



Chinese helicopters came close to border at Pangong Tso lake  
page 8



Second phase of Vande Bharat Mission will begin on May 16  
page 9



Gaps in orders blamed for second wave of workers walking home  
page 9



Response to COVID-19 shows lack of global leadership: Yan Xuetong  
page 12

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## NEARBY



Highest single-day jump in COVID-19 deaths in city  
NEW DELHI  
Thirteen deaths and 406 new COVID-19 cases have been reported in Delhi in the last 24 hours, taking the toll to 86 and cases to 7,639. This is the highest single-day spike in the city.  
CITY ▶ PAGE 3

HC relief for DMC chief in sedition case  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday ordered that no coercive action will be taken against Delhi Minorities Commission chairperson Zafarul Islam Khan, who is facing a sedition case over a tweet posted last month, until June 22. The court order came on Mr. Khan's anticipatory bail plea.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

Work on Museum of Prime Ministers to begin  
NEW DELHI

The Central Public Works Department on Tuesday kicked off the process for the external works of the Museum on Prime Ministers of India by inviting bids, but building construction has been affected by the lockdown, said officials.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 10

OPPORTUNITIES ▶ PAGE 11

# PM announces ₹20 lakh crore economic stimulus package

It will focus on self-reliance; lockdown to continue with significant changes

NISTULA HEBBAR  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said a new-look Lockdown 4.0 beyond May 17 was in the offing, while announcing an economic stimulus package for ₹20 lakh crore (estimated at 10% of the GDP), with a clearly defined leap towards economic reforms that will, in his words, lead to *Atmanirbhar Bharat*, or a self-reliant, resilient India.

This amount includes packages already announced at the beginning of the lockdown, incorporating a slew of measures from the RBI and the payoffs under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana.

### 'Relook at systems'

Addressing the nation on television, Mr. Modi said the whole world was reeling from the crisis engendered by the COVID-19 pandemic, as was India. In this crisis, however, India had had an opportunity to look at systems and institutions that were in existence before the crisis hit and how they crumbled. "We have been hearing for many years that the 21st century will be India's century and this crisis is, I believe, one that carries a message, that we have to move forward not just to combat the crisis but to prevail. That can happen when we are self-reliant."

### Ramped-up capacity

He gave the example of India's ramped-up capacity in producing Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) kits and N95 masks required by medical personnel and frontline health workers to illustrate his point that India could achieve this.

"When the first case hit us, we didn't produce either of these things. Now, within weeks we have the capacity to produce 2 lakh of PPE and 2 lakh of N95 masks every day," Mr. Modi said.

Clarifying that by self-reliance he did not mean insularity and suspicion of the world as in the past, but embracing the world in the spirit

ward not just to combat the crisis but to prevail," the Prime Minister said. "That can happen when we are self-reliant."

"Self-reliance in this sense is neither exclusionary nor isolationist, it is for helping the world, with our actions. In the past whenever we have acted it has impacted the world in a positive way – by solving the Y2K riddle in 1999 or our campaigns against open defecation, tuberculosis and polio," Mr. Modi said.

He said that the new edifice of this self-reliant India would be based on the five pillars of the economy, infrastructure, demography, technologically driven systems and to strengthen demand and supply chains, with the supply chains being based on local sourcing.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

PERILOUS STATE ▶ EDITORIAL

After Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a financial package and the extension of the lockdown, Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said the nation was disappointed by his failure to address the issues of migrants. Senior leader Anand Sharma said the package would revive the economy and help the micro, small and medium enterprises in need of financial support to pay wages. Mr. Surjewala said Mr. Modi's announcement gave the media a headline, but the party would respond only when the "blank page is filled with Heartfelt Help of People". ▶ PAGE 8

No help for migrants: Cong.

AIR. Its AIR in Tamil Nadu is higher than that of *The Times of India* and *The New Indian Express* combined. *The Hindu* has witnessed a consistent growth in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. In Karnataka, *The Hindu* has grown by 10% in AIR, whereas *The Times of India* and the *Deccan Herald* have declined.

L.V. Navaneeth, Chief Executive Officer, The Hindu Group, said, "It is heartening to note that we have witnessed continued growth in all four quarters, even as we continue to disseminate verified information during these challenging times. We are thankful to our readers and to our advertisers for the continued support of our quality and credible journalism."

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quarter of the calendar year.

In south India, *The Hindu* has witnessed the highest TR of 46,70,000, which is higher than that of *The Times of India*. *The Hindu*'s performance is attributed to sus-

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**IN BRIEF****Tiware demands inquiry by CMO in food diversion**

NEW DELHI  
BJP Delhi chief Manoj Tiwari on Tuesday demanded an inquiry by the Chief Minister's Office in the alleged diversion of food items from Hunger Relief Centres. Mr. Tiwari did so on the basis of a video in which dried rotis allegedly high jacked from one such centre were found in large numbers at an undisclosed location. The video was tweeted by a party worker.

**Gautam Buddha Nagar reports one death**

NEW DELHI  
Gautam Buddha Nagar reported one more death on Tuesday, taking the COVID-19 toll to three, said officials. The district has reported five new cases, they said. District Surveillance Officer Sunil Dohare said a 60-year-old resident of Noida's Sector 19 died of COVID-19 related infection at Sharda Hospital. His wife is also admitted to the same hospital.

**IPS rank-officer tests positive; 4 policemen quarantined**

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

An IPS rank-officer of Delhi Police on Tuesday tested positive for COVID-19, said officials. Following this, three to four policemen have been quarantined.

Earlier, his PA had tested positive for the virus. The officer has mild symptoms and is currently under home quarantine, they added.

According to an order issued by Delhi Police Commissioner S.N. Srivastava on Tuesday, detailed SOP has already been issued for daily health monitoring and handling of emergency cases in respect of policemen due to prevailing pandemic.

# Capital sees highest single-day jump in COVID-19 deaths

As many as 13 die while 406 test positive, according to health bulletin

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Thirteen deaths and 406 new COVID-19 cases have been reported in Delhi in the last 24 hours, taking the toll to 86 and the cases to 7,639, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Tuesday.

This is the highest single-day spike in the city. But Health Minister Satyendar Jain said that though the deaths were reported in the last 24 hours, these cases did not happen in just one day.

"These deaths are not yesterday's [Monday], they are of the past few days," the minister told the media.

The number of COVID-19 deaths reported by the Delhi government has been lesser than the data on the number of deaths from hospitals.

For instance, when the total number of deaths was 68 according to the Delhi government on Friday, the number of deaths from just two COVID-19 designated city hospitals were 117.

The Delhi government had said that the hospitals send the number of deaths to a Death Audit Committee appointed by the govern-



Food distribution in progress in the Capital on Tuesday.

■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

ment and only the committee can certify them and only those would be counted in the health bulletin.

On Monday, the Congress and the BJP had accused Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal of hiding the actual number of deaths due to COVID-19.

Mr. Jain said that some hospitals were not sending death summaries to the Delhi government and the government had ordered them to send details of deaths within 24 hours. "We had written to hospitals to send reports of death immediately. Hospitals have started

**COVID-19**

sending death summaries," the Minister said.

Of the 7,639 cases, 2,512 people have recovered and there are 5,041 active cases.

Meanwhile, one more area was removed from the list of containment zones on Tuesday. Currently, there are 80 such zones in Delhi.

The District Magistrate (South East) in a separate order said that the government is removing G and D Blocks of Nizamuddin West from the list of containment zones. But this change was

**Virus spread**

Total number of COVID-19 cases	7,639
Total deaths	86
New cases in the past 24 hours	406
New deaths in the past 24 hours	13

SOURCE: DELHI GOVERNMENT HEALTH BULLETIN

not reflected in the Delhi government's official list of the zones till 9 p.m..

**Stranded labourers**

Meanwhile, about 800 of the 2,200 stranded labourers from an L&T construction site in Dwarka were sent back to Bihar on Tuesday, of

p.m.).

Initially L&T said that they want to restart construction. Then it came to our knowledge that the labourers are interested in going back home. We discussed the matter with Railway Ministry and made the arrangements. The labourers did not have to spend any money on the travel," District Magistrate (South West) Rahul Singh said.

"Yesterday [Sunday], the Prime Minister discussed the situation with all the Chief ministers of the country. He [PM] asked the States the level of relaxa-

# Kejriwal seeks suggestions from Delhiites on lockdown restrictions

Govt. to give ₹1 cr. to kin of teacher who died of COVID-19

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal at 12 p.m. on Tuesday sought suggestions from citizens on lockdown relaxations post-May 17 and also said the government would send a proposal based on these to the Centre on Thursday.

**HELPLINE NUMBERS**

COMMON HELPLINE – +91-11-23978046

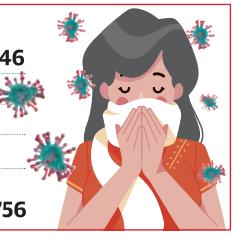
DELHI – 011-22307145

GAHAIABAD – 0120 4186453

NOIDA – 8076623612/6396776904

GURUGRAM – 108/ 0124-2322412/

9911519296/ 7015523417/ 9654231756



down "would not be a good idea", he added. However, Mr. Kejriwal said he wanted suggestions on the tenure and gravity of the relaxation, on the sectors that should get relaxation, and whether the public transport system should begin.

"I also want your suggestions on whether markets and industrial areas should re-open. If the relaxations come into play, we have to maintain social distancing, wear masks, and follow all the other norms..." he said.

"The PM has directed that all States should submit their proposal about the lockdown post-May 17 by May 15. I want suggestions from the people of Delhi regarding the removal of lockdown," he said, adding based on the suggestions, the government will prepare a recommendation and send it to the Center.

The suggestions can be messaged or mailed, said CM Arvind Kejriwal. ■ FILE PHOTO

tions and restrictions that they want," he said.

"The PM has directed that all States should submit their proposal about the lockdown post-May 17 by May 15. I want suggestions from the people of Delhi regarding the removal of lockdown," he said, adding based on the suggestions, the government will prepare a recommendation and send it to the Center.

"We are all proud of COVID warriors like her," he said before announcing the compensation.

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**THE HINDU**

India's National Newspaper

## CM taking suggestions after failure to contain virus: Cong.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Congress on Tuesday said Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal was now seeking suggestions from Delhiites as the government had failed to control the COVID-19 pandemic by taking autocratic decisions.

"Instead of addressing the issues arising due to the

## No quarantine for asymptomatic rail passengers

'Mild symptomatic' people will be directed to undergo 'home quarantine' as per SOP

"mild symptomatic" people will be directed to undergo "home quarantine" and symptomatic people will be tested and quarantined, according to a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for passengers arriving in Delhi by train, released by the Delhi government on Tuesday.

"All the asymptomatic persons coming to Delhi shall be allowed to go to their respective home after ascertaining that they are asymptomatic. Furthermore, they would be requested to download Aarogya Setu app on their mobiles, if possible," the SoP issued by the Health and Family

Welfare Department of the Delhi government said.

"Ministry of Railways shall ensure that all those boarding the train shall be compulsorily screened and only asymptomatic persons shall be allowed to board the train," the SoP read.

**ENTERPRISE CONNECT****NDMC keeps close watch on dengue - reports zero cases so far**

NDMC health department directed its cross checking team for the purpose of anti larval action to check the President House, Rail Bhavan Sardar Patel Bhavan, Shastry Bhavan, North and South Avenue and Talkatora Marg premises. NDMC field workers are already visiting the area premises to find out collection of water at the construction sites and other places.

NDMC health department has deployed two vehicle mounted fogging machine, around 30 portable fogging machine and 130 knapsack Sprayer Machine for anti larval action. There are around 162 Gang man for carrying out field activities in the area. 5 Sanitary Inspectors have been posted to supervise the field work of malaria in all the 14 sanitation circles of New Delhi area. A direction has been given by Chairman, NDMC to the Chief Engineer (Civil) to find out presence of open overhead tanks or other civil materials in the open, cemented Haudis etc. Chairman has also directed to strengthen the intra sectoral activities with inter sectoral coordination for more focusing on Nalaha, Drains and other water bodies in the area.

Keeping the view of covid-19 pandemic situation, NDMC is carrying Information, Education and Communication (IEC) activities with social distancing norms through video conferencing or mobile to mobile with RWAs, MTAs and other officials to take action by themselves for containing mosquito breeding.

**Tata power DDL : goes digital for bill and payment methods**

Tata Power-DDL consumers can now instantly receive their latest duplicate bills by just sending a message from their registered number on company's WhatsApp Number – 7303482071.

The feature has been introduced with an aim to ensure consumer safety wherein they can avail e-bills instantly and smoothly amidst the lockdown.

In order to get the duplicate bill, Tata Power-DDL consumers will have to save Tata Power-DDL's WhatsApp Number in their contacts and send a message from their registered contact number typing – BILL <SPACE> <11 DIGIT CA NUMBER> to WhatsApp Number – 7303482071.

The company also urges its consumers to opt for digital modes for payment of their electricity bills (through e-wallets, UPI, Company's Mobile App or Website) from the confines of their homes while they practice social distancing.

**PMGKAY scheme ensures 10.91 lac quintals of food grain distribution**

In the fight against Covid-19 pandemic, Govt. of India has announced one of the most important initiatives called Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana (PMGKAY) that provides free food grains to the needy population. Government of India through FCI is ensuring that no one suffers on account of non-availability of food grains due to disruption/lockdown. Under the scheme, about 10.91 Lakh Quintals of food grains have been allocated for 71 Lakhs beneficiaries of Delhi in addition to the regular allotment under NFSA so that vulnerable sections of society are not affected by the pandemic due to shortage of food grains.

General Manager, Food Corporation of India, Delhi Region, Shri Sudhir Kumar has stated that through various measures, Government of India is ensuring adequate

availability of food grains in Delhi state, especially to the poor families and also emphasized that Government is having sufficient stocks to fulfill all the requirement for the people of Delhi. All the FCI depots of Delhi Region have been fully functional throughout the lockdown with more than 325 Officers/Staffs and over 750 labours working beyond normal hours and even on Holiday/Junta Curfew day to ensure that foodgrains reach to the poor people. FCI is also grateful to State Govt./ DSCSC for the smooth and timely distribution of foodgrains to the beneficiaries of Delhi State.

**NFL sees 71% jump in growth in the month of April 2020**

NFL has started the financial year 2020-21 with a bang by recording 71% growth in fertilizer sale in the month of April compared to same period last year. Company recorded fertilizer sale of 3.62 Lakh MT in April 2019 compared to 2.12 Lakh MT made by it in April 2019.

This was despite the stringent restrictions in country in April due to COVID19 lockdown. NFL marketing team, however, left no stone unturned to make fertilizers available to farmers during this crucial period.

C&MD, NFL, Sh. Manoj Mishra has appreciated the efforts of marketing team for achieving this highest-ever growth in sales in the month of April 2020.

**Haryana Govt lays out aggressive strategy to lure manufacturing units**

The State of Haryana has chalked out an aggressive strategy to woo the investments/ Companies intending either shift from China or setting up of a new manufacturing facility in India. As a part of the plan Rajesh Khullar, principal secretary to chief minister shall hold an open house with potential investors on 6th , 7th and 8th May 2020 from 3 pm to 4pm everyday through Video Conferencing / Webinars.

A number of US, Japanese, Korean & Euro Zone Companies are proposing to shift their plants from China or set up additional manufacturing facilities to other locations in South Asia. The Government of Haryana has prepared a strategy to create windows in the existing state policies that would ensure quick setting up of manufacturing facilities in any industrial estate of the choice of investors wanting to shift base from China. Government is reaching out to these Companies to understand their individual requirement in terms of land area, payment terms, incentives sought and business facilitation sought. This is being done through a series of meeting through video conferencing on 6th, 7th & 8th of May 2020 with the potential Investors / Companies. Sh. Rajesh Khullar, PSCM-cum-Chairman HSIIDC, Sh. AK Singh, Principal Secretary Industries and Sh. Anurag Agarwal, MD HSIIDC would also be present during the interactions. Based on the interactions, tailor made solutions would be offered to such Investors/ Companies.

**Scope conducts webinar on adapting new work measures for organizations**

The webinar, 5th in the series of SCOPE Webinars, aimed at making various strategies that organizations would need from a people and process standpoint to ensure they thrive in the present situation of COVID 19 and thereafter. Special e-issue of SCOPE's monthly magazine Kaleidoscope encompassing PSEs contribution to economy and the role being played by them in Fight against COVID 19 was released on the occasion.

The webinar was addressed by Mr. Atul Sotgi, Director General, SCOPE and Mr. Sunil Kumar, Director (HR&EB), MTNL, Mr. Ankur Walunjkar, Partner, Human Capital and Mr. Pratik N. Mehta, Partner, Human Capital, Deloitte India. The webinar received an overwhelming response of over 500 participants including several senior members of the Public Sector fraternity.

**Siesta time**

## Two arrested in gym trainer's murder case

Juvenile involved nabbed last year

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Two men were arrested from Punjab in connection with a gym trainer's murder last year, the police said on Tuesday.

The accused – Vikas (27) and Rohit Sagar (30) – suspected sharpshooters of the infamous Kapil Sangeen alias Nandu gang was held from Punjab on Monday, they said.

The victim – Mohit Mor – who had over 5.17 lakh followers on TikTok was killed on May 21, 2019.

The incident took place when Mohit went to meet his friend at a photostat shop in Nafajgarh's Dharmapura where three people on a motorcycle shot him at least 13 times before speeding off.

CM

YK

# Lockdown leaves patients struggling for medical care in U.P.'s Sitapur

Doctors not always available due to COVID-19 duties; people forced to walk several kilometres for treatment; patients referred to Lucknow in absence of services

## OMAR RASHID

It's around 3 p.m. and patients accompanied by their kin continue to trickle into the district hospital in Sitapur. Several police guards are stationed at the gate but no thermal screening is done for visitors. At the hospital, only the emergency services are running.

Some patients arrive in ambulances. At the entrance to the main hospital building, Nandlal Prajapati and a relative push a wheeled stretcher bearing his brother towards an ambulance.

The patient is suffering with an abdominal lump and has been referred to the Medical College in Lucknow, 90 km away.

This is the second time that

Mr. Prajapati's brother is set to be transferred to another hospital during the lockdown. A migrant worker in Delhi, he was brought to Sitapur in an ambulance after doctors in the national capital refused to operate on him as his family was not around. They could not travel to Delhi.

"He was brought home in an ambulance. Here [district hospital] they are telling us they can't treat him," said Mr. Prajapati.

He said the hospital told him there were not enough beds to admit his brother. Several other patients, including a father-son duo who had suffered injuries after a roof collapsed on them, narrated similar stories of being referred to Lucknow for treatment that they had expected to get at

the district hospital.

In another corner of the hospital compound, which was built in 1886, Kamruddin and his family are sitting under a tree, their heads bowed in grief.

A few hours earlier, his mother Raessa died of internal injuries she suffered after being run over by a tractor trolley in a field.

On Sunday evening, when a heavy thunderstorm hit parts of Uttar Pradesh, Mr. Kamruddin's mother was out tending to the family's goats as they grazed. Mr. Kamruddin alleged that after spending a night in the hospital when he stepped out for a cup of tea at 6 a.m., he was not allowed to re-enter the premises till 11 a.m., ostensibly to comply with social distancing



A family carries a patient on a stretcher before he is transferred to an ambulance. ■ OMAR RASHID

norms. His mother reportedly died at 8 a.m. Mr. Kamruddin alleged that the hospital lacked proper medical facilities. "You can complain as much as you want, but nothing happens," he said.

As he was speaking, Shubham Shukla, a student whose

family owned the tractor that hit Mr. Kamruddin's mother, tried to defend the hospital. He said the woman was provided all possible emergency services but was too badly injured to survive.

The lockdown curbs have compounded the problems of

the locals. Doctors are not always available at the community health centres due to COVID-19 duties, and residents, especially those from rural areas, are facing logistical inconvenience due to the travel restrictions.

## Logistical inconvenience

A few metres away, Ram Het, his wife Neelam and her mother-in-law are sitting on benches, waiting for a motorcycle to arrive and take them home to Sarda, 50 km away. Neelam fell unconscious a few days ago following which she was brought to the district hospital in an ambulance. Her CT scan report came out fine, providing relief to the family. However, the family's journey back home appears cumbersome in absence of public

transport. "The bike will have to make two trips to take all of us. So I will call another bike. Till it arrives, I will walk," said Ram.

Many patients are even being forced to walk a few miles in the sun if their hospital is in the containment zone. A week ago, Shamsuddin's wife fell from the roof and fractured her hip. She was rushed to the district hospital from Khairabad, a sealed hotspot, in an ambulance.

"I have not been home for eight days. There is nobody else to stay here with her. They are not allowed to leave their area," he said.

The sealing of Khairabad has led to problems for many locals, including Rajendra Kumar, who runs a licensed medical shop in a village 6.5

km away. He is forced to travel 14 km to the district headquarters on a bicycle to get his supplies of medicines.

District Hospital Superintendent Ajay Shukla dismissed allegations and complaints by patients that they were being turned away and referred to Lucknow unnecessarily. "We are not rejecting anyone. We only refer those with neurological problems or those who cannot be treated here," he said.

When asked why there was no thermal screening at the hospital, he said only those people who came and reported that they were feverish were being screened. "This can't be done for everyone. It is for those people who are coming from outside," he said.

## Opposition takes Punjab govt. to task

Congress MP Partap Bajwa seeks a probe into 'liquor mafia'

VIKAS VASUDEVA  
CHANDIGARH

Amid the ongoing stand-off between Ministers and Chief Secretary Karan Avtar Singh in Punjab, not only the Opposition but even a Congress leader on Tuesday took the government to task by pointing fingers at the prevalence of "liquor mafia" in the State.

While the former Deputy Chief Minister and Shiromani Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal said that the "ministers-bureaucrat con-

frontation" has led to a complete administrative paralysis in the State, Congress Member of Parliament Partap Singh Bajwa asked Chief Minister Amarinder Singh to initiate a probe into the allegations over "liquor mafia".

"Punjab government is at war with itself, leading to an utter collapse of the government machinery," said Mr. Badal.

He said, "...at the core of this collapse is a fight over grabbing liquor mafia benefits. Ministers should stop making a laughing stock of themselves by refusing to sit with this or that officer and come clean on what exactly is their complaint against the officer. But the issue seems

to be much more than ego. It is about corruption."

Mr. Bajwa took to Twitter on the issue and asked the Chief Minister to initiate an inquiry.

"Given that the Govt has constantly failed in meeting the Excise Deptt.'s revenue targets, the only answer is that there is something wrong within the Department. I fear a Govt-Contractor nexus has formed and this must be probed immediately," he added.

Aam Aadmi Party State president and MP Bhagwant Mann hit out at the Chief Minister, who, he alleged, was acting like a mute spectator in this hour of crisis looming large on the State leadership.

Many ice cream vendors battle hunger due to lockdown

SIDDHARTH YADAV  
INDORE

Unsure if the lockdown will ever be lifted, Suresh Chandra Rawat is driving his place of work back home in Rajasthan. Once a cherished dream, the *kulfati saluda* counter, occupying half of the modified pick-up truck, is more of a white elephant now. His wife and daughter barely manage to slide behind the counter, atop which the helper is perched precariously.

"We were left with nothing to eat in Pune. So, we had to leave," said Mr. Rawat, 22, headed for Chittorgarh. "I sent my parents money. This time, I had to ask them for ₹7,000 to buy food and pay for diesel and toll tax," added

Mr. Rawat, unsure of making it home with ₹1,500 left for the remaining journey from Indore. Seated next to Mr. Rawat, who made around ₹2,500 a day, is Durgalal Kharol, who made ₹400 a day selling ice

cream. "2020 toh poora gaya (2020 is gone entirely)," he said morosely. The increased demand in the summer offered them an opportunity to make the yearly trip.

On the Mumbai-Agra highway are scores of ice cream and *kulfati* vendors from Rajasthan, who've lost out on a year's earning owing to the lockdown.

Only at roadside eateries offering food free do workers disgorge. And at one such eatery in Dhule in Maharashtra, the parked pick-up truck bearing the initials 'RJ', for Rajasthan, gave Mr. Kharol, 37, some hope. He had started walking back to Bilhara a week ago with his younger brother, who now sits at the

counter's edge in the truck.

"After registering with the local authorities in PUNE for transport back home, we waited for 10 days," said Mr. Kharol, who entrusted his cart to his landlord. "I told him I will return. There is no work back home."

However, Mr. Rawat will take to farming until next summer. "My earnings have been on the wane. Last year, we were shooed away from there. Now six-seven new vendors have come in my area. And now we face the lockdown," he said. Hoping to repay debt, his father had landed in PUNE seven years ago and bought a push-cart for ₹1,000. A part of the debt is still outstanding.

## BJP leaders allege mismanagement in Meerut

'Patients are avoiding going to hospital because of lack of treatment and sanitation facilities'

ANUJ KUMAR  
GHAZIABAD

With the cases of COVID-19 rising in western Uttar Pradesh, local BJP leaders are complaining against the local administration for mismanagement. After Agra Mayor Naveen Jain wrote to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Raja Sabha member Kanta Kardam has raised the issue of negligence in Meerut's Lala Lajpat Rai Memorial Hospital, in a letter written to the CM.

She said that patients were avoiding getting admitted because of lack of treatment, food, and sanitation facilities

in the hospital. She lamented the rising number of deaths in the district, including that of a BJP worker.

She added that in certain markets such as Delhi Road, Naveen Mandi and Lohiya Nagar, people didn't seem to have fear of getting infected despite a spike in the number of cases and the administration was not ensuring proper testing in those areas.

She also demanded closure of wine shops as the district was in the red zone and social distancing was not being followed at these outlets. A similar demand was made by Sahibabad MLA Sunil Ku-

mar Sharma. In a letter addressed to the CM, he demanded that if it was necessary to open wine shops, a COVID tax should be levied on liquor and it should be supplied only online.

## Free hand to officials'

Sources in the party said that some leaders were agitated that the government was not listening to the party's voices on the ground and had given the bureaucracy a free hand. "Opening the wine shops and letting labourers walk is not good for the party's image," said a source requesting anonymity. "People would soon

start saying that the BJP is no different from other parties," he said.

On Tuesday, the video of a member of BJP's district committee Deepak Sharma went viral where he made allegations of corruption against the District Magistrate. A local journalist said one had to see who were raising the voice. "They could be those who had not been given their 'cut'."

Ms. Kardam told *The Hindu* that there was no division in the party. "We are fighting the battle against COVID together. Unlike the Samajwadi Party and the Bahujan Samaj

Party, our cadre is working on the ground. However, there are certain officials who are still living in the past and are not able to put the message of Narendra Modi and Yogi Adityanath into practice."

The party's U.P. vice-president said one could not control the virus but one could certainly provide proper facilities to the infected persons. "We can certainly prevent people from dying because of the virus by timely intervention."

## Brawl over toilet use triggers violence in Hooghly district

SVUJIT BAGCHI  
KOLKATA

Communal violence, triggered by a minor brawl over use of a public toilet during the lockdown, has spread in parts of Hooghly district. On Wednesday, violence erupted in Bhadrashwar and bombs were sporadically hurled. A retired jute mill worker Sekh Shamsuddin, however, said that in Bhadrashwar, on the western bank of river Hooghly, they were protected by "Hindu brothers."

"Some men came from outside and attacked our houses, but the Goalai (milk traders) community, our neighbours, came out spoke to them and sent them back," Mr. Shamsuddin told *The Hindu*. Rajkumar Roy, a neighbour of Mr. Shamsuddin, said that those who came to "create a disturbance were outsiders who were not allowed to mobilise in the area."

He, however, indicated that the incident was "small".

But it was not as small about a kilometre further north in Telinipara, closer to the river. In Telinipara, tension started building since Monday evening as some members of a community were stopped from visiting a public toilet, fearing spread of the virus. Some locals argued that one family in the area was affected and thus the access to the toilet was blocked. The other community protested, resulting in a scuffle, locals said.

"Soon after clashes were reported, bombs were hurled, a few shops vandalised, vehicles set on fire. Thankfully No one was killed or even very severely injured," a policeman said.

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee issued a warning on Wednesday while blaming the Bharatiya Janata Party's leaders for the provocation.

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#### LOST & FOUND

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**Name of work**

Outsourcing of "Outsourcing of maintenance of the PSI assets of NKJ-BEHR- SGRL Section for a period of 24 months", Due Date of Opening of Tender - 21-05-2020 (After 15.00 hrs.), Date & Time of Submission of Tender - 21-05-2020 instead of 21-05-2020 (upto 15.00 hrs.), Cost of Work (NIT Value) - Rs. 1,04,72,025.29/-, Tender Document Cost (TDC) - Rs. 5,000/-Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) - Rs. 2,02,400/-Value of Offer - 45 Days Completion Period - 2 Years (730 Days), Enclosure uploaded in Website.

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रेल यात्रा के दौरान शिकायत हुई 138 पर एक सुरक्षा हुई 182 पर सम्पर्क करें



People holding a candlelight vigil to express solidarity with the victims of gas leak in Visakhapatnam. ■ C.V. SUBRAHMANYAM

## APPCB faces flak for 'misleading' press note

Regulator failed to do its job: activists

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
VISHAKHAPATNAM

The Andhra Pradesh Pollution Control Board (APPCB) has come under fire from several quarters over a 'misleading' press note it issued in the wake of the gas leak at LG Polymers.

A group of scientists and social activists criticised the APPCB over its stand on granting clearances to various industries, including LG Polymers.

An outfit, Scientists for People, said it was shocked to see the contents of the press release issued by the Regional Office of the APPCB in Visakhapatnam. "It is more in the tone of excuses reeled out by a student for not doing his homework. It is a highly irresponsible denial of responsibility vested in them to protect the environment and people," the organisation said.

In a strongly worded response, former union secretary E.A.S. Sarma said the APPCB tried to absolve itself of any involvement in industrial units obtaining Environment Clearance (EC) under the Environment (Protection) Act, by saying that ECs for Category-A projects were issued by the Union Ministry of Environment and Forests and ECs for Category-B projects by the State Expert Appraisal Com-

mittee (SEAC)/State Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA).

"The APPCB should not have suppressed the fact that it acts as the Member-Secretary of SEAC and supports both SEAC and SEIAA," Mr. Sarma said.

"Consent for Establishment [CFE] and Consent for Operation [CFO] cannot be given to a unit without an Environmental Clearance [EC]."

"The consents handed out by the APPCB to LG Polymers are patently illegal. It is an imprudent attempt by the PCB to absolve itself of any responsibility for the disaster of May 7," said V.S. Krishna of the Human Rights Forum.

### Shifting of gas

Meanwhile, a special chemical team from the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), Pune, headed by Commandant Anupam Srivastava, is monitoring the shifting of styrene gas from the LG Polymers plant in Visakhapatnam.

NDRF 10th Battalion Commandant Zahid Khan told *The Hindu* on Tuesday that the gas tragedy was a major operation ever handled by the force in Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Tamil Nadu in the last few years.

(With inputs from Vijayawada Bureau)

## Eight die of infection in Tamil Nadu

Southern States focus on tests for migrants as thousands arrive in native districts

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU

Tamil Nadu reported 716 new cases of COVID-19 and eight more deaths on Tuesday. Two deaths and 51 fresh cases of COVID-19 have been reported in Telangana. Andhra Pradesh reported one more death and 71 fresh cases on Tuesday.

Karnataka witnessed a record increase of 63 fresh cases raising the State's tally of cases to 925.

The case total in Karnataka includes 31 COVID deaths, one non-COVID death and 433 discharged persons. Of

### COVID-19

the 460 active cases, 449 patients were stable and 11 in the ICU.

Kolar, Yadgir and Hassan, which were COVID-19 free,

reported cases for the first time on Tuesday. With this, a total of 25 districts were affected.

Of 63 cases, 33 had a history of travel to Ahmedabad and six to Mumbai – both COVID hotspots. In the last three days, 51 people who came from Ahmedabad tested positive. Of the three from

Kolar, two visited Orissa and one, Chennai.

Out of four patients from Bengaluru, three were women from Padarayananapura, contacts of a previously infected patient. However, the source of infection in a 35-year-old male was unknown.

Primary and Secondary Education Minister Suresh Kumar, the COVID spokesperson, said all the Deputy Commissioners had prior information about inter-state returnees and they had been quarantined and tested.

With most people violating home quarantine, the government had decided to quarantine arrivals from other States and countries in institutional facilities.

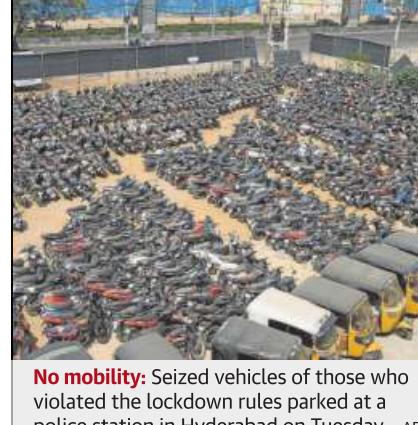
In Andhra Pradesh 58 fresh cases were linked to hotspots in other States, the Health Department said.

Of the fresh cases, only 13 were due to local transmission. Also, 930 migrant labourers returned from Kalyan near Mumbai and they transited Guntakal railway station en route to Kurnool, Anantapur and Kadapa after which they were immediately tested.

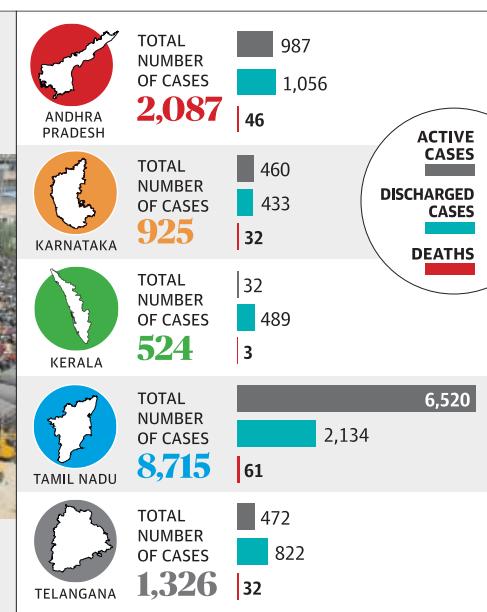
Of 250 persons, 38 tested positive (Kurnool: 37, Kada-

### Strict measures

The Telangana government is striving hard to make people follow rules and stay indoors to contain the spread of COVID-19



No mobility: Seized vehicles of those who violated the lockdown rules parked at a police station in Hyderabad on Tuesday. ■ AFP



cumbred rose to 32, a bulletin said. It added that 21 people were discharged from hospitals after recovery, with the number of people discharged at 822. There were 472 people under treatment. Of new cases, 37 were from Greater Hyderabad.

**More than 500 cases**  
Of the 716 new cases, Chennai reported more than 500 cases. The total number of COVID-19 cases in Tamil Nadu stood at 8,715.

Of the 716 new cases – 427 male, 288 female and one transgender – 60 were children aged 0 to 12. Among them were two two-month-old babies and a seven-month-old.

Though the State's mortality rate was 0.69%, deaths were rising steadily. As on date, the Statewide toll was 61, with Chennai accounting for 39 deaths.

Among the fresh cases were four persons who returned on repatriation flights. Till now, a total of 927 persons who arrived on these flights to Chennai and Tiruchi had been screened.

(With inputs from PTI, Vijayawada, Chennai & Thiruvananthapuram Bureaus)

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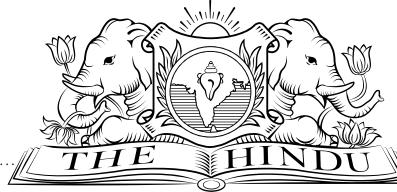
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Among migrant labourers who returned to Vizianagaram district, Srikanth said, 10 more cases were expected



## Perilous state

The Centre needs to help States financially so that they can fight the virus better

**S**tate finances are in a shambles. Every single State's, without exception, though the degree may vary. The COVID-19-induced lockdown has dealt State finances a triple whammy. Their own revenue sources – mainly from liquor sales, stamp duty from property transactions and sales tax on petroleum products – that account for half their total revenues, have collapsed. And their expenditure such as on interest payments, social sector schemes and staff salaries remains unchanged. Worse, they are now called upon to spend more on beefing up their health infrastructure and on COVID-19 measures, including testing, treatment and quarantining. So, it is not surprising that all of them, including the gold standard ones such as Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, are now pleading for funding support from the Centre and relaxation in borrowing rules by the RBI. And the Centre has been watching silently even as some States have gone ahead and cut salaries of their employees and pension benefits to rein in expenses.

It could be argued that by seeking consecutive extensions of the lockdown, which imposes tremendous strain on not just their finances but also that of the Centre, the States are wrong in their approach. Are they taking the easy option by seeking extensions and simultaneously demanding financial support from the Centre? Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Maharashtra, in their desperation, commenced liquor sales with outlets flouting all physical distancing norms. The fear is that this could seed fresh infections. The Centre is itself not in a happy place financially. But it at least has the means to replenish its finances through conventional and unconventional means. For instance, it appropriated almost all of the benefit of falling oil prices through increase in duties – ₹13 a litre on petrol and ₹16 a litre on diesel – in two tranches in March and again, last week. It recently announced an increase in its borrowing by half for this fiscal. The burden is on the Centre to find the resources to immediately release the dues of the States and also reimburse them for their COVID-19-related expenses. It should seriously consider relaxing the fiscal deficit levels of the States from the current 3% level to at least 4.5%, just as it should relax its own level too. The States should at least be able to borrow more. The Centre should also give States the freedom to restart economic activity based on their own assessment. Not all States are in the same virus-spread position and within each State, not all districts are the same. This has to be acknowledged while planning a phased lifting of the lockdown. Greater leeway in restarting economic activity will relieve some of the financial stress, not just on the States but also on the Centre.

## Indelicate imbalance

By deferring again to the executive on Kashmir, the SC is abdicating judicial responsibility

**T**he Supreme Court has failed to discharge a judicial duty it was called upon to perform. Its decision to send the question of restoring 4G connectivity in Jammu and Kashmir for a review to the very authorities who imposed the restriction in the first place is a clear abdication of responsibility. The mandate that the Court enjoys under Article 32 of the Constitution – to enforce fundamental rights – cannot be transferred to the executive. It is quite stark that the three-member Bench has resorted to this measure despite coming to the conclusion that the grievance of the petitioners merits consideration. The judgment is in consonance with a judicial trend that seeks ‘balance’ between rights and ‘national security’. In the J&K context, this approach inevitably results in unquestioning deference to any claim that the executive makes without scrutinising the nature and quality of the claim. The Court has not even pursued the attempt it made in *Anuradha Bhasin*, to lay down a set of rules by which authorities seeking to impose restrictions on fundamental rights must adhere to the doctrine of proportionality. In that case decided in January, the Court refrained from taking any view on the legality of the government’s imposition of a blanket communication lockdown in J&K in the wake of the abrogation of the special status enjoyed till then by the erstwhile State. However, it held that repeated resort to Section 144 of the CrPC to impose wide restrictions without territorial or temporal limits was unacceptable. It directed the authorities to review each one of them from time to time. In the present case, it has asked two Secretaries in the Union government and the J&K Chief Secretary to consider the case made out by the petitioners for restoring 4G services.

The Court acknowledges that it might be better and convenient to have better Internet facilities during a global pandemic and a national lockdown. It also notes that the entire Union Territory has been put under curbs that allow only 2G speed. However, it takes into account two claims by the government: one, that there ought to be limits on data speed to prevent terrorists misusing it to disturb peace and tranquillity; and two, that there has been a spike in incidents of terrorism – 108 incidents, in fact, between August 5, 2019 and April 25, 2020 – in the area. The Court also considered recent incidents including the encounter at Handwara. A question that it failed to ask was how these incidents could be linked to Internet speed when all of them took place while severe restrictions were in place. Without a judicial standard to scrutinise claims made in the name of national security, is it right to use them to dislodge fundamental rights? Further, the institutional discrimination against J&K that this approach causes is not taken into account at all. The delicate balancing the Court attempts is, in fact, no balance at all.

# Getting cash transfers out of a JAM

For effective cash relief in response to the COVID-19 crisis, the government must think beyond the Jan Dhan Yojana



JEAN DRÈZE & REETIKA KHERA

**F**or some years now, the so-called JAM trinity (Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile) has been propounded as dream cash-transfer infrastructure for India. The term “trinity” itself gives a sense of the faith and fervour this project sought to inspire (why not “trio”?). It was born in chapter 3 of the Economic Survey 2015, titled “Wiping every tear from every eye: The JAM number trinity solution”. This early JAM promo humbly concluded that “nirvana today seems within reach”. JAM’s virtues were praised again in the following year’s Economic Survey.

### An illusion and its fading

What JAM really means, in practical terms, is conveniently vague. The original formulation, in 2015, mentioned two possible incarnations of the trinity: mobile banking and post office payments. The second option never made much headway, perhaps because it did not have enough scope for private profit. So Aadhaar-enabled mobile banking became the supreme goal. In 2017, NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant predicted the imminent demise of all cash-transfer paraphernalia other than mobiles: “...in the next two-and-a-half years, India will make all its debit cards, credit cards, all ATM machines all POS machines totally irrelevant... because every Indian will be doing his transaction just by using his thumb in thirty seconds ...” This utopia was happily embraced by a familiar bandwagon of Aadhaar champions, fintech companies

and embedded economists.

The intoxication reached new heights as the JAM project latched on to another flourishing narrative – universal basic income (UBI). If you want to make cash transfers to everyone, what better platform can you have than Aadhaar, India’s unique biometric ID, doubling up as a financial address? An illusion emerged that India had developed an ideal infrastructure for UBI, ready to be deployed at any time.

It took the novel coronavirus crisis for the bubble to burst. In the early days of the crisis, JAM was often invoked as a possible tool of emergency relief. But when the time actually came to make cash transfers to the poor, JAM turned out to be of little use. For all the excitement it had generated, JAM had not gone beyond some fancy digital-payment systems for the privileged. Poor people, far from using the “thumb in thirty seconds” method to cash in, were still running from pillar to post to collect their meagre benefits from old-fashioned bank accounts (some also use the services of “business correspondents”, but those have little to do with JAM). Sure enough, long bank queues have started emerging, especially in rural areas where the density of banks is relatively low. The crowds are all set to swell further as and when the lockdown is lifted.

JAM enthusiasts may respond that the central government’s relief package does rely on Jan Dhan Yojana (JDY) – at least the J in the JAM, if not the entire trinity. Indeed, the lead cash-relief measure in the national relief package consists of monthly transfers of ₹500 to women’s JDY accounts. But is that a good idea?

One way to think about this is to compare women’s JDY accounts with another possible basis for cash transfers, at least in rural



areas: the list of households that have a National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA) job card. The numbers of accounts are roughly comparable: about 14 crore for NREGA job cards, and 12 crore or so for women’s JDY accounts in rural and semi-urban areas. For purposes of cash relief, the JDY approach turns out to fare poorly on several counts.

### Errors galore

First, JDY accounts are a mighty mess – the NREGA job-cards list is far more transparent and well-organised. During the frantic initial JDY wave, in 2014-15, banks opened JDY accounts en masse to meet the targets. Banking norms went for a toss: many accounts were opened without informed consent, duplicate accounts flourished, Aadhaar numbers were seeded without any safeguards, and so on. Later on, a large proportion of JDY accounts (40% in March 2017, down to 19% in January 2020) went “dormant” as customers were unable or unwilling to use them. Other accounts were blocked because the account holders were unable to complete timely ex-post biometric authentication (“e-KYC”) of the Aadhaar numbers that had been seeded into their accounts. It is not clear what proportion of JDY accounts are operational today, in the sense that a bank transfer to these accounts will actually reach the recipient.

pient in good time.

Second, cash transfers to women’s JDY accounts are likely to involve large exclusion errors. According to a recent Yale study, less than half of poor adult women have a JDY account. Consistent with this, a Dalberg study for 10 States finds that the proportion of poor households where at least one adult woman has a JDY account is just 57%. The NREGA job-card list is likely to have much better coverage of poor households. The natural complementarity between NREGA and social security pensions (covering more than four crore persons under the National Social Assistance Programme alone) would further help to reduce exclusion errors.

Third, inclusion errors are also likely to be larger in the JDY approach. Job cards are meant for rural workers, JDY accounts are for everyone. National Election Studies 2019 data show that JDY beneficiaries tend to be better off than NREGA beneficiaries. Earlier survey data, analysed by Manuela Kristin Günther, suggest that the probability of having a JDY account is more or less the same for poor and non-poor households. Some of our middle-class female friends have already received SMS alerts informing them that their JDY account has been credited with ₹500 of relief money.

### Back to cash in hand?

What about the respective reliability of NREGA and JDY payments? There have been significant issues (e.g. delayed, rejected, blocked or diverted payments) with NREGA payments, often related to Aadhaar. But then, numerous “direct benefit transfer” schemes (social security pensions, scholarships, maternity benefits, among others) have faced similar problems, also reflected in official transaction data.

Both the Aadhaar Payment Bridge System (APBS) and the Aadhaar-Enabled Payment System (AePS) are shot through with technical glitches, possibly exacerbated by the recent surge in transactions, and especially unknd to the powerless. Transfers to women’s JDY accounts are unlikely to be more reliable than transfers to job card holders.

In fact, as far as effective payment is concerned, there is a further argument in favour of the NREGA job-cards list: unlike JDY accounts, it lends itself to the “cash-in-hand” method (on-the-spot payment in cash, instead of bank payments) as a possible fallback. The reason is that the job-cards list is a transparent, recursive household list with village and gram panchayat identifiers. Cash-in-hand may seem like the antithesis of JAM, but this option may become important in the near future if the banking system comes under further stress. There are precedents of effective use of the cash-in-hand method, notably in Odisha for pension payments and in various States for NREGA wage payments. Several States (including Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Tamil Nadu) have already resorted to cash-in-hand for relief payments during the lockdown.

In short, there is nothing compelling about the use of women’s JDY accounts for cash relief. In fact, it is a bit of a shot in the dark. The central government would do well to consider other options, including a switch to the NREGA job-cards list in rural areas. As for the JAM trinity, it should come down to earth for a reality check.

*Jean Drèze is Visiting Professor at the Department of Economics, Ranchi University. Reetika Khera is Associate Professor of Economics at IIM Ahmedabad*

## Italy, India and a common thread in partnership

Both countries have opportunities to support a multilateral system which would aid the battle against the pandemic



VINCENZO DE LUCA

**M**ay 4 is a date that unites Italy and India in the current COVID-19 scenario. It is the day when both countries courageously decided to strike a fine balance between the need to restore industrial activities and supply chains and the duty to continue protecting their citizens from the spread of the novel coronavirus.

### Endeavour in a phase

What in India is commonly known as Lockdown 3.0 has been defined “Phase 2” in Italy. Regardless of how we call it, the stage that both countries entered that Monday reflects the same endeavour: first, we needed to put our economies and societies on hold to contain the virus; now while still working to strengthen our preparedness and our response to this global challenge, we need to be able to look forward and give our citizens and our businesses a positive outlook in the immediate future.

Like India, Italy is also a country whose economy has a solid manufacturing base. That Monday, the

new measures adopted by the Italian government allowed 4.5 million people to go back to work: the heart of our economic system started pulsating again. Nearly 50 economic and industrial activities were allowed on a national scale.

In parallel, the government adopted new measures to make sure that the nearly three million people employed in the public sector would be able to develop digital processes and streamlined procedures so as to support the prompt resumption of activities by the private sector. It is something that we are also doing here in India, by developing the “Digital Embassy” project that will allow us to create many tools and processes to virtually interact and support our nationals, our businesses and our Indian counterparts.

The endgame in Italy is to allow our entire workforce (roughly 24 million people) to recommence their activities. This need not come at the price of safety: the relevant Italian institutions have already defined adequate directives for workplaces and public places. These are based on measures that will resonate with the reader: wearing of face covers; thermal scanning; frequent sanitisation; adequate distancing.

About the latter, I avoided the adjective “social” because I believe that it would be more appropriate to talk about physical dis-



tancing: sociality will be very much alive, just a little bit different than before.

### Financial backing

The resumption of industrial activities happens in a framework where financial support to businesses and citizens has already been launched both at the national and the European Union (EU) level. In terms of national financial resources, the Italian government has already provided guarantees up to €500 billion to make sure that Italian businesses can have access to the necessary liquidity. It has also adopted measures to support families and small and medium enterprises through grants, loans, debt rescheduling and other forms of financial support. Furthermore, the Italian government was the first one to sign a protocol with trade unions for health safety at the workplace. The EU is also doing its part and has reached an agreement on three important sa-

fety nets for workers, businesses and sovereigns, amounting to a package worth €540 billion. The establishment of a recovery fund has also been agreed upon.

The lockdown adopted by the Italian government is paying out. The numbers related to COVID-19 in Italy still deserve our utmost attention and we will not lower our guard until this threat to public health is removed. And, of course, in case of a resurgence of the contagion, we stand ready to introduce restrictive measures again to counter it effectively.

### Points of convergence

Maybe it is early to draw any lesson from this crisis, but it is already possible to say that the future that we will shape in the post-COVID-19 scenario will have very much to do with our ability to bring public goods and global commons at the centre of the political narrative and agenda. In this mindset, Italy and India will have an extraordinary chance to closely cooperate in the next months, since they will be holding the consecutive Presidencies (Italy in 2021 and India in 2022) of the G20, one of the world’s main fora for global governance. This will prove a unique opportunity to shape the international discourse around priorities that both countries hold dear: from taking advantage of our economic complementarity to

strengthening our partnership based on shared values, on our thriving creating industries, scientific knowledge and technological prowess; from the development of a rules-based international system to the promotion of just trade, inclusive growth and the realisation of the 2030 Agenda. In this endeavour we will support an effective multilateral system, which would be the best political accelerator to win our battle against the novel coronavirus and to promote a sustainable, equitable and durable recovery. In this process we will not lose sight of the fight against climate change, since Italy will co-host the 26th session of the Conference of the Parties, COP26, in 2021, together with the United Kingdom, and India is one of the world’s major responsible stakeholders.

In a nutshell, at both bilateral and multilateral levels, our dialogue will be based on the main tenets of innovation and sustainability. Innovation because this crisis has transformed the urge to develop new ideas, methods, processes and devices into the “new normal”; sustainability because, paraphrasing a popular saying: “we did not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrowed it from our children”.

*Vincenzo de Luca is the Ambassador of Italy to India*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or initials.

### Name of the game

The COVID-19 pandemic has devastated large parts of the world and India is no exception. The corporate sector has borne the brunt of the lockdown as machines have ground to a halt and production has come to a standstill. The exodus of migrant labour is certain to leave its strong impact on several industries, notably the construction sector, as these workers have been contributing a great deal to the working of this sector over the years. It is a shame now that States, which have not cared to erase the perception that they have always been hand in glove with large industrialists, are now investing their time, in a shameful way, in devising ways and means to scuttle the rights of the labour force by suspending the operation of labour laws, and thereby depriving workers of their legitimate

rights. Extended working hours are in the offing and managements would be free to hire and fire workers, who in turn would not be able to take recourse to the law as the law itself would stand suspended. A grave assault on labour rights is on the anvil and it is the corporate sector that stands to benefit. The constitutionality of these moves is questionable. The total mishandling of the migrant labour issue by States and the Centre is an indication that there is all-round discrimination against the working class in the country. This is a disturbing trend as the rights of the labour class are enshrined in the Constitution; their abrogation would only usher in a situation where the working community would turn into putty at the hands of managements who in turn would be aided and abetted by State

governments. The Opposition parties should raise their voice. Workers’ unions too should not be caught napping. *C.V. ARAVIND, Bangalore*

### Still unsure

At the end of nearly two months, one would think that there would be some clear direction. However, the nation does not look confident at this crucial time. Actually, it looks uncertain and confused about what to do. A lack of unity of purpose is evident. There have been a number of arbitrary decisions, one of which is to run 15 pairs of long distance trains. What is the logic behind such a move in a crisis? It would be a difficult task for States to track and trace the number of passengers and their whereabouts. Without any public transport, how will the passengers move out or even reach railway

stations? The government’s failure to come out with a package for migrant labourers has only exacerbated their miseries. The mission “Vande Bharat”, aimed at bringing back Indians stranded overseas, is odd. How can it be even called a mission when an airfare is being charged? The government must take a broader view of the situation and show proper understanding of the challenges. *VENU G.S., Kalluvathukal, Kollam, Kerala*

■ There is every reason for there to be much confusion. It is clear that the way forward will be in the form of relaxation of some rules. But, simultaneously, we are also alive to the danger of rising numbers of active COVID-19 cases, which only calls for more stringent implementation of a lockdown and more testing to be carried out. With some

rail services being permitted, there is bound to be a spurt in active cases. Migrant workers are also reaching their home towns after undergoing much trauma. It is a pity and a shame that they have not been guaranteed dignity and basic rights. No nation can afford to alienate such a big and productive section of its population. Now, the manufacturing section says it can gear up production and supply only after the return of the migrant workers. There is indeed much chaos. *A.G. RAJMOHAN, Anantapur, Andhra Pradesh*

**A chemical concoction**  
The heading of a report, “Ayurvedic pharmacist dies after drinking concoction” (Chennai May 9, 2020), gives the impression that the pharmacist drank an Ayurvedic “concoction” made to treat COVID-19. The fact is that he drank a combination of nitric oxide

and sodium nitrate, which are not Ayurvedic ingredients. The report implicitly discredits Ayurveda. Ayurvedic texts deal with epidemics, fevers and contagious diseases at great length. This ancient knowledge should be made use of to find a way of tackling this pandemic. Incidentally, China seems to have brought the epidemic under control in Wuhan by bringing in, among other things, a couple of thousand doctors of Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCM) – it is similar to Ayurveda – to work along with allopathic doctors. However, we in India continue to view Ayurveda with scepticism. We ought to be using all our medical resources, from various schools of medicine, to end this epidemic. *PREETHA KANNAN, Mumbai*



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# Riding roughshod over State governments

Guidelines issued by the Centre to the States under the Disaster Management Act are unconstitutional



PRASHANT BHUSHAN & SHYAM AGARWAL

The Central government has so far followed a mostly top-down approach in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic. During lockdowns 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0, the Centre has issued guidelines from time to time, ostensibly under the Disaster Management Act of 2005, containing varying restrictions on public activity and commerce which the States are expected to enforce. The Centre directs the State governments to scrupulously enforce every new set of guidelines, with the States only being allowed to increase and not dilute the restrictions.

This centralised approach is counterproductive, has put the federal structure of India under strain, and is in fact beyond the powers of the Central government. Two examples show why this is counterproductive. One, the Central government, in its latest guidelines, has classified all districts in the country as red, orange or green zones in a bid to lift lockdown restrictions in an area-specific manner. Some States/Union Territories objected to the classification of certain areas/districts as red zones on the ground that these areas are very large. They pointed out that there was no need to keep economic activity on hold in an entire district when cases had been reported only from a small portion of that district. Two, Kerala, probably the best-performing State in terms of its response to COVID-19, was sent a missive by the Central government to refrain from relaxing restrictions in the State. The Kerala government had issued revised guidelines in mid-April following a near-perfect recovery rate and a steep fall in the number of cases. However, the Central government did not trust the wisdom and judgment of the State government in the matter.

This centralised approach, apart from leading to undesirable outcomes, may not be strictly legal. A study of the Disaster Management Act, 2005 as well as relevant provisions of the Constitution makes it clear that this practice of issuing guidelines and directions to the States is itself unconstitutional.



"The Centre directs the State governments to scrupulously enforce every new set of guidelines, with the States only being allowed to increase and not dilute the restrictions." Andhra Pradesh CM Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy participating in a video conference with PM Narendra Modi on the COVID-19 situation. ■ PTI

been enacted by Parliament in exercise of its residuary powers of legislation under Article 248 read with Entry 97 of List I.

The question is, can the Act be applied at all for dealing with a pandemic. The Disaster Management Act allows the Centre to issue guidelines, directions or orders to the States for mitigating the effects of any disaster. The definition of 'disaster' under the Act is quite broad and, literally speaking, would include a pandemic too. Such a reading of the Act would vest the Central government with powers to issue directions and guidelines to State governments for dealing with the pandemic in their States, which is what the Centre has been doing. However, 'public health and sanitation' is a specific field of legislation under Entry 6 of List II. This would imply that States have the exclusive right to legislate and act on matters concerning public health. Thus, the Centre's guidelines and directions to the States for dealing with the pandemic trench upon a field of legislation and executive action that is exclusively assigned to the States – public health.

The Supreme Court has held time and again that federalism is a basic feature of the Constitution and although the Union enjoys many more powers than States, the States are sovereign. The Disaster Management Act, having been enacted by Parliament under its residuary powers of legislation, cannot be applied to pandemics in view of the fact that the power to legislate on public health is vested specifically and exclusively with the States.

At this juncture, an important ca-

veat must be pointed out. Under Entry 29 of List III, both Parliament and State legislatures are competent to legislate on matters involving inter-State spread of contagious or infectious diseases. Therefore, theoretically speaking, Parliament would be competent to pass a law that allows the Central government to issue directions to the States to prevent inter-State spread of a disease like COVID-19. That law is not the Disaster Management Act which is concerned with disasters in general, and not pandemics in particular. 'Prevention of inter-State spread of contagious and infectious diseases' being a specific legislative head provided in List III, the same must be deemed to have been excluded from Parliament's residuary legislative powers. Therefore, the Disaster Management Act, which has been enacted under Parliament's residuary legislative powers, cannot be applied to the prevention of inter-State spread of contagious and infectious diseases.

## Applying another law

In fact, a law on this exists – the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, which has the objective of preventing "...the spread of dangerous epidemic diseases." However, under this Act, it is the State governments which have the prerogative to take appropriate measures for arresting the outbreak or spread of a contagious or infectious disease in their respective States. The Central government's powers are limited to taking measures for inspecting and detaining persons travelling out of or into the country. Even if that Act were to be amended, it would not empower the Central government to issue directions to the States to contain the pandemic within the State; it can only deal with inter-State spread of the disease. Therefore, instead of resorting to the Epidemic Diseases Act which gives powers to the States, the Centre has applied the Disaster Management Act, which has enabled it to ride roughshod over State governments. This is plainly unconstitutional. The States are not legally bound to observe the directions/guidelines being issued by the Central government and would be well within their rights to challenge them before the apex court.

Prashant Bhushan and Shyam Agarwal are advocates practising in the Supreme Court

# COVID-19 and the path ahead

India needs to blend acute disaster management strategies with longer-term public health measures

K. KUMARAN, G.V. KRISHNAVENI, KUMAR G.S., & GIRIRAJ CHANDAK

early on in the outbreak and has not seen the surge that could potentially have been expected for a population of 1.3 billion people.

## Easing of lockdown

If the epidemic does spread with generalised community transmission, the healthcare, social and economic implications will be significant. The lockdown in India has played a role in preventing an exponential surge in cases. However, a measured public health approach is critical in controlling this epidemic. Current approaches are largely urban-centric with little focus on rural dynamics. A decentralised approach is required to manage the large rural population, and the success in Kerala may serve as a useful model. Governments may consider mobilising and training a range of healthcare providers (including providers of primary care, and traditional healthcare systems) in responding to this situation. Crucially, the current practice of isolating all cases in hospital settings is not sustainable if cases increase.

As it would be impractical to test everyone with symptoms, a case definition based on symptoms and local epidemiological context may be used to diagnose suspected COVID-19 cases. Those with mild symptoms (and their household contacts) should be advised to stay at home. If cases cannot be managed at home, community centres may be deployed for isolation. This approach will ensure that hospitals are available to those who really need them. The lifting of the lockdown needs to be undertaken in a phased manner. One approach would be to ensure that the vulnerable (such as the elderly and the immuno-compromised) are protected beyond initial lockdown periods, while restrictions are lifted for the majority of the healthy population. The disease has generally been mild among most people affected in the subcontinent, and it is possible that herd immunity may develop through gradual exposure among healthy individuals. While lockdown measures are lifted in a controlled manner, government public health agencies need to continue to promote hygiene measures. Physical distancing will need to be continued. Public health messages need to be locally tailored and consistent. They require not only awareness, but also resources as these are largely middle-class concepts and not easy to practice in crowded areas where there is no running water. In conclusion, the approach to the management of COVID-19 needs to blend acute disaster management strategies with longer-term public health measures including economic measures.

K. Kumaran, G.V. Krishnaveni, Kumar G.S. are public health epidemiologists and Giriraj R. Chandak is a physician scientist

# Reaffirm cooperative federalism

Responding effectively to the pandemic requires the Centre to view the States as equals

PRANAV VERMA & SUGHOSH JOSHI

Many exigencies have tested the foundations of our federal democracy, but none as harshly as this pandemic. And when India's success in defeating COVID-19 actively rests upon Centre-State collaboration, it is indeed its commitment to federalism that is under the most strain.

Federalism, K.C. Wheare notes, traditionally signifies the independence of the Union and State governments of a country, in their own spheres. However, there was nothing traditional about the circumstances in which India's Constituent Assembly met. Accordingly, even when its members carefully studied the Constitutions of other great federations like the U.S., Canada, Australia and Switzerland, they adopted 'pick and choose' policy to formulate a system suited uniquely to the Republic's need. As a result, India's Constituent Assembly became the first-ever constituent body in the world to embrace what A.H. Birch and others have referred to as 'cooperative federalism' – essentially defined by administrative cooperation between the Centre and the States, and a partial dependence of the States upon payments from the Centre. Accordingly, Indian constitutional law expert Granville Austin remarks that despite a strong Centre, cooperative federalism doesn't necessarily result in weaker States; rather, the progress of the Republic rests upon active cooperation between the two.

## Fissures in cooperation

Nevertheless, some recent developments have revealed fissures in Centre-State cooperation. For instance, the zone classifications into 'red' and 'orange' has evoked sharp criticisms from several States. The States have demanded more autonomy in making such classifications. This is despite the fact that State consultation is a legislative mandate cast upon the Centre under the Disaster Management Act of 2005 (under which binding COVID-19 guidelines are being issued by the Centre to the States). The Act envisages the creation of a 'National Plan' under Section 11, as well as issuance of binding guidelines by the Centre to States un-

der Section 6(2), in furtherance of the 'National Plan'. The 'National Plan' is a broader vision document while the binding guidelines are its enforcement mechanism. Now, Section 11(2) of the Act mandates State consultations before formulating a 'National Plan', and to that extent, when the binding guidelines are ultimately issued under it, they are expected to represent the views of the States. However, the Centre has not formulated the 'National Plan', and has chosen instead to respond to COVID-19 through ad hoc binding guidelines issued to States, thereby circumventing the legislative mandate of State consultations. In fact, the Home Ministry order ushering in lockdown 3.0 prohibited States from lowering the Centre's classifications. This selective application of the Act serves to concentrate all decision-making powers with the Centre.

## Lack of funds

The Centre has also declared that corporations donating to PM-CARES can avail CSR exemptions, but those donating towards any Chief Minister's Relief Fund cannot. This directly disincentivises donations to any Chief Minister's Relief Fund; diverts crores in potential State revenues to PM-CARES; and makes the States largely dependent upon the Centre. Further, the revenue streams of several States have dried up because of the liquor sale ban; negligible sale of petrol/diesel; no land dealings and registration of agreements. States' GST collections have also been severely affected with dues still not disbursed by the Centre. All this has made it difficult for States to defray expenses of salaries, pensions and welfare schemes. As it is the States which act as first responders to the pandemic, supplying them with adequate funds becomes a pre-requisite in effectively tackling the crisis. This requires the Centre to view the States as equals, and strengthen their capabilities, instead of increasing their dependence upon itself.

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## DATA POINT

### Massive job losses

#### INCREASE IN HUNGER

% of households which reported having consumed less food during the lockdown than prior to it

Rural 70  
Urban 80

#### ESSENTIALS ARE ELUSIVE

% of households without money to buy even a week's worth of essentials

Rural 34  
Urban 61

#### DEBT RISES

% of respondents who took a loan to cover personal expenses

Rural 34  
Urban 43

#### FALL IN EARNINGS

% avg. fall in earnings for self-employed non-agricultural workers compared to February

-92 Rural  
-86 Urban

#### FALL IN INCOME

% average fall in earnings for casual workers during the lockdown compared to February

-50 Rural  
-46 Urban

#### FALL IN WAGES

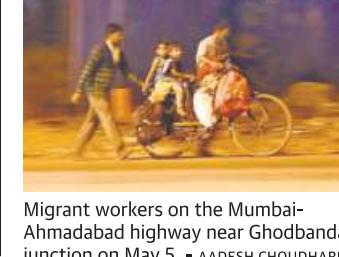
% of wage workers whose salaries were reduced or who did not receive their salaries during the lockdown

Rural 43  
Urban 57

#### JOB LOSS IN RURAL AREAS

% who were working in February but were not working during the lockdown

Self-employed 47  
Casual 66  
Regular salaried 62



Migrant workers on the Mumbai-Ahmedabad highway near Ghodbunder Junction on May 5. ■ AADESH CHOUHARI

#### MARKET MAYHEM

% of farmers who were not able to harvest or sell their produce, or sold it at reduced prices

Rural 88  
Urban 91

#### JOB LOSS IN URBAN AREAS

% who were working in February but were not working during the lockdown

Self-employed 84  
Casual 81  
Regular salaried 76

#### JOB LOSS IN RURAL AREAS

% who were working in February but were not working during the lockdown

Self-employed 47  
Casual 66  
Regular salaried 62

\*The results are based on a phone survey of 4,000 workers across 12 States. The data were collected between April 13, 2020 and May 9, 2020. The respondents were selected through a sampling method to ensure diversity in location and type of work done. The sample is not representative of the States or the country.

The Hindu

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 13, 1970

### Co-operation in the North-East

The Bill to set up a council for the north-eastern region of India, adopted by the Lok Sabha on Monday [May 11], promises to open a new chapter in the development of that key part of the country. This area has so far been marked by differences between the tribal peoples and the plain-dwellers, and States like Nagaland and Meghalaya have had to be formed out of what was once Assamese territory. The objective behind the regional council is to bring about a co-ordinated approach to the security and development of Assam, Meghalaya, Manipur and Tripura. To begin with, the council will consist of representatives of these four units and the Tribal Areas Adviser to the Assam Governor. It is hoped Nagaland, which is now keeping out, will also join the council later. The success of this experiment will naturally depend upon how far the participating members are able to pull together in solving regional problems. The available funds will have to be used to the best effect and development plans formulated on a regional rather than on a parochial basis.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 13, 1920

Colour Prejudice.  
(From second editorial)

In spite of all the pious wishes and innocent dreams of great idealists to make the world safe for Democracy and establish a universal Federation of Nations on the basis of self-determination and full equality, the hard realities obtained in the various countries of the world seem rather to accelerate racial animosities and widen the gulf between the white and the coloured inhabitants of the globe. The open refusal of racial equality to Japan in the League of Nations, the attempted effacement of the Ottoman power, the virtual subjugation of Egypt, Syria and Persia under the guise of protectorates, mandates and friendly treaties and the actual political domination of India, Africa and America as the result of exploitation, conquest and colonisation – all these monumental facts of history, past and present, must open the eyes of every thinking man to the enormous importance of the racial problem and the constant necessity of warning the statesmen of all countries against any careless or short-sighted handling of the Imperial and international questions of racial significance.

## FROM PAGE ONE

## PM Modi announces economic package

"In the past few days we have seen how local supply chains and shops are the only things that have helped," he said.

The Prime Minister said the economic package would not be based on incremental changes, but a quantum leap in bold reforms with regard to land, labour, law and liquidity.

"In the last few days we have seen the suffering of our workers, migrant labour, street vendors and daily wagers and farmers. This package will be aimed at them. It will be aimed at the honest tax payer, at our industry that makes its capital work," he said.

Sources said the reforms will keep away from "trickle down" effects and will be bold in scope. "The emphasis will be as much on governance systems as on liberalising the economy. Self reliance in this case will not mean isolation. There is no talk of only a financial sti-

mulus but of a reform stimulus and a mindset overhaul," said a senior government source.

Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman is expected to give details of the package starting on Wednesday, Mr Modi said. "Therefore, the lockdown that will be in place after May 17, or Lockdown 4.0 will be of a different kind than what went on before. Based on the suggestions given by State governments, we will be finalising its shape before May 17," he said.

Prime Minister Modi signed off on a strong note to buy local, and to be vocal about it. "Local production helped us in this crisis, and when you look at several global brands, they began as local but were marketed and raised to a global level. We have to do the same with our produce. We need to be vocal about local," he said. "We must and will make India self-reliant," he said.

## App mandatory for returning NRIs, migrants

Working with the Health Ministry, National Centre for Disease Control, State health departments and key stakeholders, the ICMR survey is being coordinated by its National Institute of Epidemiology (NIE) and National Institute of Research in Tuberculosis (NIRT) in Chennai.

"This household level cross-sectional survey will cover 24,000 adults across four strata of districts on the basis of reported cases of COVID-19. Overall, the survey will be conducted in randomly selected 69 districts from 21 States," an ICMR release said.

It added that the survey will involve collection of ve-

nous blood samples from 400 randomly selected individuals (one per household) from 10 clusters in each district.

"Sera from these individuals will be tested for presence of IgG antibodies using ELISA test developed by ICMR-National Institute of Virology (NIV), Pune. The results of the survey will provide information about spread of SARS-CoV-2 infection in different parts of the country. Besides this community-based survey, Health Ministry is also initiating hospital-based surveillance to monitor the trend of infection in all districts," it added.

It added that the survey will involve collection of ve-

## India caught in U.S.-China spat over WHO

India is likely to hold the post for the next three years. The timing of the appointment is crucial, given the worldwide debate on the role of the WHO during the pandemic, and criticism of WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

The meeting was attended by the foreign ministers of Australia, Brazil, India, Israel, Japan, and the Republic of Korea. Significantly, all invitees other than India are major non-NATO allies of the United States, who would be expected to support Washington's call.

Secretary Pompeo and his counterparts discussed the importance of international cooperation, transparency, and accountability in

combating the COVID-19 pandemic and in addressing its causes," said U.S. State Department spokesperson Morgan Ortagus, in a veiled reference to China and the virus' origins in Wuhan.

"They also discussed collaboration toward preventing future global health crises, reaffirming the importance of the rules-based international order," Ms. Ortagus added.

The MEA declined to comment on whether Taiwan was discussed during the meeting, or whether India has decided on supporting the U.S. on its move to include Taiwan as a WHA participant. A senior official said the meeting had discussed "strengthening and reforming" the WHO.

## Industrial output shrank 16.7% in March

"I have been looking at IIP data from April 1982 onward, and this is the biggest ever contraction since then. It is no surprise, as all industrial activity was halted for one week, apart from State-level lockdowns which began earlier," said D.K. Pant, chief economist of India Ratings and Research, part of the Fitch group.

"April is going to be much worse. I would project a 60-70% decline," said Pronab Sen, eminent economist and former Chief Statistician of India. "Frankly, I don't think most industries will see any recovery. FMCG sector may begin some recovery in May, but the rest of the industry is going to continue in the doldrums."

All categories of manufacturing industries showed a contraction in production in March, with the worst af-

fected being the automobile sector, which saw a 50% decline, and the computer and electronic products sector, which fell almost 42%. The manufacture of machinery, electrical equipment and other metal products saw a 31.33% fall in output.

"Auto sector has been in negative territory for a while now. This goes beyond the India lockdown," said Dr. Sen, noting that supply of both electronic components and auto parts were affected by the earlier shutdown in Wuhan, China.

The most resilient sectors were coke and refined petroleum products, which only contracted 1.8%, and food and beverages manufacture, which shrank 10.5% and 6.4% respectively. "For a lot of MSMEs, they may have already lost the plot," said Dr. Sen.

## No air space violation at Pangong Tso

No ongoing face-off or build up of armed troops at the lake, says Army spokesperson

DINAKAR PERI  
NEW DELHI

"There was no border violation on either side. IAF SU-30MKI fighters were airborne in Ladakh on routine flying and were not scrambled in response to the helicopters," IAF sources said.

## Locally resolved

Stating that incidents of face-off and aggressive behaviour occur on the Line of Actual Control (LAC), Col. Anand said patrols disengaged after local-level interaction and dialogue.

"Temporary and short-duration face-offs occur as boundary is not resolved.



Pangong Tso lake

Troops resolve such incidents mutually as per established protocols," he said in response to reports of an ongoing stand-off at the site.

There were two incidents

of face-off between Indian and Chinese troops last week which resulted in injuries to several soldiers on both sides.

The first incident occurred on May 5 near Pangong Tso in eastern Ladakh while the second face-off occurred on May 9 at Naku La in Sikkim.

Army sources stated that the face-off at Pangong Tso occurred on the intervening night of May 5 as patrol teams came across each other and was resolved by the morning of May 6. Pangong Tso has seen such several in-

cidents in the past including in 2017 and in 2019.

As per existing agreements between India and China, operation of fighter aircraft and armed helicopters is restricted to a distance from the LAC.

According to the Agreement on Maintenance of Peace and Tranquillity along the LAC in India-China Border Area of 1996, "combat aircraft (to include fighter, bomber, reconnaissance, military trainer, armed helicopter and other armed aircraft) shall not fly within 10 km of the LAC."

## Manmohan discharged from AIIMS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh was on Tuesday discharged from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), where he was admitted around 8.45 p.m. on Sunday following complaints of uneasiness and chest pain.

Dr. Singh reportedly developed a febrile reaction to a new medication.

"He is stable and responded well to the care provided," said a senior AIIMS official.

## CITU to push for safety gear for workers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) said on Tuesday that it would observe Thursday as a "day of demands" for safety gear, frequent tests and insurance for the frontline workers fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a statement, it said that the condition of frontline workers was worrisome.

"As the COVID-19 cases in the country are increasing, the cases of the frontline workers getting infected and succumbing to the disease are also increasing. This is mainly due to the lack of safety gears," it said.

Doctors, nurses and paramedical workers at hospitals, as well as field workers and police personnel, were at the risk of infection, it said.

"In most of the States, workers are not entitled to the much-publicised ₹50-lakh insurance package, and it does not cover treatment expenses," it added.

'Disappointed by PM's lack of empathy'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Moments after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a financial package along with the extension of the lockdown in a new form, Congress leaders on Tuesday reacted cautiously, preferring to wait for the fine print of the package.

While Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said the nation was "deeply disappointed by the Prime Minister's lack of empathy and failure to address the issues of migrants," senior party leader Anand Sharma welcomed it.

"Welcoming PM's announcement of an economic package of ₹20 lac crore and will wait for the details. This will help in reviving the economy and reassuring for the micro, small and medium enterprises in urgent need of financial support for workers' wages. Hope the poor, migrant workers who have lost livelihood and in-

comes, and have suffered the most, will get relief," Mr. Sharma said on Twitter.

He said the Mr. Modi's announcement gave the media a headline but the party would respond only when the "blank page is filled with Heartfelt Help of People."

"Dear PM, The mammoth heart breaking human tragedy of migrant workers walking back home needed compassion, care & safe return. India is deeply disappointed by your utter lack of empathy, sensitivity & failure to address the woes of millions of #MigrantWorkers!" Mr. Surjewala tweeted.

Randeep Surjewala

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"We have completed 49 days of this lockdown. When it was first announced, the number of positive COVID-19 cases were 566; today it stands at 70,756. The number of deaths was 10 and today its 2,295. We could have done a lot better if we had done more testing, if we had provided adequate protection to our doctors," he added.

## Lockdown achieved little, says Yechury

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

CPI (M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury said that in 49 days of the lockdown, which ends on May 17, the government has achieved very little, since it failed to ramp up testing and supply of personal protection kits for the medical staff.

The government, he said, has been inhuman towards the migrant workers who were left with little option but to trudge to their homes in the face of hunger.

He said the Mr. Chowdhury's views were irrelevant, as the party valued the 'strategic partnership' between the two countries. "The Indian National Congress recognises and values the special strategic partnership between India and China. As two ancient civilisations and large economies of the world both countries are destined to make a significant contribution in the 21st Century," he tweeted.

Mr. Chowdhury had urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to accord diplomatic recognition to Taiwan without any delay after it had donated one million masks during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In his now deleted tweet, the Mr. Chowdhury had also commented on the border skirmish between Indian and Chinese troops. "Be careful China, Indian forces will respond only when the 'blank page is filled with Heartfelt Help of People."

"Dear PM, The mammoth heart breaking human tragedy of migrant workers walking back home needed compassion, care & safe return. India is deeply disappointed by your utter lack of empathy, sensitivity & failure to address the woes of millions of #MigrantWorkers!" Mr. Surjewala tweeted.

The Parliament Building in New Delhi. ■ V.V. KRISHNAN

Do numbers matter in Rajya Sabha ?

Partnership between Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha has been guided by cooperation, despite their divergent composition

M. VENKAIAH NAIDU

law-making in the country since 1952 may be in order.

Elections to the Lok Sabha are held every five years and before that on dissolution of the House. For the Rajya Sabha, one-third of the members are chosen every second year reflecting its permanent nature. While the Lok Sabha elections hold a mirror to the recent will of the people, the Rajya Sabha is envisaged to convey the same in different phases of development marking some continuity. The Executive lasts only as long as it has a majority in the Lok Sabha, but in law-making, both the Houses are at par. Given the possible variations in the composition of both the Houses on account of different modes of election to them, did it impact the nature and speed of legislation?

On the other hand, the Rajya Sabha has some special powers as requiring to adopt a resolution allowing Parliament to legislate on subjects in the State List and creating All India Services, besides approving proclamations of Emergency and President's Rule when the Lok Sabha is dissolved.

Renowned British philosopher and political economist John Stuart Mill as early as in 1861 said in his great treatise *Considerations on Representative Government* that management of free institutions requires conciliation, readiness to compromise; a willingness to concede something to opponents and mutual give and take.

The Bryce Conference on Reform of House of Lords in early 20th Century observed that a second chamber is to interpose only so much delay in the passing of a Bill into law as may be needed to enable the opinion of the nation to be adequately expressed upon it. Famous constitutionalist Abbe Sieyes pithily noted that if a second chamber dissents from the first, it is mischievous; if it agrees, it is superfluous.

**Unlike Lok Sabha**

An analysis undertaken by the Rajya Sabha Secretariat recently revealed that during the past 68 years since the first general elections in 1952, the government of the day had a majority in the Rajya Sabha only for 29 years and was in a minority for 39 years, including an unbroken stretch for the past 31 years.

This pronounced divergence in numbers in the two Houses of Parliament does not indicate any adverse impact on the broader course of legislation except in a few cases. Since 1952, the Rajya Sabha held 5,472 sittings and passed as many as 3,857 Bills till the Budget Session this year. There are, however, a few discordant notes during this long journey of legislation. But there is no case for terming Rajya Sabha as "obstructionist".

So far, Parliament held only three joint sittings to resolve differences between both the Houses. The first instance was in 1961 when the then Nehru government en-

joyed a majority in the Rajya Sabha but the Dowry Prohibition Bill, 1959 suffered a defeat. In 1978, the Banking Services Commission (Repeal) Bill, 1977 was rejected by the Rajya Sabha and in 2002, the Prevention of Terrorism Bill, 2002 could not pass the Rajya Sabha scrutiny.

The Rajya Sabha was taunted as regressive when it rejected the Constitution (Twenty-fourth Amendment) Bill, 1970 for abolishing privy purses to erstwhile rulers after it was passed by the Lok Sabha. In 1989, the Constitution (Sixty-fourth and Sixty-fifth Amendment) Bills seeking to empower local governments fell short of the required special majority in the Rajya Sabha, though the government had the numbers.

The required spirit of cordiality between the two Houses suffered a dent on some occasions. First when Rajya Sabha members were not included in the Public Accounts Committee in 1952. Again, when the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill, 1953, was introduced in the Rajya Sabha, some members questioned its certification as a Money Bill by the Lok Sabha Speaker. When the controversy was thickening, Prime Minister Nehru intervened, asserting that "For those who are interested in the success of the great experiment in nation building

we have embarked upon, it is a paramount duty to bring about this close cooperation and respect for each other (House)."

Rajya Sabha members objected to when the Lok Sabha Speaker referred the Major Port Trust Bill, 1963 to its Select Committee without involving Rajya Sabha members and this Bill was later referred to its own Select Committee again.

Continuing with some reservations voiced in the Constituent Assembly about having a second chamber, some members of the Lok Sabha moved resolutions as early as in 1954 and again later in 1971, 1972 and 1975 for the

## COMMENT

dissolution of the Rajya Sabha. But wise counsel prevailed and such efforts were thwarted.

As per the constitutional provisions, the Rajya Sabha at best could hold a Money Bill for 14 days during when it had to return such Bills without or with amendments for the consideration of the Lok Sabha. There were some occasions when such amendments of the Rajya Sabha were accepted by the other House as in cases of the Travancore Cochin Appropriation (Vote on Account) Bill, 1956, The Union Duty of Excise (Distribution) Bill and the Estate Duty and Taxes on Railway Passenger Fares (Distribution) Bill, 1957 and the Income Tax Bill, 1961.

During these years, the government of the day enjoyed a majority in the Rajya Sabha. At the same time, there were instances when amendments proposed by the Lok Sabha were rejected by the other House. The Rajya Sabha on legislation since 1978 remained the same at about 29%, a concern emerges in respect of the 'Oversight' function of the House. Legislatures ensure accountability of the executive through Questions, Calling Attention Notices etc. Time share of this important Oversight function of the Council of States in the total functional time of the House

was 39.50%. This fell to 21.99% during 2005-14 and to 12.34% since 2015.

This decline is primarily on account of disruptions forcing cancellation of Question Hour frequently. Disruptions also dent the quality of law-making as seen in passing of Bills without discussion sometimes.

However, the Rajya Sabha is proving to be more and more a 'deliberative' body with increasingly more time being spent on this function.

The time share on deliberations under instruments like Short Duration Discussions, Zero Hour, Special Mentions, Discussion on Budgets

# Passenger services resumed partially

Eight trains to run from New Delhi, Mumbai, Kolkata, Ahmedabad, Patna and Bengaluru

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Almost 50 days after stopping passenger trains, the Railways on Tuesday partially resumed services with eight trains operating to and from New Delhi, ferrying over 10,000 passengers.

"Indian Railways begins restoration of passenger train services with eight trains today [Tuesday]. Starting in a graded manner, these trains would run from New Delhi, Mumbai, Howrah, Ahmedabad, Patna and Bengaluru," a Railway spokesperson said.

The first to run was the New Delhi-Bilaspur train that left the national capital at 4 p.m. with a booking of 1,177 passengers. The other two trains to leave from Delhi were the New Delhi-Dibrugarh special train with booking for about 1,122 passengers that departed at 4.45



**Back on track:** Passengers sitting inside a train at the New Delhi railway station following the resumption of partial train services on Tuesday. ■ PTI

p.m., and the 9.15 p.m. New Delhi-Bengaluru train with 1,162 bookings.

"The three special trains ... from New Delhi with more than 3,400 passengers... Additionally, five special trains

will depart from other cities towards New Delhi. These special train services will be in addition to the Shramik Specials," the spokesperson said.

Giving details, the Indian

Railways said a total of 741 PNRs were generated for 1,177 passengers travelling in the New Delhi-Bilaspur train, 442 PNRs for passengers travelling in New Delhi-Dibrugarh special train and 804

PNRs for passengers travelling in New Delhi-Bengaluru special train.

Till Tuesday evening, 90,331 tickets for 1,69,039 passengers were booked across the 15 pairs of special trains, meaning 30 trains travelling to and fro, the Railways said.

The Railways said since May 1, it had run 575 Shramik Special trains till 4 p.m. on May 12, in which 463 trains had reached destination and 112 were in transit. "More than 6.8 lakh people have travelled," it said.

Entry gate

The Northern Railways said in a statement that entry to the New Delhi railway station would be allowed only from the Paharganj side for all confirmed ticket holders and no entry for passengers would be permitted from the Ajmeri Gate side.

# Aarogya Setu mandatory for travel, says Railways

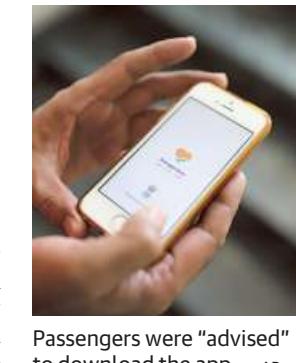
So far, about 9.8 crore people have downloaded the app

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Railways on Tuesday said it was mandatory for those travelling via the 15 special trains to download the government's Aarogya Setu mobile application.

The announcement, made through a tweet after May 11 midnight, comes even as the guidelines issued by the Railways on Monday said that all passengers were "advised" to download and use the app.



Passengers were "advised" to download the app. ■ AP

quested to download the Aarogya Setu app on their mobiles," it said.

So far, about 9.8 crore people have downloaded the app, which saw a controversy over privacy and data security issues. The contact tracing application is supposed to alert users in case they come in close contact with a person infected with COVID-19.

The Railways on Sunday announced plans to start 15 pairs of special trains from May 12 onwards. They will run from New Delhi, connecting Dibrugarh, Agartala, Howrah, Patna, Bilaspur, Ranchi, Bhubaneswar, Secunderabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Thiruvananthapuram, Madgaon, Mumbai Central, Ahmedabad and Jammu Tawi.

# Second phase of Vande Bharat Mission to begin on May 16

Evacuation operation to include 149 flights, say sources

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Vande Bharat Mission will continue to focus on evacuating stranded Indians from the Gulf countries while including new regions like Central Asia and East Europe during the second week beginning from May 16. Informed sources said the operation would include 149 flights and feeder flights to help people reach home in different parts of India.



Indians evacuated from Singapore boarding a bus in Mumbai on Sunday.

the Gulf region, Eurasian region and North America would be covered in this phase.

One flight would evacuate Indians from Lagos in western Africa.

The neighbourhood, especially Bangladesh and Nepal, will also get a share of

flights. While several hundred Indian students and professionals were evacuated by non-scheduled commercial flights in the first week from Bangladesh, at least 157 students from Kashmir remain in Dhaka. These students from the Community Based Medical College and the Kumudini Women's College are expected to be airlifted in a special flight to Srinagar during this phase.

Already evacuated

The United States, the U.K., Russia, Japan are some of the major countries that have already evacuated their citizens from India during the lockdown period.

The second phase will have several flights to these countries to evacuate Indians who remain there.

# Govt. prepares draft protocol on flight travel

Measures shared with airlines on May 9

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Passengers may have to prepare themselves to sit shoulder-to-shoulder aboard planes once the government allows flights to resume. However, airports will have to draw symbols on floors, check-in counters and chairs on their premises to ensure social distancing, and passengers will have to report earlier to avoid crowding, according to a draft protocol prepared by the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

Air travellers have to mandatorily download the Aarogya Setu app, and carry only one baggage that will have to be checked in. In the beginning, passengers can only check in online and will have to report two hours before departure.

Those above the age of 80 will be barred from taking a

flight. These are some of the measures included in the draft protocol, which was shared with airlines on May 9.

Outlets for food and beverages at airports may be allowed to remain open. The protocol also lays down that airlines must ensure crew pairing, that is, the same set of pilots and cabin crew work in a team, to avoid cross contamination.

Three rows vacant

While there is no provision for leaving the middle seat empty, airlines will have to leave the last three rows vacant for isolation of those passengers who develop a medical condition.

If this is implemented, the government would be going back on its earlier advisory to airlines, which required them to leave the middle seat empty.

# Call to set up common data portal for migrant travel

SWAN flags glaring lacunae in Home Ministry's orders

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Despite the provision of special trains and buses, a second wave of migrant workers has now begun walking home again. This is because of glaring lacunae in the Union Home Ministry's orders, leading to confusion on registration procedures, arbitrary travel protocols and a black market in Shramik Special tickets, says an analysis by the Stranded Workers Action Network (SWAN), a volunteer group.

On Tuesday, SWAN wrote to Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla, recommending that the Ministry set up a common data portal for migrants to register their travel requests.

"It will also take data from existing State-specific mobile apps. The portal in turn interfaces with all stakeholders involved in planning their journey, including medical staff, police, district authorities of States and the Railways," says the letter.



Going home: Migrant workers walking to their home State of Chhattisgarh from Bhubaneswar. ■ BISWARANJAN ROUT

keholders involved in planning their journey, including medical staff, police, district authorities of States and the Railways," says the letter.

It added that registration of workers on the portal must be unconditional, based only on the workers' choice to return home. The onus for issuing passes should lie with the State from which the migrant is travelling, it said. The network identified problems with the current system, including conflicts in the four orders dealing with inter-State travel issued by the Ministry since April 29. "In the absence of information on the number of trains, a black market has developed," said the letter.

# Maharashtra tally crosses 24,000

State records 1,026 fresh cases; toll reaches 921

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Maharashtra recorded 1,026 new cases on Tuesday, pushing its COVID-19 tally to 24,427. The State also recorded 53 deaths, a highest jump in a single day, pushing the death toll to 921. The same number of deaths were recorded on April 10 as well.

Of the 53 deaths, the highest number of 28 was recorded in Mumbai, followed by six in Panvel, two in Thane, six in Pune, five in Jalgaon, three in Solapur and one each in Raigad, Aurangabad and Akola.

State Health officials said that 29 patients who succumbed were men and 24 were women. Of these, 35 had several co-morbid conditions like diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, etc.

The overall Mumbai Metropolitan Region has emerged as



the most concerning zone, with a majority of cases and deaths reported from here.

While Mumbai remains a hotspot within the MMR region, Thane has recorded 1,144 cases and 14 deaths so far.

Navi Mumbai had recorded 955 cases and four deaths, the Kalyan Dombivali region has recorded 384 cases and three

deaths, while Mira Bhayandar has recorded 243 cases and two deaths. Nearly 18,000 cases have been recorded from the MMR, with the highest number of 14,947 cases reported from Mumbai. The region has recorded over 600 deaths, the highest number of 556 deaths being from Mumbai alone.

On Tuesday, 339 patients were discharged after recovery and, till date, nearly 5,125 patients have been discharged.

Online OPD

On Tuesday, the State also launched an online OPD service called e-Sanjeevani for patients who want to seek medical advice online.

The joint venture between the Centre and the State will offer free consultations between 9.30 a.m. to 1.30 p.m. from Monday to Saturday.

Migrants waiting to board trains at the Borivali station in Mumbai. ■ AADESH CHOURHARI

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Migrants waiting to board trains at the Borivali station in Mumbai. ■ AADESH CHOURHARI

Highest number of 81 cases seen in Indore

STAFF REPORTER

BHOPAL

Madhya Pradesh on Tuesday registered 201 new COVID-19 cases, taking the count to 3,986, the Directorate of Health Services has said.

Indore, the worst-hit city, recorded the highest number of cases at 81, followed by Bhopal (30) and Ujjain (27). The count of active cases stood at 1,901, according to a bulletin issued by the Directorate.

Meanwhile, four deaths owing to the illness were reported during the day. The State-wide death toll has climbed to 225.

Two deaths were reported from Indore and one each from Bhopal and Burhanpur. So far, 92 persons have died in Indore. The fatality rate in the



Migrant workers aboard a truck in Bhopal on Tuesday. ■ PTI

State stands at 5.7%.

As for recoveries, 113 patients were discharged from hospitals during the day after recovering from the illness. So far, 1,860 persons have recovered in the State.

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU  
WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT  
LOWER CAUVERY BASIN CIRCLE, THANJAVUR - 613001.  
TENDER DATE EXTENSION NOTICE

The last date for the receipt of tenders for the works as called for by the Superintending Engineer, Water Resources Department, Lower Cauvery Basin Circle, Thanjavur in NIT No.2/2020-2021/LCBC, Thanjavur/dt.27.04.2020 is hereby extended from 13.05.2020 to 21.05.2020 at 3.00 p.m. and will be opened on the same date (i.e)21.05.2020 at 3.30 p.m.

Tender schedule is available for sale upto 5.45 p.m. on 20.05.2020 and the last date for the receipt of the application for the tender schedule is 20.05.2020.

Any corrections or modification and Tender Extension date will be published on website only.

**SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, WRD,  
LOWER CAUVERY BASIN CIRCLE, THANJAVUR**

**The Odisha State Co-operative Milk Producers' Federation Limited**  
**omfed**  
D-2, Sahidnagar, Bhubaneswar - 751007  
Ph. No. : 0674-2546030, 2540273, 2540274,  
Fax No: 0674-2540974, Email ID : omfed@yahoo.com

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**Managing Director**  
OIPR-06063/11/0002/2021

**Ref.498/CSN/NPDD/SL**  
**TENDER NOTICE**  
Dt.11.05.2020

OMFED invites sealed Tender for (01) Supply & Testing of Adulteration Kit (02) Supply & Trial run of Sodium-Potassium Analyzer & (03) Supply & Testing of Melamine Testing Strips.

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**Dy.General Manager (CSS)**  
OIPR-06063/11/0003/2021

**E-TENDER NOTICE**  
Registered Tenders on behalf of Additional Director General of Police, Technical Services HQ, UP Police, Lucknow were invited through e-tender notice for the Equipment / Services shown below:-

S. N.	District	Work Con-tract Name	COST	Earnest Money (INR)	Tender Fees (INR) 18% GST	Work Com-pletion Time
1	Lucknow	13 Re-sources for CCTNS	Rs. 3,20,00,000.00 (Rupees Three Crore Twenty Lakh Only)	Rs. 3,20,500.00 (Rupees Three Lakh Twenty Thousand Five Hundred Only)	Rs. 25,00,000.00 + Rs. 4500 (18% GST)= 29,500 (Rupees Nine Thousand Five Hundred Only)	According to Conditions

Bid Documents are available on the website <https://etender.up.nic.in> from 14-05-



# India may miss nutrition targets

Global Nutrition Report says it has highest rates of inequalities in malnutrition

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

India is among 88 countries that are likely to miss global nutrition targets by 2025, according to the Global Nutrition Report 2020 released on Tuesday. It also identified the country as one with the highest rates of domestic inequalities in malnutrition.

In 2012, the World Health Assembly identified six nutrition targets for maternal, infant and young child nutrition to be met by 2025. These require governments to reduce stunting by 40% in children under five and prevalence of anaemia by 50% among women in the age group of 19-49, ensure 30% reduction in low-birth weight and no increase in childhood overweight, increase the rate of exclusive breastfeeding in the first six months up to at least 50% and reduce and maintain childhood wasting to less than 5%.

According to the Global Nutrition Report 2020, India



**State of imbalance:** India is among the three worst countries for steep within-country disparities in stunting.

will miss targets for all four nutritional indicators for which there is data available – stunting among under-five children, anaemia among women of reproductive age, childhood overweight and exclusive breastfeeding.

**Underweight children**

Between 2000 and 2016, underweight rates have decreased from 66.0% to 58.1% for boys and 54.2% to 50.1% in girls. However, this is still high compared with the average of 35.6% for boys and

31.8% for girls in Asia.

In addition, 37.9% of children under five are stunted and 20.8% are wasted, compared with the Asia average of 22.7% and 9.4% respectively.

One in two women of reproductive age is anaemic, while at the same time the rate of overweight and obesity continues to rise, affecting almost a fifth of the adults, at 21.6% of women and 17.8% of men.

India is identified as

among the three worst coun-

tries, along with Nigeria and Indonesia, for steep within-country disparities on stunting, where the levels varied four-fold across communities.

**Stunting level**

Stunting level in Uttar Pradesh is over 40% and the rate among individuals in the lowest income group is more than double those in the highest income group at 22.0% and 50.7%, respectively. In addition, stunting prevalence is 10.1% higher in rural areas compared with urban areas.

The same applies for overweight and obesity, where there are nearly double as many obese adult females than there are males (5.1% compared to 2.7%).

Coming at a time the world is battling COVID-19, which has exposed different forms of socio-economic inequities, the authors have called for promoting equity to address malnutrition.

THE HINDU

# OPPORTUNITIES

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT • JOBS • TECHNOLOGY

## Priority for “layoff” resumes

Online job portals prioritise resumes of those who have been rendered out-of-work by the COVID-19 crisis

LIFFY THOMAS

‘Layoff’ is a term professionals would not want in their resumes. However, those who have lost their job due to COVID-19 crisis or those who fear losing it, have a strong reason to mention this fact prominently in their resume.

Here is why: A number of job portals have started prioritising resumes of job seekers who have been laid-off due to the present crisis.

Naukri’s microsite Step-Up ([www.naukri.com/step-up-job-opportunities-during-coronavirus-covid-19](http://www.naukri.com/step-up-job-opportunities-during-coronavirus-covid-19)), is prioritising access to resumes of those recently “laid-off and immediately available to join”.

“All registered customers can confidentially share the

platform launched recently by CHROs from Accenture, Lincoln Financial Group, ServiceNow and Verizon, bring together companies laying off or furloughing people with those companies that need to recruit people urgently. There is no cost for employers to join and participate in this cross-industry platform. The analytics-driven platform pools non-confidential and aggregated workforce information through categories based on location and experience.

Scikey, a talent commerce platform, has a section on its website where employers can list the details of their employees that they have laid off.

“All registered customers can confidentially share the

resumes of the impacted employees on SCIKEY. After logging in, look for ‘Outplace Candidates’ option on the dashboard menu. SCIKEY algorithms will position the matching candidates as its first choice for any new job opening, increasing their chances for any kind of hiring opportunity,” reads a note on the website.

Monster.com has an option on its home page asking visitors if there job is under threat due to COVID-19.

Binoy John Koshy, a recruitment manager with a Fortune 500 company, says “As long as they are not fired on disciplinary grounds or unethical acts, employees who have been laid-off will be seen as an active talent pool.” Koshy says an important search word that makes these laid-off employees employable is they are ready to join.

“All these years it was an

employees market and a candidate could choose from a range of job options as well as keep the recruiter waiting for at least a few months. Now, it’s an employers’ market,” says Koshy.

**In-demand jobs**

Most of these portals have special features to highlight jobs in sectors like healthcare, pharma, edutech, retail and telecom.

LinkedIn is helping job seekers find open roles by promoting them on its ‘Jobs page’. Doctors and nurses roles are automatically added to a list of ‘urgent’ jobs, which are surfaced to LinkedIn members with skills that qualify for these roles. The company is also offering free job posts for frontline roles till June 30.

Similarly, Naukri is offering a free service to recruiters in industries like healthcare, pharma and telecom.

## New work terms to live by

The COVID-19 crisis is enriching the office lingo

PRINCE FREDERICK

**‘Vpn’ goes mainstream**

When the lockdown happened, VPN got mainstream. In companies not entirely dependent on cloud platforms, VPN access to office resources and applications were being handed out to its employees, with an intensity paralleling relief packets being distributed to marooned flood-hit populations. Earlier, VPN access would be given as selectively as prescription drugs.

“Corporate firms that need to ensure confidentiality of customer data and security of information are encouraging the use of VPN among its employees. As a full fledged digital agency, we find it easy to work as all our customer data is on the cloud and current technologies offer extremely high levels of data security. Hence we have not felt the need for VPN. For large corporates, it makes sense for them to use as they need to comply with safety guidelines,” says Kiruba Shankar, social media entrepreneur on sudden rise of ‘vping’ among office-speak lingo.

In the last few weeks, “vping” is much-heard, and so are the names of tech-support guys who have to provide VPN access. Suddenly, they have become the lifeline to engagement and productivity. Their numbers got reserved with the status-enhancing prefix ICE - In Case of Emergency.

**‘Client crisis’ gets new meaning**

“Client Crisis” is a regular terminology, and companies are now reporting that due to the paralysis afflicting businesses on account of the COVID-19 situation, it is now assuming a more painful connotation. Sorav Jain, CEO of echoVME, a digital marketing company, explains, “Now, in our company WhatsApp Group, when one of the client managers keys in ‘client crisis’, everyone else will be all attention, focussed on finding out more, as ‘client crisis’ now signals more than just a regular process-oriented problem, easily solvable. It now means a client dropping out, as they don’t have the cash flow to continue an exercise.”

**‘Forecussed’, now in focus**

Work-from-home is now being happening in exceptional circumstances, in terms of

scale and setting. The entire family is parked at home, and that is a recipe for confusion, nay chaos. During a video chat with a work associate via an application parked on a computer, it is extremely possible that one will be treated to a pageant of domestic scenes in the background. So, these times call for being “forecussed”, which is about connecting with the colleague in the foreground, and filtering out what goes on in the background. People will have to get accustomed to the idea that there will be bawling in the background, or other disturbances, says Srikrishna Sridhar Murthy, co-founder and CEO, Sattva Consulting.

GENERAL



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## IAF ‘traces’ kin of 1968 crash victim

Warrant officer was among 102 personnel on plane that went missing in Himachal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI

The Indian Air Force (IAF) has reportedly traced the family of one of its Junior Commissioned Officers who died in a plane crash in Himachal Pradesh 52 years ago.

Warrant Officer S. Bhattacharjee was among 102 armed forces personnel in the IAF’s ill-fated AN-12 aircraft that went missing over Rohtang Pass in Himachal Pradesh on February 7, 1968.

The disappearance of the aircraft remained a mystery until 2003 when members of the Himalayan Mountaineering Institute found a body, identified as that of sepoy Beli Ram.



**Lost and found:** A file photo of a search for the remains of the soldiers in the Dhaka glacier in Himachal Pradesh. •PTI

5,240 m in Himachal Pradesh two years ago.

“Some IAF officials paid a visit on May 7 and said tracing the family was their basic job. They said they would get back but we haven’t had any official communication. We don’t know if the body is in Delhi or anywhere else. How can we believe without seeing the body?” Ms. Bareh, 55, said from her residence in Jowai town, about 75 km from State capital Shillong.

But she said her mother, the late R.T. Bareh, would of-

ten tell her and her two brothers about their father and how he was captured and imprisoned by enemy forces. At the time of the crash, she was three years old and Warrant Officer Bhattacharjee in his forties.

**Delay explained**

Officials at the Eastern Air Command near Shillong declined to speak on the development. But a member of

an association of ex-service-

men in the northeast said Meghalaya’s matrilineal sys-

tem – children take the sur-

name of the mother – could

have led to the delay in finding Warrant Officer Bhattacharjee’s survivors.

The AN-12 BL-534 in which the Warrant Officer and 101 others perished was on a flight from Chandigarh to Leh in Ladakh but had to turn back after experiencing bad weather. It lost contact over Rohtang Pass.

There were several attempts to search for the debris of the aircraft after a team of mountaineers found the body of Beli Ram in 2003. An Army expedition recovered three more bodies in August 2007.

Warrant Officer Bhattacharjee’s body and some parts of the aircraft were recovered in July 2018.

An expedition by the Dogra Scouts under the Western Air Command, joined later by an IAF team, in July-August 2019 discovered more bodies trapped in the snow and major portions of the aircraft.

GENERAL

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Phone 0471 2529400, [www.rgcb.res.in](http://www.rgcb.res.in)

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May 12, 2020

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- TECHNICAL ASSISTANT GROUP II
- UPPER DIVISION CLERK
- MULTI TASKING STAFF

The Director, RGCB reserves the right not to fill any or all positions advertised. Incomplete applications or applications without copies of certificates or applications received after the last date will be rejected. Applications in prescribed format along with attested copies of all necessary certificates may be submitted by post to the DIRECTOR, RAJIV GANDHI CENTRE FOR BIOTECHNOLOGY, POOJAPPURA, THYCAUD P.O., THIRUVANANTHAPURAM 695014 or by e-mail to:

[jobs2020@rgcb.res.in](mailto:jobs2020@rgcb.res.in) on or before June 12, 2020.

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The 2 Series Gran Coupé, BMW's smallest four-door coupé, arrives in India this year



SHAPUR KOTWAL

The 2 Series Gran Coupé is BMW's smallest four-door coupé and is set to be its most affordable 'sedan' on sale in India when it arrives later this year. Compared to its sedan siblings, the 2 Series Gran Coupé has one big fundamental difference – it features a transverse engine, front-wheel-drive layout, as against the typical longitudinal engine, rear-drive arrangement. This architecture is more affordable, space efficient and practical, but is not as fundamentally nice when it comes to driving dynamics. So, what is the 'sedan' like?

The 2 Series Gran Coupé looks like a *pucca* BMW on the outside, replete with the latest interpretation of the kidney grille (not oversized as on the 7 and X7), flanked by raked-back headlight units with neat double-barrel LED detailing. Lower down is an aggressive multi-layered chin, similar to that on other recent BMWs like the 8 Series. The flowing roofline and fastback-like rear give the Gran Coupé a similar profile to some of BMW's GT cars, but not as proportionate or clean-looking. The 2 Series also gets a strong shoulder line, a chunky rear, and a variation of the carmaker's L-shaped LED tail-lights. There is no real Hofmeister kink at the base of the C-pillar, but then this is not a rear-wheel-drive BMW, and that could explain its absence. While some of the cars ride on large 19-inch wheels, in India, the 2 Series is likely to get smaller (and more practical) 17-inch wheels.

Get into the cabin and you soon realise that this is no bottom-feeder – it feels just as nicely put together as other BMWs. The cabin is slightly narrower and a bit tighter than the 3's, but the driving position is spot-on and seat comfort is exceptional. The largish front seats offer generous side support, the cushioning is just right, and the best bit is that once you are nestled in, it just holds you in place.

What betters the experience is that everything is of very high quality. The top-grain leather-wrapped steering, with its aluminium frame and thick rim feels great to hold, and the sintered aluminium paddles behind the wheel feel



# Good things in a small package



nice to use. BMW's digital instrument panel is also tack-sharp, the iDrive touchscreen is bright and slick to use, and since the air-con vents and buttons that surround it are shared with the new 3 Series, quality levels are very good.

Moving to the rear seats, space and comfort are pretty decent. The seat's backrest angle is comfy and there is sufficient head- and legroom even for six-footers – you will make contact with the roof if you are any taller. Visibility out is good too with the rear bench placed slightly higher than the front seats. Thigh support isn't great, however, and you cannot sit three abreast in comfort.

The 190hp diesel engine, the same unit under the bonnet of the 320d, has a fair amount of grunt. It is refined at low and medium speeds and what is nice is that the midrange feels muscular when you flex your right foot; it has a

strong 400Nm of torque, after all. There is less of a spike in the power delivery due to the Euro 6 tuning, and combustion is smoother, but since this diesel is still happy to rev, pulling it past 4,500rpm is very productive. It is quick too – 0-100kph comes up in a claimed 7.5sec, and there is no let-up in performance subsequently either. So, there is plenty of performance on tap. BMW has even specified it with an improved version of its 8-speed gearbox that is smooth and quick. So yes, if it is a diesel you want, this engine is unlikely to disappoint.

Even the ride is impressive. Now you would think that because this car is compact and BMW wants to make it fun to drive, the suspension will be stiff and the ride hard. This, however, is not the case. The ride quality is actually very pliant. The suspension is extremely silent (even over poorly paved roads), the springs absorb road shocks without tossing you around, and then the damping is superb;



## BMW 220D GRAN COUPÉ SPECIFICATIONS

**PRICE:** ₹32-38 lakh (estimated)

**LENGTH/WIDTH/HEIGHT:** 4526/1800/1420mm

**WHEELBASE:** 2670mm

**ENGINE:** 4 cyl, 1995cc, twin-turbo diesel

**POWER:** 190hp at 4000rpm

**TORQUE:** 400Nm at 1750-2500rpm

**GEARBOX:** 8-speed automatic

there is no real discernible secondary movement as the suspension settles very quickly after every hit.

It is no 3 Series when you get to corners, though. But then, how can it be? No front-wheel-drive car can ultimately drive like a rear-wheel drive. Still, as long as you do not drive it like you are on a rally stage, the 2 Series manages a fair imitation. The steering offers a good amount of heft and feel at low and medium speeds without it feeling heavy and then when the roads open out, it feels nice and connected. There is no early onset of understeer – a limiting factor on all front-wheel-drive cars – and BMW must be commended for that.

Drive harder, however, and you soon miss that rear-wheel-drive fluidity and balance. Go hard on the brakes before a corner and it seems to affect turn-in, with the

2 Series taking its own sweet time to do your bidding; and that numbs the experience. And then as you begin to add power on the way

out of the corner, there is a bit of a shuffe too, as the torque overwhelms the front wheels. So, if it is not the ultimate driving experience you are after, the 2 Series Gran Coupé works well.

The 2 Series Gran Coupé is expected to come to India with two engine options. The 220d driven here will be one of them, but then we will also get the 220i with a 192hp, 2.0-litre petrol engine. Prices in India are likely to start around ₹32 lakh, going up to ₹38 lakh for the top-of-the-line variants.

The 2 Series Gran Coupé works well on many levels. If you have always wanted a BMW sedan but could not stretch your budget as far up as the 3 Series, the 2 Series is sure to have tremendous appeal. The high-quality cabin delivers a genuine BMW experience, the performance of the diesel engine is strong, the ride is extremely comfortable, and it is pleasant to drive too. Even the zingy petrol with 192hp should be bags of fun. Yes, the cabin is a bit cramped, like it is in the rest of the cars in this class, and not everybody will fall for its looks, but if you are looking for a more accessible and affordable BMW sedan that does most things right, the 2 Series Gran Coupé could just be it. Just do not expect it to drive like a 3 Series.

## 2) Hero Pleasure Plus: ₹54,800 onwards

Just last year, one of Hero's most popular scooters got a much-needed overhaul after 14 years. The update was quite thorough and included everything, from its design to its mechanicals. The upgrades required to meet BS-VI norms have not brought any output changes – it continues to produce 8.1hp and 8.7Nm of torque. The Hero Pleasure Plus is the most affordable 110cc scooter in India.



## 1) TVS Scooty Pep Plus: ₹51,754 onwards

Despite a price hike of around ₹6,500, the TVS Scooty Pep Plus continues to be the most affordable scooter in India. The lightweight offering is targeted at beginners and its power figures reflect that. Its tiny 87.8cc, fuel-injected engine makes 5.4hp and 6.5Nm of torque. Fun fact – this is now the smallest fuel-injected engine in the entire personal two-wheeler industry. The Scooty Pep Plus is also the lightest in this list, with a kerb weight of just 93kg.



# Top 5 pocket-friendly scooter picks

We bring you a list of the most affordable BS-VI scooters in India

FIROZE IRANI

Two-wheeler companies in India began making the transition to BS-VI as early as late last year. We now have multiple offerings from most big names that meet the now-mandatory stringent emission norms. However, the changes required to meet these norms – like fuel-injection and electronically controlled carburetors – have brought about significant price hikes.

As a result, some of the most affordable scooters in India are no longer as cost-efficient as they used to be. Further, customers now have a smaller range to choose from, as many companies have discontinued unpopular models to save on the investment required to make the BS-VI switch.

Here are the five most affordable BS-VI scooters that are available in India, as of April-end 2020:

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Two-wheeler companies in India began making the transition to BS-VI as early as late last year. We now have multiple offerings from most big names that meet the now-mandatory stringent emission norms. However, the changes required to meet these norms – like fuel-injection and electronically controlled carburetors – have brought about significant price hikes.

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All a-bloom The garden boasts nearly 30,000 flower pots in its special flower show gallery alone ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



# Greetings in full bloom

The Ooty Botanical Garden will have some very special visitors for the next fortnight, as it welcomes those who have been in the frontlines of the COVID-19 battle

PANKAJA SRINIVASAN

There are thousands of blooms, fluttering and dancing in the breeze at the Botanical Garden, but none to see it, thanks to the lockdown.

Shiva Subramanian Samraj, Joint Director, Horticulture had recently lamented at all the hard work his team had put in to get the Garden ready in time for the season, but in vain. However, he is overjoyed now as the garden will see some worthy footfall, after all. "We had made so many arrangements to welcome tourists and the lockdown happened. It was a bitter disappointment to us all. But not any more, as we can show off the blooms after all!"

On Sunday, the Collector of the Nilgi-

ris, Innocent Divya and Shiva decided to throw open the garden for a deserving audience. "As a mark of respect and gratitude to the Corona Warriors of the Nilgiris, we have invited them to visit

**ONE OF A KIND**  
The Dubai Miracle Garden, considered among the world's largest natural flower gardens, stands on desert land. The 72,000-square-metre garden boasts a display of 60 million flowers.



the garden when it is at its peak," says Shiva.

"Fifty nurses visited the Botanical Garden yesterday. It was wonderful to see how much they enjoyed themselves amongst the flowers after a harrowing month they have had as care-givers. The Collector and I welcomed them with roses and dahlias. There are nearly 30,000 flower pots displayed at the special flower show gallery, all of them in glorious bloom," says the clearly elated Shiva.

"Our guests for the next 10 to 15 days will be none other than the nurses, doctors, sanitary and Municipal workers, the staff of the Revenue Department

and the police," he explains. The guest list has been staggered over the next fortnight in order to maintain physical distancing protocols. For the first week or 10 days, people from the Medical Department will be visiting.

Shiva reiterates that it made all the effort of the past few months worth everything, as he could think of no one better deserving than the frontline workers of the COVID-19 crisis to be the first guests to be allowed into the garden. According to him, on one of their first visits, the nurses made full use of the day out in the sun and sang and danced to music from their mobile phones!



words." Once the Foundation posts it on their Facebook and Instagram pages, participants need to promote themselves and try to get as many as likes as possible.

Three judges – Joy Nag (Havell brand managers), transwoman and activist Shane, and Vinita Saini (Reliance Trends, Jalandhar) give points based on their appearance, story and the likes from social media.

Participant Sushanta Abhishek, a fashion student from Ranchi in Jharkhand, posted a picture and wrote on in-

**In vogue** Kishore Patel wore a sari on jeans and a kurta ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

clusive gender-neutral love or unconventional love.

Kishore Patel, a student from Karimnagar, broke the taboo around male dressing and wore a dupatta on jeans and kurti. Anil says "In his post, he wrote how men dressed only in a certain way are considered male. Kishore observed how elegant women look in a sari and men in traditional attire. He combined both and wore a sari on jeans; he believes fashion is gender-neutral and that anyone can wear anything."

Short-listed participants from the first round will go on to the second and third rounds. The Foundation had also organised an online Pride Art Showcase recently.

(For more information check Mobbera's Facebook/Instagram page)

## PEANUTS



## POOCH CAFE



## HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



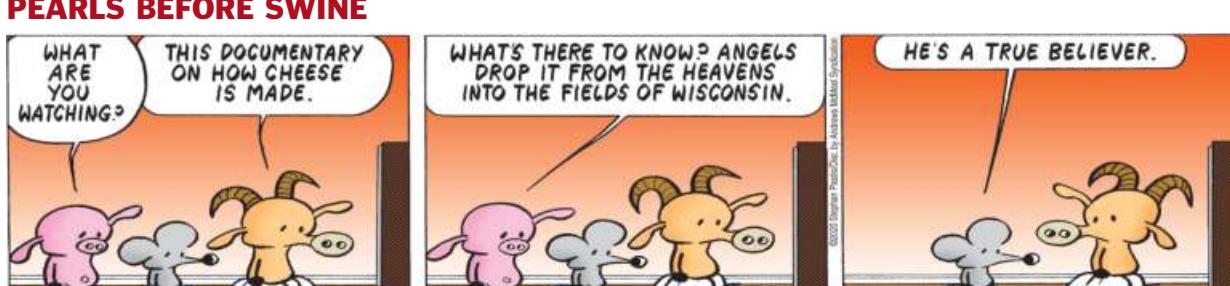
## CALVIN AND HOBBES



## TIGER



## PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



# Maths, science and imagination

Visual artist Avinash Kumar and music composer Murthovic discuss the facets of the Bharatanatyam dance opera with a story on mathematical genius Srinivasa Ramanujan



Saying it with dance  
Bharatanatyam exponent Jayalakshmi Eshwar; (below) Avinash Kumar ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

SANGEETHA DEVI DUNDOO

Antariksha Sanchar, a Bharatanatyam dance opera accompanied by multimedia, premiered at Royal Opera House in Mumbai in 2018. The performance was then staged in Delhi and Bengaluru; if not for the COVID-19 lockdown, plans were on to stage the show in Chennai and Hyderabad this year. For now, two of the key players behind this production – Goa-based visual artist Avinash Kumar and music composer Murthovic from Hyderabad – are happy to release two music albums based on the dance opera, in which Carnatic classical meets electronic music. A graphic novel, a video game (Antariksha Sanchar: Transmissions in Space) and an AR/VR (augmented reality and virtual reality) experience of the dance opera are in the works.

Antariksha Sanchar is a confluence of three creative spheres – Avinash's visual art aesthetics, Murthovic and his team's music, and Bharatanatyam dancer Jayalakshmi Eshwar's classical-contemporary ballet. It is a speculative adventure story set in the 1900s. It explores mathematical genius Srinivasa Ramanujan's dreams of wanting to travel from his home in Madurai to other planets in the solar system.

The idea came up in 2010, says Avinash. "My mother (dancer Jayalakshmi Eshwar) had this idea of a Bharatanatyam opera that can narrate stories from Indian mythology and science. We worked on it as an audio-visual collective in my studio. I also thought of a transmedia video game based on the idea," he says.

The development took time, as Avinash and his mother were involved in their respective work commitments. In 2012, a grant from British Council helped Avinash design a video

game prototype. Then, Red Bull came on board and gave the project a larger canvas to play with, culminating in the première at Royal Opera House, Mumbai.

Sri Rama Murthy aka Murthovic says: "Avinash did the sketches and animation. His mother Jayalakshmi was open to incorporating dance elements outside of the strict classical regimen. And I had grown up listening to Carnatic classical music but had been working on electronic music for the last two decades. I auditioned and formed a band of eight musicians who could jam together on Carnatic and electronic music," says Murthovic.

## Southern sound

A team of 60-plus worked to bring the ballet to stage. The visual and aural references stemmed from many sources, including travels to the neighbourhoods of Madurai, the Meenakshi temple, the gopurams of temples in Kanchi, and Chettinad houses.

Two months ago, a prototype of a graphic novel based on Antariksha Sanchar was launched at a design fest in Mexico. Simultaneously the team was also working on music albums recorded on vinyl in Berlin. "Due to the COVID-19 situation, the vinyls are stuck in Berlin. We decided to go ahead and release the albums digitally," says Murthovic.

Talking about the road ahead for Antariksha Sanchar, Avinash hopes that they will be able to stage a new and improvised show in different cities in 2021 and also unveil the video game and the graphic novel.

"We are also working on podcasts, to tell people what went into the project," says Avinash, signing off.

(Check [antariksha.in](http://antariksha.in) and [redbull.in](http://redbull.in) for details. The music albums are on [bandcamp.com](http://bandcamp.com) and will also be available on Spotify, Gaana and other music aggregators by May 29)

# Wuhan to test entire population after new virus cluster emerges

Officials are charting out a plan to test 11 million people within a 10-day timeframe

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
WUHAN

Wuhan plans to conduct COVID-19 tests on the Chinese city's entire population after new cases emerged for the first time in weeks in the cradle of the global pandemic, state media reported on Tuesday.

Officials have been ordered to submit plans to administer nucleic acid tests on all residents in the city of 11 million people, according to an official notice carried by news outlets.

"Each district should make plans and arrange-



**Unsung heroes:** Nurses reciting an oath during a ceremony marking International Nurses Day at Tongji Hospital in Wuhan on Tuesday. ■ AFP

## Russia climbs to second spot in number of cases

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
MOSCOW

ments to conduct nucleic acid tests on the entire population in its jurisdiction within a 10-day time limit," the notice said, although it was unclear when testing would begin.

The plan come after Wuhan reported the first cluster of new COVID-19 infections since the city re-opened after a 76-day lockdown on April 8.

Six new cases were reported on Sunday and Monday from a residential compound in Dongxihu District.

But an official from the Dongxihu District epidemic prevention and control commanding office told AFP that they have "not yet received news about this notice".

### 'Not necessary'

Wu Zunyou, chief epidemiologist at the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention, told state broadcaster CCTV it was "not necessary" for every person in Wuhan to be tested.

### ELSEWHERE



**Laos to press ahead with 'destructive' Mekong dam**  
BANGKOK  
Laos is pressing ahead with plans for another "destructive dam" on the Mekong River. Two dams – the Xayaburi and Don Sahong – have been built in Laos, which wants to construct seven more as it strives to live up to its billing as the "Battery of Asia". ■ AFP

### Hong Kong risks unrest with new Bill

HONG KONG  
Hong Kong's government risks reigniting last year's unrest by pushing ahead with a controversial Bill outlawing insults to China's national anthem, opposition lawmakers said. Hong Kong's leader Carrie Lam on Tuesday said the Bill would be "given priority". ■ AFP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
BEIJING

Russia has the world's second-highest number of COVID-19 cases after reporting another 10,899 new cases on Tuesday, according to an AFP tally.

The new cases brought Russia's total to 2,32,243, surpassing the number of infections in Britain and Spain and now behind only the U.S., which has reported more than 1.3

million of them.

Russia has been reporting more than 10,000 new cases per day for over a week.

Meanwhile, a fire at a hospital in Saint Petersburg on Tuesday killed five COVID-19 patients who had been attached to ventilators.

President Vladimir Putin's spokesman Dmitry Peskov has also tested positive for coronavirus.

"Neighbourhoods without any cases don't need to screen every person," Mr. Wu said.

China has largely brought the virus under control, but it has been on edge about be-

ing hit by a second wave as it has lifted lockdowns and restrictions across the country.

Virus clusters have ap-

peared recent weeks in the northeastern provinces of Jilin and Heilongjiang, which

border Russia.

With the virus taking hold in other nations, China has barred most foreigners from entering the country. Wuhan has reported 3,869 deaths since the outbreak began.

group operates in Nangahar and has carried out a number of high-profile attacks in Kabul in recent months. On Monday, security forces arrested its regional leader in the capital.

In Kabul, the attack began in the morning when at least three gunmen wearing pol-

ice uniforms entered the Dasht-e-Barchi hospital, throwing grenades and opening fire, government officials said. Fifteen people were wounded in the attack, according to the Ministry of Interior. Security forces killed the attackers by the afternoon.

There was no immediate claim of responsibility for either attack. The Taliban denied involvement in both.

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## MARKET WATCH

	PRICE	CHANGE
Sensex	31,371	-0.60
US Dollar	75.51	0.29
Brent oil	29.87	-2.96

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	291.50	+1.80
Asian Paints	1523.35	-46.25
Axia Bank	386.85	+7.30
Bajaj Auto	2628.85	+62.55
Bajaj Finserv	4668.20	+110.20
Bajaj Finance	2069.70	+54.65
Bharti Airtel	559.85	+23.65
BPCL	312.50	-2.30
Britannia Ind	3107.30	+53.35
Cipla	570.15	+15.90
Coal India	126.85	-1.60
Dr Reddy's Lab	3773.40	+88.60
Eicher Motors	14167.05	+121.90
GAIL (India)	88.70	-3.35
Grasim Ind	517.95	+13.50
HCL Tech	527.40	-0.15
HDFC	1674.10	+15.65
HDFC Bank	901.55	-14.25
Hero MotoCorp	2114.30	+25.65
Hindalco	121.10	+1.35
Hind Unilever	2011.55	+36.45
ICICI Bank	321.20	+1.05
IndusInd Bank	446.20	+12.80
Bharti Infratel	189.60	+6.00
Infosys	687.65	+4.75
Indian Oil Corp	74.90	-0.45
ITC	165.05	+6.60
JSW Steel	178.20	+3.65
Kotak Bank	1157.20	+31.25
L&T	814.80	+6.80
M&M	393.05	+2.95
Maruti Suzuki	4951.30	+13.50
Nestle India Ltd.	17461.95	+100.15
NTPC	91.65	+5.00
ONGC	76.30	-0.75
PowerGrid Corp	163.30	+4.50
Reliance Ind	1479.25	-97.55
State Bank	166.90	+1.45
Shree Cement	19127.20	+212.30
Sun Pharma	463.90	+0.05
Tata Motors	86.20	+0.10
Tata Steel	273.95	+2.25
TCS	1949.50	+14.20
Tech Mahindra	533.25	+3.05
Titan	846.45	+16.85
UltraTech Cement	3349.35	+11.40
UPL	374.55	+6.45
Vedanta	89.05	+9.45
Wipro	187.05	+2.35
Zee Entertainment	155.05	+0.35

## EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on May 12

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	75.30	75.62
Euro	81.55	81.93
British Pound	92.98	93.39
Japanese Yen (100)	70.07	70.40
Chinese Yuan	10.63	10.67
Swiss Franc	77.52	77.89
Singapore Dollar	53.18	53.42
Canadian Dollar	53.83	54.06
Malaysian Ringgit	17.38	17.47
Australian Dollar	49.04	49.25

Source: Indian Bank

# Indices yo-yo as banking stocks wilt

Amid lockdown extension concerns, rise in virus cases, foreign investors net sell ₹1,662 crore shares

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

Indian benchmarks saw a highly volatile session with an underlying weakness on Tuesday with the Sensex moving in a range of almost 700 points as banking and financial stocks came under selling pressure amidst an overall weak global trend.

The 30-share Sensex, that opened lower by over 200 points, dropped further to touch 30,844.66, a fall of almost 720 points compared with Monday's close. It managed to recoup most of the losses to close at 31,371.12, down 190.10 points, or 0.60%. The losses in the Sensex were led by Reliance Industries, Asian Paints, HDFC Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank and Hindustan Unilever, among others. Earlier in the day all the banking consti-



tents were deep in the red. "The index traded with a negative bias till noon as the banking and financial stocks corrected. However, in the latter half, the banking space recouped intraday losses and hence, Nifty, too, recovered from lows to end the day a tad below the 9,200 mark," said Ruchit Jain, Equity Technical Analyst, Angel

Broking. The broader Nifty ended Tuesday at 9,196.55, shedding 42.65 points, or 0.46%. Investor sentiments remained subdued due to an overall weak trend in Asian markets as fresh concerns emerged over the economic impact of COVID-19. The concerns were mainly due to indications that the nation-

wide lockdown may be extended even as some areas may see ease in restrictions. A fresh wave of cases in some countries also weighed in on investor sentiments.

"Global sentiments were weakened on growing worries about a second wave of COVID-19 infections after Wuhan again reported new cases since its lockdown was lifted. Even renewed trade tensions between U.S.-China added to the woes," said Siddhartha Khemka, head, retail research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services, adding the market was cautious also on account of the Prime Minister's address.

Incidentally, the PM announced a stimulus package of ₹20 lakh crore, the details of which would be announced by the Finance Minister in the coming days.

"The package comes as a shot in the arm and we could see a strong opening today and any crossover of 9,500 levels would witness a broader positive move," said Vikas Jain, senior research analyst, Reliance Securities, while highlighting the fact that the package amount was almost 10% of India's gross domestic product (GDP).

Back on the bourses, the market breadth was extremely weak with over 1,400 stocks in the red on BSE against 870 that advanced. Foreign portfolio investors continued to offload Indian shares with Tuesday's net selling pegged at ₹1,662 crore.

Elsewhere in Asia, the benchmarks of Hong Kong, South Korea, Taiwan, Indonesia, China and Singapore ended in the red on Tuesday.



Favipiravir has been approved in Japan for the treatment of novel influenza virus infections. ■ REUTERS

## Glenmark initiates phase-3 clinical trials of Favipiravir in India

DCGI nod came in late April

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

Glenmark Pharmaceuticals has initiated Phase-3 clinical trials in India on antiviral tablet Favipiravir, for which it received approval from India's drug regulator DCGI in late April, the company said in a statement.

Glenmark is the first company in India to initiate Phase-3 clinical trials on Favipiravir for COVID-19 patients in India, it said.

"We believe the study results will be significant as there is currently no effective treatment for the virus," she added.

"The data we get from these trials will point us in a clearer direction with regard to COVID-19 treatment and management," Ms. Tandon said. Stujesh Vasudevan, president, India Formulations, Middle East and Africa, Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Ltd., said, "Several health and medical experts, both in and outside of Glenmark are eager to see the effect that Favipiravir has on COVID-19 cases."

"We believe the study results will be significant as there is currently no effective treatment for the virus," she added.

Clinical trials have commenced and over 10 leading government and private hospitals in India are being enrolled for the study.

Glenmark estimates that the study would complete by July/August 2020.

It has developed the API and the formulations for the product through its in-house R&D team. Favipiravir has demonstrated activity against influenza viruses and has been approved in Japan for the treatment of novel influenza virus infections.

## Bandhan Bank net falls on COVID-19 provisions

₹690 crore additional provision made

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

Private sector lender Bandhan Bank reported a 20.6% drop in net profit to ₹517 crore for the quarter ended March 31 due to COVID-19 related provisions.

In Q4, the lender made ₹690 crore additional provisions for standard assets on account of COVID-19.

"This provision is higher than the RBI minimum required provision. With this provision and additional standard assets provision that the bank is carrying in the micro-banking portfolio, total additional provision in books stands at ₹1,000 crore," the Kolkata-based bank said in a state-

ment. Other provisions for the quarter came to ₹138 crore compared with ₹154 crore of the same period of the previous year.

Net interest income (NII) for the quarter grew 33.57% to ₹1,680 crore, while non-interest income rose 28.87% to ₹500 crore during the period.

As Gruh Finance was merged with the bank in October, the figures for the current quarter are not exactly comparable with those of the corresponding quarter of the previous year.

Gross NPAs as on March 31, 2020 were 1.48% of gross advances compared with 2.04% a year ago and 1.93% on December 31, 2019.

Listed companies can conduct their annual general meetings (AGMs) through video conferencing while banks and insurance companies have been given the option of submitting only the standalone numbers instead of consolidated financials.

Further, norms related to sending physical copies of annual reports or publishing certain statutory advertisements have also been relaxed due to COVID-19 pandemic.

As part of the relaxations given to companies and market intermediaries, the Se-

curities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) announced a fresh set of waivers on Tuesday.

Listed companies can conduct their annual general meetings (AGMs) through video conferencing while banks and insurance companies have been given the option of submitting only the standalone numbers instead of consolidated financials.

The regulator has made it voluntary for banking and insurance companies to submit consolidated results for June quarter though such entities still have to submit standalone numbers.

Attendance forms

Among other things, the regulator has waived the requirement of companies sending physical forms for proxy attendance if the meetings are held electronically.

Meanwhile, the regulator has received representation from listed companies that banks and insurance companies as well as those that have banks and insurance companies as subsidiaries are facing challenges in preparing consolidated financial results.

The exemptions related to publishing certain statutory advertisements in newspapers till May 15 have been extended until June 30.

## Smart meters come in handy in calculating power bills

EESL meters help discoms generate revenue in lockdown

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

Amid the pandemic-triggered lockdown, State-owned Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL) has enabled cash-strapped discoms in generating around 95% of billing efficiency by using smart meters and 15-20% average increase in monthly revenue per consumer.

EESL, a PSU under the Ministry of Power, Government of India, is the designated agency to implement the smart metering programme in India.

Under this programme, a total of 12,06,435 smart meters have been installed till date to enhance consumer convenience and rationalise electricity consumption.

States such as U.P., Haryana, New Delhi and Bihar

have installed 9.84 lakh, 1.23 lakh, 57,000 and 28,000 smart meters respectively.

With the help of smart meters, discoms in these States have been able to handle their operations smoothly in the time of crisis.

Saurabh Kumar, MD, EESL said, "Smart meters have been indispensable in the current situation, helping discoms function smoothly, thanks to their ability to remotely monitor

and collect meter readings. Smart meters help discoms reduce AT&C losses, improve their financial health, incentivise energy conservation, enhance ease of bill payments and ensure billing accuracy by getting rid of manual errors in meter reading."

EESL is also implementing smart prepaid meters under its smart metering programme. "Smart meters deployed [can] switch to prepaid mode with a remote button click. At a time when the general populace has to adhere to the social distancing norms of the government, electricity distribution companies have not been able to physically collect electricity bills from consumers, leading to a dip in cash flow," the company said in a statement.

## Jubilant, Gilead ink pact for Remdesivir

Drug can be sold in India, 126 nations

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD

Jubilant Life Sciences, through a subsidiary, has entered into a non-exclusive licensing agreement with Gilead Sciences Inc. to register, manufacture and sell Gilead's Remdesivir, a potential therapy for COVID-19 in 127 countries, including India.

Under the agreement, Jubilant Generics, the subsidiary, will have the right to receive a technology transfer of the Gilead manufacturing process to scale up production to enable expedited access of the medicine to COVID-19 patients upon approvals by regulatory authorities in the respective countries.

The list of 127 countries consist of nearly all low-in-

(TKM) on Tuesday announced the partial resumption of its dealer and after-sales operations after weeks-long nationwide lockdown that caused a complete shutdown of its manufacturing and retail sales. A TKM statement said: "Closely adhering to the advisory issued by the Central and State governments, the company announced the partial reopening of 171 dealership outlets and 146 service outlets across the country."

Renault India opened its office and more than 194 showrooms and workshops. The remaining touch

# Vettel, Ferrari to part ways at the end of 2020

Seismic but not entirely surprising decision follows a fruitless, error-filled period for driver and team

## FORMULA ONE

S. DIPAK RAGAV  
CHENNAI

When Sebastian Vettel joined Ferrari in 2015, the excitement was palpable. Many thought the Italian marque could recreate the success it had had with German great Michael Schumacher in the early 2000s.

However, it was announced on Tuesday that Vettel – seen as Schumacher's successor – would leave the team at the end of 2020, without having won a title so far. What started with great promise, amid a yearning for a return to the glory days, has ended with a whimper – unless Vettel conjures up some magic if a shortened season is held this year.

### A mess

The decision, as seismic as it is, is not entirely surprising, considering the German's recent career arc. Vettel and Ferrari made a mess of things and cleared Lewis Hamilton's path in 2017 and 2018, with a mix of reliability concerns and driver errors.



**Joyless ride!** Sebastian Vettel will bid goodbye to Ferrari after an underwhelming sojourn with the Italian giant. ■ GETTY IMAGES

In 2017, after having led the standings for a large part of the season, reliability issues in two races and Vettel's triggering of a multi-car collision in Singapore allowed Hamilton to pick up the pieces and seal the title.

There was also the brain-fade moment earlier in Baku when he deliberately drove

into Hamilton to make a point and received a big penalty.

### String of errors

In 2018, Vettel's errors kept piling up: the now-infamous images of him crashing out from the lead in the German GP, the incident in France when he hit Valtteri Bottas,

the mistake when battling Hamilton in Italy and the failed move in Baku. All of them proved costly.

Last year was Vettel's nadir, with new teammate Charles Leclerc getting the better of him. The defining moment came in the Italian GP where Leclerc overcame a raging Hamilton and Bottas

to help Ferrari win its first home race in nine years while Vettel spun on his own, rejoined the track dangerously and drove like a rookie. With Leclerc signing up until 2024, the centre of power at Ferrari has shifted decisively.

The contrast with Schumacher is striking. After two close title fights in four seasons, Schumacher came back strongly to win five on the bounce (2000-04). Unfortunately for Vettel, it was not to be. The lack of success at Ferrari will reinforce the narrative that he was slightly fortunate to win the four titles he did with Red Bull in dominant cars.

It remains to be seen whether the 32-year-old Vettel, a father of three, will even stay in the sport after 2020. There is a possibility that former teammate Mark Webber's prophecy will come true.

"I think Seb will do everything early in life," Webber had remarked in 2014. "He's got his titles early, he's going to have a kid early and I think he'll retire early. He'll probably take a blast in the red car (Ferrari), then sayonara."

## Balbir Singh Sr. remains critical

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Hockey legend Balbir Singh Sr on Tuesday suffered a cardiac arrest and his condition remains critical, his grandson Kabir said in a medical update.

The 96-year-old, a triple Olympic gold medallist, was hospitalised in Mohali on May 8.

"Nanaji was admitted on Friday, 8th May in a very serious multi-organ affected state. His condition had improved slightly but was, and is still, critical now. Doctors will be continuously assessing his condition over the next 24-48 hours," said Kabir.

## Ministry sanctions aid for archer's treatment

Y.B. SARANGI  
KOLKATA

The Union Sports Ministry on Tuesday sanctioned financial assistance of ₹5 lakh for the treatment of 16-year-old Pragati.

The Delhi-based archer, who competed in the World youth archery championship in Madrid last year, suffered a brain haemorrhage on May 5 and underwent surgery the following day. Since then, she has been on ventilator support.

According to sources, the treatment so far has cost around ₹16 lakh. Of the total expenses, ₹5 lakh has been paid from the Khelo India Games insurance.

## IN BRIEF

### German Cup final rescheduled for July 4

The German Cup final, scheduled to be held at the Olympic Stadium behind closed doors here on May 23, has been rescheduled for July 4, the German Football Association announced. DFB said the semifinals will take place on June 9 and 10. Holder Bayern Munich will host Eintracht Frankfurt while Bayer Leverkusen faces fourth-tier side Saarbruecken. DFB president Fritz Keller said the plans to reschedule the cup are still subject to approval by Angela Merkel's government. The Bundesliga will resume on Saturday when it becomes the first top European league to return. AFP

## Women's U-17 WC in Feb-Mar 2021

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup, originally scheduled to be held later this year, has now been rescheduled to February 17-March 7, 2021.

The new dates were announced by FIFA as part of the decisions confirmed and approved by the Bureau of the FIFA Council after an assessment of the COVID-19 impact. However, the age eligibility for players is the same, making even those

turning 18 in this period eligible for participation since the organisers have decided to treat the tournament as the 2020 edition only.

The 2020 U-20 Women's World Cup, in Costa Rica / Panama, has also been rescheduled to January 20-February 6, 2021 while the 2020 Futsal World Cup would be held from September 12-October 3, 2021 in Lithuania. The tournaments, though, remain conditional subject to further monitoring of the pandemic.

## IPL cancellation will hit BCCI hard

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
NEW DELHI

Scraping the money-spinning Indian Premier League this year because of the coronavirus pandemic would cost more than half a billion dollars, but cutting players' pay was not yet being considered, a top official has told AFP.

"The BCCI is looking at a big revenue loss. In case the IPL does not take place, the loss would be close to ₹40 billion rupees (\$530 million), or even more," said

Board of Control for Cricket in India treasurer Arun Dharmal. We are not sure whether we will be able to have it this year," he admitted.

"We will only be able to figure out the exact revenue loss once we are sure of how many games we have lost," said Dharmal.

But Dharmal, who joined the BCCI leadership last year alongside president Sourav Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah, said that it was hoped to avoid pay cuts for players.

## Manmeet Singh passes away

Ex-National TT champion also won junior, doubles titles

RAKESH RAO  
NEW DELHI

Former men's National table tennis champion Manmeet Singh, 58, passed away in Montreal on Monday. He is survived by his wife and two daughters.

For the past two years, Manmeet was suffering from Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis (ALS), a neurodegenerative disease.

He was National junior champion, National men's doubles champion (with schoolmate and close friend Vinay Chopra), before winning the National singles title beating S. Sriram in Hyderabad in 1989.

Manmeet's senior colleague and former National champion Manjit Dua remembered him as "an extremely competitive and hard-working player".

Kamlesh Mehta, an eight-time National champion, recalled: "Manmeet was the

fondly recalled his caring ways.

"Manmeet was like an elder brother, always encouraging and motivating me. In Hyderabad, more than me, he believed I could become the National champion," she said.

### Condolences

The news of Manmeet's passing away has cast a pall of gloom in the country's table tennis circles. Table Tennis Federation of India secretary M.P. Singh, advisor Dhanraj Choudhary, among others, expressed shock and grief at the passing away of a "fine champion".

As Kamlesh aptly summed up, "Manmeet was a fighter in the arena, very aggressive, but off the table, he was a great pal."

"We were of the same age and shared a lot. It's hard to believe Manmeet is no more."



Manmeet. ■ THE HINDU ARCHIVES

## We have to get local guys to play first: Sunder

Suggests that the sport may have to grow to become more popular

## TENNIS

KAMESH SRINIVASAN  
NEW DELHI

It is hard for active sportspersons to stay idle for long. Considering COVID-19's devastating impact, a lot of caution is required before sports can spring back to life.

"Everyone is keen to resume the sport. We have discussed what needs to be done to get players back on tennis courts. There are guidelines from the International Tennis Federation (ITF) and the USTA," said Sunder Iyer, secretary-general of the Maharashtra Tennis Association and executive member of the All India Tennis Association (AITA).

"We have to localise. We may have to keep crowds away. We may have to keep parents away."



**Ready for challenge:** Sunder Iyer, seen with Rutuja Bhosale and Mahak Jain, is clear about the path ahead for the sport.

Having organised more than 1,500 tournaments at all levels, Sunder is clear about the path ahead.

"Even for the AITA, we have worked out a plan, starting with local level tournaments so that there is not

with restrictions to facilities for people of that area.

"We have to get the local guys to play first. Starting

much travel involved," said Sunder, in an Instagram conversation with coach M. Balachandran.

Sunder visualised players travelling by October, and getting into their groove before that with local events.

### Ideal time

He suggested that tennis may have to grow, to be more popular. The fresh start could be the ideal time to tweak the norms.

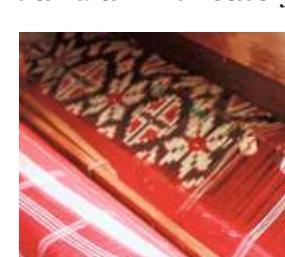
"Most of the corporates are playing golf," said Sunder, about the need to keep tennis close to the hearts of the decision makers. It is hard on the fans. They cannot bring water or food. No walking, no talking in the stands. People are coming to watch sports to enjoy. As a sport, we may have to grow," he said.

## GI tag for Sohrai Khorva painting, Telia Rumal

A ritualistic mural art and an intricately designed handloom cloth get their due

SANGEETHA KANDAVEL  
CHENNAI

Jharkhand's Sohrai Khorva painting and Telangana's Telia Rumal were given the Geographical Indication (GI) tag on Tuesday by the Geographical Indications Registry headquartered in Chennai. The application for the painting was made by Sohrai Kala Mahila Vikas Sahyog Samiti Limited while the application for Telia Rumal was made by the Consortium of Puttapaka Handloom Cluster-IHDS.



Telia Rumal can only be created with traditional handloom process.

### Local traditions

"The Sohrai Khorva painting is a traditional and ritualistic mural art being practised by local tribal women during local harvest and marriage seasons using local, naturally available soils of different colours in the area of Hazaribagh district of Jharkhand. Telia Rumal cloth involves

ing is primarily being practised only in the district of Hazaribagh. However, in recent years, for promotional purposes, it has been seen in other parts of Jharkhand.

Traditionally painted on the walls of mud houses, they are now seen on other surfaces, too. The style features a profusion of lines, dots, animal figures and plants, often representing religious iconography. In recent years, the walls of important public places in Jharkhand, such as the Birsa Munda Airport in Ranchi, and the Hazaribagh and Tatagarh Railway Stations, among others, have been decorated with Sohrai-Khorva paintings.

The officers working in the court of the Nizam would wear the Chituki Telia Rumal as a symbol representation of status. Telia Rumals are offered at the dargah of Ajmer Sharif in Rajasthan, with some devotees offering 50 or even 100 cloths. Telia Rumals were worn as a veil by princesses at the erstwhile court of the Nizam of Hyderabad; and as a turban cloth by Arabs in the Middle East.

CMK

## AIFF nominates Jhingan, Bala Devi for Arjuna

NEW DELHI

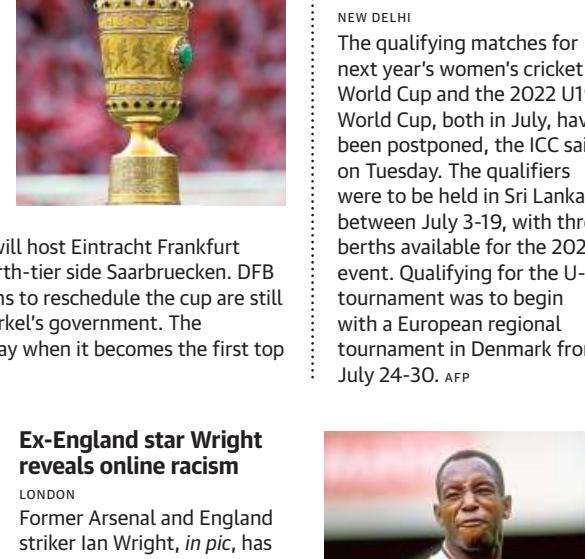
The All India Football Federation has named in on national team central defender Sandesh Jhingan and women's team striker N. Bala Devi as its nominations for the Arjuna award, rewarding them for their consistency in recent years.

Ex-England star Wright reveals online racism

Former Arsenal and England striker Ian Wright, in pic, has been subjected to a barrage of racist abuse on social media. An Instagram user messaged Wright with racist taunts who took to Twitter to expose the abuse. Former Aston Villa forward Gabriel Agbonlahor was also a racist.



message. Kick It Out called for those who targeted him and Wright to be punished. AFP



message. Kick It Out called for those who targeted him and Wright to be punished. AFP

## Time to modernise the lbw law

Batsman should be given out if ball is destined to hit the stumps



### BETWEEN WICKETS

SURESH MENON

The 12th century French thinker and theologian Peter Abelard is credited with the saying, "Only god can judge the intentions of an individual." Human beings can only judge actions. Yet, when the leg before wicket law was codified, in the 18th century, it stated the batsman was out if he "put his leg before the wicket with a design to stop the ball..." Umpires were thus called to judge intention.

It remains to be seen whether the 32-year-old Vettel, a father of three, will even stay in the sport after 2020. There is a possibility that former teammate Mark Webber's prophecy will come true.

"I think Seb will do everything early in life," Webber had remarked in 2014. "He's got his titles early, he's going to have a kid early and I think he'll retire early. He'll probably take a blast in the red car (Ferrari), then sayonara."

milarly.

In *espncriinfo* he says the Law should read, "Any delivery that strikes the pad without first hitting the bat and, in the umpire's opinion, would go on to hit the stumps is out regardless of whether or not a shot is attempted." So much simpler and logical.

### Desired effect

It echoes a proposal by the County Cricket Council in 1881 which the MCC did not accept. In 1902 it was tried out by the second class counties, and the consensus was that it had the desired effect of stopping men playing with their legs and not the bat.

But what is so special about the ball pitched outside the leg stump in the first place? There are two issues, one cultural, and the other physical.

The physical was spelt out by Ranji in his *Jubilee Book of Cricket* thus: "A good length ball pitching on or just outside the off stump, according to the leg stump is the most likely of all to light upon the 'blind spot'." His friend and equally famous cricketer C B Fry clarified further: "the blind spot is created by the batsman himself when his head is in such a position with regard to the ball that his eyes have no chance."

All sports that involve a moving ball have blind spots for the player, but only a batsman is protected from dismissal by the rules. If it was done to discourage negative bowling, umpires have the power to deal with that now.

### Gentleman's game

The cultural reason is interesting, and should have no place in today's cricket. In Victorian times when the game developed, it was considered ill-mannered, uncouth, vulgar even, to play a shot behind the wicket on the leg side. It was about the

class system, the amateur spirit, Henry Newbolt and his Play up! Play up and play the game. It was not Christian. Which perhaps explains why, after Ranji invented the leg glance,

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