



Centre trying to divide people in the name of CAA, says Pinarayi
page 8



Congress demands court-monitored probe into Delhi riots
page 13



'We expect Yes Bank moratorium to be lifted by weekend'
page 15



Mary Kom and Amit Panghal book berths to Tokyo Olympics
page 18

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NEARBY



Two Hizbul militants killed in Shopian

SRINAGAR
Two Hizbul Mujahideen militants were killed in an operation by security forces in Shopian on Monday. The militants were identified as Shabir Ahmed Malik from Kulgam and Aamir Ahmed Dar from Anantnag.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 12

Two killed, one hurt in hospital wall collapse

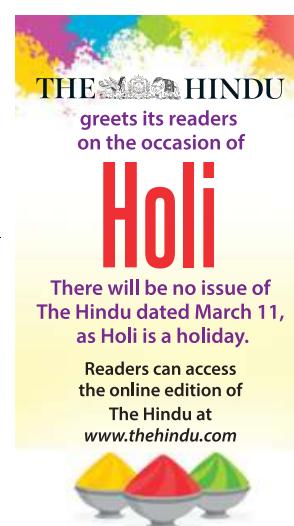
NEW DELHI
Two men were killed and one injured when a boundary wall of an eye hospital collapsed in Lajpat Nagar on Monday, the police said. The deceased were identified as Amit (30) and Gagan Wadhwa (45). The injured person, Sharafat Ali (35), has been undergoing treatment at AIIMS.

CITY ▶ PAGE 4

Brother of ex-AAP councillor arrested

NEW DELHI
Delhi Police on Monday arrested the brother of suspended AAP councillor Tahir Hussain in connection with violence in north-east Delhi. Shah Alam was arrested by Delhi Police Crime Branch.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3



Release Omar, others: Oppn.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Opposition on Monday called for the immediate release of all political detainees in Kashmir, especially Farooq Abdullah, Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti, who have been detained for seven months on the "flimsiest of grounds".

In a joint statement, the leaders termed these detentions a blatant violation of the fundamental rights guaranteed by the Constitution.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 12

Worst single-day fall for Sensex

The benchmark index loses a whopping 1,941.67 points to close at 35,634.95

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

The benchmark Sensex on Monday witnessed its biggest single day fall in absolute terms amid a global sell off in equities. This came on the back of rising concerns over the economic impact of the COVID-19 outbreak and a plunge in crude prices that further fuelled worries about a global slowdown.

The Sensex lost a whopping 1,941.67 points, or 5.17%, to close at 35,634.95 – a 52-week low for the barometer – with all its 30 constituents ending the day with huge losses.

The Sensex has now lost 6,639 points, or nearly 16%, from its record intra-day high of 42,273.87 that was touched on January 20.

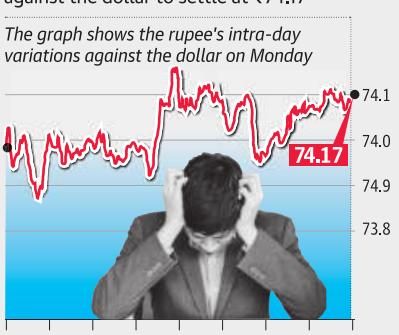
The broader Nifty plunged 538 points, or 4.90%, to close at 10,451.45.

The India VIX index, considered a barometer of near-

Monday meltdown

Global stock markets plunged on Monday following a record stump in oil prices, dealing a blow to investors who were already under pressure over the coronavirus outbreak. A look at how rupee, Sensex and other markets reacted

A new high | Rupee slipped past the ₹74 mark against the dollar to settle at ₹74.17



World markets' fall in % terms

Index	Change (%)
Euro Stoxx 50, Eurozone	-8.33%
Dax, Germany	-7.89%
FTSE 100, U.K.	-7.88%
S&P 500, U.S.	-7.29%
BSE Sensex, India	-5.17%
Nikkei 225, Tokyo	-5.07%
Hang Seng, Hong Kong	-4.23%
CSI 300, Shanghai	-4.23%
Kospi, S. Korea	-4.19%

term volatility, jumped nearly 35% during intra-day trading to touch a new 52-week high of 34.4, before closing at 30.8 – 20.11% higher than Friday's close.

"The Indian markets followed the global market meltdown which was triggered by the rapidly spreading virus and a free fall in crude oil prices," said Siddhartha Khemka, head, Retail

Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

Global crude prices registered their biggest drop since the Gulf War in 1991. After falling to an intra-day low of around \$27 per barrel, crude was trading at around \$33 a barrel level – nearly 20% lower than previous day's price – around 8 p.m.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

Special offering



Religious fervour: Women cooking Pongala, a sweet dish, during the annual festival at the Attukal Bhagavathy temple in Thiruvananthapuram on Monday. Despite concerns over fresh cases of COVID-19 in Kerala, lakhs of devotees took part in the women-only event. ■ S. MAHINSHA

Rupee sinks below 74 mark

The rupee breached the 74 to a dollar mark on Monday. The currency opened weak at 74.04 and went on to touch the day's low of 74.19 a dollar. It finally closed the day at 74.17 a dollar. ■ PAGE 15

Midnight drama as pro-Scindia MLAs go incommunicado

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BHOPAL / BENGALURU

Sixteen Cabinet Ministers of the Congress government in Madhya Pradesh resigned on Monday night and requested the Chief Minister to reconstruct the Cabinet.

The Ministers, including Home Minister Bala Bachchan, Finance Minister Tarun Bhambhani and Law Minister P.C. Sharma, tendered their resignations to Mr. Nath at a late night Cabinet meeting. The development capped a day of hectic political activity with Mr. Nath forced to rush back to Bhopal from Delhi after 17 Con-



Twist in the tale: Minister Umang Singh after submitting his resignation in Bhopal on Monday night. ■ A.M. FARUQUI

were the meeting was held, Sajjan Singh Verma, who resigned as the Public Works and Environment Minister, said, "Given the vicious atmosphere created by a special flight later in the day. Speaking to reporters outside Mr. Nath's residence,

where the meeting was held, Sajjan Singh Verma, who resigned as the Public Works and Environment Minister, said, "Given the vicious atmosphere created by a special flight later in the day. Speaking to reporters outside Mr. Nath's residence,

want to thwart the efforts of the BJP to topple the government."

Stating that the Congress had called a meeting of party MLAs at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, Mr. Verma said the government was stable. "We have been given the mandate for five years by people. We will complete our term."

Umang Singh, who resigned as Forest Minister said, "The government is safe. New Ministers will be appointed."

Mr. Nath had reached Delhi on Sunday to brief Congress president Sonia Gandhi on the political turmoil in the State and discuss an imminent expansion of the Cabinet.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

HC orders removal of hoardings

Court slams 'violation of Constitution' by U.P. govt., police

OMAR RASHID

LUCKNOW

Terming it an "unwarranted interference in privacy" of people and a violation of Article 21 of the Constitution, the Allahabad High Court on Monday directed the Lucknow administration to remove forthwith the controversial 'name and shame' hoardings identifying persons arrested during protests last December against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

The High Court also asked the Lucknow District Magis-

trate to submit a compliance report by March 16 and directed the State government not to place such hoardings, containing personal data of individuals, on roads without legal approval.

"In entirety, we are having no doubt that the action of the State... is nothing but an unwarranted interference in privacy of people," a Division Bench of Chief Justice Govind Mathur and Justice Ramesh Sinha said.

The State police and the administration had put up several hoardings in Luck-

now revealing personal details of persons accused of violence during the anti-CAA protests, triggering fears among those named. As many as 57 persons have been identified in the hoardings. The hoardings however, continued to be up even hours after the court order.

The court had taken suo motu cognisance of the police action and pulled up the government in a rare Sunday sitting.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

SEE ALSO ▶ PAGE 5

'PFI man' held for Delhi riots

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Delhi Police on Monday arrested a 33-year-old man suspected to be a member of the Popular Front of India (PFI) for allegedly hatching a conspiracy to incite riots in north-east Delhi.

The accused has been identified as Mohd. Danish, a resident of the Trilokpuri area in the Capital, police said. A city court sent him to four-day police custody.

The PFI, an alleged radical group, has been accused of funding anti-CAA protests, a charge it has denied.

Three men picked up by police in midnight swoop, families clueless

Kin claim they were guarding temple as part of post-riots vigil

HEMAMI BHANDARI

NEW DELHI

Around 1 p.m. on Monday, families and relatives of three residents of Nehru Vihar were waiting outside the Dayalpur police station to meet them and know why they had been held. "Ye to goonda raj hai (This is rule of lawlessness)," said a relative of the arrested men.

Speaking to reporters outside Mr. Nath's residence,



Families of the three arrested men outside the Dayalpur police station on Monday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

wrong. "It's never one-sided in a riot," he said.

Shoaib said that the three held by police have families and kids to take care of. While Usman runs a clothing business, Habib is a tailor and Yameen runs a retail clothing outlet. "They have nothing to do with these riots. Our area was not even affected by violence. If they remain in jail and all of us spend time in police and court proceedings, who'll earn money for the families?" said Shoaib, adding that the families wouldn't have backed the three had they been actually involved in rioting. Around 2.30 p.m., policemen emerged from the station holding the trio. When asked, they said the three have been arrested and are being taken to be produced before the court.

Efforts made to contact senior officers in North East district and Crime Branch proved futile.

MORE REPORTS ON ▶ PAGE 12

When PGs pick up the broom to become govt. servants

Highly educated persons among newly posted conservancy staff in Coimbatore

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

COIMBATORE

When 23-year-old K. Sangeetha picked up a broom to sweep Raja Street on Monday morning she was going through mixed emotions.

It was the first day of her job as a Coimbatore Corporation conservancy worker and she was not quite prepared for the task that awaited her. "I did not expect to sweep the road. Initially it was very difficult. I felt as if all eyes were on me. But I managed to pull through."

Despite holding a post-graduate qualification in microbiology, she took up

the appointment because she always wanted a government job.

"I convinced myself – let me take it, for life does not have to end with me being a conservancy worker. I'll use this as a stepping stone to find better avenues."

For 35-year-old N. Padmavathy too, Monday was the first day of work as a municipal conservancy worker. She also took up the assignment because it was a government job and the salary was better than that at her last employer.



ILLUSTRATION: DEEPAK HARICHANDAN

The conservancy workers on entry get a little more than ₹17,500 a month. They are eligible for annual increments and pension benefits.

The working hours were another reason for Ms. Padmavathy quitting her job as an accountant at a private firm near Town Hall.

"Here I'm happy that I can finish my work early in the evening to return home to my children," says the mother of two.

The women are among dozens of men and women with under-graduate and post-graduate qualifications who applied for and were appointed for conservancy work. The new staff include those from the Backward Classes and the Most Backward Classes.

R. Naveen, a civil engineering diploma holder,

says family circumstances forced him to take up the job. "I'm the breadwinner and support my mother and younger sister. That is why I left my job at a private company to take up this government job."

Welcoming the fact that qualified candidates and persons from outside the SC communities were taking up conservancy work, S. Selvakumar, member, State Level SC Welfare Committee, said it was a step towards ensuring social equality.

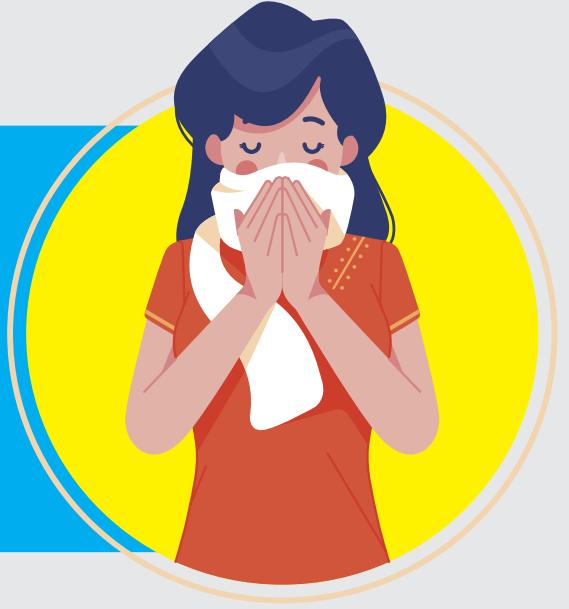
A senior Corporation official said the civic body followed the roster system in appointing qualified candidates but did not share details on the exact number of appointees with a college qualification.

Recounting Sunday night's events, Habib's nephew Azeem said that while they (Habib and others) were sitting, a police van came and suddenly picked him up. "Habib called Usman for help and when the latter intervened, they picked him up as well. Locals gathered and tried to argue with a police-

man pulled out a pistol. They all then fled," said Azeem.

No information
Families of the three then reached the police station but were asked to come at 8 a.m. on Monday, they said. "We reached here at 6 a.m.

NOVAL CORONAVIRUS (COVID-19) GENERAL ADVISORY FOR PUBLIC



The 2019 novel coronavirus (COVID-19) is a contagious virus that causes respiratory infection, can transfer from human to human.

SYMPTOMS

- FEVER
- DIFFICULTY IN BREATHING
- COUGHING
- TIGHTNESS OF CHEST
- RUNNING NOSE
- HEAD ACHE
- FEELING OF BEING UNWELL
- PNEUMONIA
- KIDNEY FAILURE

MODE OF TRANSMISSION

Human Coronavirus (COVID-19) most commonly spread from an infected person to other through:

- Coughing and sneezing
- Close personal contact, such as touching or shaking hand
- Touching an object or surface with the virus on it, then touching your mouth, nose, or eyes before washing your hands

HOW TO REDUCE RISK OF CORONAVIRUS INFECTION (COVID-19)

- Clean hand with soap and water or alcohol based hand rub
- Cover nose and mouth when coughing & sneezing with tissue or flexed elbow
- Avoid close contact & maintain 1 meter distance with anyone
- Isolation of persons traveling affected countries for atleast 14 days.

DO's

- Cover your nose and mouth with disposable tissue or handkerchief while coughing or sneezing
- Throw used tissues into closed bins immediately after use
- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water
- Avoid crowded places/big gatherings
- Person suffering from Influenza like illness must be confined at home
- Stay more than one meter distance from persons sick with flu
- Take adequate sleep and rest
- Drink plenty of water/liquids and eat nutritious food
- See a doctor if feel unwell (fever, difficulty breathing & cough). While visiting doctor, wear a mask/cloth to cover your mouth and nose.

DON'Ts

- Touching eyes, nose or mouth with unwashed hands
- Hugging, kissing and shaking hands while greeting
- Spitting in public places
- Taking medicines without consulting doctor
- Disposal of used napkin or tissue paper in open areas
- Touching surfaces usually used by public (Railing, door gates, etc)

Control Room
Numbers at State
and District level

State DGHS (HQ)	011-22307145, 22300012, 22300036
North	011-27708768
South	011-29531277

East	011-22050908, 22051234
West	011-25195529
North-West	011-25951182
South-West	011-25066674

South-East	011-26476410
North-East	011-22115289
New Delhi	011-23385743
Central	011-23270151
Shahdara	011-22111077

CELEBRATE SAFE HOLI!

- Avoid big gatherings
- Avoid close contact with others
- Maintain one meter distance
- Home quarantined should remain at home

24*7 Control Room has been established at DGHS (HQ), may be contacted for any query related to COVID-19 Ph: 011-22307145, 22300012, 22300036



Timings

DELHI

TUESDAY, MAR. 10	SET 18:27
RISE 06:36	SET 07:11
WEDNESDAY, MAR. 11	
RISE 06:35	SET 18:28
RISE 20:24	SET 07:51
THURSDAY, MAR. 12	
RISE 06:34	SET 18:28
RISE 21:32	SET 08:30

Delhi Weather

max min

Delhi City 25 12

Safdarjung 25 12

Palam 26 12

Delhi Palam Today

26°C A hazy morning lies ahead. Day will be cloudy and comfortable. There are chances of light rains.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow

23°C Fall in day temperatures is likely. A cloudy sky will prevail. Few spells of rain are likely.

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Air Quality of Delhi-NCR		
Delhi 123	Gurugram 81	
Ghaziabad 113	Faridabad 125	
Noida 102	Greater Noida 131	
■ 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		

Verifying information on outsiders' role: police

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A senior police officer on Monday said that Delhi Police is investigating the role of 'outsiders' in the violence that happened in north-east Delhi.

During investigation, the police came to know that people from outside Delhi were called in by both the communities for reinforcement.

"We are verifying the information that people from towns in Western U.P. arrived in the city during the violence and they were part of the mob that torched vehicles and killed people," said a police officer.

A team is working on the information and they have got names of several towns from where the mass movement happened. They are also using technical surveillance to get clue about 'outsiders'.

'Class 12 exam to begin from March 31 in riot-hit areas'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) on Monday announced schedule of Classes 10 and 12 examinations which were postponed in north-east Delhi in view of the recent violence.

"The exams in the area for Class 12 will begin on March 31 and conclude on April 14, while exams for Class 10 will begin on March 21 and conclude on March 30," a senior board official said.

The CBSE had postponed exams in the area till February 29. However, the exams were conducted as per original schedule from March 2 onwards as the board officials opined that any further delay in conducting exams will affect the students prospects in undergraduate admissions.

The Delhi government has maintained that 53 people were killed and over 200 injured in the violence.

DELHI TODAY**Exhibition:** "Color Play", a group exhibition of paintings by Meenaxi Sadalge, Dhvatai Singh and Sharad Tardé at Convention Centre Foyer, India Habitat Centre (IHC), 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.**Culture:** Akhil Bharat Sadhu Samajam presents discourse on Srimad Ramayanam by Sri Krishna Premi Swamigal at Sri Rajaram Mandir, Dasarath Puri, 7 p.m.(Mail your listings for this column at citeditor@thehindu.co.in)

Police picking up boys after asking their name'

Mustafabad residents claim that they haven't seen such an atmosphere prior to festival; families clueless about detainees

JATIN ANAND
NEW DELHI

An eerie calm pervaded the narrow bylanes of Mustafabad on the eve of Holi as those affected by the riots ambled down their paths to rehabilitation with gloom in their eyes and files containing details of their dead, missing or detained kin tucked beneath their arms.

Mirza Muzaffar Ali, who owns and operates locally popular Baba Juice Corner in the area, claimed he hadn't seen such an atmosphere, laden with apprehensions about "what it could bring" prior to the festival, in six decades.

Whisked boys

"In my 66 years, I have never seen an atmosphere like this. There is a lot of police deployment in the area, generally because of what happened and also because of Holi...People, especially young boys, are being picked up...residents like us are used to things like that around festivals but now it is happening on a much larger scale...in all my life I haven't seen or felt such fear and apprehension prior to Holi - not even when, and after, the Babri Masjid was demolished in 1992," Ali said.

Mustafabad Road leading towards Karawali Nagar for hours to get their hands on relief material ranging from

rations and clothes to stationery and footwear.

As small pyres for traditional Holika Dahan mate-

rialised at Bhagirathi Vihar across the road, residents alleged that four to five boys from each bylane on both



(Clockwise from top left) Security personnel keeping vigil in north-east Delhi on Monday; Asiya with her new bag which she got during distribution of relief material; Dilshad Ali, whose son is under arrest after a fortnight in detention. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA/SUHASINI HAIDAR/JATIN ANAND

sides of the street - but "mostly from just one community" - had been picked up by the police for their alleged involvement in the riots which claimed 53 lives across communities.

"Bas naam pochte hain aur utha late hain...Har gal se 4 se 5 ladke utha rakhe hain [They just ask your name and pick you up. Four to five boys have been picked up from each bylane]," alleged Sultan Mirza, a resident of Mustafabad.

"He and his colleague, Arshad, had gone to take part in a religious congregation near Karol Bagh on Monday morning and returned in the afternoon. When the violence was unfolding, my son and Arshad were in the shop. Their employer even showed the police CCTV footage to establish their innocence - but both of them were picked up," Ali claimed, adding that the police had "shown his arrest" from a different location.

"The time of day doesn't matter; the police just come and whisk the boys away whenever they want. A significant number of those detained for the riots are from here," claimed Ali Mehdi, another resident.

Families clueless

While the families of those placed under detention since February 24, according to residents, made rounds of police stations and the Karkardooma Courts complex here on Monday, some of them, such as Shahdab Alam's father Dilshad Ali, are waiting for the next court hearing to catch a glimpse of their kin.

The 27-year-old was detained from the Samrat Medical Store, the biggest and most popular among around two dozen such establishments in the area

where he has been employed for eight years, on February 24 and is now under arrest after a fortnight in detention "despite proof of non-involvement provided by his Hindu employer," Ali alleged.

"He and his colleague, Arshad, had gone to take part in a religious congregation near Karol Bagh on Monday morning and returned in the afternoon. When the violence was unfolding, my son and Arshad were in the shop. Their employer even showed the police CCTV footage to establish their innocence - but both of them were picked up," Ali claimed, adding that the police had "shown his arrest" from a different location.

"We are also talking to locals and requesting them to maintain normalcy in the area. We are taking adequate precautions to ensure no untoward incident takes place," a senior police officer said.

Flag marches were also conducted in south Delhi, where rumours of violence in the wake of the north-east Delhi riots created panic.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Atul Kumar Thakur said, "We conducted flag marches in areas of Malviya Nagar and Sangam Vihar to ensure no untoward incident takes place."

Similar flag marches will also be conducted in the evening in other areas of south district, he said.

We are probing Tahir's phone records: police

NDTV report claims suspended AAP councillor made 5 distress calls to police

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

TRANSCRIPT OF ONE CONVERSATION

On February 24 at 3.11 p.m., Tahir Hussain called on 112 for police assistance during riots. He spoke to a PCR operator seeking immediate help.

Mr. Hussain said, "I am Municipal Councillor Tahir Hussain speaking from Khajuri Khas near Chand Bagh culvert. Here hundreds of people have forcibly broken the gate and entered my house. There has been continuous stone pelting here for the last 3-4 hours."

The PCR operator replied, "We have already sent a PCR van to the area where stones are being pelted."

"Brother, nobody has reached here as of now. Many protesters have entered my house and are pelting stones from the terrace," Mr. Hussain said.

"Okay, The protesters have entered your house," replied the PCR operator.

"They are pelting stones from the terrace. Please send someone immediately in front of lane number 7," Mr. Hussain requested.

"I am sending police sir," the operator replied.

stones from his terrace. The second call he made was at 3.54 p.m. informing about the violence. The PCR operator disconnected the call promising to send a police team to his house.

NDTV reported that Mr. Hussain made the third call at 5.10 p.m. to PCR saying he had called several times but no police team had reached to rescue him. He again informed that a mob had entered his house and was pelting stones from his

terrace. He was "rescued" by the police later that evening.

On February 25 at 4 p.m., he made a call to Joint CP (Eastern Range) Alok Kumar informing him that stone pelting had again started in Chand Bagh near his house.

Mr. Kumar assured him of prompt action. He again called Dayalpur police station at 4.11 p.m. informing about stone pelting in the area. He claimed that he was not in

the area but getting reports of violence. The policeman on the line assured him of action, but said that they are finding it difficult to reach the location.

The details of call recording that Mr. Hussain made to the PCR were accessed by NDTV.

Police did a U-turn

During a press conference, Additional Commissioner of Police Ajit Kumar Singla claimed that after getting a distress call from Mr. Hussain on February 24, a police team went to his building in Chand Bagh. He refused to come out of the building without a police escort after which he was taken out by the police team. However, within a few minutes, the Delhi police refuted the claim of Mr. Singla and said that Mr. Hussain was in his house.

Mr. Hussain was arrested for allegedly murdering IB staffer Ankit Sharma and for his alleged involvement in the violence in Chand Bagh.

At the time of his arrest, his two mobile phones were found "missing".

Police kiosk at Idgah camp is of little help to us, say victims

Officers taking complaints of only those who didn't call police

HEMANI BHANDARI

NEW DELHI

At a relief camp in Mustafabad's Idgah ground, Delhi Police has set up a kiosk for victims to submit their complaints that comes under the jurisdiction of three police stations. However, the victims said that it was not helpful for all.

Mohammed Irshad (30), came to the kiosk to submit his complaint. His salon in Dayalpur's Nehru Vihar was looted on February 25 during the violence, he stated in his complaint. He had dialled '100' at the time of incident and received a reference number, but didn't get any help thereafter.

No police official contacted me after that. I came to this kiosk with my written complaint but they are saying that I should visit the police station," he said.

Police officials at the kiosk said that they are receiving

complaints of only those who did not call the police or submitted their complaints at the time of violence. "Complaints of those who had called to '100' are not being received because action has either been taken on them or will be taken," said an official.

Lack of coordination
"There should have been coordination between the officials sitting here and those in the police stations to keep track of our calls and

complaints. The kiosk is of little use to us because many of us had called the police on the day of violence," said Irshad.

The official at the kiosk said that the facility was set up on Saturday and they are receiving complaints on incidents pertaining to Dayalpur, Gokulpuri and Karawali Nagar Police Stations. "On an average, we receive about 25-30 complaints which are then taken to the respective police stations for further investigation," he said.

Police personnel interacting with victims at a relief camp in Mustafabad on Monday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA



Brother of ex-AAP councillor arrested

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police on Monday arrested the brother of suspended AAP councillor Tahir Hussain in connection with violence in north-east Delhi, officials said.

Shah Alam, brother of Tahir Hussain, was arrested by the Crime Branch wing of Delhi Police, they said. Three others have also been arrested for allegedly sheltering Alam.

Meanwhile, police said that they have arrested Arif and Abid Qureshi in connection with the murder of a 26-year old civil engineer Rahul Solanki. The deceased had left his office on Monday evening around 4.30 p.m. and before leaving he told his colleagues that everything would be fine. But after an hour, they were informed that he was shot dead.

MOMENTS OF PRIDE



Ms. Poonam Kumar Mendiratta appreciated the students.

The Science projects of Armit Modi, Kshitij Verma and Aahan Jha, students of The Manthan School, were selected for Inspire Awards first level. Armit Modi's project on Waste Management under Swachh Bharat Program was selected for State Level. The school also received the prestigious Top CBSE School Award for Individual Attention to Students in Education by India School Merit Award conducted by Education Today. The Principal, Dr. Kamal Khandelwal, Chairman, Maharishi University of Information and Technology, who is also a seasoned diplomat and a social activist, graced the event. Mr. Sundeep Talwar, CMO, The Akshaya Patra Foundation and Dr. Prabhat Kaushik, Director General, Zee Learning Ltd., were also present for the occasion. Director, Dr. Mrignaini and Principal, Seema Jerath addressed the gathering.

GOING BEYOND CURRICULUM

DLF Public School celebrated Recognition Day and Award Conferment Ceremony. The students performed various programmes. Dr. Kamal Khandelwal, Chairman, Maharishi University of Information and Technology, who is also a seasoned diplomat and a social activist, graced the event. Mr. Sundeep Talwar, CMO, The Akshaya Patra Foundation and Dr. Prabhat Kaushik, Director General, Zee Learning Ltd., were also present for the occasion. Director, Dr. Mrignaini and Principal, Seema Jerath addressed the gathering.

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Handphone: +91 98100 89457/Email: kapil.nagar@thehindu.co.in

IN BRIEF

Stay away from crowded places: Kejriwal

NEW DELHI
A day before Holi, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday asked people to avoid mass gatherings in the wake of COVID-19. "I will not celebrate Holi this year in the wake of COVID-19 outbreak and the riots that broke out in Delhi recently. I want to wish everyone 'Happy Holi'. I would like to appeal to all to stay away from crowded places. It is advisable to avoid personal touch. Metro, buses and hospitals will be disinfected daily," Mr. Kejriwal said.

AAP leader attacks Centre over Yes Bank crisis

NEW DELHI
AAP senior leader and MP Sanjay Singh on Monday attacked the BJP over the Yes Bank controversy and alleged that people who do not pay back huge loans donate money to the BJP and termed the party as "Bharatiya Jeb Katra Party". "They have divided the entire country with the Hindu-Muslim riots to keep the common man distracted and steal their hard-earned money," he said.

HC: avoid unnecessary overcrowding on court premises

Bar Association asked to display advisory issued by court on notice board and circulate it

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI
The Delhi High Court has issued an advisory asking lawyers and litigants to avoid "unnecessary overcrowding" of the court premises to prevent spread of COVID-19.

The circular issued by High Court Registrar (Gen-

COVID-19: pharmacists say fear among people has reduced

Availability of masks has increased and prices have also been reduced

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Talking about COVID-19, several pharmacists across the city said that the fear among people seemed to have reduced compared to last week. Awareness campaigns by the government helped reduce the panic they said, while adding that masks and sanitizers were back in the market once again.

Vipin Sharma of Star Medicos, located opposite to G.B. Pant Hospital, said, "The availability of mask has now increased and the prices have also been reduced. It is no longer as high as it was when the disease started spreading in the city. Several guidelines announced by the government and awareness campaigns on social media have helped curb the fear among people. They have begun to understand the issue."



People at a COVID-19 screening centre at RML Hospital in New Delhi on Monday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Echoing similar views about COVID-19 scare, Rakesh Kumar of Vinayak Medicos said that in some places were still seeing shortage of masks and sanitizers.

"The availability of N-95 masks and sanitizers are less in some areas. However, the panic that had initially gripped people have now reduced," Mr. Kumar said.

Hotels across the city were also taking precaution-

ary measures, the management said.

Julian Ayers, General Manager of Hyatt Regency Delhi, where one person was detected positive, said that protocols and guidelines from various health organisations, including the World Health Organization, were being adhered to.

"Specific measures are in place at Hyatt Regency, Delhi, that include screening of

general Administration) Ramesh Chand noted that the Delhi government had recently issued advisory on COVID-19.

It said that COVID-19 is caused by a contagious virus, which causes respiratory infection and can be transferred from human to human through air by

coughing, sneezing, personal contact such as touching or shaking hands, touching an object or surface with the virus on it and then touching the mouth, nose or eyes with unwashed hands.

"As per the said advisory, one should avoid going to crowded places. Therefore,

advocates, general public and litigants are requested to adhere to the guidelines/advisory issued by the government of the NCT of Delhi and avoid unnecessary overcrowding on the court premises," the High Court circular stated.

The High Court Registrar also asked the Delhi High

all employees upon arrival and departure, deep cleaning of restaurants and additional cleaning of public areas, restaurants, meeting spaces, guest rooms, spa, and fitness centres. Sanitizers and wet wipes are placed at all public areas and also in all guest rooms for usage," Mr. Ayers said.

Students living in hostels and paying guest (PG) accommodations also said that precautionary measures are being taken to monitor the spread of the virus.

"All students living in PGs have been asked to immediately report to authorities in case of any uneasiness or symptoms of COVID-19. The owners are also ensuring that the rooms are cleaned and disinfected regularly and the staff have been ordered accordingly," said Anisha, a postgraduate student of Delhi University.

Fliers put on masks, wash hands more to protect themselves

Many say they feel safer abroad than in India right now

AISHWARYA TRIPATHI

NEW DELHI

Passengers and airport staff at the Indira Gandhi International Airport here have been taking precautionary measures of wearing masks to protect themselves from COVID-19. Many people travelling to foreign countries said they feel safer in abroad than in India.

Students living in hostels and paying guest (PG) accommodations also said that precautionary measures are being taken to monitor the spread of the virus.

"All students living in PGs have been asked to immediately report to authorities in case of any uneasiness or symptoms of COVID-19. The owners are also ensuring that the rooms are cleaned and disinfected regularly and the staff have been ordered accordingly," said Anisha, a postgraduate student of Delhi University.



Passengers at the IGI Airport in Delhi on Monday. ■ V.V. KRISHNAN

taxi counter operators and janitors were seen wearing masks, adhering to the suggested guidelines by the government to prevent the spread of COVID-19. "We cannot stop working due to the COVID-19 scare," they explained.

A flight attendant working with the Indigo airline said that she preferred wearing masks in the flights these days to be safe. She said passengers washed hands more frequently these days and added that the fear among the fliers at times had been leading to a ruckus if one of the passengers was sick.

At the 'Arrivals', Anuvinda Sharma, pre-occupied with rubbing sanitiser on her palms, shared that she had come to India to attend her best friend's wedding. "It is going to be a huge gathering and I am scared now. I asked her if she could postpone the wedding," she said, adding that she might pair up a mask with her attire she chose to wear at the wedding.

Most of the security staff,

employed in Estonia, Ankit Tripathi, had returned to enjoy Holi at home this year. "This is one time of the year that I meet my friends and family. The celebrations are going to be restricted though," Mr. Tripathi who had "bought a portable sanitizer two years back" said. He had started using it only after a 12-hour-long flight takes off and showed that the bottle was empty.

An Australia-based technician, Herman, explained the importance to report back to work as his sanctioned leaves were lapsing. "It [COVID-19] was not this widespread when I had come here. I don't have a choice. I believe prevention is actually better than cure and have been using masks and sanitizers."

Parents travelling with their children admitted that it was being tough for them to ensure their children was not touching surfaces.

Shops selling Holi gears wear deserted look

Businesses in Kotla, Khanna Market and Ansal Plaza affected by COVID-19 scare

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A day before Holi, on Monday afternoon, shops had different colours and pichkaris on the display but one could hardly spot a customer. The COVID-19 scare has driven many to ditch celebrations and stay away from colours and gatherings.

Yogesh Kumar, who owns a makeshift shop in Kotla, said: "This has so far been the worst Holi, in terms of business, in the past 20 years. No one wants to play Holi following the outbreak of COVID-19," Mr. Kumar said. Traders from Kotla to Khanna Market in Jor Bagh and Ansal Plaza, a mall in south Delhi, were of the same view when asked about the sales this season.

While the shops selling colours, pichkaris and other Holi paraphernalia wore a deserted look, owners of many other businesses, including restaurants and garment shops, said the sales have been affected partially due to COVID-19 scare.

Mr. Yadav, who lives in Kotla, pointed at other traders who sell colours and



A couple wearing masks while shopping in New Delhi on Monday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

said that there were hardly any customers at their shops as well. "Expecting that the sales will go down this Holi, I had bought a stock of only ₹20,000 this time, which is half of what I had last year. By this time last year, we had sold half of our stock. I have hardly sold 10-15% of my stock this time," he said.

"People come and ask 'Have these products come from China?'. Look at the street. Do you feel like it's Holi? Hope things will improve by the evening," 50-year-old Kawaljeet Singh, who has been selling colours among other things for the past five years in

around 5-6 p.m. Today, no one wants to come to the market," he said.

At Ansals Plaza, Perwej Ahmad (38), who has been working at the underground parking at gate number 3 for since a year, said that their business has been also affected. "Earlier, 125-150 cars entered through the gate every day, but now it has gone down to merely 50-80. Our business has also been affected after the outbreak [of COVID-19]," he said.

Sudhan Shankar (34), assistant manager of Kofuku, a Japanese-theme restaurant said their sales have gone down by 20-30%. "Most of our customers are from Japan or Korea and many of them are not turning up."

Manoj Kumar, 47, owner of Harryz white shirts, said that he gets his stock from China and that the sales had gone down. "A major chunk of our customers are advocates. We had exhibitions in Saket and Dwarka courts last Holi and we sell goods worth ₹5-6 lakh such exhibitions. We did not hold any exhibition this year after the outbreak of COVID-19."

Khanna Market, said.

"I had got the stock about 25 days ago and at that time, the fear of COVID-19 had not gripped people like it has now. Only one or two customers are showing up in an hour and now I will have to pack a lot of the products and store for next year. My money will be stuck," Mr. Singh said.

Amar Sharma (36), who runs three cloth stores in Khanna Market, pointed towards his empty shop and said: "Last year, a day before the Holi, there were so many customers that we did not have a minute to spare and we would eat lunch

Dismissal of ex-Army man will discipline others: HC

He was held guilty of wife's dowry death

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has dismissed the plea of a man who was thrown out of the Army after he was held guilty of dowry death of his wife by repeatedly demanding a scooter from his in-laws.

A Bench of Justice Vipin Sanghi and Justice Sanjeev Narula noted that, "the object of punishing delinquent employee is not merely to inflict the punishment on the employee, but also to discipline others in the organisation".

Challenge decision

Former Nb Risaldar Dilbag Singh had moved the High Court challenging a decision passed by the Armed Forces Tribunal, Principal Bench in Delhi, which rejected his plea against his dismissal from service.

The Bench noted that Singh has been convicted of a very serious and heinous offence of causing dowry death of his wife within seven years of marriage.

"The sum and substance of evidence against the petitioner [Singh] was that he forced his wife to consume a poisonous substance in the presence of other witnesses," the Bench noted.

Singh enrolled in the Army in April 1994. His wife expired on March 20, 1998, due to consumption of a poisonous substance.

A case of dowry death was registered against him while he was serving as a Sepoy.

The trial court also found that the petitioner was cruel towards his wife,

since he did not take her with him to his place of posting," the Bench said.

If in a case like the present also, this court were to interfere and convert the dismissal into discharge, there would hardly be any other case which

would justify the punishment of dismissal from service," the High Court remarked while rejecting any relief to Singh.

Two killed, one injured in hospital wall collapse

Incident happened in Lajpat Nagar

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Two men were killed and another was injured after a boundary wall of an eye hospital collapsed in southeast Delhi's Lajpat Nagar on Monday, the police said.

The deceased were identified as Amit (30) and Ganjan Wadhwa (45) they said. The injured person, identified as Sharafat Ali (35), from JJ Colony, Tigris, was taken to AIIMS, where he is under treatment, the police said.

The police said that a beat staff, who was patrolling the area, was informed that the boundary wall of Model Eye Hospital in Lajpat Nagar II had collapsed.

The police found that the wall of the hospital collapsed towards the service lane and two-three workers and the son of the owner of a nearby house had sustained severe injuries.

A case has been registered in this regard, he added.



The boundary wall of an eye hospital collapsed.

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Deputy Commissioner of Police (South-East) R.P. Meena said that the boundary wall was around 12 feet in height. The lower portion of the wall – about 6 feet – was built using mud some 25-30 years ago and the upper portion was built with cement around 8-10 years ago. The lower portion of the wall could not bear the pressure and the wall collapsed.

The police found that the wall of the hospital collapsed towards the service lane and two-three workers and the son of the owner of a nearby house had sustained severe injuries.

Mother, daughter found dead in house; one held

'Accused is an acquaintance of woman'

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The bodies of a mother-daughter duo with stab injuries were found at their house in east Delhi's New Ashok Nagar area on Monday morning, the police said. The accused has been apprehended.

The deceased have been identified as 45-year-old Sumita and her daughter Samrita (25), they said.

Sumita was working in an event management company while her daughter was undergoing training in hospitality sector. The police were informed about the incident by the neighbours.

Neighbours told the police that Sumita's husband had passed away 20 years ago.

On scanning the CCTV footage, two men were seen entering and exiting the house.

While escaping, the two men fled in Samrita's car, the officer said. The accused appears to be an acquaintance of the woman, the officer added.

A case of murder has been registered in connection with the matter. "We came across various clues by analysing the CCTV footages and local intelligence. We coordinated with the Rajasthan police and with their help, we have apprehended the accused," said Jasmeet Singh, Deputy Commissioner of Police (East).

The accused has been identified as Vinay alias Vikrant Nagar, he said, adding that the bus in which the accused was escaping to Jaipur was intercepted by the team of SP Jaipur Rural Shankar Dutt, he said.

During interrogation, Vinay, who is an aspiring model, revealed that he was angry with Samrita as she was ignoring him and had started talking to another man.

He tried to call her several times but she did not respond.

NORTH EASTERN RAILWAY

E-Tender Notice

TENDER NOTICE NO. N235-62TeleTender-01-2020

By Chief Network Manager/FOIS/N.E. Railway/Gorakhpur for and on behalf of President of India invites E-Tender for the following works:

No. & Description of work: N235-62TeleTender-01-2020 Name of work:

Description of Works: Transportation of Loco Pilot's and Guards' Line Boxes

round the clock, from Train Engines/Brake vans of Mail Express, Passenger and Goods trains from the various Platforms and yards to Box Rooms/diesel lobby and specified places vice-versa at BC/BRY, KSJ, FBD, MRT/MTJ, PBE, KPV, LKU, KGM, TPU, SZP & RMR Railway station for the period of two years. Estimated Value of work (Rs.): ₹ 93,61,788.65, Earnest Money: (Rs.): ₹ 1,87,300/-, Cost of Tender forms (Rs.): ₹ 5,000/-, Period of Work: 15.0

'HC's message to govt.: U.P. will be run by rule of law'

Those named on Lucknow hoardings welcome order but say the damage is done and threat perception persists

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

Those featuring on the hoardings put up in Lucknow by the Uttar Pradesh government welcomed the Allahabad High Court's direction to get them removed but fear the episode exposing their identities in the public domain could yet jeopardise their safety. The government was yet to remove the hoardings till Monday evening or respond to the court's observations terming it an unwanted interference in the privacy of people.

'Damage beyond repair'
"The damage is done, which is beyond repair and long-term," said Sadaf Jafar, Congress member and cultural activist, who is among the 57 persons whose names, photo-



It looks like the Yogi [Adityanath] sarkar is bent on getting us lynched by a mob. I would approach court against the officers who put up the "illegal" hoardings

S.R. DARAPURI
Retired IPS officer and activist

tographs and residential address have been laid out on the banners across the city. They are accused, and most of them are out on bail, in the violence that took place in the State capital last December during the protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

The banners ask them to pay for the damage to public and private property during the arson and vandalism within a stipulated time or have their properties seized by the district administration. The total damage listed in the hoardings amount to ₹1.55 crore.

"The HC order sends a very strong message across to the government that the State will be run by the rule of law and not by their authoritarianism," said Ms. Jafar.

Ms. Jafar feels that by putting up the banners, the State government "arraigned not just us but also our families". "It puts their lives in danger.

a single mother of two. "However, it does not bring permanent respite because the danger still lurks," she said. "Now we are in the inboxes and galleries (of people's mobile phones)," she said.

Theatre personality Deepak Kabir echoed similar concerns, arguing that the photos of the banners would stay forever in a digital world. He, however, felt the court ruling amounted to a "moral victory". "This moral victory is very important for us at this stage because the way

people and government build perception, the court has prevented that from happening on the basis of the Constitution," he said.

Robin Verma, who teaches management at a local college, said the hoardings caused a big harm to his reputation and raised security concerns for his family. One such hoarding was put up right outside gate no. 1 of Lucknow University, he said.

"I stopped using public transport for security reasons [even since the hoardings went up]," Mr. Verma said.

He also wondered how even removing the hoardings now could repair the damage done to his image.

Septuagenarian retired IPS officer S.R. Darapuri, who also features on the

hoardings, said that by putting up them up in an "illegal way", the BJP government had encroached upon his privacy, creating dangers for his life, property and freedom.

"It looks like the Yogi [Adityanath] sarkar is bent on getting us lynched by a mob," he said.

Mr. Darapuri said he would approach court against the officers who put up the "illegal" hoardings.

'Big threat to life'

He had earlier written to the Home Secretary, Director General of Police, Commissioner and District Magistrate informing them their act had created a big threat to his life and the government would be responsible for any untoward incident or loss faced by him.

Akalis making a fool of themselves: CM

'Misleading people on jobs scenario'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

A day after the Shiromani Akali Dal asked the ruling Congress government to come out clean on the issue of "unemployment", Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Monday hit back, saying the very premise of their criticism of his government's employment generation programme was based on flawed data.



Punjab CM Amarinder Singh

Amarinder.

The Chief Minister also pointed out that it had been mentioned in the survey itself by the Government of India that no comparison could be made with previous data on unemployment on the basis of this survey "as the data sources are not strictly comparable". Clearly, then, there could be no comparison of the data of 2015-16 with the data of 2017-18, he added.

'Creating troubles'
"These clear and categorical facts notwithstanding, the Akalis continue to rave and rant about the dismal employment scenario in Punjab, like wayward children who were hell-bent on creating trouble for others, mindless of the consequences," Capt. Amarinder said.

"Instead of apologizing for pushing the State into such a terrible mess, with employment at an all-time low under their pathetic anti-people policies during their decade-long rule, the Akalis are trying to spread misinformation to further their petty political interests," he said.

Protest against CAA in Ludhiana

'Stop attacks on people protesting against violation of rights'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Several members of over a dozen outfits – including farmers, labourers and students – on Monday staged a protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), the National Register of Citizens (NRC) and the National Population Register (NPR) in Punjab's Ludhiana.

'Slogans against Centre'

At a gathering in the local grain market, the participants raised slogans against the BJP-led government at the Centre and demanded repealing of the CAA.

The leaders of different

outfits demanded that all forms of attacks against the people protesting against violations of civil rights be stopped, their security be guaranteed, false cases against democratic protesters be cancelled, arrested people and intellectuals be released and strict action be taken against officers involved in attacks in JNU and Jamia Millia University. They also condemned the recent communal violence in Delhi.

Those who addressed the gathering included Joginder Singh Ugrahan, the president of BKU (Ekta-Ugrahan); Manjeet Singh Dhaner, senior vice president of

Religious fervour



Devotees perform rituals during Holika Dahan on the eve of Holi in Patna. ■ RANJEET KUMAR

Anti-CAA woman protester dies in Lucknow

Farida died of cardiac arrest after getting drenched in rain and falling ill

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
LUCKNOW

A woman resident of old Lucknow, aged above 50, died of cardiac arrest after getting drenched in rain and falling ill while participating in an anti-CAA protest in the city's Ghantaghar area, the office-bearer of an outfit spearheading the stir said on Monday.

Rihai Manch's general secretary Rajiv Yadav said Farida died on Saturday.

"Farida got drenched in rains and was admitted to a city hospital after she fell ill. Despite her family asking her not to participate in the protest, till she gets medically fit,



Women protesting against the CAA in Lucknow. ■ FILE PHOTO: PTI

Farida wanted to participate in the protest again," he said.

Last month too, a 20-year-old woman, Tayyaba, had died under similar circumstances, said Mr. Yadav.

He also accused the police of not allowing protesters to put up a tent at the protest venue.

When contacted, Lucknow's Joint Commissioner of Police (Law and Order) Naheen Arora said, "The protesters were not allowed to put up tents because they had not sought any permission for holding dharna."

No permission

"We never gave any permission for the protest or dharna, which is in gross violation of the prohibitory orders imposed in the city under Section 144 of the CrPC," he said.

IIT-Ropar setting up application hub

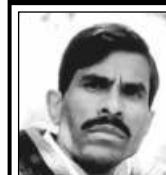
Research into stubble, water issues

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Amid the stubble burning menace and looming water crisis, the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Punjab's Ropar is setting up a sectoral application hub to bring solutions for stubble management, water quality improvement and mapping of hazardous substances in water.

Being in the agrarian State, a major mandate of IIT Ropar has been to take up research aimed at addressing water-agriculture related issues and to support this vi-

SEARCH FOR MISSING



General public is hereby informed that a Male namely Laxman Singh So/Nar Singh, R/o T-355, 2nd Floor, Near Budh Mandir, Baljeet Nagar, Delhi, Age : 42 yrs., Height : 5'4", Complexion : Wheatish, Face : Long, Built : Thin, Wearing : Cream Colour Shirt and Black Colour Pant, has been missing / kidnapped since

01.01.2020 at 03:09 pm from his house. In this regard a case DD. No. 75-A dated 03.01.2020 has been lodged at PS. Patel Nagar, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by local Police to trace out the missing / kidnapped Male but no clue has come to light so far.

If anyone have any information about this missing / kidnapped Male please inform undersigned.

Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>, Email: cic@cbi.gov.in, Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641, Fax: 011-24368639

SHO DP/40/CD/2020.

PS. Patel Nagar, Delhi

Ph.: 011-25872637, 25874034, 8750874034

Restrictions on input tax credit challenged in HC

'Unreasonable, arbitrary conditions'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

Restrictions imposed on the input tax credit, used by business establishments to reduce their tax liability, on inward supplies under the Central Goods and Services Tax Act have been challenged in the Rajasthan High Court with the plea that the amendment made to a rule to introduce the provision had imposed "unreasonable and arbitrary" conditions.

A Division Bench headed by Chief Justice Indrajit Manohar at the High Court's principal seat in Jodhpur has issued notices to the Union government on the writ petition.

The petitioner firm contended that the right to avail of credit could not be taken away by imposing the restrictions contained in the provisions of Section 43A of the Act, which was yet to be notified, through rules.

The amended Rule 36 (4) of the CGST Rules, 2017, provides that the input tax credit can be availed only when a supplier of goods updates and uploads online the details of supplies through each of the bills. The petitioner firm, Ravi Infrabuild, argued that the restrictions

had been put on the basis of the acts of supplier, on which the recipient had no control.

Prior to the amendment, the tax regime provided that the difference would account for output tax liability. Petitioner's counsel Vinay Kothari said that after the amendment, even a bona fide buyer had to chase the seller to upload and update his bills, failing which he would face the brunt.

Rights violated

"The credit towards input has been capped to 20%, and now 10%, by way of the impugned amendment. Evidently, the amendment is totally arbitrary and violates constitutional and fundamental rights of business establishments," Mr. Kothari said.

Section 43A of the CGST Act was introduced into the GST framework to simplify the procedures for filing of returns and availing the input tax credit. The impugned rule was amended even before Section 43A was notified, which the petitioner said had violated Article 14 (equality before law) of the Constitution.

Punjab Government led by Chief Minister Capt. Amarinder Singh greets people on the auspicious occasion of Hola Mohalla The Symbol of Martial Spirit

CM YK

NORTH 5

IAF plane to bring Indians from Iran

The C-17 Globemaster aircraft has a specialist medical team on board

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

India sent an IAF transport aircraft with a specialist medical team on board to Iran on Monday night to bring back Indians stranded in the coronavirus-hit nation.

According to the Indian Air Force, its C-17 Globemaster military aircraft left for Iran from the Hindon airbase at 8.30 p.m.

"An IAF C-17 'Globemaster' aircraft got airborne today at 2030 hrs from Hindon airbase to airlift Indian citizens from Iran. The aircraft has a specialist medical team on board. Indian citizens will be flown to Hindon where medical facilities including quarantine have been set up," the IAF tweeted.

The C-17 aircraft "will return to India in the early hours tomorrow [on Tuesday] morning. IAF is ensuring the required operational and medical measures are in place for an expeditious and safe return of Indian citizens from Iran," it said in another tweet.

About 2,000 Indians are living in Iran, a country that has witnessed increasing numbers of COVID-19 cases in the last few days.

According to latest reports, 237 people have died of the virus infection in Iran

while the number of positive cases stands at around 7,000.

It is the second such evacuation by the C-17 Globemaster in the last two weeks.

On February 27, 76 Indians and 36 foreign nationals were brought back from the Chinese city of Wuhan by the aircraft of the Indian Air Force.

The aircraft had also taken a consignment of medical supplies to China to help it deal with the crisis.

The C-17 Globemaster is the largest military aircraft in the Indian Air Force's inventory.

The plane can carry large combat equipment, troops and humanitarian aid across long distances in all weather conditions.

Three days ago, a Mahan airline plane brought swab samples of 300 Indians from Iran to India.

The Union Health Ministry was initially considering setting up a laboratory in Iran to test Indians living in the country for coronavirus. However, the plan was shelved due to logistical issues.

According to reports, the number of cases of novel coronavirus worldwide has crossed 1,10,000 in 100 countries and territories with more than 3,800 dead.



Rescue mission: The C-17 Globemaster transport aircraft being loaded with facilities to quarantine the passengers before it took off from Hindon airbase. ■ ANI

Jaishankar makes surprise J&K visit

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

Minister of External Affairs S. Jaishankar arrived in J&K on a surprise visit coinciding with the return of 41 locals stranded in COVID-19-hit Iran and China on Monday.

Mr. Jaishankar met here the parents and families of students stranded in Iran.

"I assured them [the students] that our embassy in Iran is monitoring their welfare. We are committed to facilitating their early return to India," he said.

Over 500 Jammu & Kashmir residents, especially students, are believed to be

trapped in Iran after India decided to stop flights to the country following the outbreak.

Scores of students have been uploading SOS calls online since then.

Traders assured

He also met the representatives of the bodies associated with hotels, tours, travels and houseboat owners.

"I heard a clear message from them that they are ready for the forthcoming tourist season," he said.

"I promised them that the government would strongly support tourism promotion

efforts, domestically and internationally," he added.

The Minister used the trip to make a first-hand assessment of the situation in Kashmir.

It was his first extensive tour since the Centre had revoked J&K's Special Status on August 5 last year.

He also visited the volatile Baramulla in north Kashmir and met locals and e-inaugurated a number of projects.

He also made a surprise visit to the Srinagar passport office, run by the MEA.

His visit was kept under the wraps till he arrived in J&K's summer capital.

Bollywood faces the heat over COVID-19

NAMRATA JOSHI
MUMBAI

Baaghi 3, at ₹17.5 crore net, may have logged in the highest opening day collections for a Hindi film in 2020 so far, but it is also the first to face the adverse effect of the COVID-19 outbreak.

According to the box office forecast of trade magazine *Super Cinema*, the opening day range for director Ahmed Khan's Tiger Shroff starrer had been projected at a much higher range – between ₹26 and ₹28 crore – than what has been delivered.

"Weekend was better but the trends have been lower than expected, the collections have been affected nationwide," says Amul Mohan, editor of the magazine.

Shailesh Kapoor, CEO of media consulting firm Ormax Media, concurs.

Ormax's opening day projections for the film starring Shraddha Kapoor (in picture) had also been substantially

higher at ₹21 crore. Its projections for the forthcoming *Suryavanshi* stand at a whopping ₹30.8 crore.

However, in a virus-less market, the

same figure for the Rohit Shetty biggie starring Akshay Kumar, would have been even higher at about ₹36 crore, says Mr. Kapoor.

He predicts a 15-20% impact on the big ticket Hindi films in the coming months and an even bigger one on the medium and small films.

Delhi-based exhibitor Sanjay Mehta, however, thinks there are several factors eating into the earnings of *Baaghi 3* and other recent Bollywood films.

"The low pre-holi period and board exams have come in the way and *Baaghi* is a predominantly youth-oriented franchisee," he says. The law and order, violence and protests have affected business in Delhi; the late evening and night shows are running empty in Uttr Pradesh.

According to Mr. Mehta, things will come to a head if things go out of control in the weeks ahead and if the government decides to shut down theatres temporarily.

According to Mr. Kapoor's the possible changes in release calendar are more worrying and will throw things in a tizzy.

Prepare quarantine facilities, CAPFs told

NEW DELHI
The Government of India has directed the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) to prepare quarantine facilities with a bed capacity to admit over 5,400 people to deal with cases of coronavirus across the country, officials said on Monday. These forces have also been asked to create 75 isolation wards as part of preparations to combat possible large-scale outbreak of the virus. PTI

Qatar bans entry of people from 14 countries

MUMBAI
Qatar has banned the entry of travellers from 14 countries, including India, to prevent the spread of the COVID-19. In a statement Qatar Airways said: "Under the direction of government authorities of the State of Qatar, entry to Qatar is temporarily suspended for all those travelling from Bangladesh, China, Egypt, India, Iran, Iraq, Lebanon, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Syria and Thailand." PTI

400 placed under quarantine in Jammu

Srinagar
Around 400 people have been put under surveillance in Jammu after a 63-year-old woman tested positive for COVID-19 on Monday. Earlier, the J&K administration termed two patients as "viral heavy-load cases". "The woman's test has come positive. She has a travel history to Iran. We await the final report of another patient," said an official.

Fall in percentage of school education funds for SC, STs'

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ
NEW DELHI

After several years of rising trends, the Centre has reduced the percentage allocation of funds for education of schoolchildren from SC and ST communities as well as for the north-eastern region in the coming year. A parliamentary panel expressed concern that any shortage of funds for these marginalised communities

could be critical, especially given that more than one in five SC and ST students drops out of school at the secondary level.

For at least three years, the amounts allocated to these groups have been on the rise in comparison to total allocations for the department. However, the percentage allotted to these communities dipped in 2020-21.

Out of a total ₹59,845 crore allotted to the Department of School Education and Literacy, 17.16% went to the Scheduled Castes Sub Plan (SCSP) in comparison to 18.14% the previous year. For the tribal sub-plan, the allocation was 9.8% in comparison to 10.3% the previous year, while the North Eastern Region (NER) received 8.7% in comparison to 9.2% the previous year.

Madhya Pradesh has challenged the exclusion of 13 districts from a map submitted by APEDA

MOHAMED IMRANULLAH S.
CHENNAI

The State of Madhya Pradesh and the Madhya Shetra Basmati Growers Association have lost two separate cases filed by them in the Madras High Court in 2016 challenging the exclusion of 13 districts in the State from a map submitted by the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) seeking Geographical Indication tag

for basmati rice grown in the Indo Gangetic Plain.

Justices R. Subbiah and C. Saravanan dismissed both writ petitions on the primary ground of maintainability after stating that the Geographical Indications Registry (GIR) had already issued GI tag certificates to APEDA by accepting its claim that basmati rice was grown only in the States of Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi and Uttarakhand apart

from 26 districts in Uttar Pradesh besides Jammu as well as Kathua.

The judges pointed out that after the filing of the present petitions in 2016, challenging an order passed by the Intellectual Property Appellate Board (IPAB) in Chennai, the GIR had passed an order on March 15, 2018 accepting APEDA's application.

Since two more writ petitions had been filed in 2018 challenging the grant of GI

Court. The issue dates back to November 2008 when APEDA, a statutory body, filed an application before an Assistant Registrar of Geographical Indications in Chennai seeking GI tag for basmati rice.

In 2010, Madhya Pradesh opposed APEDA's application on the ground that the application excluded 13 districts including Morena, Bhind, Gwalior, Sheopur, Danta, Shivpuri and Guna.

CPCB notifies contaminated sites

With 27 spots, West Bengal tops list

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

There are 128 sites in India contaminated by toxic and hazardous substances, according to a March update by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB). West Bengal led the list with 27 sites followed by Odisha at 23. Including those, there are 324 sites that may be contaminated, with 196 still awaiting an investigation and confirmation.

The Union Environment Ministry has been monitoring – and has begun to commission clean-up jobs – at sites known to be contaminated.

Twenty sites in 6 States have seen agencies prepare a detailed project reports, or a plan of action, to clean up sites. Such action follows

orders by the National Green Tribunal (NGT). There are four such sites in Kerala (Eloor-Edayar), Odisha (Ganjam, Orichem) Tamil Nadu (Ranipet), Uttar Pradesh (Rania, IPL and Deva Road), West Bengal (Nibrav village), Madhya Pradesh (Ratlam).

These incidents include oil contamination due to leakage of underground oil pipelines of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited in Tamil Nadu, pesticide and heavy metal contamination in creeks at Eloor, Kerala, chromium contamination at Rania, improperly disposed electronic waste lying on the banks of river Ramganga, Moradabad and mercury contamination of the soil at Kodaikanal, Tamil Nadu, and Ganjam, Odisha.

Convict's death sentence commuted over mental state

Man killed three children aged between eight and four after his wife eloped

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has commuted the death sentence of a man who murdered three children aged between eight and four, concluding that he was suffering from "extreme mental disturbance" at the time of the "abominable crime".

A three-judge Bench of Justices U.U. Lalit, Indira Banerjee and M.R. Shah said

the convict was motivated by revenge. He was unable to bear the blow of his wife's elopement with the children's uncle.

"It is true that a larger number of criminals go unpunished, thereby increasing criminals in society and law losing its deterrent effect... It is true that the court must respond to the cry of society and settle what would be the deterrent pun-

ishment for an abominable crime... Sometimes it is stated that only rights of criminals are kept in mind and the victims are forgotten," Justice Shah, who wrote the 68-page judgment for the Bench, acknowledged.

However, Justice Shah said death penalty was a rarest of rare punishment. While awarding death, the courts must strike a balance between the mitigating and

aggravating factors, which depend on the facts and circumstances of each particular case. In this case, the mental state of the convict, Manoj Suryavanshi, trumped over the aggravating factor that his crime was an "abominable" one.

However, the top court, sentencing him to life imprisonment, said he would not be eligible for remission for the next 25 years.

30 acquitted in transistor blasts case

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Over three decades after 69 people were killed and 127 injured in a series of transistor bomb blasts across north India, a Delhi court has acquitted 30 of the 49 accused owing to 'defective, lopsided, unfair' and 'faulty' investigation.

Additional sessions judge Sandeep Yadav said the investigation suffered from various lacunae. He also said that the accused could not be convicted in the 35-year-old case on the basis of evidence collected during such faulty investigation.

भारतीय विमानपत्रन प्राधिकरण
AIRPORTS AUTHORITY OF INDIA

E-TENDER NOTICE

Tender ID: 2020_AAI_45221_1
E-Tender duly filled in and digitally signed are hereby invited for granting License for "Tour Operator cum Hotel reservation counter at Domestic Arrival Terminal at Chennai Airport" for a period of Three (03)years with Minimum Reserve License Fee (MRLF) of ₹ 3,33,500/- (Rupees Three Lakhs Thirty Three Thousand Five Hundred only) per month with Annual Compound Escalation plus all applicable taxes and Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) of ₹ 2,50,000/-.

The tenders are to be filled online and technical documents are to be scanned and submitted through e-tender only. Any changes in the Tender schedule, corrigendum etc. shall be available on the website and will not be published in newspapers.

The last date of e-tender download - 27.03.2020 upto 1530 hrs, uploading 27.03.2020 upto 1530 hrs. Opening of Technical bid through e-tender - 30.03.2020 at 1530 hrs and opening of Financial bid through e-tender 08.04.2020 upto 1530 hrs. For further details, please visit AAI website www.aai.aero / portal address <https://tenders.aai.aero/> or contact the office of JT. GM (Commercial), Airports Authority of India, 2nd Floor, Operational Offices, Chennai Airport, Chennai - 600 027, Contact No.: 044-22560528/4239/4613.

STATE INDUSTRIES PROMOTION CORPORATION OF TAMILNADU LIMITED
19-A, RUKMANI LAKSHMIPATHY ROAD, EGMORE, CHENNAI - 600 008, CIN U74999TN1971SGC005967

Tender Notice N.I.T./No.45/CW/DO/T.No.65/2019-20, Dt.06.03.2020

For and on behalf of State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu Limited, sealed tenders are invited under "Two Cover System" for the following work from Class-I State Level Contractors registered in State/Central or Quasi Government Organisations having experience in similar nature of works. Tenders will be received upto 3.00 PM on 10.04.2020 and the same will be opened on the same day at 3.30 PM.

Name of Work Approx. value of work EMD
Providing Street light arrangements to the internal roads and high mast light arrangements, construction of AO Block building and compound wall at SIPCOT Industrial Growth Centre, Gangalkondan in Tirunelveli District.

The tender Schedule can be Downloaded at free of cost from the website [www.tenders.tn.gov.in](http://tenders.tn.gov.in) and www.sipcot.in

DIPR/1264/TENDER/2020 SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, SIPCOT, CHENNAI-8

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

L.R.no.TUFIDCO/AMRUT/1055/AM (M)/2019 Date: 10-03-20



Oil's rout

The fall in prices may bring cheer, but India will have to deal with a global slowdown

Global markets, already teetering from the impact of the coronavirus, received a jolt over the weekend as Saudi Arabia cut oil prices and declared its intention to increase output well beyond what the oil market can absorb currently. The Saudi reaction followed the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) cartel and Russia, the largest non-OPEC producer, failing to reach an agreement to deepen existing production cuts to cope with the falling demand. Oil prices crashed overnight by almost a third to \$31 a barrel consequent to the kingdom slashing prices and announcing its intent to increase output. The oil market is now set to witness the rare conjunction of a demand and a supply shock which is bad news for prices. Fears of a fall in demand following the outbreak of COVID-19 had already depressed oil prices in the last couple of weeks. China, a major importer, has cut its imports by a third from Saudi Arabia, its biggest supplier. The possibility of the market being flooded with excess production from Saudi Arabia and Russia leading to a supply shock, therefore, comes at a most inopportune time. There is still a large downside to prices from current levels especially if Russia joins the battle with Saudi Arabia and decides to hike its own output. Analysts are already talking of a floor of \$20 a barrel.

While a fall in prices is good news for major consumers such as India and China which depend on imports for a major part of their oil needs, it may be bad news for the big oil companies and the smaller shale oil players who are highly leveraged. A collapse of these shale oil producers may set off defaults in the bond markets, setting off its own non-virtuous spiral starting with the U.S. markets. With stock and bond markets already in turmoil, the price war now set off in oil is only going to make the markets more volatile and murkier. For India though, the sharp dip in oil prices is good news, for now. This will reduce the oil import bill at a time when merchandise exports are likely to suffer due to the freeze in the developed economies. This will keep the current account deficit balanced. The fall in fuel prices will also drag down headline inflation giving the Reserve Bank of India elbow room to cut rates. But the oil price fall may be bad news for the Centre's disinvestment programme as the sale of Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) could run into headwinds. Big oil companies, which are widely expected to bid for BPCL, may either shy away from it or their bids may be much lower than expected as the company's valuation may drop. In such an eventuality, it is quite possible that the government may step in to grab a slice of the windfall from falling prices, through higher excise duties to compensate for the loss from disinvestment proceeds. Any such decision is unlikely to go down well with India's consumer middle class.

Women power

India must broaden its base in women's cricket to challenge the likes of Australia

India's campaign in the ICC Women's T20 World Cup may have ended on a disappointing note but it was not without positives. The crushing 85-run loss to Australia in Sunday's final did highlight a few weaknesses: the batting came undone in a high-pressure chase, while the fielding and the running between wickets were mostly pedestrian. But Harmanpreet Kaur's unit became the first Indian women's team to make it to the T20 World Cup final, a fine achievement in itself. That it secured a place in the title decider following a rained-out semifinal against England should not be held against it. India was undefeated in the group phase, something England did not manage and ultimately paid the price for. The emergence of the cherubic 16-year-old batter Shafali Verma was the biggest plus. Barely six months into her international career, Verma carried India's batting almost single-handedly and thrilled one and all with her expansive stroke play. It was a pity that the form did not rub off on her team mates. But to lose to this Australian team is no shame. The nation's status as a cricketing powerhouse, especially in the shortest format of the game, needed no fresh proof. But the fact that Australia has captured all but one of the last six T20 World Cups should settle that debate.

The symbolism of Sunday's spectacle, though, went way beyond the result. Everything about the setting at the Melbourne Cricket Ground seemed just about right. Played on International Women's Day, it saw Australia, a pioneering country in women's sport, meet India, a driving force of world cricket. The legendary tennis player and women's equality crusader Billie Jean King was in the stands, as a near-capacity crowd – 86,174 to be precise – cheered the players on while a country of more than a billion were glued to their television sets. The attendance was the highest for any women's sporting event in Australia and it proved that a standalone women's competition can be a resounding success if marketed and executed well. It was best captured in the words of Alyssa Healy, the player of the final, who said: "You couldn't have wiped the smile off my face, even if we had lost this game." It is this energy that India needs to harness. India's run to the 2017 ICC Women's Cricket World Cup final had generated significant interest leading to a number of girls taking up the sport. Now, with the buzz at an accentuated state, it is imperative for the BCCI to carry out structural reforms at the lower levels to broaden the base. The Women's T20 Challenge, first held in 2018 as a one-off match, has now grown into a small tournament. But a bottom-up approach is a must to ensure a firmer footing for the women's game.

The cost of a yes to a bank rescue act

The Yes Bank plan is risky and there is little doubt that the State Bank of India is acting at the government's bidding



C.P. CHANDRASEKHAR

The revival package announced by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to rescue insolvent Yes Bank smacks of desperation. Having placed a moratorium on the bank's activities and capping withdrawals by depositors at ₹50,000, the government has called upon the State Bank of India (SBI), to lead the rescue. The SBI, which has its own share of problems to resolve, has responded with alacrity. Even before undertaking due diligence, SBI Chairman Rajnish Kumar has announced that his bank is willing to outlay as much as ₹10,000 crore to recapitalise ailing Yes Bank and restore it to health. There is little doubt that the SBI is merely acting at the government's bidding.

The SBI 'lifeline'

It is telling that the RBI, which has drafted the "Yes Bank Ltd Reconstruction Scheme, 2020", has made the SBI the anchor investor in Yes Bank equity, paying a premium of at least ₹8 on a share with face value of ₹2, and purchasing as many shares as needed to acquire a 49% stake. Simultaneously, the authorised capital of Yes Bank is to be raised from ₹800 crore to ₹5,000 crore. So, to start with, the SBI would be investing ₹2,450 crore to become the dominant stakeholder. But that is only the beginning. In his statement to reporters, declaring ownership of the RBI's plan, Mr. Kumar said that he

has set his bank an investment boundary of ₹10,000 crore, with the amount actually invested depending on how much money is needed to keep Yes Bank afloat. His assumption is that Yes Bank would need about ₹20,000 crore, and at the valuation of ₹10 a share, that would require an investment of ₹9,800 crore from the SBI for it to keep its stake at 49%.

This is a big ask of the SBI by the government, which clearly believes there is too much at stake. There are depositors big and small involved who were attracted by the higher interest rate offered by private banks like Yes Bank and who would lose hugely if Yes Bank is allowed to collapse. That would, besides making the government unpopular, most likely set off a chain of withdrawals from other private banks as well as some weaker public banks, with the contagion posing a systemic threat. Fearing that outcome, the Finance Minister and the Chief Economic Adviser have been straining their vocal cords to persuade depositors that their money is safe and that they should not be misled by rumours to the contrary.

Possible economic reaction

Moreover, firms and agents dependent on Yes Bank for credit to keep them in business may find their operations disrupted and new credit lines difficult to find. That could lead to their defaulting on debt they owe other creditors. There would also be adverse spin-off effects on investors in bonds and instruments issued by Yes Bank, triggering turmoil in other parts of the financial system. Not surprisingly, Mr. Kumar justifies the SBI's action on the grounds that Yes Bank cannot be allowed to

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO



fail since that "would have consequences for the Indian economy". That danger arises because the intervention has been much delayed. There have been reports of governance failures, accounting irregularities and balance sheet weaknesses at Yes Bank for more than two years now. It is because of the delay that escalated intervention is unavoidable.

The main planks

But is the SBI's intervention likely to succeed? The RBI's restructuring plan seems to be based on three principles. The first is that the government is not expected to directly invest in Yes Bank, perhaps because that would overburden its already strained finances, weakened further by a spate of recent tax concessions. The second is that Yes Bank is not to be merged with the SBI, but become a standalone subsidiary, equity in which could be sold on a later date if that proves feasible and the SBI so desires. Third, investors other than the SBI must play an important role in the revival of Yes Bank, since the equity of the bank is expected to rise from ₹800 crore to anywhere between ₹5,000 crore and ₹20,000 crore, with the SBI holding only 49% of the total. So the SBI's role is not limited to immediately infusing capital into the damaged bank but also involves building investor confidence in the

future of the bank through its dominant presence. Mr. Kumar claims that more than 20 potential investors have approached the SBI to join in the resuscitation effort.

Confidence is crucial, because in the absence of investor support the success of the restructuring exercise is not guaranteed. In fact, it is not clear as yet whether even ₹20,000 crore is enough to restore Yes Bank to health. What emerges from the available evidence is that Yes Bank had ramped up its lending in recent years, with gross advances doubling from little less than ₹1 lakh crore at end of financial year 2015-16, to around ₹205,000 crore (or more than double) at the end of 2017-18 and about ₹245,000 crore at the end of 2018-19. According to reports, the bank's exposure to bankrupt or heavily indebted corporate groups such as Dewan Housing Finance Corporation Ltd. (DHFL), Reliance Anil Dhirubhai Ambani Group (ADAG), Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services Limited (IL&FS) and Essel, besides the now stressed Vodafone, is substantial. This suggests that in search of high returns, the bank was engaged in risky leveraged lending or lending to already heavily indebted targets. This could make the asking sum to restore health much larger than initially estimated.

The RBI has implicitly provided for this possibility in its restructuring plan. It has announced that additional tier I bonds (ATI bonds) issued by Yes, totalling close to ₹11,000 crore, "shall stand written down permanently, in full, with effect from the appointed date". ATI bonds offer investors a higher return because of the higher risk associated with them, including the possibility of being written down

when a bank's equity base is under threat. But investors, who bought into these bonds because of a thirst for higher yields are likely to approach the courts, hampering the restructuring process. Overall, given uncertainties of this kind and the gloomy economic climate, investors may not be willing to outlay large sums on equity of a shaky bank.

The approach and flaws

Meanwhile, narrow explanations are on offer to explain the crisis. Investigations into the dealings of Yes Bank co-founder Rana Kapoor point to *quid pro quo* payments to family-controlled shell companies in return for large loans to entities such as DHFL, which were already stressed. But there is more to the crisis than just corruption. The government has been promoting a strategy in which growth is driven by a credit splurge, and large loans to shaky corporates are condoned or even encouraged, in the hope that they would drive investment. To that end bankers were offered a free run or even encouraged to do the wrong thing. This did raise investment levels, but very often in projects that were financially unviable. Such an environment also provided fertile ground for rogue bankers and felonious borrowers, resulting in large non-performing assets that must be written off. As of now, the SBI is providing the finances, but if the RBI's scheme does not work and that investment is not recovered, the SBI's stakeholders – the government and tax payers – must finally foot the bill.

C.P. Chandrasekhar is former Professor at the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

A new voice in a crowded space

Instead of chasing electoral glory, the Bhim Army would do well to bring about social change and Dalit empowerment



OMAR RASHID

Having sprung into the lime-light with its confrontationist ways of activism, the Bhim Army, a Dalit outfit based in western Uttar Pradesh, has decided to plunge into formal politics. The contours of its plan are not yet clear, but the outfit is expected to make an official announcement at a rally on March 15. Some leaders who were formerly with the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) are also billed to join the Bhim Army's political formation.

An alternative voice

With an already packed Opposition field in U.P., and with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) dominating the political landscape, the Bhim Army would serve itself well to not harbour unrealistic ambitions. However, what's undeniable is that its activism coincides with the failure of the mainstream parties – in particular, the BSP – in espousing the Dalit cause in the last few years.

BSP chief Mayawati's appeasement of upper castes, reluctance to take up cases of Dalit atrocities, and alleged dilution of the reservation policy have all left the educated Dalit youth frustrated. In recent times, the biggest shortcomings of

the BSP have been Ms. Mayawati's obsolete communication methods and reluctance in re-organising her party in sync with the changing aspirations of the youth. Unlike other parties, the BSP does not have a student or youth wing and its over-reliance on the personality and caste credentials of its leader has led to a stagnation of the larger Bahujan movement (of Other Backward Classes and Dalits) started by her mentor, Kanshi Ram.

Following the 2014 general election, in which the BSP won no seats and the BJP emerged with a brute majority, it was natural that Dalit politics would see a churn. In 2017, Bhim Army leader Chandrashekhar Azad, a lawyer by education, was propelled into the spotlight as a local Dalit hero during the Dalit-Thakur clashes in Saharanpur. With the Bhim Army not shying away from taking on the dominant castes, a new voice claiming to fight for the dignity and security of Dalits emerged.

With its limited means, the outfit has no doubt caught the imagination of the Dalit youth. It has provided them with an alternative voice and mobilised them to fight for their constitutional rights on the streets. Mr. Azad's confrontational approach and masculine flamboyance stand in contrast to the calculated and now restrained approach of Ms. Mayawati. Her decreasing public appearances and disconnect from ground conditions are stark today in the face of a sustained outreach by the RSS-BJP among Dalits, as well as the

unrelenting phenomenon of caste-based violence, exploitation and subjugation. With the BSP's electoral fortunes steadily declining since 2012 and Ms. Mayawati promoting her dynasty as the second line of leadership, a voice for an alternative was bound to emerge sooner or later.

Not a direct contender

But beyond the romanticism associated with Mr. Azad, does the Bhim Army have enough substance and depth to grow as a mainstream political voice, let alone transform itself into a political party to be taken seriously?

Time and again, Ms. Mayawati has revealed her insecurity about the Bhim Army by labelling it as a BJP proxy that is out to mislead Dalits and cut into her vote base to help her opponents. This insecurity is rooted in the fact that the Bhim Army's support base and the BSP's support base overlap. In real terms, this means that the Bhim Army would rely heavily on the support of the Jatavs, who are also the BSP's core, to grow.

Beyond this similarity, however, it would be over-ambitious to pitch

Mr. Azad as a direct political alternative to Ms. Mayawati, at least at this stage. Despite the BSP's downslide and limitations, Ms. Mayawati still commands relevance in U.P. politics, more so among members of her community. The 2022 Assembly election offers her a chance to redeem her performance. Besides, with many Dalit leaders from the BSP already shifting to the Samajwadi Party, SP president Akhilesh Yadav would also likely project himself as the best bet for their interests in 2022.

Dalit thinkers in U.P. are divided over the Bhim Army's growth. While some welcome it as a parallel socio-political force that could work for the political empowerment of Dalits, others are more critical of the outfit's aggressive approach and believe that competing with Ms. Mayawati would lead to further fragmentation of the Dalit voice, and possibly vote. But what's common between these two groups is that they don't pitch Mr. Azad as a serious electoral entity at this stage, his appeal notwithstanding. Therefore, a realistic goal for the Bhim Army would be to fill in the social vacuum left by the BSP without a hasty entry into the electoral game.

Challenges and constraints

The Bhim Army has many challenges and constraints. First, it does not have enough muscle to weather likely administrative action from the Yogi Adityanath government (Mr. Azad was jailed for a year under the National Security

Act by the U.P. government for allegedly inciting violence). Second, it lacks a proper structure, resources, a pan-U.P. presence, and a solid network. This is its third challenge. The Bhim Army started out flaunting its caste identity through 'The Great Chamar' signboards. However, in the long run, this confrontational style maybe unsustainable or even counterproductive. Fourth, in the last few years, Ms. Mayawati has struggled to fill the gap between the Jatavs and the non-Jatav Dalits, deepened and exploited by the BJP through its clever caste engineering, promotion of caste icons, distribution of positions, and the appeal of Hindutva nationalism. The same burden would have to be borne by Mr. Azad.

So far, the Bhim Army has raised its voice over stray incidents of atrocities and organised some dharnas. It lacks a clear ideological plank and the intellectual guidance that the BSP enjoys. Rather than chasing short-term electoral glory in 2022 and running the risk of being consumed by mainstream parties, it would do well to set itself long-term goals of social change and empowerment of the Dalits, and draw linkages between the OBC and the SC communities. Its presence on the ground could play a small role in acting as a counterforce to the steady saffronisation of Dalit communities, especially in western U.P., a communally sensitive area.

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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.

Running Parliament

The fact that the government does not want to have an immediate debate in Parliament on the Delhi violence shows how seriously the Constitution, upon which ruling party members too have taken oath, has been subjected to political assault. The strength of a government does not lie merely in its numbers, but in its responsibility and commitment to protect and preserve constitutional morality and through which constitutional culture has to be nurtured. The role of the Opposition, according to the codes prescribed, is to hold the government accountable to the people through a democratically managed process. Constructive criticism and placing restrictions on arbitrariness of the ruling party are important to preserve the

values of democracy and uphold national interest in all ways possible. It is so sad to see how both the Opposition and those in power have resorted to political tactics to divert the attention of the nation (Editorial, "House matters", March 9).

S.A. THAMEEMUL ANSARI,
Kyalpatnam, Tamil Nadu

Beyond the bailout
The State Bank of India's decision to bail out the beleaguered Yes Bank – otherwise a name with a positive connotation – by means of capital infusion could help hapless depositors. Knots of depositors queued up before branches in the aftermath of the bank's collapse have again showed up the fragility of the financial sector. Meanwhile, urgent action should be taken to recover dues from borrowers who dodge

paying their loans. The flip side is that there is a link between private commercial banks and crony capitalism. It has become a practice for companies and dummy companies to borrow loans and then plead 'stress' or 'bankruptcy' to explain defaults on repayment and force the government to step in to rescue and reconstruct the 'looted' banks. The government is left with no option but to save the private commercial banks 'from falling off the cliff' for the sake of the customers. The rightness of using public resources to bail out failed private banks and thereby placing an additional burden on the tax payer is debatable.

G. DAVID MILTON,
Maruthancode, Tamil Nadu

■ The swift arrest of Yes Bank co-founder Rana Kapoor was most unexpected despite the

wide-held perception that a bank would not financially run into trouble unless there is total mismanagement including financial embezzlement (Page 1, "After 15 hours of questioning, Rana Kapoor arrested by ED", March 9). There are numerous ways for top brass to make money unethically: the most common is to lend mind-boggling amounts to floundering or unestablished business enterprises out of which a substantial percentage is returned to the favouring officer by way of illegal gratification. Rana Kapoor's case is not the first of its kind. The case has damaged the banking sector, which could hurt the country's economy.

V. LAKSHMANAN,
Tirupur, Tamil Nadu

Adivasis as co-citizens
The denial of a rightful place to Adivasis culture, social

capital, community-centric governance systems and ecological sensitiveness is nothing but a case of democratic decline (Editorial page, "Having an ear to Adivasi ground", March 9). Mainstream society's perception of Adivasis as being "uncivilised" or "underdeveloped" is a grave mistake and renders injustice to these communities. SC/ST Commissioner B.D. Sharma once said that we need to empower the traditional governance systems of Adivasis rather than teaching democracy to them. C.U. Wills, a British

NAYAKARA VEERESA,
Bengaluru

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:
A report on CPI(M)'s decision against fielding Sitaram Yechury for Rajya Sabha (March 9, 2020) erroneously said the party only had one Lok Sabha member. It actually has two.

In the Editorial page article titled "No green shoots of a revival in sight as yet" (March

Beneath the 'Yes mess', some stark truths

There is a pattern in the failure of promoter-driven entities that needs to be halted by regulators



G.R. GOPINATH

The collapse of Yes Bank is the tale of a promoter who ran amok, treating a publicly listed bank as his private company. The sordid saga of the bank, launched in 2004, and its meteoric rise and fall, can be attributed to its founder and former Managing Director Rana Kapoor. The bank's story is similar to many recent stories of large listed companies that went bust, companies that were treated like family firms by their promoters, companies that were household names. But what is astonishing in the case of Yes Bank is that though there were laws and regulations to abide by, like the Companies Act and those stipulated by the Securities and Exchange Board of India, the bank had another layer of compliance requirements under the oversight of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), which has its own set of strict guidelines. It failed in spite of all these.

'Independent director' fallacy
There is a pattern in the failure of such promoter-run firms. Yes Bank is no exception. Listed companies are run by Boards. There is a CEO and Managing Director who runs the company but is answerable to the Board. But the Board of Directors is perfunctory. Therein lies the rub. The Board has 'independent directors' not just because it is a statutory requirement, but also because this adds prestige to the company and the promoter. Usually, retired top-level bureaucrats, former public sector heads, former diplomats and former Generals are given such positions, adding heft. This also opens, for the company and the promoter, doors to the government, where most licences and files are still cleared depending on who you know in the corridors of power. These independent directors rarely perform their function of questioning the decisions of the CEO, upholding probity, and protecting the minority shareholders' rights. Nor are they expected to do so by the promoter or the controlling shareholders who appoint them. Ho-



Rana Kapoor, founder of Yes Bank, in a 2010 photo. ■ SHASHI ASHWAL

wever, the moment these 'independent directors' raise concerns on any seeming impropriety, they are shown the door.

When instances emerge of family-controlled or promoter-run businesses dipping into the company coffers at will, to transfer funds to other companies where the promoters have stakes, even the minority institutional shareholders and the public who hold stock often do not complain – as long as they get attractive returns on their stock. On the contrary, the common shareholders treat such transgressions by the promoters approvingly – they consider the promoters 'smart' enough to have used some of these proceeds to have bottlenecks removed. All this is tacit understanding.

The public and institutions – be it private hedge funds and mutual funds, pension funds or government insurance companies who invest in stocks – instinctively identify the promoters who have these attributes and excel in bending the rules to their advantage. Such promoters are, in fact, looked up to as 'dashing entrepreneurs'. They are lionised by media houses and bestowed awards and honours in annual jamborees by Ministers from parties in power. Some of those diverted funds can also end up in the private pockets of promoters. All impropriety on the parts of these buccaneering promoters and CEOs is forgiven by the public, the banks and authorities most of the times.

This is as long as the loans are ostensibly paid, serviced or ever-

greened, statutory dues are cleared, the company prospers and share prices zoom. It is all hunky-dory and everyone is happy till the cookies crumble. And they often do. And then all hell breaks loose. People lose jobs, customers lose their deposits, vendors don't pay in turn, ancillary businesses downstream collapse or turn sick, livelihoods are destroyed, assets and machinery lay waste and the ripple effect also grinds other concomitant good businesses to a halt as the cycle of debtors and creditors freeze. The promoter is arrested, the Opposition trains its guns on the ruling party, and the ruling party counter attacks and says it inherited the problems from the Opposition which gave the licence or sanctioned the loans in the first place during its reign. And the media screams its head off.

Amidst all this din, the real malaise in the system that is causing these repetitive disasters, which will in all likelihood repeat itself, is overlooked. There's always a tendency and temptation to treat the symptoms instead of the disease.

The market regulators, the RBI and other statutory authorities must now introspect and ask themselves some hard questions. One, should promoters, many of whom have been in the past found responsible for misdemeanours and have compromised the interests of minority shareholders, continue to appoint independent directors? Here, it needs to be pointed out that it is the boards that are responsible to the shareholders and also ultimately accountable

to the statutory authorities. Can the directors be expected to remain truly 'independent' while serving at the discretion and pleasure of the promoter-CEO? Two, should the authorities overlook violations by promoters when they are successful and deified in the media because of their wealth and power? You cannot have one set of rules when companies have a bull run and another set when they are floundering.

Improving regulatory checks

Corporate transgressions happen in the West too but the regulators do not spare the promoter, however iconic they may be. Elon Musk was recently punished and asked to step down as Tesla Chairman by the U.S.'s Securities and Exchange Commission and penalised for issues related to insider trading. And many others, whether Bill Gates or Mark Zuckerberg, have often been reined in, investigated and heavily fined. Can India learn from these and improve regulatory checks and balances without snuffing out the 'animal spirits' of entrepreneurs?

And, finally, how do we get politicians and bureaucrats to stop influencing and interfering with lenders and banks? There has existed, for decades, a cozy nexus between such officials and big family-promoted businesses.

There are probably one or two more lessons to be learnt from this episode. One, regulators should not punish the company for the sins of its promoters. All efforts must be made to save companies and jobs, as is being attempted with Yes Bank. Two, similar rescue plans must be put in place with other companies, not just banks, because they are politically sensitive. The devastation to the economy and impact on individual lives and collateral damage is as severe when large companies like Kingfisher Airlines, Jet Airways, Dewan Housing Finance Corporation, or Reliance Communications fold up.

The failure of Yes Bank also has lessons for those at the helm of affairs. It is never late to bring about the needed reforms to strengthen the autonomy of various regulatory institutions. This needs to be carried out now.

Captain G.R. Gopinath is a writer and founder of Air Deccan

Misery in Haiti

While the long-suffering nation needs a democratic renewal, others must respect its sovereignty

GARIMELLA SUBRAMANIAM

Last week, Haiti's embattled President Jovenel Moise appointed Joseph Jouthe as Prime Minister, the third in less than a year, disregarding opposition calls and popular protests demanding his own resignation. A former agricultural entrepreneur, the President has refused to hold legislative elections, due last October. This sparked a violent unrest which has resulted in the deaths of at least 40 people. Mr. Moise is trying to alter the Constitution to enable any piece of legislation to become law if parliament does not approve or reject it within a stipulated time frame. This proposal has raised many eyebrows. His predecessor had delayed the 2015 parliamentary elections for some months. When the polls were finally conducted, they were riddled with serious irregularities.

A history of tragedies

The current political paralysis in Port-au-Prince predates the devastating 2010 earthquake that left about 2,00,000 people dead and displaced millions. The period after the three-decade-long dictatorship of François Duvalier and his son Jean-Claude Duvalier, which ended in 1986, was marked by military coups and short-lived democratic rule. Jean-Bertrand Aristide, a Roman Catholic priest with left-wing leanings, was deposed in 1991 and then in 2004.

The role of the UN Stabilisation Mission deployed in the following months, with heavy U.S. influence, has been derided by critics as championing "investor rights, not human rights." A survey in a 2006 edition of *The Lancet* found that 8,000 people were murdered and 35,000 women victimised in the greater Port-au-Prince area after the exit of Mr. Aristide. Crucially, the perpetrators were political actors and UN soldiers.

The UN Mission, which was scaled down in 2017, continues to attract controversy. Another study in December 2019, by a website called 'Conversation', disclosed further evidence of several peacekeepers sexually assaulting minor girls, leaving them destitute and with children. In the wake of the 2010 earthquake, many UN bases were accused of dis-

charging sewage into the tributary of Haiti's main river, triggering the outbreak of a cholera epidemic, which killed over 10,000 people.

The Mission was also criticised for standing by when a former president in 2011, René Preval, sought to impose a U.S.-backed successor. Mr. Moise's own election in 2016 was mired in controversy, when the turnout was only 18%. Within months of taking office, Mr. Moise fired the head of the Central Financial Intelligence Unit. That decision is said to have influenced the move to clear his own name in a money laundering case.

Outrage and betrayal

In October 2017, Haiti's Senate report found that billions of dollars were misappropriated from the Petrocaribe oil programme, intended for education and infrastructure development. This was corroborated last year by the country's court of auditors, which also implicated a firm managed by Mr. Moise. Part of a regional initiative by then Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez, Petrocaribe allowed Haiti to buy oil at 60% of the price and the remainder to be settled in deferred payments over 25 years.

The slump in global oil prices brought to an end the Petrocaribe programme, as also the government's fuel subsidies. The decision was eventually reversed, but only after the resignation of then Prime Minister Jean-Henry Ceant and violent protests across Haiti. The embezzlement of large sums has deepened the sense of outrage and betrayal among ordinary Haitians and loss of credibility among international aid agencies.

Haiti is Latin America's first country that won independence in 1804. But millions of dollars paid in French reparations over the next 100 years, U.S. occupation early last century, the Duvalier dictatorship, and continuing misrule have crippled the economy. More than half the population lives below the poverty line. One of the world's poorest nations, Haiti's people have borne the brunt of some of the worst natural disasters in recent times. While the country needs a democratic renewal, others must respect Haiti's sovereignty.

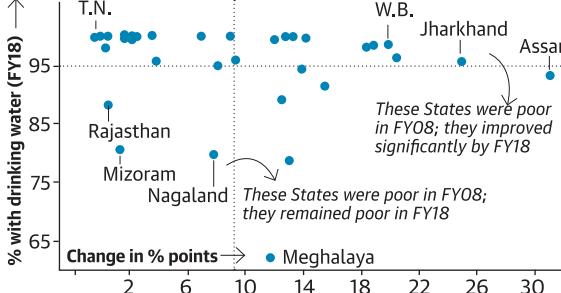
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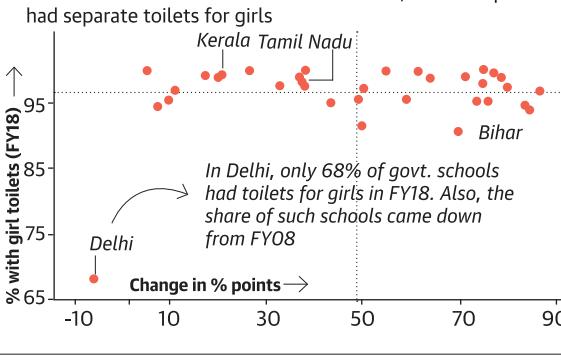
DATA POINT

The poor state of schools

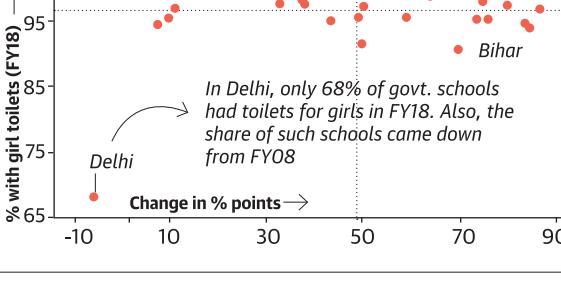
DRINKING WATER | The chart plots the share of govt. schools with drinking water facility as of FY18 against the change since FY08. For instance, 95% of schools in Jharkhand had the facility in FY18, a 25% points increase from FY08



GIRL'S TOILETS | The chart plots the % of govt. schools with toilets for girls as of FY18, against the change since FY08. More than 90% schools in all States/UTs except Delhi had separate toilets for girls

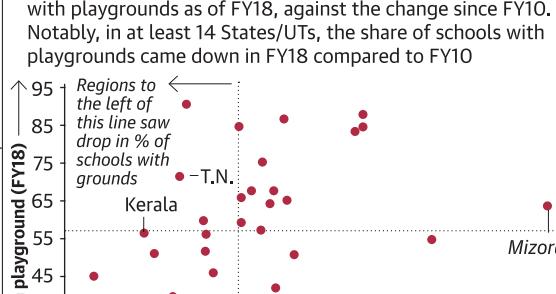


ELECTRICITY | The chart plots the share of govt. schools with electricity connection as of FY18, against the change since FY08. West Bengal saw the biggest improvement (88% schools electrified in FY18, 63% points more than FY09)

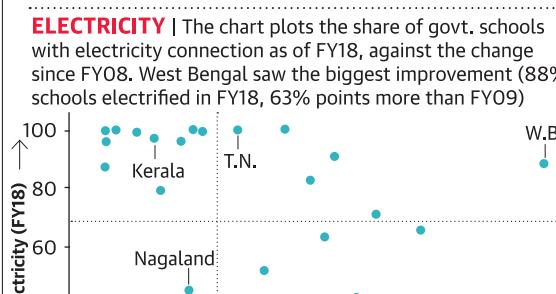


In many States, the share of schools with playgrounds came down in FY18 compared to FY10, according to data cited in a Parliamentary Standing Committee report. Many States, mostly located in the Northeast, continued to have a low proportion of schools with electricity connection. By Naresh Singaravelu & Suman Sen

PLAYGROUNDS | The chart plots the share of govt. schools with playgrounds as of FY18, against the change since FY10. Notably, in at least 14 States/UTs, the share of schools with playgrounds came down in FY18 compared to FY10



ELECTRICITY | The chart plots the share of govt. schools with electricity connection as of FY18, against the change since FY08. West Bengal saw the biggest improvement (88% schools electrified in FY18, 63% points more than FY09)



DATA SOURCE | Source: District Information System for Education

A health scheme sans clout

The PMJAY remains restricted in budget, capability and scope



SOHAM D. BHADURI

ing quality. For example, in the case of certain services, quality of care can be maintained by using physician assistants rather than doctors. These are not only pertinent to AB-PMJAY but would also be instrumental in achieving cost control. Further, the reimbursement mode (package rates) for healthcare providers under AB-PMJAY can allow for pushing such innovations through strategic design of payment components and the accompanying incentive-disincentive structures. The question arising then is: what stands in the way of mainstreaming such basic yet impactful innovations?

Large-scale adoption of innovations

While creating a smooth interface between healthcare technology start-ups and hospitals can aid in easy diffusion of solutions, it won't guarantee a widespread uptake. In the absence of substantial and streamlined incentives for providers, adoption of innovations would largely be erratic, piecemeal, and incomplete. Large-scale adoption will thus require sufficient demand generation. AB-PMJAY, however, remains restricted in this capability, especially with regard to such things as business-model innovations.

With this in view, the National Health Authority, the implementing body of AB-PMJAY, set up an "innovation unit" last year to promote indigenous cost-effective technologies. However, the current discourse on innovation in healthcare seems to be missing out on two fronts: first, the very nature of the proposed innovations; and, second, the piecemeal adoption being envisaged.

Range of solutions

While healthcare technology start-ups showcase an impressive range of solutions, not all of them can promise substantial system-level impact in terms of aspects like cost control. Second, a discourse on innovation revolving around items like telemedicine and drone technology disregards other simpler, fundamental, but highly impactful items, like operational processes and business models.

Multiple sporadic but successful precedents of such healthcare innovations already exist in India. These include, for example, thorough standardisation of hospital procedures. These are founded on evidence-based protocols that also permit other cost-saving innovations such as task-shifting, high-volume procedures, and reduction in complications. Standardisation of cataract surgeries in Aravind Eye Hospital is an example.

Reducing costs through robust procurement systems for supplies; cost minimising substitutions like using generic medicines; and work-profile alteration of existing human resources are other possible avenues of bringing innovation without adversely affecting

Soham D. Bhaduri is a Mumbai-based doctor and editor of the journal, 'The Indian Practitioner'

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO MARCH 10, 1970

Holiday in space by 1976

Men and women without special training will journey as passengers into space before the end of the present decade, the head of the United States Space programme forecast here [Key Biscayne]. Dr. Thomas Paine, chief of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration, said they would fly in a rocket plane that will zoom into space and then return to earth landing horizontally like an ordinary airplane. The rocket plane – or space shuttle – is only at the drawing-board stage, but Dr. Paine told a press conference on Saturday [March 7] he hoped it would be flying by 1976. Dr. Paine said the two-stage space shuttle would take off vertically, then at an altitude of 40 miles (60 kms) and at a speed of 7,000 miles per hour (1,200 k.p.h.) the upper stage would separate and carry men, equipment and supplies up to a permanent space station in earth orbit. The lower stage of the rocket plane would return to earth immediately, making a horizontal landing. The upper stage, after performing its mission in space, lasting maybe one or two weeks, will re-enter the earth's atmosphere and also land horizontally ready for reuse. Dr. Paine said.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MARCH 10, 1920.

Depressed classes in the presidency

The Government of Madras have just issued as a Press Communiqué Mr. G.F. Paddison's note, "as corrected by Home (Judicial)" Department, on the depressed classes in the presidency. Mr. Paddison groups these classes under three heads - the aboriginal and hill tribes, criminal tribes and untouchables. The aboriginal and hill tribes number 1,101,322. The problems connected with these tribes are problems of exploitation, sanitation and economic development calculated to develop the tribes without their being injuriously exploited by outside adventurers. Special laws protecting the tribes have been passed, schools are opened, and communications improved, malaria combat and tracts otherwise improved. Dealing with the criminal tribes, the communiqué reviews the working of criminal settlements and points to the lines by working along which satisfactory results may be obtained. It concludes with an exhaustive survey of the disabilities of the untouchables distributed throughout the presidency, the measures that Government have till now taken to ameliorate their economic condition and improve their social status.

CM YK

FROM PAGE ONE

Punjab, Karnataka, Jammu report first COVID-19 cases

"The patient is admitted at Government Medical College and Hospital in Amritsar and his condition is stable," he added.

"The patient has been kept in isolation after he was found to be symptomatic on his arrival at the International Airport in Amritsar," said Mr. Sidhu.

Five persons including a three-year-old child, suspected to have symptoms of COVID-19, were shifted to the isolation ward of the Government Medical College in Kollam. All of them fall into high-risk category as they belong to the house and neighbourhood of the family in Punalur visited by the COVID-19 positive persons from Pathanamthitta.

Jammu pilgrim
The J&K administration also confirmed the first positive case in the Union Territory. Officials said a 50-year-old woman, a resident of Kargil, had travelled to Iran on a pilgrimage. "She remains in an isolation ward in the Government Medical College, Jammu. Another patient's sample has been sent for re-test," said an official. The condition of the patient has

been termed "stable".

J&K government spokesman Rohit Kansal said, "The situation is under constant watch. Around 400 persons are under surveillance in Sattawari and Sarwal areas of Jammu (where the woman was staying). Several Anganwadi centers in these areas have been closed till March 3."

"Of the over 3,003 samples, 44 have tested positive for COVID-19; 2,694 samples returned negative results," Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said after a meeting of stakeholders, including Delhi Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

He added that the country could not afford to be complacent. "We have to prepare now to ensure that we are able to take care of patient load," he said.

Dr. Vardhan stressed the need for coordinated action for contact tracing, community surveillance, hospital management, identification of isolation wards, ensuring adequate personal protection equipment and masks and risk communication.

HC orders removal of Lucknow banners

Rejecting the State's arguments against the Court taking up the case *suo motu*, the court said: "Where there is gross negligence on part of public authorities and government, where the law is disobeyed and the public is put to suffering and where the precious values of the Constitution are subjected to injuries, a constitutional court can very well take notice of that at its own."

The court further observed that the placement of personal data of selected persons "reflects colourable exercise of powers" by the government.

Those served notices in this hoarding included retired IPS officer S.R. Darapuri, lawyer and activist Mohammad Shoib, Congress member Sadaf Jafar, and cul-

tural activist Deepak Kabir.

Ms. Jafar said the HC order "reiterates our faith in the judiciary and the constitution of India."

Mr. Darapuri also welcomed the court order and said it had established that the State and the country would be "run by the rule of law and not by the authoritarianism and lawlessness of a government."

Uttar Pradesh Advocate General Raghvendra Singh while accepting absence of any statute permitting executive authorities to put such banners, had opposed the petition by submitting that the object of displaying personal details of the individuals "is to deter the mischief mongers from causing damage to public and private site," the police said.

Labourers killed
The house in which the militants were hiding was also destroyed during the opera-

tion. "The militants opened fire on the security forces during a search operation, triggering an encounter. One AK-47 and one under-barrel grenade launcher were recovered from the encounter site," the police said.

Worst single-day fall for Sensex

The fall in crude prices was primarily on account of the all-out price war between Russia and Saudi Arabia. In the Sensex pack, ONGC was the worst performer of the day, shedding over 16%. This affected investor sentiments that are already down on account of the virus outbreak.

The dampened sentiments could be further gauged from the fact that trading at the NYSE had to be halted for 15 minutes as circuit breakers were triggered after the S&P 500 index had lost 7%.

"The relentless FPI sell-

ing in the last two weeks has added to the overall downturn. There was panic globally as fears of rising cases of COVID-19 made investors nervous. This has led to worries over a prolonged global economic slowdown," said Mr. Khemka.

As per provisional numbers, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) were net sellers at nearly ₹6,600 crore. More than 2,200 stocks ended the day in the red as against only 327 gainers. In the Sensex pack, stocks like Reliance Industries, SBI, TCS, Tata Steel, all lost in the range of 5-13% each.

16 Ministers submit resignations in M.P.

He is believed to have left it to Ms. Gandhi to decide the way forward and reach out to Mr. Scindia.

The younger Congress leader, after having lost out on the CM's post, was also ignored for the post of the Madhya Pradesh Pradesh Congress Committee (MPPCC) chief.

Congress insiders indicated that Mr. Scindia could be offered a Rajya Sabha seat as well as the MPPCC chief's post as part of a compromise.

Amid persistent rumours about Mr. Scindia being in touch with senior BJP leaders, the former Lok Sabha member from Guna remained unavailable for

comment. Late in the evening, he is reported to have met party colleague and Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot.

The group of Congress MLAs, including at least one Cabinet Minister, arrived at Bengaluru by a special flight.

BJP leader Arvind Limbavali, who played a crucial role in wooing Karnataka Congress MLAs last year resulting in the collapse of the Congress-Janata Dal (Secular) coalition government, is reported to be handling the logistics of the Madhya Pradesh lawmakers' stay. Sources said these MLAs were shifted to a private resort in Whitefield.

Democratic dissent being stifled'

Opposition leaders demand immediate release of political detainees in Kashmir

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

There is nothing in the past records of these three leaders [Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Shri Omar Abdullah and Smt. Mehbooba Mufti] to lend credence to the Modi government's false and self-serving claim that they pose a threat to 'public safety' in J&K or that they have endangered national interests with their activities

Joint statement by Opposition leaders

three leaders to lend credence to the Modi government's false and self-serving claim that they pose a threat to 'public safety' in J&K or that they have endangered national interests with their activities," it said.

The very validity of the Jammu & Kashmir Public Safety Act (PSA), 1978 can be challenged following the dilution of Article 370 as the State had now been stripped off its special status, it added.

"All this exposes the oft-repeated lie of Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi and Home Minister Shri Amit Shah that the situation in J&K is 'completely normal'." It said while the government had recently organised well-choreographed visits of foreign diplomats to Srinagar, it had placed all kinds of hurdles in the attempts of the representatives of India's political and media establishment to move freely in the State and assess the situation on the ground.

"Nothing exemplifies this more starkly than the continuing detention, on the flimsiest of grounds, of three former Chief Ministers of Jammu & Kashmir – Dr. Farooq Abdullah, Shri Omar Abdullah and Smt. Mehbooba Mufti – for over seven months. There is nothing in the past records of these

stood for "unity in diversity" with everybody's views respected, honoured and heard, the statement said that in the Narendra Modi-led government, "democratic dissent is being muzzled by coercive administrative action, which has threatened the basic ideals of justice, liberty, equality and fraternity as enshrined in our Constitution".

There are growing assaults on democratic norms, fundamental rights and civic liberties of citizens of the Indian Republic, it said, adding that as a result, dissent is not only being stifled, but the avenues of raising critical voices are also being systematically muted.

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CBI continues searches in Yes Bank case

DHFL offices and premises of Rana Kapoor and family come under the scanner of probe agency

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Monday searched several locations in Mumbai in connection with a first information report registered against Yes Bank founder Rana Kapoor on Sunday.

The FIR, which has been registered under sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Prevention of Corruption Act, names Mr. Kapoor's wife, Bindu, and daughters, Roshni, Radha and Rakhee, as accused, along with Dheeraj and Kapil Wadhawan.

The Banking Regulations Act treats office-bearers of private banks on a par with public servants when public money is involved, permitting law enforcement agencies to invoke the anti-corruption Act against them wherever there are enough grounds to do so.

CBI officials said the searches were conducted at the offices of RKW Developers and Dewan Housing Finance Ltd. (DHFL), both



On watch: The police outside a Yes Bank office during a CBI search. ■ AADESH CHOUDHARI

owned by the Wadhawans, in Bandra East, at the office of DOIT Urban Ventures, owned by the Kapoors, on Elphinstone Road and at the Kapoor residence at the Samudra Mahal building in Worli.

"Inquiries so far indicate

that from April to June 2018, Yes Bank invested ₹3,700 crore in short-term debentures of DHFL. Simultaneously, Yes Bank received a kickback of ₹600 crore in the garb of a 'builder loan' by DHFL to DOIT Urban Ventures, a wholly owned subsidiary

of RAB Enterprises of which Mr. Kapoor's wife, Bindu, is a director and a 100% shareholder. Further, their daughters, Roshni, Radha and Rakhee, are 100% shareholders of DOIT through Morgan Credits Ltd," a CBI officer said.

The officer added that the supposed loan from DHFL to DOIT was sanctioned on the basis of the mortgage of a sub-standard property with a very meagre value, on consideration of its future conversion from agricultural land to residential.

Money trail

"Not only that the amount of ₹3,700 crore has not been redeemed by Yes Bank till date, the Bank also sanctioned another loan of ₹750 crore to RKW Developers, of which Dheeraj Wadhawan is a director. RKW is a company owned by the DHFL group which was created to oversee a construction project at the Bandra Reclamation project. However, the entire amount was transferred from RKW to DHFL without being invested in the project for which the loan was sanctioned," the officer said.

The CBI seized a large number of documents as well as electronic storage devices from all the properties searched on Monday.

'67% of donations to national parties by unknown sources'

ADR analyses income tax returns and donation statements

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

As much as 67% of donations to national parties in 2018-19 came from "unknown sources," an increase from 53% in the previous financial year, said a report released by the Association for Democratic Reforms on Monday.

The ADR analysed the income tax returns and donation statements submitted to the Election Commission by the BJP, the Congress, the Trinamool, the Communist Party of India, the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the Nationalist Congress Party and the Bahujan Samaj Party.



Party	Total income	Income from electoral bond	% of unknown income
BJP	1,612.04	1,450.89	64.15
INC	728.88	383.26	29
AITC	97.28	97.28	3.87
CPM	36,395	0	1.45
NCP	35,775	29.25	1.42
CPI	2.61	0	0.1
BSP	0	0	0

Source: Association for Democratic Reforms All figures in cr.

Electoral bonds accounted for 78% of the ₹2,512.98-crore income from unknown sources.

While parties are required to give details of all donations above ₹20,000, donations under ₹20,000 and those through electoral bonds remain anonymous.

Of the total income from unknown sources, 64% went

to the BJP and 29% to the Congress.

"Since a very large percentage of the income of political parties cannot be traced to the original donor, full details of all donors should be made available for public scrutiny under the RTI [Right to Information Act]," the ADR said in a statement.

Court-monitored probe must: Cong.

Party demands Shah's resignation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Congress on Monday demanded a court-monitored judicial investigation into the Delhi riots, and again pressed for the immediate resignation of Union Home Minister Amit Shah over the Delhi police's inaction in the face of the the riots.

The party demanded that cases be registered against BJP leaders for making inflammatory speeches and inciting violence.



Sonia Gandhi
matory speeches and legal action against them," Mr. Wasnik said.

The Congress also targeted Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) for failing to instil confidence among the people and ensure their safety.

The violence coinciding with U.S. President Donald Trump's visit had tarnished India's reputation, it said.

'Pay compensation'
Congress Delhi in-charge Shaktisinh Gohil alleged that the violence spread as the BJP and the AAP played politics. He demanded compensation to the victims of violence.

'Fix responsibility'
He said the judicial inquiry should be monitored by a High Court or Supreme Court judge to ascertain what led to the violence and fix responsibility of police officers who were guilty of dereliction of duty.

"We feel that Amit Shah as the Union Home Minister did not take enough measures to stop the violence in Delhi. We demand that Amit Shah resign immediately. We also demand that FIRs and cases be registered immediately against those BJP leaders who made inflam-

INTERVIEW | SANDEEP DIKSHIT

'There was complete dereliction of duty by police'

In a matter of two or three hours, one flag march, lathi charge, things would have been normal, says Congress leader

SANDEEP PHUKAN

Former East Delhi MP and Congress leader Sandeep Dikshit was among the first to visit the areas of north-east Delhi affected by violence two weeks ago. Excerpts:

You visited the violence-hit areas of north-east Delhi. What did you find there?

I was being told that this is some anti-CAA [Citizenship (Amendment) Act], pro-CAA supporters locally and people trying to muscle down the other. But on [February] 24, things suddenly started going wrong. So, I tried to contact my people and go there sometime in the evening. I found that some of the areas blocked so I quickly came back. On [February] 25 I randomly went from place to place; Muslim-dominated,

Hindu-dominated, mixed population areas. There was a sense of panic and fear in both communities. There was some anger in the Hindu community; they had this sense that the protests [against the CAA] had gone on too long. Then came [BJP leader] Kapil Mishra speech. I think he used a platform where there were police people standing around him to give a very clear message as to who is with us.

What about the police role?

Initially, it was a case of



It was a case of masterly inactivity, followed by biased assistance

masterly inactivity, followed by biased assistance towards one community. The police don't have to wait for any order when there is a clear case of violation of law and order in front of you. They are duty-bound by their oath to intervene and that is something they just didn't do.

So either they were given explicit instructions not to do anything when things go bad or there was fear in them that they cannot retaliate against particular communities, because a government favours a particular community. But very clearly, it was complete dereliction of duty. You know, there are two huge Rapid Force [Rapid Action Force] camps [in the area and these men] could have been called within five minutes. So it was a case of dereliction of duty, but it literally turned into wilful abuse of law and neutrality.

In your view, where does the buck stop?

I think the first is the kind of a political atmosphere we

have seen. Secondly, I would put it squarely on the [former] police commissioner. Amulya Patnaik has gone out dishonourably. It was a matter of two to three hours, one flag march, one lathi charge, a few tear gas shells in every area and things would have been completely normal.

What about the AAP government? They say the police do not fall under them.

If Aam Aadmi Party government [functionaries] had come out onto the streets, none of this would have happened. You have your SDMs [Sub-Divisional Magistrates] and your Collectors. If they had started moving in the area, none of this

would have happened. If [Chief Minister] Arvind Kejriwal and others were travelling around in their cavalcade in these areas you really think police would have been inactive? Can the police remain inactive if the Chief Minister is travelling? Mr. Kejriwal knew that he had the Muslim vote with him and can probably play the role of a leader of both communities in his larger national ambitions. He is hunting with the hound and running with the hare. When you become too clever by half, this is what happens. Delhi was not a vote against communalism but a vote for free power, electricity. And many people misread that as him presenting some new kind of a secular hope.

U.S. Defence Secretary's India trip on

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The visit of US Secretary of Defence Mark Esper to New Delhi is scheduled for March 15 and 16 and preparations are on, officials sources said on Monday.

There were doubts over the proposed visit due to the threat posed by COVID-19.

The details were decided at a coordination meeting between Defence Ministry and U.S. Embassy officials at South Block in the morning, two defence officials independently confirmed. Defence Ministry is in the process of finalising the protocol, one of the officials stated.

The team visited the riot-affected areas in northeast Delhi and met the victims and their families, both in hospitals and in their homes.

Modi calls off visit to Dhaka

COVID-19 fears had led to cancellation of Mujibur event

Narendra Modi
ing understanding of the circumstances that necessitates this deferment, India is ready to work with Bangladesh to stop the spread of COVID-19, which prompted cancellation of the inauguration ceremony of the birth centenary celebrations of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman in Dhaka.

A statement from External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Raveesh Kumar on Monday confirmed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi, scheduled to participate in the March 17 event, would not travel to Dhaka. He said Bangladesh had formally communicated that the authorities were forced to "defer" the event in the prevailing health scenario in Bangladesh. "While express-

country. Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina assured people that her government was capable of meeting the public health emergency. This was followed by a meeting of the celebrations committee of the "Mujib Year" after which the mega event, to be held in the Parade Ground of Dhaka, was cancelled.

"The Government of Bangladesh has advised us that fresh dates for these commemorative events will be conveyed later," said Mr. Kumar. Bangladesh has promised to hold smaller events to mark the birth centenary of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman throughout the year, avoiding large public gatherings in view of the recommendations of epidemiologists.

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT CHANDIGARH ADMINISTRATION U.T., CHANDIGARH					
E-TENDER NOTICE					
The Executive Engineer C.P Division No.6, U.T. Chandigarh invited online the Percentage rate tenders on behalf of the President of India from eligible reputed contractors/agencies fulfilling the eligibility criteria mentioned below which shall be uploaded and received on http://etenders.chd.nic.in/nicgp .					
Sr. No	Name of Work	Estimated Tender Amount	Earliest Money	Time Limit	Last date of submission of Bid
1.	RESTORATION, PRESERVATION, CONSERVATION AND MANAGEMENT OF CAPITOL COMPLEX (WORLD HERITAGE), CHANDIGARH - PUNJAB AND HARYANA CIVIL SECRETARIAT BUILDING (COMPOSITE WORK).	(a) Civil Component : Rs. 19,85,15,500/- (b) PH Services : Rs. 2,60,00,000/- (c) Electrical Installation: Rs. 3,06,63,114/- Total : Rs. 25,51,78,614/-	Rs. 35,52,000/-	12 Months	24/03/2020 11:00 AM

Executive Engineer, C.P. Division No.6, 2nd Floor, Additional Deluxe Building, Sector 9-D, U.T. Chandigarh, Ph. No. 0172-2740094, E-mail: xencp6@gmail.com

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT, CHANDIGARH ADMINISTRATION, U.T., CHANDIGARH					
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Sr. No	Name of Work	Estimated Tender Amount	Earliest Money	Time Limit	Last date of submission of Bid
1.	CONSTRUCTION OF 216 NOS. TYPE-II HOUSES AT CHANDIGARH ARMED POLICE COMPLEX, VILLAGE DHANAS, U.T. CHANDIGARH (COMPOSITE WORK).	(a) Civil Component : Rs. 49,99,40,700/- (b) PH Services : Rs. 5,50,70,920/- (c) Electrical Installation: Rs. 1,87,86,233/- Total : Rs. 48,37,97,853/-	Rs. 58,37,979/-	18 Months	25/03/2020 11:00 AM

Executive Engineer, C.P. Division No.6, 2nd Floor, Additional Deluxe Building, Sector 9-D, U.T. Chandigarh, Ph. No. 0172-2740094 E-mail: xencp6@gmail.com

GUJARAT URJA VIKAS NIGAM LIMITED (A wholly-owned undertaking of Government of Gujarat) Sardar Patel Vidyut Bhawan, Vadodara CIN U40109GJ2004SGC045195					
NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER					
GUVNL hereby invites e-tender for purchase of 500 MW RTC power for the period 01-04-2020 to 30-06-2020 at GETCO Periphery (interconnection point of Gujarat STU with CTU) as per Ministry of Power (MoP), Govt. of India Guidelines dated 30-03-2016. RFP will be available at www.mstcecommerce.com from 09-03-2020. Bid has to be submitted online through DEEP Portal of MoP. All terms and conditions shall be as per RFPA.					
Date: 10-03-2020 General Manager (Commerce)					

KMML The Kerala Minerals and Metals Ltd. (A Govt. Of Kerala Undertaking) (An ISO 9001, ISO 14001, OHSAS 18001 & SA 8000 Certified Company) Sankaramangalam, Chavara -691583, Kollam, Kerala, India Phone: 0476-2686722 to 2686733 (12 Lines), 2651000, Fax: 91-476-2680101, 2686721 E-mail: contact@kmml.com , URL: www.kmml.com					
Competitive Tenders are invited for following. For more details please visit the E-Tendering portal https://etenders.kerala.gov.in or www.kmml.com					
Sr. No.	Tender Id	Items	Estimate Cost	Earliest Money (Rs.)	Last date/Time receipt of Tender through e-procurement solution
1	2020_KMML_346298_I	For Fabrication and supply of 4 No. Oxidizer Liner Cone			
2	2020_KMML_346389_I	For the supply of high purity Magnesium Metal			
3	2020_KMML_347216_I	For the supply of paper valve product bags			
4	2020_KMML_346936				

The virus that shook the world

Started in China, COVID-19 has now reached 105 countries and territories. About 27% of the total number of infections have been confirmed outside mainland China

Total number of infections
113,404
Deaths: **3,981** (3.5%)

- Overseas cases constitute 97% of the cases added in the last week
- There have been 874 new cases and five new deaths outside China since Sunday

People recovered: **62,547** (55.2%)
Pending cases: **46,876** (41.3%)

Countries*	Cases	Deaths
Mainland China	80,745	3,119
South Korea	7,478	53
Italy	9,172	463
Iran	7,161	237
France	1,209	19
Japan	1,190	14
Germany	1,040	0
Spain	674	17
United States	538	22
Switzerland	332	2
United Kingdom	273	3
Netherlands	265	3
Sweden	203	0
Belgium	200	0
Norway	176	0



● COUNTRIES WITH 10 CASES AND ABOVE
India 43 0
Ireland 21 0
Russia 17 0
Algeria 20 0
San Marino 36 1
Denmark 35 0
Czech Republic 32 0
Lebanon 32 0
Portugal 30 0
Vietnam 30 0
Brazil 25 0
Finland 25 0
Palestine 22 0
Ecuador 15 0
Chile 14 0
Argentina 13 0
Croatia 12 0
Argentina 12 1
Saudi Arabia 11 0
Poland 11 0
Estonia 10 0

*Countries most affected by the new virus



Medical staff moving a patient suffering from COVID-19 from an ambulance to a hospital on Monday in Seoul, South Korea. ■ GETTY IMAGES

Source: Reuters

EU seeks to tackle virus as infections spread

Italian PM asks for easing borrowing limits to contain the outbreak; six inmates die in a prison riot over new restrictions

REUTERS
ROME

EU leaders will seek a coordinated response to the coronavirus after Italy sealed off much of its industrial north, where six prisoners were killed in a riot over curbs on visits.

EU leaders will hold a teleconference to discuss their next moves, European Council President Charles Michel said, with one official saying the call was likely to take

place on Tuesday. "We need to cooperate in order to protect the health of our citizens," Mr. Michel, who chairs EU summits, tweeted.

In little more than two weeks, the number of people infected in Italy rose to 9,172 – an increase of 1,797 on Sunday's figures. Italy's civil protection agency reported 97 new deaths, bringing the country's toll to 463, the second-highest death toll after China's, putting its health

system under huge strain.

More than 1,10,000 people have been infected in 105 countries and territories, and 3,800 have died, the vast majority in mainland China, according to a Reuters tally.

Italian Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte said strict European Union borrowing limits should be loosened and the flexibility envisaged by EU budget rules should be used "in full".

"Europe cannot think of

confronting an extraordinary situation with ordinary measures," he said.

Italy's prison administration said six inmates had died in a prison riot in the northern town of Modena over new restrictions on visits.

Series of rebellions

"There have been a series of rebellions across the country," said Francesco Basentini, head of the authority. Vi-

deo aired on TV showed police and fire trucks outside the prison as black smoke swirled into the sky.

With Italy's economy already on the brink of recession, bars and restaurants in Lombardy were ordered to close or to restrict entry and maintain a distance of at least a metre between people on their premises.

The rules do not stop people going to and from work or prevent goods deliveries, and Switzerland left its border open for the thousands of Italians who commute from Lombardy into the neighbouring Swiss canton of Ticino every day.

there was widespread confusion about what exceptions might apply to rules saying people could travel only for proven work reasons or emergencies.

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New York Port Authority chief tests positive

REUTERS
WASHINGTON

The number of confirmed U.S. cases of COVID-19 on Monday rose to 566, including 22 deaths, according to state public health authorities and a running national tally kept by the Johns Hopkins University.

About three-fourths of the 50 U.S. states have reported infections of the respiratory illness COVID-19 that can lead to pneumonia.

The number of people who have tested positive across New York state in-

creased to 142, up from 105 a day earlier, Governor Andrew Cuomo said on Monday. Most of the cases are in Westchester county, where a Manhattan lawyer believed to be at the centre of the outbreak there resides, he told a news conference.

Rick Cotton, executive director of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey which controls airports and other major travel hubs, has tested positive for the virus and will be quarantined and working from home, Mr. Cuomo added.

Rival Afghan leaders take parallel oaths

At least two blasts hit Ashraf Ghani's oath ceremony, no casualties were reported

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
KABUL

Afghanistan lurched deeper into political crisis Monday as the country's two rival leaders swore themselves in as President at simultaneous ceremonies that were interrupted by at least two blasts.

The bitter feud between President Ashraf Ghani and his former Chief Executive Abdullah Abdullah has raised fears for Afghanistan's fragile democracy as the U.S. prepares to leave the country following an agreement last month with a strong and largely unified Taliban.

Polls were held in September, but repeated delays and accusations of voter fraud meant that Mr. Ghani, the incumbent President, was only declared as winner of a second term in February –



Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and Chief Executive Abdullah both held swearing in ceremonies on Monday. ■ AP

sparking a furious response from Mr. Abdullah, who vowed to form his own parallel government.

On Monday, Mr. Ghani, dressed in traditional Afghan clothing and white turban, arrived at the presidential palace to be sworn in, sur-

rounded by supporters, senior political figures, diplomats and foreign dignitaries, including U.S. special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad.

Minutes later, in another corner of the sprawling presidential palace compound, a suit-clad Mr. Abdullah in-

augurated himself as President, vowing to "safeguard the independence, national sovereignty, territorial integrity" of Afghanistan.

Two explosions

As hundreds of people watched Mr. Ghani's ceremony, two loud explosions were heard, prompting some people to flee.

There were no reports of casualties from the blasts, which mirrored a similar incident in August 2018 when militants fired several mortars as Mr. Ghani was making a speech at the palace, injuring six civilians.

"I have no bulletproof vest on, only my shirt," Mr. Ghani told those who stayed behind as sirens wailed. "I will stay even if I have to sacrifice my head."

U.S. airlines to force Boeing to rewire jets

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
NEW YORK

U.S. aviation regulators plan to require Boeing to rewire all 737 MAX aircraft before allowing the troubled planes fly again, *The Wall Street Journal* has reported.

Regulators have concluded that the current wiring layout violated safety standards to prevent short-circuits that could cause sharp drops in aircraft pitch similar to what happened in the case of an Ethiopian Airlines flight last year, the newspaper said on Sunday.

The order to modify the wiring would apply to the nearly 800 MAX planes already produced, according to the report.

Sudan PM survives assassination attempt

Hamduk heads a transitional govt.

REUTERS
KHARTOUM

Sudanese Prime Minister Abdalla Hamduk survived an assassination attempt targeting his convoy as he headed to work on Monday morning in the capital Khartoum, officials said.

Mr. Hamduk said he was in "good shape" and that what had happened would be "an additional push to the wheel of change in Sudan", where he heads a transitional government following the overthrow last year of long-time President Omar al-Bashir.

Three witnesses said the attack happened near the northern entrance to the Kober bridge, which crosses the Blue Nile from Khartoum North to the city centre, where Mr. Hamduk's office is located.

The convoy appeared to have been targeted from above, they said. State radio said it had been hit by gunfire and a projectile, while state television said it had been targeted by a car bomb.

ELSEWHERE



Netanyahu asks court to delay corruption trial

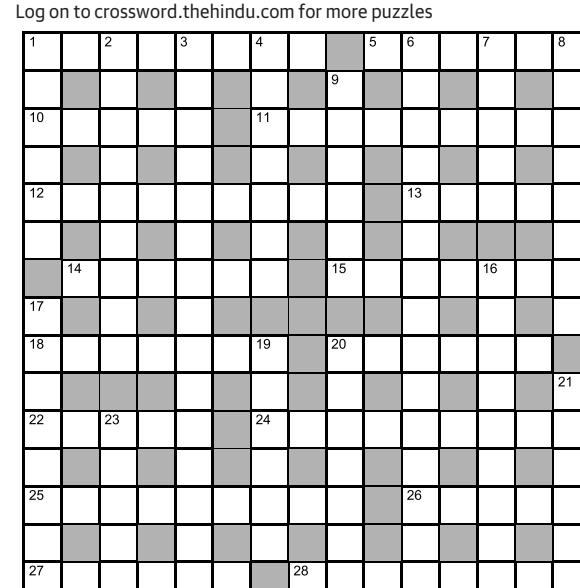
JERUSALEM
Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu asked on Monday for a 45-day delay in his corruption trial due to open March 17, saying prosecutors had not provided all information relevant to the case. ■ AP

35 killed in Ghana after two buses collide

ACCRA
Thirty-five people, including women and children, were killed on Monday when two buses collided on a busy road in Ghana, officials said. The accident, which happened in the Bono East region around 430 km from the capital Accra, also left six people in critical condition. ■ AP

THE HINDU CROSSWORD 12879

Log on to crossword.thehindu.com for more puzzles



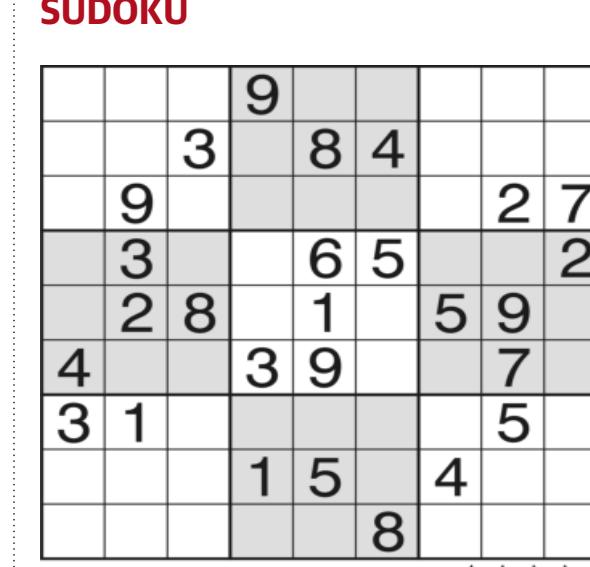
ACROSS

- Mournful in lodge after consuming dope (8)
- Endures worthless person aboard steamer (6)
- A scoundrel endlessly drinking spirit in Greek marketplace (5)
- Tolerate barbarian? Difficult (2,7)
- Plant a secret agent (5)
- Reckon English appear to be accepting Brexit finally (6)
- Suspension following blunder in transaction (8)
- Spot to catch one flatfish (6)

(set by Dr. X)

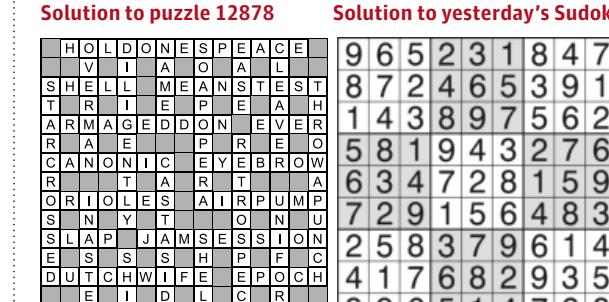
- Champion facing crazy rat race shows determination (9)
- Muesli digested finally! Enzymes released here? (5)
- Heaps of money for hot dogs (6)
- Mercurial Trump's latest drivell – spiteful, exudes malice primarily (7)
- Critical instruction to catch snake (7)
- Characters in Hoover docudrama ham it up (6)
- Trivial talks by Yankee – supports Britain exiting (5)
- Choose escort possessing ultimately attractive figure (9)
- Distinctly better than what a barber might provide? (1,3,5)
- Subatomic particle in hydrogen radon compound (6)
- Suspension following blunder in transaction (8)
- Woo, essentially lure into bed (5)
- Strategy prepared for match played on opponent's ground (4,4)
- Lecher exposes in a room! Creep (2,2,1,6,4)
- Wipes out revolutionary observed holding gun (7)
- Very upset lately with underground revolution? (4,2,4,5)
- Justification given by union in dispute (5)
- Foxy Carol acquires essentially provocative skirt (8)
- Arouse endless rage in revolutionary groups (4,2)
- Crack goal by English champion eliminates France (9)
- A strategy prepared for match played on opponent's ground (4,4)
- Subatomic particle in hydrogen radon compound (6)
- Dirty old boy on stage (7)
- Refuse to retain Article, leading to abrogation (6)
- Woo, essentially lure into bed (5)

SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to puzzle 12879



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

No. SSS646 Distribution: www.mightyfingers.com

FAITH

In praise of mothers

The role of a mother in the life of a child is huge and is, therefore, celebrated in verse in Tamil. The Jain work Naaladiyaar gives motherhood as an example while talking of the importance of having the support of one's family. It says a man who is surrounded by his relatives in troubled times will feel his weakness disappearing. In the same way, when her child is placed on a mother's lap, she forgets the discomforts of pregnancy and the labour pains. The only feeling she experiences is joy. All else is forgotten, said Malayaman in a discourse. Attending to every need of the child, feeding it, bathing it, nursing it through sickness – a mother's care for her child continues during the child's growing years.

Tamil literature has verses that capture the beauty of a mother showing the child the moon and getting it to eat up its food, the child's first attempts at walking and so on. They show how a mother delights at each milestone in her child's life. The work Yelaadi says that a mother has certain distinctive characteristics. She is patient; she is a woman with good qualities; she is generous; she forgives those who treat her badly; she is honest. Such a woman is a mother to everyone, says Yelaadi.

Thirikadukam says a mother is the one who sustains the whole family. Thirikadukam says that a mother is also a good host, who welcomes guests warmly. Naanmanikkadai says that no relative of a person can compare with his or her mother. Just as one's mother deserves one's gratitude, so too does one's father. Achara kovai says it is the duty of every person to pay respects to his mother and father every day. Thirikadukam says a person has three important duties – studying, living a virtuous life and worshipping his parents.

MARKET WATCH

	PRICE	CHANGE
Sensex	35635	-5.17
US Dollar	74.17	-0.41
Gold	45063	0.05
Brent oil	36.94	-20.34

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	321.90	-19.50
Asian Paints	1867.15	-10.30
Axis Bank	623.55	-34.10
Bajaj Auto	2573.35	-161.70
Bajaj Finserv	8207.10	-396.10
Bajaj Finance	4026.80	-199.05
Bharti Airtel	496.25	-22.90
BPCL	423.85	20.75
Britannia Ind	2996.50	-84.90
Cipla	426.15	-8.25
Coal India	157.95	-10.80
Dr Reddys Lab	3061.25	-109.70
Eicher Motors	17885.80	-142.25
GAIL (India)	100.45	-7.35
Grafix Ind	634.60	-30.45
HCL Tech	540.45	-25.75
HDFC	2027.90	-81.55
HDFC Bank	1107.30	-27.60
Hero MotoCorp	1956.05	-82.25
Hindalco	143.45	-6.65
Hind Unilever	2121.50	-67.40
ICICI Bank	457.75	-28.60
IndusInd Bank	903.10	-111.70
Bharti Infratel	211.00	-7.30
Infosys	704.45	-34.50
Indian Oil Corp	99.40	-1.40
ITC	177.20	-4.55
JSW Steel	229.05	-9.75
Kotak Bank	1578.15	-52.90
L&T	1101.95	-56.95
M&M	463.20	-7.80
Maruti Suzuki	6201.10	-244.85
Nestle India Ltd.	16031.35	-397.95
NTPC	102.90	-2.25
ONGC	74.55	-13.95
PowerGrid Corp	180.95	-9.65
Reliance Ind	1114.15	-156.85
State Bank	253.45	-17.05
Sun Pharma	393.35	-7.55
Tata Motors	105.70	-8.50
Tata Steel	322.30	-29.20
TCS	1972.35	-144.10
Tech Mahindra	704.80	-35.60
Titan	1203.45	-39.15
UltraTech Cement	4097.35	-70.50
UPL	513.00	-0.60
Vedanta	94.90	-16.15
Wipro	214.40	-9.15
YES Bank	21.25	5.10
Zee Entertainment	194.45	-26.70

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	73.88	74.20
Euro	84.67	85.05
British Pound	96.89	97.32
Japanese Yen (100)	72.41	72.73
Chinese Yuan	10.63	10.68
Swiss Franc	79.92	80.27
Singapore Dollar	53.42	53.66
Canadian Dollar	54.29	54.53
Malaysian Ringgit	17.51	17.60

Source: Indian Bank

BULLION RATES CHENNAI

Retail Silver (1g)	49.5	(50.4)
22 ct gold (1g)	4181	(4220)

AGR dues: full evaluation to take 6 months

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

A full evaluation of the self-assessment done by telcos' for AGR dues could take at least six months, given the multiple years and numerous documents that have to be checked, according to a telecom department source. The government, last week, had asked Bharti Airtel, Vodafone Idea and other telecom companies to pay remaining AGR dues as per the SC order.

The total value of China's global exports of these products amounted to \$5488.6 million in 2018. India exported \$4,445.9 million worth of these commodities in the same period and could now have a chance to grab part of China's market share.

"There may be opportunities for Indian exporters of agri-items, in case some countries impose restrictions on Chinese goods in response to outbreak of COVID-19. Opportunities may arise in case of other countries imposing import restriction on these tariff lines," said an analysis of the impact of the virus outbreak on India's agricultural trade, prepared by the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. The report was submitted to the Finance Ministry last week, as part of a wider exercise to analyse the disruptions in global supply

INTERVIEW | PRASHANT KUMAR

'We expect moratorium to be lifted by weekend'

We have full support of the Reserve Bank of India and the State Bank of India for liquidity, says Yes Bank administrator

MANOJIT SAHA

Prashant Kumar, the RBI-appointed administrator of Yes Bank, says the bank will emerge stronger post moratorium. Edited excerpts from an interview:

How fast do you think the moratorium can be lifted?

According to the RBI notification, April 3 is the outer date. We are expecting that, by this weekend, we will be in a position [such] that the moratorium could be lifted.

How serious is the problem?

This bank has two separate components. One is on the retail side and the other is on the corporate side.

What I have seen is, on the retail side, the bank is quite strong. NPAs are very low on the retail side, they are [also] having very good earnings. On the corporate side, they have not taken care of the concentration risk. Loans have been given to entities

and unfortunately, all these entities have become non-performing assets (NPAs). They have not been able to absorb it.

Is it limited to a particular sector or some entities?

It is concentrated to few entities – 5-6 entities are there.

That itself is very high, because it is not a very large bank. For a small bank, you give loans like ₹10,000 crore, ₹5,000 crore and then, if everything becomes NPA, you cannot survive.

For a small bank, it is good have more focus on the retail loan side but here, the focus was on corporate side.

What is your primary focus?

My first focus is to bring back normalcy. Today, customers are facing a lot of difficulties because of the restrictions. I cannot give them more than ₹50,000, but I can give them the assurance, I can empathise with the customers.

Several steps have been taken. Our ATMs were available within 24 hours. And, from Saturday night onwards, ATMs of other banks were also available. Today, we don't have much rush in the branches because they can

withdraw from ATMs. Today, none of our branches is facing any cash crunch. Not a single customer has been turned away today. We have also started processing requests from customers for emergency situations, like a medical condition where we can disburse up to ₹5 lakh.

How long will it take to start the NEFT?

NEFT inflows have started.

What is the message to depositors?

First thing

There is no need for depositors to panic and shift their deposits to other banks

is, their deposits are safe and secure, they need not worry.

Second, all of us are working to lift the moratorium so that they can do normal banking transactions.

Going forward, they are going to have a much stronger Yes Bank. So, there is no need to panic and shift deposits to other banks.

What is the kind of liquidity support the bank is getting from RBI?

We have full support from the RBI and the SBI for liquidity.

Depositors could rush to the bank after moratorium is lifted. What will be your strategy?

We have started reaching out to customers. The biggest comfort has come from the SBI. When SBI is investing equity, and they say they are behind Yes Bank, then I think the fear among depositors should not be there.

Maybe, we are in a problem but the solution has been worked out so fast. The moratorium was imposed on Thursday night, and the draft plan came within 24 hours. And, when we are saying moratorium will be lifted by the weekend, the central government, the RBI is absolutely behind this. When the resolution has come so fast, it shows the intention and commitment of the government and the RBI.

How much capital would Yes Bank need now?

That, we would be able to share when we announce the Q3 results on March 14.

Rupee crosses 74, bond yields drop 12 bps

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

The rupee breached the 74 to a dollar mark on Monday amid a heavy sell-off in the equity markets as the fear of a COVID-19-led economic slowdown gripped various economies.

The rupee opened weak at 74.04, compared with the previous close of 73.87 and went on to touch the day's low of 74.19 a dollar. The currency finally closed the day at 74.17 a dollar or 0.41% lower than its previous close.

Bond yields plunged by 12 basis points on Monday on hopes of interest rate cuts by the RBI to address the slowdown. The sharp drop in oil prices could help lower domestic inflation, given that the country imports over 80% of its crude oil requirement. The yield on the 10-year benchmark government bond, after falling below 6%, ended at 6.07%, down 12 bps.

Oil plunges as producers begin price war

Suffers biggest daily rout since 1991 Gulf War; Saudi, Russia to raise production

REUTERS NEW YORK



As inventories rise over the next 3 quarters, Brent prices could temporarily dip into the \$20s, says BoFA. ■ AP

Exporting Countries, which includes the group's top producer Saudi Arabia, and Russia fell apart on Friday after Moscow refused to support deeper oil cuts to cope with the outbreak of coronavirus.

OPEC responded by removing all limits on its own production, prompting fear of a supply hike in a market already awash with crude.

Despite sliding demand for crude due to the coronavirus, Saudi Arabia plans to boost its crude output above 10 million barrels per day (bpd) in April after the current deal to curb production expires at the end of March, two sources told Reuters on Sunday. Saudi Arabia also cut its official crude selling price. The kingdom has been producing around 9.7 million bpd in recent months.

Russia, one of the world's top producers alongside Saudi Arabia and the United States, also said it could lift

output and that it could cope with low oil prices for six to 10 years.

The countries, along with several other producers, have cooperated for three years to restrain supply. The OPEC+ talks collapsed after OPEC effectively presented Russia with an ultimatum on Thursday, offering it a choice of accepting a deal with much bigger than expected cuts or no deal at all.

"The prognosis for the oil market is even more dire than in November 2014, when such a price war last started, as it comes to a head with the significant collapse in oil demand due to the coronavirus," Goldman Sachs said. Saudi Arabia, Russia and other major producers last battled for market share in 2014 in a bid to put a squeeze on production from the United States, which has not joined any output limiting pacts and which is now

the world's biggest producer of crude.

The global outbreak of the coronavirus prompted OPEC to seek additional output cuts. More than 110,000 people have been infected in 105 countries and territories and 3,800 have died, the vast majority in mainland China, according to a Reuters tally.

China's efforts to curtail the coronavirus outbreak has disrupted the world's second-largest economy and curtailed shipments to the biggest oil importer. The International Energy Agency said on Monday oil demand was set to contract in 2020 for the first time since 2009. It cut its annual forecast by almost 1 million bpd and that the market would now contract by 90,000 bpd.

Major banks also have cut their demand growth forecasts. Morgan Stanley predicted China would have zero demand growth in 2020, while Goldman Sachs sees a contraction of 150,000 bpd in global demand. Bank of America reduced its Brent crude forecast from \$54 a barrel to \$45 in 2020.

"The radical shift in policy suggests that Saudi will allow inventories to build sharply over the next three quarters," said a Bank of America Global Research report. "As a result, we now expect Brent oil prices to temporarily dip into the \$20s range over the coming weeks."

HPCL, BPCL to maximise crude buying

REUTERS SINGAPORE/NEW DELHI

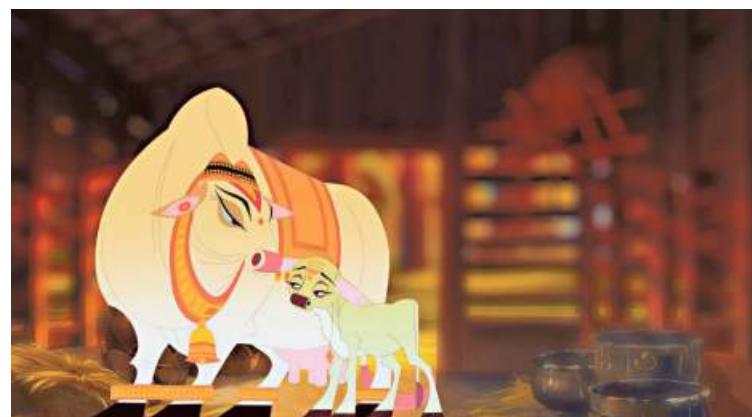
At least four Asian refiners, including India's HPCL and BPCL, plan to maximise purchases of April-loading Middle East crude after Saudi Arabia drastically cut its prices for term contract buyers, four sources at the refiners said on Monday.

Saudi Aramco on Saturday cut its selling price for Arab Light crude oil to Asia for April to a discount of \$3.10 to the Oman/Dubai average, down \$6 a barrel from the March price, its biggest-ever month-on-month price drop. The sources said they were still waiting for other Middle East producers such as Kuwait and Iraq to issue their official selling prices (OSPs), which are due by the 10th of each month.

The other West Asia producers are expected to cut their April crude OSPs to follow the trend set by Saudi Arabia. "In Middle Eastern crude [prices], definitely there will be substantial softness, we will try to maximise to the extent possible," said M.K. Surana, chairman of HPCL.

Two of the four refinery sources said they will seek the

What did the cow tell the tiger?



Sounds as music

Panyakoti is an Ilayaraaja musical according to Ravishankar. "Music is an important element in animation. I had planned a musical script where several portions of the movie are told through music. Raja Sir saw these visuals as sounds and melodies, it was an intense process."

Ravishankar Venkateswaran talks of his labour of love, the Sanskrit animation film, *Panyakoti*

RANJANI GOVIND

"It is a big boost for Indian animation," says Ravishankar Venkateswaran, the man behind animated Sanskrit film *Panyakoti*. Through the film, Ravishankar wanted to make Sanskrit accessible. "The trailer received close to half a million views."

Panyakoti was first screened for the crowd-funders in October 2019. It won three awards at Animation Xpress' ANN Awards the same year for Best Animation Digital Film, Best Voice Over Artist (Revathi) and Best Screenplay. The 85-minute film with subtitles is inspired by Indian folk art, and is a mix of traditional and digital animation techniques. A startup, Teriflix, has agreed to screen the film in a mini theatre in South Bengaluru in April. "We are also in talks with an American digital platform for a global release," says Ravishankar in an interview.

Excerpts:



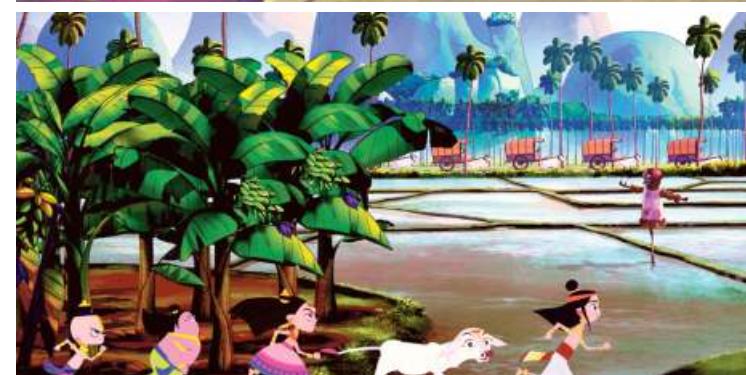
After many difficulties, *Panyakoti* is going to be released. What was the final budget for the film?

● Kalidas says that struggles are forgotten when the results are sweet. I am in that state of mind. The expenses were between ₹1.5 to ₹2 crore. The final budget will be around ₹5 crore as people worked for free or at extreme discounts. When we decided to make the film in 2015, we could not find producers, so Mohandas Pai, an ex-board member of Infosys, suggested that we take the crowd-funding route. Wishberry helped us raise ₹41 lakh to begin the work.

How did *Panyakoti* come to be?

● There is a folk song about a cow named Panyakoti who only speaks the truth. She promises a hungry tiger that she will return after feeding her calf. Honesty and upholding *dharma* are the two values of the song and that is why it has stood the test of time. The film speaks of two important virtues – *satya* (truth) and *dharma* (righteousness).

When I heard the song in 2013, I thought of writing a backstory for the cow and the tiger and that became the script of the movie. Animation gives you the freedom to tell a story that is larger than life. I learnt of the richness of Sanskrit in my 40s. I



The journey

Ravishankar graduated in English Literature and started his career as a copywriter. "I wrote and directed the first interactive CD-ROM for children in 1995 when I was still a trainee at Kirloskar multimedia. Since then, I have been dreaming of making an animated movie." Ravishankar completed MBA and was with Infosys until recently. "My exposure to crowd-funding and running a social media campaign for *Panyakoti* brought me close to digital marketing. Now I run the global marketing studio for an American bank."



wanted to share the wonder of the language and thought cinema is a powerful medium to do that.

Is there a comic in English based on the same story?

● I initially did not have plans to make a movie. I wrote a picture book with the backstory in 2014. The book was translated to Sanskrit and published by Samskrta Bharati. The idea of making a movie came later.

Could you share your experience of working with Ilayaraaja who composed music and Revathi who did voice work?

Stills from *Panyakoti*

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

● I consider Raja Sir my mentor. He was among the first people to believe I could make this film. He heard the story and promised me that he would score the music if it was made into a film. He wanted to see the reels without any cuts before he started composing. However, we wanted the songs in advance so that we could animate them. He told us to use any song as reference for the animation and that he would replace it with his original compositions. He had done this earlier for *Hey Ram*. His energy could put any youngster to shame. Every note in the movie comes from his hands.

The music is a blend of instruments, modern and traditional, and echoes the clash between villagers who want to exploit Nature and those who want to preserve it. Every minute spent with Ilayaraaja was a lesson in professionalism and dedication. For him music is a *tapas* (spiritual quest).

Revathi, who did voice work for the film, studied the basics of Sanskrit for her role. She was a pillar of support.

What do you think needs to be done to preserve Sanskrit?

● Sanskrit lives on despite negligence from the days of the British. We cannot expect the establishment to do much, we have to work at it. We have handed over the study of Sanskrit to foreigners who see the wisdom of a 5000-year-old civilisation embedded in it. That is why experiments such as *Panyakoti* are important.

PEOPLE

Soap opera

Mannem Sindhu Madhuri on her line of natural and organic products



She is a writer and the owner of a line of handmade soaps, shampoo bars, hair oils and face creams made with natural ingredients. Mannem Sindhu Madhuri owns 'Kalapi Naturals' that sources its raw materials from organic farmers in Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Himachal Pradesh. "Kalapi means peacock. It is known for its natural beauty. My products are natural," she smiles.

The 46-year-old who has published 70 short stories in Telugu and Kannada says one of them is called *Kalapi*. That became so famous that people started calling her "Kalapi" Sindhu. "That is also why I chose this name for my brand."

Born in Gangavathi town of Koppal district in Karnataka, she relocated to Guntur in Andhra Pradesh, her ancestral home. Her foray into her line of skin care products began when a young girl in her family had severe skin allergy and was prohibited from eating dairy products, nuts, non-vegetarian food and almost all of her favourites. Still, there was no relief. Sindhu did some research and learnt that soaps and

shampoos could cause skin allergies. "I was reminded of *sunni pindi*, the home-made herbal bath powder my grandmother used as a scrub to cleanse and make our skin softer. We used the same powder for the girl and the allergy disappeared."

Sindhu pursued a diploma in cosmetology from Butic Institute. She researched for over a year on where and how to source natural and organic ingredients from, to produce 'safe' cosmetics. She then took up a six-month cold process soap-making course offered online by popular soap maker Ariane Arsenault.

She ordered soap moulds from China and began making them out of her home. "I started in a small way. I would make a kilo of soap and distribute half of it as samples to people requesting them to give their feedback." Despite money constraints, she distributed soaps worth ₹6 lakh as samples and her efforts paid off as people started coming back to her. Later she added shampoo bars, hair oils, face cream and bath power to her collection.

Her confidence grew and she enrolled with Udyog Aadhaar, a Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises initiative that offers tax exemptions and subsidies to entrepreneurs. "But I wanted to reach out to a wider client base by selling my products through an online platform like Amazon for which I needed drugs and cosmetics license."

She ran from pillar to post. "The application had 120 pages but I was not ready to give up." As luck would have it, she was at a women entrepreneurs' meeting attended by then Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu.

"That did the trick and I got my license within the next few days."

Today Sindhu's products are available at local supermarkets and online. She is also exporting to The Netherlands and is in talks with a few firms in Latin American countries, who are currently trying out her samples.

P. SUJATHA VARMA

PRODUCTS

Holi-care



Nuskay, an organic skincare brand co-founded by the sibling duo Pooja Chhabra and Drishti Chhabra, has a Post-Holi Ritual Kit. Refined with plant-based ingredients, this kit claims to prepare your skin for the forthcoming festivities and the summer. Embracing ancient remedies but presented in a modern no-fuss format, the kit can be customized as per skin type, and consists of an Illuminating Face Elixir, Golden Dew Concentrate, a Handcrafted Rose Petal Soap, and a Sandalwood & Hibiscus Scrub.

At Nuskay.in, upwards of ₹2,000

Contact us at delhimetro@thehindu.co.in

When do you need to wear A MASK?

SWETA AKUNDI

As the number of COVID-19 cases in India rise, the need of the moment is to ensure we do not encourage mass panic. Confusion over precautionary measures has also led to a global shortage of masks. As people buy disposable surgical masks off the counter, its prices are skyrocketing. Do you even need one?

Wear only if you are sick

Masks are not necessary if you are healthy, the WHO in its notice has made it clear. "Wear a mask if you are coughing or sneezing," it adds. Even though visuals of men and women in airports wearing masks have become common, you would do better avoiding travel than travelling with a mask on.

"Surgical masks generally should not be worn by any healthy person," says Chennai-based Dr Vijayalakshmi B, Senior Consultant - Infectious Diseases, Kauvery Hospital. "If you are sick, say you have a cough or cold, then wearing a mask would help prevent droplets from going outside."

If you are healthy, do not buy one. Save them for people in healthcare who actually need it, as new cases of COVID-2019 emerge

In fact, the better option is to stay indoors when you are sick. "People with any respiratory infection have to be home quarantined," says Dr. Vijayalakshmi. So the question of wearing masks in public only arises until you get checked by a doctor, to make sure you don't spread any infection in the meantime.

In such cases, surgical masks are okay. "You should also wear masks if you are healthy but taking care of a sick person in your family," she adds.

Other than this, there is no role of wearing masks in public, she emphasises, and should be left for healthcare providers: doctors, nurses, or even security staff in hospitals. "There is proof that wearing a regular mask in the hospital setting decreases



Don't panic! Common sense goes a long way ■ AP PHOTO

the chance of transmissions," she says.

The pricier N95 masks are also to be used by those working in close contact with patients.

Nothing makes up for bad hygiene

The main reason why people wear masks despite being healthy is to protect themselves from other sick people, who may or may not be wearing them.

However, Dr. Vijayalakshmi

explains, "You assume that if somebody coughs on you, it should not reach your mucosa. But the point is, a mask is not going to prevent that. People think that by wearing the mask, they will not touch their faces. On the contrary, if you are not used to wearing a mask, you will keep fidgeting with it, which may increase the chance of spreading."

Moreover, nothing can make up for bad hygiene. The WHO notice states that "masks are effective only when used in combination with frequent hand-cleaning with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water."

In a tropical, crowded envi-

ronment like India, the main mode of spread is physical touch – direct or indirect, which will happen irrespective of you wearing a mask.

"Regular hand washing helps a lot. Every human being needs to have a social responsibility, let people not provoke panic, or hoard masks. Use the helplines, and see your doctors," she says.

A shortage of masks will not only lead to them becoming more expensive, but also introduce substandard masks in the market. This will only make the actual sick people wearing masks less effective in preventing the spread.

When in doubt, call the COVID-19 helpline, 011-23978046

5 EVENTS WORTH YOUR WHILE



FOOD

Holi special

On the occasion of Holi, restaurant Chutney, Bar + Tandoor at The Metropolitan Hotel is offering special vegetarian and non-vegetarian thalis. The menu has dishes such as Kesari Badam Thandai, Sunhari Machhl Tikka, Rangbiranga Paneer Tikka, Narangi Shorba, Hariyali Khumb Kaju, Lal Moti Pulao and Mutter ki Kheer.

VENUE: Metropolitan Hotel, Bangla Sahib Road

TIME: 12 noon - 3 p.m. and 7:15 p.m.



PERFORMANCE

Kathak

On Wednesday, the Ministry of Culture and Kalahetu are jointly hosting Sabrang 2020, a festival of Hindustani classical Music and Dance. The event will see Kathak performances of Saurav Mishra and Gaurav Mishra of the Banaras Gharana, and Pandit Deepak Maharaj and Ragini Maharaj of Lucknow Gharana.

VENUE: Kamani Auditorium, Mandi House

TIME: 6:30 p.m. onwards



MEAL

Holi treat

The restaurant Dhansoo Café, which is inspired by the various foods of India has a Holi special menu. This includes Goan Potato Chops, Paniyaram, Mushroom Chimichurri, Dhansoo Bhel, Keema Pao, Pulao Pakoda, Podi Idli, Duck Samosa, Avacado Malki Roll, Asparagus Tempura Roll, Kolivada Fried Bhelki, to name a few.

VENUE: Sangam Courtyard, Sector 9, R. K. Puram

TIME: 12 noon - 12 midnight



JAZZ

Bianca Gismonti trio live

This Wednesday, Bianca Gismonti, a leading jazz pianist from Brazil will perform at the India International Centre. Her compositions come along with a rich Brazilian rhythmic gesture, lyrical harmonies, and inspiring melodies. She will be accompanied by Julio Falavigna on the drums and Paolo Andriolo on the bass guitar.

VENUE: C.D. Deshmukh Auditorium, IIC

TIME: 6:30 p.m.

DINING

Special menu

A special Awadhi cuisine offering at casual dining restaurant Namak Mandi. The menu has dishes such as Galawati Kebab, Dum Nacknvi Biriyani, Rogan Josh, Murgh Rampur, Seekh Kabab, Imtiazi, Murgh Kadhai Khurchan. The restaurant is also offering a complimentary thandai and gujiya on dine-in today.

VENUE: Nelson Mandela Marg, Vasant Kunj

TIME: 11:30 a.m. - 11:30 p.m.

For many years, India was not a crypto-friendly nation... but a five million-plus strong pro-crypto community is now celebrating its new freedom

Toss a coin to the banker

DIVYA KALA BHAVANI

Akshay Aggarwal had been waiting with bated breath to hear the verdict of the Supreme Court regarding crypto-currency, an encrypted, decentralised and digital medium of exchange. As the founder of Blockchained India, a pan-India community for crypto enthusiasts, this ruling means the most to him in terms of freedom of investment and of movement.

Finally, a verdict was made last Wednesday: 'SC rules curb on crypto-currency trade illegal', and thus the ban on trading in virtual currency, crypto-currency and Bitcoins was lifted. Judging from the excitement on social media and relevant online forums, it was as though a cataclysmic election win took place. Plus, with the ongoing Yes Bank crisis, some crypto-lovers such as Rohan Jethi simply tweeted, "Short banks. Long Bitcoin."

India's pro-crypto community is five million-plus strong, and interestingly, despite our population and online pre-



sence, India only accounted for around three percent of the global crypto-currency market before the ban. Surely, these figures could grow slowly as more currencies are created and more progressive discussions are held.

An excited Akshay admits he was quite nervous in the lead-up to the verdict. "I had a slight positivity though there was still disappointment in the regulators that penalised innovators because of their own narrow thought process."

Shinam Arora, who heads Pune-based Primechain Technologies, which facilitates self-building blockchain ecosystems, says, "I don't understand why RBI couldn't come up with a way earlier to monetise it. If they would have monetised it, it would have helped in our country's growth and economy so much by now. For example, they could have simply imposed a minimal charge towards cryptocurrency exchange."

A vast ecosystem

The umbrella of this technology is so vast that it is just impossible to enumerate the different sub-markets... almost like the fight club of banking as in it exists but not many talk about it.

Crypto has its own exchange market like mainstream currency would, too. Akshay predicts the acceleration of crypto-neo-banks (a type of direct bank) which would speed things along, "I see sophistication and maturity coming in this industry," comments Akshay, "mainly because of increased demand, which will lead to increased competition. I am expecting a hundred more exchanges to open up in the next two years."

The entertainment scene could change too. myNK, India's first blockchain-powered global entertainment platform, foresees positivity. Founder Nitin Narkhede says, "The entertainment industry will be one of the early adopters of crypto. Crypto adoption can streamline many processes in film and music industries, create new financing options and improve payment models in the industry, thereby benefiting many smaller artistes and stakeholders.



Depiction of Bitcoin being accepted at a shop

Though the battle is won, the war is far from over

New payment mechanisms will find their way in the existing systems and new companies will emerge to cater to these requirements."

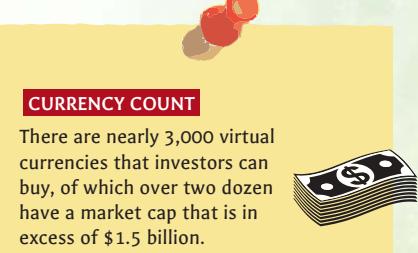
The gaming industry also sees a lot of interaction with crypto. Up until about two years ago, gaming platform Steam operated many transactions through such means but put a stop to it because of its ineffectiveness, and this could change given the massive Indian population on Steam.

What of education; do experts see a potential for schools and colleges to at least inform students about crypto-currency? Wilson Bright, who heads Bengaluru-based BlockSurvey, explains, "I think it would be wonderful to inform young people about the entirety of the banking ecosystem and state that there are alternatives! There is also the myth that to invest in Bitcoin, for example, you have to own one whole Bitcoin, so BlockSurvey hopes to inform and educate people about the value of owning your own transactional freedom and being proud of it. So this is the time to really get the conversation going because people will now be curious, so the first step is to get rid of misinformation."

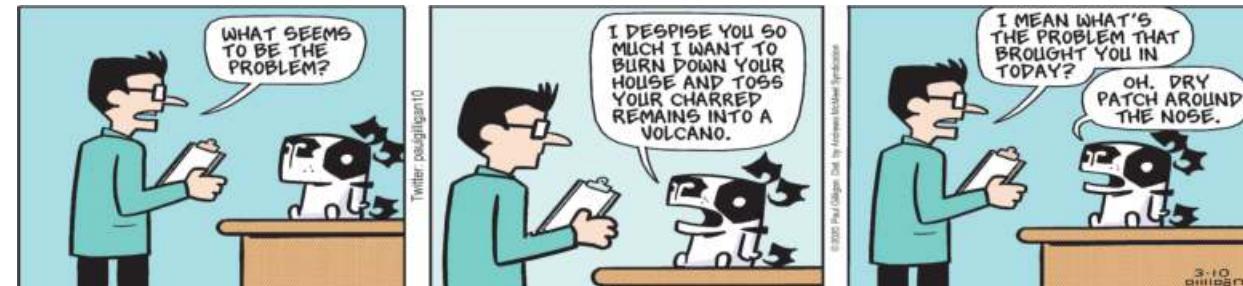
Be realistic
However optimistic things look, such startups must be patient when it comes

to acquiring funding after a barren time. While the situation is clearer *de jure*, the same might not be *de facto*; there are many mindsets to converse with. Akshay says, "Now in this extreme economic vulnerability, I don't think much is going to change with this one early positive indicator. This will definitely restore faith and bring confidence to Indian crypto-entrepreneurs; maybe early adoption results could even convince some investors to take bets on them."

Though the battle is won, the war is far from over. "Post SC ruling, if the review petition doesn't yield a negative result again, we shall push forward our goals of enabling mass adoption towards mobilising support from politicians," avers Akshay, "I see a lack of futuristic thinking towards use of technology generally, and I believe we need to identify or elect pro-tech champions to push positive regulations. We need to continually direct these debates to the right problem, that being of prohibiting only the negative use."



POOCH CAFE



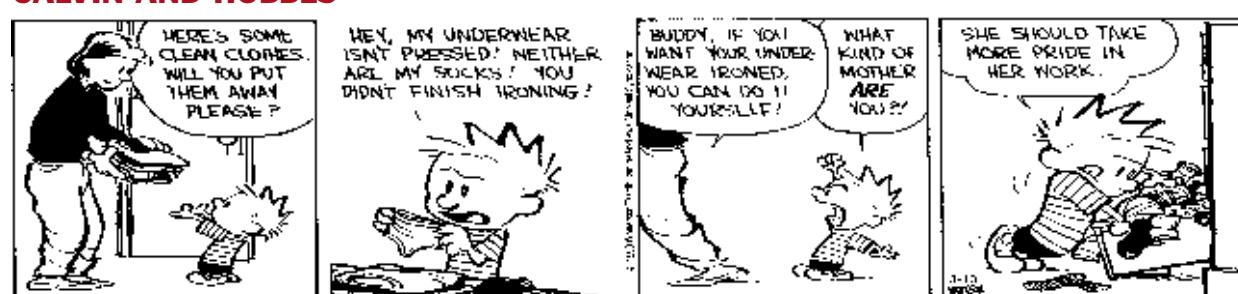
PEANUTS



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



CALVIN AND HOBBES



TIGER



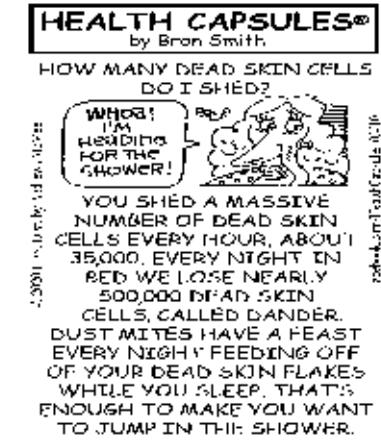
GRAFFITI



WUMO



HEALTH CAPSULES



THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13323

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
		8				
9				10		
11					12	
14	15				16	
17		18		19	20	
21						
22			23			
24					25	

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To play The Guardian Quick Crossword, The Hindu Cryptic crossword, Sudoku & other puzzles online, scan the QR code.

help in trouble (4,9)

5 A unicycle has one (5)

6 Ahead (2,5)

7 Thousands of millions of years (4)

8 Hubble-bubble (6)

13 Infraction of one of the Ten Commandments (8)

15 Bout of extravagance (7)

16 US coin (6)

18 Cambrian (5)

20 Milan football team (5)

21 Tidings (4)

The solution will appear on March 12, 2020.

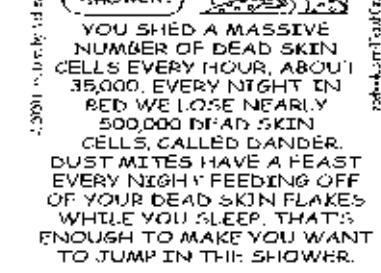
Solution No. 13322

F	I	R	E	W	O	R	K	R	A	N	G
I	E	O	E	F	M	R					
F	E	M	R	P	L	A	I	B	A	L	E
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PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



HOW MANY DEAD SKIN CELLS DO I SHED?



HOW MANY DEAD SKIN CELLS DO I SHED?

DO YOU HAVE A MASSIVE NUMBER OF DEAD SKIN CELLS EVERY HOUR?

ABOUT 35,000. EVERY NIGHT IN BED WE LOSE NEARLY 500,000 DEAD SKIN CELLS CALLED DANDER.

DUST MITES HAVE A FEAST EVERY NIGHT FEEDING OFF OF YOUR DEAD SKIN FLAKES WHILE YOU SLEEP. THAT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU WANT TO JUMP IN THE SHOWER.

Health Capsules is not intended to be a diagnostic resource.

19 Cold (5)

22 Sign up (5)

23 The writing and production of plays (7)

24 Really riled (8)

25 Priam's city (4)

■ Down

1 Stop talking! (4,4)

2 Russian Black Sea port, hosting the 2014 Winter Olympic Games (5)

14 London football team (4,3,6)

17 Angry stare (6)

4 Volunteer offering

AN-ND

Shubhangi bullish on women's team despite reverse

Former India skipper bats for a mental trainer and a women's IPL



On the rise: The wonderful run of the Women in Blue showed the spectacular progress they have made in the last one year. ■ ICC

T20 WORLD CUP

VIJAY LOKAPALLY
NEW DELHI

The loss may have been crushing and devastating for fans who were convinced the Cup was India's but the lessons have been huge too.

For former India captain Shubhangi Kulkarni, the journey at the ICC T20 women's World Cup was noth-

ing short of "glory on the best stage."

Speaking to *The Hindu* from USA, she insisted there was no reason to feel "gloomy" about the 85-run defeat against Australia on Sunday. "The gap between the teams looks big when you see the end result but the same girls beat Australia in the opening match."

"It only confirms the spectacular progress India has

made in the last one year."

Shubhangi pointed out the lack of support from players like Harmanpreet Kaur (30 in five innings) and Smriti Mandhana (49 in four).

Good fielding

"The star players did not perform. It hurt the team. Imagine what would have happened had they scored! I must say the Indian fielding was far better than most oth-

er teams. Earlier, fitness and fielding were issues. Not this time."

"Shafali (Verma) gave us great starts but most batters missed out on taking ones and twos. They kept getting out to shots in the air. Maybe, Smriti could have been cautious. Don't forget Alyssa Healy got an early reprieve. All this in hindsight, though."

Shubhangi, who played 19 Tests and 27 ODIs in a 15-year

The women's T20 World Cup in numbers

Batting

Name	Inn	Runs	HS	Avg.	S/R	50/100s
Beth Mooney (Aus)	6	259	81*	64.75	125.12	3/0
Alyssa Healy (Aus)	6	236	83	39.33	156.29	3/0
Natalie Sciver (Eng)	4	202	59*	67.33	113.48	3/0
Heather Knight (Eng)	4	193	108*	64.33	136.87	1/1
Shafali Verma (Ind)	5	163	47	32.60	158.25	0/0



Bowling

Name	M	Wkts	BB	Avg.	Econ.	4/5W
Megan Schutt (Aus)	6	13	4/18	10.30	6.33	1/0
Poonam Yadav (Ind)	5	10	4/19	11.90	5.95	1/0
Jess Jonassen (Aus)	6	10	3/20	14.00	6.08	0/0
Sophie Ecclestone (Eng)	4	8	3/7	6.12	3.23	0/0
Anya Shrubsole (Eng)	4	8	3/21	10.62	6.07	0/0



Faf's experience will come in handy: Boucher
Proteas' tour begins on March 12

SA IN INDIA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Former skipper Faf du Plessis' long experience of playing the IPL and international cricket in India will come in handy during the upcoming three-match ODI series, says South Africa head coach Mark Boucher.

The series starts in Dharamsala on March 12.

"If you go to a place like India, you need to find a balance between youth and experience. I think Faf is really doing well in ODI cricket. The last time he played, he got a hundred. He knows the Indian conditions very well," Boucher said at the team's pre-departure press conference on Sunday.

The South Africans reached India on Monday



and will take a chartered flight to Dharamsala on Tuesday. Boucher feels that having du Plessis also means he will have some selection headaches, which is a good thing to have.

"It's a good headache to have. Just him being around the squad will add a lot of value and experience. We will look at conditions and then put together combinations."

Y.B. SARANGI
RAJKOT

Amid a swift change in plot in the last one hour, gritty half-centuries by Avi Barot and Vishvaraj Singh Jadeja took Saurashtra to 206 for five on the opening day of the Ranji Trophy final against Bengal at the Saurashtra Cricket Association Stadium here on Monday.

Electing to bat, Saurashtra conceded some momentum when it lost three wickets and saw star batsman Cheteshwar Pujara (5) retiring owing to a throat infection.

Good start

Openers Harvik Desai (38, 111b, 5x4) and Avi Barot (54, 142b, 6x4) gave Saurashtra a

Breached: Vishvaraj Singh Jadeja becomes one of Akash Deep's three victims. ■ VIJAY SONEJI

solid start through a fine 82-run partnership on a batsman-friendly track. It was the best opening stand by any side against Bengal this season.

Displaying sound temperament and footwork, the home openers denied the visiting pacers any early ad-

vantage. They left the good deliveries and placed the loose ones in gaps. The pair also had the Bengal fielders, who failed to grab some difficult chances, to thank.

Left-arm spinner Shahbaz Ahmed, who bowled 20 overs on the trot in the first two sessions and posed some

questions, was the one who provided Bengal the breakthrough in the third over of the post-lunch session. Desai pushed at one to be caught at silly point.

Barot, who drove beautifully on both sides, put up another noteworthy partnership of 50 runs with a confi-

dent-looking Vishvaraj (54, 92b, 7x4) to strengthen Saurashtra's position. Young Vishvaraj, who played some crisp shots including three consecutive boundaries off Shahbaz, scored his second half-century inside three weeks.

Akash broke their association finding Barot's outside edge. The hard-working opener opted for the DRS, but could not extend his stay.

The Bengal bowlers found better line and length on a pitch that became slower.

The ball virtually rolled to the wicketkeeper on a few instances raised doubts of the match extending beyond four days.

Clutch of wickets

Bowling with a big heart, the strongly-built Akash breached Vishvaraj's defence with a delivery that cut in sharply. Three overs later, Ishan Porel trapped Sheldon

Jackson in front and Akash had nightwatchman Chetan Sakariya caught behind.

The health issues of Puja, who came in at No. 6 and could face only 24 deliveries owing to overnight throat infection and fever, affected Saurashtra's plans.

Captain Jaydev Unadkat expressed confidence that Puja would be fit on Tuesday.

The scores: Saurashtra – 1st innings: Harvik Desai c sub b Shahbaz 38, Avi Barot c Shah b Akash 54, Vishvaraj Singh Jadeja b Akash 54, Arpit Vasavada (batting) 29, Sheldon Jackson lbw b Porel 14, Cheteshwar Pujara retd. hurt 5, Chetan Sakariya c Saha b Akash 4; Extras (b-1, lb-5, nb-1, w-1): 8. (for five wkts. in 80.5 overs): 206.

Fall of wickets: 1-82, 2-113, 3-163, 4-182, 5-206.

Bengal bowling: Porel 16-5-37-1, Mukesh 22-3-55-0, Shahbaz 23-6-56-1, Akash 14.5-3-41-3, Nandi 5-1-11-0.

Toss: Saurashtra.

Love Rahul's style, says Lara

'He's got the skills to play all forms and secure his place'

SHAYAN ACHARYA
MUMBAI

It's been 13 years since Brian Lara quit the international scene, but the West Indies icon still keeps a tab on world cricket and considers K.L. Rahul his favourite batsman.

"Rahul is just class... he is my favourite. He is a great entertainer and a great person to watch bat," Lara said here on Monday.

Skilful
The former West Indies captain, however, clarified that even though India captain Virat Kohli is the best batsman in the world, he personally enjoys Rahul's style of play.

Despite enjoying success in the limited-overs series, Rahul was left out of India's Test squad against New Zealand last month, raising a few eyebrows.

But, Lara – here for the Unacademy Road Safety World Series, where he is captaining West Indies Legends – said Rahul has the skills to make it to any team, irrespective of the format.

"I don't know (why he was not included). I just know that with his technique and the way I see him bat, he should not have a problem being in any team," the 50-year-old said.

"He's got the skills to play all forms of the game and to



Up-to-date: Despite having retired 13 years ago, Lara keeps himself informed of events in world cricket. ■ VIVEK BENDRE

secure his place. He should be one of the first names after Virat Kohli in any Indian team," Lara stated.

The West Indies legend – not a big fan of day-night Tests – also believes it is time the longer format of the game is revived.

The solution

But what should be done?

"I think they have created that love and respect for the game in England and also in Australia in terms of a Boxing Day Test, or even any Ashes series, that's played there. That has to come back," Lara said.

Bangladesh goes 1-0 up

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
DHAKA

Soumya Sarkar and Liton Das struck half-centuries as Bangladesh registered a 48-run win against Zimbabwe in the first T20I on Monday.

Chasing 200, the visitors were bowled out for 152.

Sarkar smashed an unbeaten 62 off 32 balls after the in-form Liton had made

59 off 39 balls to entertain the home crowd.

Earlier, Liton set the platform with a 92-run opening stand with Tamim Iqbal, who made 41 off 33 balls.

The scores: Bangladesh 200/3 in 20 overs (Liton Das 59, Tamim Iqbal 41, Soumya Sarkar 62 n.o.) bt Zimbabwe 152 in 19 overs (Mustafizur Rahman 3/32, Aminul Islam 3/34).

BBC honour for Sindhu

Usha gets lifetime achievement award

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

P.V. Sindhu was voted as the BBC Indian Sportswoman of the Year here on Sunday.

She gained more popular votes than boxer Mary Kom, para-shuttle Manasi Joshi, sprinter Dutee Chand and wrestler Vinesh Phogat.

Sindhu, away in London for the upcoming All England badminton championship, said in a video message, "I would like to dedicate this award to my supporters and fans who have supported me and vot-

ed for me."

On the occasion of International Women's Day, legendary athlete P.T. Usha was bestowed the Lifetime Achievement Award.

"We did not have any facilities when I started my career," said Usha and continued, "I used to train alongside railway tracks and on beaches as there were no training spaces then. Things have changed a lot since then."

"I dedicated my Olympic quota to my uncle Raj Narayan, it's his birthday and he is someone who gives me a lot of courage," said Panghal. "I followed the instructions given by my coaches. I ensured that he didn't get on top of me. I think I was pretty consistent in all three rounds," Panghal said.

Next up for Panghal is China's Jianguan Hu, who

can win the box-off between losing quarterfinalists as the top six boxers will claim Tokyo tickets in the 63kg category.

Mary Kom books ticket to Tokyo

Panghal, too, makes it to Olympics; Kaushik still in the hunt

BOXING

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AMMAN (JORDAN)

Six-time World champion Mary Kom (51kg) and World No. 1 Amit Panghal (52kg) qualified for the Olympic Games, while Manish Kaushik (63kg) remained in the hunt for a Tokyo berth despite losing his quarterfinal bout at the Asia/Oceania Qualifiers here on Monday.

Second-seeded Mary Kom notched up a comfortable 5-0 win over the Philippines' Irish Magno in her quarterfinal bout to book a ticket to her second Olympics. She won a bronze in the 2012 London Games.

Panghal qualified for his maiden Olympics, edging out familiar foe Carlo Paalam of the Philippines in a 4-1 split quarterfinal verdict, while Kaushik lost 2-3 to third seed Chinzorig Baatarzukh of Mongolia after another intense battle.

"I dedicate my Olympic quota to my uncle Raj Narayan, it's his birthday and he is someone who gives me a lot of courage," said Panghal. "I followed the instructions given by my coaches. I ensured that he didn't get on top of me. I think I was pretty consistent in all three rounds," Panghal said.

Next up for Panghal is China's Jianguan Hu, who

TV PICKS

Ranji Trophy: Final, day two, Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 9.30 a.m.
Legends World T20 Series: India vs Sri Lanka, Colors Cinemax (SD & HD), 7 p.m.
Champions League: Sony Ten 1 & Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 1.30 a.m. (Wednesday)

IN BRIEF



James-Davis combine to beat Clippers

LOS ANGELES
LeBron James and Anthony Davis combined for 58 points as Los Angeles Lakers beat Los Angeles Clippers for the first time this season with a 112-104 NBA victory on Sunday. James scored 28 points and dished out nine assists while Davis finished with a team-high 30 points in the showdown between the two best teams in the Western Conference.
The results: Nets 110 bt Bulls 107; Pelicans 120 bt Timberwolves 107; Lakers 112 bt Clippers 103; Thunder 105 bt Celtics 104; Suns 140 bt Bucks 131; Heat 100 bt Wizards 89; Pacers 112 bt Mavericks 109; Magic 126 bt Rockets 106; Cavaliers 132 bt Spurs 129 (OT); Knicks 96 bt Pistons 84; Raptors 118 bt Kings 113. AGENCIES

East Bengal scrapes past Real Kashmir

SRINAGAR
East Bengal edged Real Kashmir 1-0 in an ill-tempered I-League clash in which two home team players and one from the visiting side were sent off here on Monday. The lone goal was scored by Spaniard Victor Perez from a penalty in the fifth minute of added time. East Bengal is now second spot with 23 points from 16 matches, while fourth-placed Kashmir has 22 points from 15. PTI



CAS scraps long jumper Lawson's doping ban

LAUSANNE
The Court of Arbitration for Sport said on Monday it had struck down a four-year doping ban imposed on world long jump silver medallist Jarrion Lawson, finding him innocent of "fault or negligence". AFP

Fed Cup junior athletics postponed

NEW DELHI
The 18th Federation Cup National junior athletics championships, scheduled to be held from April 6-8 in Bhopal, was on Monday postponed till further notice due to the coronavirus outbreak. The Athletics Federation of India took the decision after the 19th Asian junior championships, to be held in Bangkok from May 14-17, was cancelled for the same reason. PTI

Road to Wimbledon from Mar. 15

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Some of best Indian junior boys and girls will be in action in the Road to Wimbledon under-14 tennis tournament to be played at the Calcutta South Club, Kolkata, and the Delhi Gymkhana here from March 15 to 19.

Manas Dhamne, Vansh Nandal, Rushil Khosla, Vinay Rathee, R.S. Rethin Pranav and Manan Nath will be some of the boys competing in a knock-out draw of 16 players in Kolkata.

The girls' event in Delhi will have Shruti Ahlawat, Riya Sachdeva, Saumya Ronde, Samiksha Dabas, Sahira Singh and Ridhi Choudhary among others. The girls No. 1 Chandini Srinivasan from Telengana has pulled out.

The winner and runner-up, from the two grass court events, will compete in the UK under-14 championship in Wimbledon in April.

Real cedes top spot to Barcelona

Loses to Real Betis; Juventus beats Inter to top Serie A

EURO LEAGUES

AGENCIES
SEVILLE

Real Madrid failed to build on last week's *Clasico* victory as it lost 2-1 to Real Betis in a fiery match on Sunday and surrendered top spot in *La Liga* to Barcelona.

Former Barca forward Cristian Tello grabbed the decisive late goal that saw his old team regain the lead in the see-saw title race.

Real is now second on 56 points after 27 games, two behind Barca which beat Real Sociedad on Saturday to regain first place a week after losing at the Bernabeu.

Moment of confusion

Betis had gone ahead in the 40th minute after a moment of confusion as it appealed for a penalty when Sergio Ramos collided into Nabil Fekir but the loose ball landed at the feet of defender Sidnei who rifled it into the roof of the net.

The Brazilian's joy was cut short when he was penalised for tripping Marcelo in the area and Karim Benzema



Firing it in: Aaron Ramsey shoots through a maze of legs to score Juventus' first goal. ■ REUTERS

converted from the spot, his first goal in seven matches in all competitions.

Betis captain Joaquin missed an open goal in the second half and Real defender Ferland Mendy hammered a shot against the bar but Tello decided an end-to-end game in the 82nd minute, keeping his composure to beat Thibaut Courtois and find the net.

His goal ensured a third defeat in four matches in all

competitions for Madrid.

Dybala stars in win

A wonderful winning goal from substitute Paulo Dybala sent Juventus back to the top of Serie A with a 2-0 victory over title rival Inter Milan at an empty Allianz Stadium on Sunday.

Midfielder Ramsey fired home the first goal from close range soon after the break and was also involved in the second.

Juventus's Argentine forward Dybala exchanged passes with the Wales international on the edge of the area before dribbling around defender Ashley Young and showing great invention to find the bottom corner with the outside of his boot.

Quick reactions

Inter goalkeeper Samir Handanovic returned from injury and it was grateful to have the Slovenian back as he

Mohun Bagan on the cusp of glory

Kolkata giant is a win away from regaining crown

I-LEAGUE

AMITABHA DAS SHARMA
KOLKATA

For former champion Mohun Bagan, regaining the I-League title now is a mere formality. Having already created a new mark with a 13-match unbeaten run, Bagan needs just two points to secure the crown that it last won in 2015.

Currently on 36 points from 15 matches, Bagan can make its final season in the I-League memorable if it wins

at home against Aizawl FC at Kalyani Stadium on Tuesday.

It will also mean that Bagan becomes the second team after Dempo FC (in 2009-2010) to ensure the title with four rounds to spare.

Bagan's task became easier on Monday after traditional rival East Bengal got the better of Real Kashmir FC with an injury-time winner in Srinagar.

With most sides having five more rounds to play, the best any of Bagan's challengers can now manage is 38

points. A win over Aizawl will thus be enough to make Bagan's position at the top unassailable.

Bagan's Spanish head coach, Kibu Vicuna, adopted a professional stance on the eve of the match that in all likelihood will bring a historic triumph to his side.

"Aizawl is playing well and is a difficult side to beat. We need to bring out our best if we want to get the result that we are looking for," said Vicuna as he adopted a cautious approach especially after the hard-earned

draw in the last match at home against holder Chennai City FC.

Key players suspended

Bagan's earlier meeting with Aizawl – the opening round match at the latter's home three months ago – ended goalless.

What made Vicuna even more circumspect was the fact that the host will be missing key defender Francisco Morante owing to suspension.

Despite lying ninth currently, Aizawl has done fairly

well in its last five outings securing eight points, most of which came from 'away' engagements.

"The pressure is on them (Bagan) now as they drew their last match with Chennai City.

"My players are ready to take them on and are looking forward for a positive result."

"In football, everything is possible," said the seasoned Aizawl FC coach, Stanley Rozario, while setting the tone for the upcoming action.

Indian Wells tournament cancelled

First major US sports event to be hit by coronavirus outbreak



Huge attendance: The BNP Paribas Open at Indian Wells draws more than 400,000 fans each year. ■ AFP

TENNIS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LOS ANGELES

The ATP and WTA tennis tournament in Indian Wells has been cancelled over fears surrounding the new coronavirus outbreak, making it the first major sports event in the US to be scrubbed due to health concerns.

The tournament, one of the biggest outside the four tennis Grand Slams, was cancelled just days before it was due to begin.

Officials said in a news release on Sunday they opted to cancel because California health officials had declared a public health emergency for the Coachella Valley after a confirmed case of COVID-19. "We are very disappointed that the tournament will not take place, but the

health and safety of the local community, fans, players, volunteers, sponsors, employees, vendors, and everyone involved with the event is of paramount importance," said tournament director Tommy Haas.

Days earlier, organisers had said they planned to go ahead with extra health measures in place such as hand-sanitising stations, improved cleaning protocols and gloves for ball kids, volunteers and food workers. The ATP and WTA had also issued virus-related guidelines, telling players not to accept items from fans to be autographed.

The tournament, one of the biggest outside the four tennis Grand Slams, was cancelled just days before it was due to begin.

Before the cancellation, the tournament had offered to give refunds to anyone who had bought tickets, but did not want to attend. The tournament draws more

than 400,000 fans each year.

Many of the players had already arrived in Indian Wells with qualifying matches scheduled to start on Monday and the main women's draw beginning on Wednesday. "I'm shook," Canadian tennis star Denis Shapovalov wrote on his Twitter page.

The number of coronavirus cases in the US has exceeded 500 spread across more than 30 States.

The fifth Slam

Indian Wells lasts two weeks and draws some of the largest crowds for a tennis event in North America.

The number of competitors and lucrative prize money being offered for the men and women has helped earn it the nickname of 'The Fifth Slam'.

Sri Lanka squad for England Test series

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka on Monday named a 16-member squad, including two injured players, for the two-match Test series against England starting next week.

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) said Kusal Perera was included even though the injury-hit wicketkeeper may only

be fit to play in about two weeks.

Another injured player, Wanindu Hasaranga, was also named in the squad despite never having played at that level before.

A replacement for Hasaranga will be named before the first Test on March 19 in Galle, SLC said.

The second Test is due to

Tottenham faces an uphill task

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LEIPZIG

The global virus outbreak will be the centre of attention when the Champions League resumes this week with second-leg matches in the round of 16.

The host had the better chances in a lively first half, but Marcelo Brozovic forced Juve keeper Wojciech Szczesny into a sharp save with a powerful drive before the break.

Juventus found the breakthrough 10 minutes into the second half when Matuidi's cutback was taken off the toe of Cristiano Ronaldo by Inter defender Alessandro Bastoni, only to fall into the path of Ramsey who drilled a shot home via a deflection.

The results: LaLiga: Villarreal 1 (Gerard 5) lost to Leganes 2 (Rodriguez 47, 70-pen); Real Betis 2 (Sidnei 40, Tello 82) bt Real Madrid 1 (Benzema 45+3-pen); Levante 1 (Roger 11) drew with Granada 1 (Machis 60).

Serie A: Udinese 0 drew with Fiorentina 0; Juventus 2 (Ramsey 55, Dybala 67) bt Inter Milan 0.

Bundesliga: Mainz 1 (Oztunal 62) drew with Fortuna Dusseldorf 1 (Karaman 85); Bayern Munich 2 (Muller 53, Goretzka 90+1) bt Augsburg 0.

while preparing for the trip to Germany, complaining about the commitment of a fit player – record-signing Tangy Ndombela.

German news agency DPA reported Monday that the game would go ahead as scheduled with fans, citing the Leipzig city government.

No fans

In the day's other game, Atalanta has a 4-1 lead from the first leg and won't have to worry about Valencia's fans as the Italian team tries to reach the quarterfinals for the first time.

The game will be played without fans present as Spain tries to slow the spread of the new coronavirus.

UEFA Champions League 2019-20

LAST 16, 2ND LEG - MAR 10 CL form W D L

VALÈNCIA v ATALANTA		
Camp de Mestalla		
First leg result:	1-4	
Head-to-head		
Won 1	Drawn 0	Won 1
Form	10/11	12/13
Goals for / against	4	10
Shots on target	5	5
Shots wide	5	5
Passes	413	401
Corners	6	4
Possession	48%	52%

LEIPZIG v TOTTENHAM		
Red Bull Arena		
First leg result:	1-0	
Head-to-head		
Won 1	Drawn 0	Won 0
Form	11/8	18/15
Goals for / against	6	5
Shots on target	4	4
Shots wide	4	4
Passes	338	500
Corners	6	7
Possession		

Sehwag applauds Tendulkar's win obsession

'I enjoyed batting with him and watching from the other end'



Rolling back the years: Virender Sehwag and Sachin Tendulkar once again provided the entertainment in a big win. ■ VIVEK BENDRE

Kohli's success because of hard work, says Kaluwitharana

Jayawardene was an intelligent player and a great ambassador for Sri Lankan cricket'



NANDAKUMAR MARAN
MUMBAI

Romesh Kaluwitharana, a cheeky batsman able to starle fast bowlers with his power-hitting in the 50-overs format, is part of the Sri Lanka Legends squad in the Unacademy Road Safety World Series.

The Lankan opener and member of the 2006 World Cup-winning team, admires Mahela Jayawardene's batting, rates Virat Kohli as favourite batsman among the current lot and advises

youngsters below 19 to keep away from the Twenty20 format.

Excerpts:

On playing for Sri Lanka Legends

We had a good start, happy to beaten the mighty Australia Legends. They played good cricket, we sneaked through.

It feels great to be back in Mumbai and playing cricket for a cause.

Present player across formats he will pay to watch

There are many players I

T20 alone will not make you a tactically and technically sound cricketer

like. Nowadays, I would like to watch the India captain.

Virat Kohli gets runs all the time, consistency and hard work pay off. I like to see him bat because in any format, under any conditions, he is successful.

On Jayawardene's success in T20s

Mahela has been a great ambassador for Sri Lankan

cricket. He was an intelligent player, maximised his ability. He put a lot of thought into his batting.

Never a power-hitter, he got big scores in T20 because of his ability to find the gaps.

Value of skills to be effective across formats

Any batsman with skills can do well. Even in T20 you don't need to be a power-hitter, because what is necessary is to get more than run-a-ball when you are batting.

Placing the ball into gaps and playing intelligent cricket is effective.

Advice to young cricketers hooked on T20s

At 19, I don't think you should look at T20 cricket too much. Because at that age you are developing and learning how to build innings, build your career.

There is always a risk factor if the focus is on T20 alone. It will not give you the necessary edge to become a tactically and technically sound cricketer. I would not advise any player to start off with T20.

I want to give the country an Olympic gold'

Vikas Krishan acknowledges the support of BFI and its coaches

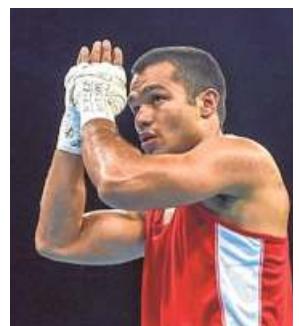
BOXING

Y.B. SARANGI
RAJKOT

Despite shuffling between amateur and professional boxing, seasoned boxer Vikas Krishan has handled the challenges well to ensure an Olympic quota place in the 69kg category.

Vikas – a former World youth champion, youth Olympics medal winner, World championships bronze medallist and an Asian Games gold medallist – had switched to professional boxing in 2018, but returned to the amateur fold late last year to chase his ultimate dream of winning an Olympic medal.

After securing a quota place, in the Asia/Oceania



Vikas Krishan. ■ FILE PHOTO

"It was difficult to switch from amateur to professional and vice versa. I trained overtime to make it look easy. I want to give the country an Olympic gold."

Neeraj's advice

The 28-year-old, who weighs around 70kg, followed his friend and professional boxer Neeraj Goyat's advice to jump back from 75kg to 69kg. He acknowledged the support of the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) and its coaches, who took care of his switch-back to amateur boxing.

Vikas said his maturity worked to his advantage in Amman. "I have become more mature now and it helped me in the ring. I was never under immense pressure, which is generally seen

in amateur boxers. "I have boxed at Madison Square Garden and other places in New York. So that helped me deal with pressure as boxing is a mind game."

Past and present

One of the finest boxers India has ever produced, Vikas has enjoyed his journey for more than a decade. "I boxed with two generations – Vijender Singh, Jitender Kumar, Akhil Kumar, Dinesh Kumar and Jai Bhagwan in the past and Amit Panghal, Satish Kumar and Manish Kaushik now."

"The previous generation was tough and the present one too is tough. I love the boxing sense of both generations and the way Indian boxing has been growing," he said.

Zeel's zeal impresses Clark

TENNIS

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

It's not easy to win against a player who has the home advantage. Zeel Desai realised this after battling it out for nearly four hours – three hours and 55 minutes, to be exact – before being beaten by top seed Sandra Samir of Egypt in the ITF women's final in Cairo on Sunday.

The title may have eluded her, but the 21-year-old Zeel, accompanied by coach Todd Clark, got a firm grip on her game and temperament during the campaign.

By getting past quality opponents with authority, prior to the summit clash, Zeel showed that she had improved by leaps and bounds. To prove her all-round ability, she made the doubles final.

For someone who was quite impressive at the junior level, reaching a career-best rank of No. 18 in 2017,



Pleased as punch: Clark, right, says it is great to see Zeel evolve, both physically and psychologically.

Zeel looked to have made a smooth transition to the senior grade when she won the women's title in the ITF circuit the same year, in Gwadar. It takes time to gain experience, and Zeel has spent

the next three weeks when she competes in Tunisia.

Tough competitor

"It is great to see an athlete evolve, both physically and mentally. Zeel competed from the first point until the last, and physically was in good shape at the end of the match," said Clark, pleased with his ward's performance as well as the composure with which she handled the contest.

"Zeel is becoming more professional in all aspects of her training and match play. It is exciting to watch," said the coach. "She is learning from each and every match, regardless of the outcome. Today's match [the final] was no exception. I am confident that the result [loss] will further strengthen Zeel's mental resolve," said Clark.

For a tough Australian like Clark, there is no room for excuses. Zeel is on the right track and moving ahead at a brisk pace, a positive sign for Indian women's tennis.

LEGENDS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

In keeping with his gift for timing when batting, Virender Sehwag drew a parallel between safety in cricket and road safety.

The opener was responding to questions after an entertaining 74 not out for India Legends against West Indies Legends. He used the pace off the Wankhede track, was in his comfort zone when rocking back for sizzling cuts and backed his instincts for brutal strokes in an unbeaten knock, laced with 11 boundaries, to walk away with the Man of the Match award in the Unacademy Road Safety World Series opening game.

Asked about safety in cricket and on the road, Sehwag said: "If I go out to bat without helmet or pads, the chances of getting hurt is higher. "Wearing a seatbelt when driving is as critical. Awareness about road safety is very important."

The game – won by seven wickets by India Legends –

was played in front of packed stands. "I was surprised at the crowd coming to watch us. I was not expecting a full house, so thanks to the Mumbai crowd," Sehwag said, adding: "I enjoyed batting with Tendulkar and watching him from the other end."

The two crowd-pullers rolled back the years. Sehwag quipped: "A few strokes by him in the PowerPlays were amazing."

"Watching him explode into those shots gave the impression that he is still competing and not retired. He is focussed on winning this game. Tendulkar is serious, whether gully cricket or an international match, he tries to win."

Sehwag brought out a humorous aspect from the first wicket stand with the India captain.

"Tendulkar told me not to take risks, then would tap the ball and attempt a quick run, or would call me for a second and then decide against it.

"It was fun. We tease each other, but his seriousness at cricket is appreciated."

Holi masti, wholly maska!



Amul
Khilao, peela lao!

daCunha/AB/589

Australia rules out fan ban for opener

FORMULA ONE

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MELBOURNE

Australian Formula One chiefs on Monday ruled out any chance of the opening Grand Prix of the year following the lead of Bahrain and barring spectators because of the coronavirus.

■ We've got to go around things sensibly and keep moving on through life while taking the necessary precautions, says the organiser

■ On Sunday, Bahrain had announced that it would hold the race behind closed doors

moving on through life while taking the necessary precautions."

Most Formula One teams are already in Australia or en route, including powerhouse Ferrari and Alpha Tauri from their bases in Italy, where swathes of the country are now in lockdown in a bid to halt the spread of the virus.

No travel ban
There were fears that the Australian government could bar travel from Italy, which would have prevented staff from the two teams being considered.

"When you look at 86,000 at the Melbourne Cricket Ground last night, and the footy the week after, we've got to go around things sensibly and keep



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