



Four local terrorists killed in encounter in south Kashmir

page 9



New Zealand declares it is free of COVID-19, retains border controls

page 12



L-G overrules Kejriwal govt's decision to restrict treatment to residents

page 10

NEARBY



Minister warns of action against newscaster

CHENNAI

Health Minister C. Vijayabaskar on Monday warned of action against newscaster and actor S. Varadharajan after the latter, in a video message, cited difficulty in finding a hospital bed for his friend, who had symptoms of COVID-19.

TAMIL NADU ▶ PAGE 2

RGGH officials not working as team: report

CHENNAI

Top officials at the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital (RGGH) "were not working as a team in letter and spirit", says a report submitted by an inspection team to the Health Secretary. The inspection was ordered in the wake of rise in COVID-19 cases among health staff.

TAMIL NADU ▶ PAGE 2

T.N. gets ₹3,193 cr. as GST compensation

CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu has been given about ₹3,193 crore as Goods and Services Tax (GST) compensation due for the period from December 2019 to February 2020. The amount was out of the ₹36,400 crore released by the Centre last week.

TAMIL NADU ▶ PAGE 4

Malls, cafes reopen to a new normal

Physical distancing and limited public transport mean it's just a trickle of visitors at business centres



The wait's over: An employee prays as his bus proceeds to the Lord Venkateswara temple in Tirumala on Monday. The temple will reopen to the public on June 11. ■ K.V. POORNACHANDRA KUMAR

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Places of worship, malls and restaurants reopened across the country on Monday as India bid a graded goodbye to a stringent 75-day lockdown intended to slow the spread of COVID-19 even as positive cases continued to grow in many States and cities.

Metro and suburban rail services, educational institutions, gymnasiums, cinema halls, bars and auditoriums remained closed in line with a May 30 Home Ministry order. Their reopening will be reviewed in July and subsequent months.

Visitors trickled into malls in Delhi with stringent temperature checks at entry points and shop doors. At Select City Walk mall in Saket, the food court was open during lunch hour but only four or five tables were occupied.

Regulated seating
In Connaught Place, restaurants were allowing customers to enter with regulated seating. Managers at restaurants said barely any customers were coming in and those who did were made to sit far apart.

As India opened up further, Mizoram became the odd State out by imposing a total lockdown for two weeks from Tuesday, less than a week after "unlocking". The

quarantine period for returnees has also been raised from 14 to 21 days with immediate effect. The decisions have been taken to ramp up RT-PCR testing, officials said.

Mumbai opened up with many private offices opening with 10% of staff strength. Markets also opened and State bus operators put on extra buses to cater to commuters. Mumbai kars had to stand in long queues with the average waiting time being nearly an hour as the city's lifeline, the suburban train services, remained suspended. At bus stops, many

discarded notions of physical distancing and jostled with one another for limited seats. According to government directives, only one person was allowed on each seat and five people were allowed to stand in buses.

In Bengaluru, people were seen standing in queues to get *darshan* at the big temples. There were markers to keep a safe distance, with thermal checking and sanitisers at the entrance of the temples. Ravishankar G.N. of the famous Doddha Ganapathi temple's managing committee

said, "There is no distribution of *theertha* [holy water] and *prasada*. People can get *darshan*. People are cooperating and we are thankful to them."

Disposable plates

Restaurants that opened in the city imposed precautionary measures for both customers and employees. Some restaurants had made "compartments" on tables so that physical contact was avoided. Many restaurants were serving food in disposable plates only.

With Tamil Nadu's tally of

Kerala move to open temples triggers row

The Kerala government's decision to reopen temples from Tuesday has triggered a row with the Sangh Parivar organisations opposing the move citing the rise in COVID-19 cases, and the Travancore Devaswom Board, which manages 1,248 temples, going ahead with the plan to permit entry of devotees. "Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan did not invite Hindu organisations for consultations," Hindu Aikya Vedi State president R.V. Babu said. ▶ PAGE 8

COVID-19 cases crossing 33,000, the State was measured in offering relaxations. Bus services were yet to resume in the hotspots of Chennai and neighbouring districts of Tiruvallur, Kancheepuram and Chengalpattu. The remaining parts of the State have been divided into six zones for bus operations. While industries have reopened, production suffered for want of workers as much of the workforce had returned home.

(With Bureau inputs)

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Military-level talks positive: Rajnath

Minister reviews border situation with top brass

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

It's not in India's character to hurt another country's self-respect; nor can it tolerate any attack on its dignity, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Monday.

At a virtual rally of the BJP, he said the military-level talks that took place on June 6 had been very positive. "Both India and China have agreed that they will continue talks to resolve the border dispute," he said.

Mr. Singh said talks were on between India and China at the military and diplomatic levels. "The leadership of the country is in



strong hands and they will not allow India's self-respect to be hurt under any circumstances," he said.

Earlier in the day, Mr. Singh reviewed the situation along the China border with the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) and the three Service chiefs. However, official sources said the Monday meeting was routine.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

HC asks Manipur Speaker to keep 7 Cong. MLAs out

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI/ IMPHAL

The Manipur High Court on Monday directed Speaker Yumnam Khemchand to "restrain" seven Congress MLAs, who had "defected" to the BJP, from entering the Assembly.

The MLAs had raised the strength of the BJP-led coali-

tion government to 40 in the 60-member Assembly. Justice K. Nobin Singh ordered that they "are restrained from entering the Manipur Legislative Assembly, Imphal" unless and until the petitions "are disposed of finally" by the Speaker.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

MSME revival package yet to take off

Banks still await RBI guidelines on ₹20,000-crore equity support scheme

MANOJIT SAHA
MUMBAI

Almost one month after Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced a revival package for stressed micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), the scheme is yet to see the light of the day.

The scheme, which was to provide ₹20,000-crore equity support to stressed MSMEs and those categorised as non-performing assets, was approved by the Union Cabinet on June 1.

Aimed at 2 lakh units
Under the scheme, banks were expected to provide subordinate debt to promoters of stressed MSMEs, up to 15% of their existing stake in the unit subject to a maximum of ₹75 lakh. This would have helped two lakh



Rough winds: An MSME unit in Chennai. The pandemic has hit such enterprises hard. ■ BIJOY GHOSH

stressed enterprises. However, the scheme has not taken off as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is yet to issue the guidelines for it.

"This is also a kind of debt restructuring scheme which

would mean making higher provision. So, the RBI's approval is required for relaxing the higher provision requirement," a banker said.

On January 1, the RBI allowed banks to recast debt of

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

'STIMULUS DIDN'T HELP' ▶ PAGE 13

Born on March 16, Mr. Chavan's child seemed healthy at first. A few weeks later, he began turning blue. The parents rushed him to Sangli civil hospital where the first defect was diagnosed. Due to lack of facilities there, sending the baby to an advanced centre was the only option.

Dr. Laxmikant Magdum, a medical officer in Sangli said, "Sending them to Mumbai was a challenge due to the lockdown." The 108 ambulance stepped in. After negative COVID-19 tests, the parents and infant left for Mumbai.

At SRCC Hospital the baby's oxygen level was just 40%. Such cases must be operated in two weeks but this baby was near two months. "Doctors said it was nothing but a miracle," said Mr. Chavan (31), a farmer in Sangli's Karoli village.

main arteries come out from a different heart chamber or are reversed and the body doesn't get oxygenated blood. But there was a further shock: a scan revealed another severe heart condition – infracardiac total anomalous pulmonary venous connection (TAPVC). Here,

the vessels carrying purified blood from the lungs drain through the liver. "There is only one reported case in South America with a combination of these two conditions who survived post-surgery," said cardiac surgeon Dr. Pradeep Kaushik, who operated on the baby.

Success story: The child recovering from the complex surgery at home in Sangli, Maharashtra. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Marginal decrease in daily cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

The daily increase in total number of COVID-19 cases fell to 8,552 on Monday after going beyond 10,000 recently. According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), 1,08,048 samples were tested on June 8, a steep decrease from the 1,42,069 samples tested the previous day.

There were 2,65,916 confirmed cases as of Monday, with 1,29,569 active ones. A total of 270 people died, adding to the overall death tally of 7,471.

The recovery rate increased marginally to 48.43%. The bulk of the new cases were confirmed in Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Delhi.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

'MORE REPORTS' ▶ PAGES 8 & 10

To market



Inter-State commerce: People of West Khasi Hill district in Meghalaya crossing a hanging bridge across the Sri river to a market in Kamrup (Rural) district of Assam. The market, which reopened on Monday, is a lifeline for people from remote villages. ■ RITU RAJ KONWAR

Saving a heart in the midst of the lockdown

Doctors, ambulance crews raced to save a baby with rare cardiac conditions

JYOTI SHELAR
MUMBAI

Rohit Chavan is celebrating one month of a medical miracle. At this time a month ago, doctors from two districts in Maharashtra – Sangli and Mumbai – and the State-run 108 ambulance service were working overtime to ensure that this baby born with a rare heart condition got emergency surgery.

On May 7, the baby was raced from Sangli to SRCC Children's Hospital in Mumbai in six ambulances across 380 km in 10 hours. The next morning, the infant underwent an eight-hour-long procedure to repair the complex heart defect. Today, he is recuperating well at home.

The tiny patient was first diagnosed with transposition of great arteries – where the two



main arteries come out from a different heart chamber or are reversed and the body doesn't get oxygenated blood. But there was a further shock: a scan revealed another severe heart condition – infracardiac total anomalous pulmonary venous connection (TAPVC). Here,

the vessels carrying purified blood from the lungs drain through the liver. "There is only one reported case in South America with a combination of these two conditions who survived post-surgery," said cardiac surgeon Dr. Pradeep Kaushik, who operated on the baby.

Success story: The child recovering from the complex surgery at home in Sangli, Maharashtra. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

HC questions 'tearing hurry' to hold Class X examinations

T.N. told to list out States where exams have been held

MOHAMED IMRANULLAH S.
CHENNAI

The Madras High Court on Monday questioned the Tamil Nadu government on what the "tearing hurry" was to conduct the Class X board examinations, when the number of COVID-19 cases was on the rise.

Separately, Opposition parties led by the DMK and the ruling AIADMK's ally, the PMK, urged the government to revoke its decision to hold the exams.

While the court posed tough questions to the government, it did not restrain it, for the present, from going ahead with the decision.

Justices Vineet Kothari and R. Suresh Kumar granted relief till Thursday for Advocate General (AG) Vijay Narayan to submit a report listing out the number of States where board exami-

Cases top 1,500 for second day

The surge in COVID-19

cases continued in Tamil Nadu on Monday, with over 1,500 cases being reported for the second consecutive day. The 1,562 fresh cases took the State's tally to 33,229. While 528 persons were discharged, the State's toll increased to 286 with 17 more fatalities, including a 22-year-old man.

FULL REPORT ON ▶ PAGE 2

nations had already been conducted and other related details.

The questions were raised by the Bench during the hearing of a public interest litigation (PIL) petition challenging the government's

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 2

Home loans get cheaper as SBI cuts rates

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The country's largest lender, State Bank of India (SBI), has reduced the marginal cost of fund-based lending rate (MCLR) by 25 bps across all tenors. The one-year MCLR will fall to 7% from 7.25% with effect from June 10.

"This is the 13th consecutive reduction in bank's MCLR," the SBI said.

The external benchmark-linked (EBR) lending rate will now be 6.65% from

T.N. records 1,562 new COVID-19 cases

Chennai reports 1,149 fresh cases, taking its tally to 23,298; State sees 17 fatalities

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

The surge in COVID-19 cases continued in Tamil Nadu on Monday, with over 1,500 cases being reported for the second consecutive day.

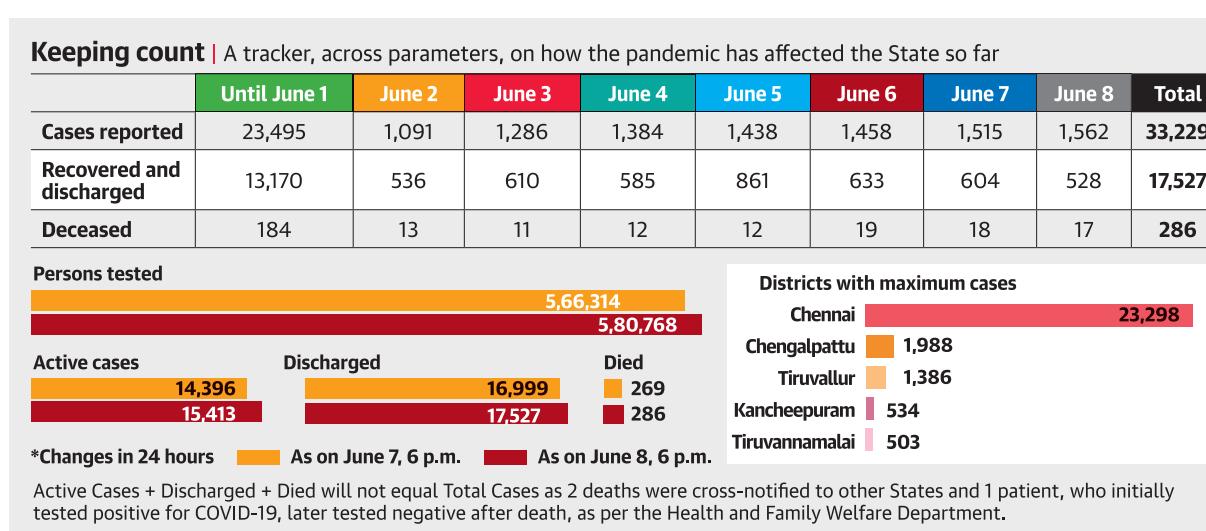
The 1,562 fresh cases took the State's tally to 33,229*.

While 528 persons were discharged, the State's toll increased to 286, with 17 more fatalities (15 in government hospitals and two in private hospitals), including a 22-year-old man and a nonagenarian.

Chennai yet again registered a four-figure rise with 1,149 new patients, taking its tally to 23,298. The city has accounted for 224 deaths till now. Chengalpattu reported 134 new cases, taking its COVID-19 count closer to the 2,000-mark.

According to the medical bulletin, the 22-year-old man from Tiruvallur was admitted to the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital (RGGH) with frontal subdural haemorrhage on May 31. His sample returned positive for COVID-19 on June 1. He died on Sunday due to cardiopulmonary arrest, COVID-19 pneumonia and frontal subdural haemorrhage.

A 92-year-old man from Chennai, who was admitted to RGGH on June 6 with systemic hypertension and



*Changes in 24 hours As on June 7, 6 p.m. As on June 8, 6 p.m.
Active Cases + Discharged + Died will not equal Total Cases as 2 deaths were cross-notified to other States and 1 patient, who initially tested positive for COVID-19, later tested negative after death, as per the Health and Family Welfare Department.

chronic kidney disease stage V, tested positive. On Sunday, he died of conditions including cardiopulmonary arrest, COVID-19 pneumonia and respiratory failure.

COVID-19

A 55-year-old woman with diabetes and systemic hypertension, who was admitted to the Government Villupuram Medical College Hospital on Sunday, died due to COVID-19 pneumonia, Acute Respiratory Disease Syndrome, respiratory failure and newly diagnosed diabetes.

Three of the 17 persons who died in the State did not have co-morbidities.

A 62-year-old man from

Among the 1,562 new patients, 42 were returnees from other States or abroad. This included 22 persons from Maharashtra and six from Delhi

Ranipet died at the Government Vellore Medical College Hospital within five hours of admission on Sunday due to severe acute respiratory illness, respiratory failure and newly diagnosed diabetes.

Nine persons who returned from Qatar and three from Kuwait also tested positive.

Recovery in State

Till date, a total of 17,527 persons have been discharged from hospitals in Tamil Nadu, while there are 15,413 active cases. A total of 14,982

Chengalpattu, new cases were reported in Tiruvallur (57), Vellore (32), Thoothukudi (26), Kanchipuram (18) and Tiruvannamalai (11).

Among the 1,562 new patients, 42 were returnees from other States or abroad. This included 22 persons from Maharashtra and six from Delhi.

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Recovery in State

Till date, a total of 17,527 persons have been discharged from hospitals in Tamil Nadu, while there are 15,413 active cases. A total of 14,982

samples were tested on Monday, taking the total number of samples tested to 6,07,952.

A total of 5,80,768 individuals have been tested till date, including the day's count of 14,454.

One more private laboratory – Balaji Medical Centre, Chennai – has been approved for COVID-19 testing.

With this, there are a total of 77 testing facilities – 44 in the government and 33 in the private sector – in the State.

*(*This is inclusive of two deaths cross-notified to other States and one patient who died after testing negative for the infection)*

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Top officials at RGGH not working as a team, says report

Findings follow an inspection ordered last month

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Top officials at the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital (RGGH) "were not working as a team in letter and spirit", according to a report submitted by an inspection team to the Health Secretary.

The inspection was ordered last month, following reports of the spread of COVID-19 among doctors/paramedics in the hospital, which is at the forefront of pandemic management efforts in the State. While issues relating to shortages in PPE kits and N95 masks, food, transport and proper accommodation facilities had been sorted out, the report said that the top officials were not functioning in tandem with each other.

The post of Medical Superintendent was vacant, and the acting Medical Superin-



Unattended issues resulted in the negative projection of the institution in the media, the report said. ■ B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

tendent was already overburdened with several other responsibilities, such as those of the Head of the Hepatology Department, the Director of Liver Transplantation and the Director of Medical Gastroenterology, among others, and "hence could not devote time and attention", the report said.

Eateries see poor patronage on day one of reopening

While physical distancing limits capacity, restrictions on operational timings add to the troubles

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

On day one of restaurants re-opening in the State, after being shut for over 10 weeks, patronage ranged from the dismal to the average.

Restaurants enforced physical distancing norms by changing seating arrangements, reducing their capacity by around 50%. Items on the menu too were trimmed.

Hoteliers in Madurai said that sales was poor.

"Ensuring that all our employees are paid and our premises are disinfected five times a day is tough. We are fine with following rules but we barely have any customers to serve," said K. L. Kumar, district president, Tamil Nadu Hotel Owners' Association.

Across the State, including in Tiruchi, Tirunelveli and Salem, many air-conditioned eateries and those attached with hotels decided to wait for further relaxations.

Of the 602 hotels and res-



Safety on the menu: Restaurants in Salem, Coimbatore and other parts of the State saw partitions being put up between tables and waiters donning face shields and gloves while serving patrons. ■ E. LAKSHMI NARAYANAN AND M. PERIASAMY

taurants in Tirunelveli, only 20% conducted business on Monday, with waiters serving food to customers wearing masks and gloves, said Ramkumar, president of the Tirunelveli district Hotel Owners' Association.

A few restaurants in Coimbatore urged customers to reserve tables in advance. While norms prescribed by the district administration were largely complied with,

smaller eateries facing space constraints could not be stringent in enforcing physical distancing norms.

In Salem, only a minimal number of restaurants opened for dine-in, and most hotels restricted themselves to takeaways. A popular vegetarian chain of restaurants served food in disposable packaging.

M. Venkadasubbu, president, Tamil Nadu Hotels' As-

sociation, said that it would yet to pick up. Only when the COVID-19 scare is done away with and things return to normal can hoteliers heave a sigh of relief," he said.

(With inputs from: P. Sudhakar in Tirunelveli; T. Madhavan in Vellore; Sanjana Ganesh in Madurai; M. Soundarya Preetha in Coimbatore; V. Vignesh in Salem; C. Jaishankar in Tiruchi; and Deepa H. Ramakrishnan in Chennai)

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FROM PAGE ONE

HC questions haste to hold Class X exams

Asked how the lives of 9.79 lakh Class X students and over two lakh teachers could be put at risk, the AG said that all measures had been put in place to safeguard them.

"Originally, the exams were to be conducted in 3,825 centres from March 27 to April 13. After postponement, we have now decided to conduct the exams in 12,690 centres between June 15 and 25," the AG added.

Only 10 students would be assigned to an examination hall spread over 400 square ft., as against the normal practice of accommodating 20 students. Candidates would be given three reusable face masks.

In all, 46.37 lakh face masks would be distributed to students, teachers and others apart from providing soap, running water and hand sanitisers. The examination centre would also be disinfected twice daily, the AG said.

Besides, special examination centres would be set up for students residing in containment zones to prevent them from mingling with others and adequate transport facilities would also be

Opposition, AIADMK ally urge govt. to cancel Class X exams

Don't put students' lives at risk, says DMK president

STAFF REPORTER
CHENNAI

With the number of COVID-19 cases steadily rising in Chennai, DMK president M.K. Stalin on Monday demanded that the State government cancel the Class 10 public examination as it would put the lives of young students at risk.

In a statement, Mr. Stalin said that Edappadi K. Palaniswami's government had failed to take adequate precautions to control the spread of COVID-19.

"By being adamant on conducting the Class 10 public examination, the State government is playing with the lives of students," said Mr. Stalin.

Mr. Stalin said that the examinations could be held after students and parents were convinced that there was no health risks and normalcy had returned in Tamil Nadu.

The State government's daily announcements show that babies, young children and youth are also being affected by COVID-19. In this scenario, educationists and medical professionals have pointed out that conducting Class 10 examinations should be cancelled amid the rising number of COVID-19 cases, and all stu-



M.K. Stalin

their parents, families and their siblings too at risk of contracting the disease," said Mr. Stalin.

Mr. Stalin said that the number of cases was rising despite the State government not testing enough samples every day. "The number of cases in Tamil Nadu's capital Chennai has transformed it into a city that scares the entire State. In many cases, the 'primary source' of infection cannot be ascertained and medical experts have said that Chennai has entered the 'community transmission' phase," he said.

Meanwhile, MDMK chief Vaiko on Monday said that the Class 10 public examination should be cancelled amid the rising number of COVID-19 cases, and all stu-

dents should be declared 'pass'. In a statement, he said that the number of cases had increased rapidly, since April, when the public examinations were postponed due to the outbreak.

"Students should not be forced to write the exams without proper revision and practice. It will affect them mentally," Mr. Vaiko said.

Promote students'
PMK founder S. Ramadoss on Monday said that the Class 10 public examinations should be postponed, citing the steadily rising rate of COVID-19 cases in Chennai and a few other districts. He also urged the State government to promote all Class 10 students to Class 11.

In a statement, Dr. Ramadoss said that the government's insistence on holding public examinations when everyone was against it did not augur well for it. "Just like the government announced that every student from Class 11 to Class 9 had passed to the next class, this should be extended until Class 11. I hope that the School Education Minister has welfare of the students of Tamil Nadu in his heart," said Dr. Ramadoss.

Oversleeping on board a train, just ahead of the nationwide COVID-19 lockdown in March, turned life into a nightmare for a 70-year-old Madurai woman who has been stuck in Mangalore, Karnataka, for over two months. After 80 long days, she was reunited with her son on Sunday night.

K. Kasthuri, a resident of Arapalayam in Madurai, had boarded a special train from Villupuram to reach Madurai on March 20. She overslept, missing her destination and detoured in Thrissur, Kerala. She then took a bus to Mangalore. Unfortunately, train services were suspended in view of the COVID-19 outbreak.

She was stuck alone, without a mobile phone or knowledge of the local language. From being stranded in a camp initially to being admitted to a Government Mental Health Care Centre in Kozhikode, Kerala, Ms. Kasthuri endured a lot of hardship.

Team effort
On Sunday night, the septuagenarian reached Madurai to be with her daughter, Ms. Kasthuri was shifted to the Government

thanks to the efforts of the district Red Cross team and the intervention of Collector T.G. Vinay.

"I was relieved when I met my daughter, the only relative I have. I used to think that I might die without being able to see her," she said.

Ms. Kasthuri said that she was at the camp in Mangalore for around 15 days. She then petitioned the Collector, requesting him to help her bring back her mother to Madurai.

The Red Cross team and officials of the Madurai district administration spoke to their counterparts in Kerala and an e-pass was procured for her travel. "Initially, I rejected their offer. I was afraid that I would be quarantined if I travel to Kerala. Being a single mother, I could not afford to leave my son alone," she said.

"But the Collector assured me that I would return home with my mother safely. So I travelled with Red Cross members and brought my mother home," she said.

A CH-CHE

Newscaster draws flak for flagging shortage of beds

Warning of action, Vijayabaskar says T.N. has 75,000 beds

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Health Minister C. Vijayabaskar on Monday warned of action against veteran new

Timings**CHENNAI**

TUESDAY, JUN. 09

RISE 05:43 SET 18:35

RISE 22:04 SET 08:52

WEDNESDAY, JUN. 10

RISE 05:43 SET 18:35

RISE 22:51 SET 09:47

THURSDAY, JUN. 11

RISE 05:43 SET 18:35

RISE 23:34 SET 10:39

Chennai Weather max min
Chinnavalur 41 28
Chennai Airport 40 29
Chennai City 39 30**Chennai Airport Today**
39°C Sky will remain cloudy over the district. Warm night expected.**Chennai Airport Tomorrow**
39°C Morning will be warm. Sky likely to remain cloudy. Evening and night to be warm.© Copyright Skymet Weather 2019
All rights reserved.**IN BRIEF****Fire breaks out at paper factory in Sholavaram**

CHENNAI

A fire broke out at a paper converter factory in Sholavaram on Monday. No one was injured. Ten vehicles of the Tamil Nadu Fire and Rescue Services were used to douse the blaze. Officials suspect a shortcircuit may have triggered the fire.

Woman falls from building, dies

CHENNAI

Anthonyammal, 44, of Tiruvannamalai, died after she reportedly fell from the terrace of a two-storey building while plucking flowers in Mogappair on Sunday. Police said she worked as a maid in a convent. Investigation is on.

MNC donates life-support equipment

CHENNAI

Saipem India, a multinational company in Chennai, donated life-support equipment, including 26 ventilators and 20 monitors worth ₹2.5 crore to the Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital on June 6 to help combat COVID-19.

THE HINDU
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Are govt. hospitals in the city running out of beds?

With cases surging, doctors say that the four facilities are already running at capacity; a further rise can see patients being turned away

SERENA JOSEPHINE M.
CHENNAI

Do government hospitals in Chennai have enough beds for COVID-19 patients? While the State government is maintaining that there are adequate beds in the city, many of their own doctors beg to differ.

Chennai has been reporting 1,000-plus cases every day for six consecutive days. As per the Health Department's bulletin, there are 11,817 active cases – persons under treatment – in the city. Many doctors in the four government hospitals pointed out that the institutions are running at almost capacity. At least three of these hospitals have over 400 patients each.

“The problem is the surge in cases. The hospital's bed capacity is almost full. We are admitting on a need basis. Once patients are stable, we move them to step-down wards to make way to admit critical patients. However, we can manage this way for a week as critically-ill patients will become stagnant in the



Three of the government hospitals in Chennai have over 400 patients each. ■ B. VELAKANNI RAJ

hospital,” a senior doctor in one of the government hospitals said.

“We have many more patients than the actual treating capacity. We cannot take even one more patient,” another government doctor said.

He added that patients aged above 55 years and those with co-morbidities cannot be sent to COVID-19 Care Centres (CCC).

“At a given time, we will have around 300 patients

who cannot be shifted. We discharge patients, and admit persons who are waiting. The government is augmenting bed strength simultaneously,” he said.

Lack of oxygen supply
At another institution, doctors said they were running to near-full capacity.

“The majority of the patients who are coming are sick. Even then, we are unable to accommodate as cases have surged exponential-

Minister Pandiarajan to oversee Zone 4

Three days after the State nominated five ministers to oversee relief work by the Greater Chennai Corporation (GCC) for COVID-19 in highly affected zones, yet another minister has been added to the roster.

On Monday, it made a partial modification to its

order from June 5 and nominated Minister for Tamil Official Language and Tamil Culture MaFor K. Pandiarajan to oversee Zone 4.

As per the earlier order, Minister D. Jayakumar was nominated to oversee the Zone 4, along with Zones 3 and 5.

cases continue rising at the same rate.”

Private hospitals

Senior government doctors said all private medical colleges in and around Chennai had no beds available. Phone calls went unanswered/switched off in two hospitals where beds were available, while representatives of two other hospitals stated that they would be able to give the bed availability status only depending on the discharges in the morning.

Official sources said there are at least 75 to 150 vacan-

cies at the four government medical college hospitals – Rajiv Gandhi Government General Hospital, Government Stanley Medical College Hospital, Government Kilpauk Medical College Hospital, Government Medical College Hospital, Omandurar Estate, and ESI Hospital, Avanavaram.

CCCs, maternity wards

The government maternity hospitals have at least 100 beds allocated for pregnant women testing positive for COVID-19. Besides, there are at least 500 vacant beds in CCCs, and many beds at private medical colleges in and around Chennai.

“There are vacant beds in these government hospitals. But we are reserving them for really sick and symptomatic patients. We are finding it difficult to shift patients who are relieved of symptoms from these hospitals to CCCs. Many are unwilling to move. If they are shifted, more beds will become available for sick patients,” an official said.

Amma Canteens yet to get reimbursed for free food

Philanthropists delay payment of at least ₹1.25 crore

ALOYSIUS XAVIER LOPEZ
CHENNAI

eateries registering a dip in sales.

According to workers at the canteens, some of them have reported a dip in footfalls and reduction in sales by around 70%. For instance, a canteen which reported a sales of around ₹5,000 per day when food was being supplied free of cost, registered only around ₹1,400 per day after June 1, following the scheme's suspension.

No suitable NGOs

Amma Canteen workers said the Corporation permitted self-help groups (SHGs) to get funds from NGOs to supply free food for the poor. But SHGs at Amma Canteens have not been able to find suitable NGOs.

Actors who funded the scheme during the lockdown have also stopped giving

funds after its relaxation.

Former Corporation Councillor S. Mangala Raj said the government should take responsibility of feeding the poor during the pandemic. “Poor people are unable to pay for subsidised food in Amma Canteens because of a dip in earnings.

The government should not advise Chennai Corporation to seek help from big philanthropists. Instead, the government should explore alternatives to feed the poorest of the poor during the pandemic,” he said.

Corporation officials said supply of dry rations and other welfare schemes have been implemented to help the poor. During the period of free sales, philanthropists promised around ₹3.00 crore for free supply of food. The total beneficiaries have been estimated at 90 lakh.

Teenager with COVID-19 goes missing from ward

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

A 17-year-old boy from the government boys' home, who was admitted to the Communicable Diseases Hospital, Tondiarpet, after testing positive for COVID-19, reportedly went missing from the hospital on Monday.

According to police, 35 children and five staff members in a government-run home in Royapuram tested positive on Saturday. They were admitted to the Communicable Diseases Hospital. Among them was the boy from Jharkhand, who was rescued from the streets.

“Till 3 a.m., the medical staff saw the boy. But at 6 a.m., he went to the toilet and went mis-

sing afterwards. Our staff members are searching for him everywhere. We are sure that he will return in a day,” a source from the Social Defence Department said. He added that the police have been informed about the issue.

“He was rescued a few days ago and brought to the home. Our teams are also checking everywhere. We are wondering what to do to make the children feel comfortable in the hospital. Our staff cannot be with them while in the hospital,” the source said.

The police have registered a case based on the complaint of Kasturi, superintendent of the home. “We are also searching for the boy,” a senior police officer said.

Baby undergoes life-saving procedure at city hospital

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

A month-old premature baby recently underwent a surgery to correct her malformed food pipe at the Kanchi Kamakoti CHILD'S Trust Hospital (KKCTH) in the city.

The infant, born in Tiruchi, was diagnosed with tracheo-esophageal fistula, where the food pipe ends abruptly and the remaining half joins the wind pipe. As a result the child was not able to swallow or feed. Such infants have breathing difficulties, as saliva gets into the lungs, said neonatologist N. Chandrasekaran, under whose care the infant was at KKCTH.

Adding to the complication

was the fact that the baby was born premature, in the 32nd week, and weighed just 1.1 kg.

The KKCTH team brought the child from Tiruchi on January 15 and stabilised her for a day in the neonatal intensive care unit before taking up surgery. “The surgery went on for almost four-and-a-half hours. Post-surgery, the baby was on invasive ventilator support for almost two months,” the doctor said. The pre-term delivery and low birth weight made the surgery that much more difficult, Dr. Chandrasekaran said.

Doctors said the baby was not only feeding normally but had also gained weight now. She was showing normal developmental signs of a two-month-old baby.

THE HINDU CHENNAI

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Notice is hereby given to the public at large that our client, K. K. Elevated Industries Private Limited is the owner of all that piece and parcels of lands comprised in the Survey No. 50 (1.11 Acres), the Survey No. 51 (0.97 Acres), the Survey No. 52 (2.41 Acres), the Survey No. 53 (0.65 Acres), the Survey No. 54 (1.04 Acres), the Survey No. 55 (1.36 Acres), the Survey No. 56 (0.5220) or Survey No. 57 (0.67 Acres) situated in the Ayyanakkam Village, Poonamallee Taluk, Tiruvallur District, lying within the Registration District of North Chennai and the Registration District of Ambattur.

Our clients duly held the originals of the following documents, but are currently unable to locate the copies, therefore, we are searching for:

(1) Sale Deed dated 23/01/1984 (Doc. No. 95/1985)

(2) Sale Deed dated 11/01/1985 (Doc. No. 96/1985)

(3) Sale Deed dated 21/01/1985 (Doc. No. 208/1985)

(4) Sale Deed dated 23/01/1985 (Doc. No. 210/1985)

(5) Sale Deed dated 01/01/1985 (Doc. No. 216/1985)

(6) Sale Deed dated 23/01/1984 (Doc. No. 207/1985)

(7) Sale Deed dated 18/02/1985 (Doc. No. 781/1985)

(8) Sale Deed dated 19/02/1985 (Doc. No. 784/1985)

(9) Sale Deed dated 20/02/1985 (Doc. No. 785/1985)

(10) Sale Deed dated 21/02/1985 (Doc. No. 786/1985)

(11) Sale Deed dated 03/03/1985 (Doc. No. 1410/1985)

(12) Sale Deed dated 27/03/1985 (Doc. No. 1401/1985)

(13) Sale Deed dated 18/03/1985 (Doc. No. 788/1985)

(14) Sale Deed dated 18/02/1985 (Doc. No. 789/1985)

(15) Sale Deed dated 23/03/1985 (Doc. No. 1322/1985)

(16) Sale Deed dated 27/03/1985 (Doc. No. 1323/1985)

(17) Sale Deed dated 23/03/1985 (Doc. No. 1369/1985)

(18) Sale Deed dated 23/03/1985 (Doc. No. 1371/1985)

(19) Sale Deed dated 23/03/1985 (Doc. No. 1379/1985)

(20) Sale Deed dated 23/03/1985 (Doc. No. 1380/1985)

(21) Sale Deed dated 23/03/1985 (Doc. No. 1382/1985)

(22) Sale Deed dated 23/03/1985 (Doc. No. 1383/1985)

(23) Sale Deed dated 23/03/1985 (Doc. No. 1384/1985)

(24) Sale Deed dated 23/03/1985 (Doc. No. 1385/1985)

(25) Sale Deed dated 23/03/1985 (Doc. No. 1386/1985)

(26) Sale Deed dated 23/03/1985 (Doc. No. 1387/1985)

(27) Sale Deed dated 23/03/1985 (Doc. No. 1388/1985)

(28) Sale Deed dated 23/03/1985 (Doc. No. 1389/1985)

(29) Sale Deed dated 23/03/1985 (Doc. No. 1390/1985)

IN BRIEF

Man arrested for impregnating minor

CUDDALORE
The Chidambaram All Women Police Station on Monday arrested a 45-year-old man under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act (POCSO) on charges of sexually assaulting a 16-year-old intellectually challenged girl and impregnating her. The crime came to light when the minor girl and her mother went to a government hospital for a check-up and was found to be five months pregnant, the police said.

'Velumani will be in jail after 11 months'

CHENNAI
DMK principal secretary K.N. Nehru on Monday claimed that Municipal Administration Minister S. P. Velumani has a mere 11 months in office before he would find himself in the same Central Jail in Coimbatore where "he lodged journalists and other DMK partymen".

DMK men arrested for protest

VELLORE
More than 100 party workers from the DMK including Vellore MP D.M. Kathir Anand, and MLAs A.P. Nandakumar and A.C. Vilvanathan, staged a demonstration in front of Anaicut BDO office on Monday. Party workers seated in front of the office building raised slogans against official apathy in addressing water scarcity.

'Scrap Salem-Chennai expressway project'

CHENNAI
The State unit of the CPI(M) on Monday urged the Central government to give up the Salem-Chennai expressway project to safeguard the welfare of the farmers. In a statement, CPI(M) state secretary K. Balakrishnan said that the NHAI has moved the SC for early hearing on its appeal after the Madras High Court cancelled land acquisition to implement the project.

T.N. gets ₹3,193 crore as GST compensation

Centre released funds due for December-February period

T. RAMAKRISHNAN
CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu has been given about ₹3,193 crore as Goods and Services Tax (GST) compensation due for the period December 2019 to February 2020.

The amount was out of the ₹36,400 crore released by the Centre to States last week.

In April, the State was given around ₹1,393 crore as GST compensation. Apart from this, the Centre gave ₹4,820 crore as grants-in-aid, which included local bodies' grants of ₹1,898 crore and the first instalment of revenue deficit grant for ₹845 crore. The State had also received its share of Central taxes to the tune of ₹1,900 crore.

Faceless assessment to promote business

Turant Suvidha Kendra, a dedicated cell to help the trading community complete formalities for ushering in faceless assessment, was inaugurated by Principal Chief Commissioner of Customs, Chennai Zone, Va-

sa Seshagiri Rao, on Monday. The initiative has been launched in Chennai and Bengaluru customs zones and will be expanded to airports, ports and inland container depots by the end of the year, said a release.

In May, the Union government, apart from giving a similar amount towards the State's share of its taxes, provided around ₹1,827 crore in the form of grants-in-aid. Among the components are the second instalment of revenue deficit grant for ₹335

crore and the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan (SSA) funds around ₹356 crore.

In total, in the last two-and-a-half months, the Centre has granted about ₹15,033 crore in the form of grants-in-aid and the State's share in Central taxes.

Chief Minister inaugurates projects

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami inaugurated a few projects and buildings of various departments via video-conferencing on Monday. He inaugurated projects of the highways and minor ports departments, built at a cost of ₹265.46 crore in various districts. These include a flyover in Madurai west, and projects in Namakkal,

Tiruappattur, Pudukkottai, Sivaganga, Ariyalur, Tiruvallur, Madurai and Chen-

nai that have been built at a cost of ₹211.39 crore, a govern-

ment release said.

He also inaugurated projects of the Municipal Adminstration Department, that includes bridges and buildings in Vellore, Kan-

cheepuram, Ariyalur, Chengalpet, and Tiruva-

rur, the release said.

Renovation under way at iconic Ketti railway station

The stop on the NMR has featured in many movies



The work at Ketti railway station is likely to be completed in a couple of months, says an official. ■ M. SATHYAMOORTHY

work will be done to renovate the platform as well as the fencing surrounding the railway station," said an official, adding that the project would have no impact on the trains passing through the station when services resume.

"We expect the work to be completed in a couple of months," said the official.

Narayanasamy expresses regret over undignified burial of COVID-19 patient

Two suspended, says Puducherry Chief Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PUDUCHERRY

In a video message to reporters, the Chief Minister said it was highly regrettable that such an incident occurred.

Dignified disposal

"The video of the body being dumped into a pit has gone viral on social media. The act is highly condemnable. Whatever maybe the cause of death, the body has to be disposed of in a dignified manner. In this case, it has not happened," he said.

The man had come from Chennai to meet his wife. He developed chest pain and was taken to GH where doctors declared him brought

dead. After his death, he was tested for COVID-19 and found positive, he said.

The family had given their consent for burial as per protocol, he added.

Report sought

Mr. Narayanasamy said that a detailed report had been sought from the health and LAD departments over the incident. The employees had been placed under suspension, he added.

On the conduct of SSLC

examination, the Chief Minister said that his government would abide by the directions of Madras High Court.

Eight persons test positive

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PUDUCHERRY

Eight new COVID-19 cases, including one in Mahe enclave in Kerala, were reported in Puducherry on Monday. While six persons were admitted to IGMCR, two patients were under treatment in Jipmer.

Four patients were discharged from IGMCR. The administration has so far tested 8,274 samples. The active cases stand at 75, while the cumulative total is 127.

Restaurants, places of worship reopen in U.T.

RAJESH B NAIR
PUDUCHERRY

Amid a rise in number of COVID-19 cases in Puducherry, more lockdown relaxations took effect on Monday, as places of worship and restaurants allowing dine-ins at 50% seating capacity, reopened after over two months of closure.

A majority of the temples reopened with authorities enforcing strict measures to ensure physical distancing and hygiene. Temple authorities of Sri Manakula Vinayagar temple, the Sri Vedapureeswarar Temple and Varadaraja Perumal Temple screened devotees using thermal scanners and also provided hand sanitizers.

Elephant translocated

S. PRASAD
PUDUCHERRY

Queues were also witnessed in front of Aurobindo Ashram. Some of the churches, including the famous Immaculate Conception Cathedral allowed the faithful to offer prayers. Mosques were also opened.

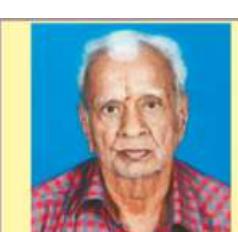
Though the government allowed restaurants to offer dine-in services, only a few opened, over worries about patronage and shortage of workers.

General secretary of restaurant association V. Baskar said the industry wanted to see the response of customers before offering full services. Collector T. Arun and Senior SP (Law and Order) conducted a joint inspection of religious places and restaurants.

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

SRI. S. Gopalathram, 78 attained Acharyan thrividai on 6th Jun. Mourned by wife & children. Rathna 044 28112422



Eathakudi
SRI. S. RAGHAVACHARI (Kappu)
Retired Findlay High School teacher
Passed away on 08.06.2020 at Chennai
Cremation on 09.06.2020 at Nungambakkam
Family, friends and relatives

DEATH

OBITUARY



Dr. P. RAMACHANDRAN (68)
Eminent Cardiologist
expired on 06.06.2020.
Deeply mourned by
FAMILY AND FRIENDS
Contact : 044-28172368

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES



S.LALTHA- Age 81, W/o T. Subramanian & Dil of K.R. Tyagarajan, reached heavenly abode on 02.06.2020, Dasadhu on 11.06.20 at Brahmameetham, Cbe - Umashankar, 9980135494.

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES
REMEMBRANCE

M.RATHNASAMY B.A.
DOB : 12.03.1927 DOD : 09.06.2011
R. RAJALAKSHMI
DOB : 09.04.1933 DOD : 18.06.2005
Fondly & respectfully remembered by
R.VIJAYARAJ

SECOND ANNIVERSARY



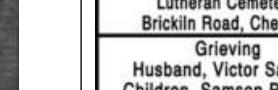
G. DHANDAPANI
Fondly remembered by:
Family Members
G.M. ELECTRICAL WORKS
G.M. AUDIOTECHNICS, CHENNAI

BIRTH CENTENARY



M.R. SIVAKUMAR
Prop: Span Corporation
Sembudoss St., Chennai-1
Expired on 08.06.2020
Cremated on 09.06.2020
Mourned by
Family Members
Ph: 9841646375

BIRTH CENTENARY REMEMBRANCE



MARY VICTOR
of Malaysia/ Annaikadu
was called home by her Creator
on Monday, June 8, 2020.
She was a devout Christian,
dutiful wife, adorable mother and
a humane person.

Funeral Service

Tuesday, June 9, 2020, 10.00 AM,

Lutheran Cemetery,

Bricklin Road, Chennai.

Grieving

Husband, Victor Samuel

Children, Samson Prakash

Sylvia Chandrasekar, USA

Bennett Victor, USA

Ph: 9840326404

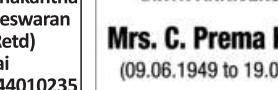
DEATH



Mr. D. SUNDARAVANAN
Retd. Director, Geological Survey of India
01.06.1955 - 09.06.2018

Fondly remembered by
Mrs. Mira Vanan, Anita Edith & Pradeep Daniel

BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE



Mrs. C. PREMA KUMAR
(09.06.1949 to 19.05.2017)



Smt. MYTHILI RAMAN
(29-04-1937 to 07-06-2020)
Proprietor Gana Leather Products, Salem,
W/o late Sri P.N.S. Raman (Retd. Indi Cements Ltd.,
Sankari), D/o Late Sri T.S. Venkataraman (Retd DSP)
reached her heavenly abode on 7th June 2020.
Deeply mourned by Family, Friends and Relatives

THE MADRAS SEVA SADAN
PAYS RESPECTFUL HOMAGE

TO IT'S ERSTWHILE HONORARY

GENERAL SECRETARY

(1976 – 2017)

ON THE OCCASION OF HER

71ST BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

The MADRAS SEVA SADAN
PAYS RESPECTFUL HOMAGE

TO IT'S ERSTWHILE HONORARY

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GENERAL SECRETARY

(1976 – 2017)

ON THE OCCASION OF HER

71ST BIRTH ANNIVERSARY

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

Forecast for Tuesday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Odisha, Andaman and Nicobar Islands, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yanam, Mahe, Kerala, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	83.4	30.0	23.2	Kozhikode	14.2	33.8	23.0
Ahmedabad	19.8	36.8	22.6	Kurnool	—	37.0	27.4
Aizawl	—	24.3	18.8	Lucknow	—	38.4	25.6
Allahabad	—	39.9	27.5	Madurai	—	39.2	27.5
Bengaluru	—	30.0	21.2	Mangaluru	3.1	32.0	22.9
Bhopal	0.7	36.0	24.0	Mumbai	73.2	31.8	23.1
Bhubaneswar	—	36.0	26.4	Mysuru	5.1	31.0	22.0
Chandigarh	—	35.7	23.8	New Delhi	5.6	37.6	25.2
Chennai	—	39.7	29.0	Patna	—	36.8	26.4
Coimbatore	—	33.6	22.8	Port Blair	17.7	29.0	24.0
Dehradun	29.9	34.2	22.1	Puducherry	—	40.4	28.2
Gangtok	0.2	23.2	16.3	Pune	—	32.7	23.4
Goa	20	32.4	22.9	Raipur	6.8	38.8	23.6
Guwahati	0.1	35.5	25.0	Ranchi	1	35.2	24.3
Kolkata	69.5	36.3	25.4	Shillong	0.2	22.8	—
Hyderabad	—	31.0	22.0	Shimla	—	27.0	18.0
Imphal	—	30.8	20.4	Srinagar	—	29.0	14.0
Jaipur	10.1	39.0	25.0	Thiruvananthapuram	11.6	31.9	24.4
Kochi	4.8	31.2	24.8	Tiruchi	—	38.1	27.2
Kohima	—	24.2	14.7	Vijayawada	0.3	39.0	29.4
Kolkata	69.5	36.3	25.4	Visakhapatnam	—	33.0	28.8

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	14	36	23	39	70	—
Bengaluru	.6	13	47	26	59	—
Chennai	3	34	94	52	—	—
Delhi	4	41	94	198	128	—
Hyderabad	29	20	9	44	96	—
Kolkata	3	7	17	24	49	—
Lucknow	4	22	49	105	—	—
Mumbai	11	31	50	15	31	—
Pune	15	5	61	18	18	—
Visakhapatnam	.8	53	35	56	120	—

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

NO_x: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

CO: Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

PM2.5 & PM10: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Srirangam fire: HC upholds conviction of three persons

64 persons, including the groom, had perished in 2004 tragedy

B. TILAK CHANDAR

MADRASI

The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court on Monday upheld the conviction of the owner, the manager and an electrician of a marriage hall in Srirangam where 64 persons, including the groom, died in a fire in 2004.

Thirty-three persons had sustained burns in the fire at the Sri Padmapriya Kalyana Mahal.

The court confirmed the conviction of hall owner Ramasamy and manager Sadagopan. However, their sentences were modified to three months and six months' simple imprisonment, taking into account their age. The owner gave an undertaking to pay compensation of ₹40 lakh to the families of the victims.

Justice G.R. Swaminathan, referring to the Supreme Court's judgment in the Delhi Uphaar cinema fire tragedy, said that the occupier had a duty to ensure safety of visitors against all foreseeable dangers and harm. It was a continuing obligation that an occupier owed towards every invitee, the judge said.

The court was hearing the criminal appeal preferred by the accused, challenging the Tiruchi sessions court order convicting them.

The trial court had found them guilty of causing death by

Man hacked to death in hospital

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MADRASI

A murder accused, V. Murgan, 40, who was undergoing treatment, was hacked to death by an armed gang inside Government Rajaji Hospital here early on Monday.

DMK MLA Anbazhagan critical, says hospital

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

DMK legislator J. Anbazhagan's health has deteriorated and his condition is critical, Rela Institute and Medical Centre said in a bulletin on Monday.

Mr. Anbazhagan, 61, was admitted to the hospital's ICU on June 2 and tested positive for COVID-19 on admission. He was subsequently put on ventilator support on June 3, when his respiratory condition worsened, and was under high flow oxygen therapy. The hospital said he was initially getting 90% oxygen on the

ventilator. His condition improved steadily over the next two days and he was gradually weaned off the ventilator.

"However, since this evening there has been a significant deterioration of his condition. His oxygen requirement has gone up once again and his cardiac function is deteriorating, requiring medical support for blood pressure. His existing chronic kidney disease is also worsening. His condition currently is described as critical," Dr. Ilankumaran Kaliamoorthy, CEO, Rela Institute, said in the bulletin.

Sharp knives are usually tied to the legs of roosters. One of the birds tried to fly away from the arena. When Murugesan tried to stop it, the bird inflicted a deep cut on his thigh, leading to profuse bleeding.



Recalling a tragedy: A file photo of the marriage hall where a blaze killed 64 people at Srirangam in 2004.

negligence, causing grievous hurt by an act endangering life or personal safety of others under the Indian Penal Code.

The main accused in the case were the videographer, assistant of the videographer, owner of the marriage hall, manager of the marriage hall and the electrician. It was said that electric short-circuit and excessive heat generated by the videographer's equipment had caused the fire.

A thatched roof put up at the marriage hall caught fire and fell on the guests. The narrow staircase at the hall caused stampede and added to the tragedy. There were no fire extinguishers in the hall, originally a residential

building that was illegally converted into a marriage hall.

The court acquitted videographer Dharmaraj of all charges and said that he was only focusing on capturing the images at the wedding and his assistant Balaji, who handled the equipment, should have been careful. The court upheld conviction of electrician Murtugesan. The court said that owner Ramasamy should deposit ₹40 lakh and the amount should be disbursed by the Principal District Judge of Tiruchi by applying appropriate yardstick. It should not be a mechanical distribution and the governing standard must be the dependency and the need factor.

स्वास्थ्य विभाग

प्रेस विज्ञप्ति

राज्य के चिकित्सा महाविद्यालय विभागों में सहायक प्राच्यापक के 1171 रिक्त पदों पर नियमित नियुक्त हेतु विज्ञापन संख्या-07 / 2017 से 31 / 2017 के विरुद्ध बिहार लोक सेवा आयोग द्वारा अनुशंसा की गयी है।

राज्य के चिकित्सा महाविद्यालय एवं अस्पतालों में नियमित सहायक प्राच्यापक के पद पर नियुक्त हेतु बिहार लोक सेवा आयोग द्वारा अनुशंसित अध्यर्थियों के प्रमाण-पत्रों की जीव/सत्यापन का अधिकारी कार्यालयों से नियामित विधियों को कुछ अस्थी सत्यापन हेतु उपरित्थित नहीं हुए।

कोविड-19 वैश्वान नामांकनी के कार्यालय दिनांक-31.05.2020 को लॉक-डाउन खत्त होने के उपरांत नियमित विधियों के बैसे अस्थी सत्यापन हेतु उपरित्थित नहीं हो सके, उन्हें अंतिम अवसर प्रदान करते हुए प्रमाण-पत्रों की जीव/सत्यापन का कार्यालय दिनांक नहीं होता।

विषय पर विज्ञापन संख्या

तिथि

समय

स्थान

- ऐनाटॉमी (विज्ञापन संख्या-07 / 2017)
- फिजियोलॉजी (विज्ञापन संख्या-08 / 2017)
- बायोक्रिस्टोट्री (विज्ञापन संख्या-09 / 2017)
- फार्मासीलॉजी (विज्ञापन संख्या-10 / 2017)
- माइक्रोबायोलॉजी (विज्ञापन संख्या-11 / 2017)
- पैथोलॉजी (विज्ञापन संख्या-12 / 2017)
- पौष्ट्रशास्त्र (विज्ञापन संख्या-13 / 2017)
- टॉपीयी एवं वैटर (विज्ञापन संख्या-16 / 2017)
- चर्म एवं रीति रोग (विज्ञापन संख्या-17 / 2017)
- सर्जी रोग (विज्ञापन संख्या-18 / 2017)
- शिशु रोग (विज्ञापन संख्या-19 / 2017)
- स्त्री रोग एवं प्रसारण (विज्ञापन संख्या-20 / 2017)
- पौष्ट्रामारा (विज्ञापन संख्या-21 / 2017)
- रेडियोलॉजी (विज्ञापन संख्या-23 / 2017)
- नियोनोना (विज्ञापन संख्या-24 / 2017)
- मनोरोग (विज्ञापन संख्या-25 / 2017)
- न्यूरो सार्कोरी (विज्ञापन संख्या-26 / 2017)
- हड्डी रोग (विज्ञापन संख्या-27 / 2017)
- नाक, कान एवं गला (विज्ञापन संख्या-29 / 2017)
- नेक्रोलॉजी (विज्ञापन संख्या-30 / 2017)
- न्यूरोलॉजी (विज्ञापन संख्या-31 / 2017)

1. अनुशंसित अध्यर्थियों के शैक्षणिक योग्यता एवं प्रमाण-पत्रों के जीव/सत्यापन से संबंधित प्रपत्र एवं कार्यक्रम की सूची विभागीय वेबसाईट www.health.bih.nic.in पर उपलब्ध है।
2. प्रमाण-पत्रों की जीव एवं समिक्षित होनेवाले अध्यर्थियों को किसी प्रकार का यात्रा यात्र एवं अन्य कोई गतिशील देयांक नहीं होगा।
3. यात्रे उत्त्युक्त विधियों द्वारा देय जायेगा कि वे इस



Step by step

Talks will not find an immediate resolution to the LAC stand-off, but a start has been made

With official talks getting under way over the weekend, the month-long stand-off between Indian and Chinese soldiers along the LAC in Ladakh and Sikkim has entered a more considered phase. There was little expectation that the videoconference on Friday, held between External Affairs Ministry officials in Delhi and their Ministry of Foreign Affairs counterparts in Beijing, and talks between the Leh Corps Commander with the South Xinjiang Military Region Commander, held in the Chushul-Moldo region on China's side of the LAC on Saturday, would bear fruit immediately. However, statements from both sides that the talks will continue indicate a desire to resolve the situation. The MEA and the MFA have also reiterated their commitment to abide by agreements between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping, which came after the last big stand-off, at Doklam in 2017, to not allow "differences to escalate into disputes". During the Doklam incident, even after a meeting between the leaders on the sidelines of a G-20 summit, it had taken several high-level engagements to ensure a drawdown to the 73-day stand-off.

Given the differences between the situation now and previous incidents, it would be naive to assume that this stand-off can be resolved quickly through talks. The stand-off is at more than one location, including the Finger areas of the Pangong Tso, Galwan Valley and Gogra post in Ladakh and the Naku La pass in Sikkim, and it will require careful study to decide how to de-induct soldiers. Furthermore, a "status quo ante" will require that Chinese soldiers vacate areas where they have dug in for weeks now. Nothing short of their full withdrawal should satisfy India, which means that more than talks on the ground and by diplomats, there is a need for strong political direction from Beijing to the PLA to do that. Otherwise, India must prepare for a long-drawn stand-off, and manoeuvres aimed at ensuring China's pull back. In addition, even as the government tries to analyse the reasons for China's aggressive action, it must introspect on signals it misread and warnings that went unheeded across its strategic command. If such skirmishes normally follow the melting of snowlines, for example, then why was the LAC not adequately manned in April-May? Serious notice should have been taken of China's protests on the redrawing of the Jammu-Kashmir and Ladakh maps, as well as the impact of the Home Minister's vow in Parliament to "take back" Aksai Chin. The Defence Minister has said that Chinese troops arrived in "heavy numbers" and therefore the government must also study what intelligence was received ahead of such movement, and when action was taken upon it. Finally, why has the stand-off emerged at all, after the intense summit-level conversations in Wuhan and Mamallapuram to discuss building trust at the LAC? Given the government's silence on events thus far, it is unlikely that it will put out answers to these questions publicly, but in any event, they must be sought.

Selling space

SpaceX's mission carrying humans to space marks a new age in commercial space flight

For the United States to send American astronauts to space from American soil after a gap of nine years is a milestone in itself. That took place at the time of one of the biggest civil rights upsurges since the 1960s makes it almost like an escape to fantasy, riding on the wings of a public-private partnership between NASA and Elon Musk's SpaceX. The less expensive journey is a clear financial advantage as the U.S. has been paying the Russians \$80 million to put one astronaut into space ever since they stopped NASA's human space launch programme. Thus, SpaceX comes in to provide advantages in costs, innovation and safety. In the 2000s, when Mr. Musk showed off his rockets and lobbied in Washington DC, he was mostly ignored, yet now, NASA wants him to find customers for space flights. This can expand the power of U.S. commerce exponentially. Japanese billionaire Yusaku Maezawa has already signed up as a potential traveller to the moon and back. With this partnership, Americans have taken yet another leap of faith in creating commerce in space. If his plans get realised, Mr. Musk could make space flights as common as domestic flights. Technologically, it is a remarkable feat. The collaboration brings in a 'willingness to fail' which has kept SpaceX alive. This is coupled to the propensity to 'qualify every component', which has been NASA's strength.

NASA has partially outsourced its work of innovating, testing and building new technology to market players such as SpaceX. It has made clear its desire to invite more such innovative space companies to participate. India under Prime Minister Modi has also opened up the space sector including ISRO facilities to private players. The emergence of successful partnerships here will likely depend on how well they stand up against the American example of allowing for failure. 'Fly, test, fail, fix' has been the rubric followed by SpaceX. India has not witnessed such huge experiments in space except by the state-led ISRO, its most recently celebrated one being the Mars Orbiter Mission at the cost of ₹7 per km, which is cheaper than autorickshaw travel as cited by Mr. Modi himself, famously. ISRO already has a competitive edge in the global market for space technology. The opening up of space technologies could harbour many an innovation of this kind; however, it calls for a high degree of accountability coupled with a non-partisan approach on the part of all players. The state's role as a just arbiter in finding a delicate balance between entrepreneurial adventure and vested interests is a prerequisite to compete in space with the superpowers.

Who's afraid of monetisation of the deficit?

The shrill clamour against it is based on misconceptions; fears of inflation lack substance



T.T. RAM MOHAN

As the government began to wrestle with the severe downturn caused by the novel coronavirus pandemic, some economic pundits urged the government to go out and spend without worrying about the increase in public debt. They said the rating agencies would understand that these are unusual times. If they did not and chose to downgrade India, we should not lose too much sleep over it.

Rating and fundamentals

Well, the decision of the rating agency, Moody's, to downgrade India from Baa2 to Baa3 should come as a rude awakening. The present rating is just one notch above the 'junk' category. Moody's has also retained its negative outlook on India, which suggests that a further downgrade is more likely than an upgrade.

The rationale given by Moody's should especially make people sit up. The downgrade, Moody's says, has not factored in the economic impact of the pandemic. It has to do with India's fundamentals before the onset of the pandemic and the extended lockdown with which India responded. The message should be clear enough. Any further deterioration in the fundamentals from now on will push India into 'junk' status.

We should not lose sleep over a further downgrade and simply borrow our way out of trouble? Anybody who thinks so is living in cloud cuckoo land. Whatever the failings of the agencies, in the imperfect world of global finance that we live in, their ratings do car-

ry weight. Institutional investors are largely bound by covenants that require them to exit an economy that falls below investment grade.

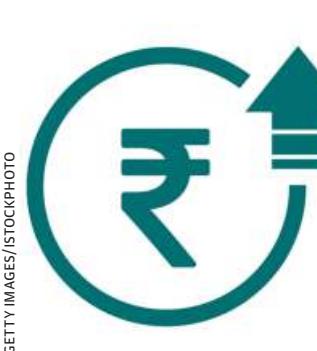
If India is downgraded to junk status, foreign institutional investors, or FIIs, will flee in droves. The stock and bond markets will take a severe beating. The rupee will depreciate hugely and the central bank will have its hands full trying to stave off a foreign exchange crisis. That is the last thing we need at the moment.

Work towards an upgrade

We have to put our best foot forward now to prevent a downgrade and bring about an upgrade instead. To do so, we need to note the key concerns that Moody's has cited in effecting the present downgrade to our rating: slowing growth, rising debt and financial sector weakness. These concerns are legitimate.

Many economists as also the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) expect India's economy to shrink in FY 2020-21. The combined fiscal deficit of the Centre and the States is expected to be in the region of 12% of GDP. Moody's expects India's public debt to GDP ratio to rise from 72% of GDP to 84% of GDP in 2020-21. The banking sector had non-performing assets of over 9% of advances before the onset of the pandemic. Weak growth and rising bankruptcies will increase stress in the banking sector.

The government's focus thus far has been on reassuring the financial markets that the fisc will not spin out of control. It has kept the 'discretionary fiscal stimulus' down to 1% of GDP, a figure that is most modest in relation to that of many other economies, especially developed economies. ('Discretionary fiscal stimulus' refers to an increase in the fiscal deficit caused by government policy as distinct



from an increase caused by slowing growth, the latter being called an 'automatic stabiliser').

Keeping the fiscal deficit on a leash addresses the concerns of rating agencies about a rise in the public debt to GDP ratio. But it does little to address their concerns about growth. The debt to GDP ratio will worsen and financial stress will accentuate if growth fails to recover quickly enough. The government's stimulus package relies heavily on the banking system to shore up growth. But there is only so much banks can do. More government spending is required, especially for infrastructure.

Clearing misconceptions

We need to increase the discretionary fiscal stimulus without increasing public debt. The answer is monetisation of the deficit, that is, the central bank providing funds to the government. Mention 'monetisation of deficit' and many economic pundits will cower in terror. These fears are based on misconceptions about monetisation of the deficit and its effects.

A common misconception is that it involves 'printing notes'. One image that leaps to mind is the printing presses of central banks cranking out notes with abandon. But that is not how central banks fund the government. The central bank typically funds

the government by buying Treasury bills. As proponents of what is called Modern Monetary Theory point out, even that is not required. The central bank could simply credit the Treasury's account with itself through an electronic accounting entry.

When the government spends the extra funds that have come into its account, there is an increase in 'Base money', that is, currency plus banks' reserves. So, yes, monetisation results in an expansion of money supply. But that is not the same as printing currency notes.

What could be the objection to such an expansion in money supply? It could be that the expansion is inflationary. This objection has little substance in a situation where aggregate demand has fallen sharply and there is an increase in unemployment. In such a situation, monetisation of the deficit is more likely to raise actual output closer to potential output without any great increase in inflation.

Exponents of the MMT make a more striking point. They say there is nothing particularly virtuous about the government incurring expenditure and issuing bonds to banks instead of issuing these to the central bank. The expansion in base money and hence in money supply is the same in either route. (The precise sequence of central bank transactions in these two cases and the identity in outcomes is shown in *Macroeconomics* by Mitchell, Wray and Watts, three economists who are among the leading exponents of MMT). The preference for private debt is voluntary. MMT proponents say it has more to do with an ideological preference for limiting government expenditure. But that is a debate for another day.

Central banks worldwide have resorted to massive purchases of

government bonds in the secondary market in recent years, with the RBI joining the party of late. These are carried out under Open Market Operations (OMO). The impact on money supply is the same whether the central bank acquires government bonds in the secondary market or directly from the Treasury. So why the shrill clamour against monetisation of public debt?

About inflation control

OMO is said to be a lesser evil than direct monetisation because the former is a 'temporary' expansion in the central bank's balance sheet whereas the latter is 'permanent'. But we know that even so-called 'temporary' expansions can last for long periods with identical effects on inflation. What matters, therefore, is not whether the central bank's balance sheet expansion is temporary or permanent but how it impacts inflation. As long as inflation is kept under control, it is hard to argue against monetisation of the deficit in a situation such as the one we are now confronted with.

We now have a way out of the constraints imposed by sovereign ratings. The government must confine itself to the additional borrowing of ₹4.2 trillion which it has announced. Further discretionary fiscal stimulus must happen through monetisation of the deficit. That way, the debt to GDP ratio can be kept under control while also addressing concerns about growth. The rating agencies should be worrying not about monetisation per se but about its impact on inflation. As long as inflation is kept under control, they should not have concerns – and we need not lose sleep over a possible downgrade.

T.T. Ram Mohan is a professor at IIM Ahmedabad. E-mail: ttr@iima.ac.in

The critical role of decentralised responses

Strategies in tackling the COVID-19 crisis must include local governments being equipped and fiscally empowered



M.A. OOMMEN

The novel coronavirus pandemic has brought home the critical role of local governments and decentralised responses. In terms of information, monitoring and immediate action, local governments are at an advantage, and eminently, to meet any disaster such as COVID-19. While imposing restrictive conditionalities on States availing themselves of the enhanced borrowing limits (3.5% to 5% of Gross State Domestic Product, or GSDP) for 2020-21 is unwarranted, the recognition that local governments should be fiscally empowered immediately is a valid signal for the future of local governance. This article makes some suggestions to improve local finance and argues that the extant fiscal illusion is a great deterrent to mobilisation.

Core issues

COVID-19 has raised home four major challenges: economic, health, welfare/livelihood and resource mobilisation. These challenges have to be addressed by all tiers of government in the federal polity, jointly and severally. Own revenue is the critical lever of local government empowerment. Of course the several lacunae that continue to bedevil local governance have to be simultaneously

addressed. One, the new normal demands a paradigm shift in the delivery of health care at the cutting edge level. Two, the parallel bodies that have come up after the 73rd/74th Constitutional Amendments have considerably distorted the functions-fund flow matrix at the lower level of governance. Three, there is yet no clarity in the assignment of functions, functionaries and financial responsibilities to local governments. Functional mapping and responsibilities continue to be ambiguous in many States. Instructively, Kerala attempted even responsibility mapping besides activity mapping. Four, the critical role of local governments will have to be recognised by all. A few suggestions for resource mobilisation are given under three heads: local finance, Members of Parliament Local Area Development Scheme, or MPLADS, and the Fifteenth Finance Commission (FFC).

Local finance

Property tax collection with appropriate exemptions should be a compulsory levy and preferably must cover land. The Economic Survey 2017-18 points out that urban local governments, or ULGs, generate about 44% of their revenue from own sources as against only 5% by rural local governments, or RLGs. Per capita own revenue collected by ULGs is about 3% of urban per capita income while the corresponding figure is only 0.1% for RLGs. There is a yawning gap between tax potential and actual collection, resulting in colossal underperformance.



When they are not taxed, people remain indifferent. LGs, States and people seem to labour under a fiscal illusion. In States such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Jharkhand, local tax collection at the panchayat level is next to nil. Property tax forms the major source of local revenue throughout the world. All States should take steps to enhance and rationalise property tax regime. A recent study by Professor O.P. Mathur shows that the share of property tax in GDP has been declining since 2002-03. This portends a wrong signal. The share of property tax in India in 2017-18 is only 0.14% of GDP as against 2.1% in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) countries. If property tax covers land, that will hugely enhance the yield from this source even without any increase in rates.

Land monetisation and betterment levy may be tried in the context of COVID-19 in India. To be sure, land values have to be unbundled for socially relevant purposes.

Municipalities and even suburban panchayats can issue a corona containment bond for a period of say 10 years, on a coupon rate be-

low market rate but significantly above the reverse repo rate to attract banks. We are appealing to the patriotic sentiments of non-resident Indians and rich citizens. Needless to say, credit rating is not to be the weighing consideration. That the Resurgent India Bond of 1998 could mobilise over \$4 billion in a few days encourages us to try this option.

MP fund scheme

The suspension of MPLADS by the Union government for two years is a welcome measure. The annual budget was around ₹4,000 crore. The Union government has appropriated the entire allocation along with the huge non-lapseable arrears. MPLADS, which was avowedly earmarked for local area development, must be assigned to local governments, preferably to panchayats on the basis of well-defined criteria.

A special COVID-19 containment grant to the LGs by the FFC to be distributed on the basis of SFC-laid criteria is the need of the hour. The commission may do well to consider this. The local government grant of ₹90,000 crore for 2020-2021 by the FFC is only 3% higher than that recommended by the Fourteenth Finance Commission. For panchayats there is only an increase of ₹63 crore. The commission's claim that the grant works out to 4.3% of the divisible pool and that it is higher than the 3.54% of the FC-XIV is obviously because the size of the denominator is smaller.

Building health infrastructure and disease control strategies at the lo-

cal level find no mention in the five tranches of the packages announced by the Union Finance Minister. The claim for a higher award to LGs is loud and clear.

The ratio of basic to tied grant is fixed at 50:50 by the commission. In the context of the crisis underway, all grants must be united for freely evolving proper COVID-19 containment strategies locally. Further the 13th Finance Commission's recommendation to tie local grants to the union divisible pool of taxes to ensure a buoyant and predictable source of revenue to LGs (accepted by the then Union government) must be restored by the commission.

Flood, drought, and earthquakes are taken care of by the Disaster Management Act 2005 which does not recognise epidemics, although several parts of India experienced several bouts of various flus in the past. The new pandemic is a public health challenge of an unprecedented nature along with livelihood and welfare challenges. The first Report speaks of mitigation funds and even prepared a disaster risk index, to map out vulnerable areas. These are redundant in the present context. The 2005 Act may have to be modified to accommodate the emerging situation.

COVID-19 has woken us up to the reality that local governments must be equipped and empowered. Relevant action is the critical need.

M.A. Oommen is an Honorary Fellow, Centre for Development Studies, Thiruvananthapuram

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column should serve as reminder to some readers who propagate obtuse views.

THARCUS S. FERNANDO, Chennai

Article of hate

There can be no second opinion that the NYT article "Send in the troops", is nothing but an outburst of communal hatred ('From the Readers' Editor', 'Some lines are sacrosanct', June 8). When the world has witnessed with great anguish, anger and unfathomable pain what happened to a hapless, unarmed and handcuffed person, Tom Cotton has advocated an extreme line, pawning his conscience. The last paragraph of the RE's

Still on the margins The issue of the migrant worker needs to be addressed by national consensus. The Centre cannot leave everything to the States. With industry leaning on the government to ask workers to return, the issue acquires a new dimension. Basic issues of housing and medical care in their dingy tenements remain unresolved.

BRIJ B. GOYAL, Ludhiana, Punjab

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.

The state of politics

The fact that the Bharatiya Janata Party has effortlessly managed the numbers required for the smooth passage of crucial and controversial Bills in the Rajya Sabha despite its inadequate strength makes a strong case for checks on its humongous manipulative power and the Opposition's easy susceptibility to be poached (Editorial, "Upper hand", June 8). Seemingly, sheer political opportunism and the absence of ideological commitment among political parties and leaders have become the bane of the present political discourse. The political rhetoric contains an

overdose of ideological coating

where the actions reflect the colour of caustic politics. The party in power swears by the legacy of its political stalwarts but explores all dubious ways to implement its agenda. The million dollar question is not about whether or not the BJP and its allies consolidate their numbers in the Rajya Sabha but about whether or not Indian polity is cleansed of the ever increasing menace of political defections, ideological bankruptcy, tendencies to dent national unity and ugly manifestations of the personality cult.

N. RAVEENDRA BABU,
Hyderabad

Private care

Allegations of price gouging are flying thick and fast against private hospitals across India. In the pre-pandemic period too, they have not covered themselves in glory; so milking the present situation is true to their form. Though a few State governments have capped COVID-19 treatment prices in such hospitals, the prohibitive prices are beyond the reach of the middle class (Editorial, "Profit, not profiteering", June 8). In the face of an exponential surge in positive cases the health infrastructure is bursting at its seams and, in all probability, will lean

towards only people with deep pockets. For the common man, prevention is better than no cure. It is better if this message is disseminated loud and clear and people are given no false hopes.

DEEPAK SINGHAL,<

Resume dialogue with Nepal now

India should take the lead in ending a deadlock that goes against the interest of bilateral ties with Nepal



YASHWANT SINHA & ATUL K. THAKUR



"India should not shy away from a dialogue even during the COVID-19 crisis." Students protest against the Indian government in Kathmandu, Nepal. ■AP

The time of a pandemic is not the time to have a hostile neighbourhood. At this moment, India should ideally lead in creating momentum for deeper regional and sub-regional cooperation in South Asia. Ironically, the recent developments with Nepal have been the opposite of that. India and Nepal have reached a new low in bilateral relations when both countries are facing a humanitarian crisis.

Official statements

On May 8, the Defence Minister of India tweeted: "Delighted to inaugurate the Link Road to Mansarovar Yatra today. The BRO achieved road connectivity from Dharchula to Lipulekh (China Border) known as Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra Route. Also flagged off a convoy of vehicles from Pithoragarh to Gunji through video conferencing." The announcement and its timing surprised even the keen observers of India-Nepal relations. No one thought that a road project in this territory would get inaugurated so urgently and through video conferencing. The announcement immediately put the Nepali government, the people and political players there on high alert. The Oli government's sharp reaction was unexpected – the road was being built for years, so for it to pretend that it was unaware of this development and therefore surprised at its inauguration defies logic.

In a statement, the Nepalese Ministry of Foreign Affairs expressed regret at India's move. It said, "As per the Sugauli Treaty (1816), all the territories east of Kali (Mahakali) River, including Lipulekh, Kalapani and Lipulekh, belong to Nepal. This was reiterated by the Government of Nepal several times in the past and most recently through a diplomatic note addressed to the Government of India dated 20 November 2019 in response to the new political map issued by the latter." It cautioned the Indian government against carrying out "any activity inside the territory of Nepal". It stated that "Nepal had expressed its disagreement in 2015

through separate diplomatic notes addressed to the governments of both India and China when the two sides agreed to include Lipulekh Pass as a bilateral trade route without Nepal's consent in the Joint Statement issued on 15 May 2015 during the official visit of the Prime Minister of India to China." Nepal said it believed in resolving the pending boundary issues through diplomatic means. It said that Kathmandu had proposed twice the dates for holding the Foreign Secretary-level meeting between the two countries.

There was a long-awaited response to this from the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA). Without giving any specific date, the MEA assured Nepal that talks would begin after the lockdown was lifted. The delay is not understandable. Why can't discussions take place over video conferencing? India's response to Nepal's note said: "The recently inaugurated road section in Pithoragarh district in the State of Uttarakhand lies completely within the territory of India. The road follows the pre-existing route used by the pilgrims of the Kailash-Mansarovar Yatra. India and Nepal have established mechanism to deal with all boundary matters. The boundary delineation exercise with Nepal is ongoing. India is committed to resolving outstanding boundary issues through diplomatic dialogue and in the spirit of our close and friendly bilateral relations with Nepal." Nepal's Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali asked why talks on this important matter could not take place under lockdown when the 'inauguration' of the road could take place during the COVID-19 crisis. We also believe that it should take place

without wasting even a day. The strain in ties also reflects the tensions in Nepal's politics. Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli stepped out of diplomatic nicety when he indulged in reactionary nationalism and termed the "Indian virus" as more damaging than the "Chinese virus". He also questioned India's faith in 'Satyameva Jayate'.

On India's part, the problem lies in overlooking the past realities of Lipulekh region. The Army Chief's statement that "there is reason to believe" that Nepal's recent objection was "at the behest of someone else", hinting at China's possible role, was eminently avoidable. This too drew sharp reactions from Nepal.

A unique relationship

India and Nepal enjoy a unique relationship that goes beyond diplomacy and the governments of the day. Both countries are interdependent through shared social, cultural, economic and other civilisational links. Here, the ties are not between the governments alone. Over three million Nepalese live in India and lakhs of Indians live in Nepal. The Gurkha Rifles, known for the best in warfare, are incomplete without the Nepalese. They fight to keep India secure, so where is the scope for conflict? The people of Nepal fought for India's independence. B.P. Koirala and many more Nepalese made enormous sacrifices during the freedom struggle. Both countries have open borders and unique ties. This reminds us that both countries have shared interests while respecting each other's sovereignty. There is no place for a 'big brother' attitude. The regimes in New Delhi and Kathman-

du have to exercise caution and restraint. The boundary controversy on Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura should be seen in retrospect. It must be admitted that Nepal's kings had neglected this territory for decades. The area attained prominence only with Nepal's tryst with parliamentary democracy beginning in 1990. The consistent neglect for the area is evident in the fact that the last official record of any government work that happened there was in 1953. A census was conducted in this area by the royal regime of Nepal and the land records from there were archived at the Darchula district office.

Article 8 of the India-Nepal Friendship Treaty, 1950 says, "So far as matters dealt with herein are concerned, this Treaty cancels all previous Treaties, agreements and engagements entered into on behalf of India between the British Government and the Government of Nepal", though the treaty does not define the India-Nepal boundary. On the issue of defining the boundary, the Treaty of Sugauli (1816) and the 1960 agreement between India and Nepal on the four Terai districts prevail. The Sugauli Treaty outlines the east of Mahakali River as Nepal's territory, and the west of it as India's territory. The dispute today is with regard to the origin of the Kali River. Nepal claims that the origin is in the higher reaches of this hilly territory which would establish its claim on Kalapani and Lipulekh. The Boundary Committee constituted in the year 2000 failed to resolve the issue. There is a need to renew it to end the cartographic tussle between the two countries.

It is time to repose faith in constructive dialogue with empathy to resolve any matter that disturbs the calm between the two countries. In good and bad times, India and Nepal have to live together. Diplomatic dialogue should be resumed at the earliest possible. Embassies on both sides should be allowed to function freely. Nothing of the sort that happened in 2015 should be repeated now. India should not shy away from a dialogue even during the COVID-19 crisis. The MEA's latest statement should materialise in action and restore trust and confidence through constructive dialogue.

Yashwant Sinha is former Minister of Finance and Minister of External Affairs; Atul K. Thakur is a policy professional and columnist

Fighting sea blindness

Forgoing a third aircraft carrier due to budgetary constraints could be counterproductive



D.K. SHARMA

mied this plan, Pakistan was hopeful of a "stalemate" followed by international intervention. Almost a lakh Pakistani soldiers would possibly not have surrendered unless they had lost their "will to fight". The Indian Navy, using its lone carrier, ensured that no reinforcements or supplies were forthcoming and no escape route was possible.

Indian Naval history (*Transition to Triumph*) also records that "by themselves the ships of the Eastern Fleet were too few and too slow to enforce contraband control and help would be needed from Vikrant's aircraft. But the extraordinary extent to which Vikrant's aircraft actually succeeded in assisting ships in contraband control and apprehending merchant ships, over and above their air strikes against East Pakistan, came to be fully realised only after the war."

The contemporary argument that a carrier's utility in "future war scenarios will be short and swift" is interesting. Pakistan Navy history laments "vague concepts" such as "a short, sharp war" leading to it being accorded a lower inter-service priority. This rendered it incapable of "providing protection to the sea lines of communication between the two wings" and led to the 1971 debacle.

Another shibboleth that needs discarding is the claimed ability of any air force providing effective air cover at sea. In 1971, for example, carrier-borne aircraft repeatedly attacked Chittagong and Cox's Bazar airfields on the request of the Air Force.

Impact of parochialism

There are other counterpoints to the article too. First, stating that China went in for a carrier only after building its army is a narrow interpretation. This may have been Hobson's choice. Aircraft carrier operations take years to master even if a ship is available. Further, China's 2015 defence white paper states that "the traditional mentality that land outweighs sea must be abandoned". Even as China is reducing its land forces to focus on the sea, 'sources' are propounding that India do the exact opposite. Second, forgoing a carrier due to budgetary constraints is counterproductive. An indigenously constructed carrier can galvanise the economy given the large number of industries and MSMEs involved in the supply chain. Third, carriers being required only for global powers is debatable. India had initiated procurement of INS Vikrant within a few years of independence. Carriers cannot be built overnight. Planning for the future requires foresight.

Parochialism and sea blindness in an era of COVID-19 budget cuts can have a long-term impact on comprehensive national power.

Captain D.K. Sharma, a retired Naval Officer, was the Spokesperson, Indian Navy, at the Ministry of Defence

The e-diplomacy experiment

Cyber security and productivity are concerns but e-summits must go on as diplomacy must go on

SREERAM SUNDAR CHAULIA

The first India-Australia virtual leaders' summit on June 4 had a lot on the menu, ranging from military interoperability to jointly tackling COVID-19. The two countries upgraded their relations to a 'comprehensive strategic partnership'. The summit was noteworthy for its novel modus operandi.

Adapting to the times

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Indian delegation were on a video conference call with Prime Minister Scott Morrison and the Australian delegation. The dangers posed by COVID-19 have compelled the traditionally glad-handing, backslapping and tourism-promoting art of summit diplomacy to adapt. Just as corporations and educational institutions have migrated to online mediums, nation states are left with no choice but to do the same. E-summits are physically safer for leaders and also time-saving and economising events where costly physical journeys with entourages can be avoided.

Mr. Modi has engaged in a few multilateral 'e-diplomacy' rounds since the COVID-19 outbreak. He convened the SAARC leaders' video conference on March 15, joined the Extraordinary G20 Leaders' Summit via video link on March 26, and made his maiden appearance at the Non-Aligned Movement virtual summit on May 4. These were all single-issue focused and brief affairs. But the bilateral summit with Australia was elaborate and involved the exchange of multiple agreements.

It has been a maxim in diplomacy that face-to-face interactions at the highest level mark the zenith of foreign relations. The British scholar Ernest Satow dubbed summits "a permanent feature of diplomatic topography". The formal negotiations during summits, the closed-door restricted sessions, the fireside chats, the walks in the woods, the photo ops and the outreach to live audiences in the host and home countries are all part of the package. But now without all the protocols and structured dialogues in cozy settings, it is doubtful if major breakthroughs or deals requiring direct intervention of lead-

ers can happen. There is a danger that 'e-diplomacy' will become less productive in terms of deliverables, especially where crucial sticking points need ironing out. While the backroom legwork and minutiae of agreements can be hashed out by lower-level bureaucrats communicating remotely, online summits will simply not satisfy the broader political goals and bigger objectives that heads of state carry with them.

Threat to cyber security

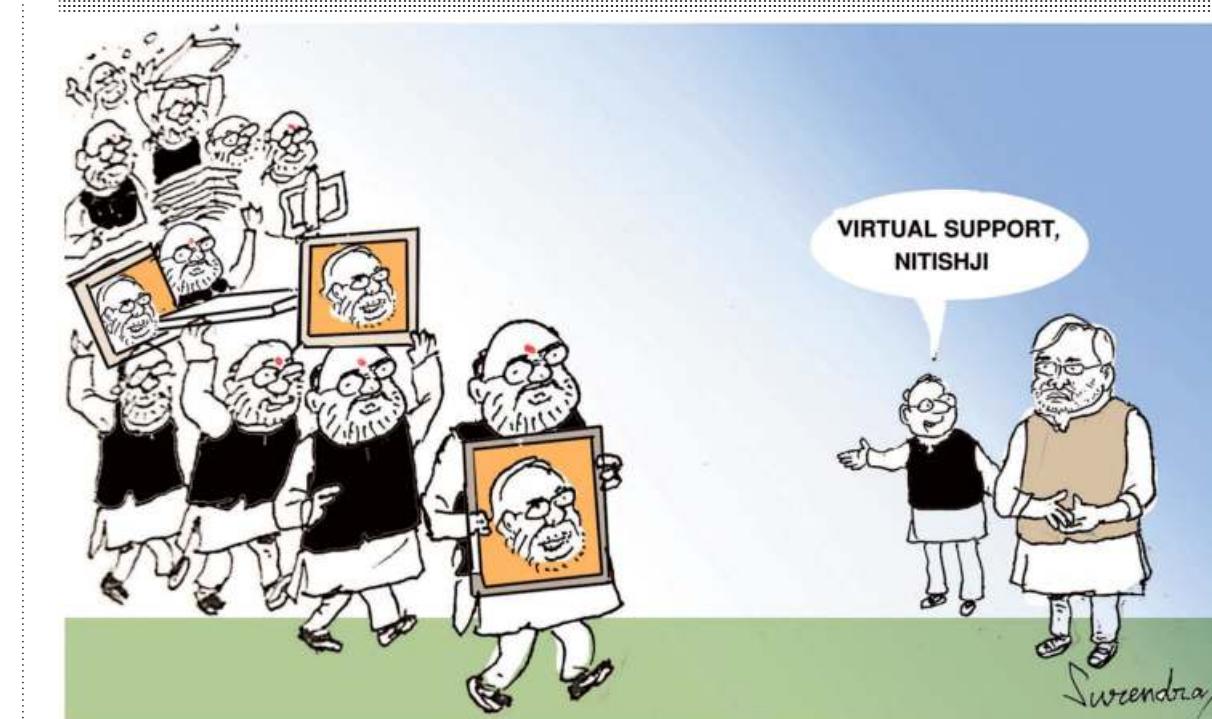
Another threat to virtual summits comes from cyber insecurity. In pre-COVID-19 times, summit venues used to be thoroughly sanitised and debugged to prevent sensitive foreign policy content from being spied upon or leaked. E-diplomacy is riskier and could be subject to hacking of classified content, making the leaders warier. This could reduce the spontaneity and candour of their conversations. It is arguable whether new ideas or proposals which entail geo-strategic alignments can emanate out of e-summits.

Yet, having some summit is better than no summit at all. However artificial and unsatisfying the video conferencing medium is, key partners like India and Australia have to get on with it and hold high-level meetings as part of their strategic signalling. With Australia and India trying to forge coalitions of middle powers in sustaining the balance of power in the Indo-Pacific, gaps in diplomatic summits can convey weakening of collective resolve.

For those missing the drama and the trappings of a 'real' summit, social media-savvy politicians might generate visuals to cherish in spite of the limits of virtual diplomacy. In a build-up to the India-Australia e-summit, Mr. Morrison offered vegetarian samosas via Twitter and Mr. Modi replied that he wanted to enjoy them together "once we achieve a decisive victory against COVID-19".

In-person summits will restart one day. But the online interlude has to go on because diplomacy has to go on.

Sreeram Sundar Chaulia is Dean at the Jindal School of International Affairs

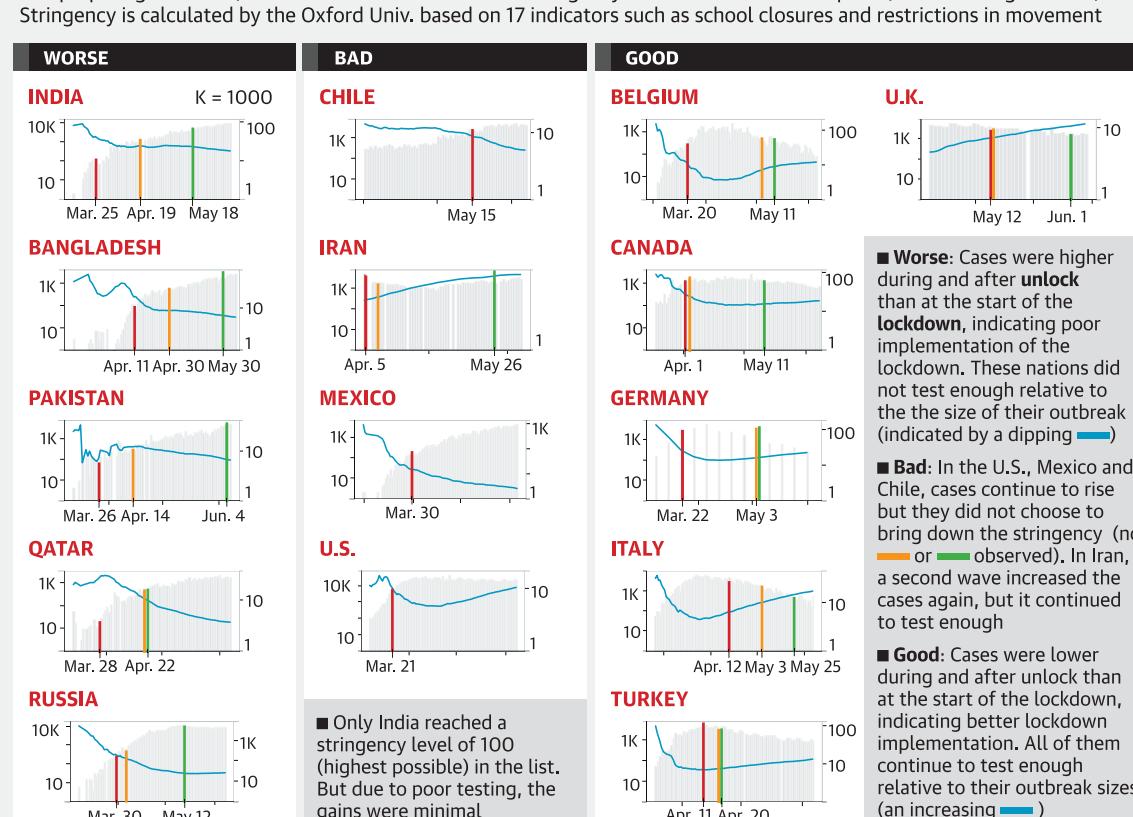


DATA POINT

Lost in lockdown

Despite a long and stringent lockdown, cases in India continue to surge. Is poor testing a reason? By **The Hindu Data Team**

The graphs show the no. of daily cases (■, left axis) & the cumulative no. of tests conducted per confirmed case (■, right axis) for select countries with >50,000 cases. The reference lines indicate how stringent a nation's lockdown was on a particular date. ■ indicates when peak lockdown stringency was reached; ■ indicates when it was relaxed (the govt. was preparing to unlock); ■ indicates when the lowest stringency was recorded after the peak (further lifting of curbs). Stringency is calculated by the Oxford Univ. based on 17 indicators such as school closures and restrictions in movement



The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO JUNE 09, 1970

Grave Mistake

(From an editorial)

A long-term strategy seems to be contemplated by the Tamil Nadu Government in its campaign against the use of the English language in school and college. Recently, a Government order was issued restricting the entry of children into the English medium sections of middle and high schools unless they had had their primary education in English or were the children of Central Government servants or of persons whose mother tongue was not Tamil. This order has been strongly criticised at a public meeting when it was pointed out that it was highly discriminatory. Since pupils are now studying English from the third class, it is quite possible for many children to enter English-medium sections in the higher classes. Further, it is not the children of Central Government servants alone who are likely to move from State to State. This happens to many other classes of professional people and businessmen. As one correspondent pointed out, the proper way to avoid this kind of discrimination would be to open at least one English medium section in every school controlled or recognised by the Government.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO JUNE 9, 1920

Indian medical professionals (From an editorial)

The agitation in Britain against the admission of Indians in the Indian Medical Service in larger numbers has not yet died out. The Morning Post laments that the Indian Medical Service has been ruined almost beyond repair by the excessive admission of Indians. "The ruin," says the apostle of Junkerdom, "has gone so far that no Englishman with any prospect of succeeding in England will care to go over to India." It is a stale theory that English doctors of the I.M.S. have come forward at the sacrifice of prodigious prospects at home and no amount of warming up will alter the fact that the majority of them have had only a Hobson's choice – to pick up in India what they are unable to earn in England. The best of them have chosen service here on a balance of benefits and as these benefits still remain fat as ever, there is no reason why they should not continue to come. Our contemporary argues with more chagrin than logic that the diminution of English doctors reacts on other departments on account of the emphatic prejudice against placing his wife and children under an Indian's treatment.

FROM PAGE ONE

Malls, cafes reopen to a new normal

On its part, Kerala permitted the opening up of places of worship and government offices in a restricted manner. The grim shadow cast by the outbreak prompted social organisations cutting across the religious spectrum to declare almost unanimously that a majority of the temples, mosques and churches would remain shuttered. However, there were some exceptions. The government said temples owned by the Travancore, Kochi and Malabar Devaswom Boards would admit devotees in limited manner. Sabarimala would open for pilgrimage on June 14. The Guruvayoor temple would allow devotees from Tuesday. Attendance in Kerala government offices showed an upswing. Most hotels in the State announced that they would not allow dine-in facilities.

In Kolkata, shopping malls and restaurants opened with strict health

protocols. Masks were a must, so was thermal screening and use of sanitizers. Surprisingly, many people turned up during lunch hour.

"We did not expect so many of our regular customers on day one," said Tanmoy Manna, a south Kolkata cafe manager. Well known Park Street restaurant Peter Cat had many waiting outside during lunch hour as seating capacity had been halved. Government offices opened too and people were out in large numbers. But getting public transport was a challenge.

In Andhra Pradesh, the hill temple of Lord Venkateswara at Tirumala was opened for *darshan* but was restricted to temple employees and their family members for the first two days. Senior citizens and children are not permitted to visit the temple. The general public will be allowed in from June 11.

Military-level talks positive, says Rajnath

At the virtual rally, the Minister flayed Opposition parties, saying he did not need lessons from them on how to deal with these things.

"Congress leaders are raising questions on the India-China border situation. I want to assure the people of the country that I will respond in detail in Parliament," he said. The meeting with the CDS comes two days after the talks between senior military commanders to defuse the month-long stand-off. The government has so far not said anything on the ground situation in the month-long stand-offs at various points along the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh.

Mr. Singh had been holding regular consultations with CDS Gen Bipin Rawat and Army Chief Gen Manoj Naravane on the border situation and this was part of

the routine review.

While there was still no clarity on the next round of senior level talks, the sources said the dialogue between local commanders on the ground would continue. At Saturday's talks, which was the highest military dialogue so far to address the issue, India firmly conveyed to the other side that it wanted restoration of status quo ante of April before the stand-off began and that China must pull back troops close to the LAC. More meetings were scheduled to be held both, military and diplomatic, to end the impasse.

In Beijing, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs said the situation along the border was "stable and controllable" and the two sides were ready to engage in consultations to "properly solve the relevant issues."

MSME revival package yet to take off

"This is a much needed great move as firms that are reviving but currently NPA were hoping that the measure will be speedily implemented which would have increased the chance of revival drastically," said the promoter of a mid-sized

enterprise.

"As an additional measure, as not all banks may have appetite for this scheme, portability of such accounts to banks that have the appetite would ensure greater impact and help off-court resolutions," he said.

HC asks Manipur Speaker to keep 7 Cong. MLAs out

After hearing disqualification petitions against them, the court also directed the Speaker to ensure compliance of the order by all concerned.

The seven MLAs are Sanam Biraj Singh, Ginsuanhau, Onam Lukhoo Singh, Ngamthang Haokip, Yengkhom Surchandra Singh, Kshetrimayam Biraj Singh and Paonam Brojen Singh.

Congress leader Kapil Sibal and other senior advocates represented the petitioners from the Congress.

Petitions pending

The court said the Speaker had failed to decide the petitions filed by the petitioners from the Congress party within a reasonable time. It said the Speaker had not disposed of the petitions despite the petitions having been filed on November 8, 2018.

The seven MLAs, as well as Mr. Shyamkumar, will not be able to take part in the voting for the State's lone Rajya Sabha seat because of the court orders. The BJP is fielding the titular king Leishemba Sanajaoba while former MLA T. Mangababu is the Congress candidate for the seat.

(With inputs from Iboyai-ma Laithangbam)

Mr. Shyamkumar was

Travel-linked cases spike in southern States

On day one of Unlock 1, Karnataka reports three deaths, focuses on non-urban infection spread; Kerala records one fatality

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Three months after the first COVID-19 case was reported in Bengaluru, Karnataka's tally touched 5,760 on Monday, with 308 new cases in 24 hours. Bengaluru currently records 501 cases.

Monday also saw three deaths in the Karnataka, taking the total number to 64, besides two deaths of COVID-19 patients from non-COVID causes.

Kerala also reported one

COVID-19

death, with a 41-year-old man who had returned from the Maldives succumbing to the disease.

The Central government praised Karnataka's efforts and the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike's protocols for containment, even though there was an escalation in numbers in some districts with influx of returnees

from other States. Six States and 47 cities had followed the same approach.

Hephisia Rani Korlapati, Special Officer, BBMP COVID-19 War Room, said that BBMP's preparedness and the approach of leaving no case untraced, and micro-level planning and effective implementation helped the city keep numbers low.

Of the 308 new cases, 277 passengers had a travel history to other States, while one had travelled to Maharashtra. The largest number of cases, 99, were in Kalaburagi, followed by Yadagiri with 66. All three deaths reported on Monday were in Bengaluru Urban. One patient who passed away was a 67-year-old man with Influenza-like illnesses and Ischemic heart disease and ventricular dysfunction. He was admitted on June 4 and died on June 8. A 48-year-old woman who passed away also had a history of ILI. She had fever and breathlessness and was ad-



Sit and dine: With the government relaxing the lockdown norms, hotels began serving dine-in customers from Monday. Customers having breakfast at a hotel in Vijayawada. ■ K.V.S. GIRI

mitted to a private hospital on June 4 and died on June 5. The third was a 65-year-old patient with a history of Severe Acute Respiratory Illness and breathlessness. She was also admitted on June 4 to a

private hospital and died on June 5.

Positive cases in Andhra Pradesh rose to 4,813 including 154 cases on Monday.

Of the new cases, 125 were local, 28 from other States or

migrant returnees and one from a foreign country.

A total of 2,711 were discharged; 51 were sent home during the past day, the Medical, Health and Family Welfare Department said. Total

active cases were 2,027 and the death toll 75.

There were 91 fresh cases in Kerala, and in line with the trend over one month now, all but three were imported cases among people coming from abroad or other States.

Three persons, including two health workers in Thrissur, were believed to have contracted the infection through local transmission.

The fatality was that of a 41-year-old man who had returned from the Maldives, at the Government Medical College Hospital, Thrissur. The Health Department said he had renal disease and respiratory distress.

The death toll was 16. Though an 87-year-old who died on Sunday night at Thrissur MCH had suspected COVID-19, the Health Department did not add it to official figures and was re-confirming it.

(With inputs from Vijayawada and Thiruvananthapuram bureaus)

Decision to reopen temples triggers political row in Kerala

Sangh Parivar organisations oppose the move

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala government's decision to reopen temples from Tuesday has triggered a row with Sangh Parivar organisations opposing the move and the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) and other Devaswoms going ahead with the preparations to permit the entry of devotees as per the COVID-19 protocol.

The Kerala Kshetra Samrakshana Samiti and the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, having about 600 temples under their ambit, mostly in northern Kerala, cited the spurt in COVID-19 cases and the failure of the government to take Hindu organisations into confidence



KERALA

Sree Padmanabhaswamy temple not to open today

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Sree Padmanabhaswamy temple authorities here have reversed their decision to allow devotees to worship at the temple from June 9. The administration committee that met on Monday in the wake of the concerns raised over the opening of places of worship in view of the spurt in COVID-19 cases in Kerala, decided to reverse the decision. As per the new decision, devotees will not be allowed entry till June 30.

as reasons for their objection.

TDB president N. Vasu said entry to the 1,248 temples under the board would be as per the COVID-19 protocol. The Padmanabhaswamy temple in the State capital would be reopened only after June 30.

Churches in Kerala not to open in haste

PATHANAMTHITTA

Metropolitan of the Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church of Malabar Joseph Mar Thoma said its churches would not be opened in haste from Tuesday. The Church would continue with the online worship system until the crisis eased. Meanwhile, the Jacobite Syrian Church on Monday decided to open its churches under the dioceses of Kollam and Niram for liturgical services only after June 30.

Hindu Aikya Vedi State president R.V. Babu said if the reopening would lead to a virus spread, even routine rituals and pujas would be affected forcing a total closure of the temples.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan did not invite Hindu organisations for consultations," Mr. Babu said.

Tirumala temple opens its door for darshan trial run

TTD staff, their families to be allowed during first two days

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
TIRUMALA

The Lord Venkateswara temple in Tirumala was on Monday opened for trial run of darshan for the public.

Though the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) did not compromise on the performance of day-to-day rituals, the temple was kept out of bounds for devotees since March 20 due to COVID-19 lockdown and reopened after an interval of 80 days.

The TTD has imposed several restrictions on the darshan.

It will allow its employees and their families during the first two days of the trial run, followed by local denizens on the third day, to plug deficiencies, if any, before allowing the general public from June 8.



Devotees offering prayers outside Lord Venkateswara temple on Monday. ■ PTI

11. Devotees above 65 years and children below 10 years would not be allowed. Besides making face masks and social distancing mandatory, devotees would be barred from visiting sub-temples within the main temple complex and strictly urged to use herbal sanitiser

before and after making offerings into the 'hundi' and refrain themselves from touching it. Employees who are likely to come into direct contact with devotees, including the temple annadhanam staff, volunteers and barbers were provided with PPEs.

TTD Chairman Y.V. Subba Reddy, who supervised the trial run, expressed satisfaction at the arrangements. He felt that there was scope for allowing more number of devotees with minor modifications.

Speaking to media, he said the intention behind the trial run was to get a first-hand report at the ground level.

After taking stock of the three-day trial run, a decision whether or not to increase the number of devotees would be taken.

RS elections: BJP high command snubs Yediyurappa

Party chooses less-known, old-time workers Eranna Kadadi and Ashok Gasthi as candidates

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

In a major snub to its State core committee and Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, the BJP high command has rejected all the three names recommended by them for the Rajya Sabha polls scheduled for June 19.

Instead, the high command has chosen two less-known, old-time party workers as its candidates:

the BJP's organisational in-charge leaders for Belagavi and Ballari zones, Eranna Kadadi and Ashok Gasthi, respectively.

Mr. Kadadi, who has been a party worker for over three decades, hails from Belagavi district and has served as the president of the Belagavi Zilla



KARNATAKA

la Panchayat. He belongs to the dominant Panchamashali Lingayat community.

Mr. Gasthi has served as the chairman of the Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes. He belongs to the backward Savita Samaj community.

While the BJP can win two seats comfortably with its present numerical strength in the Legislative Assembly, the State core committee had recommended three names: educationist Prabhakar Kore, who had sought renomination; hotelier Prakash Shetty, and Ramesh Katti, brother of disgruntled leader Umesh Katti, who is upset over not getting ministerial berth.

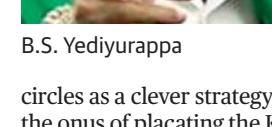
This was seen in State BJP

Deve Gowda to file nomination papers today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda will be filing his nomination papers on Tuesday to contest the Rajya Sabha elections scheduled for June 19.

Clearing the air on the



B.S. Yediyurappa

circles as a clever strategy, as the onus of placating the Katti brothers was left to the party high command.

However, the BJP Central Election Committee took everyone by surprise and chose its own candidates.

While the prominent lead-

ers of the party, especially those belonging to Mr. Yediyurappa's camp, have been rattled by the high command's choices, the party cadre is happy.

"For the first time ordinary party workers have been chosen as candidates for the Rajya Sabha," a party functionary said.

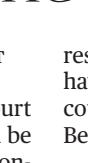
This is also being seen as a clear and stern message to Mr. Yediyurappa as the high command has rejected the candidature of both Mr. Kore and Mr. Shetty who are said to be very close to him.

Follow orders or face contempt, HC tells govt.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

The Telangana High Court on Monday said it would be compelled to initiate contempt proceedings against officials of the State government if its directions in COVID-19-related pleas were not complied with.

Its directions like conducting autopsy on persons who died in hospitals while undergoing treatment for different ailments were not being followed, the HC said. It would hold Principal Secretary of Medical and Health and Director of Medical and Health



TELANGANA

responsible. They would have to face contempt of court proceedings, the Bench said.

It took serious note of its order to conduct random public testing for coronavirus not being executed. Pointing out that 37 doctors working in government hospitals had contracted COVID-19, the Bench said it had earlier instructed that protective gear be provided to all doctors and para-medical staff. The fact that so many doctors were infected suggested that the required protective gear was not arranged, the bench said.

This was the outcome of an official meeting convened by Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao on Monday.

No Secondary School Certificate exams in Telangana this year

Students to be promoted to next higher level automatically

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has decided to promote Class X students to the next higher class without Board exams in view of the spread of coronavirus.

It was also decided that students will be promoted to the next higher class based on the grades they got in internal assessment conducted by schools.

This was the outcome of an official meeting convened by Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao on Monday.

three papers and the remaining exams were postponed due to the lockdown.

Nod for film shooting The State government also decided to permit film and TV shootings while continuing to keep the cinema halls closed in

India better placed in virus fight, says Shah

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BHUBANESWAR

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday took a pot shot at the Congress, saying it had done nothing to fight the COVID-19 pandemic apart from conducting interviews.

While addressing a Janmashtami "virtual rally" for Odisha, Mr. Shah said, "I am here to tell you what the Narendra Modi government has done. When the crisis of coronavirus surfaced, the government announced a ₹1.7 lakh crore package for 60 crore people."

"Some Opposition leaders are questioning us on how we handled the pandemic. We may have faulted somewhere and may be short of expectations but we never lacked sincerity. People are discussing about India's fight against coronavirus in Sweden and America," he said.

"India is comparatively at a better position for the steps taken by it," he said.

SC asks J&K to respond to plea against Soz detention

Former Union Minister has been under detention since 2019

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday asked the Jammu and Kashmir government to respond to a petition challenging the house arrest/detention of senior Congress leader and former Union Minister Saifuddin Soz for the past 10 months.

The *habeas corpus* petition, filed by his wife Mumtazunisa Soz, sought to know his whereabouts.

A virtual court Bench led by Justice Arun Mishra listed the case for July second week.

Mr. Soz has been detained since August 5 last, when the special rights given to Kashmiri people under Article 370 was abrogated and the State of Jammu and Kashmir was reorganised into the Un-

Four local terrorists killed in Shopian

As many as 22 terrorists have been killed in the Valley in the past two weeks, says J&K police chief

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Four local terrorists were killed in an encounter with security forces in south Kashmir's Shopian on Monday after a four-hour operation. A day earlier, five terrorists were killed in the same area.

According to Jammu and Kashmir police chief Dilbag Singh, as many as 22 terrorists have been killed in the past two weeks.

At a press conference in Awantipore, Lt. Gen. B.S. Raju of the XV Corps said that after the revocation of Article 370 in J&K last year, the people of Kashmir took the decision in a "positive manner" as there was relative peace for a long time.

He asked people not to "consume Pakistani media as they peddled only misinformation".

'Relative peace'

Lt. Gen. Raju said normalcy was almost back in the Valley till another lockdown had to be imposed due to the CO-



Grim reminder: Residents inspecting a damaged house after an encounter between security personnel and militants in Pinjora area of Shopian district on Monday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

VID-19 pandemic.

"We saw relative peace for a fairly long period of time...by February things had opened up. January-February people had begun to move around, schools opened with 100% attendan-

ce...winter tourism had commenced in Gulmarg, so we were seeing all kinds of normalcy before the issue of COVID came in and we had to get in another round of lockdown," he said.

He said that Pakistan was

not happy with the peaceful situation in the Valley.

'Pakistan unhappy'

"Pakistan is unhappy because it is in its larger plan to keep the pot boiling in the Valley. That is how the rele-

vance of the Pakistan Army remains within Pakistan. As far as Pakistan's contribution to violence here is concerned, it is a combination of two things – on the physical front inducing weapons along the Line of Control and, the second is, the information warfare Pakistan intends to fight."

"I would say that 120 crore of the country's population have a role to play in demolishing false narratives, which are coming from Pakistan."

General Officer Commanding of Army's South Kashmir-based Victor Force Major General A. Sengupta said the encounter took place in a congested area at Pinjora in Shopian.

"The terrorists were harassing civilians and were known to cause excesses to the civil population. They were involved in abducting policemen, causing injury to truck drivers last year....in four-hour operation four local terrorists were killed, arms and war like stores were recovered," he said.

Rajnath, Rahul in social media spat

Cong. leader had taken a dig at Shah

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi were on Monday engaged in a social media battle after the latter took a dig at Home Minister Amit Shah for his comment that India is strong in protecting its borders.

"Everyone knows the reality of the 'borders,' but the thought is good to keep one's heart happy," Mr. Gandhi tweeted, tweaking a famous Urdu couplet from Mirza Ghalib.

"If there is pain in your hands, apply medicine. But when hands itself become the source of pain, then what do you do?"



Rahul Gandhi

China on the Ladakh border.

Replying to Mr. Gandhi, the Defence Minister tweeted another couplet from Mirza Ghalib, "If there is pain in your hands, apply medicine. But when hands itself become the source of pain, then what do you do?"

Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala then joined the fight. "Dear Rajnathji, when we pose a question, then questions are asked... Use the force in your hands as We are India. We demand answers against those who show us red eyes."

HC notice to Delhi police on Tharoor's plea

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday issued a notice to the Delhi police on Congress MP Shashi Tharoor's plea seeking a direction to Twitter India to preserve the account and tweets made by his deceased wife Sunanda Pushkar.

The Thiruvananthapuram MP, against whom the police have filed a chargesheet in a local court here for abetment to suicide and cruelty, said in his petition that the Twitter timeline and tweets of Pushkar were of utmost importance in the case.

Senior advocate Vikas Pahwa and advocate Gaurav Gupta, appearing for Mr. Tharoor, argued that the perusal of the tweets of Pushkar would reflect her actual frame of mind which is contrary to the prosecution case.

Maximum traffic



Chaos returns: A jam on the Western Express Highway in Mumbai, as restrictions were eased on Monday. ■ AADESHCHOURDHARI

Plea in SC against Hindi use in courts

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court asked a group of lawyers to approach the Punjab and Haryana High Court with their grievance against a Haryana law, which makes Hindi the official language in subordinate courts.

Chief Justice Sharad A. Bobde, leading a three-judge Bench, however remarked orally that there was nothing wrong in using Hindi as the official language in courts in certain States, considering that a majority of lawyers were well-versed in the language there and found English a challenge. The apex court finally asked the lawyers to approach the High Court.

The petition contended that the Haryana Official Language (Amendment) Act of 2020 had unconstitutionally and arbitrarily imposed Hindi as the sole official language to be used in lower courts across the State.

Advocates Sameer Jain, Sandeep Bajaj, Angad Sandhu, Suvigya Awasthi and Anant Gupta jointly challenged the new Section 3A incorporated into the Act.

The lawyers argued that English was widely used by advocates and the subordinate judiciary in lower courts in justice administration work. The imposition of Hindi as the sole language would result in an unreasonable classification between lawyers who were fluent in Hindi and those who are not.

Cong. moves its Gujarat MLAs to Rajasthan

Move aimed at preventing poaching by BJP; polls to four Rajya Sabha seats scheduled for June 19

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

The Gujarat Congress on Monday decided to shift all its legislators to party-ruled Rajasthan, in a bid to prevent alleged attempts at poaching by the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party ahead of the June 19 elections for four Rajya Sabha seats from Gujarat.

It had earlier sent about 20 MLAs to a private resort in Rajasthan's Abu Road town.

Abu Road, on the foothills of popular tourist destination Mount Abu, is situated adjacent to the Gujarat-Rajasthan border in Sirohi dis-



Preparing game plan: A June 4 photo of Congress MLAs and leaders attending a meeting in Ahmedabad. ■ PTI

trict. Following the resignation of three MLAs last week, the Congress had moved its legislators to different plac-

es, alleging that the BJP was indulging in horse-trading.

The strength of the Oppo-

nition Congress in the 182-

member Gujarat Assembly has been reduced to 65 after the three legislators resigned. According to the party sources, the shifting of MLAs to a single place will facilitate finalisation of strategies by senior leaders for the Rajya Sabha polls.

The MLAs are likely to stay in Abu Road until just before the elections on June 19. Earlier, the Congress MLAs were taken to a resort near Jaipur in March this year when five legislators resigned.

The March 26 Rajya Sabha elec-

tions were subsequently postponed because of the COVID-19 lockdown.

The BJP has questioned the Congress's move, alleging that the party had violated the guidelines on reopening of hotels and shopping malls.

"Why was the resort opened 48 hours before the lockdown relaxations and how was the gathering of legislators allowed?" asked Rajendra Rathore, Deputy Leader of the Opposition in the Rajasthan Assembly.

The BJP's Sirohi district unit has lodged a complaint with the police against the resort's owner, accusing him of violating COVID-19 lock-down guidelines.

Editors Guild slams police for FIR against journalist

It is a 'brazen attack' on free speech

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Editors Guild of India has expressed concern over "growing tendency" among the police to take cognisance of frivolous charges against journalists and slammed the Delhi police for filing an FIR against senior journalist Vinod Dua.

In a statement, the Guild said, "The accusations are a brazen attack on his right to free speech and fair comment. An FIR based on this is an instrument of harassment setting off a process that is itself a punishment".

It urged the police to respect constitutionally guaranteed freedoms rather than behave in a manner that raises questions on its independence.

Nod to ED to attach Nirav Modi's assets

Order won't apply to properties mortgaged to parties like Punjab National Bank

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

A Special Court on Monday permitted the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to confiscate properties of diamond merchant Nirav Modi, barring those mortgaged to parties like the Punjab National Bank (PNB), within a month.

Mr. Modi was declared a fugitive economic offender (FEO) on December 5, 2019, that enabled the ED to move the court for confiscation of his properties in India, the United Kingdom and the United Arab Emirates.

This is for the first time an agency will be able to confiscate the property of an economic offender since the FEO Act, 2018, came into



force. The agency, through Hiten Venegalkar, had moved the application on January 19, 2020.

The court partly allowed confiscation of properties of some parties to the extent of their claim in respect of secured debts only by way of mortgage, hypothecation and guarantee deeds. Valuable paintings seized by the Income Tax Department will be attached by the ED under the provisions of the FEO Act within one month.

The properties of the PNB are excluded in the list of the properties claimed by the interested parties under the FEO. This will entitle them to proceed with their claim before the competent court, authority or tribunal in the manner provided by law.

The ED had listed proper-

ties valued at ₹1,396.07 crore for confiscation, which include paintings, eight cars and other valuables, including watches, bags and purses, that were seized from Mr.

Modi's house at Samudra Mahal. The application also seeks to sell paintings seized by the Income Tax department.

Earlier, the court rejected an application for intervention from Mr. Modi into the hearing of confiscation of properties after the PNB approached the court against the process and had pleaded for release of Mr. Modi's properties to the bank to clear dues.

Special judge V.C. Barde in February held that Mr. Modi had no right to intervene as he was declared a fugitive economic offender and that he would not be heard before an order on confiscation of his properties was passed.

Special judge V.C. Barde in February held that Mr. Modi had no right to intervene as he was declared a fugitive economic offender and that he would not be heard before an order on confiscation of his properties was passed.

The first incident occurred on June 5 when an eight-month pregnant woman died in an ambulance

outside a hospital in Greater Noida after being denied treatment at several government and private hospitals for 13 hours, the NHRC noted.

In the second case, reported on Monday, a 26-year-old woman was allegedly refused admission by the District Hospital in Noida, Sector 30, after which she delivered a stillborn baby on the pavement.

'Matter of concern'

"The Commission has observed that contents of the news reports, if true, raise serious issues of violation of human rights as the State authorities have failed to ensure right to life and medical care to its citizens. It is understood that amid spread of COVID-19, the hospitals are receiving a very large number of patients and there is shortage of infrastructure but denial to attend to the patients is a matter of concern," it said.

The NHRC also sent the Secretary of the Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry clippings of the news reports "to look into the matter and issue specific instructions to all the States and the UTs".

NHRC notice to U.P. on denial of treatment to 2 pregnant women

'State has failed to ensure right to life and medical care'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on Monday issued a notice to the Uttar Pradesh government over two reported cases of pregnant women being denied treatment in Noida and Greater Noida.

Taking *suo motu* cognisance of media reports, the NHRC issued the notice to the Chief Secretary asking for a detailed report within four weeks.

The first incident occurred on June 5 when an eight-month pregnant woman died in an ambulance

11 Labour officials test positive

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Eleven officials, including a joint secretary, of the Union Labour and Employment Ministry have tested positive for COVID-19, Ministry sources said on Monday.

The officials work in the offices at Shram Shakti Bhawan here and they were closed for sanitising on June 4 and 5, a source said. Another source stated that the floor of Shram Shakti Bhawan that has the offices was closed on June 4 and June 5, and the whole area had been "deeply sanitised" by the staff of the Employees' State Insurance Corporation, which comes under the Labour Ministry.

Since some of the officials who tested positive were working in Labour and Employment Secretary Heeralal Samariya's office, he was also tested and was found negative, the source said.

Centre seeks district-level plans

Health Ministry directs States to make prospective blueprint to tackle COVID-19

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry, on Monday, directed States to make district-wise prospective plans for the coming months to tackle COVID-19.

Health Secretary Preeti Sudan, along with senior Health Ministry officials, held a review with District Collectors, municipal commissioners, chief medical officers, superintendents of district hospitals and principals of medical colleges from 45 municipalities and municipal corporations across 38 districts in 10 States that are witnessing a surge in COVID-19 cases.

Districts officials from Maharashtra, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Rajasthan, Haryana, Gujarat, Jammu & Kashmir, Karnataka, Uttarakhand and Madhya Pradesh participated in the discussion.

"Main issues discussed included widespread infection in densely populated urban areas, with areas that shared public amenities; impor-



Further action: A healthcare worker conducting a temperature screening at Dharavi in Mumbai on Monday. ■ VIJAY BATE

tance of house-to-house surveys; prompt testing followed by prompt isolation and clinical management of cases and containment strategy to be implemented," a release issued by the Ministry said.

Initiate measures'

The Health Minister has directed State officials to initiate measures in containment zones for case management and buffer zones surveillance activities, and the promotion of CO-

VID-appropriate behaviour.

"To reduce the case fatality rate, the officials were briefed on measures to be taken like prioritising the high-risk segments like elderly people and people with comorbidities while contact-tracing to prevent deaths; active surveillance measures, adequate testing and promoting health seeking behaviour for timely detection of cases; ensuring timely shifting of patients without escalating the symptoms," said a senior health official.

He added that States had been also advised that adequate planning for health infrastructure should be taken up; adequate number of surveillance teams must be provided and a system should be put in place for bed availability management.

Constant attention

The Health Ministry has said areas that need constant attention included active house-to-house survey for timely detection, augmentation of the survey teams, efficient ambulance management, efficient triaging of patients at the hospitals and bed management and clinical management of the hospitalised cases.

Dismissing claims that wearing a mask leads to carbon dioxide retention, as far as lung capacity is concerned, All India Institute of Medical Sciences director Randeep Guleria said with a mask even pre-symptomatic persons may be saved from spreading the infection.

NHRC seeks report on deaths by police action

Panel asks for reports from seven States where 15 died following police brutality during the lockdown

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI

The National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) has asked for action taken reports from the authorities of seven States, where 15 people died following police action in the first month or so of the lockdown, according to the proceedings in the cases.

The NHRC acted on a May 16 complaint by the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative (CHRI), which stated that the 15 men – five in Andhra Pradesh, three in Uttar Pradesh, two each in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, and one each in Tamil Nadu, Punjab and West Bengal – died after police ac-



Brute force: Police guarding an area in Mumbai. The panel is acting on a May 16 complaint by CHRI. ■ VIVEK BENDRE

tion or in custody from March 25 to April 30.

The CHRI complaint cited media reports that said 12 of the 15 deaths occurred after police action such as beatings, allegedly as "punishment" for violating the lockdown imposed to control the

spread of COVID-19, and three in police custody. Nine of the 12 died of their injuries and the remaining by suicide, the complaint said.

"Given the COVID-19 lockdown, restrictions on movement and limited access to courts, the families have ve-

ry limited recourse to seek justice," the complaint by CHRI researcher Raja Bagga stated.

The Commission took up three cases of alleged custodial death on June 4 and asked the police commissioners or superintendent of police of the respective districts to submit detailed reports by July 26.

The alleged custodial deaths include the death of Kalapala Krupkar on March 28, allegedly at the Gudivada police station in Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh. He was arrested with five others for allegedly running a gambling racket.

The death of Raju Velu Devendra on March 30, alleged-

ly in the Juhu police station in Mumbai, was due to beatings by police, his family said. The police, however, denied the charge, saying he was lynched while trying to commit a robbery.

The third case was of Muniappappa alias Muni Kulla, who was accused of stealing liquor in Hoskote in Karnataka. According to his wife, he was taken by the police for questioning on April 7, assaulted and his body dumped in a well near his house on April 10.

In the other 12 cases, the NHRC took cognisance of the matters on June 1 and gave the district magistrates and police chiefs time till July 11 to submit their reports.

INS Shardul evacuates 233 from Iran

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Navy's INS *Shardul* departed from the port of Bandar Abbas in Iran on Monday evening with 233 Indian nationals who are being evacuated under Operation Samudra Setu.

The ship is expected to reach Porbandar in Gujarat on June 11, the Navy said. The Indian Mission in Iran had prepared the list of Indian citizens to be evacuated and also facilitated their embarkation after requisite medical screening.

The Indian Navy had launched Operation Samudra Setu commencing on May 8 to repatriate Indian citizens stuck abroad due to the COVID-19 pandemic and since then *INS Jalashwa* and *INS Magar* have evacuated 2,874 individuals from the Maldives and Sri Lanka to the ports of Kochi and Thoothukudi.

The Navy said in a statement that social distancing norms have been ensured onboard *INS Shardul* and it has been specially provisioned for evacuation, including embarkation of additional medical staff, doctors, hygienists, nutritionists, medical stores, rations, personal protective equipment, face-masks and lifesaving gear.

Priyanka helped 1,600 labourers reach U.P.

Train left Mumbai on May 31: Congress

STAFF REPORTER
MUMBAI



Priyanka Gandhi

des and catering to their needs, be it of ration or of travel," said Suraj Singh Thakur, State vice-president of the Indian Youth Congress (IYC).

Around 1,600 migrant workers from Uttar Pradesh were in contact with Ms. Gandhi's office and had expressed their wish to return to their hometowns.

"She may have faced some problems in arranging buses, but she ensured that the workers reached U.P." Mr. Thakur said.

The Odisha State Co-operative Milk Producers' Federation Limited

D-2, Sahidnagar, Bhubaneswar - 751007

Ph. No.: 0674-2546030, 2540273, 2540417,

Fax No: 0674-2540974, Email ID : omfed@yahoo.com

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CAD-145:

Managing Director

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ICMR - NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EPIDEMIOLOGY

MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND FAMILY WELFARE

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2020_ICMR_563634_1 Refrigerator 29.06.2020

2020_ICMR_563653_1 HPLC D10 System (Bio-Rad) 29.06.2020

2020_ICMR_563655_1 Hematology Analyzer (5 Part) 29.06.2020

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DIRECTOR

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ICMR STATE POLLUTION CONTROL BOARD

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INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

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1. Bihar State Pollution Control Board(BSPCB), invites e-tender from eligible bidders for supply, installation, commissioning and comprehensive operation & Maintenance services of Continuous Ambient Air Quality Monitoring Stations (CAAQMS) within Bihar and related services as specified in the bid document. Manual bids shall not be accepted.
2. Prospective bidders may visit websites: <https://www.eproc.bihar.gov.in> or <http://bspcb.bih.nic.in/Tenders.html> for details of terms and conditions of e-tender, eligibility of bidder, scope of work, bidding procedure, bidding document etc.
3. Tender processing fee, bid document fee, earnest money deposit shall be submitted through e-Payment mode (i.e. NEFT/RTGS, Credit/Debit Card & Net Banking) only through <https://www.eproc.bihar.gov.in>.
4. The schedule of bidding are hereunder:-

Date of Publishing of Tender	09.06.2020: 1700 hrs
Bid Document Download Start Date	09.06.2020: 1800 hrs
Pre Bid Meeting	18.06.2020: 1200 hrs
Minutes of Pre-Bid Meeting to be uploaded	22.06.2020: 1500 hrs
Bid Submission START Date	22.06.2020: 1500 hrs
Bid Submission END Date	15.07.2020: 1500 hrs
Technical Bid Opening Date	16.07.2020: 1500 hrs

Member Secretary

Final guidelines to reopen schools awaiting approval

Safety of students, teachers is top priority, says Minister



Ramesh Pokhriyal

safety and security of students and teachers," he added, after the meeting. "The suggestions received will be examined and sent to the [Ministry of Health and Family Welfare] and Ministry of Home Affairs for appropriate actions regarding framing guidelines for the education sector during COVID-19 times."

Final decision
On Friday, Ms. Karwal convened a meeting of all State Education Secretaries on Monday "to discuss the health and safety of students, hygiene measures in schools, and issues regarding online/digital learning in their States", according to Mr. Nishank's tweet.

Guidelines are likely to include rigorous health screening and quarantine protocols, hygiene measures and staggered attendance for students allowing for blended learning from classrooms and home.

L-G overrules Delhi govt. order to restrict treatment

ICMR guidelines must be followed without deviation: Baijal

JATIN ANAND
NIKHIL M. BABU
NEW DELHI

Delhi Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal, on the eve of a crucial meeting to reassess the capital's strategy to tackle COVID-19 with representatives from the Delhi government, on Monday overturned two significant orders issued by it in the face of surging coronavirus cases in the city.

The meeting of the Delhi

Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) headed by the L-G scheduled for Tuesday was to have Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal in attendance; however Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia will be filling in for the Chief Minister who will undergo a COVID test.

Mr. Baijal, in his capacity as the Chairperson of the DDMA, overruled the Delhi government's decision to restrict treatment at both

INTERVIEW | SANJAY AGARWAL

'Farmers are strong, not vulnerable; they need to be given choices'

Option for direct marketing during the lockdown period has reduced government procurement of wheat in some States, says Agriculture Secretary

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ

The disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic led to at least 12 States allowing direct marketing of agriculture produce, which offered greater options to farmers during the lockdown, Agriculture Secretary Sanjay Agarwal says. The two new ordinances pushing agricultural marketing reform will widen choices for small farmers, he adds.

Despite the lockdown, this year's wheat harvest hit record highs, and government procurement at minimum support prices (MSP) is also higher than last year. However, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh have fallen short of procurement targets. What is the reason?

■ I was looking at a video of ITC. This year, because direct marketing was allowed for farmers to sell their produce during the lockdown, they had a line of over two

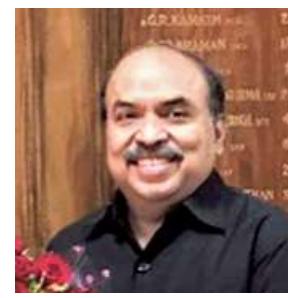
km of tractors outside their purchasing centres. If as a farmer, you are faced with the cost of transport to an MSP centre, and if you are getting the same price at the village level, what will you do? In fact, this year, procurement centres were two and a half times more in comparison to last year. But because direct marketing was allowed and a corporate purchaser was available, that gave the farmer a choice and that changes everything. And that becomes the logic

of bringing the trade and commerce ordinance this year, where direct marketing takes place.

Speaking of these two ordinances to reform agriculture marketing and facilitate contract farming, how will they help small farmers?

■ Both ordinances will be most beneficial to small and marginal farmers. A farmer's produce is unregulated at time of production, but there are restrictions on where to sell and whom to sell, which is not there for any other commodity globally or in India. The Farm Trade ordinance will open up this ecosystem.

Right now, the farmer can only sell produce to a licensed trader in one of four



THE farm trade and contract farming ordinances are most beneficial to small & marginal farmers

physical locations: mandis operated by marketing committees, very few private mandis, cold storage warehouses declared as deemed markets, or direct licensees which have to notify a space with certain facilities. Mandi secretaries say most big

farmers bring a truckload of produce; they know the officials there, they have access to knowledge about prices and they get the right price. But a small farmer may produce just two quintals. So an aggregator at the village level will take it to the mandi with the understanding that he will take a set percentage of the sale price, and give the rest to the farmer. But in more than 50% of cases, farmers are being cheated by aggregators who get a receipt for a lower price.

Number two, the contract farming ordinance. If I'm a large farmer who grows a large quantity of high quality organic potatoes and sells to a big retail chain dependent on me, I can negotiate my terms. But if I'm a small marginal farmer who wants to grow a high value crop like

which doesn't have that much demand in mandis, or if I add value in terms of processing, then I have to take the total risk in terms of production and then go find a buyer in the industry.

This ordinance allows the small farmer to benefit from a high value product by transferring the risk to the corporate purchaser, who will buy the produce at a fixed rate. The industry can also provide technology inputs and get seeds and pesticides at wholesale prices, which will translate into higher production, higher value, higher incomes. There is also a unique provision for production agreements, where the farmer is simply paid for agricultural services rendered, and this is very useful in poultry and livestock sector.

Will the safety net of MSP continue to remain effective under the new direct marketing regime?

■ This provides a different option to farmers. MSP is a support system for the farmer, where he knows he can sell at a certain place for that price. There is a clear assurance that MSP shall continue. But going to the MSP centre also has a cost, so now the farmer has an option to choose direct marketing instead.

Why do you think that the farmer will not understand if the price offered in the village is not the right price? He is aware of the mandi price and the MSP rate. There is also an important provision to develop a price information and market research system under the Act. So he can

make an informed choice.

We are also creating the right ecosystem through Kisan Credit Cards, farmer producer organisations which will provide marketing and legal support, and creation of ₹1 lakh crore financing facility for post harvest management.

If you consider a child as weak, and always handhold that child, try to protect that child, the child will never grow. Our farmers are strong, they have knowledge and competence and have brought India to this stage of surplus foodgrain. Considering farmers as vulnerable, thinking people will take them for a ride in everything, limiting their choices, restricting them – that is not helpful. Every provision in this Act is in farmers' interest.

NGO moves SC on protection of children

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday took serious note of a petition filed by Bachpan Bachao Andolan, an NGO headed by Nobel Prize laureate Kailash Satyarthi, alerting that the period of opening up after the national lockdown will see a considerable spike in child trafficking for labour and prostitution.

A Bench led by Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sharad Arora asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta to enquire into the issue and report back to the court in two weeks.

"The opening of the lockdown would see a massive spurt in the cases of child trafficking... The pandemic, the lockdown and its aftermath would have a dauntingly adverse impact on children," the NGO said.

Formation of panel

The lockdown spelt catastrophe for the poor. The economic crisis, increased insecurity, poverty and marginalisation would see the poorest try to clutch on to the last straws for their survival. They may be forced to push their children into the hands of traffickers. The most affected would be agricultural families considering the crisis seen in the sector, it stated.

The court suggested forming an expert committee to frame a policy to prevent and protect children from private contractors who are part of the mafia. It urged the NGO with its wide experience of with child issues, to also suggest a protective mechanism to the court.

Scale up MGNREGA works: Cong.

The party urges Centre to raise employment days to 200 under the scheme

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday said that 2.19 crore households had found work under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA), and asked the Centre to scale up and make the Act open-ended to help people during COVID-19 pandemic.

The party's formal demand came after its chief Sonia Gandhi wrote an article in a newspaper on Monday, in which she asked the Modi government to shun politics over the scheme and "use the powerful mechanism at hand."

At an online press conference, Rajya Sabha member and senior party spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's comment that the



Daily grind: Women labourers working at a site under the MGNREGA on the outskirts of Ajmer, Rajasthan. ■ PTI

MGNREGA was 'a living monument of the Congress's failure' had come back to haunt the BJP as their government was now heavily relying on it to provide relief and increase its allocation by ₹40,000 crore.

Prime Minister Modi famously criticised MGNREGA on the floor of Parliament in 2014, calling it 'a living mon-

ument of the INC's failure'. Today, he must live with that short-sighted assessment, as MGNREGA has come to the nation's aid in combating growing poverty. Even programmes like Swacch Bharat and Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana are being merged to leverage its utility, reach and value. As on March 31, 2020, over 12 crore people cumula-

tively had benefited from the programme," Mr. Singhvi said.

Beginning of exodus

The party said 8 crore migrants were expected to relocate due to COVID-19. In the Supreme Court, the government has stated that 91 lakh migrants have been moved by Shramik Special trains. This number was only the start of an exodus that was taking place across the country.

"Since the PM is compelled to fall back on a UPA scheme, it is only appropriate that we, as its authors, provide him with additional guidance for the next steps," Mr. Singhvi said. Ten per cent advance should be paid to MGNREGA workers and 200 days of work in a year to the needy people, he added.



Derek O'Brien

"The Centre must act now; it is absolutely critical that all registered workers get 100 days of work. Currently they get only 40-50 days. The current wages of ₹202 per day also needs revision as it is lower than minimum wage in 31 States," the Rajya Sabha MP said.

He added that the wages must be linked to the rural

consumer price index. In the current scenario with reverse migration to the villages, the MGNREGA has assumed a huge importance. "It is equally critical that all the dues are paid to the workers within 15 days," he said.

Plea for dole

The party has also demanded that the unemployment allowance of 15 days that is guaranteed in the law should be further extended.

He said that by January this year, 95% of the allocation for 2019-20 was spent and the Ministry of Rural Development sought additional ₹20,000 crore. But the Finance Ministry gave only ₹5,000 crore, he added.

'Gas leak not cause of 4 deaths'

Team from Singapore working on capping the well in Assam

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI



A magisterial inquiry is on to ascertain the cause of the death of four persons. ■ PTI

five residents of villages in the Baghjan area died due to gas emission. It was found that two of the people who died, including a woman, had not been to their village

in recent times," the district information office said.

While a man from the Baghjan area suffering from tuberculosis died on June 4 at a hospital in Dibrugarh, a woman from Natun Rangarbarh village died at her in-laws' place, also in Dibrugarh district. Another person died of a liver ailment while a fourth person, with a history of epilepsy, reportedly expired on June 3 due to drowning."

Tinsukia's Deputy Commissioner Bhaskar Pegu, however, said a magisterial inquiry had been ordered to ascertain the exact cause of the death of these people.

ED searches tour operator in Mumbai

5 locations in Mumbai searched in money laundering probe involving Yes Bank

DEVESHWAR PANDEY

NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday conducted searches at five locations linked to Cox & Kings in Mumbai, in connection with a money laundering probe involving Yes Bank and its former director-promoter Rana Kapoor, the probe agency said.

The ED said that in the bank fraud case involving ₹3,642 crore, the premises of

Ajay Ajit Peter Kerkar, Pesi Patel, Abhishek Goenka, Anil Khandelwal and Naresh Jain, the promoter, directors, chief financial officer

and auditor of the group, were searched.

Cox & Kings Ltd. (CKL), India, had an outstanding of ₹563 crore; ₹1,012 crore due against Ezeego One travel & Tours Ltd.; ₹422 crore against Cox & Kings Financial Services Ltd.; ₹1,152 crore against Prometheon Enterprise Ltd. (U.K.); and ₹493 crore against Malvern Travel Ltd. (U.K.).

The ED probe is based on a case registered by the CBI on March 7, against Mr. Kapoor and others. It pertains to about ₹3,700 crore in loans extended to Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd (DHFL), allegedly in lieu of ₹600 crore.

During the probe following the arrest of Mr. Kapoor, the ED noticed irregularities in the loans sanctioned to the Cox & Kings group. It had



Ajay Ajit Peter Kerkar

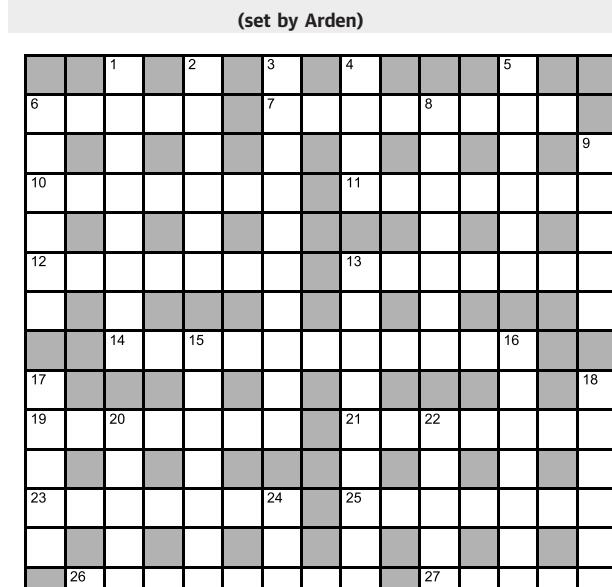
allegedly diverted funds via multiple layers of onshore and offshore subsidiaries.

CKL forged balance sheets of its overseas subsidiaries. It was reported to the Bombay Stock Exchange and the National Stock Exchange by the resolution professional, it said.

After default by CKL, the lenders appointed PwC for forensic audit, but the management did not cooperate.

Based on the available data, PwC confirmed falsification of accounts, overstating sales figures, understating debt figures and other irregularities.

TH CROSSWORD + 12957
(set by Arden)



ACROSS
6 Lead factor (5)
7 Foolishly treated, as if holy (8)
10 Talk about lease of property (7)
11 A short way to stop army at sea – it's on a ship (7)
12 Character in comics – wrong to expose innards (7)

CM YK

Feeling down in lockdown? Get across to our Crossword site.
@ <https://crossword.thehindu.com>



- 13 Artists recreated 'Artemis' (7)
- 14 Part of trailer-coach enters, collects, leaves (3-8)
- 19 Harry sat near a star (7)
- 21 Rejects, love handles cheese cloth (7)
- 23 Scientist gets a day in a month (7)
- 25 Group in front made a move (7)
- 26 Became a bit taller, did you say? That's terrible! (8)
- 27 Birds from head to toe by a famous collage artist (5)
- DOWN
- 1 Saint's support for say, Krishna the artist (8)
- 2 Man approaches court, or is it to harass (6)
- 3 Propagates growth, after election could be in seat (10)
- 4 Forty five? Voter turnout is doubtful (4)
- 5 Works without interest, is easily influenced (6)
- 6 Safeguard businesses which are running (6)
- 8 Egg breaks, issue for a theatre person (7)
- 9 Manoeuvre, after midnight there is scope (5)
- 13 Lunch coupon provides sustenance (4,6)
- 15 Minimize a game (7)
- 16 Spreading lies, stop, call for some wine (8)
- 17 One inside the shed is a child (5)
- 18 Group sex – one's upto no good (6)
- 20 Boy has money, Bill goes for sound quality (6)
- 22 Gun supports, nothing to secure (6)
- 24 One on one, there is some infusion of gas (4)

SUDOKU

5	3	4					8	
			9	3	2			
9	2		6		4			
8		1						
	6	5						
			9				7	
3	7		5	8				
9	8	1						
2			3	6	7			

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★

Solution to puzzle 12956

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

2	7	9	5	1	8	6	4	3
1	8	3	6	9	4	7	5	2
4	6	5	3	7	2	9	1	8
7	2	8	4	6	9</			

New Zealand is free of COVID-19

Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern thanks citizens as nation lifts restrictions after 75 days

REUTERS
WELLINGTON

New Zealand lifted all social and economic restrictions except border controls after declaring on Monday it was free of COVID-19, one of the first countries in the world to return to pre-pandemic normality. Public and private events, the retail and hospitality industries and all public transport were allowed to resume without the distancing rules still in place across much of the world.

"While the job is not done, there is no denying this is a milestone... Thank you, New Zealand," Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern told a news conference, saying she had danced for joy at the news.

"We are confident we have eliminated transmission of the virus in New Zealand for now, but elimination is not a point in time, it is a sustained effort."

New Zealand's five million people are emerging from the pandemic while big economies such as Brazil, Britain, India and the United States continue to grapple with spread of the virus.

7 weeks of lockdown

Its 75 days of restrictions included about seven weeks of a strict lockdown in which most businesses were shut and everyone except essential workers had to stay home. "Today, 75 days later, we are ready," Ms. Ardern said, announcing that social distancing restrictions would end at midnight. Ms. Ardern said she had done a "little dance" when she was told there were no more active COVID-19 cases in New Zealand, surprising her two-year-old daughter, Neve. "She was caught a little by surprise and she joined it having absolutely no idea



Moment of relief: Commuters waiting for transport at a bus interchange in Christchurch, New Zealand, on Monday; right, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern speaking at a press conference. ■ AP



why I was dancing around the lounge."

Eliminating the virus

New Zealand has reported 1,154 infections and 22 deaths from COVID-19 since the virus arrived in late February. Ms. Ardern had vowed to eliminate, not merely contain, the virus, which meant stopping transmission for two weeks after the last known case was cleared. For now, everyone entering the country will continue to be tested and quarantined.

There have been no new infections for 17 days and, until Monday, just one active case for more than a week. Details of the final patient were not released for privacy reasons but it is believed to be a woman aged in her 50s who was linked to a cluster at an Auckland nursing home.

Ms. Ardern was quickly trending on Twitter, and many said they wanted to move to New Zealand. "Such news really brightens up your day! There is hope and this too

shall pass for the entire world," one user tweeted.

Former Prime Minister Helen Clark tweeted: "Clear leadership and an engaged public have produced this result."

Ms. Ardern, 39, has won global praise for her leadership during the pandemic.

Her popularity at home has soared and recent surveys suggest she is well placed to win a second term in September's election. Even so, the government will need to show it can revive the economy, which is expected to sink into recession.

Opposition parties have criticised Ms. Ardern's decision to maintain restrictions for so long.

Ms. Ardern did not commit to a timeline for a quarantine-free 'travel bubble' with Australia to facilitate tourism that the industries in both countries have been pushing for. "We will need to move cautiously here. No one wants to jeopardise the gains New Zealand has made," she said.

'Lockdowns averted 3 million deaths in Europe'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

Lockdowns prevented around 3.1 million deaths in 11 European countries, according to a new modelling study published on Monday, as most nations tiptoe out of the strict measures to halt the spread of the new coronavirus.

Research by Imperial College London, whose scientists are advising the British government on the virus, found that restrictions such as stay-at-home orders had worked to bring the epidemic under control. Using European Centre of Disease Control data on deaths in 11 nations in the period up to May 4, the authors said in the study, published in *Nature Research*.

The researchers estimated that cumulatively between 12 and 15 million people had been infected in the period – or between 3.2 and 4% of the population of the 11 nations.

imposed. They estimated that approximately 3.1 million deaths had been averted by the policies.

Researchers also calculated that the interventions had caused the reproduction number – how many people someone with the virus infects – to drop by an average of 82%, to below 1.0. "Our results show that major non-pharmaceutical interventions, and lockdown in particular, have had a large effect on reducing transmission," the authors said in the study, published in *Nature Research*.

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Minneapolis council votes to dismantle police after protests

It calls for a 'new model of public safety' amidst outrage

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

The council of the U.S. city of Minneapolis voted late on Sunday to dismantle and rebuild the police department, after the death in custody of George Floyd sparked nationwide protests about racism in law enforcement, pushing the issue onto the national political agenda.

Floyd was killed on May 25 when white Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin pressed his knee on the unarmed black man's neck for nearly nine minutes. Chauvin has been charged with second-degree murder and was to appear in court on Monday.

"We committed to dismantling policing as we know it in the city of Minneapolis and to rebuild with our community a new model of public safety that actually keeps our community safe," Council President Lisa Bender told CNN.

Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey, however, is against getting rid of the department.

Call for police reform

On Sunday, protesters in cities including Washington, New York and Winter Park, Florida, began focusing their outrage over the death of the unarmed Floyd into demands for police reform and social justice.

Mitt Romney, a Republican Senator from Utah, joined a group of Christian protesters marching towards the White House. He tweeted photos of himself in the procession, along with the simple caption, "Black Lives Matter."

Although Mr. Romney has been a rare Republican voice of opposition to Mr. Trump, he was joined last week by



Protests spread: A demonstrator gesturing in front of a statue of Winston Churchill in Parliament Square during a Black Lives Matter protest in London on Sunday. ■ REUTERS

Slave-trader's statue toppled

REUTERS
LONDON

The toppling by anti-racism protesters of a statue of a slave trader in the English port city of Bristol has given new urgency to a debate about how Britain should confront some of the darkest chapters of its history. The statue of Edward Colston, who made a fortune in the 17th century from trading in West African slaves, was torn down and thrown into Bristol harbour on Sunday by a group of demonstrators. Statues of figures from Britain's imperialist past have in recent years become the subject of controversies. Prime Minister Boris Johnson's spokesman said the removal of the statue was a criminal act.

China to train 14 million migrant workers in 2 years

Unemployment numbers reached 33 million-40 million in May, after lockdowns were lifted



Workers at a factory in Shanghai, China, in January. ■ REUTERS

ANANTH KRISHNAN
China on Monday outlined plans to train 14 million migrant workers in vocational programmes over the next two years, as it combats an unprecedented jobs crisis in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

At least seven million rural migrant workers will be trained in the coming year, the Ministry of Human Resources and Social Security said, in an initiative that "will target rural migrant workers including those with a job or without, and those who newly resettled in cities or returned to their hometowns, as well as poor labourers", State media reported.

290 million workers
The pandemic has severely impacted China's 290 million migrant worker population, many of whom were left stuck in their hometowns in January and subsequently

found no jobs to return to after the gradual lifting of lockdowns by April. The outbreak hit during the annual new year holiday, by when most factories were closed and much of the migrant population had already returned home.

China's unemployment peaked at around 80 million in March, according to estimates, although official figures were much lower. According to UBS, the number of people not working reached 70 to 80 million in March, subsequently falling to between 33 million and 40 million in May, the *Wall Street Journal* reported.

The new plan calls on rural areas that have seen a large number of unemployed migrant workers return to lead in training, aimed at helping them find jobs locally or start businesses. Local governments have been asked to target specific industries that can absorb laid off workers, including

construction, machinery, catering and logistics.

Limited support

For an officially Communist Party-run state, the Chinese government provides limited financial support for unemployed workers, which does not generally cover the migrant population.

In an effort to support laid off workers, China's Premier Li Keqiang in a visit to Shandong province last week called for unleashing what is being called the "street vendor economy", referring to allowing people to start street-side small businesses, in a marked shift from past crackdowns on unlicensed retailing in cities. "They are part of China's vitality," he said, referring to the opening of China's economy in the late 1970s when the government for the first time allowed self-employed businesses to open after the

Maoist era. "Self-employed businesses must survive and thrive," he said, highlighting the example of the city of Chengdu in Sichuan province, which created one lakh jobs by supporting 36,000 street stalls, the *South China Morning Post* reported.

The shift in policy on street-selling has generated heated debate in China over the past week, given the harsh approach in the past to informal street-selling, which is regulated by an urban management authority called "Chengguan" that is widely reviled in China for heavy-handed enforcement. "Who would have thought the day would come when family planning officials would beg people to have a second child," read one comment on WeChat reported by the Post, "and Chengguan would invite vendors to go out onto the street?"

Intra-Afghan talks to begin soon: Abdullah

Khalilzad is talking to Taliban delegates'

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

The Afghanistan government is preparing for the first round of intra-Afghan talks with the Taliban "soon", said Abdullah Abdullah, the recently appointed chief of the High Council for National Reconciliation, on Monday.

The talks are expected to be held in Qatar, Mr. Abdullah said, while other countries that have offered to facilitate the talks, including Germany, may host future rounds.

"Khalilzad [has been] in Doha talking to Taliban delegates there in order to finalise the details, before the start of intra-Afghan negotiations," said Mr. Abdullah, referring to the U.S. Special Envoy on Afghanistan, Zalmay Khalilzad's visit to Qatar, Pakistan and Afghanis-

tan this week. Mr. Abdullah was speaking to a group of international experts at a "Track-2" dialogue organised by the Kabul-based Heart of Asia Society (HAS).

The intra-Afghan dialogue will also see more calls for the Narendra Modi government to engage the Taliban. In the past few weeks, both Mr. Khalilzad and Russian Special Envoy for Afghanistan Zamir Kabulov, have said in separate interviews to *The Hindu* that they feel it is time for India to give up its opposition to talks with the Taliban which New Delhi has thus far seen as a terror group allied to Pakistan.

At least two senior Afghan officials also told *The Hindu* that they expected New Delhi to soften its stand on the Taliban once the intra-Afghan talks begin.

Married couple to share the role of Germany's Slovenia Ambassador

Berlin's Foreign Ministry gives approval to their proposal

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BERLIN

The Foreign Ministry in Berlin appointed a married couple to share the Ambassador's job in Slovenia, an unprecedented arrangement for Germany that allows them to balance work and family life.

Natalie Kauther, 45, and Adrian Pollmann, 43, said they will share the post in the capital Ljubljana for four years from August.

They have both been working for the Ministry since 2005 and foreign assignments are part of the job, but have three children, aged seven, eight and 10, and were keen to find a family-friendly arrangement. They came up with the idea of a job share and put it to Foreign Minister Heiko



Natalie Kauther and Adrian Pollmann.

Maas, who agreed to give it a try. Mr. Pollmann will be Ambassador for the first eight months and Ms. Kauther will then take over for eight months in a rotating system. They have already done a job share once before: as joint Deputy Ambassadors to Sarajevo.

The couple admit having very different personalities,

Iran scientist returns after prisoner swap

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TEHRAN

An Iranian scientist returned home on Monday after his release from a U.S. jail in what the Islamic republic said was a prisoner exchange it hopes can be repeated between the countries.

Majid Taheri – an Iranian-American who had been working at a clinic in Tampa, Florida – had been detained in the United States for 16 months. He was freed last Thursday as Iran released U.S. Navy veteran Michael White, who had been detained in the country since his arrest in July 2018.

Upon his arrival at Tehran's Imam Khomeini International Airport, Mr. Taheri was greeted by Deputy Foreign Minister Hossein Jaberi Ansari.

Notre-Dame workers start removing scaffolding

Around 40,000 tubes were fused into a tangled mass during the 2019 fire



A complex operation: Workers taking part in the dismantling operation at the Notre-Dame Cathedral on Monday. ■ AFP

the spire that was being carried out when the fire erupted on the evening of April 15, 2019. Millions of people around the world watched as the fire tore through the church's roof, causing its steeple to collapse and sending billowing fumes containing toxic molten lead into the air. Workers first had to install a new lattice of scaffolding to encompass the roughly 40 tonnes of molten metal and stabilise it as well as the fire-scarred walls of the 13th-century masterpiece. Two teams of five will take turns cutting away the tubes one by one while hanging from rope harnesses.

Marking the first anniversary of the disaster in April, President Emmanuel Macron reiterated his goal of restoring Notre-Dame to its former glory by 2024. But the renovation has been slowed by a series of delays. The scaffolding had been installed for a renovation of

charity that is overseeing the collection of donations for the cathedral. "Pieces of the scaffolding could fall and weaken parts of the walls," he said, describing the work as "very complicated, with a sizable degree of risk."

A telescopic lift carried workers into the middle of the structure for a last evaluation, and a towering crane

installed at the site brought up equipment.

Sawing it apart
Later this week, workers will be suspended by ropes to start sawing apart the scaffolding, an operation expected to last through the summer, Mr. Rousselot said.

The scaffolding had been installed for a renovation of

MARKET WATCH

	08-06-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	34,371	0.24
US Dollar	75.55	0.04
Gold	46,959	--
Brent oil	41.01	-2.47

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	343.30	2.15
Asian Paints	1634.25	-4.30
Axis Bank	430.25	24.95
Bajaj Auto	2801.05	24.75
Bajaj Finserv	5440.95	204.55
Bajaj Finance	2507.25	116.90
Bharti Airtel	585.15	0.80
BPLC	394.10	24.50
Britannia Ind	3426.80	-39.90
Cipla	635.10	-15.80
Coal India	146.70	1.85
Dr Reddys Lab	3967.60	-57.30
Eicher Motors	16894.85	-600.50
GAIL (India)	104.75	6.90
Grasim Ind	617.15	-10.00
HCL Tech	578.25	2.30
HDFC	1760.80	-5.80
HDFC Bank	1015.90	-17.45
Hero MotoCorp	2384.30	43.65
Hindalco	146.35	-2.90
Hind Unilever	2111.70	24.10
ICICI Bank	359.80	2.60
IndusInd Bank	451.60	29.25
Bharti Infratel	230.20	-6.05
Infosys	720.85	17.30
Indian Oil Corp	93.10	3.70
ITC	197.65	-2.35
JSW Steel	194.95	-2.10
Kotak Bank	1336.75	-1.05
L&T	961.35	6.10
M&M	470.85	-13.35
Maruti Suzuki	5734.80	-11.40
Nestle India Ltd.	16836.20	-260.65
NTPC	98.55	0.60
ONGC	90.95	4.00
PowerGrid Corp	172.35	0.90
Reliance Ind	1569.50	-12.20
State Bank	186.80	-1.00
Shree Cement	21180.90	-908.70
Sun Pharma	489.95	-5.25
Tata Motors	115.45	4.70
Tata Steel	333.60	-5.35
TCS	2071.75	23.50
Tech Mahindra	590.00	10.15
Titan	1025.00	34.05
UltraTech Cement	3778.20	-91.35
UPL	436.80	-2.60
Vedanta	105.10	-0.20
Wipro	226.45	7.70
Zee Entertainment	197.05	-9.15

Economy to contract 3.2% in FY21: WB

Shrinkage in India GDP attributed to COVID-19 curbs, says World Bank; forecasts 3.1% growth in FY22

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN

The Indian economy is expected to contract by 3.2% in this fiscal year as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and its associated restrictions, the World Bank said in its Global Economic Prospects (GEP) June 2020 report released on Monday. Growth is forecast at 3.1% next year.

The world economy, as a whole, is set to witness its deepest recession since World War II, with a forecasted contraction of 5.2% this year – some 60 million could be pushed into extreme poverty, World Bank Group President David Malpass had warned last week.

With updated data now available, this number could be 70-100 million, a Bank economist told reporters on a briefing call on Monday.

Emerging market and de-



Up to 100 mn may be pushed into extreme poverty; this is up from the 60 mn estimated earlier by David Malpass. ■ AFP

veloping economies (EMDEs) are expected to contract by 2.5% this year, and economic activity in advanced economies is forecast to shrink by 7%, as domestic supply and demand, finance and trade have been disrupted due to the pan-

demic. Countries most reliant on global trade, tourism, external financing and commodity exports are likely to hit the hardest.

This is a deeply sobering outlook, with the crisis likely to leave long-lasting scars and pose major global chal-

lenges,” said World Bank economist Ceyla Pazarbasioglu.

In the baseline scenario, global growth is set to rebound at 4.2% in 2021, with EMDEs growing at 4.6% and advanced economies growing at 3.9%.

This, however, is the baseline forecast and assumes that pandemic-induced domestic restrictions will be lifted by mid-year in advanced economies and a bit later in EMDEs.

The downside scenario is more severe – the global economy could shrink this year by as much as 8% (5% for EMDEs), followed by weak recovery at just above 1% growth next year.

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