



Sonia launches scheme to help farmers as tribute to Rajiv Gandhi
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Maharashtra govt. erred in handling COVID-19 crisis, says Fadnavis
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₹20 lakh crore package is holistic: BJP leader Bhupender Yadav
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China planning Bill that could limit opposition activity in Hong Kong
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NEARBY



With 571 cases, Delhi records highest surge

NEW DELHI
Delhi reported 571 new COVID-19 cases in the last 24 hours, taking the total to 11,659, said the government health bulletin released on Thursday. This is the biggest single-day jump in the number of cases so far.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

Notice to Centre, State over woman's detention

NEW DELHI
The Delhi High Court has issued notices to both Centre and city government over continued detention of a 25-year-old woman involved in anti-CAA protest under UAPA when special courts which can extend her custody have not been functioning due to lockdown.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

Amphan kills 72 in West Bengal, brings life to a halt

■ Deaths have occurred in eight districts, including 15 in Kolkata

■ I haven't seen such a disaster in my entire life: Mamata Banerjee

■ Casualties were due to falling of trees, electrocution, house collapse

■ PM to survey Bengal, Odisha today; Mamata sets up ₹1,000 crore fund



Extensive damage: A bus that got crushed after a tree fell on it when cyclone Amphan swept through Kolkata. ■ PTI

PLA blocking Indian patrols in Ladakh, Sikkim, says MEA

India rejects China's claims of trespass into its territory



of Actual Control] in the Western Sector or the Sikkim Sector is not accurate. Indian troops are fully familiar with the LAC alignment in the India-China border areas and abide by it scrupulously," said MEA spokesperson Anurag Srivastava.

"All Indian activities are entirely on the Indian side of the LAC. In fact, it is the Chinese side that has recently undertaken activity hindering India's normal patrolling patterns," he observed.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

EDITORIAL ▶ PAGE 6

Five men arrested for carrying chicken meat granted bail by HC

U.P. govt. counsel concedes it is an exempted commodity

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

The Allahabad High Court on Wednesday granted bail to five persons jailed on the charge of carrying chicken meat allegedly in violation of lockdown norms.

Ajaz Gazi, Irshad Raza, Nihaluddin, Mohd. Aqeel and Mohd. Shahid had been in jail since April 13 after they were found carrying 3 quintals (300 kg) of chicken meat in a truck in Lucknow. They were booked under several sections of the Indian Penal Code, the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, and the Disaster Manage-

ment Act, 2005.

In his submission before Justice Rajeev Singh of the Lucknow Bench, the defence counsel argued that the Joint Secretary, Union Ministry of Fisheries and Animal Husbandry, had asked the States on March 30 to include live chicks, eggs and meat in the list of commodities exempted from the lockdown.

Essential items

The Director of Animal Husbandry, Uttar Pradesh, clarified on April 3 that these were essential items.

The State government's

advocate opposed the bail saying the accused persons were carrying the meat with a forged pass. But he conceded that both State and Centre had clarified that chicken meat was an exempted commodity.

"Considering the rival submissions of learned counsel for parties, material available on record as well as totality of fact and circumstances, and without expressing any opinion on the merits of the case, I am of the view that the applicants are entitled to be released on bail," Justice Singh said.

HC tells police to pay ₹75 lakh to motorist

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has directed the Delhi Police to pay ₹75 lakh as compensation to the parents of a man who is in a vegetative state after his motorcycle rammed into an unmanned and poorly lit police barricade five years ago.

Justice Navin Chawla said that the victim was entitled to damages for the negligence of police in discharging their duty. As per rules, all barricades must have fluorescent paint and blinkers so that they are visible from a distance.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 2

ICICI offers FD scheme for senior citizens

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Private sector ICICI Bank will offer 6.55% on fixed deposits of 5-year to 10-year tenure for senior citizens, which is 80 basis points (bps) higher than the ordinary deposits. Typically, banks offer 50 bps more to senior citizens for fixed deposits.

"Named 'ICICI Bank Golden Years FD', the scheme offers senior citizens an interest rate of 6.55% per annum for deposits up to ₹2 crore with a tenure of more than five to 10 years," the bank said in a statement.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Pidawa, an unheralded success

Rajasthan town sets example in COVID-19 battle

MANVENDRA SINGH

The picturesque road to Pidawa crosses streams, lush farmlands, rolling hills, and the former 'badlands' which are the border areas between Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh. Pidawa is a small town in the middle of the sliver of Rajasthan that thrusts into Madhya Pradesh. And like many of the habitations in this part of the country, Pidawa too

benefitted over the last couple of centuries from a 'black gold' rush.

Unlike the better known hydrocarbon of the same name, this 'black gold' is extracted from a plant, *Papaver somniferum*, and is then processed to make opium and its many derivatives. In fact these 'badlands' hosted a part of the production facilities that provided the fuel which ignited the Anglo-Chinese Opium Wars of 1839-42 and 1856-60. But those days are long gone, and what is now grown is largely legal, although a portion does slip through



Screening for COVID-19 under way at the Government Girls Higher Secondary School in Pidawa, Rajasthan. ■ T.R. SIRVI

the system to reach consumers on the western side of Rajasthan.

It was another kind of slip through the system that

set off a major scare in Pidawa during early April and resulted in the imposition of a stringent curfew across the town. The slip would

have gone undetected but for an alert Dr. Raees at the Pidawa Community Health Centre, where Khalida Bi died on April 4.

Those were the early days of the COVID-19 outbreak, and the contagion had yet to enter this isolated corner of Jhalawar district, in Rajasthan. On an impulse, Dr. Raees decided to test the family members who had handled the body before burial. They were asked to go to Jhalawar on April 5 to be tested but proved elusive.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 11

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DELHI		
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RISE 05:27 SET 19:10		
RISE 05:13 SET 18:51		
SATURDAY, MAY. 23		
RISE 05:27 SET 19:10		
RISE 05:50 SET 19:48		
SUNDAY, MAY. 24		
RISE 05:27 SET 19:11		
RISE 06:32 SET 20:45		

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	43	25
Safdarjung	43	25
Palam	44	23

Delhi Palam Today
43°C A dry and hot day is likely. The winds will be warm and dusty with moderate speed. Night will be comfortable.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
45°C Heat wave like conditions are possible with mainly clear sky conditions. Night will be comfortable.

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THE HINDU
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IN BRIEF

DCW issues notice to social media platforms

NEW DELHI
The Delhi Commission for Women on Wednesday issued notice to social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and TikTok seeking details of standard operating procedures put in place to curb and deal with content which incite violence and harassment. The social media platforms have been asked to respond to the women's commission by May 25.

High Court directs police to pay motorist ₹75 lakh compensation

Motorcycle rammed into unmanned barricade, leaving rider in vegetative state

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has directed the Delhi police to pay ₹75 lakh as compensation to the parents of a man, who is in vegetative state, after his motorcycle rammed into an unmanned and poorly lit police barricade five years ago.

Justice Navin Chawla said that the victim was entitled to damages for the negligence and failure of the Delhi police in discharging their duty. The court remarked that placing of barricades, though, may be for valid security reasons, also casts a duty on the police to ensure that they do not cause accidents due to their non-maintenance.

As per rules, all barricades must have necessary fluorescent paint as well as blinkers so that they are visible from a



long distance. The rules also mandate that the barricades, under no circumstances, should be left unmanned. The alignment of the barricades should be done to ensure that the traffic halts for checking, but at the same time, is able to negotiate through them.

The High Court noted that chaining of such barricades was not permissible.

On December 5, 2015,

Dheeraj Kumar (21) had gone to attend a marriage function in the vicinity of Paschim Vihar in Madipur Village. Around 5 a.m., a constable from the nearby police station informed the family that Mr. Kumar had met with an accident. He had suffered severe injuries on his body and head. He was discharged from the hospital while he was unconsciousness, on January 14, 2016. He has been in the same state since.

Meanwhile, an FIR was registered against Mr. Kumar by the police for rash and negligent driving. The Delhi police had stated that he seemed to have tried to slip through the gap in between the barricades and due to the speed at which his vehicle was travelling, he was unable to spot the chain linking the barricades.

CISF adopts no-touch policy for passengers entering airports

Ticket, ID will be checked via camera; no more pat-downs

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) said they have adopted a "no-touch policy" for passengers entering airports, said a senior CISF officer on Thursday.

The officer said that to ensure safety of passengers and CISF personnel, they have adopted the policy to prevent spread of COVID-19.

"Passenger entering the airport have to undergo thermal screening and their ticket and ID will be checked by security personnel via a camera. A CISF personnel will check the ID by sitting in a glass cabin at the entry point," said the officer.

He added that they have provided masks, gloves and alcohol-based sanitisers to all their personnel. Infra-red

thermometers have also been arranged for screening at building entry points and at access control places.

"At frisking point, passenger will cross Door Frame Metal Detectors. If any metal object is detected in possession of passengers then an extended hand-held metal detector will be used to frisk. There will be no pat-downs," said the officer.

Student held for JMI violence booked in riots case

He has been charged under UAPA for being part of a 'larger conspiracy' behind riots

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

Days after Asif Iqbal Tanha, a Jamia Millia Islamia student, was arrested by the Crime Branch in connection with the "violence" in the Jamia area in December last year, the Delhi Police Special Cell has booked him under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) for being part of a "larger conspiracy" behind the riots that broke out here in February, police officers said on

Thursday.

The police have alleged that Mr. Tanha is a member of the Students Islamic Organisation and was part of the Jamia Coordination Committee (JCC), a public organisation, which spearheaded protests against the CAA.

"We have evidence and he was wanted in a case that we were investigating. So we arrested him on production warrant on Tuesday. We have been granted seven days of custody," an officer

said. A city court on Wednesday sent Mr. Tanha to a seven-day police custody.

Earlier, the Delhi police charged JCC members Safoora Zargar and Meeraan Haider, Jamia Alumni Association president Shifa-Ur-Rehman and "suspected" AAP Councillor Tahir Hussain under the UAPA. The Crime Branch had arrested Mr. Tanha recently in a case registered at Jamia police station on December 16 last, in connection with "violence" in the

Jamia area in which he was named an accused, a senior police officer had claimed.

On December 15, 2019, buses and police vehicles were torched as the police and protesters clashed in New Friends Colony during an anti-CAA demonstration, leaving at least 40 people injured.

Communal clashes had broken out in north-east Delhi on February 24 leaving at least 53 people dead and around 200 injured.

'BOIS LOCKER ROOM, A REFLECTION OF AN EXISTING MINDSET'

Psychologists stress the need for open and constructive conversations on sex and sexuality at home for teenagers to understand banter from abuse

SIDHARTH RAVI
NEW DELHI

The controversy triggered by leaked lewd chats from 'Bois Locker Room', an Instagram group run by some teenagers, and the death of a 17-year-old boy in Gurugram, allegedly in connection with the incident, have raised serious questions about the mindset of youngsters, their use of social media and the way forward.

The Hindu spoke to a few psychologists, specialising in adolescent counselling, who narrowed down the reasons to lack of proper sexual education and gender sensitivity among teenagers.

"There are multiple episodes – the Bois Locker Room, a 17-year-old ending his life, and the Snapchat screenshot. Though we may feel they are all different, what comes out is that there is a complete lack of sex education, gender sensitisation and sensitivity among teenagers," said Mahalakshmi Rajagopal, a psychologist who works as a consultant with some Delhi schools.



'Forbidden topic'

According to Dr. Rajagopal, while girls are imparted with some amount of sex education when they start their menstrual cycle, for boys sex is often a "forbidden topic". "The reason you have a boys room locker, where all these discussions are taking place, is because at that age they are curious and they haven't been given healthy sensitisation about sex, women and things related to sexual health. Nothing has been provided," she said.

Roma Kumar, a counsellor psychologist at Sir Ganga Ram

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

Police, civil society and government authorities should be more careful while commenting or reacting in cases involving juveniles because their actions can have serious consequences, said a senior police officer.

The way people commented on the 'Bois Locker Room' incident, which involved many juveniles, was an example of carelessness, said the officer. Amid the outrage on social media on the issue, a girl came out with an Instagram post accusing a boy of molesting her two years ago. Fearing police action and social media trial, the teenager ended his life, he said.

"Juveniles should be treated with soft hands and caution, they have their future. They can't be treated like criminals," said the officer.

DCP (Cyber Crime) Bhisham Singh said whenever they deal with any case involving juveniles, they exercise extra caution in their probe.

SOFTER APPROACH
While investigating cyber-crime cases involving juveniles, they follow a standard operating procedure. The investigating officer remains in plain clothes when meeting the juvenile; he/she is never called to a police station and is counselled only in the presence

'JUVENILES SHOULD BE TREATED WITH CAUTION, SOFT HANDS'
POLICE OFFICERS SAY CARELESS REACTIONS, ACTIONS IN CASES INVOLVING MINORS CAN HAVE SERIOUS CONSEQUENCES



SUICIDE PREVENTION HELPLINE: SANJIVINI, SOCIETY FOR MENTAL HEALTH, 011-4076 9002, MONDAY-SATURDAY (10 A.M.-7.30 P.M.)

families engaging in such casual exchange. So the children grow up thinking it is okay to objectify women. This then gets reinforced with their peers," said Dr. Rajagopal.

Damini Grover, another counselling psychologist, agreed. "It's a reflection of an already ex-

isting mindset," she said. She also pointed out the role of Bollywood movies that engage in similar conversations between men about women. This, she said, comes from a "sense of superiority, an assertion of masculinity which involves thinking and talking about women

casually".

Taking the example of asking for consent, Dr. Kumar said, "We don't take consent in our homes. We just order. It's how we communicate to our children also. And they learn from the environment, how a man or the father is talking to the wife. And

how the wife is connecting to the in-laws or to the husband."

Still a stigma

Stigma attached to sex and sexuality has been a hindrance, observed counsellors. Dr. Grover said there is reluctance among parents to talk about sex and

sexuality to their children. Because of it, a volley of topics, like exploring one's sexuality, sex and its consequences, ideas of masculinity and femininity, consent, building relationships and treating partners are left undiscussed, she said.

Removing the sense of taboo is the first step, said Dr. Rajagopal. "We as a society must be comfortable to sit down and talk about the sexual act. We give the impression that it is a big secret and something bad. Even today the minute there is an intimate scene in movie, parents tell their children to get up and leave. We have to get out of that sort of mindset. We should be able to have a healthy and open conversation," she said.

"If somebody's asking about masturbation or oral sex, talk about it. Tell them," said Dr. Kumar, adding that parents too need to learn to deal with their children. "They shouldn't stop children, but guide them," she said.

'Sexual' education

Looking forward, Dr. Kumar said that there is a need for sexual education and not just sex education among children. Dr. Rajagopal stressed that apart from proper sex education and gender sensitivity among children, it is important to teach parents about such concerns and ensure a positive environment at home.

Dr. Grover asserted the need for social media education, given a complete lack of any kind of sensitivity training to children either in schools or at home. "It is part of a new way of living and there is a need to develop some rules around it. Future generations will continue to use these platforms and we need to understand how to use them responsibly," she said.

Restricting the use of social media is not an option, she argued. As individuals grow older, the focus has to be on creating a sense of responsibility when using social media, she said. The 'Bois Locker Room incident' should act as a tale of caution.

Anti-CAA protest: notice to Centre, State over woman's detention

Special Courts which can extend her custody not functioning; plea

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has issued notices to both the Centre and the Delhi government over continued detention of a 25-year-old woman, involved in anti-CAA and NRC protest, under Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) when the Special Courts which can extend her custody have not been functioning due to COVID-19-induced lockdown.

A Bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Rajnish Bhatnagar posted the case for a detailed hearing on May 29.

The High Court order came to the conclusion that "the chains tying the barricades could not be visible to a motorist from far". "Merely because no helmet was shown to have been recovered from the site, cannot lead to a conclusion that petitioner no.1 [Mr. Kumar] was not wearing a helmet or was driving at a high speed or rashly," the court added.

The court also held that Mr. Kumar was entitled to claim of damages for the negligence and failure of the police to discharge their duty.

April 9.

Ms. Fatima, along with others, were initially arrested over an FIR lodged in Jafrabad police station for allegedly instigating a crowd to block the road near Jafrabad metro station on February 22 to protest against the CAA and the NRC.

Later, stringent provisions under the UAPA were invoked against her in a separate FIR, which is under investigation by the Crime Branch. The Delhi Police had earlier opposed her bail application before the trial court, saying that her conduct was "attributable to anti-national activity".

Mr. Hussain stated that even though his sister was granted bail in the initial FIR, at Jafrabad police station, she remains in custody due to the alleged charges

against her under the UAPA. As per the National Investigation Agency Act, offences under the UAPA can be tried only by a Special Court constituted under the NIA Act only.

The petition pointed out that the Special Courts empowered to extend the judicial custody of Ms. Fatima have not been functioning since March 23, when the first lockdown began.

"This constitutes a deprivation of the liberty of Ms. Fatima without due process, and therefore violates her fundamental right to life and liberty secured under Article 21 of the Constitution of India," the plea said.

The plea said that her continued detention was without authority of law, and urged the High Court to release her immediately.

IN BRIEF

'Govt. not doing enough for migrant labourers'

NEW DELHI The Delhi unit of the Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) on Thursday said that the government's efforts to provide food to the migrant and stranded labourers were not enough and this was the primary reason that the labourers were reverse-migrating to their homes. The CITU Delhi-NCR committee said that it would highlight the situation on May 22 with protests at several places in Ghaziabad, Gautam Buddha Nagar and Delhi and a joint protest at Rajghat.

Air Quality of Delhi-NCR		
Delhi 147	Gurugram 123	
Ghaziabad 187	Faridabad 218	
Noida 136	Greater Noida 146	
Good 0-50	Satisfactory 51-100	Moderate 101-200
Poor 201-300	Very Poor 301-400	Severe >400
Air Quality Index at 4 p.m., yesterday (Average of past 24 hours) Source: CPCB		

Jama Masjid cleric issues advisory ahead of Id

NEW DELHI The Deputy Shahi Imam of Jama Masjid, Syed Shabani Bulkhari, on Thursday issued an advisory for celebration of Id and Ramzan in the light of the COVID-19 lockdown. He has asked people to refrain from any mass gathering, religious or celebratory, at any time during the holy month of Ramzan.

Wait's over



Former Union Minister and Congress leader Anand Sharma cycling at Lodi Garden in the Capital on Thursday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

HC rejects plea seeking removal of DCW chief

Petitioner told to be careful in future

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court rejected a public interest petition (PIL) seeking removal of Swati Maliwal as the chairperson of the Delhi Commission for Women (DCW), saying it appeared to be "nothing but a vested interest litigation".

A Bench of Justice Hima Kohli and Justice Subramonium Prasad, while allowing the petition to be withdrawn, cautioned the petitioner Archana Sharma, an advocate, "to be more careful in future while filing petitions as PILs."

The petition had sought directions to the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights to initiate an

With 571 COVID-19 cases, Delhi records biggest 24-hour surge

Third successive 500-plus day takes case count to 11,659, even as 18 die

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

As many as 571 new COVID-19 cases were reported in Delhi in the last 24 hours, taking the total number of cases to 11,659, according to the Delhi government health bulletin released on Thursday. This is the biggest single-day jump in the number of cases in the city so far.

Tuesday and Wednesday had also recorded the biggest single-day increase till then. Also, 18 more deaths have been reported, taking the total number of deaths to 194, though the bullet said that all the deaths did not happen in the past 24 hours.

Of the 11,659 cases, 5,567 people have recovered, whittling down the active cases to 5,898.

The recovery rate pleased Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal. "Am so proud of our team of doctors and nurses who have provided the best possible treatment to our COVID patients. Delhi will soon have more recovered patients than the number of active cases [sic]," he tweeted.

Meanwhile, Lok Nayak



A girl rides her mother back home after medical treatment during the nationwide lockdown on Thursday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

Hospital, which had asked healthcare workers who are on quarantine to vacate the accommodation the hospital had provided, handed them a week's extension. In an order issued on Wednesday, Dr. Suresh Kumar, Medical Director of Lok Nayak Hospital, asked workers to vacate by Thursday noon.

'Quarantine not needed' Mr. Kumar issued the order following a Delhi government order, dated May 18, which said that "regular quarantine of healthcare workers after performing duty in

COVID-19 areas is not warranted". The Delhi government issued the order following a Central government order on the same on May 15.

Before the order, all the healthcare workers in Delhi who were on COVID-19 duty were quarantined for 14 days after working for the same tenure. Under the new guidelines, only high-risk workers will be quarantined for 14 days.

"We have given them a week's time to vacate the accommodation," Dr. Kumar stated. However, it entails considerable risk. "Under the cur-

rent guidelines, almost no one would be eligible for quarantine after 14 days of work. This would risk healthcare workers infecting family members and society," Parv Mittal, president of the Resident Doctors' Association (RDA) of the hospital said.

New amendments The RDA has urged the Union Health Minister to amend the new guidelines, but the Minister is yet to respond.

The Federation of Resident Doctors' Association India (FORDA) too had written to Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain, urging him to make amendments to the new guidelines for the quarantine of healthcare workers.

Many patients do not show any symptoms and by not quarantining healthcare workers, we expose their family and friends to the virus. We will be holding a black ribbon protest tomorrow [Friday] and doctors will be wearing a black ribbon to work," FORDA president Shivi Dev Barman said.

'End DMC chief's removal process within 2 weeks'

HC tells govt. to act under ambit of law

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday directed the city government to conclude the process of removal of Zafarul Islam Khan, chairperson of Delhi Minorities Commission (DMC) in accordance with law within two weeks.

A Bench of Justices Manmohan and Sanjeev Narula said, "Respondents No.1 [Delhi government] and 2 [L-G] to conclude the process under Section 4(4)(f) of the Delhi Minorities Commission Act against respondent No.3 - Mr. Zafarul Islam Khan in accordance with law within two weeks".

The sections provide for removal of the DMC chairperson after giving him a

proper hearing.

The High Court's order came on a plea by a social worker, Vikram Gahlot, challenging the constitutionality of the DMC Act and seeking removal of Mr. Khan from the post of the chairperson.

Advocate Dhananjai Jain, who represented Mr. Gahlot, argued that despite the previous order of the High Court, no show-cause notice has been issued to Mr. Khan till date.

The L-G had in April written to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal highlighting a social media post by Mr. Khan, the content of which prima facie appears to have the potential of disturbing communal harmony in the city.

Too early to direct DMRC to resume services, remarks HC

There is adequate public transport in the Capital as of now'

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has remarked that it is too early to urge through petition that the Delhi Metro must be directed to resume operation immediately since there is "adequate public transport" in the Capital as of now.

A Bench of Justice Hima Kohli and Justice Subramonium Prasad said on Wednesday that, "it has been just two days since the new rules and regulations [for lockdown] have come into force".

"It is too early in the day to urge that there is an inadequate supply of public transport for insisting that

DMRC [Delhi Metro Rail Corporation] must be directed to operate immediately," the Bench said.

The court said, "As of now, there is an adequate public transport that has been permitted to be operated by the Government of NCT to meet the requirement of the public at large".

Social distancing "As and when the lockdown is further relaxed, the DMRC shall also be permitted to operate the Metro Rail in terms of the directions that may be issued by the respondents

[government] subsequently," it added.

The court, further, said that it shall be the duty of the DMRC to ensure that adequate steps are taken to maintain social distancing once it is permitted to function, particularly, since DMRC has become the lifeline for the residents of Delhi and the NCR region and invariably, the compartments are packed to the gills, which can be dangerous in the current COVID-19 pandemic situation.

The court disposed of a petition seeking directions to operate all the public transport, including Delhi Metro in all districts of the Capital.

Economics dept. teachers express concern over DU open book exams

Students may not have regular access to Internet, they say

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

About 170 teachers of the economics department from across Delhi University wrote to the head of the department raising issue with the university's decision to conduct open book examinations, on Wednesday.

"Based on strong student feedback and our own experience of the unsatisfactory

and limited scope and coverage of online classes, we feel that there are very serious hindrances to time-bound online open book examinations in the pattern suggested by the university," the teachers wrote.

Among issues they highlighted, they said that many students may not have regular access to Internet, adding that the issue may be worse

for those staying in containment zones who wouldn't be able to access internet outside their homes, apart from facing issues with scanning and uploading answer sheets.

It raised concerns about the ability of students who even have smartphones to be able to read question papers or upload high quality answer sheets.

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU STATE DEVELOPMENT POLICY COUNCIL REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATIONS FOR EMPANELMENT OF SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR CONTENT WRITING SERVICES & EMPANELMENT OF SERVICE PROVIDERS FOR DESIGN AND LAYOUT

The State Development Policy Council (SDPC), on behalf of the Planning and Development Department, Government of Tamil Nadu proposes to empanel 1. Service Providers for Content Writing Services and 2. Service Providers for Design and Layout.

Those who are interested must send RFP separately for each in the prescribed format and they will be processed as per Tamil Nadu Transparency in Tenders Act 1998, (TT Act) latest and TT Rules 2000 there under.

The details can be downloaded from the websites www.tenders.tn.gov.in and www.spc.tn.gov.in from 22.05.2020.

The RFQ document must be delivered in the office of Member Secretary, State Development Policy Council (SDPC), Ezhilagam, 5th Floor, Chepauk, Chennai-600 005 on or before 3.00 PM, 09.06.2020.

Member Secretary,
STATE DEVELOPMENT POLICY COUNCIL

Deputy superintendent of Mandoli jail tests positive

Officer is under home quarantine, says prison management

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Mandoli jail reported its first case of COVID-19 as its deputy superintendent tested positive, prison officials said on Thursday.

Director General (Prisons) Sandeep Goel confirmed the development.



An assistant superintendent of Rohini jail had tested positive for COVID-19 earlier this week. ■ FILE PHOTO

district, tested positive on Thursday after which a rigorous sanitisation drive is underway and senior officers are planning on how to "work things out".

DCP West office in Rajouri Garden will also undergo a sanitisation drive from Saturday to Monday during the long weekend. Seven affected officials have been quarantined, a senior officer said.

Two arrested for ferrying migrant workers illegally

Two persons have been arrested for allegedly ferrying migrant labourers on a forged e-pass from south east Delhi's Govindpuri, police said on Thursday. Deputy Commissioner of Police (South East) R.P. Meena said that the accused have been identified as Manish Kumar Jha, a resident of Prem Nagar, and Sharvan Kumar, a resident of Govindpuri.

The police said that the bus and the e-pass have been seized. Fifty one workers were there on the bus with no medical fitness certificate, said Mr. Meena.

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THE HINDU
India's National Newspaper

Bajjal suggests steps to help people

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal on Thursday wrote to the Delhi Development Authority, the Delhi Police, municipal corporations and the Delhi government asking them to ameliorate sufferings of people and businesses through proactive measures by using technology.

Some of the steps suggested include automatic renewal of various licences, moratorium on payments, simplified online processes and minimising requirement of visit to government offices.

'Constitute panel' To help people of Delhi get through the troubled financial times, the L-G suggested that the Chief Minister constitute a committee to comprehensively analyse and suggest measures to help people and businesses with special focus on protection of interests of labours. He al-

so directed the Home Department to take steps to explore the possibility of automatic extension of term/ renewal of licences of various categories which stand expired after March 1 after taking into account safety concerns.

As most sections of society are facing challenge of cash flow management, which makes it difficult to pay instalment, allotment money, lease rent, licence fee, etc, the L-G advised the DDA to explore measures for moratorium on payments.

He advised the DDA to stimulate the business environment by attracting investments and focusing on sectoral revival.

He advised local bodies that ongoing pending processes related to property tax, conversion charges for allowing commercial activities on mixed land use, parking, etc. should be expeditiously completed.

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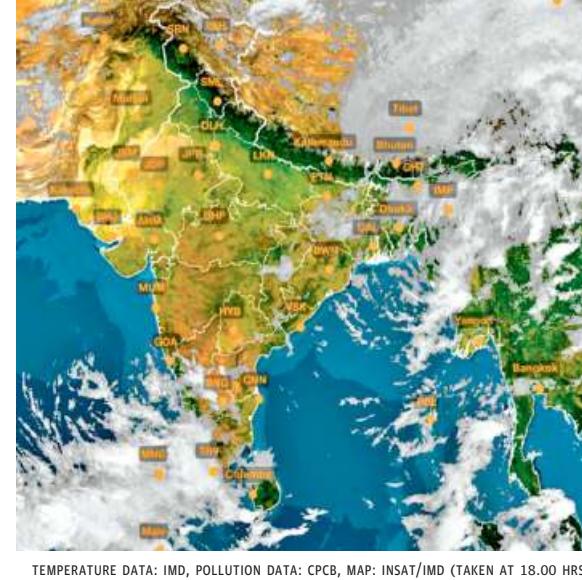
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- M.Tech. Electrical Engineering (Power System)
- M.Tech. Electrical Engineering (Power Electronics)
- M.Tech. Remote Sensing
- M.Tech. Space Engineering & Rocketry (Aerodynamics)
- M.Tech. Space Engineering & Rocketry (Rocket Propulsion)
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- M.Pharm. (Pharmaceutical Quality Assurance)
- M.Pharm. (Pharmaceutical Chemistry)
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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 Friday: Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning, hail and gusty winds very likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh; with lightning and gusty winds at isolated places over Punjab, Haryana, Delhi, Kerala and Lakshadweep and with lightning at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh.

CITY **RAIN** **MAX** **MIN** **CITY** **RAIN** **MAX** **MIN**

Agartala	2.7	30.6	24.8	Kozhikode	—	33.0	27.0
Ahmedabad	—	44.1	26.0	Kurnool	—	43.0	28.8
Aizawl	21.0	23.7	19.2	Lucknow	—	40.5	24.8
Allahabad	—	42.2	25.4	Madurai	—	37.0	27.0
Bengaluru	—	33.2	22.0	Mangalore	—	34.7	25.4
Dhohar	—	42.7	22.0	Mumbai	—	35.1	26.5
Bhubaneswar	—	35.0	20.9	Mysuru	—	31.4	24.0
Chandigarh	—	38.3	21.8	New Delhi	—	43.2	23.6
Coimbatore	—	35.0	25.3	Port Blair	6.7	31.7	25.2
Dehradun	—	36.7	19.3	Puducherry	0.2	41.2	27.2
Gangtok	22.4	19.6	14.9	Pune	—	39.0	23.9
Goa	—	34.6	26.9	Raipur	—	39.5	21.6
Guwahati	00.0	00.0	00.0	Ranchi	0.8	30.1	21.0
Hubballi	—	34.0	23.0	Shillong	86.4	19.6	—
Hyderabad	19.9	24.8	22.0	Shimla	—	27.1	18.2
Imphal	4.5	28.0	22.0	Srinagar	—	26.7	8.4
Jaipur	—	42.0	26.8	Thiruvananthapuram	17.7	27.8	24.7
Kochi	0.4	32.0	26.0	Tiruchi	—	41.1	28.0
Kohima	15.0	24.2	16.0	Vijayawada	—	—	—
Kolkata	236.3	26.8	23.4	Visakhapatnam	—	35.6	30.4

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	CODE
Ahmedabad	—	.27	.16	53	82	■■■■■
Bengaluru	03	.11	.38	36	81	■■■■■
Chennai	04	.33	.76	71	—	■■■■■
Delhi	—	.39	107	.204	—	■■■■■
Hyderabad	52	.35	10	.95	136	■■■■■
Kolkata	05	.08	.22	.10	.47	■■■■■
Lucknow	05	.18	.29	.211	—	■■■■■
Mumbai	31	.10	.10	.14	.63	■■■■■
Pune	26	.10	.59	.33	.32	■■■■■
Visakhapatnam	09	.65	.08	.82	.133	■■■■■

Yesterday

In observation made at 6.00 p.m., Mandi Gobindgarh, Punjab recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 235 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Aizawl, Mizoram recorded a healthy AQI score of 14.

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.

NO₂: 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.

PM_{2.5} & 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.

Soren seeks permission to fly back workers

Jharkhand government to provide free food and water for returning migrants along national highways

AMARNATH TEWARY
SATYASUNDAR BARIK
PATNA/BHUBANESWAR

Days after a spat with Railways Minister Piyush Goyal over ferrying migrants on special trains, Jharkhand Chief Minister Hemant Soren has written to Union Home Minister Amit Shah expressing willingness to bring back the "distressed workers" of his State from Leh and the north-eastern States on chartered flights with "dignity".

"So far we have been able to get back 1.5 lakh stranded workers, students and other persons by trains and buses and while executing this evacuation exercise, we came to know that nearly 200 labourers of Jharkhand are stuck in the difficult terrain of Ladakh. Similarly, around 450 such workers are stranded in the north-eastern States. Distress calls from there are being received every day in my of-



Food being served in one of the over 6,000 Mukhya Mantri Didi Kitchens in Jharkhand. ■ SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

fice... due to the difficult terrain of these places, a viable solution would be to lift them by air," said Mr. Soren in his one-page letter dated May 20 to the Home Minister. Noting that MHA lockdown rules prohibit chartered flights, he urged Mr. Shah to grant permission while reminding him about an earlier request dated May 12 for a similar chartered

flight from the Andaman & Nicobar Islands to bring back over 300 workers of the State.

Nearly 4 lakh migrant workers from Jharkhand are stuck in different parts of the country after the nationwide lockdown was imposed to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Many of them have returned home but lakhs of migrants are still stranded.

Mr. Soren, who has been vocal about the official insensitivity towards the plight of migrant workers, also announced the opening of community kitchens along highways to provide free food.

Spots identified

The community kitchens will be set up at a gap of 20 km along bordering national highways and migrant workers found walking towards their homes will be provided food and water free of cost. The Jharkhand CMO has identified 94 spots so far for the purpose along national highways. Besides, Jharkhand has been providing two meals to about 45,000 people every day through 6,432 "Didi Kitchens".

Migrant workers from other States who are either stranded in Jharkhand or using the State as transit route will also avail free food in the

community kitchens. They will be taken to a nearby centre from where vehicles will be arranged to ferry them to their respective State borders.

"People should not lose humanity at the time of pandemic. We should set an example. About 7 lakh workers from Jharkhand are stranded outside. Food and accommodation arrangements for more than 6 lakh of those migrant workers have been made in coordination with different State governments," said Mr. Soren. The government was also making efforts to bring back migrant workers stuck outside by special trains and buses, he said.

On May 15, Mr. Soren had directed all district administrations as well as Jharkhand police to ensure that no person is stranded in Jharkhand or any other State walks towards their destinations.

Migrants trigger spike in U.P. cases

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

The huge number of migrant workers returning to Uttar Pradesh during the lockdown has caused the positive cases of COVID-19 in the State to surge, an official said on Thursday.

Amit Mohan Prasad, Principal Secretary in the Health Department, said so far 1,230 migrant workers who had returned to U.P. had tested positive. Over 46,000 samples of migrant workers have also been collected, he said.

Mr. Prasad said the number of pool tests showing positive results in the State had also considerably gone up because of the entry of migrant workers.

Over 5.42 lakh migrant workers are under the surveillance of ASHA workers, he added. So far, over 20 lakh migrant workers have returned to U.P.

Two girls found murdered in Shamli

Reports of heinous crimes have once again started emerging from western U.P.

ANUJ KUMAR
GAZIABAD

After a lull, reports of heinous crimes have once again started emerging from western Uttar Pradesh. After the gruesome murder of two workers of a political party in Sambhal on May 19, two unidentified bodies of girls were found in a sugarcane field in a village in Shamli district on Wednesday, police said.

The sugarcane field where the bodies were found. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

port says the girls were murdered between the night of May 18 and May 19. There are head injuries that suggest they were killed with a heavy, blunt object. There is no evidence of rape," he said.

Mr. Jaiswal said four teams had been formed to trace the antecedents of the deceased.

glers fired at the police but constable Vatan Pawar caught hold of one of the smugglers. The constable was attacked with a knife three times. The police fired in self-defence, injuring one of the smugglers.

In another incident an alleged cow smuggler was killed and a constable was seriously injured during an encounter in Saharanpur on Wednesday night. According to an official release, the police responded to an informer's tip off that four persons were indulging in cow slaughter in a village Ghanamandi.

According to the release, a team of five policemen surrounded the area. The smuggler was declared dead.

The injured constable was referred to Dehradun where his situation is critical, according to Dinesh Kumar P, Senior Superintendent of Police, Saharanpur. A case has been registered.

Pranayama can boost immunity, says Ramdev

Yoga guru advises M.P. govt. on virus

SIDHARTH YADAV
BHOPAL

Yoga guru Baba Ramdev on Wednesday informed Shrikrishna Chouhan, Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, which is one of the worst hit by the COVID-19 pandemic, that pranayama (breathing exercises) and ayurvedic medicines have shown good results," he claimed.

As for breathing exercises, he listed six kinds of pranayama which could help keep the disease at bay. "Corona patients can also do pranayama. It gives quick relief," he claimed.

Ex�rolling the initiative of Mr. Chouhan to give away ayurvedic medicines to people to improve their immunity to stop the disease's spread, Baba Ramdev claimed the use of ayurvedic medicines and pranayama improves the body's immunity."

Health Minister Narottam Mishra, Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains, Director General of Police Vivek Johri and Additional Chief Secretary for Health Mohammed Suleman were present during the meeting where Baba Ramdev guided health officials on the use of ayurvedic medicines and pranayama to combat COVID-19.

Baba Ramdev claimed herbs ashwagandha (witha-

nia somnifera) and giloy (tinospora cordifolia) were effective to break the chain of infection due to the illness.

"Their usage in the treatment of corona patients has shown good results," he claimed.

As for breathing exercises, he listed six kinds of pranayama which could help keep the disease at bay. "Corona patients can also do pranayama. It gives quick relief," he claimed.

During a videoconference to give advice to the Chief Medical and Health Officers of all the 52 districts, in the presence of Mr. Chouhan, Baba Ramdev said, "If an individual's immunity is strong, corona can do no harm to them. The usage of ayurvedic medicines and pranayama improves the body's immunity."

Health Minister Narottam Mishra, Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains, Director General of Police Vivek Johri and Additional Chief Secretary for Health Mohammed Suleman were present during the meeting where Baba Ramdev guided health officials on the use of ayurvedic medicines and pranayama to combat COVID-19.

Baba Ramdev claimed herbs ashwagandha (witha-

Police demand for Cong. leader Pankaj Punia

Controversy over social media post

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Congress leader from Haryana Pankaj Punia, arrested by police in Haryana's Karnal for allegedly hurting religious feelings through a social media post was on Thursday sent on police remand for a day by a local court.

"We produced Pankaj Punia in a local court at Karnal on May 21, and the court has granted one day police remand. He was arrested from Madhuban area late Wednesday night," Bharti Arora, Inspector General of Police, Karnal Range said.

"We produced Pankaj Punia in a local court at Karnal on May 21, and the court has granted one day police remand. He was arrested from Madhuban area late Wednesday night," Bharti Arora, Inspector General of Police, Karnal Range said.

A police case was registered against Mr. Punia, a

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Keeping the peace

India and China must end tensions on the border by clarifying the LAC

With four incidents along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in recent weeks, the India-China border is witnessing the highest tensions since the Doklam stand-off in 2017. In the three years since, both sides have done remarkably well to keep the peace. Prime Minister Modi and President Xi both agreed differences should not be allowed to escalate into disputes. Also, a clear message was sent to the two militaries to abide by the detailed protocols already in place, such as those agreed to in 2005 and 2013. These regulate the activities of troops in the contested zones that lie in between both sides' overlapping claim lines of the undefined LAC. If Army Chief General Manoj Naravane wisely sought to cool the temperatures with his May 14 statement, China has unhelpfully raised them. On May 19, its Foreign Ministry accused the Indian Army of "attempting to unilaterally change the status" of the LAC. The stand-off in Ladakh appears to have been triggered by China moving in troops to obstruct road construction activity by India. Last year, India completed the Darbuk-Shyok-Daulet Beg Oldi (DBO) road which connects Leh to the Karakoram Pass. India also maintains a key landing strip at DBO at 16,000 feet. The broader context for the tensions is the changing dynamic along the LAC. India has been upgrading its roads as it plays catch-up, with China already enjoying an advantage in both terrain and infrastructure. China now seems to be telling India it has no right to carry out the kind of activity that Beijing has already done. India is well within its right to carry out construction work. Delhi needs to remind Beijing that a fundamental principle that underpins all previous agreements is recognising the right to mutual and equal security of the two sides.

The immediate priority is for both sides to use existing channels and step back. Flag meetings between brigade commanders have so far been unable to break the stalemate. The incidents have underlined how the new LAC situation is placing existing mechanisms under renewed stress. India and China should grasp the current situation as an opportunity to revive the stalled process of clarifying the LAC. China has resisted this as a distraction to the boundary negotiations. But rather than agree on a line, both can instead simply seek to better understand the claims of the other and reach a common understanding to regulate activity in these areas. Clarifying the LAC may even provide a fresh impetus to the stalled boundary talks between the Special Representatives. Beyond the posturing, both sides know a final settlement will ultimately have to use the LAC as a basis, with only minor adjustments. Only a settlement will end the shadow boxing on the LAC. With both countries in the midst of an unprecedented global pandemic, the time to push for a settlement to a distracting, protracted dispute is now.

A double disaster

India forecast Amphan's arrival; it must now handle the impact of the storm and COVID-19

The trail of death and devastation that Cyclone Amphan has left in West Bengal and Odisha demonstrates, once again, the fragile state of eastern coastal States during the storm season. At least 72 people are dead in Bengal and normal life is paralysed for millions in Kolkata and in the rural areas of both the States. That Amphan would be a terrible disaster was anticipated, but even with reliable forecasts of its movement since May 16, and the preparatory moves by National and State Disaster Response Force units, the impact has been catastrophic. The States along the east coast have evolved a code of practice for a storm coming under category 3 and above: evacuations, arranging for backup power, warning people to stay far from the coasts, designating strong buildings as cyclone shelters, and providing for at least a week's supply of cooked food besides bolstering medical supplies. Yet, the loss of life and damage to livelihoods is always significant. This time has been no different, and the Centre and the governments of the affected States, including those in the Northeast lashed by heavy rain, must help people already weighed down by a severe lockdown pick up their lives again. There is an additional challenge, as thousands of people have been moved to crowded shelters where the COVID-19 pandemic poses a continuing threat. Adhering to hygienic practices, monitoring those requiring medical assistance and testing for the virus is a high priority.

India's cyclone warning system has made major advances for being able to provide clear warnings and saving lives but the precarious lives led by millions of citizens have once again been subjected to a severe shock. Many who were working in distant States have just returned to Odisha and Bengal in the wake of the economic paralysis caused by COVID-19, and need sustained support after the storm. West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has appealed for strong support from the Centre, which the State must be provided to help it overcome the double jeopardy of the pandemic and the cyclone. Encouragingly, some vital activities such as functioning of the Kolkata airport were restored a day after the cyclone struck, facilitating movement of essentials, and additional NDRF personnel despatched to restore normalcy. The challenge is to provide pre-fabricated facilities for safe shelter in outlying areas, such as the Sunderbans, and use off-the-shelf solutions such as solar power to mobilise communities. While the battle against the virus may yet be won sooner or later, India must strengthen its response capabilities for a never-ending cycle of storms along its coastline.

The lockdown has highlighted stark inequalities

Instead of embracing the welfare state path, the BJP government is encouraging greater privatisation



ZOYA HASAN

The novel coronavirus is a global threat, but the pandemic has had an uneven impact across countries and within countries. Historically, social inequality has always been extreme in India. However, the lockdown has sharpened the edges of inequality even further, especially because of the way it has been implemented. Many countries have imposed lockdowns but not as stringent and severe as the Indian one. What is more, the largest lockdown in the world with hardly any safety net was imposed at a four-hour notice. The sudden decision deprived countless people of jobs and livelihoods. This has strained the fragile social and economic fabric far more than it needed to.

A disastrous decision

Nobody is safe from the virus, but some classes are more protected than others. Class and wealth inequality means COVID-19 may pose greater risks to some as it poses a double threat to them. In India, the lockdown favours the "balcony classes", with no regard of its consequences for others. The pandemic has exposed the precarious existence of millions of migrants who operate the levers of the informal economy. It required no rocket science to anticipate that India's huge army of informal labour would be the most badly hit by the lockdown. Repeated extension of the lockdown has caused economic devastation to workers in the informal economy as it has left them with no income, no food and no shelter. The Centre for

Monitoring Indian Economy estimates that about 140 million people have lost jobs since the lockdown. In brief, pervasive unemployment or underemployment, a feature of the Indian economy before the lockdown, worsened after it, and will remain so for the foreseeable future.

Worldwide, the defining images of India's lockdown are the caravans of migrant workers walking hundreds of kilometres to reach their homes. Bereft of substantive support from the government or their employers, they want to escape the city and get back to their villages and families. Several hundreds of them lost their lives in their desperate attempt to reach home during the lockdown. The SaveLife Foundation, a non-profit organisation working to prevent road accidents, has recorded nearly 2,000 road crashes and 368 deaths from March 25, when the lockdown began, to May 16.

The Union Home Ministry had asked shops, industry and commercial establishments to pay wages to workers during the lockdown but it offered no financial support should this not happen. Social activist Harsh Mander asked the Supreme Court to order the government to pay wages. As expected, the apex court refused to intervene. However, the Court intervened and asked the government not to resort to any coercive action against private companies that have not paid their workers full wages during the lockdown in accordance with a government order in March. Since then, the government has dropped the crucial order. Clearly, the Court has readily accepted the government's assurance that it was looking after migrant labourers. But all that the government had done was take small steps such as providing dry rations and a paltry sum of ₹500, the first of the three instalments of



a sum of ₹1,500 relief, to Jan Dhan accounts of women.

Putting the onus on citizens

The Sangh Parivar believes that society has to take care of itself through self-regulation. Given this world view, it is no surprise that the BJP government is offering little by way of a safety net. Rather, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in one of his national addresses, asked each citizen to help nine poor families during the lockdown. This puts the responsibility for containing the consequences of the pandemic/lockdown squarely on the citizens, instead of instituting a government-backed social support system. While the call to compassion is unremarkable, it has two implications – it minimises the urgency of state intervention required to deal with the economic crisis and it passes on the responsibility to citizens with an emphasis on citizens' duties as against citizens' rights.

Quite the reverse is happening in many other countries which have introduced huge relief packages involving large amounts of government expenditure to provide money for workers' wages for up to three months, giving money or rebates to companies, unemployment allowance or direct benefit transfers. The Spanish government unveiled sweeping reforms that led to nationalisation of all private hospitals. The U.K. extended a worker furlough programme that pays people idled by the pandemic till the end of October. This

is similar to the Paycheck Protection Programme in the U.S. Both seek to preserve jobs rather than resort to mass lay-offs.

In India, transfer of cash in the past two months of lockdown could have mitigated the most heart-breaking migrant crisis since the Partition in 1947. This was the basic requirement of justice. But the government failed to transfer money to the distressed people or to small businesses and commercial establishments. Failure to do so has exposed the heartlessness of the BJP government. It refuses to embrace the welfare state path adopted by most governments which believe radical change is essential for restoring a social balance underlying the welfare state of earlier years. Even governments ideologically committed to conservatism are loosening their purse strings. But the BJP government has done nothing of the sort. In the event, acute distress and disempowerment of the most vulnerable has further deepened existing social inequalities of Indian society. The government's lack of sympathy and concern for the stranded migrant workers clearly shows that the system doesn't work for everyone. No wonder, migrant labourers across India have told reporters they won't return to see such humiliation again.

Greater privatisation

Seen against the scale of distress, the government's economic stimulus package is niggardly based on minimal fiscal cost and minimum social spending. Just about everything is included in the fiscal stimulus ranging from repaying tax refunds to loans. At this rate, even a good monsoon can be considered fiscal stimuli. The immediate relief to the people is not more than 1% of the GDP. The stimulus package has been rightly dismissed by almost everyone out-

side the government as too little, too late.

Most shocking is the slew of controversial reforms announced by the Finance Minister in the last episode of her five-part serial on the government's stimulus package. Instead of addressing the migrant worker crisis, the government has embarked on greater privatisation and further opening the economy to foreign capital. It has thrown open coal, defence production, space travel, among other areas, to the private sector. These contentious pieces of economic reforms wouldn't be counted as rescue package anywhere; moreover, it is wrong and unethical to push them under lockdown without parliamentary oversight.

The much-derided Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) and National Food Security Act (NFS) have come to the rescue of the people. Ironically, both schemes are legacies of the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance government and both were hugely criticised by the BJP. MGNREGA was described as a "living monument" of Congress failure in addressing poverty. Now the government has decided to allocate an additional ₹40,000 crore to MGNREGA. This is welcome as it will provide a semblance of relief during distress in rural India. But in cities migrant workers do not have even this modicum of social security. The one important lesson that this pandemic has underlined is the urgent need for an urban employment guarantee scheme. In the meantime, generous cash transfers can provide economic security. However, for this to happen, we need a more humane government responsive to the basic needs of its people.

Zoya Hasan is Professor Emerita, Centre for Political Studies, JNU

A violation of right found, but no remedy given

Despite finding a violation of rights in prohibiting 4G Internet in J&K, the Supreme Court did not issue a writ to the state



SUHRIT PARTHASARTHY

The maxim *Ubi Jus Ibi Remedium* (where there is a right, there is a remedy) has anchored the common law for centuries. In India, the Constituent Assembly regarded the principle as so foundational that, through Article 32, it granted the Supreme Court the authority to issue a set of prerogative writs to enforce the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution. Over the last four decades, though, the idea of remedies moving in parallel with rights has come to wane. In this period, the Supreme Court has enunciated a number of rights which it found ought to be manifest on a proper reading of the Constitution. These have included the rights to clean air, health, shelter, human dignity, and privacy. But this articulation, stentorian as it might have been, hasn't always led to just results. The court's history is littered with cases where a violation of a right is found, but a remedy hasn't been forthcoming. The ruling delivered on May 11, in *Foundation for Media Professionals v. Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir [FMP]*, is, in many ways, symptomatic of this trend. It ought to enjoin us to think more deeply about what the

Court's institutional role really should be.

The judgment begins thus: "Again, this Court is called upon to address a very important but a sensitive issue... we have to ensure that national security and human rights can be reasonably and defensibly balanced, a responsibility, that this Court takes with utmost seriousness." But while the Court found that a prohibition of 4G Internet in J&K was potentially disproportionate, it could not extend itself to remedying the wrong by issuing a writ to the state. What it did instead was to relegate the decision-making to a newly formed committee comprising officials from the executive. In doing so, it effectively reversed the age-old principle that no person shall act as a judge in his own cause.

Vagueness of purpose

What was the reason for the Court's dithering? The answers are hard to find in the judgment. The Constitution, and the debates that went into its making, are clear on what the judiciary's role ought to be. It is meant to act as an independent check on parliamentary and executive actions. But the Court remains mired in a vagueness of purpose. When must it strike down legislation? When must it show deference to Parliament? Do social welfare measures demand greater deference than ordinary criminal laws? Should the level of scrutiny of executive actions be higher than that em-



NISSAR AHMAD

ployed in testing statutes? Under what circumstances do executive acts call for special respect? These questions should have been settled by now. But the Court still wavers in its answers every time a new case comes before it. In January, when, in *Anuradha Bhasin*, the Court recognised something akin to a fundamental right to access the Internet, the judgment was widely acclaimed. But of what use is the fashioning of a new right to the people of J&K if a decision on whether that right has been violated is consigned to the very authority that made the original call?

Indeed, the petitioner in *FMP* relied on the Court's judgment in *Anuradha Bhasin* to argue that a blanket restriction on 4G Internet across the region had had a deleterious impact on a slew of rights, including the rights to free speech and expression, education, freedom of trade, and health. The Court's own past decisions, including that of the very bench which heard *FMP*, prescribes a standard of proportionality to judge cases where a fundamental right is limited by state action. The test would have required the Court

to engage in a rigorous analysis of the facts, to examine whether the state's rationale for limiting access to the Internet was, one, predicated on legitimate grounds; two, was the least intrusive measure available to the government; and three, whether on a balance of the competing interests the restriction was justified. Given this doctrine and given that the Supreme Court often functions as a court of first resort, it cannot absolve itself from the job of fact-finding. In a system of justice that is adversarial, it is incumbent on the Court to appreciate the rival versions of the facts submitted before it and arrive at what it deems to be the truth. And once it does so, should it find the state's actions illegitimate, it must issue a writ to remedy the wrong, unless it finds compelling reasons not to do so. And if such reasons do exist, they require voicing.

There is no doubt that there might be instances in which appreciating evidence can prove to be a confounding exercise. But judicial review is not meant to be easy. What we need today is a revision to first principles – where the Court seeks to treat the art of delivering a judgment as an exercise in persuasion, where there is a clear link drawn between rights and remedies. In far too many cases the Court has inverted the basic logic of judicial review: it has either enunciated a violation of rights only to deny a remedy or it has granted remedies without articulating what right has been violat-

ed.

In her 2002 Reith Lectures, the philosopher Onora O'Neill began by quoting Confucius, who held weapons, food and trust as necessary for the government. O'Neill retold this theorem not to stress on any need for arms, but to emphasise on what she believed was a crisis of trust. She thought that ancient philosophies held trust to be the dearest of qualities. If a ruler, said Confucius to his disciple Tsze-kung, could not hold on to all three necessities for government, he should give up the weapons first and the food next. Trust, he said, had to be guarded to the end. Unlike governments, trust is all the judiciary has. When that belief begins to dissipate, courts lose their moral sway. They are rendered meaningless.

Building trust

Courts build trust not through ambiguous snippets of wisdom, but through an adherence to basic norms. Principle over policy and consistency over randomness are the lodestar tenets of moral courage. The separation of powers cannot, as American writer Gore Vidal wrote, be allowed to work simply as a useful device under which "any sin of omission and commission can be shifted from one branch of government to another." We need it to do more. We need it to uphold the rule of law.

Suhrit Parthasarathy is an advocate practising at the Madras High Court

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.

Post-COVID world
Taking a lead over China in the post-COVID global order is easier said than done given the series of failures of our political leadership in handling the pandemic and the economy ("China, better prepared for the post-COVID world", May 20). Efficient governance, a good law and order situation, professionalism in bureaucracy, an investor-friendly environment, and harmony among various sections of the people are prerequisites for attracting global investors. Enough damage was done to national unity when the controversial law on

citizenship was passed. We can't afford such societal disruptions again.

N. RAVEENDRA BABU,
Hyderabad

China's loss cannot be considered as India's gain unless India strives hard to attract companies exiting China. Infrastructure here needs a lot of improvement. Ease of business remains a challenge in terms of implementation at the State and local levels.

V. RAJAGOPALAN,
Chennai

China has emerged stronger from this crisis because of its disciplined

execution of its strategy to contain the virus. On the other hand, in India, where the emergence of the virus was slow to begin with, the situation is now spiralling out of control. The Centre could have aggressively followed the Kerala model implemented at the village level by the Health Minister, K. K. Shailaja. Instead, it adopted a different approach that has clearly not worked. This is a clear sign that at a fundamental level in India, there is no proper planning.

G. PARAMESWARAN
Coimbatore

No refund yet
While we can appreciate

the Civil Aviation Ministry's announcement, no steps appear to have been taken yet to refund fares for tickets booked during the no-flight period ("Domestic flights to resume on May 25", May 21). I hope the Civil Aviation Ministry, while looking forward, also finds a solution to this problem. International flights are extremely expensive and many of us are still waiting for our hard-earned money to be returned.

K. RAMALINGAM,
Chennai

Playing politics
The ruling dispensation in U.P. will lose nothing if it

accepts the few hundred buses to take the stranded migrants to their native places ("Not the time to play politics", May 21). The labourers have already undergone untold hardships. Making them wait further in the heat is inhuman. Instead of

transporting the labourers, it says a lot that the government is busy finding fault with the vehicles arranged by the Opposition.

V. JOHAN DHANAKUMAR,
Chennai

MORE LETTERS ONLINE:
www.thehindu.com/opinion/letters/



CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS: The fourth paragraph of the report headlined "60% of farmers faced losses: survey" (May 21, 2020) read: "The survey found that 26% of respondents had harvested a crop in the past month, while ...". Actually, according to the survey, 63% of respondents had harvested a crop in the past month.

It is the policy of The Hindu to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Please specify the edition (place of publication), date and page. The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300 (11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday to Friday); Fax: +91-44-2852963; E-mail: readerseditor@thehindu.co.in; Mail: Readers' Editor, The Hindu, Kasturi Buildings, 859 & 860 Anna Salai, Chennai 600 002, India. All communication must carry the full postal address and telephone number. Personal visits. The Terms of Reference for the Readers' Editor are on www.thehindu.com.

Will sport be the same in empty stadia?

PARLEY

This will mark a new normal, at least till the end of the year. Players will have to tune their minds

Last weekend's return of Bundesliga – German football's premier division – marked the revival of top flight international sporting action after a two-month long hiatus. But physical distancing measures necessitated by COVID-19 ensured that matches were played without fans. India is a long way from starting tournaments, with the government having just given the nod for individual training to resume under spectator-less conditions. In a discussion moderated by N. Sudarshan, Sunil Chhetri and Sunil Yajaman discuss if sport behind closed doors will be the new normal and what lies ahead for the sports industry. Edited excerpts:

Did it feel strange watching top-notch football being played in an empty stadium?

Sunil Chhetri (SC): It did feel strange. As a player I'd always prefer to play in front of fans. But as a spectator, I was happy. It looks like once the lockdown ends and slowly competitions start, we will have to play in empty stadia. But I might still happily play because what I understood as a fan last weekend was that you get a lot of joy watching live action. It is still the second best thing; the ultimate joy is still to go to the venue. But under the present circumstances, it made us all happy.

Sunil Yajaman (SY): It will be the new normal, definitely till the end of the year. But it is safer. Australian Open, the season's first Grand Slam tournament in January, is already talking about having no spectators. The fear [of the virus] will stay for quite some time and we need to figure out new ways to get around it.

What is the change in mindset that players will require?

SC: In team sports, home advantage is a very important aspect. There are multiple reasons why a game is termed a home game – climate, ground and fans. Among these, fans are the most important and act as a

motivating factor. But a home game played now will not feel like a home game. It is not ideal; but [these are] the kind of times we are in now.

SY: Spectators are a very important part of players' performance on court, both in positive and negative ways. It has a psychological effect on players. So it is not going to be easy to play in an empty stadium, especially the bigger events. Smaller competitions like ATP Challengers and many ATP 250s (the lowest rung of ATP tennis tournaments) do not attract much of a crowd except for the last two days. But players will still have to tune their minds. All the motivation and energy have to come from within. It will take a few months of playing to get used to it.

So if fans cannot attend, is it worth going ahead, if you are told that there is a TV audience?

SC: To me, it is the best possible solution. To cancel events because fans cannot attend may be worse. Of course, the best thing would be for everyone to get a vaccine and for life to be normal. But that doesn't look like it will happen anytime soon. But the German and South Korean leagues have shown the way.

Let's be clear here, it is not easy; even for a closed door game, there are a lot of things to be taken care of. There are ball boys, the kit managers, the coaches, the physios and we have to monitor all of them. In the unfortunate scenario of even one person getting infected, the whole league has to stop. At least that particular team cannot play and has to be quarantined. So you need to be really really careful. But I hope we are able to manage it until a vaccine arrives.

SY: If a sport is able to go on without fans, it is a great thing under the present circumstances. Professional players' livelihood is tied to them playing. There is a whole bunch of people that depend on tournaments for survival, like the supporting staff, officials, groundsmen etc.



In the eyes of many, sport is better off waiting until things return to normal. Should it?

C In team sports, home advantage is an important aspect. There are multiple reasons why a game is termed a home game, the most important being fans

SUNIL CHHETRI
Indian football captain

events in India, and it is going to be incredibly tough to find sponsors. Even at big meets a sponsor wouldn't like to see his or her name in an empty stadium. Every sponsor will look at the return on investment (ROI) and one of the major conditions for good ROI is the footfalls at the sporting site. In the absence of footfalls, it won't be inviting for companies. The ATP Bengaluru Open (South Asia's biggest ATP Challenger) has a budget of ₹6.5 crores. The Karnataka government has been funding close to 50% of it. Now I don't know if the government will even be looking to support a sports event in the next one or two years. And many of our sponsors are under financial strain and are a long way [from] recouping things. Already a company which had to settle the final instalment for the last edition has expressed an inability to pay. So you can already see the effect. For the next edition we will have to broaden the base by looking for more sponsors and also look to cover the government's

share because it may come down.

Thus far, the focus has been on fan safety. What about player safety even in a closed door environment?

SC: It is an individual thing. Troy Deeney (captain of the English club side Watford) has said he wouldn't return to training because he has a five-month old son with breathing difficulties and he wouldn't want to put the child in more danger. Why would he go out knowing that there are chances of him getting infected and passing it on? It is a legitimate concern that we should be sensitive to. There are, at least, 45 people at any given time on the pitch, even during a training session. So there is a risk. Personally speaking, when football starts, I will probably train. That's a decision I am taking based on the information available currently and in the belief that my club will take utmost care and ensure full safety. But I don't know what's in store in the future. So, I can fully understand Deeney's conundrum. There is a lot at stake, and in many cases it's a matter of life and death.

SY: In tennis, players move across continents and countries on a week-to-week basis. If you see, the major spread of infection is through travelling. So they are always at the risk of getting infected. So we may see localised events, but at the ATP Challenger level, players may risk travelling because that's where players earn substantial points and make a little bit of money.

There is talk of using augmented reality to create virtual fans so that match-watching experience on television gets better. Is this the way forward?

SC: There is huge money involved, so if broadcasters take that decision, I am not the one to comment. But technological intervention in football has thus far been minimal and that's the beauty of it. There is the Video Assistant Referee system now, but it is still a mostly free-flowing game that's raw and natural with real fans in the stadium showing

their aggression and passion. It's preferable if it stays like that.

SY: I am sure there will be innovative things done. But a tennis fan is mostly looking at the players. A television camera may miss zooming in on a celebrity sitting in the crowd. But for a fan watching tennis on the television, the presence of a crowd is immaterial. At the end of the day, they will continue to watch because of a Roger Federer, a Rafael Nadal or a Novak Djokovic.

What is the way forward for sports in India?

SC: If everything goes well, it will be around October or November before competitions behind closed doors can start. I am 35 and I don't want to lose a single day of my career. But lives are more important. For us sportspersons, sport is life, but until we feel completely safe we should not start. Overall, sport is not going to be the same as before. A lot will change, particularly on-field hygiene. For example, spitting on the pitch will reduce. Just because footballers are fit, their hygiene is taken for granted. But that's not always true.

SY: The sports industry as a whole is going to take a big beating. Fewer people are going to get into sport in the next one or two years. Fans will mostly depend on live broadcast but even for television companies revenues are going to reduce because all of them are under financial stress. We have no idea whether advertising will continue as before. But sports is about positivity and it will come back, albeit in a changed scenario.

In fact, you can see that the whole education system is undergoing a change. There is more online learning and I don't see children getting back into the classrooms in the near future, with distancing rules set to be strictly enforced. More children are going to be locked up inside and parents are sure to ask their children to go out and play, at least individual sports, for their physical and mental well-being. So I am hoping that participation at the grass roots will not tank.

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 22, 1970

Atom Isolated and Photographed

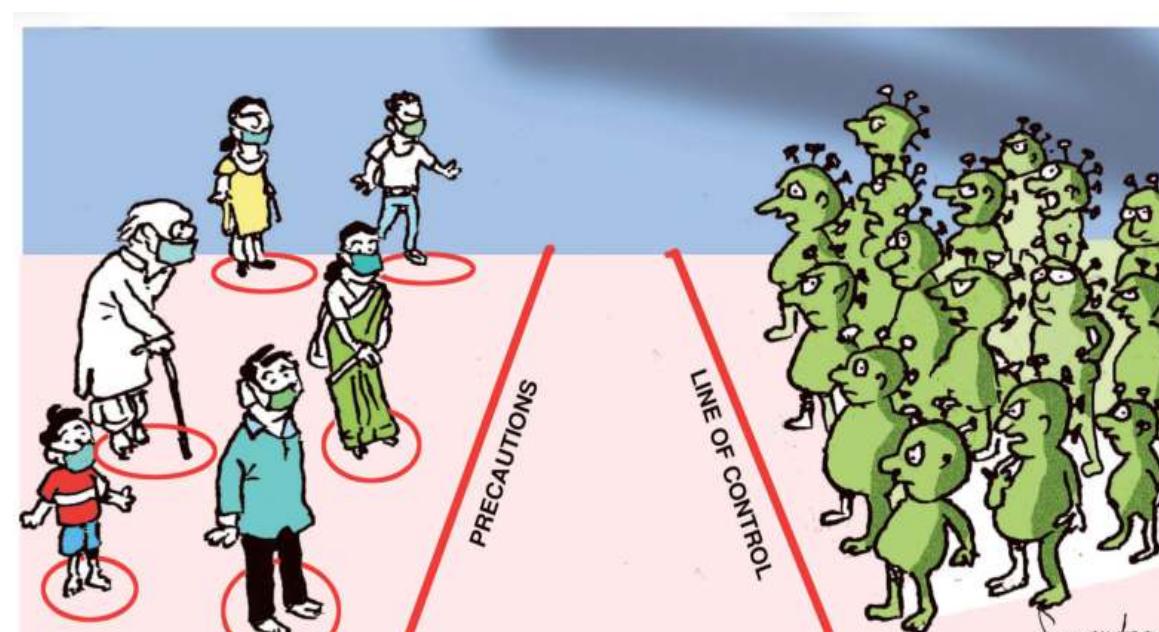
A British-born physicist announced yesterday [May 20] he had succeeded in achieving one of science's ultimate dreams—isolating and photographing a single atom. The scientific breakthrough was made by Professor Albert V. Crewe, assisted by two graduate students, Joseph Wail and John Langmore, at the University of Chicago two months ago with the aid of a scanning electron microscope which Dr. Crewe designed and built with funds supplied by the Atomic Energy Commission. Dr. Crewe displayed photographs of single uranium and thorium atoms, magnified a million times, at a press conference. They were the result of six years' research and expenditure of between \$750,000 (Rs. 56,25,000) and one million dollars (Rs. 75,00,000). The technique devised by Dr. Crewe enables a single atom of these metals to be seen within a molecular structure for the first time. With further research the technique "will provide a tool for investigating the materials of biological processes and enable biologists to proceed more rapidly in the techniques of studying biological cells, such as cancer and other cells," he said.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 22, 1920.

The Reform Act unmasked.

(From an editorial)

The official head of the Moderate party has borne testimony to the sincerity of the Government of India's zeal for real reform in India. With a temerity which his captains might admire but dare not emulate, he once made the astounding suggestion that there was nothing reactionary about the Government of India's famous Despatch on the Bill. Another and equally notable monument to their zeal for democracy and the early realisation of self-Government in India is to be found in the draft rules framed by them. The rules of business of the Legislative Assembly and the Provincial Councils show up the Reform Act in its true character. They make the position of these Councils actually worse in some important respects than it now is. Hitherto, it was possible to raise a discussion on important subjects in the Councils either by a motion for adjournment or by means of Bills. Hereafter, these courses have been either effectively shut out or so modified as to make them useless for the purpose for which they are intended. The bureaucracy learnt by bitter experience the uses to which these provisions may be put and they have now so hedged them in with restrictions as to render them futile. Its powers will, under the new rules, be as effective as ever.



NOTEBOOK

The eternal longing for the distant home

Abandoned by the very society they helped to build, migrants yearn to return

N. VENKATESWARAN

ings of migrant workers trying to get back home. Once we crossed Krishnagiri on the way to the Karnataka border, I realised how wrong I was. Vehicle after vehicle, full to the brim with migrants and their families from Erode, Tirupur, Salem and other parts of Tamil Nadu, zipped past, making their way to Rajashan via Karnataka and Maharashtra. These were labourers and agents and small-time businessmen, who had collected money, hired buses and then organised passes to get back home. Jobs lost and sources of income drying up, with some being asked to vacate their rented accommodation, they wanted to go back to their villages where they were assured of food and shelter.

The more people I saw by the roadside, the more I thought about the blank look in their eyes. Was it due to hunger or thirst? Was it that they were tired of walking long distances, or were they thinking about the effort needed to reach home? Was it fear about what the future held for them, or were they worried about their livelihoods once they go back to their towns and villages? Or was it sadness, brought about by the disappointment that the very society for which

they had cooked and cleaned, or built roads or houses had abandoned them? Was it due to the inaction of those who had rendered them refugees in their own country? Or was it their way of expressing disgust for a society that entertained itself by watching reruns of *Ramayan* and *Mahabharat* while a humanitarian tragedy unfolded outside on the roads?

My driver Ganesh ensured I was back home in Chennai with my family by the evening of May 11, a whole day and a half earlier than the deadline. I still wonder about those I saw on the Mumbai roads — were they able to get food and water? Were they able to catch a train back home? Or were they beaten up by policemen and sent back to their unlivable tenements? Or if they just ended up as statistics on some highway accident report?

The exodus of vehicles from Tamil Nadu to Rajasthan and Bihar, meanwhile, continues unabated. The Pune expressway and entered the roads leading into Mumbai did the horrors unfold. Scores and scores of people sat by the roadside — some alone, others huddled together in groups — hungry and tired after hours (or maybe days) of walking in the hot sun, waiting for food and water and maybe a miracle to enable them to go home. Policemen hung around, checking vehicle passes and ensuring that they sat around in one place.

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Bypassing the censors

Also, you could bypass many of the problems of censor certification if you release films on these platforms. Amidst the ongoing pandemic, many film festivals are moving online. Britain's most famous socialist filmmaker, Ken Loach, has made some of his best films available for free on YouTube. Other film streaming platforms are making foreign and documentary cinema available at a nominal fee for a limited time span. With increased awareness about films, will we go back to theatres and settle for the same content that mainstream cinema peddles after the lockdown?

The writer teaches at FLAME University, Pune

+ Cinema after COVID-19

Online platforms provide an alternative to big-screen halls. But their reach is limited

KUNAL RAY

The ongoing COVID-19 crisis has led to large-scale anxieties about the future of the arts. Many livelihoods rely upon the performing and visual arts. It is just not the fraternity of artistes but their support staff, co-workers and an entire ecosystem that is sustained through their practice. We are the largest film-making nation in the world. The film industry offers jobs to several thousands.

The lockdown will be eventually relaxed at some point as can be seen in different parts of the world but many are of the opinion that this pandemic will significantly impact our film-viewing behavior and other economic decisions around it. We might stay away from film theatres to avoid large gatherings. This could also indicate a shift towards viewing films on online platforms which have already made a dent during the lockdown.

Netflix, Amazon Prime, etc., have witnessed a record surge in subscriptions during the lockdown. This doesn't mean that everybody has suddenly turned a film lover, but that these platforms offer a plethora of entertainment options for people locked inside their homes. The content and range of programmes on these portals is also far superior to what is available on regular television. There are films and TV series which are especially commissioned by and released exclusively on these platforms.

Direct to home releases
Their numbers might further increase. As I write this, news has just trickled in that two big Hindi films, one Tamil and Telugu film, amongst others, are being released on a digital platform next month owing to the uncertainty about theatrical release in near future. Also, the choice and diversity of content on these platforms is much greater. A film theatre has to cater to mainstream audience expectations for business reasons. In the process, many deserving films often miss out on decent screening slots or have to make do with whatever is available. The online platforms do not have to deal with these concerns and offer a good mix of both mainstream and art-house cinema.



Bypassing the censors

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CMYK

AN-NDE

FROM PAGE ONE

Amphan kills 72 in West Bengal, brings life to a halt

At the meeting, Ms. Banerjee said there was a scarcity of drinking water in South 24 Parganas and North 24 Parganas and asked them to ensure supply.

Aerial survey

Around 45 lakh people were affected in Odisha. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik made an aerial survey of the affected districts and expressed concern over the damage to standing crops.

About 30 lakh power consumers have been affected.

The cyclone has affected 44.80 lakh people in 89 blocks. Balasore, Bhadrak, Jagatsinghpur and Kendrapara districts have been badly affected.

Expressing grief at the loss of lives and damage in West Bengal, Mr. Patnaik ex-

tended help to the neighbouring State and asked Chief Secretary Asit Tripathy to be in touch with his West Bengal counterpart.

Earlier, Mr. Tripathy informed Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba of the extent of damage from the cyclone.

According to preliminary reports received on Thursday morning, crops grown on over one lakh hectares have been lost. Around 86% of the mobile phone connectivity has been restored.

The Chief Secretary said 2,00,400 people were evacuated and kept in 3,228 cyclone shelters and other buildings. All fishermen were brought back from the sea.

(With inputs from Satyendar Barik in Bhubaneswar)

Govt. sets price range based on flight duration

In order to benefit from the fares close to the minimum (or floor) price determined by the government, passengers would still have to book early. Airlines would have to sell 40% of the tickets below the midpoint of the price range to ensure that the benefit of this formula was passed on to the passengers.

The price range for the shortest journey (Sector A: 40 minutes) is ₹2,000-₹6,000 and for the longest journey (Sector G: 210 minutes) is ₹6,500-₹18,600.

"The minimum fare for Delhi to Mumbai is ₹3,500 and the maximum is ₹10,000. Airlines will have to sell at least 40% of flight tickets below the midpoint, which in this case is ₹6,750," Minister of Civil Aviation Hardeep Puri illustrated at a press conference.

Airlines divide airfares into different buckets and sell the lowest fare buckets to passengers who book the earliest. Airfares move upwards as seats get filled in an aircraft.

"We have studied this [pricing mechanism] and looked at corresponding rail

fares. Our motive is that air travel should become affordable, it should be within the means of all our citizens to be able to increasingly travel by air," he said, adding that the government "was equally conscious of the fact that airlines operate on thin margins".

Travellers would be allowed to carry one piece each of cabin baggage and checked-in baggage, and if the latter exceeded 20 kg passengers would have to pay an excess baggage fee.

Also, passengers would neither be able to avail themselves of meal service on board, nor would they be allowed to consume their own eatables, unless there was a specific medical need.

On the question of whether passengers would need to undergo a mandatory quarantine on arriving at the destination airport, the guidelines merely state: "health protocols as prescribed by the destination States/UTs" would have to be followed. The Minister, however, opposed the idea of a 14-day quarantine at the end of each journey.

'PLA blocking Indian patrols in Ladakh, Sikkim'

Mr. Srivastava's remarks followed claims by the China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) on Tuesday that Indian troops were attempting to "unilaterally change" the status quo at the boundary between them and "blocking" patrolling by Chinese border guards.

On Thursday, the MFA issued another statement repeating the claims. It said Chinese troops "firmly" dealt with what it called the Indian troops' "crossover and infringement activities."

"We urge the Indian side to work together with us, abide by our leadership's important consensus, comply with the agreements signed, refrain from unilateral actions complicating the situation," said MFA spokesperson Zhao Lijian.

Thus far, Indian Army officials had maintained that scuffles at two points, at "finger areas" of Pangong Tso (lake) in eastern Ladakh and Naku La in north Sikkim, had been part of normal ground actions that emanate from a "difference in perception of the Line of Actual Control".

The sources said more troops were being moved in-

to the next stage of a three-step acclimatisation process for high altitudes. "The Army units at Binnaguri, Hashimara and a few other places have been upstaged and are undergoing acclimatisation in Sikkim," the sources added.

The MEA statement is the first time the government has said Chinese troops are blocking Indian patrols during the current stand-off, though it didn't accuse the PLA of crossing into Indian territory. While New Delhi and Beijing indicated that talks between military commanders are on to resolve the situation, neither said they had made progress yet.

China reacted angrily to comments by senior American official Alice Wells, who had referred to the border dispute as proof of Chinese "provocative behaviour" and "threat to its neighbours". "The Diplomat's remarks are just nonsense," said Mr. Zhao. "There are consultations and diplomatic channels between the two sides that has nothing to do with the USA," he said.

(With inputs from Ananth Krishnan in Chennai)

ICICI offers FD scheme for senior citizens

The scheme is available from May 20 to September 30, 2020.

This offer from the ICICI Bank comes after the SBI introduced a similar deposit

product for senior citizens earlier this month. The SBI's product also offered additional 30 bps interest rate on deposits of 5 years and above.

Telangana, Kerala, T.N. & A.P. report virus deaths

Five die in Telangana, seven in T.N.; with fresh fatality, Kerala's toll rises to 4; Karnataka gets positive cases from Maharashtra

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Telangana reported more deaths of COVID-19 patients with five more people succumbing to the disease on Thursday. Kerala reported one more death, and so did Andhra Pradesh.

A 73-year-old woman, who had come to Thrissur in Kerala from Mumbai, died of COVID-19 on Thursday taking the death toll in the State to four. The woman, who came by car along with three

MCH. The woman, who was suffering from diabetes, high blood pressure and breathlessness, tested positive for SARS-CoV-2.

Her son and the driver of the ambulance were put under observation.

Kerala's COVID-19 case load spiralled on Thursday, with 24 more testing positive as more expatriates and Non-Resident Keralites from other parts of the country returned to the State.

All 24 were imported cases, with 14 cases among those who had returned from abroad and 10 in persons who came from other States, particularly Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

Andhra Pradesh witnessed the death of a COVID-19 patient in Nellore district, and 45 fresh cases of infection.

The toll rose to 54 and the tally of positive cases touched 2,605, including 153 migrant workers. Two cases each in Nellore and Chittoor were linked to the Koyambedu

Spic and span

With the Karnataka government partially relaxing the lockdown norms, BBMP, the administrative body responsible for civic amenities in Bengaluru, is striving hard to keep the environment safe



Cleanliness drive: Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike staff spraying disinfectant at the K.R. Market in the city on Thursday. ■ V. SREENIVASA MURTHY

du market in Chennai. Meanwhile, 41 patients recovered.

In all, 1,705 patients, over 65% of the total, had recovered so far and 846 were undergoing treatment.

The Telangana surge in deaths was one of the highest in the State. While four

deaths were recorded on May 19, two were reported on May 20. A total of 45 patients had died.

There were 38 more positive cases, including 26 from Greater Hyderabad, two from Rangareddy and 10 were migrants. So far, 99 mi-

grants had tested positive.

Of the total 1,699 cases till date, 618 were active, 1,036 were discharged and 45 people died.

143 cases in Karnataka

Till the first week of April, Tablighi Jamaat attendees

Patient data moved to C-DIT: Kerala to HC

'Sprinklr told to destroy residual data'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI

Kerala government on Thursday informed the High Court that the entire data of COVID-19 patients and those under surveillance had been transferred to the government-owned cloud web space in Amazon Web Services, managed and controlled by the Centre for Development of Imaging Technology (C-DIT).

In an affidavit filed in a case challenging the use of the data by the U.S.-based data analytical company Sprinklr, the government said the company was directed to immediately destroy all residual data, if any, with it.

'No data shared'

The data had been transferred by April 20 itself. In fact, no data had been shared with Sprinklr after it

was transferred to the C-DIT cloud space. And Sprinklr had no access to the system.

The government submitted that if any data needed to be shared, which was not envisaged now, a detailed protocol, including anonymisation, would be followed.

The affidavit said the State government had requested the Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) to direct the National Informatics Centre (NIC) or an appropriate agency/institution to provide details of the information system application available with them to meet the functional requirements of the State in connection with the COVID-19 related activities.

However, it has not received any positive reply so far from the MeitY.

In the complaint, Praveen KV, an advocate, said the tweets from the handle @INCIndia on May 11 on the initiatives of the Modi-led government to tackle the COVID-19 situation were "highly misleading."

It said that at a time

when the nation was fighting the pandemic, the Congress

was spreading "false information" through the social media and trying to mislead

Case registered against Sonia for tweets on PM CARES fund

Karnataka Congress alleges political motive behind FIR

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SHIVAMOGGA

The police in Shivamogga district of Karnataka have filed an FIR against Congress interim president Sonia Gandhi over some tweets posted on the official Twitter handle of the party criticising the utilisation of the PM CARES fund and the way Prime Minister Narendra Modi has handled the COV-19 situation.

In the complaint, Praveen KV, an advocate, said the tweets from the handle @INCIndia on May 11 on the initiatives of the Modi-led government to tackle the COVID-19 situation were "highly misleading."

It said that at a time

when the nation was fighting the pandemic, the Congress

was spreading "false information" through the social media and trying to mislead



Sonia Gandhi

and provoke people against the government.

The Sagar police filed the case under Section 153 (wanton provocation with intent to cause riot) and 505(1)(b) (cause fear or alarm among the public or induce a person to commit an offence against State or public tranquillity) of the Indian Penal Code against Ms. Gandhi.

Meanwhile, the Karnata-

ka Congress has urged Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa to have the FIR withdrawn. In a letter, Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee (KPPC) president-designate D.K. Shivakumar said it was filed "with a political motive and false information on Ms. Gandhi's tweet".

The Congress leader demanded withdrawal of the FIR and suspension of the police officer concerned. "We urge the government to register an FIR against the said police officer for misusing the process of law, in the interest of justice and equity," the KPPC leader said.

Mr. Shivakumar claimed Mr. Yediyurappa had agreed to his request.

The complaint would be withdrawn within 24 hours, and action taken against the officer, he said.

(With inputs from Bengaluru Bureau)

Push to safety

Troubled waters: Fishermen towing a boat ashore at Shangumugham beach in Thiruvananthapuram on Thursday. The Met department has warned fishermen not to venture into the sea in view of the inclement weather triggered by cyclone Amphan. ■ S. MAHINSHA

'Not paying train fare reflects badly on State'

Insensitive approach: Karnataka HC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Terming that migrants in the State are in a precarious condition, the Karnataka High Court on Thursday directed the Chief Secretary and the Labour Secretary to appear personally through video-conference on May 26.

The top officials' presence was necessitated as the Karnataka government could not give clarity on its decision of not paying train fares of migrant workers who cannot afford the fares to return to their home States.

"Today, because of the State government's reluctance to pay the train fares, many are unable to travel,

and will have to look to the State for their food... Many workers have left their families in their home States and are in a precarious position as they are unable to send money to them," the court observed, pointing out that it was not merely an issue of their survival but also of their health and families.

"Sorry to say that the State has forgotten that it is a human issue and there is Article 21 [Protection of life and personal liberty]. It reflects badly on the State. We are finding fault with the insensitive approach of the State... Why don't the State take a bold stand that migrants are rich and they can pay for tickets..." the Bench observed orally.

Watch pujas live, get prasad delivered home

Devotees can watch telecast of rituals at select Karnataka temples by the end of this month

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

day that the government was also considering allowing online pujas, which the devotees can pre-book.

He said the government was planning to introduce live telecast of pujas in nearly 15 districts on temple websites and Facebook. The *prasad* will be delivered home, he said. Provisions would be made to book 15 kinds of pujas online, including *mangalaarathi*, *archane*, *pushpaalankaara puja*, and *ashoththara*.

The temples set to have online pujas and direct tele-

cast include Banashankari temple in Bengaluru, Saundatti Yellamma temple, Myluru Chamundeshwari temple, Nanjangud Srikantheshwara, Kante Durga Parameshwari, and Kukke Subrahmanyam.

The Minister said the government has decided to release ₹33.66 crore to pay the salaries of priests of 29,700 temples for three months. Though the priests had appealed to the government to reopen temples, it was not possible in the current situation, he said.



Going live: The Chamundeshwari temple in Mysuru is among those planning to embrace webcasting. ■ M.A. SRIRAM

CM YK

YK

</

Policeman killed in attack in Pulwama

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

One policeman was killed and another injured in a hit-and-run attack of militants in south Kashmir's Pulwama on Thursday.

A police officer said armed militants alighted at Pulwama's Pricho area and opened indiscriminate fire on a checkpoint, manned by the Jammu and Kashmir police and the CRPF, in the afternoon.

"It was a stand-off fire. Two security personnel, including a policeman and a CRPF jawan, were injured in the attack," said the police.

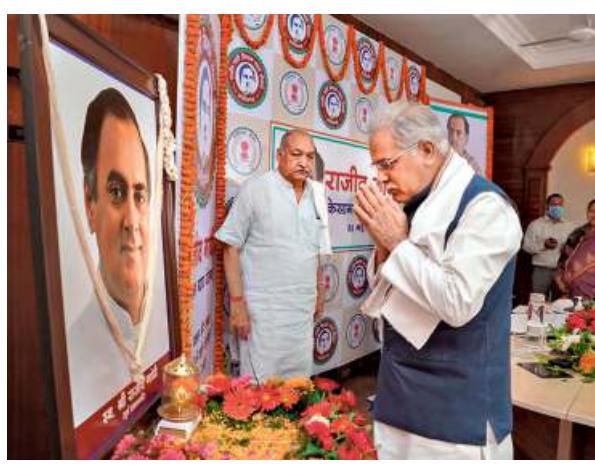
Head constable Anoop Singh succumbed to his injuries.

The militants managed to escape from the spot.

Congress launches Kisan Nyay Scheme

Party rolls out assistance plan for farmers in Chhattisgarh on Rajiv Gandhi's death anniversary

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI



Homage: Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel paying tribute to Rajiv Gandhi in Raipur on Thursday. ■ PTI

Gandhi. This is a big step taken in line with the values of Rajiv Gandhi," Ms. Gandhi said.

The online event, however,

audio and video glitches that somewhat curtailed the party's top leaders' speeches.

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel said the assured monetary assistance

scheme will benefit 19 lakh farmers and help bring more area under cultivation. Landless labour and agriculturists would be covered in the next phase, he said.

Former party president Rahul Gandhi lauded Chhattisgarh for being the first State to transfer financial aid directly into the accounts of farmers.

A true patriot

"The Chhattisgarh government has set the example for the country on how to help people in the time of crisis," he said at the launch event.

Mr. Gandhi also remembered his father as a "true patriot, liberal and who put the country on the path of progress and self-reliance with his farsightedness". "In memory of my beloved father,

er, Shri Rajiv Gandhi, who was martyred this day in 1991. He was a wonderful father; gentle, kind, compassionate and patient. I miss him. But he will always stay alive in my heart and in the wonderful memories I have of him," he wrote on Twitter.

His sister and party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra posted her last photo with her father and shared an emotional tweet.

"To be kind to those who are unkind to you; to know that life is fair, no matter how unfair you imagine it to be; to keep walking, no matter how dark the skies or fearsome the storm; to nurture a strong heart, and fill it with love no matter how great its sorrows; these are the gifts of my father's life," she tweeted.

Release J&K political detainees, says CCG

It slams Net curbs in Union Territory

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Concerned Citizens' Group (CCG), headed by former Union Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha, sought the release of all political detainees in Jammu and Kashmir on the festival of Eid-ul-Fitr.



Yashwant Sinha
Don't use the lack of a Legislative Assembly to pass policies with long term consequences

CONCERNED CITIZENS' GROUP

2G Internet, premised on the assumption that faster Internet speeds help terrorists – is causing havoc not only in banking, trade, business and healthcare but in the field of education as well," it said.

The 2G technology cannot sustain online learning, which is a ready option being used in the rest of the country. The problem is particularly acute for students who have returned home because of the pandemic from universities and colleges in the rest of India.

They cannot attend online classes and webinars or submit assignments. They may not be able to appear for online end-semester examinations which universities and colleges plan to hold soon," it added.

The Union government had also used the lockdown to implement domicile laws for the Union Territory, that should have been debated by people's representatives and affected citizens, said the group.

"Do not use the lack of a legislative Assembly to push through policies with long term consequences," it said.

"During the excavation, a 5-ft Shivling, pillars and broken idols have also been discovered," it wrote on Twitter. Trust general secretary Champat Rai said the recovery further established the fact that a temple had existed at the site.

The other members of the group are former National Chief Information Commissioner Wajahat Habibullah, Air Vice-Marshall (Retd.) Kapil Kak, senior journalist Bharat Bhushan and Sushobha Barve.

Finance panel flags recovery uncertainty

Members of the Committee have wide variations of opinion in nominal GDP growth projections

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India's nominal GDP growth rate in 2020-21 could range between -6% and 1%, according to members of the 15th Finance Commission's committee on the fiscal consolidation road map, which had a videoconference on Thursday.

"There are high levels of uncertainty, both with regard to the course of the pandemic and the fiscal pressures on the economy and the trend of economic recovery," the Commission's Chairman, N.K. Singh, told presspersons after the meeting. He said participants in the meeting had wide varia-



N.K. Singh

tion in terms of nominal GDP growth projections, ranging between -6% and 1%, as well as on whether the economy would experience a V-shaped or U-shaped recovery.

Nominal GDP growth does not take inflation into account, and is thus higher than real GDP growth.

"In the medium term, we would like to be in the range of 8% growth, or the debt trajectory becomes very problematic," said Dr. Singh, who felt that the Centre's reforms as part of the Aatma-nirbhar stimulus package were meant to spur such growth in the medium term, even if they did not help im-

mediately. "The question is what is the lag with which these reforms are going to reflect in the growth rate in the medium term," he said.

He also endorsed the Centre's reform conditions to allow the States to exceed their current borrowing li-

mits, though several States have objected to this.

The Commission's high-level group on health, headed by AIIMS Director Randeep Guleria, also met on Thursday, to review its earlier recommendations in view of the COVID-19 pandemic. It has now recommended an immediate beefing up of health infrastructure in areas with a cluster of positive patients, and discussed the growing needs of rural health infrastructure, especially with migrants returning from the cities, often carrying the virus.

"There is a wide disparity between the per capita health personnel available in

various States. The situation in rural Bihar and Jharkhand is dramatically different from the cities," Dr. Singh said. The anaesthetists needed to operate ventilators are crucially missing in many rural areas, he noted, even while manufacture of the machines has increased.

There were also discussions about allowing final year MBBS students to begin practising in some areas and the need for a national health service.

In the medium term, the government's financial outlay on the health sector must increase significantly from the current 0.9% of GDP, said Dr. Singh.

Health Ministry plans to study + viral behaviour in corpses

Death toll rises to 3,561; total cases stand at 1,12,359

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
NEW DELHI

The lockdown period has been gainfully utilised to ramp up the health infrastructure in the country, the Union Health Ministry said on Thursday, with senior health officials confirming that India is now planning to initiate a study on "behaviour of the COVID-19 virus in persons who died after contracting the disease".

Autopsy in confirmed COVID-19 cases is not recommended by the Health Ministry and this research, to be conducted at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, will be the first to be undertaken on a COVID-19 dead body. This is expected to give researchers an insight into how the virus behaves in a dead body, the manner in which it affects organs and so on.

A senior health official said: "We are at planning stage for this very vital exercise and it will be a multi-department enterprise. India in its guidelines has said that forensic autopsy should not be done in COVID-19 death cases as mortuary staff are exposed to potentially



Five CAPF companies have been deployed in severely affected areas of Mumbai.

"So far, 26,15,920 samples have been tested and 1,03,532 samples have been tested in the last 24 hours through 555 testing labs [391 in the government sector and 164 private labs]," noted the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR).

According to data from State Health Departments, the tally stands at 1,17,580 case and death toll 3,561.

Community survey

The ICMR, in collaboration with the Health Ministry and the National Centre for Disease Control, with support from State Health departments and key stakeholders, including WHO, is conducting a community based serosurvey to estimate the prevalence of SARS-CoV-2 infection in Indian population.

ICMR has also recommended the TrueNat COVID-19 test stating that as the COVID-19 pandemic is expanding, there is a global shortfall of diagnostic supplies. "It is critical for countries to strengthen indigenous production of diagnostic material to ensure uninterrupted availability," the ICMR said.

CAPF awaits clarity on canteen order

VIJAYA SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Central Armed Police Forces (CAPF) are awaiting clear orders from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on what comprises *swadeshi* or indigenous products, a week after Union Home Minister Amit Shah announced that CAPF canteens will only sell *swadeshi* goods from June 1.

A senior government official said that Ministry of Commerce was working on the guidelines as confusion prevailed on future procurements in the canteens, which sell many daily-use products at a subsidised rate to around 10 lakh personnel, their families and retired personnel.

"We are collecting data on the production facilities of all the companies that sell items in the CAPF canteens. We do not know if the products manufactured here under multinational labels will also be counted as a foreign product," said the official.

"Since the June 1 deadline is approaching, the clarification is necessary, else the supply chain will be affected," said the official.

Wildlife Institute of India
(An Autonomous Institution of the Ministry of Environment & Forests, Government of India)
Chandrabani, Dehra Dun - 248 001, INDIA
EPABX: +91-135-2640114 to 2640115, 2646100
E-MAIL: registrar@wii.gov.in, Web Site: www.wii.gov.in

Advertisement No. WII/ADM/2019/2015

Deputation appointment of IFS officers for the post of Scientist-D/E/F and Scientist-G

Applications are invited from IFS officers for filling up the posts at the level of Scientist – D/E/F & G in the Pay Matrix Level 12/13/13-A & 14 respectively for appointment on deputation basis in Wildlife Institute of India, Dehra Dun.

The detailed advertisement, terms and conditions can be seen on Institute's website: www.wii.gov.in. The last date of receipt of application is 15.06.2020.

The Director, Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun, reserves the right to reject any or all applications without assigning any reasons.

Registrar
Wildlife Institute of India, Dehradun

**Office of the Mission Director
NATIONAL URBAN LIVELIHOODS MISSION**
No.11, Unit No. 305, 3rd Floor, Blue cross Chambers Building, Infantry Road Cross, Bengaluru - 560 001.

No: MD 31 DAY-NULM/2020-21 Date: 20.05.2020

NOTIFICATION

Applications are invited for the following posts on contract basis under DAY-NULM for State Mission Management Unit (SMMU).

Sl. No.	Name of the Post	No. of Posts
1	State Mission Manager (Shelters and Social Infrastructure)	01
2	State Mission Manager (Financial Inclusion & Micro Enterprises)	01
3	State Mission Manager (MIS & ME)	01
4	Multi-tasking Officials	01

Applications should be submitted to Office of the Mission Director, DAY-NULM, National Urban Livelihoods Missions, through e-mail: hrdaynulmkarnataka@gmail.com on or before 30.05.2020. Detailed Notification and Application format can be downloaded from www.kaushalkar.com/nulm website.

Sd/- Mission Director
National Urban Livelihoods Mission

**GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
TENDER 4th EXTENSION NOTICE**
NIT No. 41,42 & 43/2019-2020 BCMC/MW/CHENNAI Date : 20.05.2020
Last date for receipt of Tenders invited in this office
NIT No. 41, 42, 43 & 44/2019-2020 /BCMC /MW/ CHENNAI
Dated: 10.03.2020 for three works are extended upto
03.06.2020, 3.00 P.M. Further details are available in the Website <http://www.tenders.tn.gov.in>.
Other conditions remain unaltered.
Superintending Engineer, PWD., Buildings (C&M) Circle, M.W., Chepauk, Chennai-5.

DIPR / 1873 / TENDER / 2020

**Office of the Addl. Chief Engineer Water Resources Zone, Jaipur
Sinchai Bhawan, J.L.N. Marg, Jaipur-302017**

No. : 7171 Date : 18.5.2020

INVITATION OF E-TENDER NO. 5 YEAR 2020-21

On behalf of Governor of Rajasthan, invites e-tender from eligible contractor for civil works under DRIP-II Scheme, estimated cost of work is Rs. 3452.00 Lacs. The details are available in the following websites:-

UBN No.: WRD2021WLOB00232
1. www.eproc.rajasthan.gov.in

2. www.dipr.rajasthan.gov.in

3. <http://sppp.rajasthan.gov.in>

DIPR/C/3475/2020

Addl. Chief Engineer
Water Resources Zone, Jaipur

Release J&K political detainees, says CCG

It slams Net curbs in Union Territory

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Concerned Citizens' Group (CCG), headed by former Union Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha, sought the release of all political detainees in Jammu and Kashmir on the festival of Eid-ul-Fitr.



Yashwant Sinha
Don't use the lack of a Legislative Assembly to pass policies with long term consequences

CONCERNED CITIZENS' GROUP

2G Internet, premised on the assumption that faster Internet speeds help terrorists – is causing havoc not only in banking, trade, business and healthcare but in the field of education as well," it said.

It wanted the Central government to release all those detained since August last.

The Union government had also used the lockdown to implement domicile laws for the Union Territory, that should have been debated by people's representatives and affected citizens, said the group

Amphan makes quick work of grand trees and joie de vivre of City of Joy

The morning after the super cyclone, city wakes up to untold devastation all around; people speak of a 'doomsday' feel with a strange encompassing silence

BISHWANATH GHOSH

KOLKATA

Last October, Arabinda Ganguli passed away at the age of 91. Seven months later, on Wednesday, the *radhachura* tree he planted outside his south Kolkata home in 1977 was also dead. The trunk that had withstood many storms was felled by Cyclone Amphan.

The *radhachura* isn't alone. Countless other trees, including many that inspired poetry in those who lived under their gaze, are gone. Not just trees alone. Poles were uprooted,

cars were damaged and metal roofs flew off. On Thursday morning, Kolkata woke up in a state of daze, the silence gripping the city far more pronounced than the one caused by the lockdown imposed to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus.

Roads blocked

And just when residents thought they would pick up the pieces and move on, they realised the road ahead was blocked by the lockdown. To make matters worse, mobile networks col-



Broken spirits: A fallen tree in the Tollygunj area of Kolkata on Thursday morning. ■ RAJEEV BHATT

lapsed, and as a result people couldn't reach their loved ones to enquire whether they were safe. But thanks to broadband, pictures of battered neighbour-

hoods began to circulate on social media once power supply was restored and the extent of damage began unravelling itself.

Shops vanish

"There is devastation all around our house. So many [makeshift] shops are gone. Ours is one of the few houses that have power and neighbours are sending their fish and milk to be refrigerated. I even saw vans carrying bodies – no idea whether they were victims of COVID-19 or electrocution," Ranjini Guha, daughter-in-law of the late Ganguli, told *The Hindu*.

tent of damage, one thing is certain: Amphan has scoured Kolkata.

This is peak summer, when Kolkata should be melting in the heat, but the weather feels like February, and the citizens of the City of Joy would have loved to do what they do best: celebrate. But they are not only fettered by the lockdown but are also staring at uncertainty because of the increasing number of COVID-19 infections in the city and now the pounding from the super cyclone. While it is up to the government agencies to calculate the ex-

tent of damage, one thing is certain: Amphan has scoured Kolkata.

"We are feeling miserable and alone, like a doomsday feel. We can't even step out because trees have fallen on both sides of the road, but we can sense the trail of destruction," said Anshu Monga Kapur, an entrepreneur who lives with her husband in Ballygunge. "The shaken security guard at the gate asked me innocently whether the cyclone had blown away coronavirus as well."

The Karachi-born Shamu Dudeja, a long-time resident

of Alipore, said: "Amphan has taught us that the biggest necessity for any human is a shelter whose roof wouldn't blow away and whose floor won't come under water."

She herself lives in a handsome house but spent a better part of Thursday getting water out of her ground-floor rooms. "Last night was very frightening. It was like a horror film. I have never been through such times," said Ms. Dudeja, who, as a child, witnessed the horrors of Partition.

Worst over as Amphan leaves India

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Cyclone Amphan has crossed India and is now in Bangladesh. It will no longer have any "adverse impact" on West Bengal and Odisha, according to a update from the Ministry of Earth Sciences.

"Super cyclonic storm 'Amphan' moved north-northeastwards with a speed of 27 kmph during past 06 hours, further weakened into a cyclonic storm and lay centered at 05.30 a.m. over Bangladesh," the statement said.

"For the next few days, the civic authorities have their task cut out with the main works being clearing thousands of fallen trees from the roads and restoring power supply.

The destruction, unprecedented in recent public memory, was evident in every neighbourhood of the city. Residents of the metropolis woke up with almost all the

15 dead in badly ravaged metropolis

Minister asks for time to make Kolkata functional again as super cyclone damaged vital infrastructure

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

Fifteen persons died in the havoc caused by the super cyclone in the city on Wednesday. Deaths were reported from almost all parts of the city, with some of the victims electrocuted and others crushed under trees or collapsed houses.

For the next few days, the civic authorities have their task cut out with the main works being clearing thousands of fallen trees from the roads and restoring power supply.

The destruction, unprecedented in recent public memory, was evident in every neighbourhood of the city. Residents of the metropolis woke up with almost all the



Remains of the day: A man walking through a waterlogged road in Kolkata on Thursday. ■ PTI

roads blocked by fallen trees and electric poles. Some areas were submerged.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee shared photographs with presspersons, showing

traffic to a standstill. Waterlogging was reported in low-lying parts, including at the city airport. The Kolkata Municipal Corporation was trying to pump out water from the low-lying areas.

Time required

Firhad Hakim, Chairman of the Board of Administrators of the Corporation and State Urban Development Minister, sought time from people to make the city functional again.

From Dum Dum in the north to Tollygunj and Jadavpur in the south, every area had suffered damage from fallen trees and broken lamp posts. The central business district was badly damaged with trees falling on bound-

dary walls.

Central Red Road witnessed massive uprooting of trees. Hospitals such as M.R. Bangur and SSKM, which were battling the COVID-19 pandemic, had to deal with the destruction caused by the cyclone.

The cyclone raged for hours on Wednesday evening and night. The storm started making landfall at 2.30 p.m. on Wednesday and by 4 p.m., the impact was felt in Kolkatta. For over six hours the storm raged with all its fury.

Around 6 p.m., the Alipore Weather Office recorded a wind speed of about 112 kmph and at 7.20 p.m. the wind speed in Dum Dum peaked to 133 kmph.

Life comes to a halt in South 24 Parganas

Cyclone leaves residents high and dry

SUVIJIT BAGCHI
CANNING

Till late on Wednesday, Selima Akhter Sekh, a 55-year-old farmer, refused to leave her tin and bamboo thatched house.



Selima returned to her home to find that it was flattened.

struction worker and one of her three sons. "We shifted and survived, but the house disappeared," Mr. Sekh said.

On Wednesday night, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said South and North 24 Parganas were two of south Bengal's "ruined" districts.

Pidawa, an unheralded success

FROM PAGE 1

"We had to take the help of the local police and move them by ambulance on April 6 to Jhalawar for testing, which could only be done by the evening, further delaying matters," recalled Dr. Raees. On April 7, three of the five samples taken proved positive, all symptomatic. Dr. Raees and his staff were also tested and put in quarantine, thus closing the CHC until doctors from neighbouring hospitals arrived.

This set in motion a chain of events that were to prove decisive in the containment and eventual elimination of the virus from Pidawa. "In hindsight, we may have been a bit harsh in imposing curfew over the entire town," reminisced Sidharth Sihag, Jhalawar District Collector. "We were all in a learning curve about the virus at that time, and didn't have any other protocols to go by," he ad-

ded. He and his Rapid Response Team descended on Pidawa moments after the first positive reports came, and closed the town completely from the midnight of April 7-8. And then began an extensive testing programme beginning with the family, neighbours, street by street, and mohalla by mohalla.

Collection centre

Once another five positive cases appeared it was decided to set up a sample collection centre at Pidawa. Constantly moving people was

had gone to Indore for trousseau shopping, as well as to get supplies for a grocery store. And then, others had gone to nearby Kota too, for the upcoming "wedding of my niece Arshi," said Riazullah, brother of the deceased Khalida Bi. The wedding was scheduled for March 23 but postponed when Rajasthan announced its lockdown on March 21. In the meantime, and unknown to all, the virus had entered the family and slowly begun to make its way around.

Shravan Rajawat, Pidawa Sub-Divisional Magistrate, was the administrative local point man and recalled suggesting to the Collector that women should also be extensively tested. "Unlike other places, the women in Dalelpura, the area of Pidawa most affected, are not housebound and are actively moving around, socially or otherwise," he said. While it is debatable if data can back that assertion, the spread was ne-

vertheless quick, albeit within a close circle. Almost all the cases were either family, neighbours, or nearby associates. Sohan Lal, the family sharecropper also tested positive, as did his wife and a neighbour of Mr. Lal, suffering from paralysis, also tested positive. In all, Pidawa saw 20 positive cases, which for a town of about 14,000 is enough to cause a major scare scenario. And then the demographics of those who tested positive gave rise to yet more unwanted scares.

"Don't forget that the first positive cases in Pidawa appeared the day after the stunning incidents in Indore," remarked an official, who spoke on the condition of anonymity. "Coupled with the Tablighi allegations doing the digital rounds, we were sitting on another social disaster," the official added.

Pidawa has a delicate demographic balance, and hasn't been immune from the longer term contagion.

Those tensions were revived in early April and the administration was hard-pressed to watch the spread of both viruses, the digital as well as the novel coronavirus. The curfew certainly helped, in keeping people indoors and putting testing procedures in place, but it did create problems for families in terms of availability of milk and vegetables.

And even in that an avenue was found to fan the flames of the older virus. As the whole town was under curfew, the supply to each locality came to be staggered, giving rise to allegations that the 'other' were getting ac-

cess on a more regular basis than the 'own'. Curfew rationalisation sorted out that insinuation from spreading further, but not before causing administrative stress. "It had us on the edge for sure, but luckily better sense prevailed," said the same official.

In fact, the local administration and medical authorities now recall with a great deal of satisfaction the cooperation they received from the public. The family that initially tested positive was singled out for praise in terms of its calmness and cooperative attitude once the contagion was explained to the

them. They were taken to Kota, the divisional headquarters, in the first days of quarantine and treatment, for that was the protocol established across Rajasthan. After a few days, and the Kota Medical College feeling the strain of increasing numbers, they were shifted to Jhalawar Medical College for the remainder of their treatment, quarantine and repeated testing. Even as all patients continued to provide negative samples subsequently, the drama didn't cease around them.

Spilt vial

On May 7 a bunch of samples arrived at the laboratory of the Department of Microbiology at Jhalawar Medical College. When opened a vial was found to have spilled, causing a major scare among the laboratory technicians. They refused to touch the samples for fear of infecting themselves.

"The HoD handled the situation brilliantly," recounted Mr. Sihag, the Collector. Yogendra Tiwari, HoD Microbiology, laughed off the praise, but did admit to the

fear hovering among the laboratory technicians. "The vials didn't have screw-on caps, so one of them spilled its sample over the others, and one didn't know whether it was an infected case. So I had to handle the whole bunch myself," he said. He cleaned all the samples himself, and then decontaminated the entire laboratory. "We resumed work after fumigation, invalidated that sample, had it taken and tested again," he added. About 292 samples were repeat tested, and only then was Pidawa declared free of the novel coronavirus.

While most of the district administration and medical authorities were reticent about claiming a major success in containing and eliminating the novel coronavirus from a remote small town near the heart of India, Dr. Tiwari was unabashed.

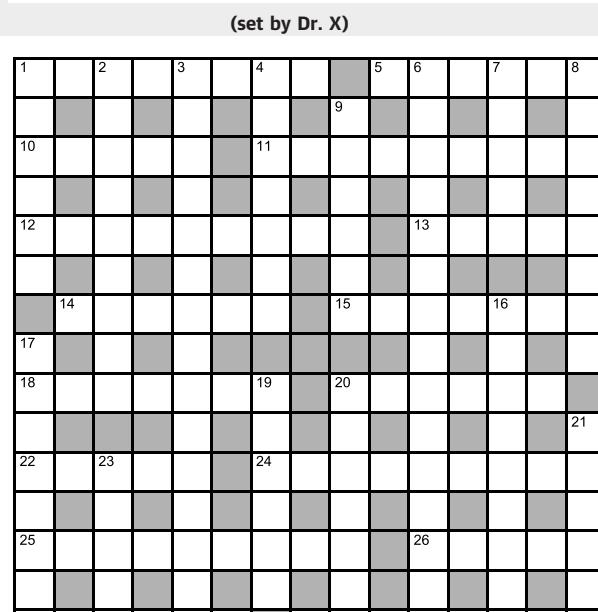
"The Pidawa model is something to be proud of," he declared. Mofussil India scored a point, and left a marker, without any fanfare.

(The writer is a former Member of Parliament)

TH CROSSWORD + 12942

(set by Dr. X)

Are you good with numbers or better with words? Pick from Sudokus and crosswords.
<https://crossword.thehindu.com>



- 14 Ridicules many getting sick aboard steamer (6)
15 Times of terrible unrest over citizenship essentially (7)
18 Suckers for old-time therapy? (7)
20 Outlaw at townhouse arrested around capital city (6)
22 Small compact chip (5)
24 Sponge cake prepared by chefs heartily in department (9)
25 Charge of care given incorrectly (9)
26 Select good bank (5)
27 Graceful maiden starting to bathe in river (6)
28 Consequences of America infiltrating territories (8)
- DOWN
- 1 Most widespread fires raging at southern border of rainforest (6)
2 Skill in bed essentially increases! Get tablet (9)
3 What a preacher might do to guess who's here? (5, 2, 3, 5)
4 They invaded England from heart of France, breaking usual rules (7)
6 Group perhaps got in trouble about exposing (8, 2, 5)
7 Characteristic flair backed by sex appeal (5)
8 Model in court facing trial is most unreasonable (8)
9 Climb a trail (6)
16 Unruly behaviour in bank with outcry over money lost in cock-up (9)
17 Batter close to amazing in game! It shows brilliance (8)
19 Ecclesiastical offence is about getting cash after selling benefit essentially (6)
20 Scrap in party over chaps interrupting date every so often (7)
21 Parties very upset after a little exchange in bar (6)
23 Scumbag is maliciously adopting a type of discrimination (5)
- ACROSS
- 1 Deny arresting American dissenter (8)
5 Start to admire Dravid say, one with special defence (6)
10 Found strength to give up cocaine for good (5)
11 Unstated reversal in plan to go to live in the country (9)
12 Keep cuddling wife after wine for a sensational reaction (5, 4)
13 Clothes stand (3-2)

SUDOKU

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★☆☆

Solution to puzzle 12941 | Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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**No-oven cake**

Feeling the urge to bake a delicious cake but don't have an oven or even the 'right' ingredients? How about batter made with glucose biscuits in a pressure cooker? New Delhi-based food blogger and cookbook author Shivesh Bhatia explains his popular five-ingredient cake (no flour, no egg). "You start by preheating the cooker (close the lid without the whistle) on medium heat for 10 minutes. This makes sure that once your batter (in a greased pan) goes in, it's hot enough for the cooking process to start. Use a wire rack or plate to make sure that the bottom of the cooker doesn't touch your baking pan. I don't like adding water because then it gives more of a steamed texture." Stating that anyone can make the cake, he adds, "I wanted to simplify it so that even people using

a cooker for the first time can make it. It takes about 50 minutes for the cake to cook on an induction stove, but the baking time varies; I always suggest keeping an eye on it."

As for the all-important question of taste, Shivesh says, "Honestly, the texture is as good as any regular cake. If you did a blind taste test, I don't think anyone will be able to guess that this cake is made with only glucose biscuits. That is the best part, because you get a great dessert without compromising on the taste."

Extra hack

Waffles are one dessert that everyone loves but a waffle iron is a gadget that is not commonly available in Indian households. Instead of the iron, use a sandwich-maker or griller to make the waffles. It actually does such a great job and I think this is a great hack that everyone can try.

From cake made in a pressure cooker to eggs in an *idli* steamer, here are some easy hacks to make cooking more fun during lockdown

KITCHEN HACKS for slim pickings

APARNA NARRAIN

Steamed egg curry

For Sarvesh Devanandan of the Instagram page 'A Bite Of Chennai', a story on cooking eggs in an *idli* steamer gave him the idea to take it one step further and make an egg curry. "I had watched an Instagram video of eggs being steamed and then toasted on a pan with some pepper, chilli powder and curry leaves. That's what I wanted to make initially. Then, I had this idea of changing my mother's recipe. She used to make tomato curry, where she would add the

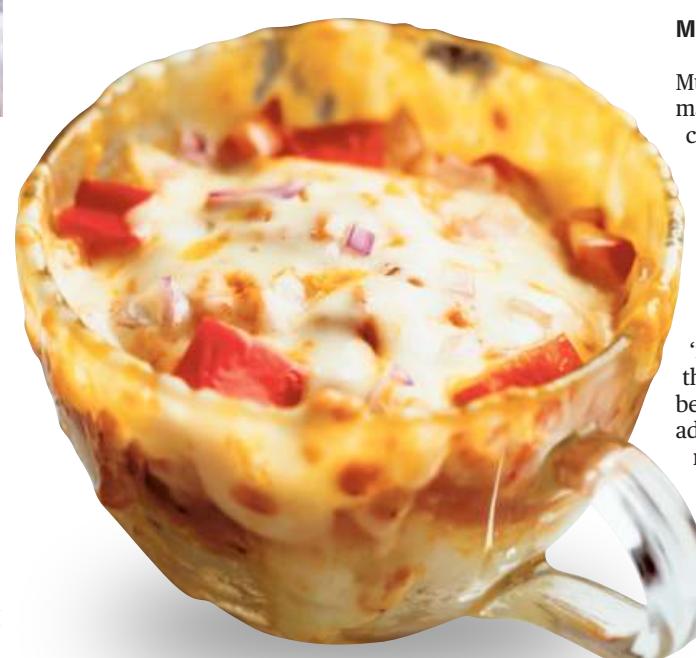
raw egg to it when it was boiling. But the eggs would become messy and also overcooked. So, I thought of adding steamed eggs to the curry. It turned out really well. The eggs were fluffy, soft and stayed intact."

Extra hack

When we make egg *dosa*, we usually make the *dosa* first and then spread the egg on it. Instead, mix the egg in the batter and cook it. You don't get the *dosa* texture, but it does become very fluffy. And it goes really well with any gravy or chutney.



■ SARVESH DEVANANDAN



■ RICHA GUPTA

Mug pizza

Mug cakes may be well known, but are you familiar with mug pizza and mug mac 'n cheese? Bengaluru-based food blogger Richa Gupta of My Food Story channel says, "Mug recipes are popular because when you're watching something late in the night, you just want something to eat and these recipes are really fast and easy. You don't even need egg. All my mug recipes are eggless; they are made in a microwave and are quick and easy."

So how does one make these dishes? Says Richa, "For the pizza, we use baking soda as a leavening agent and so you get that bread-like sort of texture in the base when it cooks in the microwave. Then you add sauce, cheese and toppings and the top part cooks and gives you that pizza-like taste. The mac 'n' cheese takes about eight minutes to make in a microwave. The reason for that is the pasta has to cook; it's not like the pasta can cook in two minutes just because it's in a microwave. After that, it is another 30 or 40 seconds when you add the milk, cheese and cornflower powder. And the texture is very similar to a regular pasta: creamy and cheesy."

Extra hack

My favourite hack, if you have forgotten to soak channa or rajma overnight, is to take a casserole or anything with a tight lid, fill it with hot water, add the beans, a little bit of salt, cover it, and leave it aside for one hour. The hot water and salt will do the trick and the beans will be the same as if you had soaked it overnight.

The root of the matter

With food security emerging as a priority during the lockdown, Kerala is promoting tuber cultivation



Ready to serve A happy Yangdup Lama behind the bar at Sidecar, his second project

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

where it comes from, it influences the flavour of the cocktail differently."

He also experiments with nuts, in his creations. "I once infused three types of nuts – almonds, walnuts and peanuts – in a 50-year-old single malt whisky. Everyone thought I had lost it. But when the makers of the whisky tried the infusion, they said they wouldn't have the single malt any other way."

The mixologist, who is making the best use of his unplanned stay at home, is thrilled to be able to restart theoretical learning.

"It dawned on me that I still had a lot of learning to do about cocktails. I love taking some quizzes and knowing where I stand," he says, adding that he has also been doing a lot of online training with his staff.

"Without the pressure of work everyday, we seem to be learning a lot better," says Yangdup, adding that he is also using this time to teach the team about mindfulness, since he has an interest in spirituality.

"In that process, I must say that I too have benefited. Mindfulness elevates your experience, especially at work. If we can put our heart into our work, we will not only work better but also make more enjoyable cocktails and create a better experience for our guests," states Yangdup, adding, "I believe that whatever we do should make us happy."

The best of spirits

speakeasy bar Cocktails And Dreams. With 25 years of experience in bartending, Yangdup says that his motive at work is not to be listed, but admits that such recognitions are encouraging for the team nevertheless.

Contrary to the popular saying that the life of a bar is two years, he says that a bar should have an en-

during, friendly neighbourhood charm.

Over a phone call from Delhi, he discusses his cocktail philosophy: "The basic guideline that I follow is, 'anything edible can go in a cocktail'. Cocktails should be diverse in flavour and culture. Take coffee, for instance. India produces good coffee, like tea, and depending on



Nature's bounty
Tapioca cuttings being taken away for distribution in Mayil panchayat in Kannur district

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

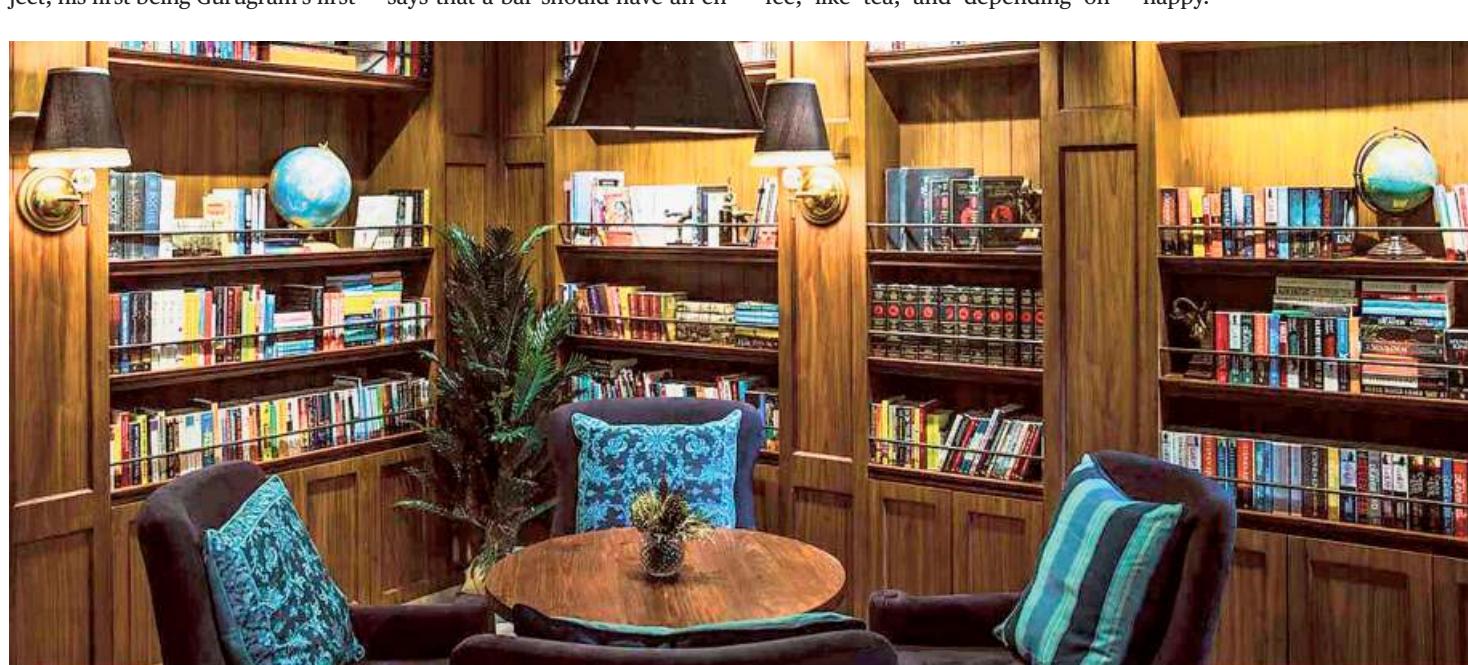
launched a scheme to grow tapioca and sweet potato in every household. It is led by Mayil Rice Producer Company (MRPC), a farmer producer organisation that has been instrumental in reviving paddy cultivation in the panchayat. "Planting materials of both tapioca and sweet potato were distributed early this month. There are over 8,000 households in the Panchayat and tapioca cuttings were given away to over 6,100 of them and sweet potato vine cuttings to nearly 1,000 families," says TK Balakrishnan, managing director, MRPC. While tapioca can be harvested in six months, it will take three or four months to harvest sweet potatoes.

He says that this is part of making every household in the Panchayat self-sufficient in food production. "Ginger roots and turmeric rhizomes have already been distributed by Mayil Krish Bhawan. Later this month, we are distributing vegetable and paddy seeds in Santhigram, a voluntary organisation in the district, which has initiated a scheme to promote tuber cultivation in and around the area.

The COVID-19-induced break in supply chains of food has brought the focus back on tubers in Kerala. Besides the State Government, voluntary organisations, local self Government bodies and farmers' groups have also stepped in to promote cultivation of roots and tubers, along with vegetable farming in the state.

The Central Tuber Crops Research Institute (ICAR-CTCRI) in the State capital has chalked out a tuber campaign with the support of the Kerala Agricultural University (KAU), Vegetable and Fruit Promotion Council Keralam (VFCCK), and State Agriculture Department. The project encourages farming of cassava (tapioca), different varieties of yams, sweet potato, taro and Chinese potato. Mayil panchayat in Kannur district has

Meanwhile, the University of Kerala has announced that it will revive farming on its campus at Kariavattom in the State capital, which includes tuber cultivation. Another initiative is by the corporation of Kozhikode, which has already started tapioca cultivation in 12 spots that were lying fallow.



A throwback to the Vijayanagara Empire

Author Srinivas Reddy discusses his biography of Krishnadevaraya, whom he likes to describe as a poet-king

SANGEETHA DEVI DUNDOO

A book on Krishnadevaraya, the most popular ruler of the erstwhile Vijayanagara Empire, seems like a natural progression of things for sitar player and author Srinivas Reddy. Growing up with a keen interest in Sanskrit, Telugu and Tamil literature, he completed his PhD at UC Berkeley in 2011, with his thesis on Krishnadevaraya's Telugu work *Amuktamalyada*. Srinivas translated *Amuktamalyada* in English as *Giver of the Worn Garland*, in 2010. Around that time, he also began working on a biography on Krishnadevaraya, which is now published as *Raya: Krishnadevaraya of Vijayanagara* (by Juggernaut, available as e-book at ₹503, and print form at ₹535).

Edited excerpts from an email interview with the Rhode Island-based author:

What got you interested in history and literature in your growing years?

• I was raised in a traditional but liberal-minded family. Both my parents were medical doctors, but knowledge of every kind was greatly valued at home, be it scientific, humanistic or artistic. As a child, however, I was much more into science than literature. In college, I had a spiritual awakening that brought me back to Indian literature, philosophy and music. Around that time, my grandfather came to stay with us and my education in Sanskrit and the *Bhaga-*

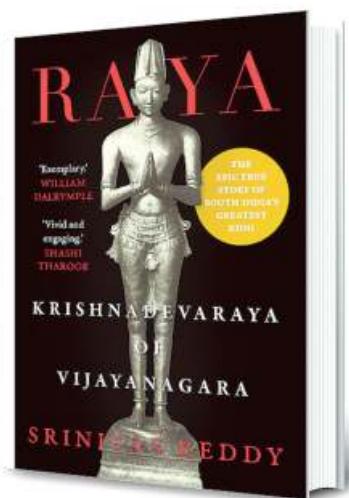


vad Gita began. From then on, I was in love!

What prompted you to write a book on Krishnadevaraya and how did you want to make it different from the existing ones?

• Krishnadevaraya is a well-known name, and many people have heard the stories of his amazing empire, but there has been surprisingly little academic research done on his life. This book is the first sustained work in English to explore the emperor's remarkable life and his place in Indian/world history. I think the most unique contribution of my work is the integration of well-known historical sources like Portuguese chronicles with classical Telugu literature, much of which has never been ful-

Notes from the past (above)
Srinivas Reddy, (below) Book cover • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



ly explored or translated into English.

What aspects of Krishnadevaraya's life did you want to highlight?

• There are many facets of Raya's life that I wanted to shine light on, but one important theme is the idea of a *kavi-raja* or poet-king. This old India concept (akin to the 'philosopher king' or 'enlightened monarch' of western civilisations) emphasises that a good king should be both mighty in battle and wise in governance. Raya was the pre-modern epitome of this ideal; he was a brilliant warrior, statesman and poet all wrapped into one extraordinary individual. Another critical aspect that I examine is the persistent notion that Vijayanagara was a staunchly Hindu state in valiant opposition to the onslaught of Islam. This oversimplified narrative is something I wanted to re-evaluate and contextualise, especially in regard to Raya's promotion of religious tolerance and multiculturalism.

There is a tendency to eulogise while writing about a personality one has followed for years. What was your writing approach?

• This is true and I even concede to it, in the book. I am an admirer of Krishnadevaraya because after years of studying his life, he remains a great source of inspiration to me, and hopefully now a whole new generation of leaders and thinkers. As the book progresses, I am also critical of Raya's actions at the end of his reign, particularly his growing megalomania and the unfortunate incident with his beloved minister, Timmaras. As the story goes, Raya, in a fit of rage, blinded the man who he always called a father. A sad story indeed, but one that also serves to humanise this larger-than-life king.



HOMING IN

For your weekly **Watch List**, we have Malayalam actor 'Appani' **Sarath** sharing his list of favourite movies/series that he recommends. "Because of the lockdown, I'm now getting more time to catch up on movies I have missed," says Sarath, who rose to fame with the gangster-drama *Angamaly Diaries*

HARIKUMAR JS

Iruvar

This classic from Mani Ratnam scores high in every department, be it direction, casting or the performances. The story of political rivalry, inspired by real-life events, is gripping and an inspiration.



Sacred Games

Web series have become quite popular for their flexibility quotient today, and *Sacred Games* provides wholesome entertainment. It showcases some top-notch performances, especially by Nawazuddin Siddiqui and Saif Ali Khan.



Joker

Joaquin Phoenix truly deserved the Oscar for Best Actor for his brilliant performance in this film. Watching it, one can see the immense effort that went into the characterisation.



Kilukkam

Directed by Priyadarshan, it is an evergreen comedy in Malayalam. It is one of those movies that always proves a stress-buster and is a perfect watch for some comic relief during this lockdown.

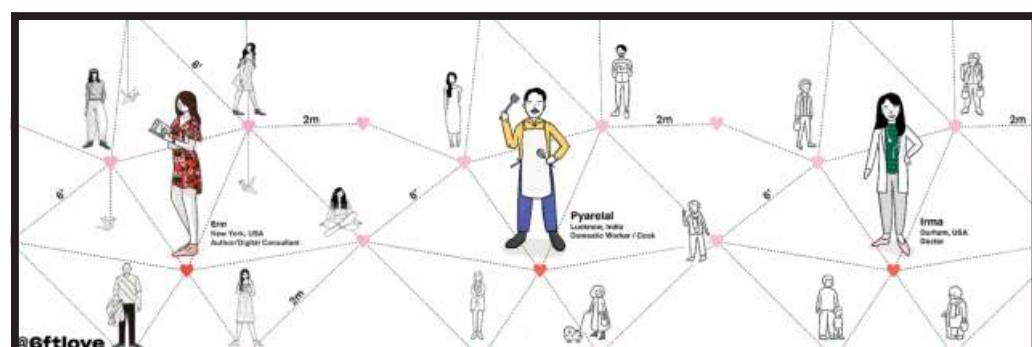


Bigil

Atlee is one director I like a lot and the success of this Vijay-starrer goes beyond its popular appeal. It is both a celebration and an inspiration.

We would love to know how you are keeping busy at home. Tell us what you are watching at metro@thehindu.co.in

Grids of grit The stories featured in 6ftlove have come in from 17 countries and 34 cities; (below) Sabah Usmani along with some of the illustrations • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



under lockdown, while a former graffiti artist from Adelaide, Australia, who has now taken to canvases, is itching to paint the town again. "I am reminded of where my love for art came from," he says.

The illustrations in the grid are by Dia-

na Ang and Aashti Miller, and the team includes urban planners (Sera Tolgay, Akemi Sato), designers (Mira Khandpur, Nikita Notowidigdo), and an environmental expert (Daphne Yin) – some based in the US and some in

India. "I started 6ftlove in early March,

just as the COVID-19 pandemic swept through the world. It was at this time that the term 'physical distancing' (aka social distancing) came to dominate the discourse," says Sabah.

"I felt that there was a need to spread the message that practising physical distancing doesn't mean we can't be social or connect with people – whether it be loved ones or strangers."

Living in New York City, which emerged as one of the epicenters of this crisis, Sabah was worried

about her father. "He is in his late sixties, has diabetes, and is in the high-risk category. I tried to convince him to stay at home." Despite her parents living in the same city as her, she hasn't seen them in person in over two months. "I mostly keep in touch with my family and friends via video calls and texting, which means my phone has basically become an extension of my arm," she says.

But as cities around the world are easing restrictions in the coming weeks, Sabah plans to bring the movement from social-media to real life.

"We are working on a campaign to

mainstream the need for collective action to combat the spread of COVID-19 and remove the psychological barriers to physical distancing. This will include a design for a wearable pin that communicates to others that even though you are keeping a safe distance, you are doing it out of love and concern for them." Meanwhile, the team is focussing on hard-to-reach stories, from vulnerable groups, rural populations, and frontline workers. "We would also like to partner with organisations with aligned goals to reach out to communities who may not have access to social media," she says.

+ Love is just six feet away

A trans US-India team aims to create Instagram's largest network of people who are physically distancing, with illustrations and personal stories

SWETA AKUNDI

For 6ftlove, the Instagram Grid takes on a much more literal sense. Intersecting lines run like tracks all over this page, joined by little pink hearts. And the building block units of this hive are illustrations of people like you and I, all physically distancing.

The page (@6ftlove), created by New York-based urban planner, Sabah Usmani, is a reminder that though we are staying six feet apart physically, we are all still connected emotionally.

"6ftlove is both a design project and a global solidarity movement to fight the spread of COVID-19," says Sabah. The team invites people to send in their experiences of isolation, submitted in any lan-

guage. Almost every day, they profile an individual's story, with an illustration and a quote of how they are navigating the outbreak and dealing with physical distancing.

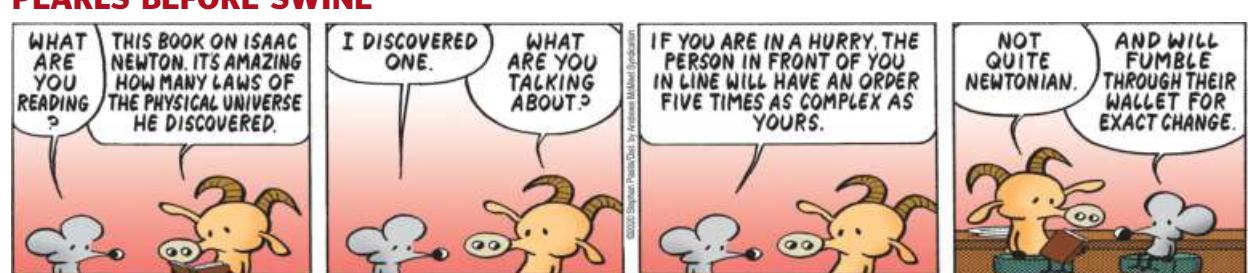
"We are gathering stories spanning a diversity of experiences, backgrounds, and geographies. We include quotes in their original language alongside an English translation," adds Sabah.

And it is working: the stories put up have come in from 17 countries and 34 cities, in seven different languages so far. Some of them are doctors and domestic workers, while others are comedians and writers.

A 12-year-old talks about celebrating her birthday



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



POUCH CAFE



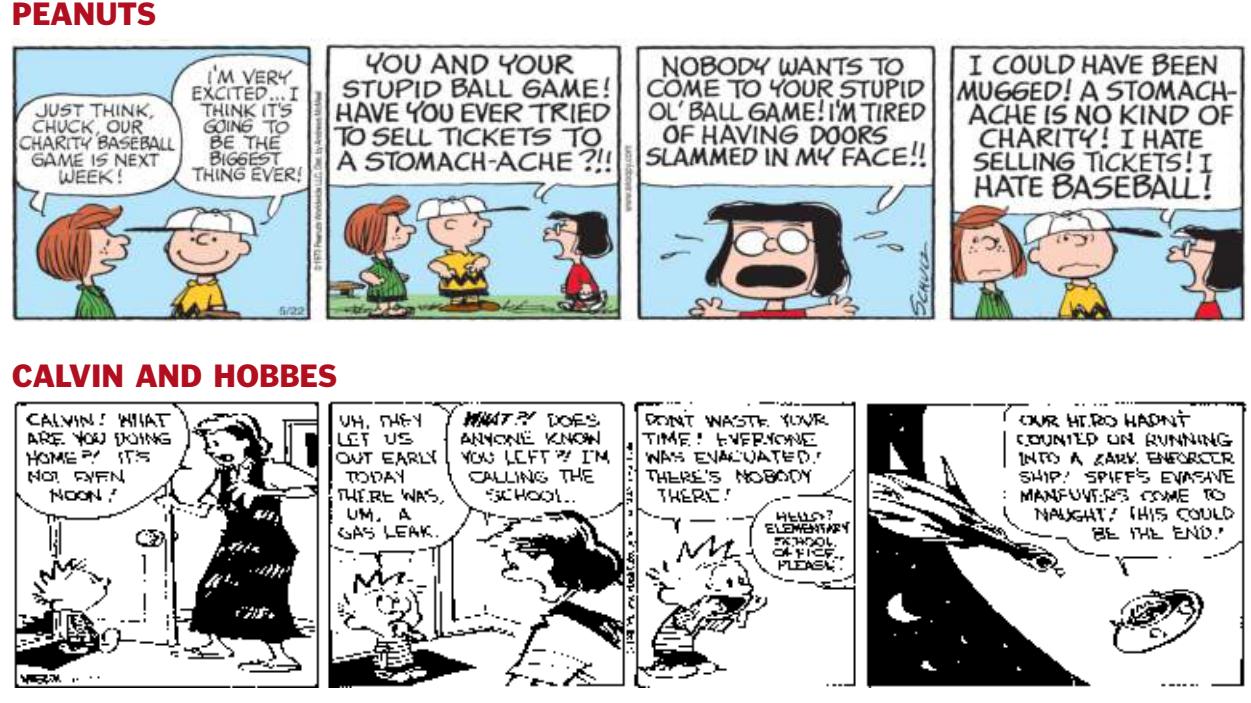
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



TIGER



PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBES



China plans security law for Hong Kong

Parliament to discuss a Bill on 'improving the legal system and enforcement mechanisms' for the city

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BEIJING

China's Parliament will consider a Bill that could limit opposition activity in Hong Kong, a spokesperson said on Thursday, appearing to confirm speculation that China will sidestep the territory's own lawmaking body in enacting legislation to crack down on activity Beijing considers subversive.

Zhang Yesui said the National People's Congress will deliberate a Bill on "establishing and improving the



Controversial move: President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Keqiang, right, observing a minute of silence for COVID-19 victims at the opening session of the Parliament in Beijing. ■ REUTERS

legal system and enforcement mechanisms for the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region to safeguard national security."

Anti-govt. protests

Such a move has long been under consideration but was hastened by months of anti-government protests last year in the former British colony that was handed over to Chinese rule in 1997. Such legislation was last proposed in 2003 under Article 23 of

the Basic Law, Hong Kong's mini-Constitution, bringing hundreds of thousands of the territory's citizens out in protest.

The proposal was withdrawn by the government but Beijing has increasingly pushed for measures such as punishment for disrespecting the Chinese national flag and anthem and increased pro-China patriotic-themed education in schools. Opposition in Hong Kong's Legisla-

tive Council, however, made it unlikely such a Bill could pass at the local level.

The new measures are required by the "new situation and demands" and action at the national level is "entirely necessary," Mr. Zhang said.

A vote at the NPC will add to concerns in Hong Kong's pro-democracy camp that Beijing is chipping away at the semi-autonomous territory's rights to assembly and free speech that greatly ex-

ceed those permitted by the ruling Communist Party in mainland China.

Mr. Zhang's comments at a news conference came on the eve of the opening of the congress's annual session after a two-month delay because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Thursday saw the opening session of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, an advisory body. That will be followed Fri-

day by the start of the 3,000-member NPC at which Premier Li Keqiang will deliver a keynote speech outlining economic and social goals for the year.

The holding of the "two sessions," as the annual meetings are known, is a further sign of what the party says is its success in bringing the outbreak under control, although clusters of cases are still popping up in some parts of the country.

Members of the Consultative Conference will "tell the world about how China, as a responsible major country, has taken firm action and contributed to international cooperation in the fight against the COVID-19 epidemic," Wang Yang, the chairman of the body, said in a report to the opening session. Mr. Wang's comments were in the prepared text distributed to journalists, although he skipped over them in his delivery, apparently to save time.

Rank-and-file members wore masks in the vast auditorium inside the Great Hall of the People in the heart of Beijing.

WHO records highest daily number of COVID-19 cases

1,06,000 cases: the most since the outbreak began in Dec.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
GENEVA

The World Health Organization said on Wednesday it had registered a new daily record number of COVID-19 cases as it quickly neared the "tragic milestone" of five million total infections.



Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus

The UN agency's chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said that on Tuesday, there were 1,06,000 cases reported to WHO — the most in a single day since the outbreak began in December.

The WHO was also getting to grips with US President Donald Trump's reform ultimatum, giving the organisation 30 days to overhaul its operations otherwise its biggest contributor would freeze its funding and consider pulling out altogether.

The Geneva-based WHO's

warned of rising infection figures in poorer countries.

More than 4.9 million cases of the novel coronavirus have been registered in total since the outbreak first emerged in China last December, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP.

WHO emergencies director Michael Ryan said the five million cases mark would be a "tragic milestone".

Mr. Tedros added: "We're very concerned about the rising numbers of cases in low- and middle-income countries."

Meanwhile, Mr. Ryan said neither Hydroxychloroquine nor chloroquine have been, as yet, found to be effective in the treatment of COVID-19.

Trump suggests holding in-person G7 summit

It would be a great sign of normalisation'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump said on Wednesday he is considering hosting world leaders for the annual G7 summit at his Camp David retreat despite the ongoing coronavirus crisis, as the global death toll soared past 3,25,000.

There was encouraging news, meanwhile, on the scientific front as two studies on monkeys published on Wednesday offered hope that humans can develop protective immunity to the novel coronavirus.

Beginning to comeback
Mr. Trump said in a tweet that the U.S. was "Transitioning back to Greatness" and he may hold the G7 in June in person, instead of

3 die in Lanka stampede over virus aid

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

Three women died in a stampede on Thursday, police said, when residents of the crowded Maligawatta area in Colombo rushed to receive aid distributed to those who had lost their livelihoods due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

At least eight persons were injured — some of them had to be hospitalised — the local newspaper *Daily Mirror* reported. The aid was distributed by a private group. As of Thursday, Sri Lanka reported 1,045 COVID-19 cases and nine deaths.

The incident of residents scrambling for aid comes amid growing fear of joblessness, especially among Sri Lanka's informal sector workers.

White House report blasts Chinese 'malign activities'

It expands on Trump's tough rhetoric in hopes that it will resonate with voters angry at that country

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON

Beyond its hard-hitting rhetoric against China over its handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, the White House has issued a broad-scale attack on Beijing's predatory economic policies, military buildup, disinformation campaigns and human rights violations.

The 20-page report does not signal a shift in U.S. policy, according to a senior administration official, who was not authorised to publicly discuss the report and spoke only on the condition of anonymity, but it expands



President Donald Trump pointing towards China on a chart showing daily mortality cases, in this file photo. ■ REUTERS

on President Donald Trump's get-tough rhetoric that he hopes will resonate with voters angry about Chi-

na's handling of the pandemic, which has left millions of Americans out of work.

"The media's focus on the

current pandemic risks missing the bigger picture of the challenge that's presented by the Chinese Communist Party," Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said.

"China's been ruled by a brutal, authoritarian regime, a communist regime since 1949. For several decades, we thought the regime would become more like us — through trade, scientific exchanges, diplomatic outreach, letting them in the World Trade Organization as a developing nation. That didn't happen," he said. "We greatly underestimated the degree to which Beijing is

ideologically and politically hostile to free nations. The whole world is waking up to that fact."

Later, the State Department announced that it had approved the sale of advanced torpedoes to the Taiwanese military. China regards the island as a renegade province. The department said it had informed Congress of the \$180 million sale of heavy-weight torpedoes, which "will help improve the security of (Taiwan) and assist in maintaining political stability, military balance, and economic progress in the region."

Man held for 'honour killings' of cousins in Pak.

Murder after victims video went viral

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PESHAWAR

The Pakistan police have arrested a man over alleged "honour killings" of his two cousins, who appeared in a viral video being kissed by someone, police said on Thursday.

The two women were shot dead last week in a northwestern district near the Afghan border, where women are subjected to strict tribal codes that limit their movement outside of the home.

Muhammad Aslam, the 26-year-old first cousin of the victims, is accused of carrying out the murders.

"We have arrested the main suspect and are trying to recover the pistol he

used," said Mohammad Nawaz Khan, who is investigating the case.

Police said the victims, both in their 20s, were later gunned down in North Waziristan's remote Garyum village and buried by family members.

A third woman seen in the video, recorded last year, is the wife of the suspected killer but has been safely located, police added.

Two other relatives of the women have also been arrested over the killings, while the man in the video and the man who filmed it have both been arrested for indecency.

Around a thousand Pakistani women are murdered in honour killings each year.

Biden warns of 'abuse of power'

In a veiled attack on Trump, he says the powers that be are protecting friends

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON



Joe Biden

friends, weakening the very

principles that make our

country work."

Asked on Tuesday night how he'd respond to the allegations, Mr. Biden said, "I don't want to get down in the mud with these guys."

Speaking at a Yahoo News virtual town hall on Tuesday, Mr. Biden said Mr. Trump was trying to distract voters

from his inadequate response to the coronavirus pandemic. Mr. Trump has said the virus will disappear "like a miracle."

Broadly dubbing his allegations "Obamagate," Mr. Trump has pointed to the legal case of his former National Security Adviser Michael Flynn, suggesting that the "unmasking" of Mr. Flynn's name as part of legal U.S. surveillance of foreign targets was criminal and motivated by partisan politics.

There is no evidence of that, and Mr. Trump's accusations misrepresent the facts of the case. The "unmasking" of people in surveillance reports is a routine, legal activity in government — the Trump administration made 10,012 such requests in

2019. But they don't often become public, and in the Flynn case, Mr. Trump's supporters point to it as evidence that Mr. Obama's loyalists were out to undermine Mr. Trump from the start.

The President himself has called it the "biggest political crime and scandal in the history of the USA."

"This is his pattern. Diversion, diversion, diversion, diversion," Mr. Biden said on Tuesday. "The greatest crime? I mean, my Lord."

Mr. Trump's cries of scandal come as the President and many top Republicans have used increasingly harsh rhetoric against Mr. Biden — hoping to foment doubt in voters' minds as election season beings to heat up.

Iranian tankers will get military escort: Venezuela

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
CARACAS

Venezuela on Wednesday said its Navy and Air Force would escort Iranian tankers arriving with much needed fuel, after Tehran warned of "consequences" if the U.S. stopped the ships from reaching their destination.

"We're ready for whatever, whenever," President Nicolas Maduro told state-run media, thanking "all the support" from its West Asian ally in its confrontation with the U.S.

Venezuela has the world's largest proven oil reserves, but its capacity to refine crude into gasoline is limited.

US President Donald Trump's administration has imposed unilateral sanc-

tions aimed at ending oil exports from Iran and Venezuela.

Defence Minister Vladimir Padrino Lopez said that when the Iranian ships enter the oceanic economic zone "they will be welcomed" by Venezuelan naval ships and warplanes.

According to reports, five ships have sailed from Iran but it is not known when they will arrive.

With an eye on U.S. election, Iran tries a new tack

A shift in policy from provocation to limited cooperation reflects an effort to avoid direct confrontation with the Trump administration

ALISSA J. RUBIN
FARNAZ FASSIHI
BAGHDAD

After years of increasing tensions that nearly led to war, Iran has moderated its approach to the West, shifting from a policy of provocation to one of limited cooperation. The change reflects an effort to avoid direct confrontation with the U.S. that the Iranians say could benefit President Donald Trump in the November election.

Nowhere is the shift more evident than in Iraq, where Iran has backed a pro-American Prime Minister and ordered its proxy militias to cease their rocket attacks on U.S. forces.

The Americans, while publicly dismissive of any change in Iranian posture, have quietly reciprocated in



Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei. ■ AFP/FILE

modest and indirect ways.

Taken together, the openings represent an incipient détente that, even if it does not last or lead to the end of hostilities between Iran and the U.S., has already lowered the temperature of the relationship, reducing the risk of open conflict.

fore the U.S. elections."

Iran's shift, which it has not announced or explained publicly, appears to be tactical, analysts said, noting that the country still vehemently opposes the Trump administration's demand that it renegotiate its nuclear agreement with the West and that it has not backed off its goal of ousting the U.S. military from West Asia. Publicly, both countries remain engaged in verbal warfare.

But the recent signs of de-

escalation have been

significant:

Attacks ceased

After months of hit-and-run attacks on U.S. forces in Iraq that pushed the U.S. and Iran to the brink of war in January, Iran has called off its proxy militias, and the at-

tacks have largely ceased.

When Iraq's Parliament chose a U.S.-backed Prime Minister this month, Iran, which has been instrumental in choosing previous Iraqi governments, ultimately acceded to the choice and helped put him in office.

In April, Iran reached out to the U.S. to open negotiations for a prisoner swap, offering to release a U.S. Navy veteran held by Iran in exchange for an Iranian American doctor detained by the Americans.

Attacks on merchant ships and tankers in the Persian Gulf that threatened one of the world's busiest shipping lanes for much of last year have been ratcheted down, although not entirely ended.

Diplomats, Iraqi and Iranian officials and analysts

cite a combination of reasons for the change, including a fear of war with the U.S. They also note that Iran is overextended — fighting a coronavirus epidemic, a tanking economy and public unrest at home — and needs to retrench.

Caught by surprise

Tehran was caught by surprise when the Americans retaliated for the killing of a U.S. contractor in Iraq in December by killing the leader of Iran's elite Quds Force, Gen. Qassem Soleimani.

The U.S. threatened a disproportionate response if another American was killed, something Iran could ill afford.

"Iran is redefining its regional policies

MARKET WATCH

	PRICE	CHANGE
Sensex	30,933	0.37
US Dollar	75.61	0.25
Brent oil	36.31	0.00

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	317.15	-6.60
Asian Paints	1574.30	74.25
Axist Bank	357.20	-5.30
Bajaj Auto	2640.35	82.60
Bajaj Finserv	4539.20	-162.85
Bajaj Finance	1990.20	-52.60
Bharti Airtel	594.55	0.50
BPCL	313.20	4.30
Britannia Ind	3110.95	-16.90
Cipla	616.60	-4.05
Coal India	124.50	1.25
Dr Reddys Lab	3847.50	-62.70
Eicher Motors	14087.60	412.50
GAIL (India)	87.95	1.70
Grasim Ind	526.95	-9.90
HCL Tech	534.85	8.10
HDPC	1597.30	-29.70
HDPC Bank	859.55	2.45
Hero MotoCorp	2119.50	95.90
Hindalco	129.50	8.70
Hind Unilever	1970.90	-19.95
ICICI Bank	304.40	-1.25
IndusInd Bank	346.80	-10.50
Bharti InfraNet	205.85	5.00
Infosys	672.20	2.65
Indian Oil Corp	74.45	0.35
ITC	188.95	13.20
JSW Steel	169.90	-1.15
Kotak Bank	1150.25	-9.85
L&T	820.50	-14.50
M&M	408.30	3.25
Maruti Suzuki	5050.10	158.15
Nestle India Ltd.	16295.45	-7.95
NTPC	90.25	-2.65
ONGC	77.00	-1.00
PowerGrid Corp	158.90	0.45
Reliance Ind	1441.25	7.55
State Bank	151.95	-1.45
Shree Cement	29215.15	-160.50
Sun Pharma	466.45	10.70
Tata Motors	84.10	0.65
Tata Steel	283.70	0.50
TCS	1991.20	37.60
Tech Mahindra	520.05	0.85
Titan	849.85	1.15
UltraTech Cement	3571.50	43.00
UPL	366.80	10.25
Vedanta	90.20	1.65
Wipro	189.10	4.15
Zee Entertainment	153.95	0.40

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	75.41	75.73
Euro	82.67	83.05
British Pound	92.14	92.55
Japanese Yen (100)	69.94	70.24
Chinese Yuan	10.62	10.67
Swiss Franc	78.01	78.35
Singapore Dollar	53.28	53.51
Canadian Dollar	54.18	54.43
Malaysian Ringgit	17.35	17.45
Australian Dollar	49.49	49.71

Source: Indian Bank

Sundaram Home Finance profit at ₹82 cr.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHENNAI

Sundaram Home Finance posted a net profit of ₹82 crore for the fourth quarter ended March 2020 that included a one-time exceptional item of ₹60 crore.

In the previous comparable quarter, it posted a net profit of ₹26 crore.

Hence, the net profit for the two quarters was not comparable on a like-to-like basis, the firm said.

Amazon enters Indian food delivery market

Swiggy ventures into liquor delivery

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

Amazon India on Thursday said it is launching its food delivery operations in select parts of Bengaluru, a move that will see the e-commerce giant compete against major players like Zomato and Swiggy in the country.

The announcement by Amazon India, which has been testing the service for a few months, comes at a time when Zomato and Swiggy have announced laying off of over 1,600 employees amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Separately, Swiggy said on Thursday it had started

Aditya Birla MF suspends fresh inflows into two debt schemes

Fund house does not want to dilute them as 'significant gains have been made'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Aditya Birla Sun Life Mutual Fund has temporarily suspended fresh investments in two of its debt schemes – Medium Term Plan and Credit Risk Fund – with effect from Friday.

The fund house said that it had made significant gains in the two schemes, which would be realised by existing investors, and hence has stopped fresh investments so that the gains are not diluted.

"We have stopped taking additional money in our credit oriented funds – Medium Term Plan and Credit Risk Fund," the fund house said in a statement on Thursday.

"We believe that there are substantial gains in our funds which would be realised by the existing investors over the next few months. Since we do not wish to dilute this for existing invest-

Playing it safe

- Closure not to hit existing SIPs, systematic transfer plans
- Only fresh registrations to be barred
- Cumulative assets under management of two schemes ₹ 5,000 crore
- Medium term plan invests in instruments with maturity period of 3-4 years
- Credit Risk Fund invests in AA, below rated corporate bonds

tors by taking more money in these funds," it added.

While the Medium Term plan is an open-ended debt scheme that invests in instruments with a maturity period between three to four years, the Credit Risk Fund predominantly invests in AA and below rated corporate bonds.

The cumulative assets under management (AUM) of



the two schemes is around ₹5,000 crore.

It is believed that the move is to ensure that the incremental gains from some of the written down assets go to the existing investors while barring new investors that invest just eyeing the recent gains.

Meanwhile, the fund house's decision will not impact existing systematic investment plans (SIPs) and systematic transfer plans

(STPs). Only fresh registrations will be barred.

Incidentally, the development comes close on the heels of Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund announcing the winding up of six debt schemes with a combined AUM of ₹26,000 crore due to an illiquid market for low rated securities.

The ongoing coronavirus pandemic has significantly affected the cash flows of most corporates that, in turn, has impacted the payment capabilities especially those with a lower rating.

Further, given the bleak outlook, the market for low rated papers has become illiquid.

However, after the Franklin Templeton MF announcement, industry body Association of Mutual Funds in India (AMFI) had said that it was a one-off instance and not an industry-wide phenomenon.

Airlines cautiously optimistic

Filling even 33% capacity will be difficult once flights begin'

LALATENDU MISHRA MUMBAI

Airline companies gearing up to resume domestic operations after two months on Monday (May 25) remain only 'cautiously' optimistic.

Most airlines, except Vistara, refrained from commenting on the record on the government's announcement on reopening the skies for passenger flights, that too with limited operations and with capped fares to

protect air passengers from high charges.

"Now there is no option. We could have charged more. And fares could have gone below the lowest slab also on account of low demand. We have to wait and see," an executive said.

Commenting on the development, Leslie Thng, CEO, Vistara said, "Aviation is a growth engine for the economy and resumption of air travel will give great impetus to the government's overall efforts in helping the country eventually return to normalcy."

"We thank the government for taking this step and for their consultative ap-

proach in bringing about the new SOPs/guidelines for all stakeholders in the aviation sector," he said.

An Air India spokesperson said, "We would be glad to serve our passengers by operating scheduled flights adhering to all government guidelines and protocols."

An airline executive, on the condition of anonymity said, "If intrinsic demand is muted, then the minimum fare will help in general. Maximum fare will not be that relevant."

"However, when demand is muted and minimum fare is higher than what it would otherwise have been, the weakest or least attractive player suffers the most as they cannot use pricing as a tool to increase share," he added.

"Setting a cap will create shortages like we see for trains. That is why typically leaving fares to be determined by the market is the best method," he said.

(With inputs from Jagriti Chandra in New Delhi)

PET recycling units seek permission to import

Generation of bottle scrap falls sharply

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT COIMBATORE

PET bottles are used to pack and store water, cold drinks, and the like. With the closure of airlines, railways and hotels, the use of PET bottles has declined.

B.P. Sultania, former president of the All India Recycled Fibre and Yarn Manufacturers Association, said PET bottle scrap is processed and converted into valuable products such as polyester staple fibre and yarn.

The 40 PET recycling companies in the country have a production capacity of close to 12 lakh tonnes of recycled polyester staple fibre a year, including capacities that are in the pipeline.

This will enable the industries to operate. Import of washed PET bottle flakes, banned in October 2019, must be allowed again; the Environment Ministry may allow a certain percentage of requirements by providing licences to existing industries for a year at least," he said.

Industry in trouble

With the spread of COVID-19 pandemic and the nationwide lockdown following this, the industry is in trouble as almost all the plants are closed due to shortage



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The bidding for the second batch of six airports to be privatised will be done 'quickly' and the Union Cabinet is expected to take a decision on it soon, Minister for Civil Aviation Hardeep Puri said on Thursday.

"The Ministry of Civil Aviation has approved the proposal for privatisation of another six airports, which include Amritsar, Varanasi, Bhubaneswar, Indore, Raipur and Tiruchi," Chairman of the Airports Authority of India Arvind Singh said in a press conference.

"A Cabinet note has been prepared and it is under consideration of the government and once there is a decision, we will go ahead and invite bids," he added. "We intend to do the bidding quickly," Mr. Puri added.

In another significant



Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri addresses a press conference on issues related to aviation on Thursday. ■PTI

move, the Empowered Group of Secretaries has taken a decision on awarding three airports – Jaipur, Thiruvananthapuram and Guwahati. These three airports were part of the first round of privatisation of airports last year when a total of six airports were auctioned out.

While Adani Enterprises emerged as the winning bid-

der for all of these airports, the government had not taken a decision on awarding these three airports.

But now, the government has decided to go ahead with awarding them too as there is no judicial stay on the bids, the chairman explained. This should next be tabled before the Union Cabinet.

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Smith wants Ganguly to head ICC



Smith and Ganguly.

■ FILE PHOTO: V.V. KRISHNAN

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
JOHANNESBURG

South Africa director of cricket Graeme Smith on Thursday made a strong call for India's Sourav Ganguly to be the next chairman of the ICC.

Speaking at a tele-conference, Smith expressed his support for BCCI president Ganguly to take over the ICC chairmanship after Shashank Manohar's term ends this month.

Smith's comments were backed by his CEO Jacques Faul. Due to the current situation, Manohar's term may be extended by two months.

"From our perspective, it would be great to see a cricket man like Sourav Ganguly maybe getting into the president's role of the ICC. I think that will be good for the game."

"He understands it; he has played it at the highest level; he is respected; and his leadership will be the key to us going forward," said Smith.

+ Carlsen suffers twin defeats

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

Rare twin-defeats for Magnus Carlsen marked an action-filled day in the \$150,000 Lindores Abbey Rapid Challenge online chess tournament on Wednesday.

The results: Eighth round: Hikaru Nakamura (USA, 5.5) drew with Yu Yangyi (Chn, 4); Alireza Firouzja (FIDE, 3) lost to Sergey Karjakin (Rus, 5.5); Magnus Carlsen (Nor, 4.5) drew with Wesley So (USA, 4.5); Levon Aronian (4) drew with Jan-Krzysztof Duda (Pol, 3.5); Alexander Grischuk (Rus, 4) lost to Daniil Dubov (Rus, 3.5); Ding Liren (Chn, 4) bt Wei Yi (Chn, 2).

Seventh round: Nakamura drew with Grischuk; Yangyi bt Liren; Wei drew with Aronian; Duda bt Carlsen; So drew with Firouzja; Karjakin drew with Dubov.

Sixth round: Liren drew with Nakamura; Grischuk drew with Karjakin; Dubov bt So; Carlsen bt Wei; Firouzja bt Duda; Aronian bt Yangyi.

Fifth round: Liren lost to Grischuk; Nakamura bt Aronian; Yangyi bt Carlsen; Wei drew with Firouzja; Duda bt Dubov; So drew with Karjakin.

India may tour SA for T20 series

Boards engaged in talks to identify possible dates in August

AMOL KARHDAKAR
MUMBAI

Talk that India could mark its return to international cricket with a short white-ball series in South Africa in August has been doing the rounds for more than a month now. On Thursday, Cricket South Africa (CSA) admitted it was discussing a three-T20I series with the BCCI.

"India wants to honour [a prior] agreement. If it's postponed, maybe a bit later," CSA acting CEO Jacques Faul said at a virtual media interaction. However, everything hinges on government clearance from both sides.

The series is being planned to make up for the cancelled ODI series between the two teams in India in March, after a washed out first ODI.

That both Boards have the same broadcaster also augurs well for the conduct of the series in South Africa.

A BCCI executive confirmed that the Board hopes to get the government nod.

With guidelines for resumption of sports training having

been released, the BCCI's medical team, in consultation with the support staff, has started planning for a simulation camp starting early June.

Mini IPL by Sept-end?

Meanwhile, Indian Premier League (IPL) executives are understood to have sounded the franchises out on the likelihood of the postponed 2020 season being staged from late September to early November.

For that to happen, the BCCI is likely to push for the T20 World Cup, scheduled from October 18 in Australia, to be deferred during the ICC Board meeting on May 28. "If the ICC event is postponed, we will start preparing for the IPL," said a franchise official.

On Wednesday, BCCI CEO Rahul Johri ruled out the possibility of having the IPL without overseas cricketers. "The flavour of IPL is that the best players in the world come and play, and everyone is committed to maintaining that flow," he said at a TCM Sports Huddle webinar.



Planning for resumption: Quinton de Kock and Virat Kohli will come face to face again soon if all goes well and a bilateral series is fixed. ■ FILE PHOTO: K. MURALI KUMAR

Green light for training, with caveats

SAI SOPs for resumption of sporting activities "come into immediate effect"

UTHRA GANESAN
NEW DELHI

Indian sportspersons can finally resume training, starting Friday, subject to guidelines and restrictions as mandated by the government and the sports ministry. The actual activities on ground, however, might take a while to begin.

The Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), unveiled by SAI on Thursday for resumption of sporting activities "come into immediate effect" and would be applicable at all SAI and non-SAI

centres, SAI secretary Rohit Bhardwaj said during a web interaction.

Training would also have a phased start for sports and athletes.

No batons, kneeling...

Relay teams will have to practice without batons, no kneeling or sitting activities for hockey players and individual training sets for weightlifters – these are some of the provisions mandated by the SOP.

Every equipment, regardless of sport and usage, will

have to be sanitised before and after every use.

While the draft SOP had been shared last week itself, the final version includes sport-specific details, declaring that these were only for broad reference and a final decision at every centre would be taken in consultation with local authorities.

"In case of any confusion, the government guidelines and local administration would prevail," Bhardwaj clarified.

That would make a definite date for actual resump-

tion of training difficult given the spread of SAI centres across the country.

Patiala has been one of the hotspots for COVID-19 and although the National Institute of Sports (NIS) with its athletes and weightlifters has been isolated, Punjab government's guidelines would need to be considered before re-starting sports.

The SOP mandates not just sharing of personal equipment and gear but also limits the number of athletes that can train at a given time anywhere.

E.A.S. Prasanna remains one of cricket's enduring greats

K.C. VIJAYA KUMAR

Many summers back, a senior citizen ambled across and turned his arm over in a leafy ground at Bengaluru. He was about to coach at a local academy and talk veered towards spin bowling's seductive charms. It is a skill in which he was one of the leading practitioners. E.A.S. Prasanna, as always, had a twinkle in his eye, a mischievous grin and for a lark, he bowed.

On that warm day, the kind which makes Bengalureans yearn for either an ice-cream at Corner House or something frothy and potent at Koshy's, Prasanna's off-spin was spot-on. It had flight, dip and accuracy and harked back to the 1960s and 70s, when he along with Bishan Singh Bedi, B.S. Chandrasekhar and S. Venkataraghavan constituted the great spin quartet. But despite nostalgia's warm embrace, time flies and the iconic Prasanna will clock a personal milestone on Friday as he turns 80.



Master craftsman: Prasanna spun a web around the batsmen with his bag of tricks. ■ THE HINDU ARCHIVES

won the 1985 Benson and Hedges World Championship of Cricket in Australia.

In another chat pertaining to that specific triumph, a tale further embellished with Ravi Shastri being crowned 'Champion of M.A.K. Pataudi and then Ajit Wadekar forged a unit that could take on the world's best.

Staying relevant

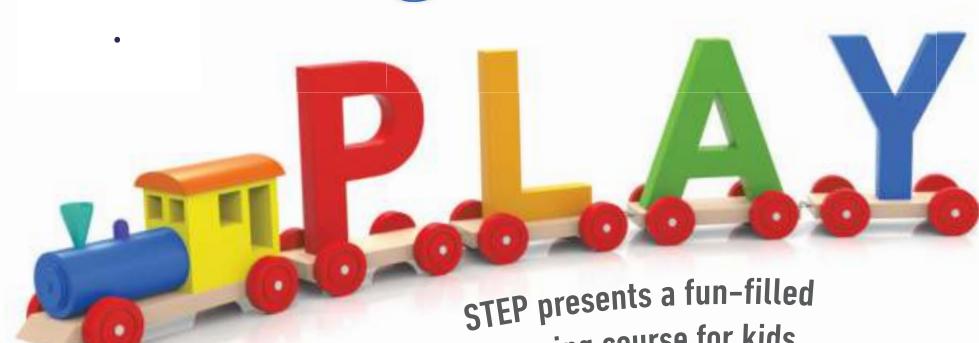
Even if the 1978 Pakistan tour ended his tenure at the

highest level while simultaneously heralding the arrival of India's talismanic all-rounder Kapil Dev, Prasanna stayed relevant. Contributing in the nets and bouncing ideas, he played a key role in the backroom as the Indian team manager when the squad under Sunil Gavaskar



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Assam police's social media posts get whacky

In a recent tweet, the force sees the funny side of a spelling gaffe in seizure list

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

Policing is serious business in Assam, even if it occasionally means seizing a 'cartoon' of 'bears'.

The police in eastern Assam's Dibrugarh district on Wednesday seized a huge cache of liquor and tobacco products in the Naohalia area of Duliajan. The constables were patted for a job well done amid COVID-19 duties.

Senior officers could not help but smile when they received a seizure list mentioning the types of liquor and packets of chewing tobacco with misspelt brand names. Many of the items were in cases or cartons with an ex-



Social media humour is making the lockdown bearable. ■ ISTOCKPHOTO

tra 'o', a common mistake in these parts.

Nos. 4 and 5 on the list were 'bear' of strong and mild types.

"...Before you point out serial no 4, we are doubly sure the officer on duty meant fermented barley and not the four-legged omnivore," the Dibrugarh police tweeted on its handle late on Wednesday.

"Winnie the Pooh, Baloo

[of *The Jungle Book*], Yogi and other cartoon bears were certainly not on the minds of the policemen on duty. They meant 'beer' and 'carton' when they wrote 'bear' and 'cartoon', a district police officer said.

On Wednesday, the Kamrup district police added a bit of wit to their social media announcement about catching three drug-peddlers with heroin after a 15-minute chase at Changsari near Guwahati.

"You may be a top racer in NFS Most Wanted. But when it comes to drugs, you can't

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