



Rahul Gandhi hits out at Modi on the state of the economy
page 12



No doubtful category in NPR even if a person fails to give details: Shah
page 12



SBI board clears ₹7,250 crore investment in troubled Yes Bank
page 15



IPL 2020 likely to be played in empty stadiums
page 18

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NEARBY



CBI seeks maximum punishment for Sengar
NEW DELHI
The CBI on Thursday sought maximum punishment for expelled BJP MLA Kuldeep Sengar and others, who have been held guilty in the two cases linked to the death of the Unnao rape victim's father in 2018.

NATION ▶ PAGE 9

'FT members' term linked to conviction rate'
GUWAHATI
The Assam government decides the tenure of a Foreigners' Tribunal member based on how many foreigners he or she declares, Amnesty International said, basing its assertion on the performance appraisal data submitted by the State in an affidavit in court.

NORTH & EAST ▶ PAGE 6

7 arrested for head constable's murder
NEW DELHI

Seven persons have been arrested in connection with the killing of head constable Ratan Lal during riots in north-east Delhi's Gokulpuri last month. The police said that "a conspiracy was hatched to attack the police party" and that the accused are "both conspirators as well as active rioters".

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

FRIDAY REVIEW ▶ 4 PAGES

India's first COVID-19 death in Karnataka; cases touch 74

Fresh cases in Maharashtra, Delhi, Ladakh, A.P., U.P.; MEA advises BCCI against IPL

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BENGALURU/NEW DELHI

Health officials in Karnataka reported the country's first COVID-19 death late on Thursday after samples of a 76-year-old man, who was a suspected COVID-19 patient and passed away on Tuesday night, tested positive for the disease. The patient from Kalaburagi also had co-morbidities such as asthma, hypertension and diabetes.

He had returned from Saudi Arabia on February 29. According to reports, he fell ill soon after and was admitted to a private hospital and later shifted to the Gulbarga Institute of Medical Sciences (GIMS). His throat swab was sent to check for COVID-19 infection.

Despite efforts by the District Health Official to convince his family that he be shifted to the GIMS isolation ward, he was transferred to a private hospital in Hyderabad. Later, he was discharged from the hospital and was being brought back to Kalaburagi when he died en route.

The Union Health Ministry confirmed the COVID-19 death in a late night statement.

Karnataka Health Commissioner Pankaj Kumar Pandey, who confirmed that



Gear up: An ambulance driver at a screening and isolation facility at the Government Medical College, Ernakulam, on Wednesday. ■ THULASI KAKKAT

the patient's samples tested positive for COVID-19, said contact tracing, isolation and other measures as per protocol are being carried out. The government of Telangana has also been informed.

Earlier in the day, the Union Health Ministry said the number of patients in the country has risen to 74, with fresh cases reported from Maharashtra, Delhi, Ladakh, Andhra Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh, as well as one foreign national. India is still seeing local transmission, the ministry said.

The rise in the number came a day after the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a global pandemic.

Health Department notification dated March 11, the Governor issued certain regulations to contain the spread of the disease. The regulations came into force immediately and will remain valid for a year. ▶ PAGE 14

The Ministry of External Affairs advised the BCCI not to go ahead with the cash-rich Indian Premier League (IPL). Following a directive from the Sports Ministry, the remaining two ODIs between India and South Africa in Lucknow and Kolkata, and the Indian Super League football tournament final in Goa are among the events to be played in empty stadiums.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

43 ISOLATED ▶ PAGE 8

CENTRE JUSTIFIES VISA SUSPENSION ▶ PAGE 12

NOT A TIME TO PANIC ▶ EDITORIAL

No travel from Europe: Trump

President Donald Trump has suspended travel from Europe to the U.S. for 30 days in an effort to halt the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. The ban will not include travellers from the U.K. ▶ PAGE 14

Regulations in place in Haryana

Haryana declared COVID-19 an epidemic on Thursday.

According to a Health Department notification dated March 11, the Governor issued certain regulations to contain the spread of the disease. The regulations came into force immediately and will remain valid for a year. ▶ PAGE 5

Vaccine at least two years away

Senior health officials have said a COVID-19 vaccine will take at least two years to develop, even with expedited clinical trials and approvals. Indian scientists have managed to isolate the COVID-19 virus. ▶ PAGE 9

Delhi declares COVID-19 an epidemic, shuts schools, colleges and cinemas

L-G holds meeting with CM Kejriwal, reviews preparedness

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The COVID-19 was declared an epidemic by the Delhi government on Thursday. Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal chaired a meeting at Raj Niwas with Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to review the preparedness to contain the disease.

All cinemas, schools and colleges – except those where exams are on – will remain shut till March 31. Disinfecting all public and private places will be made compulsory.

The Delhi government is preparing more quarantine facilities.

As a related measure, Rashtrapati Bhavan will remain closed for exploratory tour visits from March 13 till further notice. In addition, the Rashtrapati Bhavan Museum Complex and the



A DTC bus being disinfected in the city on Thursday. ■ PTI

Change of Guard ceremony will also not be open to public till further notice.

'Fully prepared'

"All the officials of the Delhi government, as well as Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain, were present today at the meeting with the L-G. The Delhi government is fully prepared to handle the corona crisis. All the measures in the wake of the outbreak were reviewed today," Mr. Kejriwal told reporters after

the meeting.

"We have sufficient beds in case people are to be quarantined. We are arranging DUSIB [Delhi Urban Shelter Improvement Board] flats which have remained unoccupied for long, and rooms in under-construction hospitals of the Delhi government. More than 500 beds are ready to be installed in Delhi government hospitals," he added.

MORE REPORTS ON ▶ PAGE 5

M.P. Speaker serves notice on 13 rebel MLAs

They should say they quit on their own

SIDHARTH YADAV

BHOPAL

Amid the political turmoil in Madhya Pradesh, Assembly Speaker N.P. Prajapati has served notice on 13 rebel MLAs, asking them to appear before him immediately and attest that they had resigned of their own accord as legislators.

Six of them in Bengaluru were served notice on Wednesday.

Rajya Sabha member Vivek Tankha, in Bhopal to contain the situation, said, "It's odd that the BJP has brought their letters, while the MLAs have not appeared themselves. They are being held hostage with their mobile phones off. Even Congress members can't contact them."

On Thursday, Mr. Prajapati told reporters, "Today, I am going to serve notice on another seven. The Speaker is bound by rules and regulations. And it is his duty to follow them. Accordingly, he is acting."

The Speaker has asked the MLAs to verify in person that they had submitted their resignations independently and under no duress.

The letters of 19 of the 22

rebel MLAs were carried by former BJP Minister Bhupendra Singh from a Bengaluru resort to the Speaker on Tuesday.

Sources in the Assembly said the Speaker would serve notice on the remaining six MLAs on Friday.

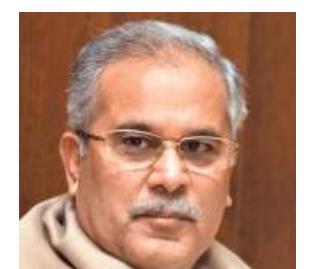
Rajya Sabha member Vivek Tankha, in Bhopal to contain the situation, said, "It's odd that the BJP has brought their letters, while the MLAs have not appeared themselves. They are being held hostage with their mobile phones off. Even Congress members can't contact them."

He said that if the BJP continued holding Congress MLAs "hostage", the party might take legal recourse.

HIGH DRAMA ▶ PAGE 13
I HAVE SACRIFICED EVERYTHING, SAYS SCINDIA ▶ PAGE 13

Nath govt. will survive BJP machinations: Baghel

'MLAs feel betrayed by Scindia's move'



Bhupesh Baghel ■ R.V. MOORTHY

bargaining for a Rajya Sabha ticket, and they feel betrayed by Mr. Scindia's move.

The feedback that we have is that the MLAs who supposedly left the Congress feel deceived. They were taken on the pretext of

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

NPR work in T.N. put on hold: Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu government has "put on hold" work towards updating the National Population Register (NPR) in the State, pending certain clarifications sought on the issue from the Centre.

"So far, the notification for updating the NPR has not been issued. We will take it up only after we receive clarification from the Centre. Until then, the updating of the NPR has been put on hold," Revenue Minister R.B. Udhayakumar told journalists in Chennai on Thursday.

The government has sought clarifications from the Centre over three specific questions pertaining to the mother tongue, details of the parents and spouse of the resident during enumeration.

Supreme Court refers appeal against posters to larger Bench

But no stay on March 9 order of Allahabad High Court

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

NEW DELHI

A Supreme Court Bench on Thursday did not stay an Allahabad High Court order to the district and police authorities in Lucknow to "forthwith" remove roadside banners displaying the personal details of persons accused of "vandalism" during the anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) protests in December 2019.

It ordered that the case be listed before an appropriate Bench in the coming week.

The court reopens after Holi vacations on March 16.

On March 9, a High Court Bench, led by Chief Justice U.U. Lalit and Aniruddha Bose did not interfere with the High Court order. Noting that the



The Allahabad High Court held that the posters were a violation of privacy.

fundamental right which globally "underpins human dignity and key values of a democracy".

'Elaboration needed'

On Thursday, the Vacation Bench of Justices U.U. Lalit and Aniruddha Bose did not interfere with the High Court order. Noting that the

wayside posters were a violation of individual privacy, a

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

controversy involved "issues which need further elaboration and consideration", it referred the appeal filed by the Uttar Pradesh government to a larger Bench, to be set up by Chief Justice of India S.A. Bobde "immediately".

Significantly, the High Court had ordered the Lucknow District Magistrate and police chief to remove the posters without delay and file a compliance report on March 16. With no express stay on the High Court order by the Supreme Court, it is to be seen if the State would take down the posters.

Justice Lalit remarked that the State's action was not "covered in law".

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 12

'Never aspired to be CM, want resurgence first'

Rajinikanth shies away from specifying if and when he will launch his political party

UDHAV NAIG

CHENNAI

Claiming that he never aspired to be Chief Minister, actor Rajinikanth on Thursday propagated three political ideas, as a 'preview' to his brand of politics, and declared that he wanted to "see a wave of resurgence" and an endorsement from them before taking the political plunge.

Though he felt that in the absence of former Chief Ministers M. Karunanidhi and Jayalalithaa this was an opportunity moment to oust the Dravidian parties and create a 1967-like "revolution", he did not specify if and when he would launch his political party.

He did not take any questions at the "press conference" he convened in the city, where he delivered a 30-minute speech.

Mr. Rajinikanth said he wanted to separate the party leadership and the government, induct talented youngsters into politics and create a party council (headed by him), which would appoint a capable and young Chief Minister (and Council of Ministers), and abolish thousands of party posts to prevent party functionaries from influencing governance.

'Push for change'

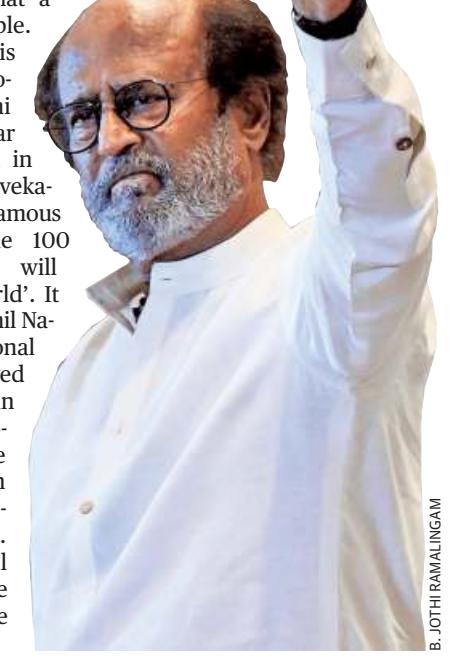
"People voted 30% for the DMK and the AIADMK and 70% for Kalaignar (Karunanidhi) and Jayalalithaa. This is the best time to enter politics and push for change. We need to create an uprising, revolution, a wave that will sweep away the power of money, men and party structure. I believe that it is possible in Tamil Nadu," he said.

Mr. Rajinikanth said he urged his fans to take this message to every corner of Tamil Nadu. "I want to see that uprising among the people. This should spread throughout India - party and government should be separated," he said.

"Don't do it for Rajinikanth...for Tamil Nadu and people of Tamil Nadu. Political revolution must explode. Otherwise, what is the point? I will just be one of the players - getting 15-20% - and merely divide votes. Do I get another chance? Am I 44 or 50? I am 71. I have survived (after health setback). My body is patched up. I will be 76 in 2026. When you don't accept my idea now, how will you accept it in 2026? Let me see the uprising, revolution among people, I will come then," he said.

Mr. Rajinikanth said that miracles and revolutions are possible in Tamil Nadu.

"I believe that a change is possible. Tamil Nadu is known for revolutions. Gandhi decided to wear only loincloth in Tamil Nadu. Vivekananda said his famous lines 'Give me 100 youngsters, I will change the world'. It was here in Tamil Nadu that a regional party dislodged the Congress in the 1960s. People should make it happen again in the 2021 Assembly polls. The people will make a miracle happen," he signed off.



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Gurdwara volunteers did their bit, fed 15,000 riot victims daily

Medical teams comprising doctors, nurses and pharmacists also sent to help victims

SHINJINI GHOSH

NEW DELHI
Volunteers of the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee had delivered food to around 15,000 riot victims, who had not shifted to relief camps, in north-east Delhi on a daily basis from February 26 to March 7. Many of them who had visited the riot-affected areas said that it would take generations to heal the trauma that the violence had left behind.

Twenty six-year-old Rajphinder Singh, a volunteer said: "There are no words to describe what we saw and it is really difficult to express. All these years we had only heard about the 1984 riots from our family members. But after volunteering here, I realised what the situation must have been then. When we distributed the langar, elderly Muslim women broke down and thanked us for the help extended to them. When the trucks reached their area, their eyes literally lit up. The violence and trauma which these people had gone through would take generations to heal."

Volunteers said that the



Volunteers of the Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee distributing food packets to victims of communal clash in Mustafabad. ■ FILE PHOTO: SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

trucks, which made two trips a day to the affected areas, started around 6 a.m. and returned only around 10 p.m. after the second shift.

Harbhej Singh, another volunteer who visited Bhajarpura, Seelampur and Majupur, said: "We had gone there for sewa. People were not able to step out during that period as curfew was imposed. So we went into the lanes till the point vehicles could reach and delivered

food. Food for around 15,000 people was cooked daily."

Medical teams in ambulances comprising doctors, nurses, ward boys and pharmacists were also sent to the area.

Dr. Milap Singh, who was part of the medical team, said: "When we reached there [a day after the violence stopped], several people locked themselves in their houses due to the curfew. Over the two days that I visited,

around 200 people turned up daily for treatment. Most of them were the ones with minor injuries who were not hospitalized."

DGMC president Manjinder Singh Sirsa said: "We provided relief material separately to the government when they asked for it. Doctors were also sent as children were falling ill. Around 60 volunteers and four medical teams were deployed from February 26 to March 7."

Exams at Shiv Vihar school postponed after protest

Relatives of a victim demanded that the school be re-sealed

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI
The Delhi High Court on Thursday issued notice to the police and AAP government on a petition which alleged that hate speeches were made by Congress leaders Sonia Gandhi, Salman Khurshid and BJP's Anurag Thakur and Kapil Mishra.

A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice C. Hari Shankar gave the direction on the plea filed by one Deepak Madan, who also sought registration of cases against those allegedly making hate speeches and setting up of a special investigation team to assess property damage in last month's riots in north-east Delhi.

The petition also sought the attachment of properties of people allegedly involved in making hate speeches and suggested selling them off to compensate riot victims.

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Examinations at Rajdhani Senior Secondary Public School in north-east Delhi's Shiv Vihar have been postponed a day after locals protested demanding that the school be re-sealed.

The school's principal Sadaf Faisal said that they are managing the internal process at the moment and will reschedule the examinations in due course. "Yesterday [Wednesday], there was a protest outside the school. Nothing happened on Thursday and police helped us to ensure normalcy. The examinations were to begin from Wednesday but given the situation, it'll be worked upon again," she said.

Students worried

Two Class 12 students, who are taking examinations through open school, came to check whether they'll be

able to take the exams.

"We have our practical exams next month. Came here to check whether exams are happening or not. It's quite worrying," said Nishat.

On Wednesday, locals led by Hari Singh Solanki, whose son was killed during the communal violence on February 24, protested opening of the school and demanded that it be sealed again. He said that his son Rahul died in an attack al-

legedly mounted from the terrace of the school.

Mr. Solanki said that he won't let the examinations be conducted in the school which he called "a den of death that doesn't deserve the presence of innocent children", adding that the school had weapons, a slingshot and petrol bombs.

However, police maintained that adequate evidence was collected from the school and there was no need for it to remain shut.



Residents on a dharna outside Rajdhani Senior Secondary Public School at Shiv Vihar on Wednesday. ■ FILE PHOTO: SANDEEP SAXENA

Communal clash cases hearing adjourned

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI
The Delhi High Court on Thursday deferred till March 20 the hearing on a batch of petitions related to recent riots that broke out in the Capital's north-east area.

A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice C. Hari Shankar adjourned the hearing after Solicitor General Tushar Mehta sought time to submit the detailed reply of the government.

The Bench directed the Centre to submit its reply on or before March 16.

During the brief proceeding, senior advocate Colin Gonsalves, appearing for petitioner Harsh Mander, urged that he be allowed to argue his case in the afternoon session. Mr. Mander has sought lodging of FIRs against three BJP leaders over their alleged hate speeches.

The Supreme Court had earlier this month remarked that it was "unjustified" on the part of the Delhi High Court to delay hearing the pleas for arrest and prosecution of leaders, who instigated the communal rampage.

NGO alleges gaps in government measures for riot survivors

Nodal officers are unreachable, non-responsive, unsympathetic'



Family members of a victim outside GTB Hospital in the city. ■ FILE PHOTO: SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

written in it. Further, despite giving information to the doctors about being injured during the riot, her MLC was not registered as a "Disaster MLC", the letter said.

Explaining about the nodal officers not working properly, the JSA said in the letter, "While phone numbers of nodal officers have been provided to us and help desks have been set up, they have been unable to facilitate patients at the hospitals."

MLC record
In one instance, a woman, injured in the communal violence, demanded an MLC record from GTB Hospital and was told to access it from the police as the hospital did not have a photocopy machine'. She was also not allowed to see the MLC record and what was

written in it. Further, despite giving information to the doctors about being injured during the riot, her MLC was not registered as a "Disaster MLC", the letter said.

Explaining about the nodal officers not working properly, the JSA said in the letter, "While phone numbers of nodal officers have been provided to us and help desks have been set up, they have been unable to facilitate patients at the hospitals."

Refused to help
It added, "The purpose of designating a nodal officer

at hospitals was to ensure speedy redressal of barriers being faced by the patients. However, this is far from what the experience with nodal officers has been. When the nodal officer of GTB Hospital was contacted to intervene in a case where a patient was having trouble filing an MLC, he flatly refused saying that he was not concerned with this matter and had not been informed that he is a nodal officer."

The JSA said that the nodal officers were unreachable, non-responsive and unsympathetic to the troubles being faced by victims and their families.

Timings**DELHI**

FRIDAY, MAR. 13
● RISE 06:33 SET 18:29
● RISE 22:38 SET 09:11
SATURDAY, MAR. 14
● RISE 06:32 SET 18:29
● RISE 23:43 SET 09:53
SUNDAY, MAR. 15
● RISE 06:31 SET 18:30
● RISE 00:00 SET 10:38

Delhi Weathermax min
Delhi City 28 15
Safdarjung 28 15
Palam 28 15**Delhi Palam Today**
28°C Mist/shallow fog in the morning. A warm afternoon and a cloudy sky. Short spell of rain and thundershower likely.**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**
27°C Haze/mist in the morning. A partly cloudy sky. Few spells of rain and thundershower would occur in parts.© Copyright Skymet Weather 2019
All rights reserved.**Air Quality of Delhi-NCR**

Delhi 127	Gurugram 109
Ghaziabad 138	Faridabad 148
Noida 124	Greater Noida 127
■ Good	■ Satisfactory
0-50	51-100
■ Poor	■ Very Poor
201-300	301-400
>400	

Air Quality Index at 4 p.m., yesterday (Average of past 24 hours) | Source: CPCB

IN BRIEF**Zero paper attendance in govt. schools: Sisodia**NEW DELHI
Education Minister Manish Sisodia on Thursday directed officials that attendance in every school should be marked on tablets from April 1. "Zero paper attendance to be implemented in government schools from April 1," he told officials.**DELHI TODAY****Talk:** Discussion on the book titled "Land Lust: Short Stories" written by Joginder Paul at Conference Room - I, India International Centre, 6.30 p.m.**Exhibition:** "Color Play," a group exhibition of paintings by Meenaxi Sadage, Dhavat Singh and Sharad Tardé at Convention Centre Foyer, India Habitat Centre, 11 a.m. - 7 p.m.**Exhibition:** An art exhibition by Raghu Vyas at Shridharani Gallery, Triveni Kala Sangam, 205, Tansen Marg, 11 a.m. - 8 p.m.**Exhibition:** "Affordable Masters" a group exhibition at Gallery Art Magnum, 60/4, Indian Oil Complex, Sri Aurobindo Marg, Yusuf Sarai, 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 cityeditor@thehindu.co.in)

Seven arrested for head constable's murder

Accused are both conspirators and active rioters: police

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Twenty days after head constable Ratan Lal was killed during communal riots in north-east Delhi's Gokulpuri, seven persons have been arrested in connection with the murder, the police said on Thursday.

Delhi Police Public Relations Officer and Additional Commissioner of Police M.S. Randhawa said that the accused have been identified as Chand Bagh residents Saleem Malik alias Munna, Mohammed Jalaluddin alias Gudu Bhai, two brothers Mohammed Ayub and Mohammed Yunus, Arif, and Mohammed Saleem Khan, and Loni resident Mohammed Danish.

The police said that "a conspiracy was hatched to attack the police party" and that the accused are "both conspirators as well as active



Ratan Lal

rioters".

Sufficient evidence

Mr. Randhawa said that the police have sufficient evidence against the accused in the form of video footage, local intelligence and eyewitness accounts. When asked if the murder weapon has been recovered, Mr. Randhawa said that the police are yet to recover it.

A senior police officer privy to the probe said that the seven accused are not among the ones who shot Lal but among the rioters who were part of that mob. "Munna and Saleem are organisers of the mob and they can be seen in the videos procured by the police. Investigation is at an early stage and this is among the first few arrests made in this case," the officer said.

Lal was killed on February 24 and later, his autopsy report ascertained that he died of a bullet injury. The deceased officer is survived by his wife and three minor children.

Munna and Saleem can be seen in the videos procured by the police. Investigation is at an early stage and this is among the first few arrests made in this case**A SENIOR POLICE OFFICER**

Two more PFI members arrested over fuelling riots

The accused have been sent to seven-day police custody

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi police on Thursday arrested Popular Front of India's (PFI) Delhi president and secretary for their alleged role in hatching a conspiracy to incite riots in north-east Delhi and funding anti-CAA protests in the national capital.

A senior police officer said Delhi unit president Parvez and State secretary Mohammad Ilyas were arrested from south-east Delhi.

During interrogation, Ilyas is said to have revealed the "role and involvement of PFI" during the anti-CAA protests.

"There are more than 2,000 active PFI members in the city. We are identifying

We are identifying the members who had played an active role in fuelling violence in north-east Delhi and provided help to anti-CAA protesters**A SENIOR POLICE OFFICER**

the members who had played an active role in fuelling violence in north-east Delhi and provided help to anti-CAA protesters," added the officer.

Funding of protests' Besides the Special Cell, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) is also probing the alleged funding of the anti-CAA protest across the country by the PFI.

On Friday, the Special Cell of Delhi Police had arrested a Kashmiri couple for alleged links to a module of the IS. The police claimed that the couple was involved in inciting people during riots and collecting funds for anti-CAA protests.

Mohd Danish for hatching a conspiracy to incite communal riots in north-east Delhi.

During interrogation, Danish is said to have revealed the "role and involvement of PFI" during the anti-CAA protests.

On Monday, the police had arrested PFI member

Suspect in IB staffer murder case arrested

He was part of the mob that murdered Ankit Sharma, said police

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A man suspected to be involved in the murder of IB employee Ankit Sharma during the violence on February 24 was arrested on Thursday.

A senior police officer said that after scanning the video footage, technical surveillance was mounted on him and he was nabbed.

They are likely to arrest many more who were involved in the murder. The detained person was part of the mob that murdered



Ankit.

"We have obtained several videos, photos and the location where Ankit was murdered during riots in Chand

Bagh. We are connecting the dots to find out how he was kidnapped and murdered," added the officer.

2 brothers held

An investigation team also arrested two brothers – Varun and Arun – for killing Akbari Begum in riot-affected Garhi Mewa area. The brothers were leading a mob that torched a Muslim house in the area. The family members rushed to the terrace after their house was set on fire. A police team rescued

them safely from the terrace of the adjoining house but Akbari couldn't go to the terrace because of old age and died of asphyxiation.

"We arrested Arun and Varun after they were identified through video clippings. Their presence and role were also established by eyewitnesses," said the officer.

Meanwhile, Delhi Police on Wednesday held a meeting with their counterparts in U.P. with details of suspects who were allegedly involved in the violence.

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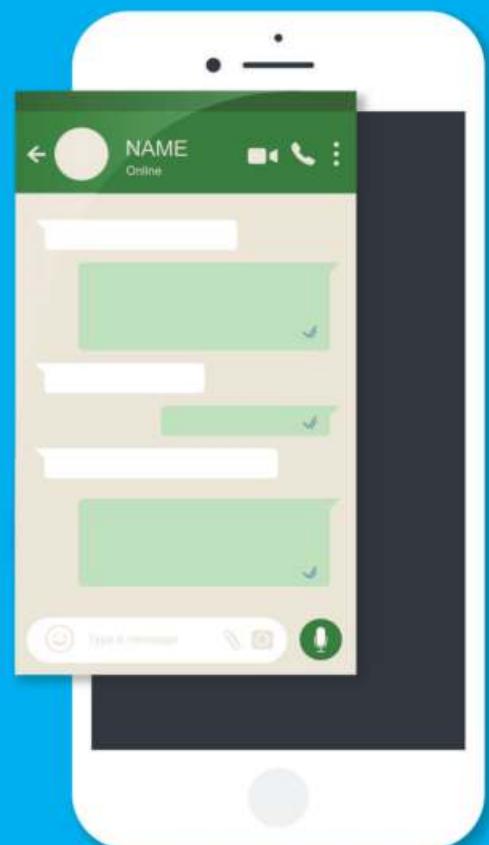
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◆ Mr. Mukund Kaushal, I.P.S (Rtd.) Former Delhi Police Commissioner
◆ Mr. Gyaneshwar Muley, I.F.S (Rtd.)
◆ Prof. Abdul Nofey, Rtd. Dean J.N.U
◆ Mr. Mammen Mathew, Rtd. Editor, Hindustan Times
◆ Mr. R.C Sinha, Eminent Expert
Next Mock March 21
ANALOG IAS ACADEMY Old Rajinder Nagar, New Delhi Ph: 8800283132 info@analogeducation.in Website: analogeducation.in

PUBLIC NOTICE
NOTICE is hereby given that TARLOCH SINGH S/o PARTAB SINGH R/o W2-A-45, FIRST FLOOR, GALLI NO. 10, KRISHNA PARK EXTN., TILAK NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110018 OF AFGHANISTAN is applying to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Home Affairs for Naturalization and that any person who knows any reason why Naturalization should not be granted should send a written signed statement of the facts to the said Secretary.

PUBLIC NOTICE
NOTICE is hereby given that GURMEET KAUR D/o RAJINDER SINGH R/o L-2/58, 2ND FLOOR, NEW MAHARAJA NAGAR, TILAK NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110018 OF AFGHANISTAN is applying to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Home Affairs for Naturalization and that any person who knows any reason why Naturalization should not be granted should send a written signed statement of the facts to the said Secretary.

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED
General Public is hereby informed that one person Namely: Pramod, S/o: Sh. Maharam Singh, R/o: H. No. 432, JJ colony, Bawana, Delhi has been missing / kidnapped since 11.02.2020 at 09:00 am. from his house from the area of P.S. Narela Industrial Area, Distt. Outer North, Delhi. In this regard a case vide FIR/DD No. 55A dated 13.02.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Narela Industrial Area, Distt. Outer North, Delhi. The description of the missing/kidnapped person are as under: Age: 32 years, Height: 5'4", Face: Round, Complexion: Shallow, Built: Medium, Wearing: Black colour lower and cream colour T-shirt. Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the person but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this person kindly inform to the following.
Website: <http://cbi.nic.in>
E-mail Id - cic@cbi.gov.in
Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641
Fax No. 011-24368639
DPI/56/ON/2020

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PERSONAL

LOST & FOUND

IT IS notified for the information that my original qualifying examination certificate of main, secondary and senior secondary Examination of Year 2014-15 and 2016-17, 2017-18 and roll No. 2134127 and 2630919 and 2627619 respectively issued by CBSE has been actually lost. The name of the candidate is ANKIT YADAV, resident address H.NO. 84 Village Bhanpura Post office Diwal Dist. Kaithal Haryana 136027. Tel. +91290846903.

PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE
NOTICE is hereby given that PAWANDAW SINGH, S/o TILAK SINGH R/o W2-A-45, FIRST FLOOR, GALLI NO. 10, KRISHNA PARK EXTN., TILAK NAGAR, NEW DELHI-110018 OF AFGHANISTAN is applying to the Secretary to the Government of India in the Ministry of Home Affairs for Naturalization and that any person who knows any reason why Naturalization should not be granted should send a written signed statement of the facts to the said Secretary.

PUBLIC NOTICE

We both, Krishan Pal S/o Sh. Bell Ram & Usha Rani w/o Krishan Pal R/o C-61, Janta Garden, Pandav Nagar, Galli No. 3, Shamaspur, Patparganj DL-91 that we disown dear our son Ashish Kumar & his wife Sarika Rajput Both R/o RZ-61 Durga Park, Galli No.03-04 Palam N. DL from all my movable & immovable properties and all relations due to their bad / filthy misbehaviour & we shall not be responsible for any act done by Ashish & Sarika.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Indraprastha Gas Limited ("IGL") has issued a Letters of Intent for setting up of CNG Stations at the site located at following locations and to be operated by its wholly owned subsidiary received such application from the Operator & conducting due diligence and following due process of law.
Name of Applicant - Mr. Deepanshu Rana Address of proposed station- Khasra No. 48/2 & 41/22, Main 48, Kila No. 2, Village Khera Gaon, Distt. Deoband, UP-201302.

However, if any person has any objection or claim regarding the setting up of CNG Station at the said site, kindly contact us within 7 days from the publication of this notice, with the relevant and appropriate proof to substantiate the objection claiming which, it shall be deemed that there is no objection from the setting of CNG Station at the said site. Contact us: IGL Bhawan, Plot No.4, New Delhi-110042, cngproject@igl.co.in

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TENDER

DMM/NR/192/18-19 Date: 10.03.2020

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Divisional Manager
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Pavanesh Singh Batra
GM (BD & Projects)

TENDER

DATE OF ADJOURNMENT : 23/03/2020, AT 10.30 AM

VSS PRATAP, SPR KUMAR

Advocates, Rao & Rao Associates

Door No:24-28-6/5, FF-1, Nagendra

Towers, Edupuganti, Lakshmana

Rao Street, Durgapur, West Bengal, India-713009.

Vijayawada-520 003, Andhra

Pradesh. Ph: 85000 14509

The above Suit is filed by Plaintiff before the Hon'ble Court against Defendant. The Suit is posted for your appearance on 23/02/2020 at 10.30 AM. Defendant is advised to appear in person or with his Advocate for objections if any in the suit, failing which the Hon'ble Court may be, pass appropriate order against you. This notice is issued according to the Orders of this Hon'ble Court.

DATE OF ADJOURNMENT : 23/03/2020, AT 10.30 AM

VSS PRATAP, SPR KUMAR

Advocates, Rao & Rao Associates

Door No:24-28-6/5, FF-1, Nagendra

Towers, Edupuganti, Lakshmana

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By Order of the Tribunal
Assistant Registrar DRT-II,
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F.C.M.C.No/10/2020

1. Trishla Vaishnav

W/o, Ravindra Vaishnav

2. Minor Vaishnav,

D/o, Ravindra Vaishnav,

Minor Rep. By her mother and

Guardian the 1st petitioner herein.

Both are residing at

No.5/6, Chumambukara Street,

Arasamarpetta, Vellore - 632004.

Vellore District, Tamil Nadu.

...Petitioners

To

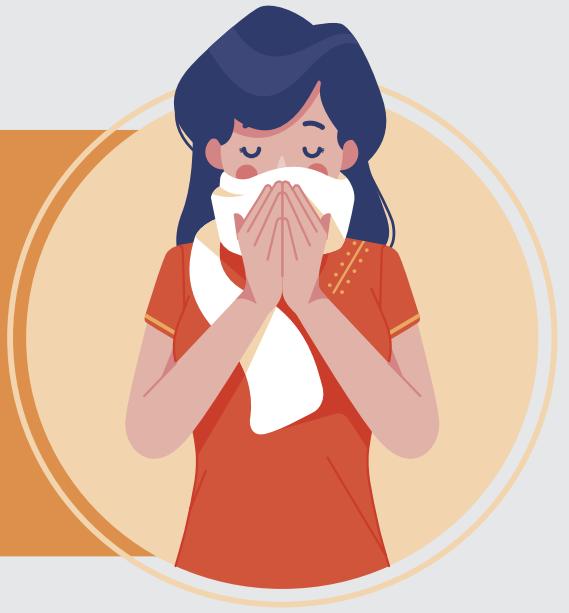
Ravindra Vaishnav,

S/o, Dhandooprasa Vaishnav,

No.365, Mahatma Gandhi Colony,

Ramdev Road, P

NOVEL 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 travelling from affected countries for atleast 14 days.

DipShabdarth/D/0352/19-20

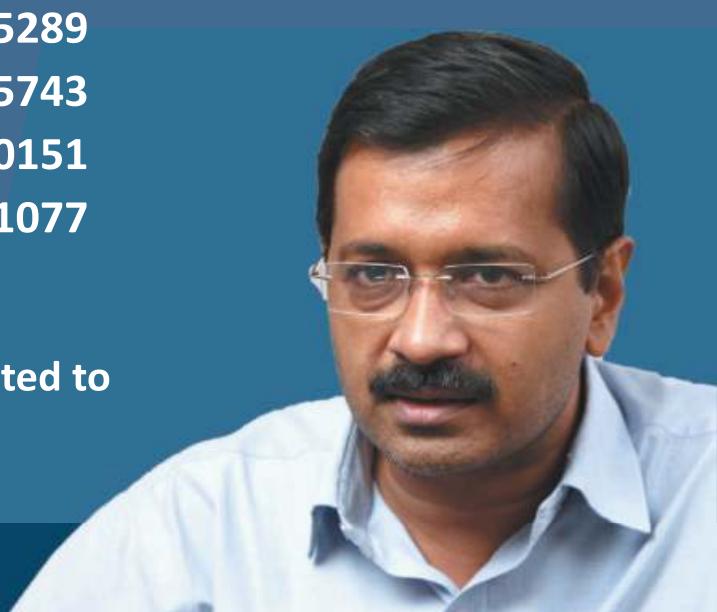
DO's	DON'Ts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover your nose and mouth with disposable tissue or handkerchief while coughing or sneezing • Throw used tissues into closed bins immediately after use • Frequently wash your hands with soap and water • Avoid crowded places/big gatherings • Person suffering from Influenza like illness must be confined to 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. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

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



IN BRIEF



Opposition candidates being rejected: Naidu

VIJAYAWADA
TDP chief N. Chandrababu Naidu has urged State Election Commissioner N. Ramesh Kumar to postpone or re-issue the election notification for the MPTC and ZPTC seats. Several officers had conspired to reject the nominations filed by Opposition parties in general, and the TDP in particular, he said.

Under-construction rail overbridge collapses

HASSAN
A portion of an under-construction railway overbridge, work of which was going on for the past one year, collapsed on the Hassan-Mysuru Road on Thursday. None was injured. "The incident happened because of wrong handling by some workers," a Railway official said.

Avian flu confirmed at 3 places in Kerala

Special squads formed to cull birds

STAFF REPORTER

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

While suspected cases of avian influenza (bird flu) are being reported from various parts of Kerala, the disease has been confirmed only at three places in Kozhikode and Malappuram. Minister for Animal Husbandry and Dairy Development K. Raju said on Thursday.

Replying to questions in the Assembly, Mr. Raju said that while birds in parts of Kozhikode, including Kodiyathur and Vengeri, were initially affected, the disease had now been confirmed in Parappanangady in Malappuram. Special squads had been formed to cull birds. The situation had been brought under control.

According to a Malappuram report, the culling of capriox virus among cattle, and the drought had taken a toll on milk production.

Maradu: delay in removal of debris to invite penal action



A file photo of debris accumulated after the demolition of the four apartment buildings at Maradu in Kochi.

waste from the four sites.

The committee accepted the finding of the State Level Monitoring Committee (SLMC) on Solid Waste Management that the process of segregation and removal of waste was not at the expect-

ed pace. The company engaged in segregating steel from the debris had sought a 20-day extension to complete its work.

It could realise only 60% of the target by the end of February.

ed pace. The company engaged in segregating steel from the debris had sought a 20-day extension to complete its work.

It could realise only 60% of the target by the end of February.

tom," said SPSR Nellore District Joint Collector V. Vinod Kumar, who was overseeing the mass contact programme to allay the fears of panic-stricken people and precautionary measures to be taken by them.

All the five relatives of the youth have been kept under observation in GGH.

Area sanitised

Meanwhile, the health officials sanitised the Chinna Bazaar area in the city from where the youth hailed.

People were seen wearing masks or covering their mouths and noses with handkerchiefs to avoid contracting the disease.

COVID-19: Kerala passes resolution

'Centre's fiat on entry certificates inhuman'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala Assembly on Thursday adopted a rather strongly worded resolution that damned as "fundamentally inhuman" the contentious decision of the Central government to bar citizens stranded in Italy and South Korea without a COVID-19 negative certification from medical authorities at their respective port of departure from travelling to India.

The Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) Opposition benches were empty when the ruling front passed the resolution by voice vote. Independent legislator and National Democratic Alliance (NDA) ally P.C. George backed the motion moved by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan under



Reaching out: A help desk set up at the Ernakulam railway station. ■ H. VIBHU

Rule 118. The resolution sought to urge the Centre to solve the problems faced by non-resident Indians (NRIs) due to the regulatory measures placed by the Union Ministry of Civil Aviation in the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The Opposition had displayed support for the resolution on Wednesday but walked out of the House on

another issue minutes before Mr. Vijayan tabled it.

Mr. Vijayan said the Centre had introduced the "unusual" requirement for travel to India from Italy and South Korea, both COVID-19 hotspots, in a circular issued on March 5. The order (4/1/2020-R) came into effect midnight March 10. The Centre insisted that citizens grounded for days in air-

ports in those countries required a medical testimonial from authorities there to board flights to India. The diktat tantamount to "cruel abandonment" of NRIs, he said. The government has requested Prime Minister Narendra Modi to allow the citizens to come to India.

"We can vet them for the virus and treat them in our country if necessary."

Tirumala witnesses decline in footfalls

TIRUMALA

The COVID-19 scare has found its 'echo' at the famous hill temple of Lord Venkateswara here, if the sudden decline in the turnout of pilgrims is any indication. According to statistics, about 4.97 lakh pilgrims had the darshan of the presiding deity last week (March 2 to 8) as against 5.37 lakh during the corresponding week last year. As against 2.33 lakh pilgrims last year, the pilgrim turnout was just 1.87 lakh so far during the week.

Sriramulu files complaint over 'fake post' in FB

BENGALURU

Karnataka Health and Family Welfare Minister B. Sriramulu has filed a complaint with the Police Commissioner about a "fake post" in his name being circulated in the social media to defame him. In his complaint, Mr. Sriramulu said someone had created a post in his name and circulated it on Facebook and other social media tagging an FB account

— "My favourite Chief Minister Siddaramaiah", stating that smearing of cow dung on the body and drinking of cow urine could help handle COVID-19. "This is to defame me and to portray me in bad light

among the general public," he said in his complaint.

Fifth COVID-19 case reported in Karnataka

BENGALURU

A 26-year-old man who returned from Greece has tested positive for COVID-19, making it the fifth case in Karnataka, the health department said on Thursday. "The patient has been admitted and isolated at a hospital and his condition is stable," a department media bulletin said. "All (his) primary contacts have been traced and are asymptomatic. Home quarantine has been advised," it said. PTI

Andhra Pradesh's first case reported from Nellore

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NELLORE

In a first COVID-19 case in Andhra Pradesh, a 24-year-old youth, who returned from Italy on March 6, has tested "positive" for the disease, health officials here said on Thursday.

The youth, who was pursuing post-graduation studies in the European country, has been admitted to the isolation ward of the Government General Hospital late on Monday with COVID-19 symptoms.

"The patient, who was admitted with dry cough is now stable and all his vitals are normal. He has now recovered from the symp-

toms," said SPSR Nellore District Joint Collector V. Vinod Kumar, who was overseeing the mass contact programme to allay the fears of panic-stricken people and precautionary measures to be taken by them.

All the five relatives of the youth have been kept under observation in GGH.

Area sanitised

Meanwhile, the health officials sanitised the Chinna Bazaar area in the city from where the youth hailed.

Authorities have also home isolated nearly 43 people, including his family members. All protocols were followed in disposing

43 isolated after COVID-19 death in Karnataka

the body, the statement said.

According to an official release, a private doctor first visited the patient at home on March 6. He was admitted to a private hospital in Kalaburagi on March 9 after he developed respiratory illness. The hospital informed the Health Department, which immediately quarantined the patient in the same hospital. His samples were collected the same day. However, the family insisted on discharge and the patient was discharged against medical advice after which the family took him to a private hospital in Hyderabad.

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Office of the M.D., JIADA, 5th Floor, New JIADA Building, Industrial area, Namkum, Ranchi-834010

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3. Period downloading of Bidding Documents

4. Bids online submission

5. Bid opening date

6. Details of works

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- Online through www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in

- Date 20.03.2020 Time: 11:00 A.M.

- Start date 20.03.2020 Time 11:00 A.M.

- End date 04.04.2020 Time 5:00 P.M.

- Start date 20.03.2020 Time 11:00 A.M.

- End date 04.04.2020 Time 5:00 P.M.

- Date 07.04.2020 Time: 3:30 P.M.

7. The original copy of Tender fee and Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) must be submitted in JIADA office up to 07.04.2020 by 01:00 P.M. If Tender fee and EMD are not received before mentioned date and time tender shall not be accepted.

8. Place to receiving tender fee and EMD

- Office of M.D. JIADA, 5th Floor, New RIADA building, Namkum Industrial area, Namkum, Ranchi-834010

- 120 days

- Office of M.D. JIADA, 5th Floor, New RIADA building, Namkum Industrial area, Namkum, Ranchi-834010

11. For any information/complaints the department helpline no. M.b.no.943136208 may be contacted.

12. Further details can be seen on website- www.jharkhandtenders.gov.in.

Note: The estimated cost mentioned above in sl. no. 6 column no. 4 is approximate which may be increased or decreased.

P.R.226773 RIADA(19-20):D Sd/- Secretary, JIADA, Ranchi

Forest, Environment & Climate Change Department, Jharkhand, Ranchi Additional Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (FCA), Ranchi

Short Tender Notice

Addl. PCCF (FCA) invites proposals from Certification bodies (CBs) approved and accredited by National Accreditation Board for Certification Bodies (NACB) to carryout Forest management Evaluation and Certification leading to issuance of NCCF-FM Certificate for the forest areas under three clusters of JFCMs falling in three forest divisions in Jharkhand State.

Detailed information and the Tender Document for the tender is available on the website www.forest.jharkhand.gov.in

Pre bid meeting is scheduled at 11:00 AM on 24.03.2020.

Last date and time for submission of bids & EMD is 26.03.2020 (3:00 PM). For queries : Call office at **0651-2480450** or email queries at apccf-fda@gov.in

Financial bids shall be opened on 27.03.20 at 12.00 Noon.

Addl.PCCF (FCA) Van Bhawan, Doranda, Ranchi-834002

GOVT. OF JHARKHAND TRANSPORT DEPARTMENT (CIVIL AVIATION DIVISION) STATE HANGER, AIRPORT ROAD, HINOO, RANCHI TELEFAX NO.-0651-2250319, 2251090 Email - gvtflyops@gmail.com/civilaviation.jhr@gmail.com

E-Procurement Notice

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST (EOI) UNDER SINGLE BID SYSTEM FOR CHARTERING TWIN/ MULTI ENGINE JET/TURBOPROP AIRCRAFT ON AS AND WHEN REQUIRED BASIS FOR VIP/VIP OPERATIONS OF GOVT. OF JHARKHAND.

Sealed offers(EOLs) under Single Bid system are hereby invited by the Govt. of Jharkhand from eligible Twin/Multi Engine jet/turboprop service operators to be included in empanelled list for chartering different types of Twin/Multi Engine Aircraft on **as and when required basis** through e-tendering mode at jharkhandtenders.gov.in as stated below:-

Tender reference number :- CAD/VIII/14/2009/192

Project Description :- Sealed offers(EOLs) under Single Bid system are hereby invited by the Govt. of Jharkhand from eligible Twin/Multi Engine Jet/Turboprop Service Operators to be included in empanelled list for chartering different types of Twin/Multi Engine Aircraft on **as and when required basis**.

Date and time of publish of tender on website and download of Tender document :- 13/03/2020 ; 1000 Hrs

Starting of Bid Submission :- 13/03/2020 ; 1000 Hrs

End of Bid Submission :- 04/04/2020 ; 1800 Hrs

Date and time of opening of bids :- 07/04/2020 ; 1130 Hrs

Contact Number :- 0651-2250319 / 9431114196

For further details and application please visit jharkhandtenders.gov.in

Sd/- (Capt. S. P. Sinha)
Transport Department (Civil Aviation Division)

PR 226765 (Civil Aviation) 19-20 (D)

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED



General public is hereby informed that a girl namely **Khushbu, D/o: Vidhya Sagar, R/o: Plot No. 12, Gali No.5, Vikas Kunj, Vikash Nagar, Delhi** has been missing/kidnapped since **04.01.2020** from the area of P.S. Ranholi. In this regard DD No. 21-A, dated 14.01.2020 has been registered at P.S. Ranholi, Delhi. The description of missing girl is as under:

Name: Khushbu, Age: 23 Years, Height: 5', Complexion: Fair, Face: Round, Wearing: Green Suit-Cream Salwar and Blue Chappie in feet.

If anyone have any information about this missing girl please inform P.S. Ranholi, Delhi.

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

SHO Police Station, Ranholi, Delhi
DP/42/OD/2020 Ph: 011-28363001, 28363002, 28363003



<p

'COVID-19 vaccine at least 2 years away'

Scientists have isolated the virus, says ICMR official

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
NEW DELHI

Senior health officials have said a COVID-19 vaccine will take at least two years to develop even with expedited clinical trials and approvals. The virus has affected at least 74 people in the country, including 17 foreign nationals (16 Italians and a Canadian).

Raman R. Gangakhedkar, head of the Epidemiology and Communicable Diseases-I (ECD-I), Division of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), said Indian scientists have managed to "successfully isolate the COVID-19 virus". "This is needed for making a vaccine. There are two ways of going



Health crisis: A man seen buying a hand sanitiser in New Delhi on Thursday. The virus has affected at least 74 people in the country so far. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

for vaccine preparation – either you look at the sequences of the gene which then may lead to development of antibodies, or you actually have the strain and

then you try to develop a vaccine which is always an easier option," he said.

Dr. Gangakhedkar said the COVID-19 virus is difficult to isolate.

"But the efforts of Indian scientists have been successful and about 11 isolates are available, which is a prime requisite for doing any kind of research related to virus-

es," he said. He cautioned that in certain viruses, even if vaccines are given, when the infection tends to occur, there could be a flare-up and the severity of the infection is likely to increase.

"This is an evolving virus and we are still learning about it. We would say right now we must try to prevent it as much as possible, contain it and wait for things to happen," he said. Asked if high temperature kills the virus, a senior health official said there is no study or evidence to suggest that.

He said those avoiding quarantine are not only risking their life but also that of the loved ones ... The ICMR will start surveillance to examine whether any infected person has been left undetected. "So far there is no evidence that we are missing any cases," he said.

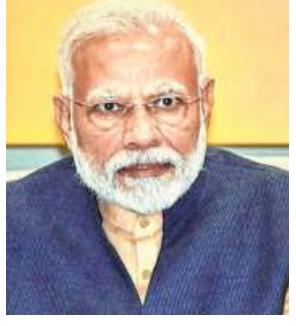
No Minister to travel abroad in coming days, says Modi

PM urges people to avoid non-essential travel

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday declared that no Minister will travel abroad in the coming days as a measure to encourage Indians to curb non-essential trip in order to break "the chain of spread and ensure safety of all by avoiding large gatherings".

Mr. Modi said on Twitter, "Say no to panic, say yes to precautions. No minister of the Central government will travel abroad in the upcoming days. I urge our countrymen to also avoid non-essential travel. We can break the chain of spread and ensure



Narendra Modi

the safety of all by avoiding large gatherings." He noted that the government was vigilant with regard to the COVID-19.

Across ministries and states, multiple steps have

been proactively taken to ensure safety of all. These steps are wide ranging, from suspension of visas to augmenting healthcare capacities," he added.

The Prime Minister's directive to Ministers comes a day after the Union government temporarily suspended visas for all inbound travel.

A group of ministers, comprising Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Puri, among others, was constituted on February 3 and it has been monitoring the situation.

COVID-19 triggers fear of mass return of workers

Crisis takes a toll on Surat, Mumbai units

STAFF REPORTER
BERHAMPUR

Panic due to rising COVID-19 cases and its negative impact on industrial sector is expected to lead to mass return of Odia migrant labourers from Gujarat and Maharashtra to their homes in Ganjam district in the next few weeks.

Social activists, involved with migrant labourers from Ganjam working in Surat and Mumbai, feel if the panic over COVID-19 continues, it will lead to mass return of workers from both these places. Around five lakh migrant Odia workers are employed in textile industries in Surat. In Mumbai, a large number of Odia migrant

workers serve in various small manufacturing units.

"Although no cases of COVID-19 infection have been reported from Surat, its threat has started to take a toll on the production process of textile manufacturing units," said Lokenath Mishra, who is involved in 'link workers scheme', a project related to migrant workers of Ganjam district.

According to Mr. Mishra, as a repercussion of international situation due to COVID-19 threat, export of cotton fabric produced in Surat has stopped. If this situation continues, several textile units in Surat may close down, which will directly affect the Odia migrant workers.

CBI seeks maximum punishment for Sengar

He was held guilty in two other cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Thursday sought maximum punishment for expelled BJP MLA Kuldeep Sengar and others, who have been held guilty in the two cases linked to the death of the Unnao rape victim's father in 2018. The quantum of sentence is scheduled to be announced on Friday.

During the arguments, the agency also sought maximum imprisonment for the convicted police officials – the then Makhi Police Station in-charge Ashok Singh Bhaduria and then Sub-Inspector K. P. Singh. They did not fulfil their duties, nor did they provide medical treatment to the victim's father, the agency said.

Sengar argued for himself. Seeking justice, he said he should be hanged and acid poured into his eyes if he had done anything wrong. The Judge observed that he had already been held guilty based on evidence. Sengar pleaded, stat-



ing that he had two daughters, at which the court said he should have thought about it before he committed the crime.

On March 4, the court convicted seven persons, including Sengar. Four other accused persons were acquitted. Sengar was found guilty of culpable homicide not amounting to murder under Section 304 of the Indian Penal Code. One case pertained to the death of the victim's father on April 9, 2018, while the other was against him for alleged possession of illegal arms.

On December 12, 2019, the court sentenced Sengar to life imprisonment for raping the girl in 2017.

New environment law cuts time for hearings

Draft notification introduces updates

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

A set of key updates to India's Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Act, the law that governs how the threat posed by large infrastructure projects to the environment ought to be evaluated, proposes to reduce the time given to people to object.

The draft EIA notification proposes to be an update to the EIA of 2006, which specifies a "minimum of 30 days" for people to respond. The current version of the update, which will likely be

come law in 60 days, gives a "minimum of 20 days" of notice period. It also requires that the public-hearing process be wrapped up in 40 days, as opposed to the existing norm of 45 days.

Under the process, an organisation has to submit a detailed plan explaining the nature, need, and remedial measures, if their proposed project could significantly impact a region. A committee constituted by the Union Environment Ministry then decides on whether the project should be cleared.

Executive Engineer - Govindarajanagar Division
Pay Development Charges - Help to Develop Bengaluru

Army spending ₹3.5 lakh a day

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Army is incurring an expenditure of ₹3.5 lakh a day to run the quarantine facility at Manesar for persons suspected of being infected with the COVID-19, and 60 personnel have been committed to run the facility, officials said on Thursday. Some of those quarantined have been demanding special facilities, resulting in some arguments, they added.

"This is an evolving virus and we are still learning about it. We would say right now we must try to prevent it as much as possible, contain it and wait for things to happen," he said. Asked if high temperature kills the virus, a senior health official said there is no study or evidence to suggest that.

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CJI meets judges, officials

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde on Thursday held a meeting with senior judges of the Supreme Court, law officers and officials from the Ministries of Health and Law to discuss the prospect of extending the Holi break amidst the COVID-19 scare. The court is scheduled to reopen on March 16.

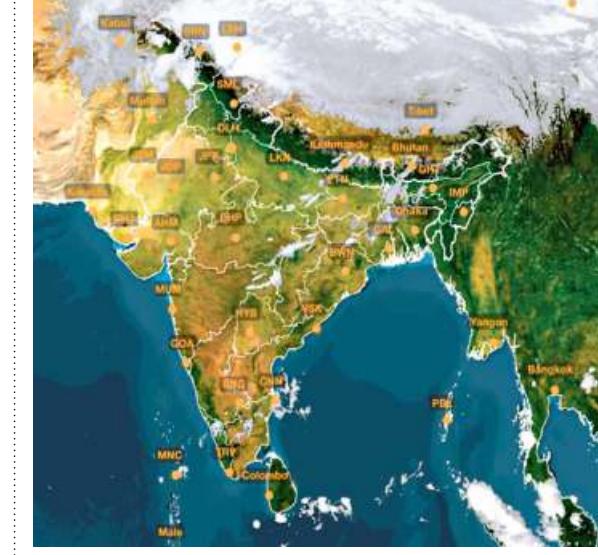
Ladakh resident tests positive

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

Ladakh recorded its third case of COVID-19 on Thursday. His report came positive on Wednesday evening. His six family members have been quarantined," said Ringzin Samphel, Commissioner Secretary, Ladakh. The man, who had recently visited Iran, was already under quarantine. His father and another person with similar travel histories had tested positive earlier.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

Forecast for Friday: Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning and squalls likely at isolated places over Uttarakhand, Bihar, West Bengal, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh, Sikkim, Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, and Gilgit-Baltistan.

CITY RAIN MAX MIN CITY RAIN MAX MIN

Agartala 35.0 17.0 Kozhikode 36.0 26.0

Ahmedabad 31.0 15.0 Kurnool 37.0 27.0

Aizawl 24.0 11.0 Lucknow 30.0 16.0

Allahabad 6.6 30.0 18.0 Maduraj 37.0 24.0

Bengaluru 34.0 22.0 Mangaluru 36.0 24.0

Bhopal 31.0 15.0 Mumbai 27.0 20.0

Bhubaneswar 33.0 23.0 Mysuru 34.0 21.0

Chandigarh 25.0 14.0 New Delhi 1.0 28.0 15.0

Chennai 34.0 24.0 Patna 27.0 16.0

Coimbatore 35.0 23.0 Port Blair 30.0 22.0

Dehradoon 33.5 26.0 12.0 Puducherry 33.0 24.0

Gangtok 23.0 11.0 Pune 31.0 15.0

Goa 33.0 21.0 Raipur 32.0 22.0

Guwahati 31.0 15.0 Ranchi 10.2 26.0 16.0

Hubballi 33.0 19.0 Shillong 21.0 7.0

Hyderabad 32.0 21.0 Shimla 22.6 12.0 3.0

Imphal 28.0 11.0 Srinagar 14.0 2.0

Jaipur 28.0 12.0 Thiruvananthapuram 32.0 26.0

Kochi 38.8 32.0 24.0 Tiruchi 37.0 23.0

Kohima 24.0 10.0 Vijayawada 36.0 22.0

Kolkata 33.0 23.0 Visakhapatnam 33.0 25.0

(Rainfall in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

Yesterday

CITIES SO. NO. CO PM2.5 PM10 CODE In observation made at 4.00 PM, 12.00 hrs. Ahmedabad 34 32 11 61 92 2000 2000 recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 223 indicating a severe level of pollution. In contrast, Amaravati, Andhra Pradesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 34.

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

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

NO: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

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

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

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He was held guilty in two other cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
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New environment law cuts time for hearings

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BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE
Office of the Executive Engineer, Govindarajanagar Division, 2nd Floor, Shakti Soudha 13th Cross Road, 4th B Main Road, M.C. Layout, Vijayanagara, Bengaluru-560 040.
No: EE(GRN)/TN/GL-16/2019-20 Date: 09.03.2020

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTIFICATION
(Through GOK e-Procurement Portal only)
(STANDARD TENDER DOCUMENT KW - 1.2 & 3)

Tenders on Item Rate basis are invited by the undersigned for the work mentioned below from the registered contractors of Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike or Equivalent registration with CPWD/KPWD/Railways/MES or any State Government Organizations.

Sl. No.	Name of the Works	Est Cost (₹. in Lakhs)	EMD (in ₹.)
Single Cover Works			
Works Reserved for Schedule Caste (SC) Category			
1.	Improvements and Repairs to Approach Drains (3rd Call)	15.00</td	



Not a time to panic

India must cut the transmission chain of the virus to save its health system from collapse

With the virus galloping to 116 countries/regions causing more than 118,000 cases and 4,291 deaths, as on Wednesday, March 11, the World Health Organization took the last logical step the same day to spotlight the threat posed by the novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) – by declaring it a pandemic. The announcement came as no surprise. On Monday, the WHO chief did caution that the “threat of a pandemic has become very real” based on the number of countries reporting new cases. On Thursday, the numbers rose further: 1,27,863 cases and 4,718 deaths. This announcement comes after WHO, on January 30, declared the outbreak a “public health emergency of international concern”. Soon thereafter, it raised the global risk level to its highest – very high. If the spread to more countries and the cases and deaths reported till the third week of February were of concern, it has become alarming since then. On February 22, the WHO chief warned that the “window of opportunity for containing the virus is narrowing”. Unfortunately, many countries did not take the warning seriously; in the last two weeks, the cases reported have increased 13-fold and countries reporting the virus have tripled. Outside China, Italy (12,462), Iran (10,075) and South Korea (7,869) have the most cases. Nearly 90% of cases reported globally are in just four countries and cases reported daily have seen a sharp drop in China and South Korea.

The response to WHO's new classification should not be one of panic but must instead stir countries into changing the course of the pandemic. While WHO had always asked all countries to take aggressive action in viral containment, it has now become all the more important to take that warning seriously. All countries are required to trace, detect, test, isolate and treat cases to prevent a handful of cases from becoming clusters, and for clusters from becoming widespread in the community and overwhelming the health-care system. Even as India has done well in this by testing, isolating, contact tracing and treating people, it has so far restricted itself to people who have returned from abroad and those who have come in contact with infected people. It may be prudent for India to adopt a more aggressive approach by looking for cases in the community to prevent the silent spread of the virus. In addition, containment measures such as closing down schools and cancelling mass gatherings in enclosed places should be done wherever necessary. Steps such as suspending tourist visas for nearly a month starting March 13 and quarantining Indians if needed are welcome – thermal screening cannot detect infected people who do not show symptoms yet. India should pull out all the stops to cut the transmission chain as its fragile public health-care system will collapse if cases rise exponentially.

Danger ahead

District committees must hold open meetings to better India's terrible record on road safety

Union Transport Minister Nitin Gadkari has expressed optimism that the significant amendments made to the Motor Vehicles Act have begun reducing the terrible death toll due to accidents on India's roads. As the prime mover of these changes, he finds the reported reduction in crashes, notably in Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh, Manipur, Jammu and Kashmir, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Maharashtra, proof of the law's beneficial impact. Any reduction in road safety incidents in a rapidly motorising country is encouraging, but the cold reality is that data on those who lose their lives or are incapacitated do not reflect a marked decline. In fact, they underscore the culture of indifference among States. Unlike acute crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, which has sent governments scrambling to save lives and stop economic derailment, a chronic malaise such as deadly road accidents begets only token measures. What else could explain policy-makers tolerating the loss of about 1.5 lakh lives each year since 2015, with the graph rising from 80,888 fatalities in 2001? Small reductions in this infamous tally, which Mr. Gadkari took note of at a transporters' summit, have little meaning, since they do not represent a trend of targeted reductions. The new Motor Vehicles law does have more muscle in being able to levy stringent penalties for road rule violations – some States are using it – but that is not the same as saying that India has moved to a scientific road system marked by good engineering, sound enforcement, appropriate technology use and respect for all road users. In fact, a World Bank 'Delivering Road Safety in India' report is apprehensive that rapid motorisation and more high-speed road infrastructure have raised the risks for road users.

The transition to a professional road environment requires implementation of first-tier reforms that deal with quality of road infrastructure, facilities for vulnerable users and zero-tolerance enforcement of rules by a trained, professional and empowered machinery. A key mechanism of change are District Road Safety Committees, which were enabled even by the 1988 Act, but remain obscure. A mandatory monthly public hearing of such committees involving local communities can highlight safety concerns, and their follow-up action can then be supervised by the Members of Parliaments' Road Safety Committees, created last year. Here, it is essential to make the Collector, local body and police accountable. Making dashboard cameras mandatory, with the video evidence accepted in investigation, would protect rule-abiding motorists and aid enforcement. To save lives on highways, quality trauma care at the district level holds the key. In the absence of good hospitals and cashless free treatment, no significant improvement is possible in the quest to save life and limb.

Delhi's shame is India's shame

The riots were stoked by a series of factors, but it is the stark police ineptitude that must cause much introspection



M.K. NARAYANAN

More than 100 days since protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, or the CAA began, and weeks after the worst ever communal riots in Delhi since 1984, questions are being raised as to what went wrong. It is quite evident by now that collective failure lay at the root of what could have been restricted in scope, if not entirely prevented.

The mix that ignited

Some saw in the Delhi riots the shadow of 1984. The comparison is, however, flawed. The 1984 Sikh riots took the authorities by surprise, while the country has been in a kind of 'slow burn' ever since the CAA was passed by Parliament in December 2019. Over time, protests against the CAA became larger in scope, especially in urban centres such as Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai and Bengaluru, but no attempt was made on the part of the authorities to defuse the situation. A mixture of political insensitivity, deliberate apathy in allowing the situation to simmer, social disharmony, pronounced incompetence of those responsible for law and order, and, above all, a highly polarised atmosphere, helped stoke the embers of conflict.

The statement of Supreme Court judge, K.M. Joseph, that timely action by the Delhi police could have saved lives, set-off a flurry of accusations by others against other organs of the state as well. Even the Delhi High Court and the Supreme Court came in for a share of blame, albeit for not intervening effectively to contain the violence. One former Justice of the Supreme Court argued that

had the judiciary been more proactive, lives lost in the recent violence could have been saved. The Chief Justice of India, Sharad Bobde, opined that courts were not 'equipped' to handle palpable 'pressure' being created to somehow step in and prevent violence.

The politics

Sections of the political class seemed to revel in the unsavoury scenes witnessed during the riots. Some leading members of the ruling party, including at least one Member of Parliament and a Central Minister, also engaged in verbal pyrotechnics. Opposition leaders were no less irresponsible. Provocations from both sides of the political divide thus largely fanned the violence.

The Central government demonstrated an obvious unwillingness to step in to quell the violence, despite the fact that law and order in Delhi is primarily the responsibility of the Home Ministry. The Home Minister is reported to have kept himself abreast of the situation in northeast Delhi, but seemed to have done little else. Political analysts have speculated that this may be due to the Bharatiya Janata Party's angst, consequent on the rebuff it received in the recent Delhi elections.

While the Union Home Ministry seems to have endorsed the muscular law and order tactics adopted by the Delhi police once the riots broke out, what is surprising and unfortunate is that the Aam Aadmi Party government, which had been elected on a promise of restoration of social harmony, and had sought to distinguish itself from the policies followed by the BJP government at the Centre, sat out the conflict, at a time when social harmony was at high risk, and sizeable segments of the population in northeast Delhi were facing extraordinary high levels of risk to their lives and livelihoods. The Chief Minister's failure to apply the necessary balm to try and con-



SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

tain the situation has certainly stained his image.

In security and law and order parlance, intelligence and police constitute the vital last 10%. Compounding the failure of the political and administrative leadership has been the ineptness displayed by the police and intelligence agencies. No agency could have missed the steady build-up – not only of tensions but also of actual preparations for violence – well before the incidents of February 23 and subsequent days (which took a toll of over 50 lives). A mixture of police overreaction (within the precincts of Jamia Millia University) and of police inaction in Jawaharlal Nehru University had already sounded the bugle for what lay ahead. The Delhi police would also, no doubt, have known that the 'peaceful demonstration' in Shaheen Bagh was an aberration of sorts, and that they should be prepared for violence once protests spread to other areas.

A lapse

Arguments adduced subsequently that nearly 7,600 members of the Central Forces – Delhi has about 80,000 police officers and men – were deployed to contain the riots, cannot obscure the extent of failure. Preparations for violence and the polarising rhetoric had made it all too evident that violence could be expected. Provocation was there in plenty from both sides. What was unpardonable, however, was that prominent leaders belonging to the ruling dispensation were allowed a free rein by the authorities to vent their 'bitter views' in public, which were heavily laced with communal overtones.

This is hardly a place to discuss modern policing techniques. It is inconceivable, however, that the Delhi police would not have carried out proper data mapping, so critical for efficient law and order management, one which all modern police forces adopt. This is the fundamental basis of all intelligence-led policing today. It is difficult to believe otherwise. Admittedly, however, to use an age-old idiom, there are many ways to skin a cat and, possibly in this instance, the Delhi police were perhaps directed by their political superiors to adopt another tack.

Delhi's shame is India's shame. Trouble-makers taking advantage of this lapse may feel encouraged to try and repeat the same in the future. The Delhi police need to set their house in order for, alongside other police forces across the world, they need to prepare for a future in which technological advances are creating an entire new paradigm of threats. In the age of rampant social media, they need to be ready to deal with the 'weaponisation of social media' – this may have already occurred in the Delhi case.

Target for all
The riots in Delhi did not fall into the category of nuclear science. If it were the latter, one could at least have attributed this to intelligence failure. The steady build-up of tension was all too obvious. Areas that needed to be properly screened for the presence of agent provocateurs and trouble-makers were ready to exploit such situations were known. Even a far less endowed police force, would have been able to effectively handle a situation that has since become a symbol of shame for Indian democracy, inviting the wrath of not only bodies such as the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, but also allowing countries with little pretence to secular democracy to point fingers at us.

M.K. Narayanan is a former National Security Adviser and a former Governor of West Bengal

Fighting COVID-19 together for a shared future

China and India have maintained close communication and cooperation on epidemic prevention



SUN WEIDONG

The COVID-19 outbreak is a major public health emergency that is most difficult to contain for China since the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949. It is also a formidable challenge to global public health security. Under the strong leadership of the Communist Party of China (CPC), China adopted unprecedented, most comprehensive, rigorous and thorough prevention and control measures, which not only protected the health and the security of the Chinese people, but also gained time for global response.

Since the outbreak of the epidemic, President Xi Jinping has personally taken charge of the nationwide response. He has chaired a series of important meetings, passed instructions every day, clearly guided and ensured the scientific deployment of epidemic prevention and control, and enabled the resumption of work and production. On March 10, President Xi went to Wuhan, the capital city of Hubei Province and the epicentre of the epidemic, to inspect prevention and control work there. He paid respects to the front-line workers and local residents. This has greatly encouraged and inspired the people of Wuhan and the whole nation.

The Chinese government has mobilised the whole nation with confidence, unity, a science-based approach and a targeted response. We focused on the following aspects: first, formulated timely strategies for epidemic prevention and control; second, strengthened a unified command and response in Wuhan and Hubei; third, coordinated the prevention and control work in other regions; fourth, strengthened scientific research, emergency medical and daily necessity supplies; fifth, effectively maintained social stability; sixth, strengthened public education; and seventh, actively engaged in international cooperation.

A resilient country
We are consolidating the positive momentum in outbreak control across the country. In general this round of the epidemic peak is over in China. The progress once again demonstrates the great strengths of the CPC's leadership and the system of socialism with Chinese characteristics. As President Xi pointed out, China is a resilient nation that has emerged stronger from numerous trials and tribulations. The bigger the difficulties and challenges China faces, the more cohesion and fighting spirit the Chinese nation demonstrates. We have all the confidence, capacity and determination to triumph over the epidemic.

Guided by the vision of a community with a shared future for mankind, China is fulfilling its responsibility for the life and health of its own people and for global public health. With an open, trans-



sparent and responsible attitude, we have actively engaged in international cooperation against the outbreak, and our efforts have been highly recognised by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the international community.

The UN Secretary-General, António Guterres, described China's sacrifice in fighting and containing the spread of COVID-19 as a great contribution to all mankind. At this critical moment, many countries embodied the spirit of standing together with mutual assistance amid difficulties. Leaders of over 170 countries and the heads of more than 40 international organisations expressed sympathy and support for China. Also, 71 countries and nine international organisations announced the donation of epidemic prevention and control materials to China.

Mutual support
China and India have maintained close communication and cooperation on epidemic prevention and control. In a letter to President Xi, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi has expressed support for China. We appreciate the medical

supplies provided by India and have helped facilitate the safe return of Indian nationals in Hubei. I am also deeply touched by the understanding and support in various ways from all sectors of the Indian society.

We have been closely following the global footprint of COVID-19. President Xi Jinping has said China will stay in close communication with WHO, share its epidemic control experience with other countries, seek closer international cooperation on medicine and vaccine development, and provide assistance to the best of its capabilities to countries and regions that are affected by the spread of the virus in keeping with its role as a responsible major country.

Reaching out
China has provided various kinds of assistance including testing reagents, remote assistance and medical supplies to countries with a severe outbreak such as Japan, the Republic of Korea and Iran and countries with fragile health systems in Asia, West Asia, Africa and Latin America. We have shared diagnosis and treatment experience and protocols with many countries including India. Recently, the number of confirmed cases in India is increasing. I sincerely wish the patients an early recovery. We are ready to maintain communication with India, share experience in a timely manner, render assistance and make joint efforts to overcome the epidemic.

The impact on the Chinese economy will be short lived and generally manageable. China has a re-

silient economy with robust domestic demand and a strong industrial base. We will definitely sustain the good momentum of economic and social development and meet the goal of achieving moderate prosperity in our society and eradicating extreme poverty in China. We will also strengthen coordination and communication with economic and trading partners and give priority to the resumption of production and supply of leading enterprises and key sectors that have a major impact on the stability of global supply chains. The fundamentals of China's economy will remain strong in the long run, and China will remain an important engine for global economic growth.

The history of civilisation is also one of a history of fighting diseases and a great journey of ceaseless global integration. President Xi Jinping has said that to prevail over a disease that threatens all, unity and cooperation is the most powerful weapon. In the process of fighting the epidemic, China is fulfilling its solemn commitment to build a community with a shared future for mankind with its own actions. The world is facing a real threat as WHO characterises COVID-19 as a pandemic. In the face of an increasingly severe situation, China will strengthen international coordination and cooperation, and jointly safeguard our only home, the blue planet, together with the world.

Sun Weidong is China's Ambassador to India

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.

State of the Congress

No party except one that is in self-destructive mode could have let a situation as the case in Madhya Pradesh snowball into one where a leader of national stature had no option but to leave and join its ideological rival, Jyotiraditya Scindia's decision to leave did not come suddenly and there have been many signs of his disaffection and dissatisfaction with the party. The factional struggle within the State unit of the grand old party has been festering for long and it is evident that the party high

command does not seem to have done much to resolve the problems. The fact remains that there is a vacuum at the top in the Congress and the leaders are unable to reorganise the party in the face of political setbacks. The family has shown that it is unable to revive and re-energise the party, which appears unable to look beyond the family. The Congress is fast getting reduced to becoming an idea without leadership, and without ownership and organisation.

AMJADULLAH ABUZAR,
Bajpatti, Bihar

It seems as if Indian democracy never stops to astonish, disappoint and intrigue us. The Indian National Congress seems to be in a situation where it would not be inappropriate to call it a sinking ship. Its leadership seems oblivious of the obvious problems and internal conflicts which are corroding the party structure. But Mr. Scindia's exit raises an integral and important question: whether our politicians have any ideological and moral values left. Are they just power hungry, greedy, pretentious and self-centred individuals? Mr. Scindia left a party after

many years of association to join a right-wing group which he has on many a given occasion, gone overboard to criticise and even ridicule. His case only exposes all the deep-rooted problems of our political system, our politicians and their fallacies.

DEVESH TRIPATHI,
Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh

The Afghan deal
The situation in Afghanistan is one where the U.S. has marooned the Afghans. The decades-long engagement, an apparent war waged against terror forces, has finally ended up as a zero-sum game. The crucial role

played by the U.S. all these days seems to have been in vain if one analyses the present situation since 9/11. The present situation has all the elements to reinvigorate the Taliban once again, which acquires importance in view of the volatile situation in the Kashmir region (Editorial page, "Fail-safe exit for America, a worry for India", March 12).

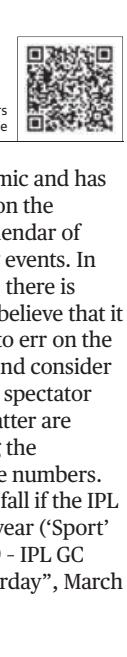
N. VIJAI,
Coimbatore

To play or not?
It is bewildering how some in the BCCI have discounted the coronavirus threat affecting this year's IPL fixtures. The

virus is a pandemic and has cast its shadow on the international calendar of various sporting events. In such a situation, there is every reason to believe that it would be wiser to err on the side of caution and consider player as well as spectator interests – the latter are bound to throng the stadiums in large numbers. The sky will not fall if the IPL is dropped this year ('Sport' page, "COVID-19 - IPL GC meeting on Saturday", March 12).

R. SIVAKUMAR,
Chennai

To read more letters online, scan the QR code



Should distressed private banks be saved by PSBs?

PARLEY

It should be the last resort, but right now, the government is facing severe fiscal constraints

A day after the government imposed a moratorium on the financially troubled Yes Bank last week, the Reserve Bank of India announced a draft restructuring plan that entails the State Bank of India acquiring a 49% stake in the private lender. In a discussion moderated by Suresh Seshadri, T.T. Ram Mohan and Ananth Narayan examine whether the proposed bailout is warranted and what lies ahead for the wider financial sector. Edited excerpts:

Is a bailout of a failing private lender by a public sector bank justified? And if so, on what grounds?

T.T. Ram Mohan: It's not the best option certainly. I think the first option should always be to have a private investor come in and infuse his capital into the private bank. The RBI did give some time to the Yes Bank management to work out such an arrangement but evidently that did not succeed.

The next option then, the straightforward option, would have been for the government to simply nationalise Yes Bank. And as you know, that's exactly what happened during the global financial crisis with innumerable private banks all over the world.

But here the government is facing severe fiscal constraints. And also, it is finding it very difficult to infuse money into its own public sector banks. That perhaps explains the reluctance of the government to nationalise Yes Bank. So, what we have is really something that should be the very last resort, which is getting a public sector institution, a public sector bank, SBI, to lead the rescue.

Why is it that in the case of a private lender, unlike, say, an airline, there's a reluctance on the part of authorities to let the bank fail?

Ananth Narayan: It's never pleasant or elegant to see something like this... intervention by the government. But let's face it, this is an issue of financial stability. Yes Bank was not a small bank. The total balance sheet size was close to ₹3.5 lakh

crore, lots of depositors, lots of businesses. And one thing which the Financial Stability Report of the RBI does kind of enumerate is the level of inter-connectedness within the financial services ecosystem. While after the global financial crisis, the idea was always to have no bank which is too big to fail, the reality is the inter-connectedness between banks themselves, banks and the rest of the financial sector ecosystem, including mutual funds, insurance companies, non-banking finance companies (NBFCs), etc. And then the inter-connectedness of the financial sector with the real economy is so deep, that you know, what is good in theory would rarely be good in practice. So, I don't dispute that what the government has done, which is stepping in to try and resolve the Yes Bank crisis, is the right approach. We can argue about what could have been the best approach. In the past, banks such as Global Trust Bank have been subsumed within existing banks, rather than trying a half-way measure as we are doing right now. So we can argue about the right way of doing this and the right modalities of doing this. But some kind of intervention was definitely required.

I will only also add, this isn't over. While Yes Bank was an immediate problem, which obviously had to be resolved, the larger trust deficit in the financial services ecosystem remains. And much work needs to be done beyond this.

Are larger public sector banks, including SBI, being made more fragile by involving them in bailouts of their public sector or private peers?

AN: It's never good for a bank to have to step in and practically as a last resort have to rescue another bank. I'm sure given the choice, the SBI management would have probably rather not gotten themselves involved in a Yes Bank rescue. But as the chairman and managing director of SBI himself said, when the country's interests come to the forefront, people have very little choice.

Things are a little fragile for the overall financial services ecosystem. I



As per the Financial Stability Report, public sector banks have 12.7% of gross non-performing assets (NPAs) as of September 2019. That number could actually be higher if you were to include or remove the kind of forbearance available on some sectors like small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and real estate. Plus, as of September, loans to NBFCs such as DHFL [Deewan Housing Finance Corporation] were actually counted as current. So, accounting for all of that, that number is probably higher, and it's higher than the rest of the ecosystem. Plus, over the last few years, the government has had to infuse ₹3.5 lakh crore of equity into public sector banks. So, the overall banking system is kind of fragile at this point in time, and it's clearly burdened with things like NPAs and loans.

I wouldn't call this particular Yes Bank episode a question as to whether public sector banks are better governed or private sector banks are. I think the reality is that every element of the financial services ecosystem requires governance reforms. Governance is a cross bank and cross institutional issue. It's not limited to public sector banks or private sector banks or NBFCs; it's across the board.

Are we creating a larger number of banks that potentially become 'Too Big to Fail'? The RBI had earlier identified only SBI, ICICI and HDFC Bank as Domestic-Systemically Important Banks.

C This isn't over. While Yes Bank was an immediate problem, which obviously had to be resolved, the larger trust deficit in the financial services ecosystem remains.

ANANT NARAYAN

TTR: The systemically important banks are banks which are tracked more carefully and which are also subject to higher capital requirements under Basel III. But that is not to say that banks which are relatively smaller in size, such as Yes Bank, do not pose systemic risk and therefore, should not be rescued. In practice, the threshold for a bank to be considered large enough to constitute a risk to the system is much lower. So characterising a bank as systemically important has more to do with tracking particular banks more carefully. That does not mean that there is no case for a rescue with banks of a much lower size. Even a bank with a size of about ₹2,00,000 crore, if it were to fail today, would need to be rescued. And that way it does constitute a systemic risk.

Are there wider risks to banking stability given the underlying stress among corporate borrowers in a wide range of sectors from telecom to power to aviation?

AN: This is a risk that a lot of us have

been flagging for a while now, that there is a trust deficit in the financial services ecosystem which is linked to several stresses on corporate and SME balance sheets at this point in time. As per the Financial Stability Report of the RBI, as of September, the gross NPAs of the banking system was 9.3% of advances. And there are analysts who say that if you include the forbearance available to SMEs and to some real estate assets, besides the fact that some NBFCs were not classified as non-performing in September, even though they subsequently have [become] non-performing like DHFL, the actual number could be higher than 9.3%. The problem really is for NBFCs where the official number for gross NPAs, as of September, was 6.3% of advances. That number doesn't make sense. NBFCs typically lend to sectors which are riskier than banks. And it does feel like the real number could be much, much higher and mind you, no asset quality review has happened for NBFCs as yet.

Now, the whole edifice of a financial services ecosystem is trust – if people don't trust the numbers, which are being put out for the asset quality, clearly that has implications for financing, that has implications for the ability and the willingness of people to actually lend and put out money. And this is something which has to be addressed. Eventually to restore trust, I think we have no choice but to actually make a clean breast of where we are in terms of the true asset quality. Which is, where all the ramifications of the stressed sectors including real estate, construction, power, telecom, airline and shipping, maybe even several public sector enterprise loans, will come to the fore. So, alongside that disclosure, if you don't want the system to actually go through a lot of strain, you obviously require a solution as well. Now, while we have a very good Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code and the NCLT [National Company Law Tribunal] process, I don't think it's geared to handle the overhang of stock that we have right now of NPAs. We already have more than 2,000 cases pending at the NCLT courts. So we probably require a one-time solution as well to go along with this actual disclosure of the real state of affairs. Absent these two things, and of course, the larger

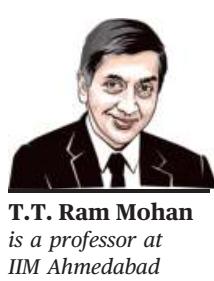
reforms... it is possible that this overall financial services ecosystem remains in a bit of a comatose condition for a long time and that's terrible news for us. We need our financial system to be able to fund growth; at the moment, that's not the case at all.

How confident are you about the outlook for the financial system?

TTR: I agree the conditions are very challenging, and not just the adverse global conditions. At the moment the stresses within our own financial system have got considerably exacerbated consequent to the Yes Bank episode. We have to see what happens to the attempted rescue. The details of the rescue plan are evolving, even as we speak. It's not clear what the precise rescue plan is going to be. And so we have to wait and watch and see whether any attempted rescue of Yes Bank has a reasonable chance of success. That is a crucial factor.

But irrespective of how that problem is resolved, the damage to confidence caused by the moratorium, one month moratorium, and the cap on withdrawal of deposits of ₹50,000 cannot be overstated. And I think that is duly reflected in the hammering that several private bank stocks have received over the last few days. It's also not helpful that the Maharashtra government has made it very clear that none of the State government's accounts or the accounts of the civic and other bodies under the State government will be left lying with private banks hereafter. Now, I shudder to think of what the implications would be if other State governments were to imitate the State government of Maharashtra, which is highly likely. So we need some cool heads at this point and there has to be coordination between the Central government, the State governments and the RBI to bring about some calm in the sector.

The rescue plan for Yes Bank is a starting point. But there are various other things that need to be done. And let me say that the impending bailout package for telecom is one of the many imponderables in the scenario. But my guess is that whatever plan is announced is going to prove quite stressful for the banking sector.



T.T. Ram Mohan

is a professor at IIM Ahmedabad



Ananth Narayan

is Professor of Finance at SP Jain Institute of Management and Research



Scan the QR code to listen to the full interview online

The cost of opacity

It is not data, but lack of transparency and awareness that causes panic during a pandemic

R. PRASAD

China's initial cover-up of the novel coronavirus outbreak for nearly a month invited worldwide condemnation. Similarly, there were concerns when the U.S. was reported to be barring leading scientist, Anthony Fauci, from speaking publicly about the COVID-19 outbreak without approval. Dr. Fauci has been the director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases since 1984 and has helped combat many novel viruses including SARS, H1N1, MERS and Ebola. Therefore, it is troubling that instead of advocating transparency during a pandemic, the Indian Medical Association (IMA), representing over 3,25,000 doctors, has said that India should adopt the same opaque manner of functioning while dealing with the outbreak.

The World Health Organization (WHO) holds a daily press briefing on COVID-19. It shares data on the number of cases and deaths country-wise every day. The Union Health Minister and the Kerala Health Minister also share data daily, which is commendable. But the IMA does not want the government to share data with the public daily as it says people are "clueless as to what is expected of them" and the release of data daily has "created panic". However, ironically, it also says that "awareness, self-precautions, contact tracing and self-isolation are the public health measures required". Secretary General Dr. R.V. Asokan said to *The Hindu* that the government should consider releasing data "once in three or seven days". It should not mention the numbers of those infected, but use terms such as 'low', 'moderate' or 'high' to give a sense of the spread, he said. "Why should people know the numbers? This pandemic will escalate and people will scrutinise the numbers minutely," he said.

Maintaining trust

While dealing with a public health crisis, especially a pandemic, complete transparency is paramount. It is information that helps build trust in society and puts people at ease. How does the IMA expect people to cooperate, practise self-isolation, and take basic precautions when they are not

taken into confidence? As Dr. Anant Bhan, a researcher in global health and bioethics, says, "When the government is transparent, it gives people the confidence that it is in control and is taking all the necessary steps to control the outbreak. The trust factor should not be broken."

Responses across the world

Many countries responded quickly to the unfolding pandemic. South Korea shared data on the number of cases and deaths even as the numbers steadily increased. On March 5, the U.K. added COVID-19 to the list of notifiable diseases and added SARS-CoV-2 to the list of notifiable causative agents. As a result, doctors are now legally bound to report all cases to Public Health England.

The Indian government has made some efforts to this end but can do much more. It could take a leaf out of Taiwan's book, for instance. In Taiwan, the public were kept informed about COVID-19 every hour through television and radio programmes. They were informed about how SARS-CoV-2 spreads, the importance of washing hands with soap, when to wear a mask, etc. They learnt about the symptoms and spread of the disease. This helped Taiwan trace contacts easily. People also cooperated in cutting the transmission chain – for instance, parents checked their children for a fever before sending them to school.

The right approach

This is not the first time that the IMA has made an embarrassing statement. Some time ago, it admonished *The Lancet* for the journal's stand on the dilution of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir. Its dangerous advice at a time like this raises questions about whether the IMA and its office bearers are aware of the best public health practices during a disease outbreak, particularly a pandemic. It is not transparency and data, but opacity and lack of public awareness that cause panic. The right approach would be for the government to constantly educate the public on various aspects of SARS-CoV-2 and the precautions to be taken.

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NOTEBOOK

What I couldn't see in isolation

Some women embrace unjust practices in the name of tradition

SANJANA GANESH

When I first arrived at Pottal Pacheri, a village in Madurai district bordering the Watrap hills of Virudhunagar, the women who met me were curious. They learnt about the symptoms and spread of the disease. This helped Taiwan trace contacts easily. People also cooperated in cutting the transmission chain – for instance, parents checked their children for a fever before sending them to school.

They asked me why I wanted to know about that one room alone. I told them that I was writing an elaborate article attempting to understand some traditional practices in Tamil Nadu. My answer seemed to mollify them and I was taken to see the room.

I knew, however, that the story was not going to be about women priding themselves on upholding an age-old practice. That was not why I was there.

Sometimes, reporters are required to be restrained about their intent when they are chasing a story. Some element of deception is always necessary to get to the hidden truth.

It really wasn't much of a room. Water was seeping through the roof. Parts of the wall that had chipped off lay on the floor along with soiled mats and animal waste. The women said they had to go to the nearest water tank to relieve themselves as there was no bathroom. Even if 10 women got their period at the same time, they had no choice but to adjust in a space that seemed barely enough to accommodate two. They said they were following tradition.

Then came the interesting part. Although to me, an outsider, the practice was blatantly discriminatory, the women I spoke to didn't think so. They told me that it was an honour to be in the room during their period. They said being confined in that space en-

bled the birth and growth of healthy children in the village. They believed that if they did not go into the 'period room', the other women in the village would not be able to conceive.

One woman, Palaniammal, sought the construction of a 'period room' which was spacious, well-lit and with access to a bathroom. She assumed that this demand would form the crux of my article. She told me to tell everyone, particularly senior officers, that the women wanted better infrastructure. She also asked me to highlight how they uphold cultural values.

Instead, I went ahead and reported on how a discriminatory practice excludes women from having access to basic amenities. I wondered briefly later: was that angle not a betrayal of their trust? Was it right on my part to expose their experiences?

I also came across women who had escaped this set-up. Women who had

married into these villages said that they travelled to their parents' homes to avoid feeling isolated. One woman said that she and many others had sent their daughters to hostels so that they wouldn't have to go through this practice.

These women said that this practice filled them with a sense of shame. A natural phenomenon made them feel unwanted and alien. It also allowed the festering of unscientific beliefs – they believed that staying at home would affect child birth.

To end the taboo surrounding menstruation, I believed that the story had to be about discrimination, about the conditions in the room and the experiences of these women. This is why I chose to report the practice in these villages as a discriminatory one. But some women embrace discrimination in the name of tradition. They do have agency and perhaps an outsider is not best placed to judge their ways.

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO FEBRUARY 13, 1970

Protecting bank nationalisation

The Union Cabinet to-night [February 12, New Delhi] decided to issue an ordinance to restore the status quo ante in regard to the nationalisation of the 14 banks, following the Supreme Court judgment last Tuesday invalidating the Bank Nationalisation Act of 1969. The ordinance will be issued to-morrow [February 13]. The ordinance will meet the "twin" objections of the Supreme Court to the Act that was struck down, namely, hostile discrimination against the 14 major banks and payment of compensation. There is expected to be another Cabinet meeting tomorrow prior to the issue of the ordinance which is being drafted. It is reliably learnt that the ordinance will provide for the acquisition of the shares in the 14 banks nationalised in July last. It is also learnt that no further extension of nationalisation to other banks, Indian and foreign, is being contemplated. The Law Ministry is understood to be studying the bearing of the Supreme Court's judgment on other matters – the reference is clearly to general insurance. The Cabinet discussion on the bank issue lasted for over two hours.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MARCH 13, 1920.

Women candidates

(From an Editorial)

It is much regretted that the amendment in the District Municipalities Bill empowering women to stand as candidates for seats in Municipal Councils was rejected in the Legislative Council. Lord Willingdon and Sir P. Rajagopalachariar did not, we think, take up the right attitude, and the matter should have been left to the judgment of the non-official members. There is not much force in the argument that competent lady candidates will not be forthcoming. If such is the case there can be no harm in enacting an enabling provision. Such a provision will create deep interest on the part of the female voters in the civic affairs. It will stimulate the progress of female education and quicken the growth of intelligence and knowledge of public affairs among the female population. The general body of voters may well be credited with knowing whether lady candidates in the localities concerned are competent to discharge the duties of Councillors. The world is moving rapidly and even the Indian atmosphere is charged with a strong impulse urging men and women to go forward and to march energetically with the times.

CM YK

FROM PAGE ONE

Country's first COVID-19 death in Karnataka

In Andhra Pradesh's first COVID-19 case, a 24-year-old youth, who returned from Italy, has tested "positive", health officials said in Nellore. With two more cases being confirmed in Kerala, the total number of cases in the State has touched 16. Two more cases were also confirmed in Maharashtra, State Health Minister Rajesh Tope said, taking the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases to 14.

The patient in Nellore, who was admitted to the isolation ward of the Government General Hospital late on Monday, is now stable and all his vitals are normal, said Nellore District Joint Collector V. Vinod Kumar.

The new cases in Kerala were reported from Kannur,

of a person who had come from Dubai, and Thrissur in a person who returned from Qatar.

In Delhi, the mother of a 46-year-old man, who had tested positive for COVID-19, has also been detected with the virus, making her the sixth patient here.

"The woman, a 69-year-old has been admitted to RML Hospital. Her son has a history of travel to Japan, Geneva and Italy," Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said. He said that cinema halls in the capital would remain shut till March 31.

Pune has reported nine cases with District Collector Naval Kishore Ram stating that a person who had travel history to the United States tested positive on Thursday.

Sensex slumps 2,919 points, Nifty at a low

"Global stocks, including India, plunged into a bear market after President Donald Trump banned travel from Europe to stem the coronavirus, threatening more disruption to the world economy," said Deepak Jasani, Head-Retail Research, HDFC Securities. "Global recession risk is rising and the markets do not seem to be pricing that in fully," he added.

Incidentally, equity markets opened in the U.S. on Thursday with a sharp fall with the benchmark Dow Jones Industrial Average hitting its circuit breaker of 7% for trading to be halted for 15 minutes. Elsewhere in Asia, the benchmarks of Hong Kong, Japan, Taiwan, Indonesia and South Korea

all fell between 3% and 5% each.

Foreign investors continued to sell Indian equities with Thursday's selling pegged at nearly ₹3,500 crore. The current month's net sales are already nearing the ₹23,000-crore mark.

"The markets have corrected sharply on back of huge selling by FPIs that are moving out of equities across emerging markets. FPIs have become risk-averse and are moving to safe havens. The Nifty 50 index is down 22% from its peak, and incremental pain cannot be ruled out as the sentiment metrics are yet to turn around and signal capitulation," said Vikas Jain, Senior Research Analyst, Reliance Securities.

+ Nath govt. will survive BJP machinations'

Fiercely attacking the BJP and Mr. Scindia, Mr. Baghel said both were trapped with each other now.

"I can assure you that nobody is leaving the Congress with Scindiaji," Mr. Baghel said.

"He was Union Minister, Deputy Leader of the party in the Lok Sabha, AICC general secretary. But what has he achieved for the party? He was in charge of Uttar Pradesh – how many times did he go there? The party has only given him all and taken nothing from him. He has only taken from the party, and not given anything to

the party. As long as you were in power, the party was good for you. You lost in the elections, and many others also lost in the elections. Suddenly, the party has become very bad for you. The only thing we can make of this is that Scindiaji cannot live without power... He could not survive one year without power," he said.

Mr. Baghel recalled that Mr. Scindia's father, late Madhavarao Scindia, had left the Congress but returned later. "Many big leaders have left the Congress but they have all come back."

U.P. posters: SC refers appeal to larger Bench

Justices Lalit and Bose said there was a difference between videographing a person's unsocial or riotous behaviour as evidence and the State displaying personal details and photographs of citizens.

The posters had come up even before the 30-day deadline to pay the compensation was over, the Supreme Court found.

Did the State have a right to display their faces in the public domain and give rise to a presumption that they were guilty for all time to come, the court asked.

"Wrongdoers have to be brought to book. But can the State go two stages beyond and start displaying their faces on posters?" Justice Lalit asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, for the State government.

Mr. Mehta argued that the crux of the High Court order was the right to privacy of individuals featured in the posters. These people were not arbitrarily picked. A competent authority had applied its mind on 95 cases of vandalism during the anti-CAA protests. It had examined records, issued not-

ice and heard everyone.

"Privacy has many dimensions. If you wield your gun in a riot, you cannot turn around and claim privacy," Mr. Mehta argued.

Senior advocate A.M. Singhvi and advocate Shadan Farasat, appearing for a former IPS officer who features in the posters, said the banners were part of a "name and shame" policy against anti-CAA protesters.

"Even in the case of child rapists and murderers, do we put out their posters? Since when do we have in this country a policy to name and shame them. If there was such policy, an accused on bail walking in the streets would be lynched... Putting up such posters is an open invitation from the State to come and lynch me, to hit me and spit at me. The idea here seems to be though there is no evidence to convict me, there is enough to hang me from the nearest lamp post," Mr. Singhvi argued.

Senior advocate C.U. Singh said the act of putting up posters reeked of a "vindictive State".

No doubtful category in NPR, says Shah

Home Minister states that no documents would be asked and people could give information they had

SOBHANA K. NAIR
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday that there would be no doubtful category in the National Population Register (NPR) even if a person failed to furnish information. He invited Opposition leaders to meet him to clear all their doubts on the issue.

"No documents will be asked under the NPR. You are free to give whatever information you have and need not give the information that is not available. There will be no doubtful category... no one will be marked as a doubtful citizen. And all of you [Opposition] can come to me to ask any doubts on NPR," Mr. Shah said.

This assertion comes against the backdrop of doubts raised by many within the ruling NDA on the NPR form seeking information about the birth date and place of birth of parents. The Opposition members raised



Locking horns: Congress MP Kapil Sibal, left, and Home Minister Amit Shah in the Rajya Sabha on Thursday. • RSTV/PTI

many questions on Mr. Shah's assertions but were not allowed to speak.

Mr. Shah also sought to assure everyone that no one had to be afraid of NPR for whatever reason.

Hate speeches

He spoke this at the end of a raging verbal duel with Congress leader Kapil Sibal. "Hate speeches started soon after the Citizenship (Amendment) Act was passed by Parliament. Fear was instilled across the country in the minds of minority

that the CAA will snatch their citizenship. Please tell me of a single clause in the law that says that citizenship of Muslims will be revoked," he said, pointing at Mr. Sibal.

To this, Mr. Sibal replied that the Congress never said that the CAA could revoke anybody's citizenship but it had to be seen in connection with the NPR that would be followed by the National Register of Citizens (NRC). "It is not just about Muslims, it is also about the poor, tribals and so on. Many additional questions will be asked in the

NPR and those who are unable to answer these questions will be put in doubtful category," Mr. Sibal said.

Judge's transfer

Mr. Shah also claimed that the issue of Delhi High Court judge Justice S. Muralidhar's transfer was routine and was done on the advice of the collegium. Justice Muralidhar was transferred a day after he ordered an FIR in case of hate speeches delivered by BJP leaders Kapil Mishra, Parvesh Verma and Union Minister Anurag Thakur.

"The transfer orders had come on February 12 and was done on the collegium's advice and with judges consent. You [Opposition] should know better that the government has little role to play in judge's transfer," Mr. Shah said.

The Left members had referred to Delhi riots as 'state-sponsored' terrorism. To this, Mr. Shah asked if a government orchestrated riots when they were hosting an international guest. "Please use some common sense," he said.

Minister contradicts himself

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

There was a contradiction in Union Home Minister Amit Shah's speech in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday where he said that the communal riots in Delhi was a "pre-planned conspiracy".

On February 25, a statement issued by the Press Information Bureau had said: "Shri Shah noted that the professional assessment is that the violence in the capital has been spontaneous."

The statement was issued after Mr. Shah chaired a meeting on the situation in Delhi that was attended by Delhi Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal.

In his speech in the Lok Sabha on Wednesday, Mr. Shah said money was pumped through hawala transactions and over 300 rioters from Uttar Pradesh were identified which showed that the riots were planned.

Centre justifies visa suspension

Health Minister says things are under control, no lapse in screening at airports

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Amid growing concern over the spread of SARS-CoV-2, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar made statements in the Lok Sabha, detailing the government's response to the WHO-certified pandemic.

Mr. Jaishankar defended the decision to suspend all visas, except those for officials and diplomats, arguing that "exceptional situations require exceptional response".

Quarantine cases

"India has said that if people from certain countries are coming here, they have to go through quarantine – in certain cases compulsory quarantine and in some cases discretionary quarantine – and Indian citizens who are coming back will obviously come back to quarantine conditions if that is required," he said.

He was responding to a remark by N.K. Premchandran of the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) that "the only country which is imposing a total ban is India".

"At this time, travel in



COVID caution: Health Minister Harsh Vardhan requested MPs to discourage large gatherings as a preventive measure. • PTI

self is not recommended as it only heightens risks," the Minister said.

Stating that the virus outbreak was a matter of "great concern" and the government's initial focus is to bring back Indian pilgrims stranded in Iran, Mr. Jaishankar told the Lok Sabha that there were over 6,000 Indian nationals in various provinces of Iran. These included some 1,100 pilgrims mainly from Ladakh, Jammu and Kashmir and Maharashtra.

In addition, there were nearly 300 students, primarily from Jammu and Kashmir; some 1,000 fishermen, many from Kerala, Tamil Na-

du and Gujarat; and others who were on longer term stay in Iran for pursuing their livelihood and religious studies.

In response to questions by MPs from the DMK (T.R. Baalu), the Congress (Hibi Eden and Manish Tewari) and the Aam Aadmi Party (Bhagwant Mann), Mr. Jaishankar detailed efforts made by the government for the safe return of the stranded Indians.

Mapping contacts

Dr. Harsh Vardhan made a detailed statement on the government's efforts at testing, quarantine and mapping contact points of those who

had been infected.

"There has been no lapse in terms of screening. I myself have spent over three hours at the Delhi airport to check our screening process. Today, we are screening at over 30 airports across the country," he said.

"As for laboratories, we have 51 such laboratories that have been set up with 56 collection points. We went up to the extent that when the Iranian government said they had no way of testing our people before being sent back, we sent an entire laboratory to be set up there," Dr. Vardhan said.

"Members of Parliament should appreciate the fact that we are not getting anyone back without completion of scientific protocols, including 645 people from Wuhan, the epicentre of the disease. For Italy, too, we are trying to follow scientific protocols to bring back our people," he said.

"Things are under control, and I request all MPs to openly discourage any large gatherings in your areas, and educate people on how they can protect themselves from the disease," the Minister said.

MEA advises against IPL, non-essential travel

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The External Affairs Ministry on Thursday advised against the holding of mega sports events such as the IPL because of the growing threat of COVID-19.

Additional Secretary Dammu Ravi said the viral outbreak was a serious threat.

"I think it is for the organisers to decide as to whether they want to go ahead with it or not. Our advice will be not to do it at this time but if they still want to do it, it's their decision," said Mr. Ravi, who has been appointed as the nodal officer to coordinate India's international efforts in response to the crisis.

Mr. Ravi said Indians abroad would be tested before they were brought back from affected countries such as Italy and Iran. He said, "We need to understand that evacuation doesn't mean that we are going to bring everybody. People who are not contaminated will be first brought in. That's the process," said Mr. Ravi.

Mr. Ravi said the situation in Europe was "alarming" and advised Indians there to "stay put" and travel only for "compelling reasons". He said that individuals would be evaluated by mission heads and other diplomatic officials if they wanted to visit India urgently, and mentioned "health reasons" and "weddings" that could possibly qualify as "compelling reasons".

Justice Lalit said the Bench was set up for a purpose, which did not include an urgent hearing of petitions to reschedule IPL matches. The Bench asked petitioner-advocate Mohan Babu Agarwal to plead for an urgent hearing before the Regular Bench assigned the case when the court reopens after the Holi vacation on March 16.

.....

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Mr. Ravi said the situation in Europe was "alarming" and advised Indians there to

Ambassador defends Italy's response to virus outbreak

Vincenzo de Luca thanks India for aid to Italian tourists

SUHASINI HAIDAR

NEW DELHI

Denying that Italy has been lax in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic, Italian Ambassador to India Vincenzo de Luca has said that the government in Rome took "immediate, progressive and serious" actions to contain the virus.

Italy has emerged as one of the worst-affected countries after the virus manifested in China's Hubei province and has now spread to most parts of the world.

After Wednesday, when Italy saw a 30% jump in deaths due to the virus within a day, with more than 800 dead and about 12,500 people infected, Prime Minister Giuseppe Conte announced a shutdown of all commercial establishments, except grocery stores and pharmacies.

Cites WHO praise

Asked if the measures came too late, Mr. Luca said even the World Health Organisation (WHO) had praised Italy for responding "energetically".

"Since the beginning of the emergency, our government adopted restrictive measures that were extend-

ed to the whole national territory: Italy is in lockdown. Severe restrictions to mobility, except for very limited purposes, are in force. These measures have already proven to be effective in those territories that were the first to adopt them," he said in written responses to *The Hindu*.

Given the large number of cases in Italy, and confirmed infections in as many as 15 Italian tourists as well as several Indians who either came into contact with them or had returned from Italy, New Delhi has decided to block any passengers from boarding flights to India from any Italian airport

without undergoing COVID-19 tests there. The move has led to more than 300 Indians being stranded at Italian airports.

According to Mr. Luca, the Indian Embassy in Rome and the Embassy of Italy in Delhi have been "working closely" and a task force has been set up in Delhi along with the Ministries of External Affairs, Health and Family Welfare and Tourism.

"Thanks to their efficient and prompt cooperation, which Italy is extremely grateful for, it was possible to assure assistance to the Italian nationals who are currently being treated in Delhi and in Jaipur," he added.

He did not, however, provide details of how stranded Indians would be looked after as they await Indian medical teams and three special relief flights to evacuate them over the next few days.

The Italian Ambassador also said the COVID-19 pandemic "is teaching us that health is the most important global public good. We are faced with the challenge to preserve it, and to do so, there is no alternative to international solidarity and cooperation."

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Tension at resort hosting M.P. legislators

Scuffle breaks out as Bengaluru police stop two Ministers and a legislator's father from meeting them

STAFF REPORTER

BENGALURU

High drama prevailed when the police stopped two Madhya Pradesh Ministers from meeting rebel Congress MLAs in a resort on the outskirts of the city on Thursday.

A scuffle reportedly broke out when the father of one of the MLAs, who accompanied the Ministers, tried to meet his son. The police rushed to the spot and prevented any meeting from taking place.

MLAs' request

Police officers said they had acted on a letter from the MLAs to the State police chief seeking security and expressing their unwillingness to meet anyone.



Failed bid: M.P. Minister Jitu Patwari, second from left, addressing the media in Bengaluru. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Scindia has embraced RSS ideology, says Rahul

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday said his former colleague Jyotiraditya Scindia became apprehensive about his political future and embraced the ideology of Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). The former Congress chief, who called himself a friend of Mr. Scindia, claimed that the latter would not get respect from the BJP.

"This is a fight of ideology. One of the one side, you have the ideology of the Congress party and on other side, you have the RSS-BJP ideology...Jyotiraditya Scindia ji got scared about his political future and that's why he kept his ideology in his pocket and joined hands with the RSS," Mr. Gandhi told reporters here.

"But the reality is that



Rahul Gandhi
neither will he get respect there nor will he be satisfied because of the ideology that is in his heart. What is inside his heart and what he is speaking are two different things," he added.

This is his first public statement after Mr. Scindia's exit that set off a chain reaction among younger Congress leaders who are responsive and worried about their political future.

IN BRIEF



Opposition warns govt. on railway privatisation

NEW DELHI

Opposition leaders cautioned against any move to privatise the Railways and demanded that the separate Railway Budget be restored. Members, however, acknowledged that stations had become cleaner in recent years. In the Lok Sabha, M.K. Raghavan (Congress) accused the Centre of showing consistent apathy in the last five years with a high operating ratio for the Railways, the worst in the last 10 years.

Ports Bill introduced in LS amid objections

NEW DELHI

A Bill seeking to provide autonomy to major ports to improve efficiency and competitiveness was introduced in the Lok Sabha amid objections by the Opposition, who wanted the Centre to redraft the legislation to remove ambiguity. Introducing the Major Ports Authority Bill, 2020, Shipping Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said the idea behind the Bill was not to privatise the 12 major ports but to give them more powers to take decisions.

Social media platforms to be made accountable

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

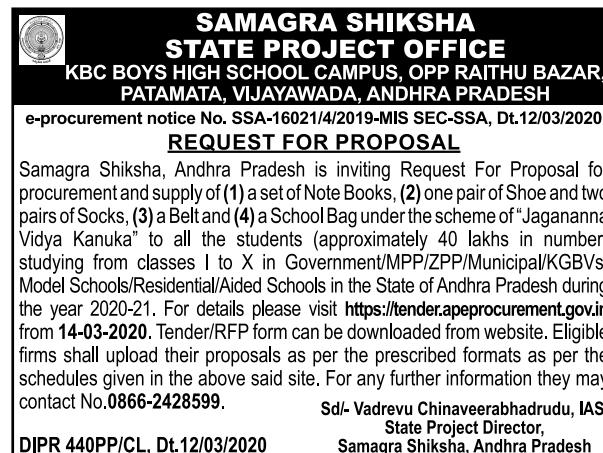
NEW DELHI

The government is finalising the 'intermediaries guidelines' to make the social media platforms, including Facebook and Twitter, more responsive and accountable.

"The Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology is in the process of amending the Information Technology (Intermediaries Guidelines) Rules, 2011, to make the social media platforms more responsive and accountable. The rules are being finalised," Minister of State for Electronics and IT Sanjay Dhotre said in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha.



The government had first released the draft for proposed amendments to the IT Act in December 2018, inviting public comments. It proposed to make it mandatory for platforms such as WhatsApp, Facebook and Twitter to trace the "originator" of "unlawful" information and remove such content within 24 hours of notice.



REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

Samagra Shiksha, Andhra Pradesh is inviting Request For Proposal for procurement and supply of (1) a set of Note Books, (2) one pair of Shoe and two pairs of Socks, (3) A Belt and (4) A School Bag under the scheme of Jagananna Vidya Kanuka" to all the students (approximately 40 lakhs in number) studying from classes I to X in Government/MPP/ZPP/Municipal/KGBVs/ Model Schools/Residential/Aided Schools in the State of Andhra Pradesh during the year 2020-21. For details please visit [https://tender.approcurement.gov.in](http://tender.approcurement.gov.in) from 14-03-2020. Tender/RFP form can be downloaded from website. Eligible firms shall upload their proposals as per the prescribed formats as per the schedules given in the above said site. For any further information they may contact No.0866-2428599.

Sd/- Vadrevu Chinaveerabhadru, IAS,
State Project Director,
Samagra Shiksha, Andhra Pradesh

DIPR 440P/CL, DL/12/03/2020

WORKS DEPARTMENT

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER,

EASTERN CIRCLE (R&B), BALASORE

e-mail: - seec_bls@rediffmail.com

Government of Odisha "e" Procurement Notice

Bid Identification No. SEEC-12/2019-20

No.1610/WE dt.29.02.2020

Nature of work

Number of works

-

Road Work works & Building Works

2 (Two) Nos of Road work &

1 (One) Nos. Buildings work.

-

Rs.133.19 Lakh to Rs.836.37 Lakh

B" & "A" Class / "A" & "Special" /

"Special" & "Super" Class

-

Dt.12.03.2020 at 10.00 AM

-

Dt.27.03.2020 up to 05.00 PM

-

Dt.28.03.2020 at 11.00 AM

-

Superintending Engineer,

Eastern Circle (R&B), Balasore.

-

The bidders have to participate in ONLINE bidding only. Further details can be seen from the e-procurement portal <http://tendersodisha.gov.in>. All future corrigendum will be available on ONLINE mode only.

Sd/- S.K.Mohnat

Superintending Engineer, Eastern Circle (R&B), Balasore

OIPR-34026/1/0012/2020

B-806:

Yes Bank: prime properties in Delhi, Mumbai under ED lens

Agency starts process to attach assets of Kapoor family

DEVESH K. PANDEY

NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate has started the process for attaching over a dozen properties in the posh localities of Delhi and Mumbai in connection with the case against Yes Bank's promoter-director Rana Kapoor and others. Assets have also been located in the United Kingdom, the U.S. and France.



Rana Kapoor

Following the money trail, the agency has also zeroed in on at least three properties in London, New York and France. "In a New York hotel, £20.66 million was invested and £30 million pounds was invested in a hotel in London," the official said.

While investigations into the domestic assets are under way, the agency plans to approach the authorities in these three countries for getting more information about the properties in question. Before a Mumbai court, the ED has said that during Mr. Kapoor's tenure, loans to the tune of ₹30,000 crore were given to various entities and ₹20,000 crore turned non-performing assets.

According to the agency, the usual modus operandi adopted by the accused persons was to extend loans through Yes Bank to companies in lieu of investments in the ones floated by them.

The ED probe has revealed that the accused persons had invested about ₹6,000 crore through 78 companies, most of which were floated in the name of Mr. Kapoor's wife and daughters, said a senior official.

"Five of the prime assets are in Delhi. They include the properties on Sardar Patel Marg, Kautalya Marg and Amrita Sherill Marg in Lutyens Delhi, one in the adjoining Jor Bagh and another one in Hauz Khas. Their

Congress names RS candidates, will fight for third seat in M.P.

Scindia is one of the BJP's nominees for the seat

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday declared 12 candidates for the upcoming Rajya Sabha polls including former Chief Minister Digvijaya Singh, party general secretary K.C. Venugopal, former Lok Sabha members Deepender Hooda and Rajeev Satav and senior Supreme Court advocate K.T. Tulsi.



will be to make a place in every worker's heart."

Mr. Scindia said he was proud of joining the party nurtured by his grandmother with capital and effort. "I have sacrificed everything and joined it [the BJP]," he said.

Cautioning workers that a post should not be important, he said, "For us, if there is something that should hold importance, it should be respect and identity."

Avoiding hitting out directly at the Kamal Nath government that his supporters hold responsible for ignoring him, Mr. Scindia said Mr. Chouhan "could do that [criticise the Congress] better".

By naming a second candidate from Madhya Pradesh

— Phool Singh Baraiya — the Congress has made clear that it is not going to give Jyotiraditya Scindia an easy passage.

Of the three seats from M.P., the BJP and Congress are assured of one each, while the third seat will witness a fight as both the parties have fielded two candidates each.

Mr. Scindia is one of the BJP's nominees.

While Mr. Venugopal is

being fielded from Rajasthan, the party's Delhi in-charge Shaktisinh Ghohil will contest from Gujarat, Mr. Hooda from Haryana and Mr. Satav from Maharashtra.

Mr. Tulsi, a senior advocate of the Supreme Court will come from Chhattisgarh, where the Congress has a comfortable majority. Phulo Devi Netam is the other candidate from Chhattisgarh while Shahzada Anwar will come from Jharkhand.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY MATERIALS MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT ADDENDUM TO AUCTION NOTICE No.17/2019 SALE OF RIVER SAND

Madurai Division of Southern Railway is having "Coarse River Sand" at Virudhunagar Railway Station Yard. It is proposed to sell it through e-auction. The e-auction is to be conducted on 27.03.2020. Interested bidders are requested to get their names registered with IREPS. For further details, Divisional Materials Manager, DRM Office, Madurai (Mobile No. 9003862771) may please be contacted.

For detailed terms and conditions and downloading of catalogue please visit our Website: <http://www.ireps.gov.in> → E-Auction → Sale → Live Auctions.

Principal Chief Materials Manager

TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS-TIRUPATI BIRD TRUST HOSPITAL, T.T.D., TIRUPATI. e - TENDER				
MATERIALS MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT ADDENDUM TO AUCTION NOTICE No.17/2019 SALE OF RIVER SAND				
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Principal Chief Materials Manager				

NLC INDIA LIMITED "Navratna" Government of India Enterprise Regd. Office: First Floor, No. 5, Main Subramani Road, FSD, Egmore, Chennai - 600 031. Corp. Office: Block-1, Neyveli-607 801, Cuddalore District, Tamil Nadu. CIN No.: 93909TN1956G000507, Email: nlcindia.com				
DOMESTIC COMPETITIVE BIDDING BRIEF NOTICE INVITING BID				
Sealed Bid in English One (1) original and Seven(7) identical copies are invited by NLC India Limited (NLCIL), Neyveli on behalf of Neyveli Uttar Pradesh Power Limited (NUPPL) for the work of DESIGN, ENGINEERING, MANUFACTURE, SUPPLY, ERECTION, COMMISSIONING, P.G.TEST ETC., OF FLUE GAS DESULPHURISATION SYSTEM PACKAGE (GA4) FOR ITS 3 X 660 MW GHATAMPUR THERMAL POWER PROJECT (GTTP) AT GHATAMPUR TEHSIL, UTTAR PRADESH, IND				

MARKET WATCH

	12-03-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	32,778	-8.18
US Dollar	74.24	-0.76
Gold	44490	-0.29
Brent oil	33.38	-7.46

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	287.65	-32.55
Asian Paints	1843.35	-39.50
Axis Bank	543.25	-76.10
Bajaj Auto	2338.90	-252.65
Bajaj Finserv	7438.05	-815.95
Bajaj Finance	3734.35	-296.30
Bharti Airtel	464.95	-28.85
BPCL	344.30	-60.10
Britannia Ind	2810.65	-237.65
Cipla	394.75	-22.35
Coal India	154.55	-13.45
Dr Reddys Lab	2850.40	-150.20
Eicher Motors	16877.75	-875.85
GAIL (India)	79.95	-10.55
Grasim Ind	559.85	-65.40
HCL Tech	493.35	-43.45
HDFC	1875.70	-160.55
HDFC Bank	1021.30	-92.50
Hero MotoCorp	1907.20	-128.85
Hindalco	120.20	-17.60
Hind Unilever	2055.95	-99.05
ICICI Bank	425.65	-40.00
IndusInd Bank	784.65	-68.90
Bharti Infratech	221.30	-3.45
Infosys	631.20	-54.80
Indian Oil Corp	87.90	-9.00
ITC	155.80	-19.85
JSW Steel	203.20	-20.30
Kotak Bank	1465.05	-124.25
L&T	1016.55	-100.40
M&M	423.35	-28.25
Maruti Suzuki	5643.15	-503.15
Nestle India Ltd.	15656.55	-483.00
NTPC	94.35	-8.70
ONGC	62.50	-9.20
PowerGrid Corp	166.10	-15.30
Reliance Ind	1063.00	-90.55
State Bank	212.60	-32.50
Sun Pharma	354.80	-31.15
Tata Motors	88.00	-10.90
Tata Steel	287.45	-12.30
TCS	1769.85	-183.85
Tech Mahindra	649.85	-58.70
Titan	1076.75	-110.90
UltraTech Cement	3663.50	-329.90
UPL	443.60	-73.35
Vedanta	79.85	-12.15
Wipro	199.10	-14.00
YES Bank	25.05	-3.75
Zee Entertainment	190.65	-18.85

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	74.02	74.34
Euro	83.03	83.40
British Pound	93.77	94.18
Japanese Yen (100)	71.18	71.50
Chinese Yuan	10.54	10.60
Swiss Franc	78.67	79.01
Singapore Dollar	52.64	52.88
Canadian Dollar	53.47	53.71
Malaysian Ringgit	17.34	17.43

Source: Indian Bank

BULLION RATES CHENNAI

March 12 rates in rupees with previous rates in parentheses

Retail Silver (1g)	48.9	(49.5)
22 ct gold (1 g)	4157	(4164)

RBI tells States not to shift deposits from private banks

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has asked all State governments to refrain from shifting their deposits from private sector banks to government banks.

The move came after the Maharashtra government directed all its departments, civic bodies and semi-government corporations not to transact with private banks after private sector lender Yes Bank was put on moratorium last week.

Observing that some other State governments were also contemplating such a move, the RBI, in a strongly-worded letter to all chief secretaries of the States, said apprehension regarding safety of deposits in private sector banks was highly misplaced and such reactions would not be in the interest of the financial stability of the banking system. "We strongly believe that such a move can have banking and financial sector stability implications," the letter said.

"We would like to point out that the Reserve Bank has adequate powers to regulate and supervise private sector banks and by using these powers it has ensured depositors' money is entirely safe. It is pertinent to mention that the resolution of weak private sector banks in the past has been done in a manner that the depositors are not at a loss.

"It is precisely with the view to retaining depositors' confidence in private banks and their mitigating their hardship that, after the imposition of moratorium on Yes Bank Ltd., the RBI has drawn up the draft scheme without any delay, and we are making every effort for the finalisation of the scheme," RBI said.

Retail inflation eases to 6.58%, industrial production quickens

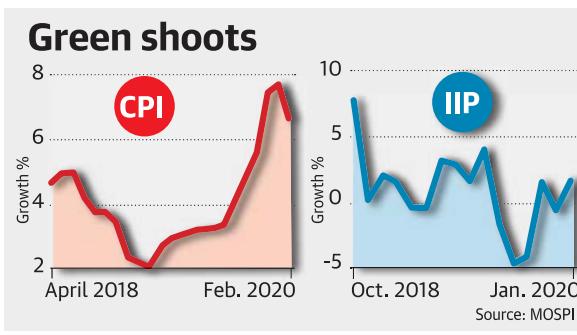
Food inflation abates; faster output growth in mining, manufacturing

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Retail inflation based on the Consumer Price Index slowed to 6.58% in February, while the industrial production growth as measured in the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) quickened to 2% in January amid subdued performance by the manufacturing sector, official data released on Thursday showed.

Retail inflation, which was 7.59% in January 2020 and 2.57% in February 2019, slowed mainly due to easing food prices. Inflation in the food basket was 10.81% February 2020, lower from 13.63% in the previous month, as per data from Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.



The government has mandated the central bank to keep inflation at 4% with a margin of two percentage points on either side.

"The moderation in inflation has expectedly been led largely by food inflation while core inflation remains muted amid tepid demand," Upasna Bhardwaj, Economist at Kotak Mahindra Bank

said. "We expect the inflation trajectory to continue to moderate going ahead led by deflationary trends from falling crude oil prices, lower food prices and weak demand."

She added that with domestic and global growth expected to face downside risks from the spread of COVID-19 and deflationary forces

emerging, "we see room for up to 50 bps of rate cut by the MPC, with any further easing contingent on the evolving growth environment."

The IIP had accelerated 1.6% in January 2019. For January 2020, official data showed that the mining sector output grew 4.4% against a rise of 3.8%, manufacturing output rose 1.5% compared with 1.3% in the year-ago month, and electricity generation rose 3.1% versus 0.9% in January 2019.

Cumulative IIP growth for the period April-January 2019-20 over the corresponding period of the previous year stands at 0.5%, as against a growth of 4.4% in the corresponding period of 2018-19.

World stocks plunge into bear market, oil slumps

Federal Reserve to inject \$1.5 trillion in repo operations

REUTERS

NEW YORK

Global stocks plunged into a bear market and oil slumped further on Thursday after stimulus efforts from the European Central Bank failed to calm investors alarmed by U.S. moves overnight to restrict travel from Europe over the spread of COVID-19.

Trading was halted for 15 minutes shortly after the open in New York after the S&P 500 index fell more than 7%. It was recently trading down 8.20%.

U.S. President Donald Trump restricted certain travel from Europe to the United States in a televised address about the health crisis on Wednesday, shocking investors and travellers, and disappointing traders hoping to see broader measures

to fight the virus. The European Central Bank approved fresh stimulus measures and temporarily dropped banks' capital requirements to help the Euro zone cope with the shock of the pandemic, but kept interest rates on hold, disappointing markets.

The Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 1,905.67 points, or 8.09%, to 21,647.55, the S&P 500 lost 224.83 points, or 8.20%, to 2,516.55 and the Nasdaq Composite dropped 490.83 points, or 6.17%, to 7,461.22. The pan-European STOXX 600 index lost 9.89% and emerging market stocks lost 6.63%. MSCI's broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan closed 5.78% lower, while Japan's Nikkei lost 4.41%.

MSCI's gauge of stocks across the globe shed 7.40%. Meanwhile, the Federal Reserve Bank of New York said on Thursday it will introduce \$1.5 trillion in new repo operations and start purchasing a range of maturities as part of its monthly Treasury purchases.

The central bank will offer \$500 billion in a three-month repo operation on Thursday.

multiple price-based, that is, successful bids will be accepted at their respective quoted premiums.

RBI said the financial markets worldwide are facing intense selling pressures on extreme risk aversion due to the spread of COVID-19 infections, compounded by the slump in international crude prices and a decline in bond yields in advanced economies.

"It stands ready to take all necessary measures to ensure that the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the Indian economy are mitigated, and financial markets and institutions in India continue to function normally," RBI said.



market," the RBI said on Thursday.

The central bank will conduct U.S. dollar-rupee sell-buy swaps worth \$2 billion on March 16, to begin with, in its effort to fight market volatility.

The swaps would be conducted through the auction route in multiple tranches and the auctions would be

SBI board clears ₹7,250 crore investment in Yes Bank

Shareholding will remain within 49% of its paid-up capital

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

The executive committee of the central board of the State Bank of India has approved purchase of 725 crore shares of Yes Bank at ₹10 apiece, the country's largest lender said in a communication to the stock exchanges.

This would mean SBI can now invest up to ₹7,250 crore in the troubled private sector lender. SBI's shareholding in Yes Bank would remain within 49% of the paid-up capital of Yes Bank, it said.

"We advise that the Executive Committee of Central

Board (ECCB), at its meeting held on 11.03.2020, accorded approval for purchase of 725 crore shares in Yes Bank Ltd. at a price of ₹10 per share subject to all regulatory approvals. Our shareholding in Yes Bank Ltd. will remain within 49% of the paid up capital of Yes Bank," the communication said.

While announcing the draft plan for the reconstruction of Yes Bank after the bank was put under moratorium, RBI had said that the authorised capital would be ₹5,000 crore and number of equity shares would be 2,400 of ₹2 each, aggregat-

ing to ₹4,800 crore. RBI said that the investor bank must agree to invest in the equity of the reconstructed bank to the extent that post infusion it holds 49% shareholding at a price not less than ₹10.

The investor bank will not be able to reduce its holding below 26% before completion of three years from the date of infusion of the capital, according to the draft plan. Chairman Rajnish Kumar had said the bank's investment in Yes Bank would not exceed ₹10,000 crore.

SBI shares slumped 13.23% to ₹212.75 on the BSE on Thursday.

CAD narrows to 0.2% of GDP in third quarter

Contraction due to lower trade deficit

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD

The country's current account deficit narrowed sharply to \$1.4 billion, or 0.2% of GDP, in the third quarter of the current financial year from \$17.7 billion (2.7% of GDP) of the same period of the previous year, latest data released by Reserve Bank of India showed.

The deficit was \$6.5 billion or 0.9% of GDP in the second quarter of the current financial year.

"The contraction in the CAD was primarily on account of a lower trade deficit at \$34.6 billion and a rise in net services receipts at \$21.9 billion as compared with the corresponding period of last year," the RBI said.

Net services receipts increased on the back of a rise

Domestic airlines likely to seek relief

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD

A Civil Aviation Ministry official on Thursday did not rule out the possibility of domestic airlines pressing for relief from the government in the wake of COVID-19 impacting their operations

'We need to make people laugh'

Director Homi Adajania and actor Radhika Madan on living different lives, stepping out of their comfort zone, and working on *Angrezi Medium*

ANAHITA PANICKER

Actor Radhika Madan asked for the question to be repeated. This time around, she peeled her eyes off of the recorder – “It’s so old-school!” – to return to our tête-à-tête.

But as director Homi Adajania kicked off his interview, he mischievously chuckled, eerily predicting its malfunctioning.

During their chats with *The Hindu* at Mumbai’s Santa Cruz West Maddock Films office, the actor and director discussed their upcoming film *Angrezi Medium* (AM), being storytellers, and their peculiar career trajectories.

After playing a badass martial artist in Vasan Bala’s *Mard Ko Dard Nahi Hota* and one half of the warring Rajasthani sisters in Vishal Bhardwaj’s *Pataakha*, the 24-year-old Madan will be portraying a 17-year-old Tarika Bansal, the daughter of an Udaipuri *mithaiwala* (Irfaan Khan) who wants to study in London.

While there were whispers of Madan replacing a star kid for the role, Adajania shares that he happened to chance upon her audi-

tion for *Pataakha*: “I had no clue who this girl was, but I was blown away by it.”

As they discussed it, Madan asked to audition for AM, but Adajania seemed rather blasé having decided he was looking for a 16- or 17-year-old. “I saw her audition and there was no way I could say no,” he said, admitting that she didn’t stick out amongst a group of younger teenagers.

Out of character

Madan feels that playing Tarika has been her toughest role yet. She rolls her eyes, knowing that people would likely disagree, “But I can’t relate to Tarika at all. I think the one thing that’s common between us is that we can’t stop dreaming.”

In her endeavour to get into a schoolgirl’s shoes, the actor travelled to Udaipur, and spent time with teenagers who were taking their exams there. “They would pick me up on their Scooty

I make a film if I know it's going to be a new and great experience

HOMI ADAJANIA

and go to their hangout spots – [near] Fateh Sagar [Lake] we would have *kulhad-wali chai* (tea in clay cups),” she says.

They spoke about boyfriends and travelling abroad, and Madan picked up the nuances and twangs in the English they spoke. But the actor shakes her head defeated while laughing and added, “All people are going to say is, ‘She looked cute and sweet!’”

With her two-year-old career in Hindi films, Madan’s filmography has almost caught up with Adajania’s, whose presence in the industry was marked with his 2006 debut, the Saif Ali Khan-starrer *Being Cyrus*. But the director is unbothered by the gaps between his releases, his last being the 2014 *Finding Fanny*.

He shares that he takes on different projects instinctively, but for varied reasons: “I make a film if I know it’s going to be a new and great experience [that will] put me out of my comfort zone. I made my first film because I didn’t know how to make a film. I made *Cocktail* (2012) because it was just not [of] my sensibilities and I thought ‘let me

New experiences Director Homi Adajania; and (below) a still from *Angrezi Medium* ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



try this’. I made *Finding Fanny* because I wanted to make a picture book on love, loneliness, and longing. I also wanted each frame to be edible.”

On why he chose to helm AM he says, “Because I’m looking at the world around me and I feel we need to make people laugh. [Not through] gags or slapstick, [but the film] needed to have a soul.”

An adventurous life

Adajania also admits that inevitably, experiences from his travels – whether it is the people he meets, or the bizarre experiences he survives – bleed into his films. He talks of being on a shark expedition, during which his boat hit rocks and sank at 3 a.m. Another time he was doing a diving course in Mauritius when he ran out

of air at a depth of 120 feet. He even went snowboarding – when he didn’t know how – and landed up with a ripped collarbone and snow blindness.

While Adajania decided to create *Being Cyrus* on a whim – just another thing to check off his bucket list, Madan’s beginnings in the industry were accidental.

After being discovered on Facebook, Madan took a leap of faith and moved to Mumbai to act in the television show *Meri Aashiqui Tum Se Hi* and it was after four months of its shooting through long hours that Madan discovered a love for acting.

Despite the condescension small screen actors often face, Madan sees her background and its rigorous schedules as the place she learnt to hone her craft.

Two separate accidental injuries with her dog – a burn and a bite – didn’t stop the show’s shooting. “They came home and took my close-up. Once I was bitten by my dog [around] my eye and they changed the script – the next day I had a kidnapping scene and got hit, so I shot with a bruised eye,” she shared.

Madan will be seen next as a swimmer in *Shiddat*, opposite Sunny Kaushal, while Adajania is working on his first web series called *Saas, Bahu Aur Cocaine* about women who run the biggest cocaine cartel in South Asia from a crumbling *haveli* in Kutch.

Both are focused on steeping themselves in new experiences. As Madan succinctly concludes, “I don’t want to get bored; I want to live different lives.”

FOOD SPOT



RAHUL VERMA

Little things make me happy. The little thing that gladdened my heart earlier this week was a tiny eatery in my own neighbourhood. I had spotted it one day, on my way back home. Tiny it may have been, but the name was big, and the message was crystal clear. Here was a place that sold south Indian food.

The name in itself was intriguing. The Madras, it said in bold, and next to it were two intriguing letters: ID. “What’s ID,” I asked the gentleman at the counter. “Idli Dosa,” he replied. This was just my kind of place, I thought, and decided that I had to try it out.

The markets in Mayur Vihar Phase 2 do not have good south Indian eateries. There is one, in the shopping plaza close to my house, but the idlis there are the kind that can only be used if you are in urgent need of a discus. Then, I remember how happy I was when a restaurant

Got ID?

Why this south Indian eatery is the best thing to have happened to Mayur Vihar Phase 2 in recent times



Southern delights (From left) The Mysore Masala Dosai; a thali of Ghee Idli, with the three chutneys; ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

called Malabar opened. But the joy was short-lived: It turned out you didn’t get anything from south of South Extension there.

That is why my heart leapt up when I saw The Madras ID. You will spot it the moment you enter Phase 2 from the highway (G6, Ground Floor, Pocket B, Sachdeva Plaza, Plot no, 25, Local Shopping Complex; 984173280). I will tell you right here and now that this is one of the best things to have happened to my neck of the woods in recent times.

It serves dosas (plain, special with podi, ghee roast, rawa onion, rawa butter and so on) and utthapams (plain, tomato-onion, tomato-onion-paneer and more). It has medu vadas, masala vadas, idlis and coffee. The food is excellent, and the rates are reasonable. It also de-

livers to areas at a distance of up to 2 km on a minimum order of ₹200.

We asked for plate of medu vada (₹20 for a piece), a masala vada (₹30), ghee idli (₹40), tomato-onion utthapam (₹100) and Mysore masala dosa (₹90). And even though this is all mostly breakfast fare, it served as our dinner. At the end of it, there were three happily sated people.

The vada was incredibly tasty, crispy on the outside, soft within, and flavoured with peppercorn. The ghee idli, stir fried with cumin seeds in a spot of ghee, was simply superb. I tried out a bit of the dosa, which

had been smeared with podi, and found it delicious. The masala vada, which is a variation of the North’s dal vada, was crunchy and full of bits of spicy dal. And the utthapam – a large and crisp base topped with soft tomatoes and onions – was out of this world. I got the flavour of the ginger slivers that had been added to it when I tore off a chunk, dipped it in coconut chutney, and popped it into my mouth.

Apart from the coconut chutney, the food came also with a tomato-

onion chutney and a coriander-based chutney.

The sambar, filled with juicy bits of onion slices, was neither too runny nor too thick. I had some of the sambar the next day too, with a little bit of rice, and, despite the absence of a papadam, it made for a nice meal.

The Madras ID has my vote. The question ‘ID hai kya’ has taken quite a pleasant turn.

The writer is a seasoned food critic

POP-UP

Artsy launch



Jacob Schlaepfer, a Swiss luxury fashion-and-interiors fabric-maker has launched in India with a show conceptualised by architect Akshat Bhatt in creative collaboration with designer Amit Aggarwal. The installation, called *Parade of Souls*, is a display of nine hand-picked Jakob Schlaepfer fabric pieces on a ‘parade’ of mannequins. They explore the idea of self-actualization by juxtaposing human emotions in a spatial context.

On till April 30th, at the STIR Gallery, DLF Chattarpur Farms

Contact us at delhimetro@thehindu.co.in

5 EVENTS WORTH YOUR WHILE



EXHIBITION

Mixed media
Nature Morte has organised a solo exhibition of artist Suhasini Kejriwal’s works. Titled *Everyday Extraordinary*, they are her responses to spending time in the Chitpur neighbourhood of north Kolkata and Chor Bazaar in central Mumbai. The collection is a mix of paintings, drawings, photography, and sculptures.

VENUE: A1 Neeti Bagh, Khel Gaon Marg

TIME: 10 a.m. - 6 p.m.



FOOD

Middle-East special
The Cafe by Foodhall in Gurugram is doing a special Middle Eastern menu, called Middle Eastern Table. It offers a variety of traditional dishes the region, such as Israeli Shakshuka, Lebanese Platter, Shawarma, Shakshuka, Vegan Moroccan Quinoa Salad, and Grilled Mediterranean Sandwich.

VENUE: Two Horizon Centre, DLF 5, Sector 43

TIME: 9 a.m. - 9:30 p.m.



GIG

French band
The Piano Man, Gurugram, is hosting the pop-gypsy-jazz band Karpati, from France. Karpati composes tunes according to a situation, and their genres include French song, gypsy jazz, and rock. The band has Frederic Rollat on the guitar, Hervé Jegousson on the bass, and Gaetan Lerat on percussion.

VENUE: 32nd avenue, Sector 15 Part 2

TIME: 9 p.m. - 11:55 p.m.



DINING

Dim sum fest
The Westin Sohna Resort has organised a week-long Dim Sum Festival at its restaurant Xiao Chi. On till 15th March and curated by the outlet’s kitchen chefs, it promises spinach, water chestnut, and mushroom dim sums in the veg basket, while the non-veg basket comes with lamb, chicken, and fish.

VENUE: Vatika Complex, Sohna Road, Gurugram

TIME: 7 p.m. - 11:30 p.m.

FILM

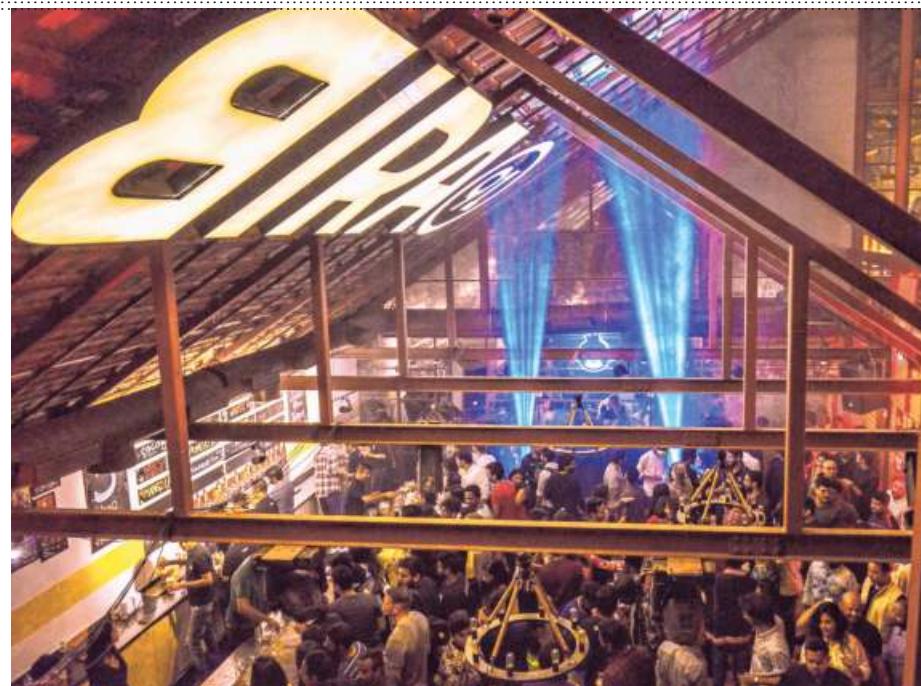
French documentary
Alliance Française de Delhi will screen *Lepage au Soleil: At the Origins of Kanata*, a Quebecois film this evening. Directed by Hélène Choquette, this 2019 film explores the origins of Kanata, a daring theatrical creation that’s turned upside down by a media scandal in the summer of 2018, even before its première.

VENUE: M.L. Bhartia Auditorium, Lodhi Road

TIME: 6:30 p.m.

Tap into BIRA

The company opens its first taproom in Bengaluru where customers can try a new brew every week



APARNA NARRAIN

For the five-year anniversary this year, the folks at Bira 91 decided to do something different.

They opened their first Limited Release Taproom in the country in Bengaluru, with the aim of directly connecting with customers and using their feedback to determine which new brew will find a place on the menu and which can be bottled and sold nationally. Taprooms offer their own specialty beers, unlike breweries which also brew them on site. Pubs usually just serve bottled fare on tap.)

Familiar space

Formerly home to The Beer Café (which is managing operations for the new venture), the taproom in Koramangala is spread across a spacious 3,500 square feet. Not a lot has changed in terms of décor, which is for erstwhile regulars at The Beer Café to either appreciate or disparage.

The high ceiling with Mangalore tiles is still there in the main area; it's just that now it sports the Bira 91 logo. With visible metal framework, an unpainted brick wall on one side, wood-top bar and wooden furniture, the vibe is industrial yet warm. There is also an *al fresco* area, complete with plants and coconut trees. The upstairs area is where you can kick off your shoes (perhaps, not literally) and shoot pool or lounge on the sofa outside.

As for the star attraction, there are a total of 20 taps (more than the average). This means that apart from Bira's regular portfolio of beers that includes White, Blonde, Light, Strong, and Boom, new brews will be created and transported on a regular basis from the



Two states From mango lassi to Malabar stout, the possibilities are endless • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

microbrewery in Mysore to the taproom in Bengaluru to the

DID SOMEONE SAY JOWAR BEER?
Says Thomas Hartman, "So, Ankur Jain (founder of Bira 91) challenged me to launch a beer every week. That's a lot of different beers to come up with. I had to think about how to compartmentalise it and start working on themes. One theme that we're going to be doing is a lager exploration series, under which we will be playing with unique Indian grains like jowar. We're also going to be playing around a lot with unique Indian fruits. That will mostly be either with sour beer or wheat beer, and we will be injecting different types of fruits into them. Another thing we really want to do is hand over the keys to the brewers and if they want to come up with something, we definitely have the capacity to encourage that."

stout, which also comes in a nitro version, is meant to mimic cold brew with alcohol, while the pomegranate champagne rose, created to mark the anniversary, is fermented with champagne

yeast and pomegranate juice. But the most popular beer since the launch has been the West Coast IPA, inspired by crisp, bitter and hoppy brews from the American West Coast, the first batch of which quickly ran out.

Top down

Says Thomas Hartman, vice-president, brewing and innovation, with a laugh, "I think we learned that the hard way with the West Coast IPA. We sold it all on the first night and were like, 'Okay, we need to brew this immediately'. Based on the success, that's the beer we think we want to have as the house beer."

He adds, "At the microbrewery, we have four tanks or fermenters and each one is of five-hectolitre capacity. We can rotate them so we can do about four different beers a month. So, we can pretty much crank out a new beer every week. Depending on the beer, the brewing process takes anywhere from two to four weeks."

Far from seeing the number of microbreweries in Bengaluru (over 60) as a disadvantage, Thomas welcomes it. "We are looking at this less as a competition and more like a party we want to join. Now there's a lot of activity in Bengaluru and we want to get in there and engage with the customers and beer brewers. Specialty beer (sector) in India is relatively new but it's similar to everywhere else in that it's kind of a community. If brewers aren't in dialogue with each other and trying each other's stuff, then it just won't evolve as quickly."

Bira 91 Limited Release Taproom, 33, 80 Feet Road, 4th Block, Nirguna Mandir Layout, Cauvery Colony, Koramangala, Bengaluru; 8929188568; beer prices upwards of ₹135 for a 330ml glass of Bira 91 Boom



A sip of bhoot jolokia

A special blend of tea leaves from Assam now has the fiery chilli in it

PRABALIKA BORAH

Move over chilli tea and civet dropping coffee, because *bhoot jolokia* is now getting blended in tea leaves. Termed the world's most notorious chilli, *bhoot jolokia* is now used to make a 'deliciously hot' tea by Aromica tea – a homegrown brand in Guwahati, Assam.

Aromica was established in 2018 by Ranjit Baruah, founding director of Tender Buds Teas & Crafts. A former tea planter with over 20 years of experience in the business, Baruah's quest to make tea interesting had him working on blending *bhoot jolokia* with organic tea leaves "in order to get the deliciously hot beverage. We call it the fiery tea," adds Ranjit.

Known by many names in different parts of the Northeast – *bhoot jolokia*, *bih jolokia*, *naga-hari*, *raja mircha*, *raja chilli* or *borbih jolokai* – the chilli has been rated as being over 1 million Scoville heat units. The chilli is cultivated in Nagaland and Assam, and in parts of Bangladesh as well.

"We source our green teas from different organic tea gardens in Assam and Arunachal Pradesh to support local producers. The chillies, which are grown in farms in Amguri in Sivasagar district of Upper Assam, are pounded in a *dheki* (an indigenous manually operated pounder)," adds Baruah. He says the concoction underwent several

trial-and-error sessions before it was brought out. "Everything is done in the backyard of my home in Guwahati. I converted my garage into a little factory, where apart from trials, we also carry out packaging work. I have put my knowledge of 20 years in the tea industry to build a setup that is efficient and hygienic."

While creating the blend, he says it was important that the tea had all the elements of the Assamese tea-drinking tradition.

"When people sip the fiery tea, they should be able to enjoy the aroma, the taste and the look (colour). So with a lot of study and work, we have chosen those leaves that give a ruby red liquor or when combined with the dried paste of the chilli. If I have to categorise the blend, it will come under 'exotic speciality blend,'" explains Baruah. When one gram of the blend is steeped for 40 seconds, the aroma of both tea and *bhoot jolokia* has your mouth watering, claims Baruah.

People in Assam love their black tea or *laal saah* with a hint of ginger, so Baruah has also infused the gingery flavour into the fiery tea as well. Aromica tea has four speciality blends and has applied for a patent for its *bhoot jolokia* tea.

Available at Aromicatea.com; ₹400 for 70 grams

POOCHE CAFE



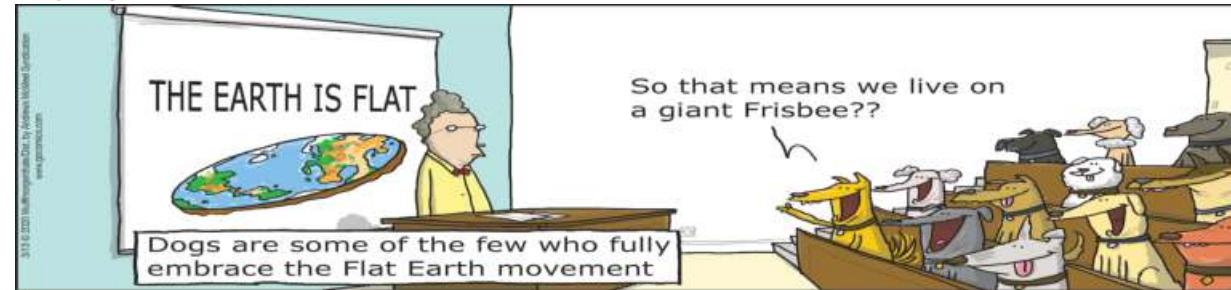
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



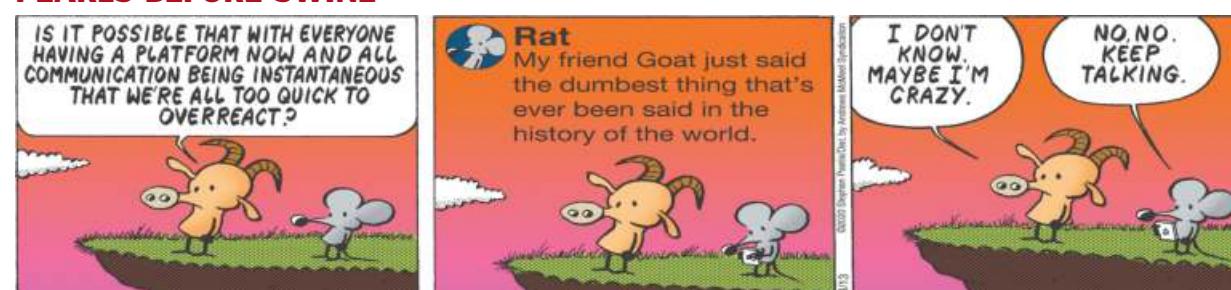
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WUMO



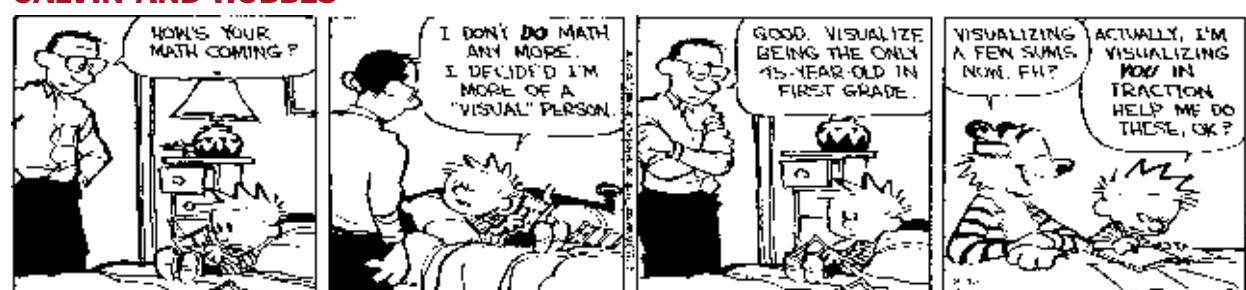
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



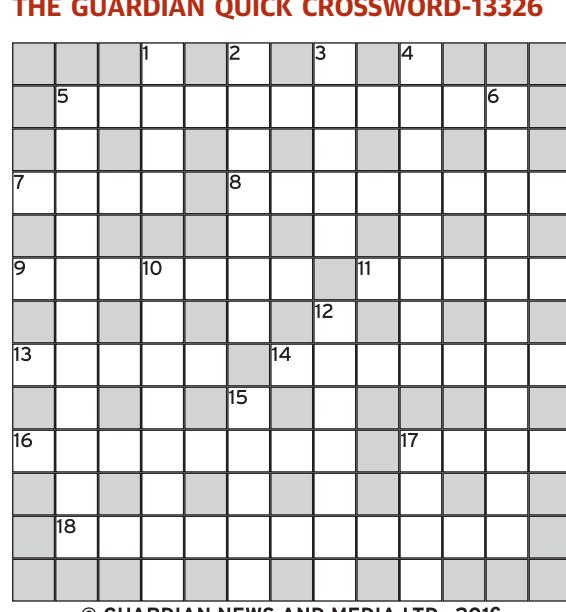
PEANUTS



CALVIN AND HOBBES



THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13326

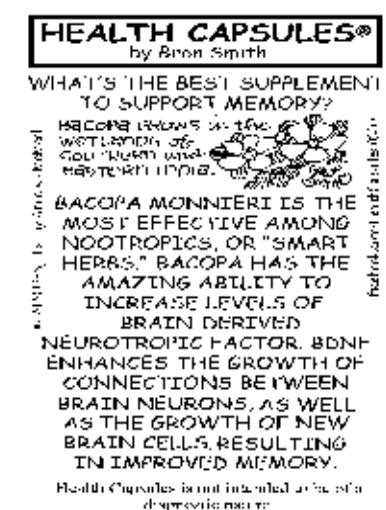
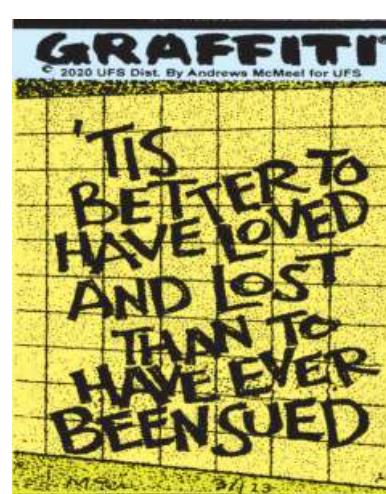


To play The Guardian Quick Crossword, The Hindu Cryptic crossword, Sudoku & other puzzles online, scan the QR code.

- 10 Sufficient (8)
- 12 Imaginary monster, frightening to children (7)
- 15 Metric unit of capacity (5)
- 17 Numerous (4)

The solution will appear on March 14, 2020.

Solution No. 13325



SICKLY	SQUIRM
I O E	U B A
M I N C E	C E I L I N G
I F C	T Z N
A N O T H E R	E V A D E
N R	V S T
M U C K A B O U T	T A N A P
T O W N U P	T R U F F L E
R E A T E	F R
P E A N U T S	T R E S S
I P R	E T I
D U S T E R	A R M A D A

IPL to be played in front of empty stands?

Saturday's Governing Council meeting will decide the fate of the tournament

COVID-19 THREAT

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

The Sports Ministry has asked all the national sports federations, including the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI), to adhere to the Health Ministry's guidelines on barring all "public gatherings."

The Ministry of External Affairs advised the BCCI not to go ahead with the Indian Premier League (IPL) "at this time" but left it to the discretion of the board. The BCCI continued to explore various options ahead of Saturday's IPL Governing Council (GC) meeting to decide the fate of the 13th edition which is scheduled to start in Mumbai on March 29.

Holistic approach

"There have been conflicting advisories from various quarters, so on Saturday, we will sit down with all the stakeholders and take a holistic approach for deciding the future course of action," BCCI treasurer Arun Dhimal told *The Hindu* on Thursday.



No spectators, please! If the IPL goes ahead as scheduled, this will possibly be the scenario at the venues. ■ FILE PHOTO: K. PICHUMANI

While Dhimal confirmed that representatives of all eight franchisees along with those from the broadcaster have been invited for the meeting, he said it would be premature to discuss overseas players' participation.

The Hindu reported on Thursday that with a majority of visas to India being cancelled in the wake of COVID-19 scare, overseas cricketers

and coaching staff members will be ineligible to enter the country at least till April 15 since they are issued B-Sports visas under Business Visa category.

"Yes, it has been brought to our notice. If the GC decides to go ahead with the event, then we shall have to request the relevant government authorities for it (issuing visas to overseas cricketers and

support staff members)," Dhimal said.

With the sports ministry

diktat of not allowing public gatherings, it is likely that if IPL goes ahead as scheduled, it will be played in front of empty stands, at least till the virus threat subsides.

Ticket sales suspended

All the franchises which had

started ticket sales have sus-

pended it, to adhere to the ministry's policy.

The big question to be considered for the IPL authorities is whether to postpone IPL or whether to go ahead as per schedule, with overseas cricketers eliminated for the first few games as the last resort. A majority of franchisee executives *The Hindu* spoke with felt postponement isn't a suitable option.

"Suspension or postponement would lead to more confusion. If the advisory is extended beyond April 15, then there will be no time to play and with a cramped international calendar for the rest of the year, there'll be no window beyond May to stage the IPL," said a franchisee official, preferring anonymity.

A BCCI official, citing anonymity, stated the ball will be in BCCI president Sourav Ganguly and Union Home Minister Amit Shah's — father of BCCI secretary Jay Shah — court. "If the minister formally advises the president to go ahead with the event, he (Ganguly) will press for the IPL as per schedule with empty stands," he said.

We would be bound by Govt. advisory, BCCI to HC

MOHAMED IMRANULLAH S.
CHENNAI

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) on Thursday told the Madras High Court that it would be bound by advisories issued by the Centre with regard to conduct of the Indian Premier League (IPL) T20 matches in the wake of threat of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and that it was not going to exceed any government decision.

He said, events including the World Athletic Indoor Championship to be held in Nanjing had been cancelled and some of them were to be conducted behind closed doors as a preventive measure.

In reply, Raman said, there were also countries which had decided not to postpone sporting events.

"I'm appearing for Respondents 3 (BCCI) and 4 (Chennai Super Kings). Some things are already happening. Right now four international cricket matches are on in various parts of the world.

"On IPL, we have to decide and we'll come back after taking a decision," he said.

ATP suspends tour for six weeks

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The ATP has announced a six-week suspension of the men's professional tennis tour owing to the global outbreak of the coronavirus.

The ATP in an official release stated that the ATP Tour and Challenger events would not take place, inclusive of the week of April 20.

The suspension comes into immediate effect and the Challengers in progress in Nur Sultan, Kazakhstan, and Potchefstroom, South Africa, will not be completed.

"The worldwide nature of our sport and the international travel required presents significant risks and challenges in today's circumstances, and the increasingly restrictive directives issued by local authorities. We continue to monitor this on a daily basis and we look forward to the Tour resuming when the situation improves," said ATP chairman Andrea Gaudenzi.

Women's WC final spectator tests positive

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MELBOURNE

A spectator who attended the ICC Women's T20 World Cup final between India and Australia here on March 8 has tested positive for COVID-19, the Melbourne Cricket Ground said on Thursday, but insisted the risk of him infecting others was low.

"...a person who attended the ICC Women's T20 World Cup Final at the MCG on Sunday March 8 has now been diagnosed with COVID-19," the MCG management said in a statement.

"It seems that the rest of the world is already reacting a little bit late, but you have seen this morning (President Donald) Trump shutting down the border to Europe to the States, the NBA suspended, yet Formula One continues to go on."

"It's a concern I think for the people here. It's quite a big circus that's come here, it's definitely concerning for me."

The first F1 practice sessions are due to start on Friday. In an attempt to limit interaction between drivers and fans, autograph sessions have been replaced by question and answer interviews, with selfies banned.

NBA suspends season

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LOS ANGELES

The NBA has suspended the season as Utah Jazz players tested positive for the coronavirus, prompting a game to be abandoned just before tip-off.

The test result was reported as Utah's game against the Thunder in Oklahoma City was about to begin. The game was abruptly postponed and the players were effectively quarantined in the locker room area.

Gobert the affected

The league said the affected player, believed to be French defensive stand-out Rudy Gobert, was not at the arena and was being treated by health officials in Oklahoma City.

"The NBA is suspending game play following the conclusion of tonight's schedule of games until further notice," the league said.



Rudy Gobert... in trouble. ■ AFP

The league and the team have declined to name the player, but Denver Nuggets coach Mike Malone told reporters he believed it was Gobert, who was listed first as questionable for the game and then as out with illness.

Gobert angered members of the Jazz media on Monday when he deliberately touched every microphone at a news conference, in what appeared to be a show of bravado about the disease.

The race was thrown into chaos earlier in the day when McLaren pulled out when one of its team mem-

Season-opening Australian GP could be a non-starter

Defending champion Lewis Hamilton slams plans to hold the race

FORMULA ONE

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MELBOURNE

The season-opening Australian Grand Prix is increasingly likely to be called off due to the coronavirus pandemic, a source suggested to AFP on Thursday.

"The majority but not all of the stakeholders are in favour of this option," the source said.

Crisis meeting

A crisis meeting was held between the race organisers, the FIA, teams and Formula One promoters to discuss whether Sunday's race should go ahead. Most agreed that the first leg of the 2020 season should not be staged.

The race was thrown into



Voicing criticism: Reigning champion Lewis Hamilton, second from right, seen with Nicholas Latifi, Sebastian Vettel and Daniel Ricciardo, has come down hard on the decision to not call off the Australian GP. ■ AP

bers tested positive for the virus.

The employee was among eight Formula One personnel who went into isolation after showing flu-like symptoms typical of the virus this

week in Melbourne.

The other seven — includ-

ing four from the Haas team — all returned negative re-

sults, organisers said.

Meanwhile World cham-

pion Lewis Hamilton said he

was stunned the race was go-

ing ahead as fears mount

about the spread of the dis-

Shocked

"I am really very, very sur-

Rain has the final say in first ODI

SA IN INDIA

RAKESH RAO
DHARAMSHALA

As anticipated, continual drizzle ensured there was no play in the first India-South Africa One-Day International here on Thursday.

Much before the match was officially abandoned at 5.20 p.m., the forecast of moderate to heavy rain had cast a cloud of uncertainty around the series opener.

Wet ground conditions, owing to heavy rain that

commenced on Wednesday night and lasted until 3 a.m. on Thursday, delayed the toss meant to be taken at 1 p.m. Thereafter, following spells of drizzles, a downpour that lashed the ground around 3 p.m. effectively dealt the final blow to the possibility of a rain-shorted match.

Too much to deal with

The cut-off time for a 20-over contest was 6.30 p.m. But the downpour that ended around 3.45 p.m. left the

Legends' cricket series called off

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The UnAcademy Road Safety World Series has been put off to a later date.

The organisers decided to postpone the remaining matches, slated to be held at Navi Mumbai, due to the coronavirus scare. No date has been fixed for now. The T20 event was to resume on Friday after a break on Thursday.

West Indies captain Brian Lara said: "This situation (re-scheduling due to coronavirus) is disappointing, but we are looking forward to coming back."

India skipper Sachin Tendulkar expressed a simi-

lar view.

The other seven — includ-

ing four from the Haas team — all returned negative re-

sults, organisers said.

Meanwhile World cham-

pion Lewis Hamilton said he

was stunned the race was go-

ing ahead as fears mount

about the spread of the dis-

Shocked

"I am really very, very sur-

Behind closed doors

RAKESH RAO
DHARAMSHALA

In keeping with the latest Government health advisory regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, the second ODI of the three-match series involving India and South Africa will be played in front of empty stands at the Ekana Cricket Stadium in

Lucknow on March 15.

Though there is no official word from the Cricket Association of Bengal, it is most likely to follow the example of UPCA and hold the final match of the series without spectators at the Eden Gardens on March 18.

Champions League matches postponed

UEFA to have a crisis meeting next week; Real in quarantine

FOOTBALL

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

The Champions League last 16, second legs between Manchester City and Real Madrid and Juventus and Lyon became the latest high-profile football matches to be postponed due to the coronavirus outbreak, UEFA confirmed on Thursday.

Juventus defender Daniele Rugani has tested positive for the virus, forcing players and staff of the Italian champion into quarantine.

Rugani's teammate Cristiano Ronaldo has been in quarantine in Madeira for several days but is not showing any symptoms of contracting the virus, local authorities in

Portugal said on Thursday.

Real Madrid players have

also been put into quarantine

after one of the club's basketball players tested positive for COVID-19.

La Liga announced Spain's top two divisions will be sus-

pend for at least two weeks over the coronavirus.

Meanwhile, UEFA has called for a crisis meeting through videoconferencing next Tuesday "to discuss European football's response to the outbreak".

Meanwhile, the remain-

ing 28 matches of the I-

League, including the mar-

queen Kolkata derby between champion Mohun Bagan and East Bengal, are likely to be

played in empty stadiums,

an All India Football Federa-

tion (AIFF) official said.



Taking no chances: Fans wear masks as a precautionary measure against the coronavirus threat, during the first ODI at Dharamshala on Thursday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

Sindhu sets up quarterfinal meeting with Okuhara

Lakshya goes down in second round; Saina exits early

ALL ENGLAND

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BIRMINGHAM

P.V. Sindhu cruised into the quarterfinals of the All England badminton championships with a straight-game win over Sung Ji Hyun of Korea in the second round on Thursday.

The sixth-seeded Olympic silver medallist, who won 21-19, 21-15 in 49 minutes, next meets fourth-seeded Nozomi Okuhara of Japan.

In men's singles, Lakshya

TV PICKS

Australia vs New Zealand: 1st ODI, Sony Six (SD & HD), 9 a.m.
Ranji Trophy: (Final), day five, Star Sports 2 (SD & HD), 9.30 a.m.
All-England Badminton Championships: Star Sports 3, 3.30 p.m.
Legends World T20 Series: Sri Lanka vs South Africa, Colors Cineplex (SD & HD), 7 p.m.
Bundesliga: SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 1 a.m. (Saturday).

IN BRIEF



Vince Carter reflects on his final game

LOS ANGELES Atlanta Hawks forward Vince Carter may have already played his final NBA game thanks to the coronavirus outbreak, the eight-time all-star said on Wednesday. "It's a weird way to say I'm calling it a career. It really is," Carter said. "I have 15 games left, technically. But if not, I'm one with it." AFP

Ghosal falls to El Shorbagy in quarterfinal

CHENNAI India's Saurav Ghosal lost 13-11, 7-11, 10-12 to top seed Mohamed El Shorbagy of Egypt in a 51-minute quarterfinal match of the St. James' Place Canary Wharf Classic squash, a PSA World Tour gold event, in London on Wednesday.

The result (quarterfinal):

Mohamed El Shorbagy bt Saurav Ghosal 11-13, 11-7, 12-10.

AFI withdraws Fed Cup invite to foreign athletes

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOCHE

The Federation Cup National senior athletics championships will now be an Indian affair.

The Athletics Federation of India has withdrawn the invitation it had offered to athletes from Iran, Iraq, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka to take part in the event to be held in Patiala from April 10 to 13.

The federation was forced to change its stand following the advisory from the Central Government after the outbreak of coronavirus.

Nationals as scheduled

The AFI also made it clear that it will run its senior National championships as scheduled.

"For the senior Indian athletes who are training to qualify for the 2020 Tokyo Olympics, all our competitions are lined up, beginning with the Indian Grand Prix-I (IGP-I) in Patiala on March 20, the IGP-2 on March 25 and the IGP-3 in New Delhi on March 29 followed by the Federation Cup," Adile Sumariwalla, the AFI President, was quoted as saying in the federation's release.

"All these competitions will go ahead as planned and we will follow all the guidelines as directed by MYAS (Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports)."

Digvijay Singh in lead

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOLKATA

The seasoned Digvijay Singh made an impressive return to competitive golf after two months as he shot a sizzling opening round of eight-under 62 to seize the lead at the TATA Steel PGTI Bengal Open golf championship at the Tollygunge Club here on Thursday.

Leading scores: **62:** Digvijay Singh; **63:** Abhinav Lohan; **65:** Aadil Bedi, Karandeep Kochhar, Om Prakash Chouhan, N. Thangaraja, C. Munirajappa; **66:** Mukesh Kumar, Viraj Mappa, Kartik Sharma.

Collective resilience gives Bengal sniff at lead

Majumdar carries visitors' hopes after half-centuries by Chatterjee and Saha

RANJI TROPHY

Y.B. SARANGI
RAJKOT

Bengal's resilience as a unit came to the fore again as it banked on half-centuries from Sudip Chatterjee, Wridhiman Saha and Anusup Majumdar to give itself a realistic chance of overhauling Saurashtra's first innings total of 425 in the Ranji Trophy final at the Saurashtra Cricket Association Stadium here on Thursday.

It was a long haul for Bengal, which resuming on 134 for three, approached the tough task with patience and finished the penultimate day at 354 for six, 72 runs shy of taking the lead.

After Saurashtra reduced Bengal to 263 for six, the tourists rose to the occasion to gather 90 runs in the final session and leave the match evenly-balanced.

Right template

It began with a great act of survival in an eventful opening period. Saha (64, 184b, 10x4, 1x6) and Chatterjee (81,



Cutting edge: Anusup Majumdar rescued Bengal with a 91-run unbroken partnership for the seventh wicket with Arnab Nandi. ■ VIJAY SONEJI

241b, 7x4) chose the right template to bat on a slow track that occasionally offered low bounce. Chatterjee, 47 overnight, stood like a rock, while Saha hung in relatively despite being short of match practice.

Saha drove beautifully and cut with control, barring once when he was dropped

on 50 off Jaydev Unadkat. Good running between wickets was another feature of their 101-run stand, lasting nearly four hours. Besides, Saha survived thrice, including two close shaves, when DRS came into play.

Unadkat, who bowled with pin-point accuracy to trouble the wicketkeeper-

batsman, succeeded in having Saha, on 6, lbw, but the television umpire overturned the decision as the ball hit the bat first. Saha escaped another lbw shout off the home skipper.

Perseverance pays

Saurashtra bowlers' perseverance paid off when Chatter-

jee, who picked up some boundaries confidently, was caught off Dharmendrasinh Jadeja at forward short-leg 40 minutes after lunch.

Saha inside-edged Prerak Menkad onto his stumps and Shahbaz Ahmed was bowled by Chetan Sakariya before tea, as Bengal lost three wickets to invite pressure in the

middle session.

Vital knock

Majumdar, Bengal's rescuer of the season, again, played a vital knock (58 batting, 134b, 8x4) to form a 91-run unbroken association with Arnab Nandi (28 batting, 82b, 3x4, 1x6). They blocked with a straight bat and didn't waste any scoring opportunity.

Majumdar, dropped on 10, got some boundaries on both sides.

Saurashtra's strategy to post the wicketkeeper close to the stumps backfired. It leaked too many easy runs, including 16 byes and five penalty, as the momentum shifted towards Bengal in quick time.

The scores:

Saurashtra – 1st innings: 425.

Bengal – 1st innings: Sudip Gharmani c Vishvaraj Singh b Dharmendrasinh 26, Abhimanyu Easwaran lbw b Mankad 9, Sudip Chatterjee c Vishvaraj Singh b Dharmendrasinh 81, Manoj Tiwary lbw b Jani 35, Wridhiman Saha b Mankad 64, Anusup Majumdar (batting) 58, Shahbaz Ahmed b Sakariya 16, Arnab Nandi (batting) 28, Extras (b-16, lb-14, nb-1, w-1, pen-5); 37; Total (for six wkts, in 147 overs): 354.

Fall of wickets: 1-35, 2-35, 3-124, 4-225, 5-241, 6-263.

Saurashtra bowling: Unadkat 30-8-84-0, Sakariya 23-6-52-1, Dharmendrasinh 50-14-106-2, Mankad 21-7-45-2, Jani 23-8-32-1.

Final day's action behind closed doors

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT RAJKOT

The Saurashtra Cricket Association (SCA) on Thursday said that no spectator would be allowed to watch the final day's action of the Ranji Trophy final being played at the SCA Stadium here following strict guidelines on the coronavirus threat.

Set of guidelines

After receiving a set of guidelines from the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) following the Central Government advisory on the epidemic, the SCA informed that the final day's action would be held behind closed doors on Friday. "We have got a set of guidelines from BCCI. Tomorrow spectators will not be allowed. Only team members and officials, match officials, the association's officials and accredited mediapersons will be allowed," said the SCA secretary Himanshu Shah.

T20 impacting spin bowling: Doshi

Youngsters shouldn't play shortest version, says ex-India spinner



Concerned: Dilip Doshi says it's not easy to pinpoint the reason for the dearth of quality spinners in India now. ■ VIJAY SONEJI

spinner, then you got to make sure that you are spinning the ball," he says.

Citing the example of Australian off-spinner Nathan Lyon, one of the finest practitioners of the trade at present, Doshi says, "If you are that passionate about maintaining your art, you will find a way to accelerate."

About the current scenario,

rio, he says, "Spinners hardly spin the ball. I cannot call somebody a spinner unless he spins the ball. Otherwise, he falls into the category of a slow bowler. Probably there is too much of coaching.

"Like fast bowlers who are born, (high quality) spin bowlers are born too. It is a natural gift and it is passion that takes them to the top

spot. Technique in spin bowling is practically non-existent today.

"Very few spinners have a follow-through... To deliver a spinning ball you got to have a follow-through, which actually makes the ball dip in flight and that's missing today.

"That's because most spinners today are open-chested. When you are open-chested, the follow-through is next to impossible," he said.

Guidance

In Doshi's view, young spinners are not guided well.

"They don't even know their fault. The problem is very few people around are able to detect it. Otherwise, India is the home of and nursery for spin bowlers.

"I have not seen a high quality spin bowler in a long time? I don't know why! It's not simple to sum it all up in one sentence," he said.

BENGALURU: Cuban Pete and Indian Empress may fight out the final of the Hemavati Salver (1,200m), the main event of the races to be held here on Friday

(March 13). False rails (width about 3.5m from 1,600m to the winning post) will be in position.

1 SEABISCUIT SALVER (1,200m, 1 maiden 3-y-o only, (Terms), 2-15 pm): 1. Little Joe (IO) T.S. Jodha 55, 9. Morganite (8) Arshad 55, 3. Sir Jersey (II) Darshan 55, 4. Tartufo (7) R. Marshall 55, 5. Wings Of The Wild (3) Sai Vanshi 55, 6. Antipes (9) Antony 53, 7. Belli Deepa (4) R. Pradeep 53, 8. Bloom Buddy (2) Vaibhav 53, 9. Infinite Spirit (6) Trevor 53, 10. Michigan Melody (5) Jagadeesh 53, 11. Priyana (12) Irwan 53, 12. See My Heels (1) S. Hussain 53.

1 ANTIBES, 2. SIR JERSEY, 3. TARTUFO

2 HASSAN PLATE (1,100m, 2 rated 0 to 20, 2-45; 1. Analease (4) Saddam H 60, 2. Nostradamus (3) M. Naveen 60, 3. Aerospeed (8) Arvind Kumar 59, 5. Flicka (2) Chetan G 59, 8. Amalfi Coast (9) Shreyas 58, 6. Santorini Secret (6) Tousif Khan 58, 7. Consort Queen (5) N.K. Kuldeep 57, 8. Prime Star (1) Md. Aliyar 56, 9. Astron (7) Ankit Yadav 50, 10. NOSTRADAMUS, 2. ANNALEASE, 3. AEROSPEED

3 KUDREMUKH PLATE (1,600m), rated 15 to 35, 5-0

6 (1,100m), rated 15 to 35, 5-y-o & over, 4-45; 1. Capstone (10) Trevor 60, 2. Gold Mist (5) Dhanu Singh 59, 3. Hunters Moon (1) John 59, 4. Kingsfield (9) Saddam H 58, 5. Charmaine (II) I. Chisty 56, 6. Honey Trap (4) Ankit Yadav 56, 7. Rancho (7) T.S. Jodha 56, 8. Track Striker (12) Nazerul 55, 9. Admiral One (6) Irwan 53, 10. Cadillac Sky (9) I. Chisty 53, 11. Limato (1) R. Manish 53 and 12. South Bell (5) N.B. Kuldeep 51, 13. SMILE OF JOY, 2. EKALAVYA, 3. CASEY

4 GALLOPING ACRES STUD (1,400m), rated 30 to 50, 3-45: 1. Queen Of Sands (8) Srinath 60, 2. Venus Bay (9) M. Naveen 60, 3. Schafenberg (3) Suraj 59, 4. Star And Garter (7) S. John 59, 5. Sea Of Cortez (1) Trevor 58, 6. Star Cavalry (6) Bhawani Singh 57, 7. Lightning Attack (2) Jagadeesh 56, 8. Glorious Dancer (4) Arshad 55 and 9. Zhu Zhu Zest (5) Darshan 55.

1 STAR AND GARTER, 2. SEA OF CORTEZ, 3. QUEEN OF SANDS

5 HEMAVATI SALVER (1,200m, 5 rated 60 & above, 4-15; 1. Silver Ikon (4) M. Naveen 64, 5. 2. Psychic Warrior (7) Md. Aliyar 59, 5. Kavasir (3) Darshan 54, 4. Indian Empress (6) Jagadeesh 53, 5. Life Awaits (2) Rayan 53, 6. Alberto (8) Irwan 50, 7. Big Boon (5) Arshad 50 and 8. Cuban Pete (1) I. Chisty 50.

1. NOSTRADAMUS, 2. ANNALEASE, 3. AEROSPEED

3 (1,600m), rated 15 to 35, 5-0

7 BRAHMAPUTRA PLATE (1,400m), rated 15 to 35, 5-15; 1. Chantelle (2) Suraj 60, 2. Sun Splash (3) S. John 58, 3. Augustina (9) Vaibhav 57, 4. Red Indra (10) Jagadeesh 57, 5. Cameleons Image (1) A. Imran 56, 6. Polar Express (7) I. Chisty 56, 7. Bahurupi (8) Arshad 55, 8. Goodwill Warrior (4) Vinod Shinde 54, 9. Daring Sweetheart (11) R. Pradeep 54, 10. Happy Dancing (5) Rayan 54, 11. Tazamour (12) Ajeeb Kumar 53, 5 and 12. Lovely Sierra (8) Arshad 52.

1. CHANTELL, 2. SUN SPLASH, 3. CAMELEONS IMAGE

Day's best: STAR AND GARTER Double: CUBAN PETE – CAPSTONE

Jkt: 3, 4, 5, 6 and 7; Tr (i): 2, 3 and 4; (ii): 5, 6 and 7.

Cuban Pete and Indian Empress may fight it out

The torch will be carried by 600 runners covering 3,500km and 842 nautical miles



The journey begins: Greek shooter Anna Korakaki became the first woman to be the initial torch-bearer. ■ REUTERS

and tsunami in Fukushima. "Japan will demonstrate its ground-breaking innovation and boundless creative energy with regard to sustainability, technology and human-centred growth," Bach said.

Japan last hosted the summer Olympics – also in Tokyo – in 1964.

Now it seeks to use the 2020 Olympics to show the world it has regained its creative flair and innovative energy, but also as a means to highlight reconstruction following the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Fukushima.

Organisers have insisted the Games will go ahead as

planned and the IOC has said there has not yet been any talk of cancellation or postponement. The IOC has said it will coordinate closely with the World Health Organisation, which has now officially classified the outbreak as a pandemic.

The torch relay in Greece is scheduled to pass through 37 cities and 15 archaeological sites covering 3,500km and 842 nautical miles and will be carried by 600 runners.

Harika remains seventh

CHESS

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA LAUSANNE

<p



What timing! Alvaro Morata puts the icing on the cake in the final moments. ■ GETTY IMAGES

World Athletics fines Russia \$10m

Also caps number of neutrals from the country at 10

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MONACO

World Athletics on Thursday fined Russia's track and field federation \$10 million for breaching anti-doping rules and capped at 10 the number of Russians allowed to compete as neutrals at the Tokyo Olympics.

The system of allowing Russian athletes to take part as Authorised Neutral Athletes, World Athletics president Sebastian Coe warned, "will be suspended if \$5 million of the \$10m fine is not paid by 1 July 2020".

"The remaining \$5 million of the fine will be suspended for two years, to be paid immediately if during that period RUSAF (the Russian federation) commits a further breach of the Anti-Doping Rules or fails to make meaningful progress towards satisfying the reinstatement

conditions set by Council."

Coe said the Council felt "severely let down by the previous RUSAF administration, which is why it has approved a new set of criteria for reinstatement of the federation". "This requires the new administration to set a clear roadmap for reinstatement, to be approved by Council, and greater oversight of the roadmap process by independent international personnel based in Russia."

World Athletics' decision-making Council had last year put a freeze on the system of allowing Russian athletes to compete as neutrals, simultaneously suspending the process of reinstating RUSAF over charges against its officials that they obstructed an anti-doping investigation.

Those decisions

prompted wholesale change at RUSAF.

New head

The Russian body has just appointed a new head, Yevgeny Yurchenko, who quickly agreed with accusations made by the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) against RUSAF on the wrongdoings in the tipping-point case of high jumper Daniil Lysenko, in which "forged documents and false explanations" were provided as an alibi to his whereabouts.

That contrite acknowledgement, paired with wholesale personnel change within RUSAF, opened the door for Rune Andersen's World Athletics Task Force to deliver a more positive option for Russian athletes, albeit just 10 of them, just 19 weeks away from Tokyo Olympics.

LeBron, Curry say NBA needs to cancel 2020

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LOS ANGELES

NBA superstars LeBron James and Stephen Curry say the league needs to cancel 2020 after the year of Kobe Bryant's tragic death also saw the season shut down.

In the wake of the worldwide COVID-19 coronavirus outbreak, the NBA shut down its season on Wednesday with five weeks remaining in the campaign after a player contracted the virus.

The shutdown follows the deaths of former NBA commissioner David Stern on January 1, 2020 and five-time NBA champion Bryant, the retired Los Angeles Lakers legend who was killed January 26 at age 41 in a helicopter crash along with his daughter Gianna and seven others.

"Man we cancelling sporting events, school, office work, etc., etc. What we

really need to cancel is 2020! Damn it's been a rough 3 months. God bless and stay safe," Lakers star James tweeted.

As Slovenian guard Luka Doncic of Dallas tweeted: "2020 is being very bad year!! stay safe folks."

Golden State Warriors star Curry, who has played in the past five NBA Finals, last week had returned from a broken left hand that had sidelined him more than four months.

"2020 aint it," Curry tweeted. "Just gotta buckle up and take care of yourself and those around you."

Safety issues

Safety issues had taken priority as area officials try to avoid mass gatherings and potential mass infections that could overwhelm hospitals, hoping to spread the outbreak over a more easily managed time frame.

Vinod Sridhar on a roll

SENIORS' TENNIS

SPORTS BUREAU
RAIPUR

Former National champion Vinod Sridhar did not drop a game in three matches while winning the over-40 title in the ITF grade-4 seniors' tournament on Thursday.

Vinod clinched the over-35 doubles title with Rohan Narayan, beating Ravindranath Pandey and Farid Usmani 6-2, 6-2 in the final.

The results:

Over-35: Final: Andrews Adu Appiah bt Farid Usmani 7-5, 6-2; **Semifinals:** Farid bt Dharmesh Patel 6-0, 6-0; Adu Appiah bt Sachin Patil 6-3, 5-0 rtd.

Doubles (final): Rohan Narayan & Vinod Sridhar bt Ravindranath Pandey & Farid Usmani 6-2, 6-2.

Over-40 (final): Vinod Sridhar bt Deepak Marwaha 6-0, 6-0;

Semifinals: Marwaha bt Akash Kale 4-6, 6-2, 3-0 rtd.; Vinod bt Kohinoor Govardhan 6-0, 6-2.

Doubles (final): Sunil Lulla & Rahul Vyas bt Navin Agarwal & Jatin 7-6(5), 2-6, [10-7].

Over-45 (final): Nelson Jatin Kumar bt Rahul Sharma 6-1,

Over-50 (final): Rahul Vyas bt

in the tie with Firmino heading against the post and then driving home the loose ball as Anfield got ready for a night of celebration.

Goalkeeper Adrian, standing in for the injured Alisson Becker, passed the ball out straight to Joao Felix who fed Llorente, with the substitute punishing the Spanish keeper for his error with a precise shot into the far corner.

Llorente then produced a carbon-copy finish as Liverpool's defence backed off following good work on the counter from Morata to end Liverpool's hopes of defending its European crown.

Morata put the icing on the cake in the final moments with a cool finish on the counterattack after Liverpool had thrown all its

players forward.

Neymar, Bernat score

Paris St. Germain beat Borussia Dortmund 2-0 in an empty stadium due to coronavirus fears to reach the quarterfinals 3-2 on aggregate. Neymar and Juan Bernat scored before halftime to overturn a 2-1 first-leg deficit and send the French champion into the last eight for the first time since 2016 as Dortmund finished with 10 men after Emre Can was sent off.

The results (last-16, second-leg): Liverpool 2 (Wijnaldum 43, Firmino 94) lost to Atletico Madrid 3 (Llorente 97, 105-1, Morata 120+1) (Atletico won 4-2 on aggregate).

PSG 2 (Neymar 28, Bernat 45+1) bt Borussia Dortmund 0 (PSG won 3-2 on aggregate).

Atletico sends Liverpool packing

Stuns Anfield with a triple strike in added time; PSG overturns first-leg deficit

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

AGENCIES
LIVERPOOL

Holder Liverpool crashed out of the Champions League in the last 16 after Atletico Madrid struck three times in extra-time to earn a shock 3-2 victory at Anfield on Wednesday that sent it through 4-2 on aggregate.

After falling 2-0 down on the night, substitute Marcos Llorente struck twice in extra-time and Alvaro Morata added a late third to ensure a famous victory for Diego Simeone's side against a Liverpool team unbeaten in its last 25 home games in European competition.

Liverpool broke through two minutes before half-time

It took just four minutes for Liverpool to take the lead

when Alex Oxlade-Chamberlain burst to the byline and pulled back a cross to Wijnaldum who powered an angled header in.

There was little change to the pattern after the interval with Liverpool peppering Atletico goalkeeper Oblak's goal but the Slovenian proved himself up to the task, denying efforts from Mohamed Salah, Firmino and Sadio Mane while Andy Robertson headed against 4-2 on aggregate.

Atletico thought it had grabbed an injury-time winner when Saul Niguez headed in a Renan Lodi cross but the effort was rightly flagged for off-side, ensuring the game went into extra-time.

Llorente thought it had

grabbed an injury-time winner when Saul Niguez headed in a Renan Lodi cross but the effort was rightly flagged for off-side, ensuring the game went into extra-time.

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Over-45 (final): Nelson Jatin Kumar bt Rahul Sharma 6-1,

Over-50 (final): Rahul Vyas bt

Atul 6-0, 6-0.

Doubles (final): Amarjeet Singh Chaddha & Shashi Bhushan Sharma bt Anuj Shah & Rahul Vyas 5-7, 7-5, [10-6].

Over-55 (final): Sanjai Kumar bt Shashi Bhushan Sharma 6-2, 3-6, 6-3.

Over-50 (final): Rahul Vyas bt

Rahul Vyas 6-2, 6-3.

Double delight: Vinod, left, won the over-40 title, and also the over-35 doubles crown in the company of Rohan Narayan.

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

6-2; **Semifinals:** Jatin bt Suni Surana 4-6, 6-4, 6-2; Rahul Sharma bt Navin Agarwal 6-0, 6-3.

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Semifinals: Marwaha bt Akash Kale 4-6, 6-2, 3-0 rtd.; Vinod bt Kohinoor Govardhan 6-0, 6-2.

Doubles (final): Sunil Lulla & Rahul Vyas bt Navin Agarwal & Jatin 7-6(5), 2-6, [10-7].

Over-45 (final): Nelson Jatin Kumar bt Rahul Sharma 6-1,

Over-50 (final): Rahul Vyas bt

Rahul Vyas 6-2, 6-3.

Double delight: Vinod, left, won the over-40 title, and also the over-35 doubles crown in the company of Rohan Narayan.

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

6-2; **Semifinals:** Jatin bt Suni Surana 4-6, 6-4, 6-2; Rahul Sharma bt Navin Agarwal 6-0, 6-3.

Doubles (final): Rohan Narayan & Vinod Sridhar bt Ravindranath Pandey & Farid Usmani 6-0, 6-2.

Over-40 (final): Vinod Sridhar bt Deepak Marwaha 6-0, 6-0;

Semifinals: Marwaha bt Akash Kale 4-6, 6-2, 3-0 rtd.; Vinod bt Kohinoor Govardhan 6-0, 6-2.

Doubles (final): Sunil Lulla & Rahul Vyas bt Navin Agarwal & Jatin 7-6(5), 2-6, [10-7].

Over-45 (final): Nelson Jatin Kumar bt Rahul Sharma 6-1,

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Rahul Vyas 6-2, 6-3.

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