 people. The shooter killed himself in the attack.

JULY 6: ST. LOUIS COUNTY, MISSOURI

The bodies of five men who had been fatally shot were discovered in an apartment building by police officers in north St. Louis County. Two men were arrested.

JUNE 8: WHITE SWAN, WASHINGTON

Five members of the Yakama Nation — a Native American tribe — were killed in a remote community in central Washington State. Four people were arrested.

MAY 31: VIRGINIA BEACH, VIRGINIA

A city engineer quit his job and then went on a shooting rampage at the Virginia Beach Municipal Centre, killing 12. The suspect, a former soldier, targeted his former co-workers in offices and

hallways, according to the authorities.

FEB 15: AURORA, ILLINOIS

A disgruntled employee who had been fired from his job returned to a suburban Chicago factory with a handgun with a laser sight, which authorities said he used to kill five of his former co-workers.

JAN 13: SEBRING, FLORIDA

Five women were fatally shot in a bank by a 21-year-old man, who called an emergency dispatcher and said, "I have shot five people." Source: NYT

EGYPT

RESTORATION BEGINS ON KING TUT'S COFFIN

Egypt started the first-ever restoration work on a gold-covered sarcophagus of the famed boy pharaoh Tutankhamun, ahead of the country's new museum opening next year, the antiquities minister said Sunday. The work is expected to take at least eight months.



Iran seizes tanker carrying 'smuggled fuel': State media

MEHDI FATTAHI & AYA BATRAWY
TEHRAN, AUGUST 4

THE IRANIAN Revolutionary Guard seized a ship in the Persian Gulf suspected of carrying smuggled fuel, state media reported Sunday, marking Iran's third seizure of a commercial vessel in recent weeks and the latest show of strength by the paramilitary force amid a spike in regional tensions.

State TV and the semi-official Fars news agency reported that seven crew members were detained when the ship was seized late Wednesday carrying 700,000 liters of "smuggled fuel" from Iran. The local reports did not provide further details on the vessel or the nationality of the crew.

The news agency reported that the ship was seized near Farsi Island, where an Iranian Guard Navy base is located. The island sits in the Persian Gulf between Saudi Arabia and Iran, north of the Strait of Hormuz.

"This foreign vessel had received the fuel from other ships and was transferring it to Persian Gulf Arab states," Fars quoted General Ramazan Zirahi, a Guard commander, as saying.

This would mark the third vessel seized by the Guard in the past two weeks, and the second accused of smuggling fuel.

The US Fifth Fleet, based in Bahrain, said it did not have information to confirm the reports. Maritime tracking experts also said they did not have any immediate information about the incident or the vessel.

Illegal fuel smuggling out of Iran is a concern of authorities there. Iranian media reported last month that some 8 million



'ZARIF SANCTIONED AFTER DECLINING TO MEET TRUMP'

Tehran: Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif was hit with US sanctions after turning down an invitation to meet President Donald Trump, officials in the Islamic republic said on Sunday. The New Yorker magazine reported on Friday that Senator Rand Paul met Zarif in the US on July 15 and had Trump's blessing when he extended an invitation to the Iranian minister to go to the White House. Officials in Iran confirmed the report on Sunday, heaping scorn on the Trump administration for claiming to want dialogue with Iran while slapping sanctions on its top diplomat.

liters of government-subsidised Iranian fuel are smuggled daily through Iran's borders to other countries where prices are much higher.

Tensions have soared around the Strait of Hormuz, a critical oil shipping waterway that lies between Iran and Oman. The US has boosted its military presence in the region and six oil tankers have been targeted in the Gulf of Oman in unclaimed acts of sabotage that the US blames on Iran. Iran has denied any involvement in those attacks. AP

Sudanese protesters sign power-sharing deal with military

SAMY MAGDY
CAIRO, AUGUST 4

SUDAN'S PRO-DEMOCRACY movement signed a power-sharing agreement with the ruling military council on Sunday aimed at paving the way for a transition to civilian rule following the overthrow of President Omar al-Bashir in April.

Representatives initiated a constitutional document that would establish a joint military and civilian council to rule for a little over three years until elections can be held. The agreement would establish a Cabinet appointed by the activists, as well as a legislative body.

The military overthrew al-Bashir in April following months of mass protests against his three-decade-long autocratic rule. The protesters remained in the streets, demanding a rapid transition to a civilian authority. They have been locked in tense negotiations with the military for weeks while holding mass protests.

General Mohammed Hamdan Dagalo, the deputy head of the military council, told a joint news conference that the deal has ended an era in Sudan's history "characterised by rivalry and fighting."

"We have entered the negotiations as partners and leave as one team. The national will has triumphed... it is a win-win," he said.

Protest leader Omar al-Dagair said a "fair and transparent" investigation into recent violence by security forces against protesters, and achieving peace with rebel groups, would be top priorities for the transitional government.

"There will be no democracy

EXPLAINED

Setting the stage for transition

AFTER MASS protests led to the ouster of President Omar al-Bashir in April, the military has been ruling Sudan. But the protesters kept up the pressure and last month, the two sides agreed on a three-year transitional period before full civilian rule. The declaration now signed by the protest leaders and the military outlines the terms of the transitional period. According to the agreement, a powerful body called the sovereign council will be set up consisting of six civilians and five generals. This body will then choose a PM and a civilian transitional government. The sovereign council will also supervise the intelligence services.

NUON CHEA WAS FOUND GUILTY OF GENOCIDE IN CAMBODIA BY A UN-BACKED COURT

Khmer Rouge chief ideologist, 'Brother Number Two', dies at 93

PRAK CHANTHUL
PHNOM PENH, AUGUST 4

NUON CHEA, the chief ideologist and 'Brother Number Two' of Cambodia's Khmer Rouge, whose brutal rule in the 1970s led to the deaths of some 2 million people, died on Sunday at the age of 93, a court spokesman said.

A UN-backed court found Chea guilty of genocide and sentenced him to life in prison last year, almost four decades after the Maoist regime which oversaw Cambodia's "Killing Fields" was overthrown.

Chea was among a small clique — led by 'Brother Number One', Pol Pot — of mostly French-educated communists who rose to lead a bloody revolution

against a US-backed government after their country was engulfed by the Vietnam War.

The extremist ideology of the 1975-79 regime sought to turn Cambodia back to "year zero" in its quest for a peasant utopia.

Between 1.7 and 2.2 million people, almost a quarter of the Southeast Asian country's population, died during its four year rule, of starvation, torture, exhaustion or disease in labour camps, or bludgeoned to death during mass executions.

"We can confirm that defendant Nuon Chea, 93, passed away this evening on 4 August 2019 at Khmer Soviet Friendship hospital," Neth Pheaktra, spokesman at the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia, said.

Of the Khmer Rouge's lead-



Nuon Chea was sentenced to life in prison in 2014. Reuters

ers only former President Khieu Samphan and Kaing Guek Eav, also known as Comrade Duch, are serving life sentences after being convicted of genocide and crimes against humanity.

Khieu Samphan and Nuon Chea were found guilty of crimes

against humanity in the first phase of the complex UN trial and sentenced to life in prison in 2014. A separate trial last year found Chea guilty of genocide.

Pol Pot died in 1998 at the age of 73.

In opening remarks at his 2011 trial, Chea denied the genocide charges against him.

"My position in the revolution was to serve the interests of the nation and people," he said. Unlike others in Pol Pot's inner circle, Nuon Chea did not study in Paris, and instead read law at Bangkok's prestigious Thammasat University, where he became a member of the Thai Communist Party.

He was appointed Deputy Secretary of the Communist Party of Kampuchea, the name

the Khmer Rouge used for Cambodia, in 1960, a position that put him in charge of party and state security and Phnom Penh's notorious S-21 interrogation and torture centre at the capital's Tuol Sleng high school.

Those carrying out the brutal beatings at S-21 were instructed to "smash to bits" traitors and counter-revolutionaries.

Under the chaotic Khmer Rouge ideology, furthered by Chea, that could mean anyone from school teachers to children, to pregnant women and to "intellectuals" identified as such if they were wearing spectacles.



Sudanese protesters march in Khartoum on Thursday. AP

14 ECONOMY

MARKET WATCH FPIs PULL OUT ₹2.8K CR IN 2 SESSIONS

New Delhi: Continuing their selling spree, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have withdrawn a net amount of Rs 2,881 crore from the Indian capital markets in the first two sessions of August on account of domestic as well as global headwinds. **PTI**

RBI MONETARY POLICY COMMITTEE TO MEET FROM AUGUST 5-7 Amid slipping growth and low inflation, markets factor in another policy rate cut

GEORGE MATHEW
MUMBAI, AUGUST 4

A DEEPENING economic slowdown has fuelled expectations of another rate cut by the Reserve Bank of India, at its upcoming Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) meeting.

After Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman publicly commented on the need for 'significant rate cuts', analysts are expecting the central bank's MPC to cut the key lending rate — Repo rate — by another 25 basis points, while cautioning the markets against putting the onus on a recovery predominantly on monetary policy.

Arguing for a rate cut, analysts point to consistently low inflation and an economy which is slowing and growing below the reported numbers and well below the MPC's own estimate of 7 per cent for FY20 for a liberal policy regime.

The MPC is scheduled to meet between August 5 and 7. Though the MPC has the leeway to cut rates further given its mandate of 4 per cent headline consumer price index (CPI) inflation, having already cut the Repo rate by 75 bps from 6.5 per cent to 5.75 per cent over the last three meetings, it is to be seen how much the central bank can help as transmission of rate cut benefits by banks has been rather slow.

Growth and inflation will remain worries for the RBI. On Friday, HDFC chairman Deepak

EXPLAINED E Inflation remains benign, but growth concerns persist

THE MONETARY policy review comes at a time when there is renewed focus on the economic growth.

Since the last policy meeting, data sets seem to indicate that while inflation is trending on the lower side, growth continues to be subdued on account of the visible consumption slowdown and sluggish investment outlook.

Parekh said there has been a distinct slowdown in the economy and the problem was compounded by the tight liquidity situation in the non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and housing finance companies (HFCs) and the reluctance of banks to lend funds.

Meanwhile, L&T chairman AM Naik had said that "we should feel 'lucky' even if GDP clips at 6.5 per cent".

Stock market benchmark Sensex, which has already seen the slowdown blues, plummeted by a whopping 2,800 points from 39,908.06 on July 4 to 37,118.22 on August 2 — a decline of 7.8 per cent after the presentation of the Union Budget on July 5.

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs), worried over the 'super rich tax', pulled out Rs 12,419 crore in July and another Rs 2,633 crore in August so far.

Shanti Ekambaram, president—consumer banking, Kotak

Mahindra Bank, said, "Since the last policy, data and trends emerging indicate that inflation continues to be stable and is trending on the lower side. Further, growth has been muted on account of visible consumption slowdown as well as subdued investment outlook."

"Despite a late start, we have seen that the monsoon has reasonably caught up, which should give a boost to agriculture and lead to the revival to some extent of consumption in rural India," she added.

Globally, negative yields have been seen in certain countries and overall interest rates either are stable or dropping, and growth has slowed.

"Against this backdrop, the central bank is likely to cut the Repo rate by 25 bps. It will be important to study the policy narrative to get a direction of likely future action by the RBI, liquidity measures, any other structural changes etc.

"Suffice it to say that inflation will be the central theme balanced with the need to boost growth," Ekambaram said.

According to Suvodhdeep Rakshit, senior economist, Kotak Institutional Equities, the RBI MPC will meet for the August policy in the backdrop of weak economic growth increasingly becoming a bigger concern, even as the inflation trajectory remains broadly in line with its expectations.

"Since the last policy meeting high frequency indicators have signalled a sharper decline in activity which will weigh on the policy meet discussions," he further said.

While the RBI's inflation estimates of 3-3.1 per cent in the first half of FY20 and 3.4-3.7 per cent in the second half of FY20 are unlikely to be breached by a significant margin, the near term outlook on growth (6.4-6.7 per cent in H1FY20) will likely see substantial downside risks.

Further, core inflation has steadily softened and will likely remain subdued given the weak aggregate demand scenario, indicating a widening of the output gap, said an analyst.

On the global front, growth remains under pressure, global central banks are indicating easier monetary policy, US-China trade war continues to simmer, Brexit-related uncertainty remains high, and crude prices outlook remains benign.

Significant growth concerns, comfort from the inflation trajectory, and weak outlook on

global macro scenario should provide room for the RBI to reduce Repo rate by another 25 bps to 5.5 per cent in the August policy, Rakshit said.

"It (RBI) is widely expected to cut the Repo Rate by 25 bps and which is already discounted by the bond, equity and currency markets. The markets thus will be looking for further guidance on how much more can the MPC cut the Repo rate going forward," said Arvind Chari, head-fixed income, Quantum Advisors.

The Repo rate being cut below 6 per cent and the RBI turning accommodative has happened only twice before in the last 20 years.

It is not a common occurrence and only a continued economic slowdown (like the one in 2002-03) or a financial crisis (2008-09) made the RBI to cut well below the six per cent mark, Chari said.

Abhishek Bansal, chairman, ABans Group of Companies, said, "We expect the RBI to cut interest rate by 25 basis points which will be the fourth time in a row. FII's (foreign institutional investors) outflow continued to grow in July to Rs 15,373 crore following a trend from consecutively last two months, while domestic institutional investors remained supportive."

In India, monetary and fiscal excesses have not ended well. In a country which has had average 5 per cent inflation, even if Repo rates do get cut to 5 per cent, it seems unlikely it will sustain there for long.

To ensure authenticity, APIs of drugs may soon get track-and-trace codes

PRABHA RAGHAVAN
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 4

THE HEALTH Ministry may soon make it mandatory for companies to include codes to track-and-trace key ingredients used to make medicines in India, *The Indian Express* has learnt.

If implemented, the move will potentially be the first step by the government to pinpoint the origin and movement of drugs manufactured here and ensure their authenticity.

A draft amendment mandating quick response (QR) codes at "each" level of packaging of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs), used to give medicines their therapeutic effect, is ready and will be notified "soon", said a senior Health Ministry official. *The Indian Express* has viewed a copy of this draft.

"The basic drug is in the API. For a medicine to be effective, the API has to be effective. As a first step (to tracking and tracing medicines in the country), every API manufactured or imported in India will bear a QR code on its label at each level of packaging," the official added. India is currently dependent on China for imports of APIs to make "certain" essential medicines, with around Rs 12,255 crore worth of these ingredients imported from the country in 2016-17, as per government data.

The latest development follows recommendations by the Drugs Technical Advisory Board (DTAB) — India's apex drug advisory body — during a meeting this year, to include "necessary" provisions in India's drugs and cos-

In 2015, DTAB had deliberated a proposal for mandatory bar coding at various levels of drug packaging to track their movement

metics rules mandating QR coding on API labels.

"The Board was apprised that the Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient is most important constituent of any drug formulation. The supply chain with respect to its security and integrity in proper storage condition plays very important role to enhance quality supply of APIs," read the minutes of DTAB's meeting. The body made these recommendations after "stakeholders" suggested it.

Issues with qualities of APIs were raised earlier this year during a Drugs Consultative Committee (DCC) meeting, when Punjab sought provisions to make API manufacturers "accountable and responsible" for the quality and purity of their products.

APIs by "various" vendors have been found to be "not as per defined specifications with respect to their quality, specifications and purity and in certain cases the desired effects are not obtained," said the DCC meeting minutes on this issue. It added that Punjab's regulators "suspected that either such APIs are not manufactured at the right premises or such APIs are not manufactured with the required scientific techniques to produce the bio-active substance."

A track-and-trace system for pharma products has been under discussion for several years in this government to also check counterfeits (fake copies), but imple-

mentation has been stalled following intervention by sections of the industry in the past.

The Commerce Ministry in June this year announced it would implement a "robust" track-and-trace mechanism for the sector "in three months".

Even DTAB, in April 2015, had deliberated a proposal for mandatory bar coding on primary, secondary and tertiary levels of drug packaging to trace their movement from the manufacturer to retailer. Draft rules to this effect were brought out in June 2015, but "large numbers" of objections were received from stakeholders, so the rules are yet to be finalised.

There is lack of clarity on the scale of India's counterfeit and substandard drug problem. The US, in its Special 301 Report this year, estimated that up to 20 per cent of drugs sold in the Indian market are "counterfeit and could represent a serious threat to patient health and safety."

However, a nationwide survey conducted by the Indian government between 2014 and 2016 concluded that only around 3 per cent of the medicines here were substandard and only 0.023 per cent spurious or counterfeit.

Drug regulators here have, on many occasions, flagged medicines produced by even large drug makers for failing quality tests. Yet, the firms have refuted claims stating the products were counterfeit.

BRIEFLY

JM Financial arm to raise up to ₹500 crore

New Delhi: JM Financial said its subsidiary JM Financial Products Ltd will raise up to Rs 500 crore by issuing bonds. JM Financial Products Limited (JMPL) has filed the Tranche II prospectus for its non-convertible debentures (NCDs), with the Registrar of Companies, BSE and Sebi, JM Financial said in a filing. "The said Tranche II prospectus is dated July 31, 2019 and pertains to the public issue of secured NCDs with a base issue size of Rs 100 crore with an option to retain oversubscription up to Rs 400 crore aggregating up to Rs 500 crore, which is within the shelf limit," JM Financial said in the filing.

'Deloitte quits as auditor of DHFL'

New Delhi: Deloitte has quit as the auditor of cash-strapped DHFL, sources said on Sunday. Communication regarding Deloitte quitting as DHFL's auditor has been sent to the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, one of the sources said. Another source confirmed that Deloitte has quit, but without citing any reasons. However, sources in DHFL denied to have received any such communication from Deloitte.

July green certificate sales fall 61%

New Delhi: Sale of renewable energy certificates declined by 61 per cent to 6.29 lakh units in July as compared to 16.18 lakh in the same month a year ago, on account of lower supply, according to official data released Sunday. Indian Energy Exchange (IEX) and Power Exchange of India (PXIL) are the two power bourses in India which are engaged in the trading of renewable energy certificates (RECs) and electricity. **PTI**

'Need to grow at 9% to achieve \$5-tn economy target'

India will need to grow by 9 per cent every year for five years continuously and raise aggregate investment rate to 38 per cent of GDP to achieve Prime Minister Narendra Modi's target of turning India into a \$5 trillion economy, EY said in its latest edition of Economy Watch

\$3 trillion

Projected size of Indian economy in fiscal 2019-20 — up from \$2.7 trillion last fiscal — if growth rate remains 7 per cent

4%: Target inflation rate, as per Monetary Policy Framework

9%: Growth rate required in each of five subsequent years for economy to reach:
\$3.3 trillion in FY21
\$3.6 trillion in FY22
\$4.1 trillion in FY23
\$4.5 trillion in FY24
\$5 trillion in FY25



IMPLICIT INCREMENTAL CAPITAL-OUTPUT RATIO (ICOR)

4.6: India's ICOR in FY19, which is relatively high due to deficient capacity utilisation

4.23: India's average ICOR in the three-year period from FY17 to FY19

INVESTMENT RATE:

31.3%

Gross investment rate in FY19, which delivered real growth rate of 6.8%

38%

Investment rate required to raise India's growth rate to 9% in FY21

39.6%

Highest investment rate achieved by India, which was in FY12

45%

Average saving and investment rates in China, that have been maintained for a long period

BOEING STUCK IN GETTING 737MAX BACK IN AIR

For Airbus, capitalising on Boeing's woes is challenging

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
NEW YORK, AUGUST 4

WITH ITS main rival hobbled by the worldwide grounding of a top-selling jet, Europe's Airbus could seem poised to emerge as the undisputed global aerospace leader. Airbus has overtaken American Boeing in key benchmarks in 2019. And the company is now better positioned to move quickly on a new jet product.

Meanwhile, the American company is mired in efforts to get its crisis-stricken 737 MAX planes back in the sky after two deadly crashes. Still, experts say the Toulouse, France-based aviation giant faces production constraints that likely limit its ability to grab more market share.

"Airbus is a winner only at the margins," said Richard Aboulafia, veteran analyst at Teal Group, an aerospace market analysis firm. To be sure, Boeing's suspension of deliveries of its top-selling plane has added luster to Airbus's solid and unscathed results.

Moreover, as the MAX grounding has dragged on since March, key airline customers are becoming increasingly blunt in



Airbus has overtaken American Boeing in key benchmarks in 2019. And the company is now better positioned to move quickly on a new jet product. Reuters File Photo

expressing frustration. Airbus delivered 389 planes through the end of June, a rise of 28 per cent. During the same period, Boeing deliveries fell 37 per cent to 239.

It was the first time since 2011 that Airbus overtook its US rival in plane deliveries, which is when the bulk of revenues are generated, effectively rendering Airbus the world's largest aircraft maker.

Airbus also has had net orders of 88 planes in 2019, compared with Boeing, which has seen a decline of 119. At the Paris Air Show

in June, Airbus announced orders for 383 planes worth \$44 billion, about \$10 billion more than Boeing's take from the show.

Still, a consolation prize for the US company was a letter of intent by British Airways parent IAG to buy 200 new 737 MAX planes, a vote of confidence in the aircraft. Airbus is primed to move faster with commercializing a new mid-distance plane, launching the A321XLR in Paris this year, a single-aisle plane with greater range and passenger capacity of 240.

Two-wheeler EV makers find takers in e-tailers, QSR firms

PRITISH RAJ
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 4

AS THE government and two-wheeler manufacturers remain at loggerheads over the deadline to phase out the conventional internal combustion engine and bring in electric vehicles (EV) instead, several entrepreneurs are busy creating a landscape to make the latter a success in their own small ways.

Fully conscious that electric vehicles in the two-wheeler space is not going to be an instant hit with consumers the way the government seems to think, these entrepreneurs are manufacturing at a low-scale and tying up with e-commerce (BigBasket, etc) and QSR firms (Dominos, etc) for their last mile deliveries.

Their model is simple: The e-commerce and QSR (quick service restaurant) firms have delivery staff who deliver products to consumers at their doorstep.

These EV manufacturers provide them with their two-wheelers on a lease basis for transporting products. In this way the EV players are able to test-market their products and as and when the market grows can accordingly scale up.

For e-commerce and QSR firms, the logistics costs are lower compared to using an internal combustion engine vehicle.

Saurav Kumar, co-founder and CEO of New Delhi-based Euler Motors said issues such as charging infrastructure and range anxiety will continue to keep the private consumers disinterested for a while. "Most of the delivery services platforms are fairly young and they aim at lowering costs of operation and EVs are clearly one of the options," Kumar said. The firm has already provided over 100 vehicles to companies like BigBasket, EcomExpress, Udaan and BlueDart. Euler Motors is a four-year-old start-up that manufactures a range of electric vehicles for carrying cargo and passengers.

Pankaj Tiwari, India business head of Avan Motors, said this is a segment which is eagerly looking for options of cost effective modes of commute for their delivery service executives, apart from environmental concerns.

"We have the B2B (business-to-business) segment as one of the key verticals of growth, which we are strongly pursuing and are in talks with such leading delivery services platforms to offer our electric scooters," he said. **FE**

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, AUGUST 4

OFFICIALS OF State Bank of India (SBI) have expressed hope that the automobile sector, which is witnessing a slowdown, would bounce back in the festival season later this year.

Last week, SBI officials met Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA) and Mumbai auto dealers to discuss the current state of auto retail.

"I am confident that the auto industry will bounce back soon in the forthcoming festival season. We at SBI are always there for auto retail industry, especially our dealer partners to work in tandem with us in these tough times and beyond," said PK Gupta, MD, retail and digital banking, SBI.

"The aim of the meeting with

Mumbai auto dealers along with FADA was to understand the current industry situation and take steps to ease the stress being faced by many dealers due to slowdown in auto sector," Gupta further said.

Hit by a dip in consumer sentiment and by the liquidity crunch in non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), car manufacturers witnessed a sharp decline in demand last month.

Various topics, including easing of liquidity from the bank's side, increase in credit repayment days on a case-to-case basis and how SBI can improve its services going forward, were discussed, FADA said.

"SBI further assured FADA of taking necessary steps to resolve the issues to reduce stress among auto dealers," the Federation added.

"FADA is highly satisfied with

the steps taken by SBI and we hope that more such deliberations would continue to take place," said Vinkesh Gulati, vice president, FADA.

In July this year, Maruti Suzuki saw its domestic passenger car sales decline 36 per cent while Honda Cars India witnessed a 48.7 per cent fall in sales, over the corresponding period last year.

Toyota Kirloskar reported a 24 per cent fall, while Hyundai Motor India announced a 10 per cent drop for the same month.

Maruti Suzuki, which has over 50 per cent of India's auto market share, saw its domestic sales decline from 154,150 units in July last year to 98,210 units in July 2019.

In fact, July unit sales for the automobile manufacturer were the lowest since June 2017, when it sold 93,263 units.

Q1 EARNINGS

India Inc in dire straits; weak demand plagues every sector

ENS ECONOMIC BUREAU
MUMBAI, AUGUST 4

THERE IS now more than abundant evidence corporate India is in deep distress. From steel to staples and cars to capital goods, every sector is feeling the pain from weak demand.

The worry is that there are few signs that demand will pick up in the coming months given the troubles in rural India. Few companies have been able to grow revenues meaningfully during the June quarter; for a sample of 548 companies (excluding banks, financials, TCS and Reliance Industries) revenues rose just 4 per cent year-on-year.

Despite valiant attempts to rein in costs operating margins were under pressure as were net profits; for the 548 companies, profits crashed 27 per cent y-o-y. A host of heavyweights — Tata Motors, Vodafone Idea and Bharti Airtel — reported losses.

Volume growth was inispid across sectors; at JSW Steel for example, domestic volumes declined by 2 per cent y-o-y due to sluggish demand.

The macro data reflects the weakness in volumes; while

PROFITS FALL 27% FOR 548 FIRMS

■ In a sample of 548 companies, profits crashed 27 per cent year-on-year

■ Despite valiant attempts to rein in costs operating margins were under pressure as were net profits

cargo recorded a decline for the first time over the last 5 years, the growth at the major ports was only 1.5 per cent in Q1FY20 versus 4 per cent in the corresponding period in the previous year.

Railway freight too saw very sluggish growth of 2.7 per cent. HUL reported a 5 per cent y-o-y increase in volumes in Q1FY20, the slowest in seven quarters. Maruti Suzuki reported an 18 per cent y-o-y drop in volumes which pulled down Q1FY20 profits by nearly 28 per cent y-o-y.

Tata Global's India tea business reported a slower volume growth of 8 per cent y-o-y compared with 12 per cent y-o-y in Q4FY19. **FE**

THE FUTURE OF AMAZON

Deathwatch

Brazil has the power to save Earth's greatest forest—or destroy it



In the past 50 years, Brazil has relinquished 17% of the forest's original extent, more than the area of France, to road- and dam-building, logging, mining, soyabean farming and cattle ranching. Reuters

ALTHOUGH ITS cradle is the sparsely wooded savannah, humankind has long looked to forests for food, fuel, timber and sublime inspiration. Still a livelihood for 1.5bn people, forests maintain local and regional ecosystems and, for the other 6.2bn, provide a—fragile and creaking—buffer against climate change. Now droughts, wildfires and other human-induced changes are compounding the damage from chainsaws. In the tropics, which contain half of the world's forest biomass, tree-cover loss has accelerated by two-thirds since 2015; if it were a country, the shrinkage would make the tropical rainforest the world's third-biggest carbon-dioxide emitter, after China and America.

Nowhere are the stakes higher than in the Amazon basin—and not just because it contains 40% of Earth's rainforests and harbours 10-15% of the world's terrestrial species. South America's natural wonder may be perilously close to the tipping-point beyond which its gradual transformation into something closer to steppe cannot be stopped or reversed, even if people lay down their axes. Brazil's president, Jair Bolsonaro, is hastening the process—in the name, he claims, of development. The ecological collapse his policies may precipitate would be felt most

acutely within his country's borders, which encircle 80% of the basin—but would go far beyond them, too. It must be averted.

Humans have been chipping away at the Amazon rainforest since they settled there well over ten millennia ago. Since the 1970s they have done so on an industrial scale. In the past 50 years Brazil has relinquished 17% of the forest's original extent, more than the area of France, to road- and dam-building, logging, mining, soyabean farming and cattle ranching. After a seven-year government effort to slow the destruction, it picked up in 2013 because of weakened enforcement and an amnesty for past deforestation. Recession and political crisis further pared back the government's ability to enforce the rules. Now Mr Bolsonaro has gleefully taken a buzz saw to them. Although congress and the courts have blocked some of his efforts to strip parts of the Amazon of their protected status, he has made it clear that rule-breakers have nothing to fear, despite the fact that he was elected to restore law and order. Because 70-80% of logging in the Amazon is illegal, the destruction has soared to record levels. Since he took office in January, trees have been disappearing at a rate of over two Manhattans a week.

The Amazon is unusual in that it recycles much of its own water. As the forest shrivels, less recycling takes place. At a certain threshold, that causes more of the forest to wither so that, over a matter of decades, the process feeds on itself. Climate change is bringing the threshold closer every year as the forest heats up. Mr Bolsonaro is pushing it towards the edge. Pessimists fear that the cycle of runaway degradation may kick in when another 3-8% of the forest vanishes—which, under Mr Bolsonaro, could happen soon. There are hints the pessimists may be correct. In the past 15 years the Amazon has suffered three severe droughts. Fires are on the rise.

Brazil's president dismisses such findings, as he does science more broadly. He accuses outsiders of hypocrisy—did rich countries not fell their own forests?—and, sometimes, of using environmental dogma

as a pretext to keep Brazil poor. "The Amazon is ours," the president thundered recently. What happens in the Brazilian Amazon, he thinks, is Brazil's business.

Except it isn't. A "dieback" would directly hurt the seven other countries with which Brazil shares the river basin. It would reduce the moisture channelled along the Andes as far south as Buenos Aires. If Brazil were damming a real river, not choking off an aerial one, downstream nations could consider it an act of war. As the vast Amazonian store of carbon burned and rotted, the world could heat up by as much as 0.1°C by 2100—not a lot, you may think, but the preferred target of the Paris climate agreement allows further warming of only 0.5°C or so.

Mr Bolsonaro's other arguments are also flawed. Yes, the rich world has razed its forests. Brazil should not copy its mistakes,

but learn from them instead as, say, France has, by reforesting while it still can. Paranoia about Western scheming is just that. The knowledge economy values the genetic information sequestered in the forest more highly than land or dead trees. Even if it did not, deforestation is not a necessary price of development. Brazil's output of soybeans and beef rose between 2004 and 2012, when forest-clearing slowed by 80%. In fact, aside from the Amazon itself, Brazilian agriculture may be deforestation's biggest victim. The drought of 2015 caused maize farmers in the central Brazilian state of Mato Grosso to lose a third of their harvest.

For all these reasons, the world ought to make clear to Mr Bolsonaro that it will not tolerate his vandalism. Food companies, pressed by consumers, should spurn soybeans and beef produced on illegally logged Amazonian land, as they did in the mid-2000s. Brazil's trading partners should make deals contingent on its good behaviour. The agreement reached in June by the EU and Mercosur, a South American trading bloc of which Brazil is the biggest member, already includes provisions to protect the rainforest. It is overwhelmingly in the parties' interest to enforce

them. So too for China, which is anxious about global warming and needs Brazilian agriculture to feed its livestock. Rich signatories of the Paris agreement, who pledged to pay developing ones to plant carbon-consuming trees, ought to do so. Deforestation accounts for 8% of global greenhouse-gas emissions but attracts only 3% of the aid earmarked for combating climate change.

The wood and the trees

If there is a green shoot in Mr Bolsonaro's scorched-earth tactics towards the rainforest, it is that they have made the Amazon's plight harder to ignore—and not just for outsiders. Brazil's agriculture minister urged Mr Bolsonaro to stay in the Paris agreement. Unchecked deforestation could end up hurting Brazilian farmers if it leads to foreign boycotts of Brazilian farm goods. Ordinary Brazilians should press their president to reverse course. They have been blessed with a unique planetary patrimony, whose value is intrinsic and life-sustaining as much as it is commercial. Letting it perish would be a needless catastrophe.

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RECLAIMING HONG KONG

Protest, but no movement

Beijing urges a stronger response to the protests in Hong Kong

FOLLOWING EIGHT weeks of protests and mounting violence, the news that the authorities in Beijing planned to hold a rare press conference had many in Hong Kong holding their breath. The result was a (welcome) anti-climax. There were no threats to send in the army, as some had feared. A speech by the spokesperson from the Hong Kong and Macau Affairs Office made no mention of that until, when asked by a journalist whether troops could be deployed on the streets he simply pointed to the relevant sections of Hong Kong-related laws. While condemning the violence of recent protests he took care not to criticise the local government and heaped praise on the work of the Hong Kong police.

Communist Party newspapers are a better place to look for evidence of the party's growing frustration. The *People's Daily* ordered the police to have no "psychological worries" about being much tougher. Activists are already being punished. After a weekend of violent confrontations between young pro-democracy protesters and police using tear-gas and rubber bullets, 44 people arrested during the clashes were told they would be charged with rioting. They face up to ten years in prison.

The forceful stance of the police has not quelled the demonstrations. Indeed, many gathered outside police stations to protest against the severity of the charges. The administration of Carrie Lam, Hong Kong's chief executive, is paralysed, those at the very top of it privately admit. Extraordinarily, Mrs Lam herself has not made any public statements for over a week. Although the Communist Party has reiterated its support, her days are surely numbered, even if it cannot accept her immediate resignation without a huge loss of face.

As for the police, some complain privately about poor leadership. Many officers are livid at being put on the front line to sort out what they say is a political crisis. But as the provocations of black-shirted protesters mounted, it was clear that by the weekend plenty of officers were itching for revenge. After applications to march over the weekend in the central business district and Yuen Long—a suburb where pro-China thugs had beaten up innocent travellers a week earlier—were rejected, activists went ahead anyway. The police showed little restraint. Amnesty International, a human-rights watchdog, says it has seen "repeated instances where police officers were the aggressors".

After a wave of arrests, protesters may be more cautious—although at least seven marches are planned for August 5th alone. Meanwhile, there is not much the police can do should tactics switch to a campaign of low-level civil disobedience—strikes, sit-ins and so on. Civil servants, firemen, bus drivers and many more have backed one of the protesters' chief demands: an independent inquiry into the crisis.

The obvious and perhaps only way to resolve the crisis would be for China to keep its promise to let the people of Hong Kong choose their own leaders. Dream on. The radicalisation of the protests is, in part, a consequence of China's strategy of persecuting more moderate opposition leaders trying to work within the system.

For now, China is out to define its enemies in Hong Kong and delegitimise them. In the propaganda, Hong Kong's quest for genuine self-rule is being portrayed as on a par with "splittists" elsewhere on China's fringes, in Tibet or Xinjiang. It is in this nationalist context that students from the mainland have recently clashed with ones from Hong Kong on campuses in America, Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

Back in Hong Kong, China can always re-



Protesters hold placards as they march in a demonstration in Hong Kong demanding complete withdrawal of a controversial extradition bill on June 16. Reuters

sort to the ultimate sanction: deploying the local garrison of the People's Liberation Army (PLA). That prospect was highlighted by Mrs Lam's predecessor as chief executive, Leung Chun-ying, long close to the Communist Party. In a letter to the *Financial*

Times last month he insisted that the PLA's presence in Hong Kong is "not meant to be token, ceremonial or symbolic" but rather to help maintain public order. Yet deploying the PLA to crush largely peaceful protests would only deepen the government's ille-

gitimacy in locals' eyes, while attracting enormous international opprobrium. That it is even being discussed is a sign of how bad things have become.

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CLIMATE CHECK

The Victoria and Albert Museum is displaying objects, comprising of the symbols used by climate-change group Extinction Rebellion during their protests in 59 countries. The placards and banners include their famous 'extinction' symbol.

WEEK AHEAD



Verse by Verse

AAJJAANE ki Zid Na Karo – Romancing the Ghazal” brings out the stories behind some of the most celebrated ghazals with the help of classical vocalist Vidya Shah (pictured) and RJ Sayema Rahman. At Stein Auditorium, IHC, Lodhi Road, on August 10 at 7 pm. Tickets available on Bookmyshow.



Matters of Art

THE CENTRAL Cottage Industries Corporation of India is organising an exhibition-cum-sale titled “Kala Sampada” to aid the revival of traditional craft forms. An array of products like wooden toys, Rogan paintings and the Chamba roomal are on display at Central Cottage Industries Emporium, Jawahar Vyapar Bhawan, Janpath Road, till August 10.



Expert Moves

The IIC Monsoon Festival of Dance features a Bharatanatyam performance by Rama Vaidyanathan, an Odissi recital by Madhavi Mudgal (pictured) and a Kathak performance by Prerana Shrivastava. At CD Deshmukh Auditorium, IIC, Max Mueller Marg, on August 8-9, 6 pm onwards.

Classic Flavours

CHEF SADAB QURESHI has put together Shaam-E-Awadh, a festival celebrating the flavours of authentic Awadhi cuisine. Indulge in delights such as Murgh Changezi, Murgh Adraki Korma, Nalli Nihari and Gosht Koh E Awadh at the buffet dinner in The Westin, Gurgaon, till August 18.

Call It Magic

VANISHING MYSTERIES: Magical Connections Between India and America” is a performance, and a talk on the art and culture of Indian magic, by contemporary magician Shreyesh Palshikar, who blends western and Indian magic. At American Center, KG Marg, on Aug 8, 4.45 pm. Entry free.



The Inheritance of Loss

Umrao Jaan Ada, playwright Mirza Hadi Ruswa’s creation and Muzaffar Ali’s muse in the famed 1989 film starring Rekha and Farooq Sheikh, is now a musical



Scenes from the musical, Umrao Jaan Ada; (right) director Rajeev Goswami

SUANSHU KHURANA

JUST AFTER the turn of the 20th century, a Lucknow-based courtesan named Umrao Jaan Ada narrated the story of her life to poet Mirza Hadi Ruswa. He met her at a mushaira at his friend’s residence, and could not forget the hushed awe in the room, when she concluded her verse with the lines, *Kisko sunaaye haal-e-dil jor-e-Ada/ Awargi mein humne zamaane ki sair ki (Who will listen to the tale of my woeful heart? I have wandered far and wide on the face of the earth).*

Ruswa was intrigued by this ageing, retired courtesan from Faizabad, who now lived in the apartment next-door. He spoke to her, even flirted a little, to convince her to tell her story. And she finally spoke. Umrao Jaan’s tale of love and life, from Ameeran to Umrao, complex thought process on courtesans and the concept of marriage, the notions of age and beauty, and the tawaifs being the most educated women of the times — who could read and write poetry and repartee on matters political and otherwise — were interspersed with her personal story, made it to the pages of a manuscript at a time when the society was quite conservative and patriarchal. The narrative wasn’t that of a dishonoured woman, but of a complex and intelligent woman whose biographer treated her with respect and empathy.

Umrao Jaan Ada (Gulab Mumshi and Sons Press, Lucknow, 1905), considered the first Urdu novel by many, was feted during its times, and has stayed on as one of the most authentic stories of the life of a tawaif. It became more popular after filmmaker Muzaffar Ali created Umrao Jaan in 1989, starring Rekha and Farooq Sheikh, with music by composer Khyyam and poetry by renowned poet Shehryar. A generation’s heart was captured with *Dil cheez kya hai aap meri jaan leejaye* and *Zindagi jab bhi teri bazar*. Almost 38 years later, a four-member team comprising director Rajeev Goswami,

composers Salim-Sulaiman and writer Irfan Siddiqui, has decided to recreate the magic of Umrao Jaan Ada in a grand, eponymous musical, being staged in the Capital. “This story, first through the book and later in Muzaffar Ali’s film, is etched in our memories. So when you recreate something as iconic as Umrao Jaan, it’s extremely challenging. It is being created in the format of a theatrical musical with live musicians and singing, and no retakes. And people always expect more than what they’ve already watched,” says Goswami, who began his career as a choreographer. He created the musical *Beyond Bollywood* in 2015, which travelled the world. The recent musical on a similar scale was *Mughal-e-Azam* by Feroze Abbas Khan.

Goswami’s Umrao Jaan Ada is played by playback singer and reality show contestant Pratibha Singh Baghel, who had to go through a rigorous training for dance and acting while also singing on stage. “It was an interesting and difficult journey,” she says. Goswami and Siddiqui have taken elements from the book that were not originally used in the film. “There is a description of a musical competition between Umrao Jaan and Barodewali Bai, which never made it to the film. Apart from introducing a couple of new characters, we took elements from the book that were not in the film,” says Siddiqui.

The magic of Umrao Jaan largely came from the immortal melodies that gave it the cult status. The moment Ustad Sultan Khan’s sarangi delivered a riff, Asha Bhosle’s voice

would follow with a ghazal. There were some others too: *Pratham dhar dhiyan* by Ut Ghulam Mustafa Khan, *Kahe ko yaahi bides* by Jagjit Kaur and *Jhoola kinne daala* by Shahida Khan among the 20 compositions. While the musical uses the popular ditties, it also has four original songs including a qawwali. Even for Khyyam’s songs in the musical, the composers have reinterpreted them their own way. “I was about eight when I heard these songs for the first time and the impact was massive. I had to be careful in touching them,” says Salim, who has merged the sounds of sarangi, tabla, and sitar with that of violins, violas, and cellos played by Prague Philharmonic Orchestra. The web of orchestration plays on a track as a background to the melodies while the Indian musicians play live. “Since this was for the stage, the idea was to keep it grand,” says Salim.

In one of the rehearsals at Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium’s auditorium, a conversation between Umrao Jaan and Nawab Hussain is on. The two are speaking of shayari and its significance, when Hussain, played by *Indian Idol 1* contestant Harish Moyal breaks into the *Talat Aziz-Shehryar’s* ghazal, *Har mulaqat ka anjaam judaai kyun hai/ Ab toh har vaqt yahi baat sataati hai humein... Zindagi jab bhi teri bazar mein laati hai humein... Moyal and Baghel’s* mediocre acting and brilliant singing manage to take one back to the watched and the appreciated, and to the story of a courtesan who dared to fall in love, and lost it all because she was one.

On till August 11 at JLN Stadium, Delhi. Tickets on Bookmyshow.com



It is being created in the format of a theatrical musical with live musicians and singing, and no retakes. And people always expect more than what they’ve already watched

RAJEEV GOSWAMI DIRECTOR

A View of Two Decades

Mumbai-based gallery, Art Musings marks its 20 years with five exhibitions that will unfold over the year

PARTH KHATAU

GOING DOWN Colaba’s Wodehouse Road in Mumbai, one can be forgiven for missing Art Musings, a gallery nestled in a bylane in one of the city’s more culturally rich areas. Opened by Shanti Chopra and her aunt Kasturi Wadhvani in February 1999, the small space has been lucky to have the trinity of SH Raza, MF Husain and FN Souza as its godfathers, says Chopra’s daughter and the present owner, Sangeeta Raghavan. The gallery, which turned 20 this year, has nurtured a spectrum of artistic practices, working across generations and choices of medium and vocabulary. It has presented the works of legendary Indian modernists such as Raza, Husain, Souza, KG Subramanyan, Ram Kumar and Satish Gujral.

Art Musings is celebrating its 20th anniversary with a series of five exhibitions, all curated by Mumbai-based poet and art critic Ranjit Hoskote. This series is intended to showcase the works of all the artists who have been associated with the gallery over the years. The third of these exhibitions, “Threads into the Labyrinth”, is currently on view. Raghavan says, “The exhibition is our way of thanking the artists who have grown with us over the years, without whom we wouldn’t exist.” The first of the five exhibi-



(From left) The Celebration by Parsh Maity, Prabhakar Kolte’s untitled work and Maity’s Here, on display at the exhibition

tions was hosted at the Jehangir Art Gallery in February, followed by the second exhibition at Art Musings in March this year. The last two shows in the anniversary series are “Pilgrims in Space, Time, Identity”, featuring Maya Burman, Nalini Malani, Raghava KK and Shilo Shiv Suleman, slated for September-October; and “If on a Winter’s Night a Traveller”, featuring Anjolie Ela Menon, Jayasri Burman, Milburn Cherian and Sakti Burman, to be held

in November-December. The current show features works by Atul Dodiya, Parsh Maity Prabhakar Kolte and Rameshwar Broota. Recalibrating the portrait and the landscape, Maity’s mixed media work *Here* (2018), depicts lamps and lamp-shades — some illuminating and some not. It takes into account the individual and the group, through a polychrome yet shadowed festivity. Kolte’s works include the



acrylic-on-canvas *Triptych* (2019), while Broota’s *Illusions* (2018) features a photograph — four men looking down into a camera, holding various multimedia devices such as a DSLR camera with a tripod and mobile phones — on gorilla glass.

Hoskote says the five exhibitions over the year will be able to cover the names the gallery has had close connections with, allowing him to not make the hard decision to leave anyone out. For him, Dodiya’s oil-on-canvas, *A Ballad for Yesterday* (2018-19), stands out. The painting depicts four different YouTube pages, with one showing a video and the others showing various error messages. “I feel Atul’s piece where he has been able to use digital media and what it has to say to us about communication and visibility, is very intriguing. We speak about the death of the painted frame but he has been able to revitalise it,” he says. Dodiya, who has been associated with

the gallery since its inception, says, “The gallery has a family atmosphere, something that is lacking in today’s growing commercial world. The owners have allowed artists like me to experiment and grow over the years, thereby giving us the freedom to work.”

This, says Raghavan, has been a priority. “It is important that we sustain an artist’s experiments and let them take risks as it is a vital stage in a beginner and mid-career artist’s growth,” she says. “The common thread tying all our artists is that they all work with a fierce sense of independence and honesty, always pushing themselves to give their best.” Raghavan says, “The fact that we’re here 20 years on is a success in itself. We believe in what we do and if you approach things with honesty, it always works. Besides, we do only five shows a year and try to make sure that each one counts,” she adds.

The exhibition is on display till Aug 28

ON THE LOOSE



LEHER KALA

Bare Essentials

Travel smart, pack light

I RECENTLY attended a weekend celebration for a friend’s birthday where the dress code was pre-decided. It was a hot and sweltering beach destination, so it’s not like I needed to pack anything cumbersome; besides, I had absolute clarity on what I had to wear on two out of the three days. Still, my bag weighed 11 kg. I should add I was the minimalist on the trip, most of the guests looked like they were planning to migrate, hauling 20-kg suitcases, because as one said defensively, ‘why not, it’s the permitted baggage allowance’. Back in Delhi, while unpacking, I noticed I had seven sets of unworn clothes, and of the three pairs of sandals I carried, I ended up wearing just one. My sneakers, which I valiantly lug all around the world in the hope that I’ll find the time for a gym, predictably, never saw the light of day.

Packing is one of those chores that seems deceptively simple but it’s a skill that most of humanity doesn’t appear to have. Even seasoned travellers end up carrying a mind boggling array of stuff they don’t use and even if it’s not costing extra, that’s not the point. Heavy bags can be back-breaking and frustrating. Packing strategically is a test of planning skills and is indicative of one’s ability to ruthlessly (and philosophically) edit your life. Mostly though, people approach packing like they do a five-star hotel buffet. There’s Indian, Continental and Thai, you can’t possibly eat and enjoy it all, yet it’s piled together on a single plate. The suitcase meets a similar fate, stuffed with incongruous odds and ends. Generally, you will find the same people who spend hours agonising over what to order at a restaurant, or are perpetually late, will also be terribly indecisive packers.

There are some rules I have learnt the hard way over countless trips. Simply, that we need to think harder about the value our peripheral belongings hold, and a trip can be stress free only when the unimportant is tossed out (of a bag). First things first, if your suitcase is the size of a coffin, you will be sure to shove in random rubbish. Why let all that unutilised space go waste? The simplest way to cut out useless clutter is to invest in a medium-sized bag, large enough to be practical but small enough so you’re not tempted to squeeze in more last-minute. A smart packer doesn’t dwell on the what-if-I-need-it category of stuff, the singular reason junk lands in a suitcase. Unless you’re going to the moon, everything can be bought on 90 per cent of the earth’s surface. Once you accept that worst comes to worst, you’ll be making a mad dash to a shop, it’s amazing how quickly so much more becomes expendable.

Then there is that which is never expendable: like medicines. Or socks. If you’re an exceptionally bad packer who’s fallen short of space, you won’t chuck out the humungous bottle of shampoo or body lotion, but will stint on the varieties of meds you need to carry. You only realise the value of your own medical kit if you’ve ever tried getting a Crocin off a flight attendant. I have, and it involved the signing of a frightening number of papers, and the cabin crew treating me like I was carrying the Ebola virus. In these sensitive times, admitting to a fever onboard is risking getting bumped off a flight, so basic anti-allergies and painkillers should be on your person. To travel lightly and move more easily also means recognising you need to be prepared for eventualities, so if a space-guzzling BP machine needs to be fit in, so be it.

Luckily, the world has reconciled to the fact that fashion and functionality need to intersect, for baggage’s sake. Enter the oversized and unflattering puffer jacket made famous by Uniqlo. The feather weight, water-resistant and practical design that can be reduced to the size of a tennis ball, is a boon for the practical traveller. If you’re a desperate fashionista hooked to Instagram, you could pack five of them and it wouldn’t add a kg to your bag’s weight. As Tolkien noted, all who wander are not lost, but those who are hauling a great mass of possessions hither and yon — are really tired.

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ON TV TODAY

ASHES, 1ST TEST, DAY 5

Live on Sony Six — 3:30 pm onwards from Edgbaston, England.

Steve Smith, a two-ton colossus, puts Aussies in command

AGENCIES BIRMINGHAM, AUGUST 4

A SECOND successive century from Steve Smith swung an unpredictable Ashes opening Test in Australia's favour as the tourists set England a daunting 398 runs to win, having declared on 487-7. England, in reply, reached 13-0 at stumps on day four.

Resuming the second innings on 124-3 at Edgbaston, Smith, following his 144 in the first innings, continued to put England to the sword, passing 50 in the fourth over of the day, with Travis Head (51) providing excellent support. Without injured bowler James Anderson, England toiled as Smith became only the fifth Australian to make centuries in both innings of an Ashes Test before departing for 142, with Matthew Wade's ton contributing to an imposing Australian total. Jason Roy and Rory Burns emerged unscathed from seven overs at the end of the day as the home side bid to save the game.

Edgbaston is the former Australia captain's first Test since the end of a 12-month ban for his role in last year's ball-tampering scandal in South Africa. Fellow centurion Wade was also playing his first Test for nearly two years, put on 126 for the fifth wicket with Smith.

Only three times have a side made more than 150 in the fourth innings to win a Test at Edgbaston. Smith is just the fifth Australia batsman to score a hundred in both innings of an Ashes Test, following Warren Bardsley (1909), Arthur Morris (1946/47), Steve Waugh (1997) and Matthew Hayden (2002/03).

Having reached lunch on 98 not out, Smith went to three figures in style when he cover-drove England paceman Stuart Broad for his 10th four in 147 balls faced.

'In a trance-like state'

He celebrated by removing his batting helmet and waving his bat joyously towards the Australia changing room. And while there was applause from a packed crowd, there were also renewed chants of "Crying on the telly, we saw you crying on the telly" in a reference to the emotional press conference Smith gave in Sydney after he was sent home from South Africa.

"When he goes out to bat, it's almost like he's in a trance-like state," former Australia captain Waugh told Channel Nine. "He knows exactly what he's trying to do, exactly what the opposition are trying to do... he analyses every ball and it's like a computer, he spits out the answer," added Waugh, now a mentor to the Australia squad.

England captain Joe Root brought himself on to bowl his part-time off-breaks and deployed Joe Denly's occasional leg-spin in a desperate bid for wickets on a sluggish pitch. Wicketkeeper Wade, playing as a specialist batsman, with Australia captain Tim Paine behind the stumps, reverse-swept Root to complete a 70-ball fifty. Wade was given out lbw to Broad by Wilson on 69 but his review showed the ball going over the top of the stumps. The new ball, however, did eventually give England the wicket they craved.

Chris Woakes, on his Warwickshire home ground, got a delivery to deviate in the air outside off stump, with Smith edging an intended drive to wicketkeeper Jonny Bairstow. The match was in the balance when Australia resumed on 124-3, a lead of just 34 runs, with Smith 46 not out and Travis Head unbeaten on 21. Smith, cleared of concussion after being hit on the head by a Ben Stokes bouncer on Saturday, has now scored more than 1,000 runs in his past 10 Ashes innings.

BRIEF SCORES: Australia 284 and 487 for 7 dec in 127 overs (Smith 142, Wade 110, Head 51, Ben Stokes 85/3) lead England 374 and 13 for 0 in 7 overs (Burns 7 not out, Roy 6 not out) by 385 runs chasing 398 to win.



DUST TO ASHES

Steve Smith scored his second hundred (142) of the Edgbaston Test. It was his 25th Test ton in 119 innings. He is the second fastest to the mark after Bradman (68). Reuters

Maximum player

Rohit (67) surpasses Gayle's sixes record, India beat Windies to take unassailable lead in T20 series

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE AUGUST 4

Krunal Pandya proved to be the game-changer for India. After scoring 20 not out off 13 balls, his double-strike in the 14th over during West Indies' chase turned the match decisively in his team's favour as India took a 2-0 lead in the three-game series.

Chasing 168 for victory, the Caribbeans lost their openers for eight runs. But Rovman Powell was taking the attack to the opposition. The Jamaican targeted Khaleel Ahmed and Navdeep Saini. After a memorable international debut on Saturday, the latter didn't have the best day at the office on Sunday. Cricket is a great leveller, but from India's perspective, Powell's wicket was the need of the hour.

West Indies were 83 for two after 13 overs and looked to be counting on an outside chance, a 12-plus required run rate notwithstanding. They had some serious hitters down the order, including Mumbai Indians legend Kieron Pollard. But Pandya dismissed Nicholas Pooran off the second ball - third actually, for he started off with a wide - of the 14th over. After labouring to 19 off 33 deliveries, Pooran decided to give it a go. Manish Pandey at long-on took the catch just inside the rope. But as he was overbalancing, he threw the ball inside and came back in to complete the catch. Three balls later, Pandya trapped Powell (54, 34 balls) plumb in front with a faster delivery that straightened.

Lightening struck soon after and the umpires took the players off the field. West Indies were 98/4 after 15.3 overs then, 20 shy of the DLS par score, 120. Then, rain arrived and that was that. India won by 22 runs (DLS) to seal the three-match series.

Sublime Rohit

For 36 deliveries, when Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli were around for a 48-run second-wicket partnership, it felt like they had the best on-field chemistry, in terms of partnership batting, in the Indian team. They hardly had any mid-pitch conferences. But two top professionals were at work, doing the job for their team away from the social media cacophony. Conversation was surplus to requirement.



FRIENDSHIP DAY

Rohit Sharma and Virat Kohli added 48 runs for the second wicket. AP

■ Rohit Sharma on Sunday became the most prolific six-hitter in T20 Internationals surpassing Chris Gayle's record of 105 sixes by hitting three maximums on his way to a 51-ball 67.

■ During his 28 off 23 balls, Virat Kohli bettered Suresh Raina's record to become the highest run-getter among Indians in T20 cricket. Raina held the top spot with 8392 runs. Kohli now has 8416 runs.

Kohli didn't mind playing second fiddle to Rohit. In the middle of a golden run, the opener is batting at such a level in white-ball cricket at the moment that even on a tacky Lauderhill pitch, although far better than what was on offer for the first T20 International on Saturday, he hit fourth gear straightaway.

After India won the toss and elected to bat, Rohit began with a whipping four off Oshane Thomas on the very first ball. The West Indies fast bowler came back well and was probably a little unlucky not to have Shikhar Dhawan, who survived a very confident caught behind appeal. The DRS didn't include ultra-edge.

Rohit, though, was in the zone. He once again brought in his wrists to whip Thomas to the mid-wicket fence. In the commentary box, Vivian Richards drew a Gundappa Viswanath analogy. Sheldon Cottrell, the left-arm fast bowler, tried to take the ball across Rohit from over the wicket. The latter responded with a lofted drive for four over extra cover, followed

by another boundary over mid-off. Rohit was a little watchful against Sunil Narine, but as Keemo Paul came into the attack and bowled a full-toss, the batsman hit the first six of the match. Two deliveries hence, he audaciously swept the medium pacer from outside the off stump to the fine-leg boundary. India were 52 for no loss after the Powerplay, with Rohit batting on 37 off 28 balls and Dhawan on 12 from nine. A day earlier, on a damp pitch, they were 31 for one after six overs.

Dhawan departed after a 67-run opening partnership to which the left-hander contributed 23 runs off 16 deliveries. Kohli walked out to bat and West Indies employed spin from both ends. Two relatively quiet overs followed before Rohit broke the shackles by sending a fullish delivery from Narine over deep mid-wicket. His use of the crease and the pull shot oozed supreme confidence.

Kohli stepped out to Khary Pierre and hit a gorgeous six over long-off. Rohit turned his at-

tention towards Carlos Brathwaite. At 111/1 after 13 overs, India looked set for a 180-plus total. But Thomas, in his second spell, dismissed Rohit with a delivery that appeared to have stopped a bit. Rohit mistimed the pull and was superbly taken by Shimron Hetmyer. But during his 51-ball 67 that had three sixes, Rohit broke Chris Gayle's record of most T20 maximums. Gayle had 105 sixes to his tally. The Mumbai batsman surpassed him to reach 107.

Rishabh Pant fell into a trap. Thomas kept third man fine and bowled a quick, short delivery. Pant tried to glide it over the 'keeper but top-edged it to Pollard, who was seemingly expecting the catch. Then, Cottrell breached Kohli's defence with a full delivery that jagged back, and India suddenly slumped to 135 for four after 17 overs. West Indies captain Brathwaite, though, had used up all his front-line bowlers. So Paul bowled the final over and Pandya took the opportunity to hit back-to-back sixes off the first two balls. Another maximum from Ravindra Jadeja secured a 20-run over and took the visitors to an over-par score.

SCORECARD: India (167/5 in 20 overs): Rohit Sharma c Hetmyer b Thomas 67 (51b, 6x4, 3x6); Shikhar Dhawan b Paul 23 (16b, 3x4); Virat Kohli b Cottrell 28 (23b, 1x4, 1x6); Rishabh Pant c Pollard b Thomas 4 (5b); Manish Pandey c Pooran b Cottrell 6 (8b); Krunal Pandya not out 20 (13b, 2x6); Ravindra Jadeja not out 9 (4b, 1x6); Extras: (lb 3, w 7) 10; Fall of wickets: 1-67 (Dhawan, 7.5 ov), 2-115 (Sharma, 13.5 ov), 3-126 (Pant, 15.1 ov), 4-132 (Kohli, 16.2 ov), 5-143 (Pandey, 18.3 ov); Bowling: Oshane Thomas 4-0-27-2, Sheldon Cottrell 4-0-25-2, Sunil Narine 4-0-28-0, Keemo Paul 4-0-46-1, Carlos Brathwaite 2-0-22-0, Khary Pierre 2-0-16-0.

West Indies (98/4 in 15.3 overs): S Narine b Washington Sundar 4 (12b); E Lewis c & b Kumar 0 (2b); N Pooran c Pandey b Pandya 19 (13b, 1x4); R Powell lbw b Pandya 54 (34b, 6x4, 3x6); K Pollard not out 8 (8b, 1x4); S Hetmyer not out 6 (4b, 1x4); extras: 7 (lb 1, nb 1, w 5); fall of wickets: 1-2 (Evin Lewis, 1.2 ov), 2-8 (Sunil Narine, 2.6 ov), 3-84 (Nicholas Pooran, 13.2 ov), 4-85 (Rovman Powell, 13.5 ov); Bowling: Washington Sundar 3-1-12-1, Bhuvneshwar Kumar 2-0-7-1, Khaleel Ahmed 3-0-22-0, Navdeep Saini 3-0-27-0, Krunal Pandya 3.3-0-23-2, Ravindra Jadeja 1-0-6-0. **Result:** India won by 22 runs on D/L method.

SA to go for football-style management, Gibson out

REUTERS CAPE TOWN, AUGUST 4

SOUTH AFRICA will radically overhaul their management team, including saying goodbye to coach Ottis Gibson, as they instead move to a football-style new structure. West Indian Gibson will not have his contract renewed after a disappointing World Cup in England, where the Proteas won only three of their nine matches and were never in the hunt for the semi-finals.

"Members of (the current) team management, including the various assistant cricket coaches, will not be retained as part of the forthcoming plan," Cricket South Africa (CSA) said in a media release on Sunday.

CSA will instead appoint a team manager, who will select his own coaching staff and captains in the three formats of the game. The medical staff and administrative staff will also report to him. The team manager will report to CSA Acting Director of Cricket, Corrie van Zyl, who will in turn report to the Chief Executive. The structure will be similar to that at top European football clubs where a technical director takes charge of the coaching staff and players.

While CSA advertise the positions of Director of Cricket, team manager and convener of selectors, Van Zyl will appoint an interim management team, selection panel and captain for the three-Test tour of India in September and October.

"This change will herald an exciting new era for the SA cricket and will bring us into line with best practice in professional sport," CSA Chief Executive Thabang Moreo said.

Opener Agarwal stars in India A's series-clinching win over WI A

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA PORT OF SPAIN, AUGUST 4

OPENERS MAYANK Agarwal and Priyank Panchal struck fine half-centuries as India A registered a series-clinching seven-wicket win over West Indies A in the second unofficial Test here. Chasing 278 for a win, Agarwal made 81 off 134 balls while Panchal scored 68 off 121 deliveries to set up the win on the final day of the four-day match on Saturday.

Agarwal and Panchal shared 150 runs for the opening stand to set the platform for India A's chase. Abhimanyu Easwaran also chipped in with an unbeaten 59 while Anmolpreet Singh contributed 51 not out as India A reached 278 for 3 in 79.1 overs to win the match and take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series. India A had also won the preceding five-match unofficial ODI series 4-1.

India A didn't lose any wicket in the first session and they were just 33 shy of victory at lunch break. India A resumed the final day at 185 for three.

Earlier, off-spinner Krishnappa Gowtham took five wickets and foxed the opposition batsmen as West Indies A were bowled for 149 in the second innings after starting the day at 12 for four on Friday. The visitors would have liked to end the day on a better note after losing three wickets for 28 runs in the last hour of the evening session.

Panchal and Test opener Agarwal had put India A in a strong position before departing in quick succession. Captain Hanuma Vihari (1) was the last wicket to fall on Friday, giving West Indies a glimmer of hope. West Indies A had started the day at 12 for four but overnight batsmen Sunil Ambris (71) and Jermaine Blackwood (31) ensured that they cross the three-figure mark, as the hosts took lunch at 107 for seven.

OBITUARY

Link with bygone era broken as Setalvad, voice of '70s cricket, falls silent

SANDIP G AUGUST 4

IT'S AN old line, widely attributed to legendary English commentator John Arlott, that the pictures are better on the radio if the commentator could paint aural pictures and transport the listener to an unknown and unseen realm.

For nearly three decades, Anant Setalvad, who passed away at the age of 84 in Mumbai on Sunday, painted pictures with his words, at a time when television was the luxury of elites, sports coverage yet to be rampantly televised, when even the radio offered only a couple of medium-wave stations with wobbly receptors - but nonetheless functioning as the metaphorical eyes to the world of sport.

His descriptive style promptly truck a chord among the audience. "His descriptions were so detailed and vivid that we could see everything play out in front of our eyes, from the quirkiness of a bowler's ac-

tion or the back-lift of a certain batsman, or even the gentle breeze flowing across the ground," says former Mumbai skipper Shishir Hattangadi.

The richness of his diction owed much to his public-school education, the upbringing in a family of jurists - he belonged to the family of Motilal Chimanlal Setalvad, the first attorney general of the country, and his brother Atul Setalvad was a famous lawyer himself - and his adulation of Arlott. "He was very much English, fitted perfectly into the public-school boy image, prim and proper. That said, his Gujarati was equally sparkling. He and Vijay (Merchant) always spoke in Gujarati," says fellow commentator and journalist Raju Bharatan.

Setalvad was always understated, not a single excited rant, no screaming at the top of the voice, few clichés, if any, nothing over the top, but no less involved and passionate for all that, his contemporaries reckon.

"He always steered clear of hyperbole, bringing fresh perspectives, and always tried to tell us something we don't know



Anant Setalvad (1935-2019).

or could not see," observes Hattangadi.

Together with Dicky Rutnagur and Suresh Saraiya, he formed the fab three of Indian English commentators, each unique in his own way. Rutnagur was all flair and humour, Saraiya studious and analytical, Setalvad all elegance.

"His words and tone comforted us, lifted the gloom of a terrible score. Back in those days, when India batted overseas, a collapse was always round the corner, but the calmness of his tone gave us a lot of hope. India would lose the game, but he always brought up hope," Hattangadi remembers.

When the mood seized him, Setalvad delighted with his dry humour. "He was always measured and choosy. He wouldn't try to produce humour for the sake of it, but his jokes were serious and spontaneous. If any, he had a dry sense of humour," recollects Vaman Apte, son of former cricketer Madhav Apte and a squash player.

Though not deliberate, he kept the producers in suspense as his turn for commentary approached. "He wouldn't be seen

anywhere near the room until the very last minute before his turn came. He would casually walk in, smile at us and straightaway get into the groove. Like his commentary, everything about him was smooth and unhurried," says Bharatan.

Setalvad, though, had his quirks. "He was particular about where he sat, be it a Test match or club game. He would always sit to the left of the scorer (the veteran Anandjee Dosa). He even coined a moniker for him, Mr Cricket," says Bharatan.

A veteran of 100-odd Test matches and twice the number of first-class games, Setalvad's soft voice, along with the lyrical Hindi commentary of Sushil Doshi, brought to home the news of India's first Test win in the West Indies. Like the spoken word, the aural images got stuck in the consciousness. "Several years later, when I saw the likes of Clive Lloyd, I was seeing him through the images Anant had painted. Even the aura of stadium names like Chepauk, Eden Gardens and the Chinnaswamy," Hattangadi recalls.

BRIEFLY

Vinesh wins 3rd gold in 53kg at Poland Open

Star India grappler Vinesh Phogat has bagged her third consecutive gold in women's 53kg category after winning the Poland Open wrestling tournament in Warsaw. The 24-year-old prevailed 3-2 over local wrestler Rokšana in the final of the competition. Vinesh had earlier beaten Sofia Mattson of Sweden, the Rio Olympics bronze medallist, in the quarterfinals of this international tournament. The top Indian woman wrestler had stood atop the podium at Grand Prix of Spain and at the Yasar Dogu International at Istanbul, Turkey last month. "The biggest positives from wrestling against strong opponents are it forces me out of my comfort zone, makes me push my limits, and teaches important lessons! Happy with my performance at the #PolandOpen Excited by this start as a 53 kg wrestler, now onwards and upwards," Vinesh tweeted.

UFC: Trump's sons watch Covington win

Colby Covington didn't need to wait for another invite to the White House to chat with President Donald Trump. The UFC star had a direct line to the president and received a congratulatory call after his latest dominant victory inside the octagon. Covington wagged his tongue, landed his strikes, and coasted to a unanimous decision over Robbie Lawler in the 170-pound main event fight of a rare Saturday afternoon card at the Prudential Center. Trump's two adult sons, Don Jr. and Eric, rooted on Covington from cage-side seats and snapped pics throughout the day with several well-wishers. Covington scaled the cage and smiled as he pointed toward the brothers after securing a 50-44 50-45, 50-45 victory. Covington visited Trump in the White House last year and the president sent a pre-fight tweet wishing luck for the "Make America Great Again" loyalist. "He just said he appreciates everything I've done, he wants me to come back to the White House to shake his hand again and hang out with him at the Oval Office," Covington said. "He just appreciates how much I do. I'm the hard-working American." The fight mixed politics and the fight game like few others in UFC history. "You know you got a big fight when the President of the United States is tweeting about it," UFC President Dana White tweeted.

Lahiri shoots 68, at t-38th at Wyndham

Anirban Lahiri shot his third successive round in the 60s with a two-under 68, which took him to eight-under 202 and tied-38th after the third round of the Wyndham Championship. Lahiri stayed at the same spot with one more round to go in the last regular event of the PGA Tour this season. The star Indian golfer, who is 178th on the FedExCup standings, will need to go back to Korn Ferry Series finals to try and regain his card for PGA Tour for 2019-20 season. Meanwhile, Korea's Byeong Hun An was once again steady as he shot a bogey free four-under 66 to stay on top of the leaderboard. An's 66 gave him a one-stroke lead after three rounds at the PGA TOUR's final event before the FedExCup Playoffs. He has played rounds of 62, 65 and 66.

Underdog day afternoon

Saatwicksairaj-Chirag outwit world champions for India's biggest doubles title



Saatwicksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty with the support staff after their historic win at the Thailand Open. BAI

SHIVANI NAIK
AUGUST 4

THE BIGGEST trick pulled by Saatwicksairaj Rankireddy against the Chinese pairing of Li Jun Hui and Liu Yu Chen was in convincing the world champions that a devil lurked round the corner. When all he did was throw shadows in the mirror and befuddle them both with the imminent threat of a big game he kept devilishly locked up.

When the unseeded Saatwik and Chirag Shetty upset the third-seeded Chinese to win India's biggest men's doubles title at the Thailand Super 500, the 21-19, 18-21, 21-18 score held so many little deceptions that this became a subtle outwitting, not quite the savage flexing of power.

The Chinese were stumped in the opening game when the Indians literally scored off jabs while threatening to unveil the power-punches. These were proper tappers - returns of serves, or in slightly more prolonged affairs, the third shot. Saatwicksairaj, the big-built man known for his firepower from the back, actually parked himself at the net - keen to not exert his sore shoulder, while Chirag (who is no mug on the step-attack) manned the back.

Saatwik's reputation for bazooka smashes is so overwhelming that no one - certainly not the Chinese - saw the bird pecks poking at their defence from the front.

With a mix of crafty short serves and angled returns, Saatwik won the short, snappy points while not backing out from the flat exchanges. The game stayed so hypnotically focused on the mid-court with attacks seeking to dissect down the middle that Li-Liu could not have anticipated Saatwik's flick serve - a looping goofball of a shuttle that floated to the back and gave Indians the 20-18 game point. Shetty would then kiss his racket frame a point later and curl one towards Liu who could only net it back.

Normalcy resumed in the second but not before the Indians took a 4-1 lead laced with the persistent threat of hassling the Chinese

Win will open door for others, says Chirag's father

Mumbai: AN ELATED Chandrashekar Shetty, father of badminton player Chirag Shetty, who created history on Sunday, said his son's feat has opened the doors for aspiring shuttlers.

"He (Chirag) has opened the doors for other badminton players, that they can also achieve (a similar feat) if they work hard and they (remain) focused," Chirag's father Chandrashekar told PTI over phone.

"What I can say! Spectacular win as no Indian has ever done (achieved the feat). It paves the way for younger players who are (playing) doubles, singles we have got lot of achievements. Other players will also think that on their day if Chirag and Satvik can do it, so why can't we. That is a big thing," he added.

Chirag's mentor Uday Pawar, who runs an academy at Goregoan Sports Club, also felt that now more players will

be keen to play doubles. "With this win, I think the attitude of not only BAI (Badminton Association of India) but all other players who are playing will change and improve for the better. There will be more people wanting to play doubles because (now) they will have Satvik and Chirag as their heroes, role models.

"It can be start of future where we have more people playing doubles and our perennial weakness has been doubles. In singles, we have produced a number of good top players, but doubles is always not been given the importance it deserves. Maybe, now it is given that importance, you will have more players coming up and it is good for the country," added Pawar. Back home, Chirag trains at the Goregoan Sports Club in suburban Goregoan. It is understood that Chirag would return to Mumbai by Thursday. PTI

like a mosquito's buzz. The game opened up a tad getting Saatwik pushed back and taming the high shots, prolonging the rallies a little more. The Indians led at the changeover and till 18-16 when Li-Liu pounced at the next five points in a flurry to level matters.

Still the fear loomed. Even when the Chinese scampered away to 4-1 lead in the decider. In a match that was distinctly technical and tactical, the Indians would now go on to find their patterned combinations - a repeated cross-stitch on the court with a diagonal rhythm as Saatwik took his place at the back while Chirag was a pendulum in the front. The Chinese fears weren't unfounded as the Indians would take a 13-9 lead creating real panic among the Chinese coach and the two players who ran into frequent dissonance.

The Indian defence was watertight by now and Chirag, in one of those carefully conducted moves, bisected the Chinese and yet another

time pushed one across with both opponents stuck on the same flank. At some point in this lead, the Indians broke the Chinese resolve to fight back and as the rallies got frenzied - the longest saved for the last - the Indians inched closer to a win with the Chinese not so much snapping at their heels as marching in step but one safe length back.

A cerebral victory

When the winner came - a Chirag straight shot whizzing behind the Chinese, the debut champions would fall to the ground and the coach would run onto the court. This was a cerebral victory - something brute power couldn't have conjured up.

The pair had picked a silver at the Commonwealth Games last year but on Sunday, the big story was how they'd pulled out a win leaving behind the annoying weakness of not managing to close out matches. This was skill on a bedrock of good de-

fence. Saatwik revealed a delicate side to his game - of drives and interceptions from the front while Chirag had the clever shots and variations in pace. Moreover, for a young pair that had never played a big final on the pro circuit, this was confidence oozing through their assured strides on court.

The shuttles played faster on finals day and anyone quick on the net had the edge in a rally. The Indians weren't exactly stomping at the net, but played like they belonged - like they had pulled off those audacious cheeky shots a hundred times before.

There were no nerves visible, no worry lines or confusion when the Chinese tried asserting their world ranking on the match. Perhaps the biggest giveaway was the complete lack of indication that they'd lost the second game despite being three points from a straight-game victory.

While Indonesian coaches will be credited with the assurance with which Saatwik and Chirag played the parallel game and negotiated the flats, the Indian duo showed the adaptability to take on the Chinese game even on their terms.

"The final point was great of course," said Chirag later, "but more the first game. Winning that was crucial because that gave us the confidence that yes, we can beat them." Chirag conceded the beauty of the match lay in concluding it. "Obviously, if we'd kept thinking about winning the tournament, we'd have messed it up. So we didn't and just focused on the next point."

The Indians rotated well too, sharing the attacking responsibilities - given Saatwik needed to guard his shoulder. "Rotation was much better today," he added. While the victory is a giant step for doubles in India, life will only get tougher with all the attention that a title invites.

"They will be watched and marked from hereon. So while they certainly belong to the top league, how they respond to others reading their game will be interesting," national coach P Gopichand said. For the two men, first-time gold medallists, this can only increase their appetite.

Pakistan tennis chief promises India foolproof security ahead of Davis Cup tie

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI, AUGUST 4

SEEKING TO allay fears on Indian team's security during the Davis Cup tie, Pakistan Tennis Federation President Salim Saifullah Khan assured that the contest will be held in safe and secure environment, promising "impressive hospitality" to the visitors. The PTF chief also said they plan to invite India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi to watch the contest, scheduled for September 14-15, and promised a memorable hospitality to the visiting team and fans.

"We are eagerly waiting for the Indian team. There will be good arrangements for Indian fans and the players. We will host the tie in a very safe and secure atmosphere," Salim Saifullah told PTI in an exclusive interview.

"There is a lot of excitement in Pakistan for this tie. Everyone is happy. It's better if we spray tennis balls at each other and not bombs. I am confident that the Indian team will be impressed with Pakistan's hospitality."

An Indian tennis team is set to travel to Pakistan for the first time in 55 years. The last time Pakistan hosted India was way back in 1964 when the visitors won 4-0 in Lahore.

When reminded that there are apprehensions regarding players' safety in Pakistan, Salim assured that nothing untoward will happen. "The ITF consultants were here for three days and they inspected everything. Islamabad is not a big city like Delhi, Lahore and Mumbai. The population here is below two million.

"All the set up will be declared a red zone because the Parliament, Presidency and the PM (residence) are also there. I am sure nothing untoward will happen and the Indian players would be comfortable," he said.

"When ITF allowed us to host ties, it was based on the fact that there is a consistent campaign against terrorists and terrorism by the government. There is a lot of difference between the 2010 incident and 2019. We have improved a lot," he added.

Salim said the two nations are similar and the people too are same - a view a lot of the commoners share in both the countries.

"The Indian players have visited here for the ITF Futures tournaments as well. And when Indians come here, it's difficult to separate them from Pakistanis because we look the same. The clothes are the same, the food is also the same. We always advise them to stay in specific hotels. Nothing has happened so far and Inshallah, nothing will happen," he hoped.

The soft-spoken Salim is a staunch supporter of sports diplomacy, which he felt can be used to normalise the relations between the two nations. "Our Prime Minister and the government have been trying that a dialogue happens and solutions (to problems between two countries) are explored. People in Pakistan crave to go to India and people in India also want to visit Pakistan. I hope these visits start.

"It's a beginning, let's see. Our player Aisam and Bopanna had reached the US Open final in 2013 and I had watched their semifinal in New York. I hope the situation improves. We are planning to invite Prime Minister Narendra Modi to come and watch the tie in Islamabad."

The Indian players have visited here for the ITF Futures tournaments as well. And when Indians come here, it's difficult to separate them from Pakistanis because we look the same. The clothes are the same, the food is also the same. We always advise them to stay in specific hotels. Nothing has happened so far and Inshallah, nothing will happen."

SALIM SAIFULLAH KHAN,
PAKISTAN TENNIS FEDERATION PRESIDENT

HUNGARIAN GRAND PRIX

Hunted becomes the hunter: Hamilton chases down Verstappen to win

ASSOCIATED PRESS/REUTERS
BUDAPEST, AUGUST 4

MORE USED to other drivers chasing him, Lewis Hamilton turned predator on Sunday to hunt down Max Verstappen and win the Hungarian Grand Prix.

When Hamilton had tried and failed to get past Verstappen midway through the race on the Hungaroring - one of Formula One's hardest tracks for overtaking - it seemed that Verstappen would secure a victory from his first pole position for an eighth career win and third in four races.

But then Mercedes showed the strength in depth of its team, making a risky but ultimately brilliant strategy call to bring Hamilton in for a second tire change on Lap 49 of 70. In the pit wall battle, Mercedes sucker-punched Red Bull and unleashed Hamilton on fresh tires.

He chased Verstappen like a silver bullet around the 4.4-kilometer (2.7-mile) track, at times shaving two seconds per lap off Verstappen's 20-second lead. Red Bull decided against giving Verstappen new tires and left him to rely only on his wits to fend off Hamilton - a five-time champion considered among the greatest drivers in F1 history.

"Lewis was on fire today," Verstappen said. "I was pushing flat out."

The remarkably adroit Verstappen - who has great composure at 20 years old - could

not hold off Hamilton. By Lap 67, Hamilton moved menacingly alongside and flew to the 81st victory of his F1 career to move only 10 wins behind Michael Schumacher.

"I honestly didn't know if I could (reduce) the gap," a jubilant Hamilton said. "I kept pushing and pushing. They were like qualifying laps every lap."

Verstappen, who took a bonus point for the fastest lap, acknowledged Mercedes made the right call.

"We were just not fast enough. I tried everything I could," Verstappen said. "Congrats to Lewis, he was pushing me really hard. I like that."

Hamilton looks headed for a sixth F1 title so far. He sits 62 points ahead of second-place Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas going into the midseason summer break, which is when Mercedes decides whether to give Bottas a new contract for 2020.

"It was difficult to get by, the defence was great, and I didn't know if I could catch that 19-second gap," said the Briton of a battle with Verstappen that ebbed and flowed throughout the race. "I just kept my head down, and each lap was like a qualifying lap. I know if (late Mercedes non-executive chairman and triple champion) Niki (Lauda) was here today, he would take his hat off."

After crashing in Germany last weekend and finishing eighth here, despite starting from second place, Bottas' future hangs in the balance.



Lewis Hamilton, 62 points ahead of second-place Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas going into the midseason summer break, looks headed for a sixth F1 title. Reuters

For Verstappen, who turns 21 next month, it was a 21st consecutive race in the top five, including 12 podiums. He is only seven points behind Bottas in third place.

Sebastian Vettel finished the race behind Verstappen in third place for Ferrari ahead of teammate Charles Leclerc.

Verstappen held his lead from pole position under pressure from Hamilton and

Bottas heading into Turn 1. Hamilton got ahead of Bottas, who was then overtaken by both Ferraris.

On Lap 25 Verstappen came in for a tire change, coming out ahead of both Ferraris.

Mercedes seemed unsure about bringing Hamilton in for his tire change, changing their minds on Laps 26 and 27. Eventually the British driver came in on Lap 32, but a poor

It was difficult to get by, the defence was great, and I didn't know if I could catch that 19-second gap. I just kept my head down, and each lap was like a qualifying lap. I know if (late Mercedes non-executive chairman and triple champion) Niki (Lauda) was here today, he would take his hat off."

LEWIS HAMILTON
ON HIS HUNGARIAN GP WIN

pit stop - lasting 4 seconds compared to 2.6 for Verstappen's - cost Hamilton momentum. Still, on fresh tires Hamilton soon caught up, forcing Verstappen to defend frantically. On Lap 40, Hamilton almost got past - first on the inside, then on the outside - but the Dutchman kept his cool as Hamilton veered slightly off track on the second attack.

"What more can I do?" Hamilton asked his team on radio. "Keep the pressure on," wasthe blunt reply. "I can't keep the pressure on," an agitated-sounding Hamilton snapped back.

After Hamilton had come in for the second pit stop he suddenly had much faster tires than Verstappen for the closing stages.

To Verstappen, the chasing Mercedes loomed small, medium and then large as a

rocket in his wing mirrors. Verstappen's lead was wilting in the afternoon sun, and with five laps left it was only three seconds.

In a blur, Hamilton's Silver Arrow flew past him. "Sorry I doubted the strategy," an ecstatic Hamilton said after an eighth win this season. "Oh man, that feels good. That feels so good."

So will the month off. The season resumes on Sept. 1 at the Belgian GP.

Vettel, meanwhile, has much to ponder over the summer as he chases an elusive 53rd career win. The four-time F1 champion is 94 points behind Hamilton in fourth place and has not won any of the 20 races since Belgium last year.

On a humiliating day for F1's most storied team, Vettel and Leclerc finished more than 1 minute behind Hamilton.

In a racing series where mere seconds often decide races, this shows how far the once-mighty Ferrari has fallen. Twelve races, zero wins makes for grim reading. RESULTS: Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 1:35:03.796; Max Verstappen (Red Bull) 1:37.796; Sebastian Vettel (Ferrari) +61.433s; Charles Leclerc (Ferrari) +65.250s; Carlos Sainz Jr (McLaren) +1 Lap

Standings: (Driver) Lewis Hamilton (Mercedes) 250; Valtteri Bottas (Mercedes) 188; Max Verstappen (Red Bull) 181; Sebastian Vettel (Ferrari) 156; Charles Leclerc (Ferrari) 132; (Constructors) Mercedes 438; Ferrari 288; Red Bull 244

New season, old story

Man City open fresh campaign by beating Liverpool in Community Shield

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
LONDON, AUGUST 4

MANCHESTER CITY fired the first shot in their battle for supremacy with rivals Liverpool on Sunday as they snatched the Community Shield with a 5-4 penalty shoot-out win after a 1-1 draw at Wembley. Raheem Sterling gave City a first half lead before Joel Matip grabbed a late equaliser for Liverpool in the annual curtain-raiser to the English top-flight season.

In the shoot-out, City keeper Claudio Bravo saved from Georginio Wijnaldum, with Gabriel Jesus driving in the winning kick after successful efforts from Ilkay Gundogan, Bernardo Silva, Phil Foden and Aleksandr Zinchenko. The jubilant celebrations from City's players and fans showed inflicting an early psychological blow on Liverpool was a moment to savour, regardless of the supposed warm-up status of the glamour friendly.

"An incredible final from both sides. We had real good moments, but in the last 15 minutes we were exhausted and they had chances to win the game," Guardiola said. "It was a good test for both teams. It's nice for the players to realise what they will face this season. At this level the difference is nothing, just one penalty. The first title of the season is ours."

With City installed as favourites to win the title for a third successive season and Liverpool expected to present the strongest challenge to Pep Guardiola's side, their meeting on the eve of the season was a window into what to expect this term.

After pipping Liverpool to last season's Premier League title with 98 points to their rivals' 97, City went on to complete an unprecedented domestic treble by adding the FA Cup to the League Cup they won earlier in the campaign. But Jurgen Klopp's men didn't dwell on that painful near-miss as they won the Champions League just weeks later.

On the evidence of this hard-fought contest, which featured both flashes of quality and signs of rustiness, there will little to separate the two teams as they go head-to-head for the major prizes once again over the next 10 months. Retaining the Community Shield trophy they won 12 months ago would improve City's belief that they can



Man City's Kyle Walker makes a goalline save against Liverpool in the Community Shield on Sunday. City won 5-4 on penalties after the match was level 1-1 after 90 minutes. Reuters

MAN UTD FACE UNCERTAIN FUTURE

Manchester United have missed out on the top four in four of the six seasons since Alex Ferguson stepped down and fans are coming to terms with their current status as Premier League also-rans.

It is difficult to know what to expect from Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's United, who enjoyed a purple patch after the Norwegian replaced Jose Mourinho but slumped alarmingly

towards the end of last season. At one stage they looked likely to finish in the top four but there was the suspicion they were getting the rub of the green and so it proved.

Their campaign ended with a whimper as they drew 1-1 at relegated Huddersfield and then were beaten 2-0 at home on the final day by Cardiff, who were also heading out of the Premier League.

repeat last season's remarkable silverware haul, but Liverpool could take encouragement as well after they finished strongly enough to have won.

The only dark cloud for City was an injury to Bayern Munich target Leroy Sane, who limped off in the 10th minute holding his right leg. City's victory was a well-timed riposte for Guardiola, who this week hit back at Klopp's claim that the champions live in a transfer "fantasy land".

Guardiola gave a debut to

Spain midfielder Rodri, who joined from Atletico Madrid for a club record £63 million (69 million euros) in the close-season. And the 23-year-old's composed passing and physical presence showed why City's financial muscles have been flexed again.

Sterling hadn't scored in his last 10 appearances against Liverpool in all competitions, but this week hit back at Klopp's drought in the 12th minute. Kyle Walker's high pass to the far post caught Liverpool appealing in

vain for offside as Kevin De Bruyne headed on to David Silva.

Silva flicked towards Sterling and his close-range effort was just strong enough to escape the grasp of Reds keeper Alisson Becker and trickle over the line. Much improved after the interval, Liverpool were inches away from equalising when Virgil van Dijk's half-volley crashed down off the crossbar onto the goalline before City scrambled clear.

Salah was by far Liverpool's most menacing player and he twisted away from the City defence before firing a fierce strike that cannoned off the outside of the post. Guardiola had his head in his hands in frustration when Sterling again ran clear on goal without scoring as his hesitant stumble allowed Alisson to save at his feet. City paid for that miss when Liverpool deservedly equalised in the 77th minute, Van Dijk helping on Jordan Henderson's free-kick before substitute Matip headed in from close-range.

Walker's incredible over-head-kick clearance then repelled what looked to be a late Salah winner, setting up City's shoot-out triumph that stood as the opening salvo in what looks set to be a season-long feud.

Rafa leads Montreal field in absence of Novak, Roger

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
MONTREAL, AUGUST 4

DEFENDING CHAMPION Rafael Nadal heads the field for the ATP Montreal Masters that starts on Monday with Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer opening out of the key US Open tuneup. With Djokovic and Federer putting a return to action on hold after their dramatic Wimbledon final, 33-year-old Nadal will be seeking to retain the title he earned last year in Toronto, when he beat rising star Stefanos Tsitsipas in the final. The Greek is back, taking the

fourth seeding behind a pair of fellow young guns in number two Dominic Thiem and Alexander Zverev, seeded third. Federer and Djokovic aren't scheduled to resurface until the Cincinnati Masters starts on August 12, giving them one tournament prior to the August 26 start of the US Open at Flushing Meadows, the final Grand Slam of the year.

Federer has been training on hardcourt at home in Switzerland after falling to Djokovic in a dramatic five-set final at the All England Club three weeks ago, in which the Swiss great held two match points.

Everton sign Kean from Juve for \$30.5 million

REUTERS
AUGUST 4

PREMIER LEAGUE side Everton have signed 19-year-old striker Moise Kean from Italian champions Juventus on a five-year deal, the clubs said on Sunday. Juventus said the transfer fee agreed for the Italy international was 27.5 million euros (\$30.5 million), payable in three financial years, with a further 2.5 million euros to be added if certain conditions were met.

"I am very proud and honoured to wear the Everton shirt. I will give my best to this team," Kean said in a statement. "I was convinced to sign because Everton is a club looking to the future and so am I. I know about the size of the club, it has big ambition and I will work very hard to help us fulfil what we want to achieve."

Kean, who was Juve's first player to be born in the 2000s, made his debut for the club at the age of 16 and scored six goals in Serie A last season.

IDFC FIRST Bank Limited
(Formerly known as Capital First Home Finance Limited)
CIN : L65110N2014PLC097792
Registered Office: KRM Towers, 8th Floor, Harrington Road, Chetpet, Chennai-600031. TEL: +91 44 4564 4000 | FAX: +91 44 4564 4022.
Authorized Officer - Mr. Arunpal Singh Gill | Contact Number - +91-9999776185.

APPENDIX- IV-A [See proviso to rule 8 (6)]
SALE NOTICE FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTIES

E-Auction Sale Notice for Sale of Immovable Assets under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 read with proviso to Rule 8(6) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002.

Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorised Officer of Capital First Limited now IDFC FIRST Bank Limited, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is", and "Whatever there is" on 22-08-2019, for recovery of INR 4,19,47,512/- as on 04-10-2018 due to IDFC FIRST Bank Limited (erstwhile Capital First Limited) from M/s. Vintage Prop. Tarun Sarda (Borrower) and Tarun Sarda & Monica Sarda (Co-borrower(s)).

The Reserve Price will be INR 02,15,00,000/- (Rupees Two Crore Fifteen Lac Only) and the Earnest Money Deposit will be INR 21,50,00,000/- (Rupees Twenty One Lac Fifty Thousand Only).

DESCRIPTION OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY
ALL THAT PART AND PARCEL OF SFS CATEGORY-III, DDA FLAT BEARING NO.1636, FIRST FLOOR & SECOND FLOOR SITUATED IN POCKET-I, SECTOR-B, VASANT KUNJ, NEW DELHI-110070

For detailed terms and conditions of the sale, please refer to the link provided in IDFC FIRST Bank website i.e. www.idfcfirstbank.com.

Disclaimer: Please note that the said notice is issued for sale of immovable property only and IDFC FIRST Bank Limited has no right to sale the movable assets, if any, present at the immovable property.

Authorized Officer
IDFC FIRST Bank Limited
Date: 03.08.2019 (Formerly known as Capital First Limited)

भारतीय कंटेनर निगम लिमिटेड
CONTAINER CORPORATION OF INDIA LTD.
(A Govt. of India Navratna Undertaking)
Regd. Office & Investors Relation Centre: CONCOR Bhawan, C-3, Mathura Road, Opp. Apollo Hospital, New Delhi - 110075
CIN : L63011DL1988O1030915, e-mail : investorrelations@concorindia.com,
Tel. Nos. : 41673093-96, Fax: 41673188, website : <http://www.concorindia.com>

NOTICE OF THIRTY FIRST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING REMOTE E-VOTING INFORMATION AND BOOK CLOSURE
NOTICE is hereby given that:

- The thirty first (31st) Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the members of the Company will be held at Auditorium, National Rail Museum, Chankayapuri, New Delhi-110021 on Tuesday, 27.08.2019 at 4.00 p.m. to transact the business set forth in the Notice of the said meeting.
- The notice of 31st AGM alongwith explanatory statement and the Annual Report for the year ended 31.03.2019 to members as on 26.07.2019 have already been dispatched in electronic mode to the members, whose e-mail IDs are registered with the Company or Depository Participant(s) and in physical mode to the members, whose E-mail IDs are neither registered with the Company nor provided to the Depository Participant, at their registered postal address. The notice of AGM and Annual Report are also available on the Company's website www.concorindia.com and on the website of Stock Exchanges (www.nseindia.com and www.bseindia.com). Members, who have not received the same, may download it from the Company's website or may request for a copy of the same by writing to the Company at above mentioned address.
- Pursuant to the provisions of Section 108 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with Rule 20 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014 and Regulation 44 of SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, the Company is providing its members the facility to cast their votes electronically on all the resolutions set out in the Notice of AGM from a remote location ("Remote e-voting") through National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL). Notice of AGM is also available at NSDL's website at <https://www.evoting.nsdl.com>. The business of AGM may therefore be transacted through e-Voting services of NSDL and the members holding shares either in physical form or dematerialized form may cast their vote electronically. All the members are informed that:
 - The business set forth in the Notice of the 31st AGM may be transacted through voting by electronic means;
 - The remote e-voting shall commence on Friday, 23.08.2019 at 09.00 AM;
 - The remote e-voting shall end on Monday, 26.08.2019 at 05.00 PM;
 - The cut-off date for determining the eligibility for remote e-voting or at the AGM is Tuesday, 20.08.2019. Any person, who acquires shares of the Company and becomes a member of the Company after dispatch of the Notice and holding shares as on the cut-off date i.e. 20.08.2019 may obtain login ID and password by sending a request at evoting@nsdl.co.in or concor@beatafinancial.com. However, if a person is already registered with NSDL for remote e-voting, then existing user ID and password can be used for casting vote;
 - Members eligible to vote may note that:
 - The remote e-voting module shall be disabled by NSDL beyond 05.00 PM on 26.08.2019 and once the vote on a resolution is cast by the member, the member shall not be allowed to change it subsequently;
 - The facility for voting either through electronic voting system or ballot paper will be made available at the AGM;
 - The members who have cast their votes by remote e-voting prior to the AGM may also attend the AGM but shall not be entitled to cast their votes again; and
 - A person whose name is recorded in the register of members or in the register of beneficial owners maintained by the depositories as on the cut-off date only shall be entitled to avail the facility of remote e-voting or voting at the AGM.
 - In case of any queries, members may refer to the Frequently Asked Questions ("FAQs") and e-voting manual available at www.evoting.nsdl.com under help section or may contact Ms. Pallavi Mhatre (Assistant Manager), NSDL, 4th Floor, 'A' Wing, Trade World, Kamala Mills Compound, Senapati Bapat Marg, Lower Parel, Mumbai-400013, Email: evoting@nsdl.co.in, Tel: 1800 222 990/ 91 22 24994200/ 91 22 24994545.
- Pursuant to Section 91 of the Companies Act, 2013 read with applicable Rules thereunder and Regulation 42 of SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, the Register of Members and Share Transfer Books of the Company will remain closed from 21.08.2019 to 27.08.2019 (both days inclusive), to determine the shareholders entitled to final dividend of Rs.8.55 per equity share of the face value of Rs.5/- each for the year ended 31.03.2019, if declared at the Annual General Meeting. This final dividend will be paid/dispatched on or before 25.09.2019 to:
 - Those Members whose names appear in the Register of Members of the Company, after giving effect to all valid Share Transfers in Physical form lodged with the Company and its Registrar on or before 20.08.2019.
 - In respect of Shares held in electronic form, to those members whose names appear on the Statements of beneficial ownership furnished by National Securities Depository Limited (NSDL) and Central Depository Services (India) Limited (CDSL), at the end of business hours on 20.08.2019.

Scrutinizer: The Company has appointed Shri Rakesh Kumar of M/s R K & Associates, a practicing Company Secretary, as Scrutinizer and in his absence Ms. Pragnya Parmita Pradhan of M/s Pragnya Pradhan & Associates, a practicing Company Secretary to scrutinize the process of remote e-voting and voting at AGM in a fair and transparent manner.

Results: The results on the resolutions shall be declared not later than forty eight hours after the conclusion of the AGM of the Company. The results declared alongwith the scrutinizer's report shall be placed on the Company's website (www.concorindia.com) and on the website of NSDL (www.evoting.nsdl.com) and would also be communicated to the Stock Exchanges.

For Container Corporation of India Ltd. Sd/- (Harish Chandra)
Place: New Delhi Date: 04.08.2019 ED (Finance) & Company Secretary

Petronet LNG Limited
Regd. Office: World Trade Centre, Babar Road, Barakhamba Lane, New Delhi-110001
Phone: 011-23411411, Fax: 011-23472550, CIN: L74899DL1998PLC093073
Email: investors@petronetlmg.com, Website: www.petronetlmg.com

A. Notice of AGM and Book Closure
Notice is hereby given that the 21st Annual General Meeting of the Members of Petronet LNG Limited shall be held on Tuesday, the 27th day of August, 2019 at 10.30 a.m. at Siri Fort Auditorium, August Kranti Marg, Siri Institutional Area, New Delhi, 110049.

The notice setting out the ordinary and special business to be transacted at the meeting and the Statement pursuant to Section 102 of the Companies Act 2013 attached thereto, together with the Audited Standalone Financial Statements and Audited Consolidated Financial Statement for the year ended 2019 and the Reports of Directors and Auditors thereon etc. has been dispatched / e-mailed to all the Members and the process has been completed on 4th August, 2019.

Notice is also hereby given pursuant to the provisions of Section 91 of the Companies Act 2013 and Rule 10 (1) of Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014, as amended from time to time, that the Registrar of Members and Share Transfer Books of the Company shall remain closed from Wednesday, 21st August, 2019 to Tuesday, 27th August, 2019 (both days inclusive) for the purpose of AGM and ascertaining the entitlement of dividend, if any, approved in the 21st Annual General Meeting of the Company.

The proposed Dividend of Rs. 4.50 per equity share of face value of Rs. 10 each as recommended by the Board, if declared at the 21st Annual General Meeting, would be paid to those shareholders, whose names appear:

- As Beneficial Owners as at the end of the business hour on Tuesday, 20th August, 2019 as per the list to be furnished by the Depositories in respect of shares held in Electronic form and
- As Members in the Register of Members of the Company after giving effect to all valid share transfers (transmission / transposition) in physical form lodged with the Registrar and Share Transfer Agent of the Company on or before Tuesday, 20th August, 2019.

In case of shares held in electronic form, the request for change of address or Bank details etc. should be sent to the respective Depository Participant of the shareholders. The Annual Report for the Financial Year for the year 2018-19 is available on the Website of the Company www.petronetlmg.com and available for inspection at the Registered Office of the Company during office hours.

B. NOTICE REGARDING VOTING
Pursuant to provisions of Section 108 of Companies Act, 2013 read with Rule 20 of the Companies (Management and Administration) Rules, 2014, as amended and Regulation 44 of the SEBI (Listing Obligation and Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015, Petronet LNG Limited ("the Company") is pleased to provide members facility through M/s. Karvy Fintech Private Limited (KFPL) to exercise their right to vote on resolutions proposed to be considered at the 21st Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Company scheduled to be held on Tuesday, the 27th day of August, 2019 at 10.30 a.m. at Siri Fort Auditorium, August Kranti Marg, Siri Institutional Area, New Delhi, 110049 by electronic means and the business may be transacted through remote e-voting. The details as required pursuant to the provisions of Companies Act, 2013 alongwith connected rules and other statutory provisions are given here under :

The business of the meeting may be transacted through remote e-voting system and Company is providing facility for voting by electronic means	Yes
Date of completion of sending of notices	4th August, 2019
Date and time of commencement of remote e-voting	Friday, 23rd August, 2019 at 9.00 a.m. (IST)
Date and time of end of remote e-voting	Monday, 26th August, 2019 at 5.00 p.m. (IST)
Voting through electronic means shall not be allowed beyond	Monday, 26th August, 2019 at 5.00 p.m. (IST)
Website address of the Company and M/s. Karvy Fintech Private Ltd. Where the Notice of 21st Annual General Meeting is displayed.	www.petronetlmg.com https://evoting.karvy.com Notice Board at the Registered Office of the Company
Contact details of the person responsible to address the grievances connected with the remote e-voting.	Shri S. V. Raju, DGM M/s Karvy Fintech Private Limited Karvy Selenium Tower-B, Plot No. 31&32, Gachibowli, Financial District, Nanakramguda, Serilingampally, Hyderabad-500032 Toll Free No. 1800 345 4001 Email: evoting@karvy.com Or may visit Help & FAQ's section available at M/s Karvy's website https://evoting.karvy.com

- The members who have cast their vote by remote e-voting prior to the 21st AGM may also attend the 21st AGM but shall not be entitled to cast their vote again.
- During the period of remote e-voting as mentioned above, members of the Company holding shares either in physical form or in dematerialized form, as on the cut-off date i.e. Tuesday, 20th August, 2019, may cast their vote by remote e-voting. Remote e-voting shall not be allowed beyond the said date and time and the remote e-voting facility shall be blocked thereafter. Once the vote on a resolution is cast by the member through remote e-voting, the member shall not be allowed to change it subsequently or cast the vote again.
- The voting rights of members shall be in proportion to their shares of the paid up equity share capital of the Company as on the cut-off date i.e. Tuesday, 20th August, 2019.
- Any person, who acquires shares of the Company and become member of the Company after dispatch of the Notice of 21st AGM and holding shares as of the cut-off date i.e. Tuesday, 20th August, 2019, may obtain the login ID and password by sending a request at raju.sv@karvy.com.
- The facility for voting through ballot paper shall be made available at the venue of 21st AGM and the members attending the meeting who have not already cast their vote by remote e-voting shall be able to exercise their right at the meeting through ballot paper.
- A person, whose name is recorded in the register of members or in the register of beneficial owners maintained by the depositories as on the cut-off date only shall be entitled to avail the facility of remote e-voting as well as voting at the 21st AGM through ballot paper. A person who is not a member as on cut-off date should treat this Notice for information purposes only.
- Ms. Savita Jyoti, Practising Company Secretary (CP No. 1796), has been appointed as the Scrutinizer by the Board of Directors of the Company to scrutinize the voting and remote e-voting process in a fair and transparent manner.
- The Chairman shall, at the 21st AGM, at the end of discussion on the resolutions on which voting is to be held, allow voting with the assistance of Scrutinizer, by use of ballot paper for all those members who are present at the 21st AGM but have not cast their votes by availing the remote e-voting facility.
- The Scrutinizer shall after the conclusion of voting at the 21st AGM, will first count the votes cast at the meeting and thereafter unblock the votes cast through remote e-voting in the presence of at least two witnesses not in the employment of the Company and shall make, not later than 48 hours of the conclusion of the 21st AGM, a consolidated Scrutinizer's Report of the total votes cast in favour or against, if any, to the Chairman or a person authorized by him in writing, who shall countersign the same and declare the result of the voting forthwith.
- The Results declared alongwith the Report of the Scrutinizer shall be placed on the website of the Company at <https://www.petronetlmg.com> and on the website of KFPL at <https://evoting.karvy.com> and notice board at the registered office of the company immediately after the declaration of result by the Chairman or a person authorized by him in writing. The results shall also be immediately forwarded to BSE Limited and National Stock Exchange of India Limited.
- Pursuant to Regulation 44(6) of SEBI (LODR) Regulations, 2015, the Company shall provide one-way live webcast of the proceedings of the 21st Annual General Meetings to the members of the company at <https://evoting.karvy.com> and they may avail this facility by using their same log in ID and password provided by the company for voting.
- The Notice of the 21st AGM is also placed on the website of the Company at www.petronetlmg.com and on the website of KFPL at <https://evoting.karvy.com>. Details of the manner and process of electronic voting have been separately sent to members of the Company and are also contained in the Notice of 21st Annual General Meeting. The same is also available on Website of the Company viz. <https://www.petronetlmg.com> and on the website of M/s Karvy Fintech Private Limited at <https://evoting.karvy.com>.
- The Resolution, if passed by the requisite majority, shall be deemed to have been passed on the date of the 21st Annual General Meeting i.e. Tuesday, 27th August, 2019.

C. Addendum
This Addendum has been issued in respect of Item No. 6 of the Notice of 21st AGM regarding "To appoint Shri B. C. Tripathi (DIN 01657366) as Director of the Company" for information of all the members and may be treated as a part of the Notice of 21st AGM of the Company. The Members are requested not to vote either through remote e-voting or voting at AGM in respect of Item No. 6 as stated in the Addendum. This Addendum has been dispatched / e-mailed to all the members and the copy of the same is also available on the website of the company i.e. www.petronetlmg.com.

By order of the Board
For Petronet LNG Limited
(Rajan Kapur)
CGM & Vice President- Company Secretary

Place: New Delhi
Date: 4th August, 2019
Note : No gifts, gift coupons or cash in lieu of gifts shall be distributed to members in the Annual General Meeting or afterwards.

Appeal to Members
Green Initiative in Corporate Governance
We solicit your valuable cooperation and support in our endeavour to contribute our bit to the environment and it is earnestly requested again that the Members who have yet not registered / updated their e-mail IDs to notify the same to the Company at investors@petronetlmg.com or to the Registrar and Share Transfer Agent of the Company or to the concerned depository. Further, in order to facilitate the members and to contribute towards Green Initiative, the Company has sent the format alongwith Business Reply Envelope for registering the email id to receive the Communications through email. The Members who have yet not registered/updated their e-mail ids may notify the same to the Company by sending duly filled form in Business Reply Envelope.