



SC: can't curtail right to free movement and residence across India

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BJP MLA Tanmoy Ghosh goes back to Trinamool Congress

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North Korea appears to have restarted nuclear reactor: UN agency

page 11

Lionel Messi makes his much-awaited debut for PSG in Ligue 1

page 14



NEARBY



School rules: staggered breaks, 50% occupancy

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Disaster Management Authority has issued a Standard Operating Procedure for reopening of schools from September 1. The guidelines include 50% occupancy per classroom and staggered entry, exit and lunch breaks.

CITY ► PAGE 2

Probe into riots case appears callous: court

NEW DELHI

A Delhi court has remarked that probe into a north-east Delhi riots case, where houses were vandalised and set on fire by a mob in Gokalpuri, "appears to be highly callous, inefficient and unproductive". The court ordered framing of charges against one Rohit, who was allegedly part of the mob that undertook rioting and arson in the locality.

CITY ► PAGE 2

Two dead, 3.63 lakh hit in Assam floods

GUWAHATI

The flood situation in Assam worsened on Monday, leaving two persons dead and more than 3.63 lakh people affected in 21 districts. According to an update by the Assam State Disaster Management Authority, a person each died in Barpeta and Morigaon districts.

NORTH & EAST ► PAGE 4

Punjab and Haryana CMs spar over farm agitation

VIKAS VASUDEVA
CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh and his Haryana counterpart Manohar Lal on Monday exchanged sharp words on the farmers' agitation against the Centre's farm laws and the recent baton charge in Haryana's Karnal.

At a press conference here, Mr. Lal accused Capt. Amarinder (ret'd) of instigating farmers. To a question on Capt. Amarinder's statement asking him to apologise to farmers, Mr. Lal said, "In what authority he is asking me to resign or apologise? Who is he to ask me to apologise or resign? Rather, he should resign for instigating farmers. About 85% of those sitting on Delhi's borders are from Punjab."

'Politically motivated'

Mr. Lal said those agitating and taking law and order in their hands were not farmers. They were politically motivated people.

"The Haryana farmers are happily working in their fields. Those from Punjab are actually sitting at Tikri and Singhu borders," he said, adding that the Congress and the Communist party leaders were misleading innocent farmers and provoking them to create chaos in Karnal as well.

The Punjab Chief Minister slammed his Haryana counterpart for defending the assault on peacefully protesting farmers by putting the onus of their agitation on Punjab, saying Mr. Lal's remarks had completely exposed his government's anti-farmer agenda.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

FARMERS THREATEN TO INTENSIFY STR ► PAGE 8

Avani, Sumit lead India's gold hunt at Tokyo Paralympics

Two golds, 4 silvers, 1 bronze in kitty till now

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Avani Lekhara and Sumit Antil led the golden charge as India gained a rich haul of medals at the Paralympics in Tokyo on Monday. India won five medals, with two golds, two silvers and a bronze.

However, the lone sour note was when Vinod Kumar, who won bronze in the F52 discus throw category on Sunday, was deemed ineligible after a disability classification reassessment.

India's overall tally stands at seven with two golds, four



Victory shot: Avani Lekhara taking aim at the Asaka Shooting Range on Monday during the Tokyo Paralympics. ■ GETTY IMAGES

silvers and one bronze, and it is currently placed 26th in the table. The day started on a rousing note as Avani became the first Indian woman to win a Paralympic gold af-

ter she registered a world record equalling score of 249.6 in the R-2 women's 10 m air rifle standing finals (SH 1).

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

Private hospitals lift less than 10% of vaccines

Only 65% of doses administered till August 13

VIGNESH RADHAKRISHNAN
CHENNAI

Private hospitals picked up only 9.4% of the COVID vaccines – Covishield and Co-vaxin – between May 1 and August 17, though 25% of the doses were allotted.

Of the 9.4% doses lifted, private hospitals had administered 65% by August 13. On the other hand, 90.6% of



A vaccination drive under way in Delhi on Monday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

tained from an RTI reply received from the Department of Health and Family Welfare.

Less than 2% share

In 12 States and Union Territories, including Andhra Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Himachal Pradesh, Bihar and Assam, the share of doses supplied to private hospitals was less than 2% of the overall supply.

In eight others, including Uttar Pradesh, Gujarat, Punjab and Jharkhand, the share

Rockets target Kabul airport

Pentagon warns of 'specific' threats as U.S. withdrawal winds down

REUTERS

KABUL/ WASHINGTON

The Pentagon warned on Monday of a "real" and "specific" threat of new attacks on Kabul airport, just hours ahead of the U.S. deadline to complete its withdrawal from Afghanistan that has been marred by Islamic State violence, with the airport coming under rocket fire.

President Joe Biden has set a deadline of Tuesday to withdraw all U.S. forces, drawing to a close his nation's longest war, which began in retaliation for the September 11 attacks in 2001.

U.S. anti-missile defences intercepted as many as five rockets fired at Kabul's airport early in the day. Afghan



Raining misery: Taliban fighters examining a damaged car after the rocket attack in Kabul on Monday. ■ AFP

media said the attack was launched from the back of a vehicle. The Pajhwok news agency said several rockets struck different parts of the Afghan capital. While there were no reports of fatalities or airport damage from the rocket attacks, they caused

greater anxiety for locals already traumatised by years of war. "Since the Americans have taken control of the airport, we can't sleep properly," Abdullah, who lives near the airport, said.

The U.S. and allied forces have evacuated about

Rajnath flags terror concerns

The events in Afghanistan are raising new questions in terms of security, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said. "We do not want anti-India forces to take advantage of the evolving Afghan situation for cross-border terrorism," he said. ► PAGE 9

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

MORE REPORTS ► PAGES 9, 11

25% of vaccinated health staff contracted COVID-19: study

But none of them required hospitalisation

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

In an indicator of the diminishing role of vaccines in preventing transmission of the coronavirus, a little over 25% of the fully vaccinated healthcare workers of a Delhi hospital contracted a fresh or 'breakthrough' in-

fection. None of the nearly 600 vaccine recipients, however, reportedly required hospitalisation.

While previous reports of similar infections have been reported in other studies in India, this is the first time that such a high percentage has been reported as part of a single study.

The study involved healthcare workers at the Max group of hospitals in Delhi and Gurugram, and

was led by scientists at the CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (CSIR-IGIB). It appears as a preprint, and is yet to be peer-reviewed.

The timing between the first and second dose varied, but 482 took the second dose within 42 days of the first. About half the recipients had been previously infected with SARS-CoV-2.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

Adityanath bans meat, liquor sale in Mathura

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MATHURA (U.P.)

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday imposed a complete ban on the sale of liquor and meat in Mathura.

"The officers are directed

to make plans for the ban as well as for the engagement of people involved in such activities in some other trade," he said.

The CM was speaking at the Krishnotsava 2021 programme here. He suggested

that those engaged in liquor and meat trade may take up selling milk in order to revive the glory of Mathura that was known for producing huge quantity of animal milk.

DETAILS ON ► PAGE 8

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Schools reopening: staggered lunch breaks, 50% occupancy

CM
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TUESDAY, AUG. 31		
RISE	05:59	SET 18:44
RISE	00:00	SET 13:53
WEDNESDAY, SEP. 01		
RISE	06:00	SET 18:43
RISE	00:19	SET 14:47
THURSDAY, SEP. 02		
RISE	06:00	SET 18:42
RISE	01:08	SET 15:39

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	35	25
Safdarjang	35	25
Palam	34	26

Delhi Palam Today
33°C Few spells of light rain and thunderstorm may occur at some places. Warm and humid day would prevail with cloudy sky and light winds.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
33°C One or two spells of light rain and thunderstorm would prevail. Warm and humid day likely.

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Slogan case: accused posts video claiming innocence

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

A video has surfaced online in which Hindu Raksha Dal chief Pinki Chaudhary, accused of raising communal slogans at a rally in Jantar Mantar here, is seen purportedly denying all allegations against him and claiming that he would surrender before Delhi Police on Tuesday.

In the video circulated on WhatsApp and some other platforms, he claimed that the charges against him are “false and baseless”.

A video showing anti-Muslim slogans being raised during a protest at Jantar Mantar here was widely circulated on social media earlier, following which the police had registered a case in this connection. Eight people – Uttam Upadhyay, Ashwini Upadhyay, Preet Singh, Deepak Singh, Deepak Kumar, Vinod Sharma, Vinit Bajpai and Sushil Tiwari – in connection with the case.

In the video, Mr. Chaudhary is heard saying that he will surrender at Connaught Place police station on Tuesday at 12 p.m. and cooperate with the investigation.

Activists seek action after report reveals toxic discharge into forest

‘Scrap waste management firm’s contract, act against MCG’

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

Citing a latest report by the Haryana State Pollution Control Board (HSPCB) showing discharge of highly toxic and untreated leachate into the forest area behind Bandhwari landfill here, the environmentalists have demanded that the contract of Ecogreen, the company handling waste management in Gurugram and Faridabad, be suspended and action taken against the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram.

In a letter to Chief Secretary Vijai Vardhan, and senior officials of the HSPCB and Forest Department, the environmentalists said the leachate testing report for the sample collected earlier this month confirmed the presence of certain toxins on a much higher side than the permissible limits.

Untreated leachate

“The report shows that highly toxic, untreated leachate is being discharged in the forest. Based on this re-



Care on the move: The mohalla clinic at Shakur Basti has been created using shipping containers and can be shifted in trucks from one place to another. •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

To overcome ‘land issues’, govt. tests out portable mohalla clinic

Jain says DDA has not given any land to build the facilities

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Health Minister Satyendar Jain on Monday said that there has been politics related to land for mohalla clinics and the government has come up with portable mohalla clinics using shipping containers.

One such mohalla clinic has been set up through CSR at Shakur Basti and this is a sample project, the Minister said.

“There have been politics related to mohalla clinics. Wherever we have wanted to open them, we have faced issues with land. Land is with the Central government and the DDA had promised in the High Court to

give land for 500 mohalla clinics, but they have not given land for even one mohalla clinic,” Mr. Jain said.

100% transferable
“We have created ready-made mohalla clinic inside shipping container. It will be built in factories. It is 100% transferable and can be shifted in trucks from one place to another,” he said.

He said that the current mohalla clinic is a sample done through CSR by a company and despite installing them on the Delhi government land, the municipal corporations that is governed by the BJP, still creates issues.

“In many areas in Delhi, we don’t have enough space to build mohalla clinics. This new clinic takes only half the space of existing ones. Earlier, mohalla clinics’ area was 600 square feet, now it takes only 300 square feet,” Mr. Jain said.

He said that the government is planning more such projects.

Mohalla clinics is one of the flagship initiatives of the Kejriwal government to boost the primary healthcare system in Delhi. A typical mohalla clinic has a doctor and a midwife-cum-nurse. It provides an array of diagnostic services and essential medicines free of cost.

Containment zones plummet as cases continue to decrease

Emphasis on strict COVID-appropriate behaviour in districts with no hotspots

JATIN ANAND
NEW DELHI

Only around 200 of the 87,500-plus containment zones created in the Capital during the course of the COVID-19 pandemic currently remain in place.

The authorities concerned are not only still keeping an eye on such areas but also ensuring COVID-appropriate behaviour in their vicinity.

The number of containment zones in the city is decreasing rapidly with some districts such as the Central and North-East districts, having seemingly become free of them per se and others on the brink of ridding themselves of the tag.

20 new cases

The city reported only one new COVID-19 death in 24 hours and the total number of deaths stood at 25,081, as per a bulletin released by the Delhi government on Monday. Also, 20 new cases were reported, taking the total cases to 14,37,736. A total of 51,387 tests were done in a day and that test positivity rate (TPR) was 0.04%.

A total of 10,828 vaccinations were administered in the city on Sunday and a total of 1,32,28,841 doses have



A health worker administers a vaccine shot to a beneficiary in west Delhi on Monday.

• SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

been given till now.

According to Revenue Department records till August 26, of the 87,508 containment zones across the city, 87,289 had been decontaminated and 71 were in the process of being scaled down leaving a total number of 219 remaining zones in the Capital of which 148 were active containment zones.

“It is very important to keep an eye on COVID cases which emerge from areas which were previously containment zones, testing and contact tracing so as to en-

sure that they do not relapse into the previous situation where clusters of infection develop,” a senior revenue department official said.

Most affected

While no containment zones exist in the North and Central districts any more, the South-East district with two and the East district with three containment zones were expected to be free of any such demarcation over the coming days, government sources said.

In terms of active contain-

ment zones, which are classified on the basis of the difference between the number of containment zones and the number of decontaminated zones, the New Delhi district has the maximum number of such zones at 116 followed by 24 in in the West district and 25 in the South district.

“The Delhi government is committed towards ensuring that COVID-19 cases do not rise in the city and is implementing best practices to plug the spread of the virus,” another health department official said.



Punjab Government
led by

Chief Minister
Capt. Amarinder Singh

pays homage to
former Chief Minister

Sardar Beant Singh

who always championed the cause of
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26th Death Anniversary

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Sarv Dharm Prarthana Sabha
will be organized
on August 31, 2021 at 9:00 AM
at
Sardar Beant Singh Memorial
Sector 42-C, Chandigarh

Department of Information & Public Relations, Punjab



5 killed due to heavy rain in Uttarakhand

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PITHORAGARH**

Five people, including three children, were killed and two others went missing after three houses collapsed in a village following heavy rain in Dharchula sub-division of the district in Uttarakhand,

an official said on Monday. The incident took place in Jumma village late on Sunday night, Pithoragarh District Magistrate Ashish Chauhan, who rushed to the spot to supervise relief and rescue operations, said. "Five bodies, including

those of three children, have been recovered, while the search for two more still missing is underway," SSB commandant M.P. Singh said. The deceased have been identified as Sanjana (15), Renu (11), Shivani (9), Sunita Devi and Parwati Devi.

Two die, 3.63 lakh people hit as Assam flood situation worsens

70% of Kaziranga submerged, traffic diverted to prevent animals being run over

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI**

The flood situation in Assam worsened on Monday, leaving two persons dead and more than 3.63 lakh people in 21 districts affected.

According to an update by the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA), a person each died in Barpeta and Morigaon districts. They drowned after being washed away.

Lakhimpur in northeastern Assam was the worst affected district, accounting for 1,30,001 out of a total of 3,63,135 people temporarily displaced. The data showed 1,24,776 of the affected people were females and 70,544 children.

Crop on 30,333.36 hectares of land and 2,56,144 domesticated animals have also been affected, ASDMA



A family takes shelter on boats at a flood-hit area in Morigaon district on Monday. ■PTI

resultant migration of animals from the park southward to the hills of Karbi Anglong district across the National Highway 715.

This was done after Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma reacted to speeding vehicles killing three hog deer that were dashing across the highway to the relative safety of the hills. The Kaziranga floods have so far killed three hog deer.

Detour via Bogibeel
Heavy commercial vehicles to and from Dibrugarh and Tinsukia districts further east have accordingly been diverted via NH 15 on the northern bank of the Brahmaputra. This would entail a detour via the Bogibeel Bridge near Dibrugarh and Kaliabhomora Bridge near Tezpur.

CM Yogi visits Firozabad after dengue deaths

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GHAZIABAD**

After around 40 persons, mostly children, succumbed to dengue and another mysterious viral disease in Firozabad, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath visited the city on his way to Mathura, where he participated in Krishna Janmashtami celebrations.

"Till now 32 children and 7 adults have died," the Chief Minister told reporters before directing officials to ensure treatment of every patient at the government hospital.

He said the reason for the deaths will be probed by a team of doctors from Lucknow's King George Medical College.

The Chief Minister warned officials against laxity of any kind and directed them to arrange more ambulances to transport patients from rural areas.

Three fatally hit by train in Odisha

**STAFF REPORTER
BHUBANESWAR**

Three labourers were fatally hit by the Visakhapatnam-Tata Nagar down train near the Haladiapadar railway level crossing, on the outskirts of Odisha's Bhubaneswar city, around 11 p.m. on Sunday. Four others escaped narrowly. They were walking along the track.

Though railway employees detained the four, they managed to escape. The Government Railway Police are investigating.

Rajasthan schools set to reopen from Sept. 1

State govt. issues standard operating procedure

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR**

The schools in Rajasthan are set to reopen from September 1 for IX to XII classes, with the government issuing a standard operating procedure (SOP), allowing 50% capacity of students and putting restrictions on holding of assembly prayers, sports activities and distribution of cooked mid-day meals. The universities, colleges and coaching institutes will also reopen the same day.

A Group of Ministers had recently recommended restarting of academic activities in the State.

The SOP requires the teaching and non-teaching staff as well as the drivers of buses, cabs and auto-rickshaws ferrying the students to and from schools to get at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine. Online education will continue only for the students of I to VIII classes till further orders.

The educational institutions were closed during the second wave of pandemic earlier this year when the lockdown was once again brought into force. The heads

of institutions have now been asked to ensure compliance with the COVID-19 containment protocol, regular sanitisation of the school premises and keep additional masks in stock for students.

Schools in two shifts
The principals of both the government and private schools have made arrangements for seating of students to prevent overcrowding and running the institutions in two shifts. According to the SOP, teachers and students will bring food and drinking water from home and eat lunch in their respective classrooms without mingling with others.

Sarwat Bano, Principal, Mahatma Gandhi Government School, Adarsh Nagar, Jaipur, said on Monday that the members of the school development and management committee had been apprised of the measures for safety of students at a meeting held last week. "We are well-equipped with foot-operated sanitiser dispenser stands and extra masks for students," she said.

The Podar World School in the State Capital has come up with a 'Suraksha Chakravayuh' with five-layer protection, in which all students will be given breaks in interval for yoga and meditation sessions.

Construction of Film City to start in January

It will be spread over 1,000 acres and built at a cost of ₹6,000 crore

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GHAZIABAD**

The construction of the Film City, a pet project of Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, in Sector-21 of Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) area of Gautam Budh Nagar district is likely to start in January next year, said an official release.

Spread over an area of 1,000 acres and to be built at a cost of ₹6,000 crore, the

Film City is expected to provide employment to 15,000 people, the release said.

According to Arun Vir Singh, the CEO of YEIDA, the preparations are in full swing with the approval of the Detailed Project Report submitted to the government recently by the consultant company CBRE South Asia Private Limited. "CBRE now has to get the bid document ready within three weeks, which will be fol-

lowed by floating of a global tender in which both domestic and foreign companies will be able to participate."

According to officials, the selection of the company to build the Film City will be finalised by December 31. It will be built on PPP (public-private partnership) model in three phases. In the first phase, studios, open areas, amusement parks, and villas will be built. According to YEIDA officials, in the first

phase, 80% of the work related to shooting of films will be completed. It will be followed by the development of hospitality and other business activities. Besides, special studios will be set up to promote film tourism.

In December last year, the CM had announced his decision to build a world-class film city in the State. Subsequently, 1,000 acres of land was identified in Sector-21 of YEIDA.

Elephant dies after falling into ditch

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
GUWAHATI**

A three-year-old elephant, which fell into a ditch in Assam's Udalguri district, died of a suspected heart attack soon after being rescued, a forest official said on Monday.

The baby elephant fell into a five-foot-deep ditch at Borengajuli tea garden on Saturday and was rescued on Sunday, he said.

Odisha monsoon session likely to be a stormy affair

2 Ministers embroiled in controversies

**SATYASUNDAR BARIK
BHUBANESWAR**

The monsoon session of Odisha Assembly commencing from September 1 is likely to be stormy with two senior Ministers in the Naveen Patnaik Government embroiled in different controversies.

While Odisha Law Minister Pratap Kumar Jena would be probed in case of murder of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader in Cuttack district, the State Cooperation Minister Ranendra Pratap Swain is drawing a lot of flaks following allegations of financial mismanagement and irregularities in Cuttack Central Cooperative Bank.

Birendra Pratap Swain, Minister's brother, is the president of the Cuttack Central Cooperative Bank.

Fresh probe ordered
Last week, Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC), Salpur, ordered a fresh probe against Mr. Jena after hearing a petition regarding dropping of Minister's name in the chargesheet.

Kulamani Baral, former chairperson of Mahanga block of Cuttack and BJP leader, and his associate Dibyasingh Baral were hacked to death while they were returning to their village in January this year.

Ramakant Baral, son of



CM Naveen Patnaik

deceased Kulamani Baral, had filed case in Mahanga Police Station against 13 persons including the Minister, alleging their involvement in the murder.

He had moved the court alleging that the investigating officer had not examined material witnesses and wrongly recorded the statement of witness under section 161 of CrPC in order to shield the Minister.

The BJP had already staged demonstrations against Mr. Jena, demanding his sacking.

Similarly, farmers across different districts have been protesting against siphoning off funds in Cuttack Central Cooperative Bank. They alleged that Mr. Swain's continuance as Cooperation Minister became untenable in wake of his brother's alleged involvement in financial irregularities in the bank.

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IN BRIEF



Classes VI to VIII to reopen from Sept. 6: Karnataka

BENGALURU
The Karnataka government on Monday decided to reopen Classes VI to VIII from September 6 in taluks that have a test positivity rate of below 2%. Classes will be held for students on alternate days with COVID-19 norms in place.

Two rubber tappers killed by wild elephants

THIRISSUR
Two rubber tappers were killed by wild elephants in separate incidents near the Chimmini dam in Thrissur district, Kerala, on Monday. The deceased were identified as Sainudhin, 49, and Peethambaran, 59.

Ticket rates soar as UAE resumes tourist visa

KOZHIKODE
As the United Arab Emirates (UAE) resumed tourist visas for fully vaccinated travellers from Monday, the flight rates between Kerala and various Emirates cities have soared higher even as travel agents are waiting for the final standard operating procedures from civil aviation authorities.

Cong. hits a low in Kerala due to dissent

Party veteran A.V. Gopinath resigns while State unit expels P.S. Prasanth

G. ANAND
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Dissension in the Congress over the District Congress Committee (DCC) reorganisation hit a new low on Monday, with party veteran A.V. Gopinath from Palakkad quitting the organisation amid intense speculation that more disgruntled leaders would follow suit.

rayi Vijayan and hinted that he was not inimical to the Left Democratic Front (LDF).

Social media post
A social media post by Congress leader Anil Akkara, purportedly mocking Mr. Gopinath for his 'overtures' to Mr. Vijayan, seemed to have catalysed the latter's decision to quit.



Breaking ties: Party veteran A.V. Gopinath announcing his resignation at a press conference in Palakkad.

party. The leader from Nedumangad had raised the flag of rebellion by 'disparaging' All-India Congress Committee general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal in a letter to former party president Rahul Gandhi. A party

insider said the KPCC had received information that Mr. Prasanth would defect to the LDF. The expulsion, he said, was a pre-emptive move. Meanwhile, top group leaders engaged the KPCC leadership in a publicised

tussle over DCC reorganisation for the second consecutive day. 'A' group leader Oommen Chandy blamed Mr. Sudhakaran for disclosing the contemporaneous notes the latter had taken during their closed door discussions about party reorganisation. 'I' group leader Joseph Vazhakkann blamed the KPCC leadership for keeping senior leaders out of decision-making.

Realignment of loyalties
The Congress also witnessed an assumed realignment of loyalties. Media outlets claimed Thiruvanchoor Radhakrishnan, K. Muralaeddharan, P.T. Thomas, T. Siddique, and Sooranadu Rajasekharan had shed their respective group identities and aligned themselves with the KPCC leadership.

WEATHER WATCH



Forecast for Tuesday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Gujarat, Rajasthan, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Madhya Pradesh, central Maharashtra, Marathwada, Vidarbha, Konkarn & Goa and Telangana. Thunderstorm with lightning likely at isolated places over Gangetic West Bengal, Jharkhand, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yanam and Rayalaseema

Table with 4 columns: CITY, RAIN, MAX, MIN. Lists weather data for various cities including Agartala, Ahmedabad, Aizawl, Allahabad, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Bhubaneswar, Chandigarh, Chennai, Coimbatore, Dehradun, Gangtok, Goa, Guwahati, Hubballi, Hyderabad, Imphal, Jaipur, Kochi, Kohima, Kolkata, Kozhikode, Kurnool, Lucknow, Madurai, Mangaluru, Mumbai, Mysuru, New Delhi, Patna, Port Blair, Puducherry, Pune, Raipur, Ranchi, Shillong, Shimla, Srinagar, Thiruvananthapuram, Tiruchi, Vijayawada, and Visakhapatnam.

Woman stripped, beaten with sticks in Telangana

Police arrest five involved in attack

STAFF REPORTER
SURYAPET

A woman in her 30s was stripped, beaten with sticks and paraded on the streets of Raja Naik Thanda at Suryapet mandal, Telangana, on Sunday. The incident came to light on Monday after the police said at least five persons involved in the attack had been arrested.

other parts of my body. They paraded me naked in the streets and wanted to kill me at the village's bodrai [centre]," she said, naming the attackers. The woman said she was in the village to attend her uncle's funeral when the Naik family took revenge. Anitha was reportedly released on bail last week and was staying at a relative's place in Suryapet town. She said she informed the police that she would be attending the funeral. The police said 10 persons involved in the attack were identified. Five of them - Lunavath Bharati, Padma, Jyothi, Sunitha and Banoth Jyothi - were arrested and remanded in judicial custody.

Bride among seven killed in heavy rain in Telangana

Most of the victims were swept away by flash floods

STAFF REPORTER
HYDERABAD/YADADRI

Seven persons died in rain-related incidents in different parts of Telangana since Sunday night. Most of the victims were swept away in flash floods due to heavy rain in Vikarabad, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri and Hanumakonda districts. Tragedy struck two families in Vikarabad as a bride and the groom's sister got washed away in a canal at Marpally mandal on Sunday night. They were travelling in a car. While the bodies of the bride, Pravalika, and her sister-in-law, Swetha Reddy, were recovered, the body of an eight-year-old boy, who was also in the car, was yet

to be found. The family members alleged that the driver of the car, Raghavender Reddy, was inebriated. Pravalika and Nawaz Reddy got married on August 24. After completing the post-marriage celebrations at Pravalika's home in Mominpet, the couple was returning to Nawaz's home in Ravepally. As water was overflowing on to the road in Marpally, several vehicles had stopped at a distance. Vikarabad Deputy Superintendent of Police A. Sanjeev Rao said Raghavender ignored the family members' plea to stop the car and not to go ahead. In another incident at Shankarpalli in the same district, a 70-year-old man died

after the car in which he was travelling was swept away on Sunday night while crossing a bridge that was overflowing with water from a stream in spate. A man and his two women pillion riders were also washed away by an overflowing stream near Kurram village in Yadadri district on Monday. In another incident, the body of a software engineer was found in a storm water drain at Kakaji colony, Hanumakonda town, on Monday. He was identified as V. Kranthi Kumar, 32, a resident of Shiva Nagar colony. It was stated that he might have accidentally fallen into the drain and died.

Two arrested for circulating minor's photo

RAINA ASSAINAR
NAVI MUMBAI

The Talaja police have arrested two persons in Uttar Pradesh for allegedly circulating a 15-year-old girl's nude photo on WhatsApp groups. The accused have been identified as Mohammad Arif Munir Ahmed (22) and Yasin Ahmed Nasiruddin Ahmed (22). The girl, who hails from Uttar Pradesh, had come to stay with her father in Talaja in June. Some people known to the father-daughter duo informed them about the girl's photo being circulated on WhatsApp groups after which the father registered a case at Talaja police station. A team was formed under the guidance of senior police inspector Kashinath Chavan. It was learnt that the photo was posted from Uttar Pradesh following which the team left for there and nabbed the duo. "The accused were brought to Navli Mumbai on Saturday," Mr. Chavan said.

Temple reopening: defying norms, BJP holds agitation

Govt. allowing liquor bars but not places of worship: Oppn.

STAFF REPORTER
PUNE

Alleging that the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government gave more importance to liquor bars than temples, Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in Maharashtra staged protests on Monday demanding reopening of temples. Symbolically blowing conches in their shankhnaad agitation and defying COVID-19 regulations, hundreds of BJP workers and State leaders participated in protests in key temple areas of Pune, Mumbai, Nashik, Ahmednagar, Aurangabad, Nagpur and Solapur districts. Alleging that the MVA government was deliberately hurting sentiments of the Hindu community, BJP MLA from Mumbai's Ghatkopar, Ram Kadam, said that the government apparently gave permission for other religious for their festivities but



BJP leader Sudhir Mungantiwar during a protest outside Babulnath temple in Mumbai on Monday.

was refusing to open temples. "Please bear in mind, we are not advocating crowding in front of temples. But the government can certainly devise a system based on the issuance of online passes for lakhs of devotees. When you can make rules for beer bars, then why does this government dither when it comes to reopening temples," Mr. Kadam said. Earlier, a police shield

had been stationed outside Siddhi Vinayak temple to prevent Mr. Kadam from holding a protest there. A partner in the coalition government, the Congress hit out at the contradictory stand taken by the BJP government at the Centre and the party's Maharashtra unit over celebration of festivals and the reopening of temples amid the looming threat of a third wave of infections.

ED working on directions of BJP: MVA leaders

Residences of Transport Dept. officials raided a day after Minister issued summons

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

A day after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) summoned Shiv Sena leader and Transport Minister in the tripartite Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government Anil Parab on August 31, the agency reportedly conducted raids on the officials of the department. The allies slammed the action saying it has become clear that the ED was working on directions of the BJP. "The happenings in Maharashtra are nothing but political vendetta. The ED is probing individuals and raid-

ing places as demanded by the BJP. This is nothing but political gameplan," said Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader and Minister Nawab Malik. State NCP president Jayant Patil too said the ED is being used to trouble the MVA government. "The practice of troubling anti-BJP leaders is seen not only in Maharashtra but across the country. The leaders being targeted are capable to reply in same coin but this is nothing but an effort to defame the State government using Central agencies," said Mr. Patil.

The Shiv Sena has termed the ED notice as love letter. "For any political worker, the ED notice is no longer a death warrant, but love letter. Power is not permanent. They have their days of power in Delhi. Our days will also come," said Sena Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut. Mr. Parab has already said he does not know the matter regarding which he has been summoned by the ED. Unauthorised resort BJP leader Kirit Somaiya on Monday claimed that Mr. Parab has built an unauthorised resort by violating coastal zone regulations in Murud village in

Dapoli tehsil of costal Ratnagiri district which should be immediately demolished. Mr. Somaiya alleged that one Bajrang Kharmate, deputy regional transport officer, acts as an agent of the Minister and deals with corruption in transfers in the RTO department. It is said Mr. Parab was under the ED lense after dismissed Mumbai police officer Sachin Waze tried to submit a letter to the NIA court claiming the Minister had asked him to extort crores of rupees. Mr. Parab has already denied all the allegations.

Man accused of triple talaq gets bail

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court has granted pre-arrest bail to a man accused of giving triple talaq to his wife through SMS. "It is possible to settle the disputes through mediation," it said. The wife was working with an airline as an air hostess. She was made to quit her job

by her in-laws. She alleged that her mother-in-law harassed her and forced her to get ₹10 lakh and jewellery from her maternal home. She also stated that after her husband, Adnan Moulvi, 32, went to work, her brother-in-law would come home and speak to her in vulgar language and touch her inappropriately. She also learnt

that her husband was having an affair. On May 29 last, when she was at her parents' home, Mr. Moulvi sent her an SMS, saying, "Main apne hosh o hawaas mein tumko talak deta hu, talak deta hu, talak deta hu [In all consciousness, I divorce you]". She then registered an FIR against him and his family members.

Farmer outfits warn govt., Oppn. to stop 'silly politics'

Rane-Thackeray spat a 'ploy' to divert attention from vital issues, says Raju Shetti

SHOUMJOIT BANERJEE
PUNE

The 'political soap opera' being played out between Union Minister Narayan Rane and Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray was nothing but 'a ploy' on the part of the ruling and Opposition politicians to divert attention from vital issues affecting farmers, former MP and farmer leader Raju Shetti has alleged. Mr. Shetti, who heads the Swabhimani Shetkari Sanghatana (SSS), chastised both the Central and the State go-

vernments while pointing out that farmers were protesting the import of genetically modified soybean and the crashing prices of tomatoes. The former MP said that he was planning a major protest on September 1 in Kolhapur to demand recompense for farmers whose croplands had been destroyed in the recent floods and the unseasonal rains last year. The SSS' protest, named 'Panchganga Parikrama' would see Mr. Shetti and his

activists attempting water immersion. He also hit out at the Commission for Agricultural Costs and Prices for recommending that the Centre increase the fair and remunerative price for sugar cane growers by a mere ₹50 a quintal. The Left-affiliated All-India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) also warned that it would stage massive protests in front of the residences of the leaders of both the ruling and Opposition parties if they continued to waste time on 'non-issues'.

"Maharashtra's tomato growers have fallen on hard times once again. So much so, that even transporting the vegetable to the market is proving to be a loss-making trip for the average farmer, who is forced to sell his produce at ₹1 or ₹2 a kilo. At a time when farmers are in the throes of such a grave crisis, we warn both the MVA and the BJP leadership to stop playing silly politics on non-issues [alluding to the Rane-Thackeray spat]," Ajit Nawale of the AIKS said.

Court allows Vaze to seek treatment at pvt. hospital

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A special court on Monday refused to grant the National Investigation Agency the custody of dismissed police officer Sachin Vaze for questioning in the Antilia bomb scare case, but allowed him to get admitted to a private hospital for the treatment of his heart ailment. Mr. Vaze, currently in judicial custody, had told the court through his lawyer that three of his arteries had "90% blockage" and that doctors had advised immediate surgery for the same. He urged the court to permit him to seek private medical treatment saying he did not wish to die in custody like tribal rights activist and Jesuit priest Stan Swamy.

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The virtue of consistency

India's focus must be on vaccinating a large number every day and not record highs

On August 27, Friday, India set a new record for a single day's vaccination – 10.7 million doses, up from 8.3 million vaccinations on the previous two days and over 6.3 million doses on August 23-24. However, on Saturday, the numbers dropped sharply to 7.9 million; 3.4 million doses were administered on August 29, but Sundays have always registered low numbers. A similar pattern was seen on June 21 – 8.7 million doses on a single day, which dropped to 5.8 million the next day and remained nearly stable at over six million for a week; the number of doses administered fell to three million-four million doses in the first half of July. The June 21 record appeared more to coincide with the day when the revised COVID-19 vaccination strategy came into effect, i.e., the Government procured 75% of the vaccines produced and supplied them to States for free. Though the record on August 27 does not coincide with any occasion, it does suggest that the intent was more to achieve a “momentous feat” of crossing the 10-million mark; the steep fall in vaccinations the very next day gives rise to scepticism. During the pandemic, the focus should not be on setting records but on consistently vaccinating a large number of people daily and ensuring that vaccines are available at all centres every day; uncertainty in vaccine availability does not help in increasing uptake especially among the poor.

With vaccination being a safe and sure way to drastically cut the risk of hospitalisation due to severe COVID-19 disease and death, efforts should be to quickly and consistently vaccinate large numbers each day. For this, equitable and a regular supply of a large number of doses to all States is needed. One sure way to increase the number of daily doses is when the Government procures 100% of vaccines produced with no separate allocation to private hospitals. Precious time and doses were wasted between May and July 15 when private hospitals utilised only 7%-9% of vaccines produced against an allotment of 25%. The Government has belatedly revised the June 7 policy such that manufacturers will not set aside 25% of vaccines produced for private hospitals but instead supply as per demand and allot the remaining to the Government. If the rationale for allowing the manufacturers to sell vaccines to private hospitals at a higher price was to fund vaccine research, the small uptake by the private hospitals does not meet that objective. Hence, the Government should procure all the vaccines produced as this will help in better vaccine allotment to States, reduce vaccine inequity and increase uptake, and States can plan daily vaccination strategies in a more organised manner.

America's Asia policy

The U.S. must push for a rules-based international order despite Afghan debacle

President Joe Biden has found himself in the uncomfortable position of facing not only the expected criticism from Republicans for his country's hasty, botched exit from Afghanistan but also brickbats from within the Democratic Party and among the broader American public. The killing of at least 13 U.S. troops and dozens of Afghan civilians in the bomb blasts last week underscored the apparent lack of planning behind the withdrawal despite prior knowledge of its approaching deadline. The chaotic, violent scenes at Kabul airport, undergirded by the deep irony of the Taliban's unchallenged takeover of Kabul and other Afghan territories, have also no doubt stung U.S. policy-makers, especially over comparisons to Saigon in 1975. How can Mr. Biden now hope to sell the big picture of Washington's engagement in the South Asia region to his domestic political constituents in a way that limits the reputational damage to the White House? The first step will be, at long last, to shift the American policy paradigm on Afghanistan from a boilerplate approach toward institution-building to recognising the political complexities of governing a society where tribal and ethnic loyalties supersede western norms of rational decision-making by government. In part, this means not demonising or cutting ties with the Taliban before they have had an opportunity to settle into power and announce intentions for governing Afghanistan. There must also be a recognition of the role that third parties are going to play, for better or worse. That must include everything from the Pakistani ISI's shadowy dealings through proxies such as the Haqqani Network, China's relentless push for access to economic projects, and India's civilisational and 'soft power' links.

In the big picture, there is an unsettling question for Washington to answer, on whether in persisting with the Trump-era promise to pull U.S. troops out of Afghanistan, Mr. Biden will be able to reassure Asian allies and partners that the U.S. will not also play a diminished strategic role in the broader Asia region. To an extent, U.S. Vice President Kamala Harris's Singapore and Vietnam trip was aimed at assuaging such concerns and shoring up enthusiasm for the rules-based international order that has taken a beating. Yet, unless Washington follows up such summit meetings with ground-level engagement, for example through the Quad or deeper bilateral initiatives with friendly democracies including India, Asian powers will be hard pressed to assume anything other than Washington's indifference toward their interests. The danger for the West of considerable blowback that could emerge thus are at least two-fold: first, Afghanistan's cyclical transitions from western-occupied territory to abandoned nation and ultimately a breeding ground for global terror outfits is well-documented; and second, China will be only too glad to step into the breach should any new spaces be ceded in the pecking order of regional hegemony in Asia.

A monetisation move that doesn't tick most boxes

The National Monetisation Pipeline may not help realise the best value for public assets to kick-start investment demand



R. NAGARAJ

The Government has launched a National Monetisation Pipeline, or NMP (<https://bit.ly/3mLkww9M>) to sell public assets or, more precisely, their revenue streams over the next four years. The pipeline mostly includes railway stations, freight corridors, airports, and renovated national highway segments (yielding toll revenue) amounting to ₹6-lakh crore, or 3% of GDP in 2020-21.

As outlined in the Union Budget, the NMP aims to mobilise resources for financing infrastructure. The other two methods of raising resources are: setting up of a development finance institution (DFI) and raising the share of infrastructure investment in the central and State Budgets.

Hard questions

The proposed asset sale (monetisation) raises many questions. Conceptually, how is it different from disinvestment and privatisation (D-P) practised for the last three decades? Since D-P proceeds (revenues) have seriously missed the targets almost every year, how believable are the NMP targets? And how are they likely to perform differently? Is the NMP a desperate attempt to shore up public finances, after nearly two years of dismal output growth, stagnant tax-GDP ratio despite the steep rise in taxes on petroleum products? If so, is such a distress (fire) sale desirable to obtain a “fair value” for public assets? Would the market not factor in the dire state of the economy in beating down the prices, as in any distress sale?

The NMP differentiates “asset monetisation” from “asset sale” by saying: “Asset Monetisation, as envisaged here, entails a limited period license/lease of an asset, owned by the government or a public authority, to a private sector entity for an upfront or periodic consideration” (NMP, volume 1, page 5).

Asset monetisation as defined above is the same as the net present value (NPV) of the future stream of revenue with an implicit interest rate (whether it is a sale or lease of the asset). In a footnote, the NMP document further clarifies: “Sale, i.e. transfer of legal ownership of assets is only envisaged in cases such as disinvestment of stake, etc.”. Again there seems to be conceptual confusion. Sale of minority equity does not lead to a change in managerial control. Hence, the official attempt to differentiate its initiative from the earlier efforts seems feeble and incorrect.

Historic missteps

The NMP outlines mainly two modes of implementing the monetisation: public-private partnership (PPP) and “structured financing” to tap the stock market. PPP in infrastructure has been a financial disaster in India, as evident from what happened after the economic boom of 2003-08. Surely, India did create world-class airports in Mumbai and Delhi and speeded up highway road reconstruction.

However, after the 2008 financial crisis, as the world economy and trade plummeted, and as India's GDP growth rate slowed down sharply, hurting demand (and revenues for the indebted companies), many PPP projects failed to repay bank loans. Banks were left holding the non-performing assets (NPAs). Further, as the bulk of the lending was to politically connected corporate houses and firms (Bollygarchs as picturesquely described by James Crabtree in his book, *The Billionaire Raj*), debt resolution came in the crosshairs of the political and banking system. India is still reeling from

the legacy of that period without any easy and credible solutions in sight.

An Infrastructure Investment Trust (InvIT) is being mooted as an alternative means of raising finance from the stock market. In principle, InvIT is much like a mutual fund, whose performance is largely linked to stock prices. It may be worthwhile to jog one's memory to recall how the disinvestment process began in 1991 after the initiation of economic reforms. It was by “off-loading” bundles of shares of public sector enterprises (PSEs) to the financial institution UTI, which in turn sold the bundles in the booming secondary stock market to realise the best price. The euphoria was short-lived, however, as the market crashed in the wake of the Harshad Mehta scam, stalling and discrediting the disinvestment process for almost the entire decade.

Hence, it may be worth learning the lessons from the historical missteps before getting enamoured with the idea all over again by the current stock market boom. As many have apprehended, the currently high stock prices seem like a bubble with heightened uncertainties in the global financial market.

With the U.S. Fed committed to reducing its assets purchase programme (known as quantitative easing), the “hot money” inflow that has fuelled Indian stock prices may dry up throwing up nasty surprises.

In 2020-21, the economy contracted by 8% due to the pandemic



GETTY IMAGES/STOCKPHOTO

and lockdown, as in the annual report of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The current year is at best likely to regain the pre-pandemic GDP level. Aggregate saving and investment rates (that is, as ratios of GDP) have (expectedly) contracted. The stock market is however booming, dancing to short-term foreign capital inflows, with little connection with the real economy. Given its distressed state, the asset monetisation effort appears nothing short of a fire sale.

Other solutions

Thus, it seems unwise to anchor the acutely needed investment revival strategy on a discredited PPP model or on fickle Foreign Institutional Investors (FIIs) investment in a frothy stock market. Instead of assets monetisation, why not monetise debt, with committed borrowing from the market and the central bank? With the financial system flush with liquidity with no takers for bank credit, why not finance the proposed investment – as envisaged in the Budget – by government borrowing. The usual objections against such an idea are three: cost of borrowing, “crowding-out” of private investment, and the inflationary threat.

The RBI's annual report shows the weighted average cost of central government borrowings in 2020-21 was 5.8%. And the inflation rate as measured by the consumer price index (CPI-combined) was 6.2%. Thus, with a negative 0.4% real interest rate (real interest rate is nominal interest rate minus inflation rate), domestic borrowing in home currency is a steal. Chances of crowding-out private investments are remote with a liquidity overhang in the market. Inflation risk is also limited with little aggregate demand pressures (barring temporary bottlenecks due to localised lockdowns).

The rising public debt to GDP ratio is often red-flagged as a potential risk to rating downgrade by bond rating agencies. If the debt is productively used to expand GDP

(the denominator), such risks seem minimal. Moreover, rising external debt by fickle portfolio investors perhaps carries a greater risk to external instability. Foreign portfolio investment has skyrocketed by 6,800% in 2020-21, over the previous year, to \$38 billion (as per RBI data released in May). This, perhaps, poses a greater financial hazard than the potential rise in debt monetisation in domestic currency used for productive purposes.

In perspective

To sum up, the NMP is an ambitious “retail” sale or lease of revenue yielding public capital projects – with the potential threats of allegations of corruption and cronyism derailing the process – to revive investment demand and to halt the economic decline. The main instruments proposed for implementing the NMP are public-private partnerships and a stock market-based investment trust (InvIT). Both have serious shortcomings, as experience demonstrates. The NMP document seems silent on how to overcome past mistakes. Hence, the NMP appears like a fire sale which may not help realise the best social value for public assets to kick-start investment demand.

If reviving investment demand quickly is the real goal, debt monetisation seems a better option than asset monetisation. It is a “whole-sale” business with lower operating and transaction costs, and at a currently negative interest rate. With excess liquidity in the financial markets, and low aggregate demand, the inflationary threat seems minimal. Such targeted borrowing, if quickly funnelled into infrastructure investment projects, could crowd-in (or bring in) private investment igniting a virtuous cycle of investment-led economic revival.

R. Nagaraj is with the Centre for Development Studies, Kerala Thiruvananthapuram, Kerala

India is indeed walking the green talk

Even with all its challenges, the country is setting a global example in meeting its Nationally Determined Contributions



SUMANT NARAIN

Did you know that even at the fifth anniversary of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change (December 2020), India was the only G20 nation compliant with the agreement? Or that the country has been ranked within the top 10 for two years consecutively in the Climate Change Performance Index, released by an independent international organisation that evaluates the performance of countries emitting 90%+ of global greenhouse gases (GHGs)? Or that the Unnat Jyoti by Affordable LEDs for All (UJALA) scheme is the world's largest zero-subsidy LED bulb programme for domestic consumers?

A world comparison needed

Despite these accomplishments, global pressures are intensifying on India to commit more towards the Conference of the Parties (COP26), scheduled for November 2021 in Glasgow. Early this year, the COP26 President, Alok Sharma, and the United States Special Presidential Envoy for Climate, John Kerry, visited India. In July, the U.S. called out to every significant economy for committing to a meaningful reduction by 2030.

That brings us to the question. Is it fair to apply pressure on India

to raise its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) committed in the Paris Agreement? We can attempt to answer the question by comparing the achievements of other countries *vis-à-vis* India's performance, given that climate change is a global public good and there is a free-rider problem – not much incentive for countries to contribute their fair share since they can enjoy benefits even otherwise.

Let us first gather the historical perspective. Examining World Bank data for CO₂ emissions (metric tons per capita) over two decades since the Kyoto protocol informs that at the current rate, both China and the U.S. could emit five times more than India in 2030. The U.K.'s emission levels could be more than 1.5 times that of India. Brazil, with its dense forests, may end up at similar levels.

On China and the U.S.

Among recent efforts, last year, China, the world's largest GHG emitter, joined the ‘race to zero’ and targets carbon neutrality by 2060. Interestingly, it hopes to peak CO₂ emissions by 2030 for bending the emissions curve. The Climate Action Tracker, an independent scientific analysis tracking governments' actions, also expressed its concern stating, “Most worryingly, China remains committed to supporting the coal industry while the rest of the world experiences a decline, and is now home to half of the world's coal capacity.” Recently, the U.S. rejoined the Paris Agreement and committed



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

to reducing emissions by 50%-52% in 2030 and reaching net-zero emissions economy-wide by 2050. While they re-energise their fight on climate change, legislation may not be straightforward, given the Democrats' strength in Congress. Such ambitions will also require much more near-term investment than even the U.S. President Joe Biden's \$2.3 trillion infrastructure package.

France and Australia

The French government, during the novel coronavirus pandemic, set green conditions for bailing out its aviation industry. However, the analysts say that no baseline for reducing emissions from domestic flights was fixed, and it is unclear what measures were adopted to promote rail for domestic travel.

An Australian Prime Minister, in 2018, lost his chair on a proposal to address climate change through an emissions-reduction target. The complicated domestic politics prevented them from addressing the problem, despite the country being vulnerable, and stretches of

the famous Great Barrier Reef having died in recent years. It was, at least, the third instance in Australia when climate issues brought down its Prime Minister. It illustrates how difficult it is for governments to develop policies to mitigate climate change.

Walking it like talking it

In comparison, with all its challenges, India is on track (as reports/documents show) to meet and exceed the NDC commitment to achieve 40% electric power installed capacity from non-fossil fuel-based sources by 2030; this share is 38.18% (November 2020). Similarly, against the voluntary declaration for reducing the emission intensity of GDP by 20%-25% by 2020, India has reduced it by 24% between 2005-2016. More importantly, we achieved these targets with around 2% out of the U.S.\$100 billion committed to developing nations in Copenhagen (2009), realised by 2015.

As part of its mitigation efforts, India is implementing one of the most extensive renewable energy expansion programmes to achieve 175 GW of renewable energy capacity by 2022 and 450 GW by 2030. India has also coupled its post-pandemic revival with environmental protection. As part of the fiscal stimulus, the Government announced several green measures, including a \$26.5-billion investment in biogas and cleaner fuels, \$3.5 billion in incentives for producing efficient solar photovoltaic (PV) and advanced chemistry cell battery, and \$780

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

Crime, rights, justice

The Mysuru case, where a university girl student was assaulted, calls for condign punishment to the perpetrators. It is common knowledge that in seeking justice, cases of this nature are dragged on for days. As often pointed out by law-abiding citizens, fast-track courts are the one and only answer, in such cases.

MANI NATARAJAN, Chennai

■ The report, “Student held in rape case freed after negative DNA test result” (Inside pages, August 30),

presents the other side of reality in India. The role of the police is in question as they need to keep in mind the phrase, “innocent until proven guilty”. The future of the boy, a higher secondary student, is in focus given the tremendous mental trauma he is bound to have undergone. The issue of false cases needs to be looked into as well.

SHREYASI DEBNATH, Kolkata

■ The report is an example of the need for police reforms. In spite of much training and instructions, many police personnel across India have

still to come to terms with the idea of respecting human rights. Verbal abuse is most common. The details the boy has highlighted are not an isolated case of abuse by the guardians of the law. Perhaps more scientific tools are essential for investigation and interrogation. It is essential that all police stations have information about free legal aid services, the numbers of higher authorities as well those of judges to highlight third degree methods. Police stations must be monitored by local magistrates. In addition, there should be regular training on the need

to protect rights, and use scientific tools to get to the truth. Decades have passed since Independence, yet the general perception of the police is still poor.

J.P. REDDY, Nalgonda, Telangana

On oil palm

When I was working in the Department of Agriculture, Tamil Nadu, the technology mission on edible oils in the 1980s and the coverage of area under oil palm was very poor. Farmers were reluctant to adopt this crop due to its invasive nature just like the *Lantana camara* weed in the Western Ghats. The Indian

Institute of Oil Palm Research Palode, Kerala does not seem to have come up with favourable results for the suitability of oil palm in India.

A. KAJA NAZIMUDEEN, Eruvadi, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu

Mental health

Mental health is one of the most trending topics right now. Teenagers and students in particular may not always express how they feel. Their concerns must be addressed and given consideration. The pandemic has resulted in people of all age groups feeling isolated and has also left many struggling to cope

with daily routines and finding some sense of normalcy. Although many have participated in surveys related to mental health and vocalised their experiences, some are still scared to come forward. It is essential to identify the symptoms early, provide intervention in terms of counselling, therapy or medication. All those confronting negative repetitive thoughts must not hesitate to reach out to hotlines, peers and trusted adults.

NITYA RAVIKANT, Bengaluru



To read more letters online, scan the QR code

FROM PAGE ONE

Five rockets target Kabul airport ahead of deadline

Two U.S. officials told *Reuters* that evacuations would continue on Monday, prioritising people deemed at extreme risk. Other countries have also put in last-minute requests to bring out people

in that category. The Taliban will take full control of Kabul airport after the American withdrawal on Tuesday, Qatar's Al Jazeera TV network cited an unidentified Taliban source as saying.

Avani, Sumit lead India's gold hunt at Paralympics

Coached by former ace shooter Suma Shirur, 19-year-old Avani pipped China's Zhang Cuiping, who got a silver with 248.9. Much later, there was a golden encore from Sumit, especially in a season where javelin throwers have excelled with Neeraj Chopra having prospered at the preceding Olympics. Sumit erased his own world record with a throw of 68.55 m, securing gold in the men's javelin F64 segment. The joys on the javelin front multiplied

as veteran Devendra Jhanharia claimed silver in the men's F46 section. In the same event, Sundar Singh Gurjar trailed Devendra and got the bronze. Devendra, who previously won golds in the 2004 and 2016 Paralympic Games, etched his name as India's greatest para-athlete, given his remarkable consistency across the years. In discus throw, Yogesh Kathuniya won silver in the F56 category with a throw that registered 44.38 m.

25% vaccinated health staff got infected: study

To confirm a reinfection, the researchers relied on levels of antibodies that were directed towards the nucleocapsid region of the coronavirus, which is different from the region (spike protein) that vaccine-generated antibodies normally target.

Currently, all the vaccines are designed to produce antibodies against the spike-protein and so high levels of antibodies against the nucleocapsid region were taken to be markers of a fresh coronavirus infection.

A breakthrough infection is one where someone tests positive at least two weeks after their second dose.

Shantanu Sengupta of the CSIR-IGIB and one of the scientists who led the study said 25% was a "conservative estimate" as many of the infections were likely asymptomatic and only a subset of them who manifested symptoms were likely to get themselves tested.

While the infections were mild it could contribute to healthcare workers unknowingly infecting patients, he said.

For their analysis, the scientists relied on blood samples taken every week — up to 90 — following vaccination and because this pe-

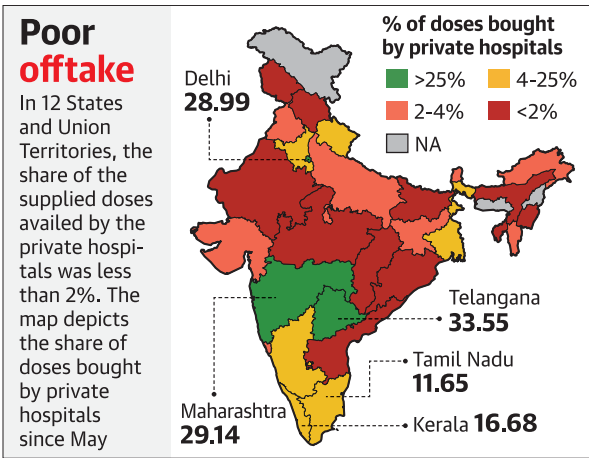
riod coincided with the second wave, where most infections were due to the Delta variant, it was most likely that these breakthrough infections too were due to the Delta variant. "Two doses of the vaccine weren't protective against infection but infection followed by vaccination — even a single dose — was significantly protective against fresh infections," he added.

Currently too, Delta and its associated lineages comprise nearly half the coronavirus infections and are believed to be driving the infection in Kerala and Maharashtra.

Those healthcare workers who were previously infected had a reinfection rate of 2.5% over the same period.

"The neutralization of Delta variant by antibodies to non-Delta spike protein is greatly reduced. This means that neither prior infection by non-Delta variants, nor existing vaccines, are individually sufficient for the path to herd immunity. This also implies that masking is an essential part of any rational COVID control strategy, being agnostic to immune escape," the authors note in their study.

Private hospitals lift less than 10% of vaccines



However, between May 1 and August 17, private hospitals' share in overall supply touched 25% only in Telangana (33%), Maharashtra (29%) and Delhi (29%). Doses supplied before May 1 were not considered for analysis as 100% of the doses were procured by the Central government and supplied to the States. Murali Neelakantan, principal lawyer at amicus, Mumbai, said mandatory upfront payment and uncertain

delivery date were the reasons behind poor uptake from private players.

"In the latest phase, private hospitals were asked to pay upfront for the doses, which was not the practice in the previous phases. Also, there is no fixed date on which the doses will arrive. Thus, they were not able to plan the administration process efficiently. This explains why the private uptake dropped," he said.

Punjab and Haryana CMs spar over farm agitation

"The farmers who were protesting against the BJP meeting in Karnal when the police rained 'lathis' on them belonged to Haryana and not Punjab," said Capt. Amarinder. Blaming the BJP for the farmers' wrath, Capt. Ama-

rinder said the crisis would not have assumed such grave proportions had the BJP, including the Haryana CM and Deputy CM Dushyant Chautala, heeded the farmers' concerns and empathised with their pain.

Farmers threaten to lay siege to mini-Secretariat at Karnal

They demand dismissal of official responsible for ordering lathi charge

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

Haryana farmer unions on Monday held a meeting in Karnal to demand registration of cases against the officials responsible for the lathi charge on the farmers this past weekend and ₹25 lakh compensation to the next of kin of the farmer who allegedly died due to the injuries sustained during the police action, among other things.

The unions threatened to lay indefinite siege to the Karnal mini-Secretariat in case their demands were not met till September 6.

Bharatiya Kisan Union (Charuni) president Gurnam Singh Charuni, addressing the meeting, alleged that the government had unleashed violence on farmers holding peaceful protests and caused injuries to 40 people, including serious injuries to 11. The unions demanded government job to the next of kin of Sushil Kajal, who allegedly died from the injuries and ₹2



Strident protest: Farmers taking part in a mahapanchayat organised by the Samyukt Kisan Morcha at Gharaunda Grain market in Karnal on Monday. •PTI

lakh each for the injured farmers.

'Illegal instructions'

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha, in a press statement, said if the Manohar Lal government did not dismiss the official responsible for ordering

the lathi charge immediately and take stringent action against him, it can only be assumed that the official was acting on the instructions from elsewhere.

"It is utterly shocking that the Chief Minister is choosing to brush aside the bar-

baric and illegal instructions as only a wrong choice of words. It once again clearly reiterates what we have been saying, which is that the Manohar Lal-Chautala government is at war with its own people," said the press statement.



Festival cheer: Kashmiri Pandits taking out a procession on Janmashtami at Lal Chowk in Srinagar on Monday. •NISSAR AHMAD

Pandits take out rath yatras on Janmasthami in Kashmir

Men and women converged on Srinagar's Lal Chowk

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

Kashmiri Pandits celebrated Janmashtami, birthday of Lord Krishna, with religious fervour in Srinagar on Monday and took out 'rath yatras' for the first time in Handwara district of north Kashmir.

Kashmiri Pandits, a majority of whom migrated from J&K in the 1990s in the face of raging militancy, converged on Lal Chowk here and took out a religious procession. Men and women were seen dancing and showering flowers. Pandits also participated in a procession in Handwara market of

Kupwara.

"I want to thank the majority community and the administration for making it a success. We were able to celebrate the occasion like in the past," M.Y. Yogi, a Kashmiri Pandit, said in Lal Chowk. "We prayed for peace in J&K on the occasion."

Top regional leaders — National Conference's Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah; Peoples Democratic Party's Mehbooba Mufti; Apni Party's Altaf Bukhari and Peoples Conference's Sajad Lone — greeted the community on the occasion.

"The festival reinforces

the belief that a life of morality and righteousness can be achieved amidst all difficulties through devotion, selfless service, commitment and compassion. We should renew our commitment to Lord Krishna's ideals on this occasion," Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha said in a message.

Such religious processions of Kashmiri Pandits were organised in the past too, especially during the regimes of Mufti Muhammad Sayeed, Ghulam Nabi Azad and Omar Abdullah. However, all such processions were barred last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

'This is renovation, not restoration'

Historians say the new-look Jallianwala Bagh is a distortion of history

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI

The new-look Jallianwala Bagh memorial that Prime Minister Narendra Modi dedicated to the nation on August 28 was a distortion of history of the site where British troops massacred Indians on April 13, 1919, historians said on Monday.

Mr. Modi virtually inaugurated four new galleries and opened the renovated memorial a year-and-a-half after it was closed for the revamp.

The well into which victims jumped when forces led by Reginald Dyer opened fire has been covered with a transparent barrier. The narrow entrance has been adorned with sculptures. A daily sound and light show explaining the events has been started.

Not a garden

Reacting to the development, historian and former Jawaharlal Nehru University Professor Chaman Lal said it was a "distortion of history".



Symbol of valour: A view of the renovated Jallianwala Bagh Martyrs' Memorial in Amritsar. •AFP

He said the project had tried to "mystify and glamourise history".

"People visiting Jallianwala Bagh should go with a sense of pain and anguish. They have now tried to make it a space for enjoying, with a beautiful garden. It was not a beautiful garden," Professor Lal said. Rather, Jallianwala Bagh was where Indians gathered as they had on that fateful day when Dyer and his forces entered and fired on a peaceful crowd. Instead of restoration, the govern-

ment has renovated the place, adding new features, he said.

'Absolutely gaudy'

Historian S. Irfan Habib said he was not opposed to additions like better toilets or a cafe for visitors, but the changes made had been "at the cost of history, cost of heritage".

"It is absolutely gaudy...Why should there be murals on the wall? Changes the whole idea of the place from where Dyer entered to kill.

Adding glamour to the little corridor changes the whole visual history. History itself is being rewritten and renovated. This is the corporatisation of monuments," he said.

He said the well should not have been covered and the changes were unnecessary and cosmetic in nature. "It is a very sad trend," he said.

Kim A. Wagner, a London-based Professor of history and author of *Amritsar 1919 - An Empire of Fear and the Making of a Massacre*, said in a tweet on August 28 that the revamping of the site "means that the last traces of the event have effectively been erased".

The project was carried out by the Archaeological Survey of India and NBCC, and developed by Ahmedabad-based Vama Communications, which has in the past worked on the National Police Museum in Delhi and Mahatma Gandhi Museum in Rajkot.

Adityanath imposes ban on meat, liquor trade in Mathura

Take up selling milk to revive the glory of the city, he says

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MATHURA (U.P.)

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Monday imposed a complete ban on the sale of liquor and meat in Mathura.

"The officers are directed to make plans for the ban as well as for the engagement of people involved in such activities in some other trade," he said.

The Chief Minister was speaking at the Krishnotsava 2021 programme here.

He suggested that those engaged in liquor and meat trade may take up selling milk in order to revive the glory of Mathura, that was known for producing huge quantity of animal milk. Mr. Adityanath also prayed to Lord Krishna to eliminate the novel coronavirus infection.



U.P. CM Yogi Adityanath arriving at the Sri Krishna Janambhoomi temple in Mathura on Monday. •PTI

"Every effort will be made to develop Brij Bhumi and there will be no dearth of funds for this. We are looking at a blend of modern technology and the cultural and spiritual heritage for the development of the region," he said.

He also complimented Prime Minister Narendra Modi for giving a new direction to the country.

He said places of faith neglected since long are being revived now. Cabinet Ministers Laxmi Narain Chaudhary and Shrikant Sharma were also present.

Marandi issue hangs fire in Jharkhand

No decision yet on anti-defection law

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA

Almost seven months after the Babulal Marandi-led Jharkhand Vikas Morcha (Prajatantrik) merged with the BJP in February this year, the Jharkhand Assembly Speaker Rabindra Nath Mahato has not yet taken any decision on granting status of Leader of the Opposition (LoP) to him under the anti-defection law pertaining to 10th Schedule of the Constitution. For the past six months, the Jharkhand Assembly has been without an LoP.

Mr. Marandi who had been a member of the BJP, was the first Chief Minister of Jharkhand after its bifurcation from Bihar in November 2000. Later, he parted ways with the BJP to form the JVM(P).

Earlier, after the merger, the BJP had declared Mr. Marandi as LoP and chief of the BJP legislature party. However, Speaker Mahato took *suo motu* cognisance of the revolt of two JVM(P) MLAs — Pradeep Yadav and Bandhu Tirkey — against the merger, and initiated proceedings against Mr. Marandi's membership under the anti-defection law.

Mr. Marandi later challenged the Speaker's decision in the Ranchi High Court.

Last week, on August 24,

the Speaker heard the case virtually due to the COVID pandemic. Pleading his case, Mr. Marandi's counsel, R.N. Sahay said the Speaker's court had no power to hear the case as the Election Commission of India had also ruled in favour of Mr. Marandi. Mr. Sahay also pleaded that since the case was already pending in the High Court, it would not be appropriate for the Speaker's court to hear the case. The Speaker should wait for the High Court's judgment in this case, he said.

Mr. Sahay also said the merger of the JVM(P) with the BJP was made after the expulsion of two party MLAs Pradeep Yadav and Bandhu Tirkey for anti-party activities.

'Against the mandate'

Former Dhanwar MLA Raj Kumar Yadav, who is also one of the petitioners in the case, meanwhile, said Mr. Marandi had contested the 2019 Assembly election on JVM(P) ticket but later merged his party with BJP which was "against the mandate".

Senior BJP leader and chief whip of the party in the State Assembly Biranchi Narayan said "the party will wait for the Speaker's decision and the High Court's judgment regarding this. What else we can do?"

ED records witness statement of actor

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate on Monday recorded the witness statement of Bollywood actor Jacqueline Fernandez in a money laundering case against 'command' Suresh Chandrasekhar.

Earlier this month, the agency seized a sea-facing bungalow in Chennai and 16 luxury cars, besides two kg gold, during the searches in connection with a fresh case registered by the Delhi police accusing Suresh of



Jacqueline Fernandez

cheating and extortion.

The premises of Suresh's wife Leena Maria Paul, a small-time actor, were also searched. The police have alleged that Suresh had been running the racket from Delhi's Rohini jail.

APPEAL
I am Thupakula Soniya, 22 years old, suffering from Ewing Sarcoma - Right Orbit. My family is extremely poor and cannot afford the huge expenditure of Rs.12,00,000/- to undergo Autologous Bone Marrow Transplantation at Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai. I need your blessings and support. Donations sent by Ch/D/D, favouring **Meenakshi Mission Hospital & Research Centre, Madurai** will be acknowledged. The donations sent through Ch/D/D/NEFT Transfer & GOOGLE PAY (Canara Bank, Nungambakkam Branch, A/C No.80182010063310, IFSC No.CNBR80016018) favouring **WOMEN'S WELFARE SYNDICATE** is exempted under 80G IT.

All correspondence is done through WWS, Regd. Public Charitable Trust, Flat No.GF 1, Cordell Apartments, O.No.13, N.No.29, Pycrofts Garden Lane, Chennai - 600006. Ph: 044-42137401/28235324/7338978027. Email ID: womenswelfare Syndicate@gmail.com Website: www.womenswelfare Syndicate.org

Thupakula Soniya

102 Vande Bharat trains to be operational by 2024

He controls all

The Brahmasutra, having established that the soul alone is both the doer and enjoyer, further clarifies that this ability of action and enjoyment is dependent on Ishwara, the Supreme Brahman. The Sutra 'Parat Tu Tat Srute', draws attention to the Srutis that affirm that everything in creation is derived from the Supreme Lord and is subject to His control, pointed out Si Mani Dravid Sastrigal in a discourse. The Upanishads state that each soul enters samsara to experience the effects of past deeds, good and bad. It is a fact that when the soul takes birth, it is endowed with the sthula and sukshma sarira. It also possesses a consciousness which expresses itself as the states of thinking, desiring, striving, etc. It is able to be the knower, enjoyer and doer.

Then it may be asked that if it is all controlled by the Lord, where is the question of individual freedom. Why then should the individual be affected by the merits and demerits of such acts? Commentators have thrown light on many interesting issues regarding the question of individual freedom vs. God's control. What the sutra points out is that it is only through the Lord's sanction and grace that the jiva is able to think, desire, act, and so on. But He remains passive and does not in any way deprive the jiva of the freedom to act, think, etc. It is for the individual soul to utilise this freedom for its own good and for salvation.

The Srutis also show that God is the sole arbiter to give the fruits of the countless deeds, good, bad and neutral, of the countless jivas in an impartial manner. This Lord is the Highest Being, is of the essence of consciousness, the ever present witness of all the activities gross and subtle in the universe without any exception by residing in each and every aspect of it.

MARKET WATCH		
	30-08-2021	% CHANGE
Sensex	56,890	1.36
US Dollar	73.29	0.54
Gold	46,389	0.17
Brent oil	72.53	-

NIFTY 50		
	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	730.00	3.00
Asian Paints	3108.75	71.95
Axis Bank	780.45	31.65
Bajaj Auto	3720.40	20.95
Bajaj Finserv	16560.40	364.80
Bajaj Finance	7165.50	198.90
Bharti Airtel	620.45	25.30
BPCL	472.55	1.25
Britannia Ind	3986.35	44.80
Cipla	934.70	10.80
Coal India	143.60	5.05
Divis Lab	5104.25	193.55
Dr Reddys Lab	4677.85	77.30
Eicher Motors	2553.95	22.15
Grasim Ind	1471.15	12.85
HCL Tech	1163.40	0.45
HDFC	2755.70	37.50
HDFC Bank	1568.25	19.80
HDFC Life	712.35	8.25
Hero MotoCorp	2726.25	52.20
Hindalco	448.05	10.15
Hind Unilever	2687.70	9.75
ICICI Bank	713.65	13.90
IndusInd Bank	1005.10	14.90
Infosys	1698.05	-10.75
Indian OilCorp	107.35	1.40
ITC	208.00	2.10
JSW Steel	686.55	9.05
Kotak Bank	1735.85	22.30
L&T	1660.10	22.00
M&M	791.55	16.40
Maruti Suzuki	6796.90	172.05
Nestle India Ltd.	19742.25	-215.10
NTPC	114.95	1.55
ONGC	120.15	3.50
PowerGrid Corp	175.50	1.15
Reliance Ind	2270.25	42.85
SBI Life	1180.70	-3.35
State Bank	422.70	10.25
Shree Cement	27157.85	260.10
Sun Pharma	787.20	15.40
Tata Consumer		
Products Ltd	860.50	12.55
Tata Motors	291.95	6.20
Tata Steel	1440.60	56.45
TCS	3701.30	-18.85
Tech Mahindra	1419.20	-26.20
Titan	1878.45	55.90
UltraTech Cement	7703.80	138.20
UPL	740.45	11.20
Wipro	632.45	-2.50

EXCHANGE RATES		
Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on August 30		
CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	73.07	73.39
Euro	88.53	88.92
British Pound	102.97	103.43
Japanese Yen (100)	66.62	66.91
Chinese Yuan	11.42	11.47
Swiss Franc	81.26	81.66
Singapore Dollar	55.07	55.32
Canadian Dollar	60.11	60.40
Malaysian Ringgit	17.75	17.84

Source:Indian Bank



Former SBI chief Kumar made HSBC Asia director

MUMBAI Banking giant HSBC has appointed former SBI chairman Rajnish Kumar as a non-executive director for its Hong Kong-headquartered Asia unit. Mr. Kumar, who retired from the country's largest lender after four decades of service in October last year, was previously appointed as senior advisor by Baring Private Equity Asia and an advisor to Kotak Investment Advisors. PTI

'MapMyIndia plans ₹1,200-crore IPO'

NEW DELHI Homegrown digital mapping firm MapMyIndia is looking to raise about ₹1,200 crore via an initial public offering, according to sources. Backed by chip major Qualcomm and payments firm PhonePe, the company is expected to file the Draft Red Herring Prospectus in the next few days, two sources close to the development said. MapMyIndia did not respond to an e-mailed query. PTI

Ola looking to raise up to \$1.5 billion via IPO

NEW DELHI Ride-hailing firm Ola is looking to raise \$1-1.5 billion (₹7,324-₹10,985 crore) via an initial public offering (IPO) and is expected to file the Draft Red Herring Prospectus in the December quarter, according to sources. Ola is working with select banks, including Citigroup and Kotak Mahindra Bank, to manage the public offering, two people close to the development said. PTI

Centre extends tenures of Canara Bank, Bol Eds

NEW DELHI The government has extended the tenure of executive directors of Canara Bank and Bank of India for two years, the State-run lenders said on Monday. The banks said the Centre informed them about the extensions through notifications on August 26, 2021. The government last week extended the term of executive directors of various public sector banks. PTI

'Bharti's rights issue to help fuel growth'

Mittal sees scope to accelerate investments in roll-out of 5G services, fibre and data centre business



Girding for battle: Fresh capital provides a good buffer if India becomes a two-player market, says Credit Suisse. *REUTERS

Bharti Airtel's plan to raise up to ₹21,000 crore through a rights issue will give the company the fuel to shift to a higher gear and tap large opportunities by accelerating investments in the roll-out of 5G services, fibre, and data centre business, Chairman Sunil Mittal said on Monday. Mr. Mittal said the industry has been urging the government to address some pressing issues "inhibiting" continued investments in the sector and added that the taxes on the industry remain high. "For every ₹100 of revenue, ₹35 go in various forms of levies. We hope that as we step up and do our part, the government will also favourably look at some of the genuine demands of the industry," he said.

Mr. Mittal said an investor call on the company's fundraising plans. Bharti "has the opportunity to be the tip of the spear for the new digital economy and take India into the next phase of growth", he added. "This capital will help improve the leverage position for the company and simultaneously provide the fuel to accelerate investments across several parts of our portfolio to drive for competitive and profitable growth," he said.

RBI tells pvt. banks: stick to CEO pay rules

NEW DELHI

The RBI said on Monday that the fair value of the share-linked incentives paid to chief executive officers, whole-time directors and other key functionaries by private banks should be recognised as an expense during the relevant accounting period. The RBI has also asked all banks, including local area banks, small finance banks and foreign banks to comply with its directions for all share-linked instruments granted after the accounting period ended March 31, 2021.

The central bank has issued guidelines on the issue in November 2019.

Future-RIL: Amazon flags SC's ruling to SEBI

It asks bourses to cancel nod for deal

NEW DELHI

Amazon has written to SEBI requesting the regulator to direct stock exchanges to withdraw the 'Observation Letters' that were issued related to the proposed ₹24,713-crore Future-Reliance deal.

The U.S. e-commerce giant has also urged SEBI to take necessary action to comply with the recent Supreme Court judgment related to the deal.

"In light of the directions contained in the Enforcement Judgment, and the EA Order whose validity has been affirmed by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, Amazon requests you to take all



such action as is necessary to comply with the Supreme Court Judgment, and to further ensure that no communications subsist or emanate which are at variance with the Supreme Court Judgment," Amazon wrote in a letter dated August 17, referring to the SC ruling on the order of the Singapore-based Emergency Arbitrator (EA). In January, SEBI had cleared the deal with riders.

Axis Bank issues foreign currency debt

NEW DELHI

Axis Bank on Monday said it had started issuing debt securities under its ₹35,000-crore, debt-raise plan announced earlier this year.

In April, the private sector lender had said its board had approved a proposal to raise up to ₹35,000 crore by issuing various debt instruments in Indian or foreign currency in domestic/overseas markets in one or more tranches. "The bank has initiated the process of issuing of the debt instruments, in the form of the additional tier 1 notes in foreign currency," Axis Bank said in a regulatory filing.

'Festive sales to lift auto dealer volumes by 10-15%

Fuel prices, third wave are risks: Crisil

MUMBAI

Festive season sales and pent-up demand along with new offerings are expected to push automobile dealers' volumes up by 10-15% in FY22, even as they see a patchy recovery this fiscal, according to a survey by credit ratings agency Crisil.

However, a possible third wave of COVID-19, spurt in fuel prices and supply constraints of original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) are seen among factors that could slow the sector down, Crisil said on Monday.

Also, the performance of the dealers varies sharply from region to region with the dealerships in north In-

Sensex extends rally on relief over U.S. rate stance

'Focus turns to macro data, auto sales'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Benchmark stock indices surged on Monday following the U.S. Federal Reserve's 'wait-and-watch' approach.

The S&P BSE Sensex rose 1.36%, or 765.04 points, to 56,889.76. Top gainers included Bharti Airtel, which added 4.44%, Axis Bank (4.15%), Tata Steel (4%), Titan (3.46%) and Bajaj Finance (2.91%).

Pointing out that the indices had maintained the trend throughout the day in line with the strength in global markets, Vinod Nair, head of Research, Geojit Financial Services, said the U.S. Federal Reserve's accommodative stance had helped strengthen the equity markets worldwide. "Global markets streng-

thened... following the dovish tone of the Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell who stated [the Fed would] stick with the wait-and-see approach, giving reassurance that the easy money policy will continue this year with a smaller rate of tapering," he said.

The NSE Nifty 50 too rose 1.35% to 16,931.05 points.

"The surge in the index was led by the banking and financials pack," Ajit Mishra, VP-Research, Religare Broking Ltd., wrote in a note. "Upcoming macroeconomic data i.e. GDP numbers and auto sales numbers will be in focus for further cues on economic recovery. We expect the prevailing uptrend to continue and suggest keeping the focus on the selection of stocks," he added.

Maruti to raise prices from Sept. on costs

NEW DELHI

The country's largest car-maker Maruti Suzuki India on Monday said it will increase prices across models from September amid rising input costs.

In a regulatory filing, the company said, "Over the past year the cost of company's vehicles continue to be adversely impacted due to increase in various input costs." "Hence, it has become imperative to pass on some impact of the additional cost to the customers through a price rise," the company added.

"The price rise has been planned across models in September 2021," Maruti Suzuki India said.



dia being impacted the most, the agency said.

"Last fiscal did see a demand uptick during the festival season, but it did not sustain. This fiscal, too, sales across segments are yet to reach pre-pandemic levels," Crisil said.

"Also, the deal conversion cycle has doubled, with customers deferring purchase decisions," said director Bhushan Parekh.

'Overall hiring returns to pre-pandemic levels'

'Jobs in hygiene, childcare pick up'

NEW DELHI

The overall hiring activity in India has touched pre-pandemic levels, and going ahead, the consumption economy will play an important role in spurring job growth further, according to a report by jobs site Indeed. For the first time several in months, hiring activity in India is at a pre-pandemic baseline (February 2020 level), the data showed.

Job postings for tech software (IT) roles saw a 19% increase between July 2020 and July 2021 as an expected outcome of the pandemic-induced digitisation. Moreover, job postings for other IT job roles such as project heads and engineers also climbed 8-16%.

"The reopening of the economy and efforts by businesses to work around the

challenges presented by COVID-19 have pushed the Indian job market towards recovery," said Sashi Kumar, head of Sales, Indeed India.

He added that while the relevance of tech jobs continued to be high, renewed demand for retail and food jobs indicated that the consumption economy would play an important role in driving job growth further. "Hygiene has become top priority for both employers and job seekers. What's curious is the heightened interest for veterinary, therapy, personal care, and childcare jobs."

The easing of lockdown restrictions and the reopening of spaces sharpened the focus on hygiene and sanitisation and the demand for housekeepers, caretakers, and cleaners had grown by 60%, the report said.

LIC gets money laundering IT solution

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

IDBI Intech Ltd., which offers specialised solutions to the Banking, Financial Services and Insurance (BFSI) sector, has announced the implementation of its iAML (anti-money laundering) solution at Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC).

The company is a wholly owned subsidiary of IDBI Bank and LIC has controlling stake in the bank.

The firm said iAML solution would provide LIC an enterprise-wide single view of risk and compliance at transactions and customer level, thereby helping the insurance behemoth to upgrade its anti money laundering reporting system.

Through this solution, LIC would easily come to know if some policy holder is flouting any norms.

Cavinkare elevates next-gen to take on 'modern trade'

Founder CKR's son, daughter to helm retail, e-com verticals

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

As part of its first step towards succession plan, homegrown Cavinkare Pvt. Ltd. on Monday announced a major revamp of its business operations by elevating generation next with a special thrust on verticals such as e-commerce and retail.

The 31-year-old company announced the elevation of promoter and founder chairman C.K. Ranganathan's son and daughter.

"This is Cavinkare 2.0 to take on modern trade," said Mr. Ranganathan, while announcing the elevation of Manuranjith Ranganathan and Amudhavalli Ranganathan. The personal care wing will be headed by Venkatesh Vijayaraghavan, director and CEO - FMCG.



Amudhavalli Ranganathan

While Mr. Manuranjith will head retail, salon products and veterinary hospital, Ms. Amudhavalli will look after e-commerce. Mr. Ranganathan will focus on innovation. Mr. Manuranjith will report to Mr. Ranganathan, and Amudhavalli to Mr. Vijayaraghavan. Currently, e-commerce accounts for 4% of Cavinkare's revenues and

this is expected to touch 25% over the next five years. "With this restructuring process, we expect our turnover to touch ₹5,000 crore over the next 3 years from ₹1,700 crore now," he added.

Mr. Ranganathan said that the company would be investing ₹800-900 crore over a period of three years, of which ₹400 crore will go towards expansion of dairy business, ₹150 crore for salon products, and ₹100-150 crore for IT/ITES.

The fund would be raised through internal accruals, external funding and borrowings. Mr. Ranganathan said he was also ready to dilute his stake.

To a question, Mr. Ranganathan denied he was retiring and added that he had "many more years to go."

Resume coal supply: aluminium sector to CIL

'Ad hoc halt hit captive power plants'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

The Aluminium Association of India (AAI) on Monday sought intervention of state-owned CIL to normalise the precarious situation that has arisen due to stoppage of coal supplies and rakes for captive power plants, resulting in paucity of dry-fuel for the aluminium sector.

This 'ad-hoc decision' without advance notice has brought the industry to a standstill with 'no time' to devise mitigation plans to continue sustainable operations, the AAI said in a letter to the CMD of Coal India Ltd. (CIL).

"This has reference to the crisis situation that has developed for the entire aluminium sector due to the recent ad hoc decision for



stopping/dramatically curtailing the coal supplies and rakes for captive power plants (CPPs) resulting in a coal crunch situation for aluminium sector," the letter said.

Also, resorting to imports at short notice was not feasible, it said. The aluminium industry's CPPs have signed fuel supply pacts with CIL and its subsidiaries for assured coal supplies.

Two more entities apply for SFB licence

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said it has received applications from two more entities - Cosma Financial Holdings Private Ltd. and Tally Solutions Private Ltd. - seeking licences to operate small finance banks (SFBs).

This is as per RBI's guidelines for 'on tap' licensing of small finance banks in the private sector.

With this, a total of six entities have applied for the licence.

The other four applicants who were named in April 2021 are VSoft Technologies Private Ltd., Calicut City Service Co-operative Bank Ltd., Akhil Kumar Gupta, and Dvara Kshetriya Gramin Financial Services Private Ltd.

