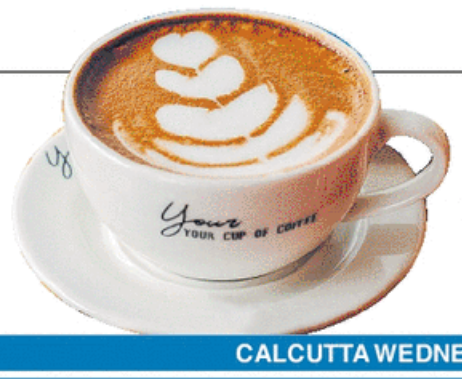
The Telegraph

FIGHT THE **COLD**

Wellness P7



WILL WE GET BACK **CAFE LIFE?**

In t2

DJOKOVIC TESTS **POSITIVE**

Sport P11

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If all's well, a riddle refuses to retreat

Who's disengaging from whom?

IMRAN AHMED SIDDIQUI

New Delhi: An Indian Army source said on Tuesday that "there was a mutual consensus to disengage" and "modalities for disengagement from all friction areas in Eastern Ladakh were discussed" at a meeting between Indian and Chinese corps commanders on Monday.

The source said the modalities "were discussed and will be taken forward by both sides", suggesting they were yet to be finalised.

China's foreign ministry also struck a positive note, referring to an agreement to take steps to "cool down the situation".

The reference to "friction areas" and the hint that more talks are needed to finalise the modalities of disengagement stood out in contrast with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's assertion on Friday that there was no intrusion (after June 15, the PMO clarified later) and no Indian post had been occupied by someone else.

Indian soldiers walk at the foothills of a mountain range near Leh on Tuesday. (AFP)

If it is business as usual on the frontline, it is not clear why the corps commanders had to hold talks for more than 10 hours and why more dialogue is needed.

A military veteran told **The Telegraph** on Tuesday: "So, we want the Chinese to disengage and vacate the land they never transgressed. Is the Prime Minister not properly briefed or did someone obfuscate the truth?"

Amid speculation that Monday's talks were inconclusive, the Indian Army reserved formal comment but an army source circulated a message in the afternoon among reporters who cover defence affairs.

The army source's message said: "The Corps Commander level talks between India and China on 22 June 2020 were held at Moldo (on the Chinese side) in a cordial, positive and constructive atmosphere. There was a mutual consensus to disengage. Modalities for disengagement from all friction areas in Eastern Ladakh were discussed and will be taken forward by both the sides."

Consensus to disengage had been reached on June 6, too, but it had been breached during the violent face-off that ended in bloodshed on June 15 in the Galwan Valley.

As is its trademark, the Chinese foreign policy establishment was less definite in its public pronouncements on Tuesday although it chose to comment on record on the over-10-hour meeting between Lt Gen. Harinder Singh, the commander of the 14 Corps, and Maj Gen. Liu Lin, the commander of the Tibet Military District, on Monday.

"This meeting showed that the two sides wish to control and alleviate the situation through dialogue and consultation. During the meeting and based on the consensus reached at the first commanders level meeting (on June 6), the two sides had a candid and in-depth exchange of views on the outstanding issues and agreed to take necessary measures to cool down the situation," PTI quoted Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian as saying in Beijing.

Asked whether he can confirm the Indian Army source's account that the two sides have agreed to disengage the troops, Zhao said: "The specific measures are under discussion by the border troops of the two sides on the ground, I have no further information to release on this."

Asked about the Chinese casualties, he said: "As for what you saw in the media, for example some people alleged that casualties on the Chinese amounted to 40. I can tell you for sure this is false information." An initial report had said Zhao had used the phrase "fake news", which was replaced by "false information".

At night, an Indian defence ministry spokesperson said defence minister Rajnath Singh would not meet his Chinese counterpart in Moscow, even though they would take part in the celebration of the 75th anniversary of the Victory Day Parade in the Russian capital on Wednesday.

The *Global Times*, the mouthpiece of the communist party of China, had tweeted a report suggesting the two could meet.

CWC homes in on PM's claim

SANJAY K. JHA

New Delhi: The Congress Working Committee has asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi why he told an all-party meeting on Friday that "no one has intruded into our territory", why these words were deleted from the official statement released by the Prime Minister's Office the same day, and why the PMO was forced to issue a clarification the next day.

"The Prime Minister's statement of denying any Chinese intrusion has had far-reaching implications. The Prime Minister cannot allow his words to be used by the Chinese as a vindication of their position, when it is clear that the brazen transgressions into our territory were committed by them and our armed forces were, and are, steadfastly and resolutely defending our territorial integrity," a resolution adopted by the highest decision-making body of the Congress said on Tuesday.

The CWC also asked why the Prime Minister had "contradicted earlier statements of his own defence minister and the external affairs minister on Chinese incursions".

The resolution comes a day after former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh cautioned that the Prime Minister should always be "mindful of the implications of his words and declarations on the nation's security…"

At the meeting on Friday to brief the Opposition on the clash in Ladakh that left 20 Indian soldiers dead, Modi had said: "Neither has anyone intruded into our frontier there, neither is any intruder there, nor is any of our posts occupied by someone else."

Modi's statement was lapped up by the Chinese propaganda machinery, which is citing this as vindication of Beijing's assertion that their troops did not intrude into Indian territory.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 ▶

IN BRIEF

Trump bar on new work visas

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump has suspended new work visas, including the H-1B category preferred by Indian IT professionals, at least until the end of this year to protect American workers in the election year. The new restrictions will take effect on June 24. The proclamation exempts those already in the US, as well as valid visa holders abroad, but they must have an official travel document that permits entry into the US. The affected visa categories include H-2B (seasonal non-farm labour); H-4 (spouses and children of H-1B and H-2B holders); J-1 (cultural and educational exchange); J-2 (spouses and dependents of J-1 holders); L-1 (high-level and specialised company employees); and L-2 (dependents of L-1 holders).
BUSINESS

IAS officer

BANGALORE: IAS officer B.M. Vijay Shankar, whom the CBI wanted to prosecute in the Rs 4,000-crore IMA ponzi scam, was found dead at his Bangalore residence on Tuesday night, a police officer said. Shankar had served as deputy commissioner of Bangalore urban district. The RBI had sought a report from the state government on the IMA group. Assigned to submit the report, Shankar was accused of taking a bribe to hush up the scam. PTI

LOCKDOWN

91 DAYS OVER
7 DAYS TO GO

INDIA COUNT

Updated Covid-19 figures on Tuesday

- Confirmed cases: **440215**
- Active cases: **178014**
- Overnight addition: **14933**
- Total deaths: **14011**
- Discharged: **248190**

Airline heat

WASHINGTON: The US has set in motion an order that allows it to verify in advance if Air India services qualify as "repatriation" charter flights as the country seeks to restore "a level playing field" for American airlines. Citing Covid, India has stopped charter services by US airlines. The US transportation department has now said the frequency of Air India flights and the sale of tickets in the market suggest "the charters go beyond true repatriations". Reuters
BUSINESS

QUOTE

India cannot afford to lose even an inch of its land in the area

AMARINDER SINGH

Protectionism tactic, aimed at China goods

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi: The Narendra Modi government is tightening the screws on Chinese companies.

The government has winched up its economic retaliatory response by making it mandatory for sellers to declare the country of origin of the goods and services on the government procurement portal, GEM.

The Government e-Marketplace (GEM) portal has also enabled a filter that requires sellers to declare the percentage of local content in the products they sell through the platform, ostensibly in a bid to promote the Make in India movement.

A Make in India filter will ensure that the government and its agencies only pick products that contain a minimum of 50 per cent local content, the commerce and industry ministry said in a statement.

Sellers who had already uploaded their products have been warned that their products would be removed from the portal if they fail to update the country of origin.

Total purchases through the GEM portal are expected to increase to Rs 3 lakh crore from a mere Rs 50,000 crore in the last fiscal — and the latest changes will raise protectionist barriers against imported goods.

The notice does not single out China by name but it is evident which country is being targeted.

A similar ruse was used in late April when the government recast its foreign direct investment policy, putting in place a new regulatory oversight mechanism that was a thinly disguised attempt to stop Chinese investors from scooping up stakes in Indian companies whose valuations had melted after the coronavirus outbreak.

At that time, the department for the promotion of industry and internal trade (DPIIT) had said countries that shared a common barrier with India would require government approval before investing in an Indian company in a bid to stop opportunistic takeovers.

Tightening rules

The Centre had changed government procurement rules last month while announcing its stimulus package under which it jettisoned the practice of global tendering for contracts worth less than Rs 200 crore, reserving a big chunk of such purchases for small and medium businesses.

"The marketplace has facilitated entry of small local sellers in public procurement while implementing 'Make in India' and MSE Purchase Preference Policies of the Government in the true sense," the commerce ministry statement said.

"GeM is enabling quick, efficient, transparent and cost-effective procurement, especially in this hour of need when government organisations require products and services urgently to fight against the Covid-19 pandemic," it added.

The economic wing of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) described the government's move as another step to help curb Chinese imports.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 4 ▶

DETAILS SOUGHT FROM PATANJALI

Centre to Ramdev firm: Halt Covid pill promotion

G.S. MUDUR

New Delhi: The Centre on Tuesday asked Patanjali Ayurved to stop advertising or touting remedies for the coronavirus disease after the company promoted by yoga evangelist Ramdev claimed it has developed a herbal cocktail that promises 100 per cent recovery.

The Union ministry for ayurveda, yoga, unani, siddha and homeopathy said it had asked Patanjali for details of the medicine and any studies on it, pointing out that all Ayush research on Covid-19 should comply with mandatory conditions.

Ramdev

Medical experts said the claim by Patanjali had exposed long-standing loopholes in India's drug regulatory processes that allow Ayush organisations to make unsubstantiated claims in the pursuit of profits.

Patanjali had earlier during the day claimed at a media conference addressed by Ramdev and other officials that its plant-based product called Coronil had been tested in Covid-19 patients at a private medical college in Jaipur and promises full recovery.

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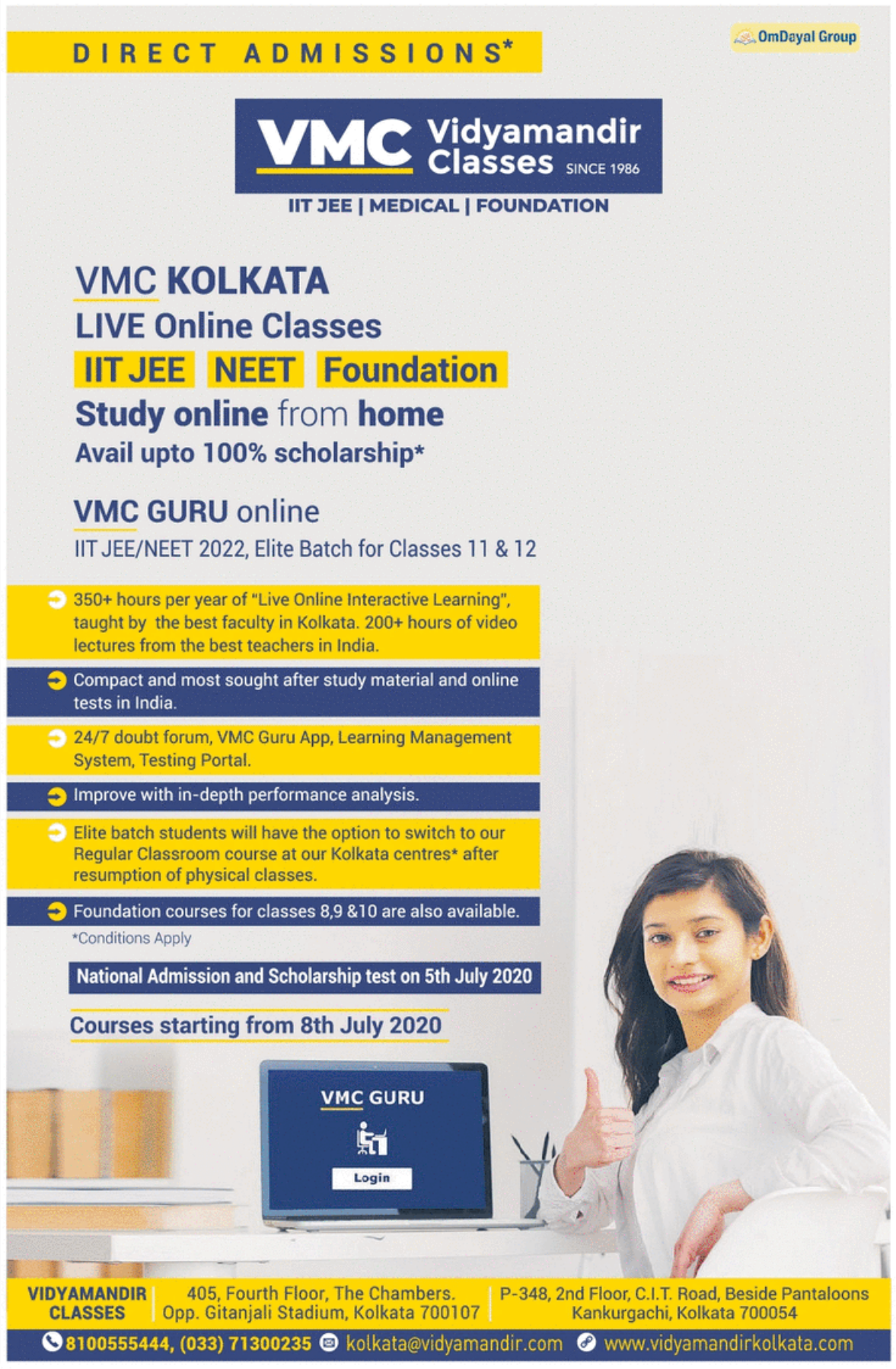


A policeman stands in front of a damaged building after the earthquake in Oaxaca, Mexico, on Tuesday. (AP)

Strong quake rattles Mexico

Mexico City: A powerful earthquake of magnitude 7.4 struck the coast of southern Mexico on Tuesday, killing at least one person, buckling paved roads, and setting off a tsunami in nearby Pacific coastal areas.

One person died in the state of Oaxaca, governor Alejandro Murat said, after the quake hit the Pacific coastal state mid-morning.

The country's seismological service said a tsunami on the Oaxaca coast was ongoing, with the sea level having risen 60cm at Huatulco beach, a popular destination for US and Canadian tourists.

Mexico's civil protection agency recommended that residents move away from the coastline. Videos on social media showed the ocean's water receding in Oaxaca, a mountainous state that is also home to coffee plantations and Spanish colonial architecture.

Miguel Candelaria, 30, was working at his computer in his family home in the Oaxaca town of Juchitan when the ground began to tremble. He ran outside with relatives, but they had to stop in the middle of the street as the pavement buckled and rocked.

"We couldn't walk... the street was like chewing gum," said Candelaria, 30.

Neighbours screamed in terror and some shouted out warnings to run from the electricity poles that looked poised to fall, said Candelaria, who works in telecommunications marketing.

Quakes of magnitudes over 7 are major earthquakes capable of widespread, heavy damage. A 7.1 magnitude earthquake that struck central Mexico in 2017 killed 355 people in the capital and the surrounding states.

Tuesday's quake set off a tsunami warning for the Pacific coasts of Mexico and Central and South America. Waves of up to one metre were possible on the Mexican coast, the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration warned.

Buildings shook in Mexico City, hundreds of miles away.

Helicopters flew low over the Roma and Condesa districts of the capital, apparently looking for damage in streets where many buildings still show the scars of the 2017 quake. Reuters

Cops confronted demonstrators in Lafayette Park, leading to tense encounters

Bid to topple statue near White House

New York: Protesters threw ropes over a statue of President Andrew Jackson near the White House on Monday night and tried to pull it down, in the latest attempt to remove memorials of marred historical figures, including Confederate leaders and Christopher Columbus.

Police officers with riot shields and pepper spray confronted the demonstrators in Lafayette Park, leading to some tense encounters shared on social media. The statue of Jackson on horseback ultimately remained upright, unlike dozens that have been toppled or taken down in recent weeks as the nation grapples with systemic racism.

Jackson, the seventh President, owned slaves and put into place policies that forced Native Americans from their land, with some 15,000 people dying on the Trail of Tears.

President Trump, who had a portrait of Jackson hung in the Oval Office shortly after his inauguration, condemned "the disgraceful vandalism" of "the magnificent Statue" in a tweet late on Monday night.

Several other presidential statues have recently been targeted.

Protesters in Portland, Oregon, toppled a statue of George Washington, and a statue of Ulysses S. Grant was pulled to the ground in San Francisco. The American Museum of Natural History in New York announced it would take down a statue of Theodore Roosevelt, and some City Council members want a statue of Thomas Jefferson removed from City Hall.

The dismantling of contentious statues began with a focus on those honouring members of the Confederacy. For weeks, protesters have converged on a statue of the commander Robert E. Lee in Richmond, Virginia, one of the most prominent on the city's Monument Avenue.

On Monday, state officials announced that the Lee statue, which governor Ralph Northam has been trying to remove, would be closed to the public from sunset to sunrise. Officials outlined a list of safety concerns, including vandalism, trespassing, littering and public urination.

According to the state's order, police officers will "encourage voluntary compliance" before taking any enforcement action. But it was unclear whether protesters would respect the closure order.

Mel Leonor, a reporter for *The Richmond Times-Dispatch*, wrote on Twitter that a crowd of protesters cheered on Monday when one suggested that they meet at the monument after 8pm.

Protesters try to pull down the statue of former US President Andrew Jackson in Lafayette Park near the White House. (Reuters)

Trump threat

Trump and his fellow Republicans in Congress on Tuesday angrily decried efforts to remove statues and other memorials that activists consider racist.

Trump early on Tuesday announced an authorisation "effective immediately" to arrest anyone caught destroying or vandalsing a commemoration to a former member of the armed services on federal land, citing the Veterans Memorial Act, which has been law for 17 years.

He first threatened arrest late on Monday night when protesters tried and failed to topple a statue of former President Andrew Jackson near the White House.

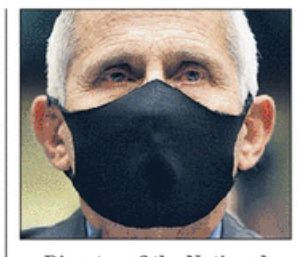
Protesters also declared a Black House Autonomous Zone across the street from the White House in front of St John's Church, taking over Black Lives Matter Plaza. They spray painted "BHAZ" on columns in front of the church, which had a small basement fire during earlier protests.

"Perpetrators must be prosecuted. These senseless attacks must be stopped," Kevin McCarthy, the top Republican in the US House of Representatives, said on Twitter.

Many of the statues and monuments targeted by crowds in recent weeks pay homage to the rebel Confederacy from the nation's Civil War. Democrats and other critics say such symbols wrongly honour those who perpetuated slavery.

Calls to take them down follow a wave of protests after the May 25 death of George Floyd, an unarmed Black man killed in police custody in Minneapolis, that has sparked ongoing demonstrations.

New York Times News Service and Reuters



Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases Dr Anthony Fauci waits to testify on Capitol Hill before a House Committee on the Trump administration's response to the Covid-19 pandemic. (AFP)

Fauci: Next 2 weeks critical to slow surge

New York: Dr Anthony S. Fauci, the nation's top infectious disease expert, told House lawmakers that the nation is experiencing a "disturbing surge" of coronavirus infections as states reopen too quickly and without adequate plans for testing and tracing the contacts of those infected with the virus.

In a break with President Trump's upbeat assessments of the pandemic's trajectory in the US, Dr Fauci told the House Energy and Commerce Committee that while some states like New York, were "doing very well" in controlling spread of the virus, the surge in other states was "very troublesome to me".

"The next couple of weeks are going to be critical in our ability to address those surges we are seeing in Florida, Texas, Arizona, and other states," Dr Fauci told the panel as he and other leaders of the White House coronavirus task force appeared together for the first time in more than a month to brief Congress.

In their testimony, the officials said they had made progress in confronting the virus, including towards a vaccine that Dr Fauci said he was "cautiously optimistic" would be available by early next year and expanding the availability of testing in doctor's offices by late autumn. But they also made clear they did not agree with Trump, who last week claimed in an interview with Fox News that the virus would simply "fade away".

In his opening statement, Dr Robert R. Redfield, the director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, called the pandemic "the greatest public health crisis our nation and world have confronted in a century", and warned that the outbreak would coincide with flu season later this year, straining hospitals and health workers.

The doctors were also grilled on Trump's claim at a campaign rally in Tulsa that he had asked "my people" to "slow the testing down" because increased screening was revealing more infections, making the country look bad.

New York Times News Service

Boris allows restaurants to reopen

AMIT ROY

London: The Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced the relaxation of a wide range of lockdown rules on Tuesday, including allowing restaurants to reopen with effect from July 4.

But, sadly, this is too late for Rohit Khattar's Indian Accent in Albemarle Street, Mayfair, which had replaced Chor Bizarre, which in turn had taken over from Gaylord.

The restaurant proved a hit especially with Hollywood stars even before it had formally opened in London in late 2017.

A statement said that "IRL, the company which licensed brand Indian Accent in London, is deeply saddened to announce its permanent closure.

"This difficult decision was made as a last resort after carefully considering all the factors in play as a direct result of Covid-19. Social distancing would reduce the restaurant capacity to just 30 covers. This combined with the significant fixed costs as a result of operating on one of the most expensive streets in the world and the general economic uncertainty in the UK, means that the business is unviable at its current location.

"Chef Manish Mehrotra and the rest of the team hope to bring Indian Accent to London at a larger location at some point in the future."

The Prime Minister, who is to take the last of the daily Downing Street news conferences, earlier told the Commons: "Today, we can say that our long national hibernation is beginning to come to an end and life is returning to our streets and to our shops, the bustle is starting to come back and a new, but cautious, optimism is palpable."

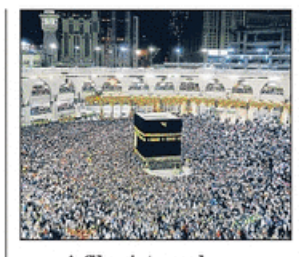
Chef Manish Mehrotra (left) with owner Rohit Khattar at Indian Accent in Albemarle Street, London. The relaxation in lockdown rules came too late for the Indian Accent as it decided to close permanently. (Picture credit: Amit Roy)

Where the two-metre rule cannot be applied it will be replaced with a "one metre-plus" measure, with the protection offered by the physical distance enhanced by other "mitigation measures" such as the use of face coverings, increased hygiene or layout changes in premises.

Boris added that the virus has not gone away and the government "will not hesitate to apply the brakes and re-introduce restrictions — even at national level — if required".

Among the changes announced: pubs and restaurants will be limited to table service and will be asked to collect customers' details so they can be traced if there is a coronavirus outbreak; hairdressers will be able to reopen with precautions including the use of visors; the domestic tourist industry will be boosted by the reopening of accommodation including hotels, bed & breakfast campsites along with most leisure facilities and attractions such as theme parks; outdoor gyms and playgrounds will be returned to use; and cinemas, museums and galleries will be allowed to open again.

In addition, places of worship will reopen, with weddings of up to 30 people allowed — although any receptions afterwards would be severely limited.



A file picture shows pilgrims circling the Kaaba at the Grand Mosque in Mecca during the Haj pilgrimage. (Reuters)

Saudi bars foreign pilgrims from Haj

Riyadh: Saudi Arabia is to limit the number of domestic pilgrims attending the Haj to around 1,000 to prevent the spread of the coronavirus, after barring Muslims abroad from the rite for the first year in modern times.

Haj minister Mohammed Benten told a news briefing on Tuesday that strict health criteria would be used to select eligible pilgrims among citizens and residents.

Those above 65 years old would not be allowed to attend the annual pilgrimage, he said.

Some 2.5 million pilgrims typically visit the holiest sites of Islam in Mecca and Medina for the week-long Haj, a once-in-a-lifetime duty for every able-bodied Muslim.

Official data shows Saudi Arabia earns around $12 billion a year from the Haj.

"The kingdom of Saudi Arabia is keen to enable all Muslims of different nationalities to perform Haj but the global health circumstances this year led us to make this haj an exception," Benten said. Reuters

Hurley's ex-lover jumps to death

AMIT ROY

London: The British actress and model, Elizabeth Hurley, has she is "saddened beyond belief" that her one-time American lover, Steve Bing, by whom she had a son following a brief affair between 2000 and 2002, had jumped to his death from his 27th floor apartment in Los Angeles.

Bing was apparently suffering from depression because of a lack of human contact during lockdown.

When Hurley became pregnant during her fling with Bing, he strenuously denied paternity because he claimed the couple had not been in an "exclusive relationship".

But a DNA test proved he was the father although Hurley then announced she did not want any money from Bing and that she would bring up their child as a single mother.

Mary, Bing's sister, claimed in a *Vanity Fair* article that he had been "snookered" into becoming a father after wooing Hurley with private jets, Rolex watches, sapphire and diamond rings and all-expenses paid trips to New York and Europe.

The same article quoted friends of Bing who claimed that Hurley had been on the pill while they were sleeping together, and that antibiotics had stopped it from working.

The magazine reported that Bing had urged her to get an abortion followed by therapy, which she declined.

On Monday, Hurley, 55, claimed she had reconciled with Bing, also 55: "I am saddened beyond belief that my ex Steve is no longer with us. It is a terrible end. Our time together was very happy and I'm posting these pictures because although we went through some tough times, it's the good, wonderful memories of a sweet, kind man that matter.

British actress and model Elizabeth Hurley and American businessman Steve Bing. (AP, AFP)

"In the past year we had become close again. We last spoke on our son's 18th birthday. This is devastating news and I thank everyone for their lovely messages."

She shared a gallery of photographs from the past of herself with Bing as a happy couple, presumably to deflect possible criticism that she could have done more to prevent his tragic end.

Although Hurley had said she wanted no financial support from Bing, he paid $100,000 a year into a trust fund for Damian, now 18, who also commented on the loss of his absent father: "Thank you from the bottom of my heart to everyone that has reached out following the devastating news.

"I'm trying to reply to as many of you as I can, but please know I will always remember your kindness. This is a very strange and confusing time and I'm immensely grateful to be surrounded by my phenomenal family and friends."

Back in 1998 Bing had another contested paternity when he had a daughter Kira Kerkorian with the former professional tennis player Lisa Bonder.

Her ex-husband MGM billionaire Kirk Kerkorian even had to hire a private detective to acquire a sample of Bing's DNA as evidence.

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STOCKHOLM'S SCANDINAVIAN NEIGHBOURS CLOSE THEIR BORDERS

Sweden tries out 'pariah state' status

THOMAS ERDBRINK

New York: Every summer for the past 13 years, fans of Nordic culture have gathered on the Norway side of the border with Sweden for the outdoor festival *Allsang pa Grensen*, which translates roughly to, "Singsong Along the Border".

But this summer, there will not be any Swedish singers in the live broadcast event, nor will there be any Swedish fans in the audience, singing and clapping along. This year, Swedes are forbidden to enter Norway.

And Norway isn't the only Scandinavian neighbour barring Swedes from visiting this summer. Denmark and Finland have also closed their borders to Swedes, fearing that they would bring new coronavirus infections with them.

While those countries went into strict lockdowns this spring, Sweden famously refused, and now has suffered roughly twice as many infections and five times as many deaths as the other three nations combined, according to figures compiled by *The New York Times*.

While reporting differences can make comparisons inexact, the overall trend is clear, as is Sweden's new status as Scandinavia's pariah state.

"We will miss the Swedes this year," said Ole Evenrud, a Norwegian pop star who goes under the stage name "Ole i'Dole," or Ole the Idol, and is a regular performer at the festival in Halden, a Norwegian border town. "But I'm OK with the borders being closed. We have been pretty clever about the way we handled corona."

Swedish officials, including the architect of the country's measures to stop the spread of the coronavirus, Anders Tegnell, are not amused. They say Swedes have been stigmatised by an international campaign to prove Sweden was wrong and warn their neighbours that they are going to be much more vulnerable if a second wave of the virus hits in autumn.

"We are really confident that our immunity is higher than any other Nordic country's," Tegnell said during a news conference last week. He added that while Sweden was not striving for so-called herd immunity, the higher level of immunity "is contributing to lower numbers of patients needing hospitalisation, as well as fewer deaths per day".

Swedes erect a maypole for midsummer celebrations in Sahl near Leksand, Sweden. (AFP)

Tegnell also said that infections in Sweden "had peaked", and were now falling, a trend reflected in *The Times*'s figures.

Experts in the other Scandinavian countries say the higher immunity levels have not been proven through rigorous testing, and that such talk misses a major point.

"When you see 5,000 deaths in Sweden and 230 in Norway, it is quite incredible," said Gro Harlem Brundtland, a former Prime Minister of Norway and the former director of the World Health Organisation, during a digital lecture at the Norwegian Academy of Science and Letters in May. "It will take a lot to even out this difference a year or two into the future."

Tegnell had emerged this spring as something of a cult figure, widely admired for his determinedly maverick approach. But perhaps because of such differing outcomes, his star has dimmed lately.

Confidence in Tegnell went from 69 per cent in April to 60 per cent on Monday, according to a poll done by the leading Swedish newspaper *Dagens Nyheter* and *Ipsos*.

Long considered the lucky holders of one of the best passports for seamless global travel, Swedes now find themselves with few options for moving about the EU. Most countries in the bloc have reopened their borders to member nations, but only France, Italy, Spain and Croatia are welcoming Swedes without restrictions.

In several countries, like the Netherlands and Cyprus, they are banned completely. Austria demands a health certificate. Greece makes Swedes quarantine for at least a week, even if they test negative for the coronavirus.

While the emergency laws and "strong travel advice" have upset many Swedes, nothing has been more painful than the behaviour of their neighbours, said Ann Linde, Sweden's foreign minister.

"It is sad and frustrating that regions on the borders were so easy to close," said Linde.

New York Times News Service

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Sikkim force moves to border villages

RAJEEV RAVIDAS

Gangtok: The Sikkim government has deployed contingents of the Indian Reserve Battalion at villages near the China border, the development coming within a week of a physical clash between Indian and Chinese forces in Ladakh.

IRB is part of Sikkim police and its personnel are usually deployed in areas of conflict.

Amid questions on whether the IRB deployment had any link with the growing tension between India and China, Prawin Gurung, the deputy inspector general (range), Sikkim police, said: "The deployment is a normal exercise during such situations, but this in no way means a war is about to break."

The DIG added that since Sikkim was a sensitive border state, its police had a responsibility to "remain vigilant".

Sources in the state police said the fact that he had linked the deployment to "such situations" meant the Sikkim government was taking the developments on the China frontier in Ladakh seriously and was doing its bit to "save lives and livelihood" at the border villages.

The state shares a 220km long border with the Tibetan Autonomous Region of China and had seen conflicts between India and China in the past, most notably in 1962 and 1967 when Sikkim was a kingdom.

Sikkim has borders with Nepal and Bhutan also.

While the Indo Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) guards the China border, it is the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) that protects the other two international boundaries. Besides these paramilitary forces, the Indian Army keeps a regular vigil on the China border. The army has a mountain division in Gangtok that is under the Trishakti Corps headquartered at Sukna near Siliguri.

A source in the Sikkim police said: "The deployment of IRB is strategic and it is unlikely the state has done it without consulting the Centre."

He has added that the P.S. Tamang (Golay) dispensation is keen on sending a message that it is complementing the efforts of the Narendra Modi government in protecting the borders.

The DIG was repeatedly asked about the strength of the deployment, but he refused to give any specific answer.

"In accordance with the directive of the Sikkim government, we have deployed the armed forces at Lachen, Lachung and Thangu in north Sikkim and Kupup and Sherathang in east Sikkim where our citizens reside at small villages," he said.

At the recent all-party meeting chaired by Modi on the border stand-off, Golay had reportedly said his government and residents of the state are with the country.

"At this hour, the government of Sikkim and the entire people of Sikkim are one with the country and Sikkim will always support any decision taken by the Union government in consultation with all concerned," Tamang was quoted as having said at the meeting.

Active Covid cases drop below 5000 in Bengal

MEGHDEEP BHATTACHARYYA

Calcutta: Total number of active Covid-19 patients in Bengal came down by 763 in 10 days to reach 4,930 on Tuesday — seventh decline after June 13 and the first drop below the 5,000 mark.

The figure of 4,930 is less than the total number of active patients reported on June 9.

As 531 people were cured of the pathogen in the past 24 hours, the recoveries rose to cross the 9,000 mark and reached 9,218. The recovery rate improved further and touched 62.58 per cent. India currently has a recovery rate of around 56 per cent.

After June 13 — now being deemed a pivotal point in the state's pandemic war, Bengal has had 4,676 recoveries, nearly 51 per cent of the total. The recovery rate has risen by over 20 per cent since June 13.

A month ago, the state had a total of 1,339 cured patients and a recovery rate of 36.51.

"After June 13, there have been only positives to talk about, by way of our Covid-19 stats. Quite a spectacular turnaround for such a cosmopolitan state — with immense population density — that saw over a million returnees in a month. Especially, the falling figure of total active cases and the steadily rising recovery rate... we are in a position of envy," a Bengal minister said.

The state on Tuesday reported deaths of 11 coronavirus patients, taking the toll to 580.

Of the 370 new Covid-19 cases reported on Tuesday, most — around 97 per cent — were from districts which experienced a high volume of returns of migrant workers and others stranded elsewhere in the country during the initial stages of the lockdown.

Visva-Bharati hostel order

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Santiniketan: Visva-Bharati asked its students, including those from abroad, to vacate its hostels on Tuesday, prompting many to question the order amid the pandemic.

Around 70 students are stuck in hostels since the March lockdown, many from Bangladesh, Myanmar, Venezuela, as well as from Kerala, Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

A varsity official said they issued the order to identify boarders who "genuinely don't have the option to return home".

Defections, veteran exit rock Lalu's party

DEVRAJ

Patna: Five out of eight members of the legislative council (MLCs) of the RJD crossed over to the ruling JDU headed by chief minister Nitish Kumar.

RJD vice-president and veteran Raghuvansh Prasad Singh also resigned from the party on Tuesday.

The twin blows to the RJD, the largest party with 80 MLAs leading the Opposition, left it reeling with neither Rabri Devi nor Tejashwi Prasad Yadav coming out with any statement over the developments.

The five MLCs Dilip Rai, Radha Charan Seth alias Radha Charan Sah, Sanjay Prasad, Qamar Alam, and Ranvijay Kumar Singh met legislative council chairman Awadhesh Narain Singh to express their intention to join the JDU.

"The five MLCs had written to me that they have formed a separate group from the RJD. They were two-third in strength and wanted to merge in the JDU. We also got a letter from JDU chief whip in the council Reena Devi in this regard. We followed all processes, verified member signatures and asked them about the move. We allowed them to merge in the JDU," Awadhesh said.

Lalu Prasad

Sources said the five MLCs were miffed with the family-oriented politics of the RJD and the purported move to nominate Lalu Prasad's eldest son and Mahua MLA Tej Pratap Yadav as one of the party's candidates for the upcoming elections to the nine seats of the Upper House on July 7.

Asked about the crossover, MLC Dilip said: "We did this after seeing the all-round development of the state under chief minister Nitish Kumar. The welfare work launched by him attracted us, people also wanted us to support him."

With the crossover, the RJD has only three MLCs left — Rabri, Subodh Kumar and R.C. Purvey. Rabri happened to be the leader of Opposition in the Council, but in the light of the changed circumstances, Awadhesh said the issue would be deliberated at an opportune time.

RJD spokesperson Mritunjay Tiwary said: "This is an action of a person (read Nitish) who specialises in smothering democracy. The MLCs have been elected because of the party. They were a product of Lalu Prasad's factory of making MLAs and MLCs. If they have chosen to go, others will come up. This move (their leaving) will also anger the public."

Raghuvansh is being treated at AIIMS, Patna, after testing positive for Covid-19. Though he could not be contacted, sources said he was miffed over the decision to induct muscleman Rama Singh in the party.

Rama faces dozens of criminal charges, including those pertaining to murder, kidnapping and ransom. He defeated Raghuvansh in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections and engineered his defeat in 2019.

"Raghuvansh *babu* in his letter addressed to party chief (Lalu Prasad) said he has always been with the party during its bad times, but is very unhappy and sending his resignation," an RJD source said.

Fresh hill demand for Nepal treaty review

VIVEK CHHETRI AND AVIJIT SINHA

Darjeeling/Siliguri: Political parties in the Darjeeling hills have renewed the demand for an amendment to the India-Nepal Friendship Treaty of 1950 in the wake of Nepal's move for a new law that will make a sever-year wait mandatory for foreign women married to men in the country to acquire citizenship by naturalisation.

Gorkhas in the hills have been for decades seeking the review of the treaty and the revocation of its Article VII that allows free passage and stay for the residents of India and Nepal on a reciprocal basis.

The Indian Gorkhas always feel abrogation of the treaty would restrict the free passage of Nepali nationals and help them establish their separate identity.

Asked about Nepal's plan to amend its citizenship law, Gorkha Janmukti Morcha leader Binay Tamang said: "It is an international issue and it is the central government that will have to take a call. However, the facility of free movement has to be dropped and a passport system should be introduced between the two countries."

Jan Andolan Party chief Harka Bahadur Chhetri said: "We are not ready to comment on a decision by any foreign country. However, if steps are taken for India's interests and restriction is put on the free movement, it would be a major victory for Indian Gorkhas."

Manipur pot boiling, CBI strikes

UMANAND JAISWAL

Guwahati: The CBI has summoned former Manipur Congress chief minister Okram Ibobi Singh to appear before the agency on Wednesday in connection with alleged embezzlement of Rs 332 crore development funds during his term.

The summons were issued days after the Congress had staked claim to form the government in Manipur where all four MLAs of the National People's Party had withdrawn support to BJP chief minister Biren Singh.

The NPP MLAs on Tuesday flew to Guwahati and were slated to meet Union home minister Amit Shah in New Delhi on Wednesday, said one of the legislators.

Assam BJP minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and NPP president and Meghalaya chief minister Conrad Sangma were in Imphal on Tuesday to resolve the crisis faced by the BJP government. This was their second visit since Sunday.

An FIR had been lodged in the alleged scam in November 2019. Besides Okram Ibobi Singh, three retired bureaucrats were also booked.

1 TEMPLE SERVITOR TESTS POSITIVE

Puri Rath Yatra rolls out amid curbs

SUBHASHISH MOHANTY

Puri: The Puri Rath Yatra was conducted as scheduled on Tuesday amid curfew-like restrictions in the temple town, and without devotees.

With the Supreme Court on Monday reversing its earlier decision and allowing the Yatra with curbs while ruling on review petitions filed by the Odisha government and others, only servitors of the Shri Jagannath Temple who tested negative for the coronavirus were allowed to pull the three chariots.

Servitors chanting "Jai Jagannath" amid the beating of gongs and cymbals pulled the chariots of Lord Jagannath and his siblings, Lord Balabhadra and Goddess Subhadra, from the Lion's Gate of the 12th-century Sri Jagannath Temple to Sri Gundicha temple 2.5km away.

Priests and devotees perform *pahandi* rituals of Lord Jagannath during the Rath Yatra festival in Puri. (PTI)

The Supreme Court had allowed a total of 1,500 servitors — 500 for each chariot — to pull the raths. According to the Puri district administration, 1,143 servitors were tested for Covid-19 on Monday and one of them tested positive. He was taken to hospital while the others were allowed to participate in the event.

As no devotee was allowed to take part, Grand Road, through which the chariots made their way, and Puri in general wore a deserted look. Usually, around 10 lakh people attend the Rath Yatra.

Curfew-like curbs were clamped in Puri and residents not allowed out. Restrictions will stay till 3pm on Wednesday. All entry points to Puri have been sealed. Fifty platoons of police or 5,000 personnel have been deployed.

The event went live on television. Chief minister Naveen Patnaik, who attends the festival every year, watched the Yatra on TV at the secretariat in Bhubaneswar this time.

The rituals began at 4am on Tuesday. At 9.30am, the deities were brought from the sanctum sanctorum to the chariots. Puri Shankaracharya Swami Nischalananda Saraswati, who earlier came down heavily on the administration after the court scrapped this year's Yatra, paid obeisance to the deities atop the chariots — Nandighosh of Lord Jagannath, Taladhwaja of Lord Balabhadra and Darpadalan of Goddess Subhadra.

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ADVERTORIAL
₹1 CRORE DEAR WEEKLY LOTTERY WINNING TICKET SOLD IN BAGDOGRA, SILIGURI

Dear weekly lottery have been creating several Crorepati across the state of West Bengal. People from several walks of life, including youngsters, house wife and other category of people are becoming Crorepati every day from Dear weekly lotteries. On such line, one more Crorepati was created through Dear Lottery ticket which was sold by Mr. Bijay Gopal Das, Bagdogra, Siliguri. In the draw held on **22.06.2020,** a Dear Lottery ticket bearing number **86H 18794** has won the first prize amount of Rs. 1 Crore. The seller said, "I have been selling lottery tickets for several years. Selling of Dear Lotteries gives me good employment opportunity. I also get an incentive amount of Rs. 1 lakh for the first prize winning ticket I have sold. Dear Lottery draws are shown on live and hence the customers trust it very much and have been buying to try their fortune", the seller said.

IN BRIEF

Penalty for avoiding RTI query

BHOPAL: The Madhya Pradesh information commission has imposed a penalty of Rs 25,000 on a revenue officer for alleged malafide and willful intention of not sharing the information sought by an RTI applicant related to a corruption case. The RTI filed by Achal Kumar Dubey in 2107 had sought a copy of chargesheet issued to then chief municipal officer Vidisha, on the basis of a complaint of alleged irregularities filed by him. PTI

Bharadwaj plea

MUMBAI: Bombay High Court will hear on Friday a bail application filed by activist Sudha Bharadwaj, an accused in the Elgar Parishad case. PTI

Teesta Setalvad

KOTA: The University of British Columbia (UBC) has conferred an honorary doctorate on human rights defender and journalist Teesta Setalvad. Setalvad, the secretary Citizens for Justice and Peace (CJP) as well as editor and co-founder of SabrangIndia, was chosen for a long history of defending the rights of people from religious minorities and oppressed socio-cultural backgrounds.

"She has worked in the field of human rights and law to expose majoritarianism and religious fanaticism in India and other parts of the world, deepening human rights jurisprudence on victimology and access to justice," the UBC said.

Sangh seeks isolation of China, not war

RSS wants shift in govt line on neighbour

J.P. YADAV

New Delhi: The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh wants the Narendra Modi government to tamp down the border tension with China and use the neighbour's aggression in Ladakh to isolate the "deceptive Red Dragon" on the world stage.

Despite a sense of annoyance within the RSS over the government's handling of the Ladakh border clash and the wider bilateral relations with China, the BJP's ideological parent is cautious not to spell it out in public.

Officially, the RSS has chosen to stand in "complete solidarity" with "Bharat's armed forces and the government", with Sangh leaders arguing this is not the time to criticise.

The RSS has always been cautious not to publicly criticise the current government given Modi's popularity and the realisation that he is the best the camp can offer.

"We have always been urging, not only the current but also previous governments, to be wary of communist China and adopt a very strong policy," an RSS leader said.

"A strong stand, however, doesn't mean going to war to avenge the death of our soldiers. We have to deal with China not only militarily but on a number of other fronts," the leader added.

The leader said the Modi government had erred in going out of its way to woo China — a reference to the lavish welcome accorded to President Xi Jinping when he visited India.

"Now, however, the government has fully understood that a country ruled by expansionist communists can't be trusted," the leader said.

Ideologically, the RSS sees communist China as an avowed enemy but feels that any impulsive action following the killing of 20 soldiers in the Galwan Valley could be counter-productive for India.

Unlike Modi, the RSS in its official statement after the killing of 20 Indian soldiers did not use words such as "befitting reply".

"We strongly condemn this aggressive and violent act of the Chinese government and the Chinese army," a statement from RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat and general secretary Bhaiyaji Joshi said. "In this time of crisis, we the people of Bharat stand by Bharat's armed forces and the government in complete solidarity," the statement added.

RSS affiliate Swadeshi Jagran Manch has been leading a campaign for long to boycott Chinese goods. The RSS mouthpiece *Organiser* has been running a sustained ideological campaign against China since the Covid-19 pandemic reached India and also over reports of intrusion in Ladakh. The RSS feels a multi-pronged campaign within and outside India is needed to isolate China.

After the violent Ladakh face-off, an *Organiser* editorial stressed on the need for a "global strategy" to isolate China.

"The armed forces, along with the political leadership, will take a call on the appropriate military response. Beyond that, we should lead the global strategy to tame the non-transparent, undemocratic and expansionist Red Dragon," the editorial said.

Speaking to **The Telegraph**, *Organiser* editor Praful Ketkar said a strong anti-China sentiment had been generated globally not only due to the "non-transparent" handling of the coronavirus crisis but also the aggressive expansionist policies being pursued under Xi.

"India has the opportunity to seize the anti-China feeling across the world. The world must unite against China, and India can lead the effort," Ketkar said, clarifying that he was not speaking on behalf of the RSS but as the editor of the *Organiser*.

Ketkar said that while the killing of Indian soldiers was a serious issue, intrusion attempts by China were nothing new. He pointed out that everybody talks of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir but nobody broaches Aksai Chin.

"Aksai Chin is also a part of Jammu and Kashmir that is under Chinese occupation," Ketkar said, accusing previous Congress governments of allowing such occupations by Pakistan and China.

The RSS and the BJP are aware that the cancellation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status and the bifurcation of the erstwhile state into Union Territories had irked both Pakistan and China but feel they can't go back on the issue and should handle it carefully on the global stage while remaining firm.

RSS insiders said that in the days to come, they would slowly foreground the issue of "China-occupied Jammu and Kashmir" and ensure it gains currency like PoK.

Army chief M.M. Naravane interacts with an injured soldier at Military Hospital in Leh on Tuesday during a visit to eastern Ladakh. (PTI)

Russia: India, China don't need outside help

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi: Russia on Tuesday expressed complete faith in India's and China's ability to resolve bilateral issues, including dialling down ongoing tensions along the Line of Actual Control, in a clear indication that Moscow does not agree with US President Donald Trump's offer to mediate.

Briefing mediapersons after chairing the Russia-India-China foreign ministers' video conference, Russian minister Sergey Lavrov said in response to a question: "Actually, we have never sought to help India and China build better relations because they have everything they need."

Lavrov had been asked if Moscow would help improve relations between the two neighbours.

"It's OK to have problems with your neighbours and with other countries.... I don't think India and China need any help from the outside. I don't think they need to be helped specially when it comes to concrete issues. They can solve them on their own. New Delhi and Beijing have already shown their commitment to a peaceful resolution. After this incident they have started meetings at the level of defence officers, foreign ministers and by the way neither of the two sides made any statements which would indicate that any of them would rather pursue other non-diplomatic solutions," he said.

Lavrov said the heads of government of the three countries would meet on the sidelines of the G20 meeting in Saudi Arabia on November 21 and 22.

External affairs minister S. Jaishankar said: "The leading voices of the world must be exemplars in every way. Respecting international law, recognising the legitimate interests of partners, supporting multilateralism and promoting common good are the only way of building a durable world order."

Chinese foreign minister Wang Yi stressed the need for all three countries to follow strategic autonomy, in a possible indication of Beijing's displeasure over India engaging with the US effort to contain China in the Asia-Pacific region.

To Pakistan, India talks tough

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi: The Narendra Modi government sought to salvage its muscular image on Tuesday by asking Pakistan to halve the staff strength in its diplomatic mission in New Delhi for allegedly engaging in "espionage" and maintaining "dealings" with terrorists.

India, too, will cut down its staff strength at its mission in Islamabad by 50 per cent in keeping with the practice of reciprocity on which the bilateral relationship works. This will bring down the staff strength in both missions to 55 compared to the current agreed strength of 110.

The decision comes at a time when India is trying to dial down tensions with China after the hand-to-hand combat in Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh last week that poses the biggest challenge till date to Prime Minister Modi's carefully cultivated muscular image and has shown the government to be weak in the face of a bigger and powerful adversary.

India delivered the message to Pakistan's Charge d' Affaires Syed Haider Shah who was summoned to the external affairs ministry and told the decision should be implemented within seven days, by when India, too, would withdraw half of its staff from the mission in Islamabad.

Shah was informed that India had repeatedly expressed concern about the activities of officials of his high commission. "They have been engaged in acts of espionage and maintained dealings with terrorist organisations. The activities of the two officials caught red-handed and expelled on May 31, 2020, was one example in that regard," the ministry said.

These two officials were accused by India of espionage and expelled from the country earlier this month.

In addition, it was said that Pakistan has simultaneously "engaged in a sustained campaign to intimidate the officials of the Indian High Commission in Islamabad from carrying on their legitimate diplomatic functions. The recent abduction at gunpoint of two Indian officials and their severe ill treatment underlines the extent to which Pakistan has gone in that direction. These officials who have returned to India on June 22, 2020, have provided graphic details of the barbaric treatment that they experienced at the hands of Pakistani agencies".

Indian officials Dwimu Brahms (right) and Selvadhas Paul at the Wagah border on Monday after their release. (AFP)

Pakistan has accused the two Indian staff members at the mission in Islamabad of "hit-and-run" after their car allegedly knocked down a pedestrian in Islamabad on June 15. The officials have since returned to India.

As for harassment of diplomats, this is again something both sides allege each other of doing routinely. In Pakistan, Indian diplomats are tailed regularly and kept under strict vigil.

"The behaviour of Pakistan and its officials is not in conformity with the Vienna Convention and bilateral agreements on the treatment of diplomatic and consular officials. On the contrary, it is an intrinsic element of a larger policy of supporting cross-border violence and terrorism," a statement issued by the external affairs ministry said.

The two missions were in any case downgraded after Pakistan unilaterally decided in August last year to downgrade diplomatic relations with India following the Modi government's decision to redraw the political and geographical map of Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan did not send its High Commissioner-designate to India and New Delhi was asked to withdraw his counterpart Ajay Bisaria, who has since been transferred to Canada to head the mission there.

China goods

▶ FROM PAGE 1

"The government should extend the rules to all platforms so that consumers get a choice not to buy Chinese products," said Ashwani Mahajan, co-convenor of the Swadeshi Jagran Manch.

Praveen Khandelwal, secretary-general of the Confederation of All India Traders which represents the small businesses in the country, endorsed the RSS demand.

"Such a provision should also be applicable on all e-commerce portals operating in the country. Since the government has begun the step with itself, it's a perfect reflection of 'charity begins at home' and the commerce ministry should immediately issue a notification to make it mandatory for all e-commerce portals operating... in India."

Amazon and Walmart are the biggest players in India's e-commerce space and have been battling a rising tide of protectionism in the country.

Earlier this month, the government modified public procurement norms to give maximum preference to companies whose goods and services have 50 per cent or more local content, a move aimed at promoting "Make in India" and making the country self-reliant.

The revised public procurement (Preference to Make in India) Order, 2017, introduced a concept of Class-I, II and non-local suppliers, based on which they will get preference in government purchases of goods and services.

Launched in 2016, the GeM portal is used for online purchases of goods and services by all the central government ministries and departments.

Currently, government departments, ministries, public sector units, state governments and central armed police forces are allowed to carry out transactions through this portal. Items on sale include a wide range of products from office stationery to vehicles.

So far, 394,461 sellers and service providers are registered with the portal to sell 18,30,688 products and several services.

India is also planning to impose higher trade barriers and raise import duties on around 300 products from China and elsewhere as part of an effort to protect domestic businesses.

Cong tears into Modi

▶ FROM PAGE 1

Amid dismay among many military veterans, retired diplomats and several others in India, the PMO issued a clarification on Saturday to say Modi's observation that "there was no Chinese presence on our side of the LAC pertained to the situation as a consequence of the bravery of our armed forces".

That the CWC issued a formal resolution suggests the main Opposition party does not believe the clarification is enough.

"What steps will the government take to ensure restoration of status quo ante?" the CWC asked, underlining that it was the right and duty of the Opposition to raise questions and seek clarity from the government.

Party president Sonia Gandhi had set the tone for the CWC meeting, saying: "It is said misfortunes do not come singly. India has been hit by a terrible economic crisis, a pandemic of huge proportions and, now, by a full-blown crisis on the borders with China. Much of each crisis is attributable to the mismanagement of the BJP-led NDA government and the wrong policies pursued by it...."

Rahul Gandhi, who has repeatedly asked the government to clarify if China has occupied Indian land, held the Prime Minister responsible.

"China has brazenly occupied our territory. The Prime Minister has destroyed our position and betrayed our army by accepting their (Chinese) position that they occupied no Indian land. The Chinese can't be permitted to get away with this unacceptable usurpation of our land. Everything needs to be done to ensure that the sacrifice of our martyrs is not in vain," the Congress MP said.

"One reason why China has acted is a complete and total failure of foreign policy. The established institutional structure of diplomacy has been demolished by the Prime Minister. Our relations with our once friendly neighbours lie in tatters. Our time-tested relationship with our traditional allies has been interrupted. India should build a good relationship with the US and other countries but must also maintain good relations with its old friends."

Covid 'disaster'

The Congress on Tuesday accused the government of abandoning its fight against Covid-19, leaving the people to fend for themselves even as the infection curve rises and economic woes deepen.

"The mismanagement of the pandemic will be recorded as one of the most disastrous failures of the Modi government," Sonia was quoted as saying at the meeting.

The CWC said in a resolution: "After more than four months into the pandemic, it is astonishing that the Modi government has not unveiled a coherent strategy on reducing fatalities, increasing testing, contact tracing and ensuring social distancing and safety for the most vulnerable population...."

IIM fund

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi: Indian Institute of Management (IIM) Ahmedabad on Tuesday launched an endowment fund similar to foreign universities with an initial commitment of Rs 100 crore from its alumni.

The institute is the first among the IIMs to start such a fund. IIM Ahmedabad aims to raise endowment funds of Rs 1,000 crore over the next five years, according to a release.

The funds will be kept as a corpus and the interest accrued will be spent on the growth of the institute.

Bail for Zargar

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi: Delhi High Court on Tuesday granted bail to Safoora Zargar, the pregnant Jamia Millia Islamia student facing terrorism charges in connection with the protests against the citizenship regime that police say sparked the Delhi riots, after she spent 74 days in jail.

Zargar, the media coordinator of the Jamia Coordination Committee who is 23 weeks (five months) pregnant, was granted bail after solicitor-general Tushar Mehta, representing the Delhi government, said the state would not oppose such a relief on "humanitarian grounds".

Zargar, an MPhil student of sociology, had been taken into custody on April 10 after being booked under the anti-terror Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) and kept at Tihar jail in Delhi. According to the police, the anti-CAA protests had triggered the Delhi riots in which 53 people were killed in February.

While telling the high court that the state would not oppose Zargar's bail, Mehta had made it clear that the prosecution had done so without considering the merits of the case, and that this should not be made a precedent.

The prosecution had submitted that 39 deliveries had taken place in Delhi's prison facilities in the last decade, and Zargar was being taken care of well and had been kept alone in a cell to protect her from Covid-19.

The court has ordered Zargar not to "indulge in any activity for which she is being investigated and not... interfere with the investigation or influence the witnesses".

Glare on Patanjali's pill

▶ FROM PAGE 1

"We've prepared the first ayurvedic trial-based medicine for Covid-19. We conducted a clinical study and found 69 per cent patients recovered in three days, 100 per cent recovered in seven days," Ramdev said at the media conference, the ANI news agency reported.

The medicine has extracts of the traditional plants ashwagandha, giloy and tulsi which have been shown through independent research studies earlier to display anti-viral and immunomodulating properties, said Mahesh Vyas, a senior researcher at the All India Institute of Ayurveda, New Delhi.

However, the study involved 100 Covid-19 patients who had no symptoms or only mild symptoms, two senior doctors at the privately run National Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS), Jaipur, the study's site, told **The Telegraph**.

Medical experts point out that observations worldwide suggest that Covid-19 is a mild disease in 80 per cent of infected persons who recover spontaneously without the need for medical intervention.

The Patanjali study's principal investigator, Ganpat Devpura, a professor of medicine at NIMS, said 69 per cent of 50 patients who received the medicine were free of the virus on Day 3 and 100 per cent on Day 7, while only 65 per cent of 50 patients who received placebo were free of the virus on Day 7.

All patients recovered and went home, Devpura told this newspaper. "We also plan to publish these findings," he said.

Senior pharmacology and medicine specialists said such a study does not in any way establish the benefit of the drug on patients as the duration of virus shedding varies from person to person.

Patients may shed the virus for up to 20 days after it enters the body, said Shri Prakash Kalantri, professor of medicine at the Mahatma Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences, Wardha.

"Can a drug reduce death rates? Can a drug reduce the need for ventilators? Can a drug reduce the length of stay in an intensive care unit? These are the questions that will tell us whether a drug benefits patients," Kalantri told this newspaper.

The Ayush ministry, concerned about unsubstantiated claims about Ayush and Covid-19, had in April directed that all Ayush studies be registered on a national clinical trial database and that their patients' sample size should withstand statistical scrutiny.

While the Patanjali study is registered on the database, medical experts point out that its sample size of 100 patients is not large enough for a meaningful analysis of how a medicine might influence outcomes in patients with mild symptoms.

Pharmacology experts point out that Indian drug regulatory processes allow organisations to develop and market ayurvedic products without rigorous clinical trials if the ingredients of the products are mentioned in ancient classical ayurvedic texts.

"We must subject products from ayurveda to the same methodological rigour as we do for clinical trials in modern medicine," Kalantri said.

There is currently no proven anti-viral therapy specifically for Covid-19 and doctors around the world provide patients supportive therapy such as oxygen and anti-inflammatory drugs while waiting for the body's immune system to fight the virus.

However, many countries, including India, have approved two anti-virals — remdesivir and favipiravir — for restricted emergency use in Covid-19 patients on the basis of limited evidence.

Bridge near LAC crashes into river

PIYUSH SRIVASTAVA

Lucknow: A bridge in Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh district that is 65km from the Line of Actual Control between India and China collapsed on Monday under the weight of a truck carrying an excavator, cutting off the only road link to the LAC from the region.

The 60-metre Valley Bridge, which split from the middle and fell into the Senargar river, was also the sole link between Munsiyari town and 15 villages on the other side.

Around 7,000 people in these villages depend solely on the 11-year-old bridge for their daily provisions. Food and other items for soldiers stationed at the LAC are also ferried by the bridge.

The truck was ferrying the excavator to a Border Roads Organisation road-laying site nearby.

Kharak Singh, a watchman posted near the bridge, told reporters the truck driver ignored his request not to drive on it with the excavator because together they weighed almost double the bridge's permissible limit.

"The truck driver shouted at me and asked me to get lost. I kept telling him that the bridge had been shaking badly of late when heavy vehicles plied on it. The truck had reached the end of the bridge when it collapsed and the vehicle fell into the Senargar river," he said.

"We somehow brought Gowardhan Singh, the driver, and Lakhvindar Singh, the excavator operator, out of the river," said an eyewitness.

goodlife

TT Connect Initiative

BUYING A CAR IS NOW A NECESSITY

Today, a four-wheeler is more of a need than a want.

The spread of Covid-19 has led to the need of having certain ground rules for sanitation and personal hygiene. Among them, social distancing is a must.

In times like these, now more so when the lockdown is being phased out with all due precaution, work from home is becoming work from office as well. Organizations are leaving no stone unturned to ensure that their employees and stakeholders return to work in the safest of environments.

Towards this extent, having your own car is increasingly becoming a necessity than a want. It ensures social distancing, beyond commuting in public transport where people have to be extra cautious to maintain distance.

Also, when you have your own vehicle, it becomes easy to sanitise and maintain the car as per your usage.

So this is the opportune moment to buy your own car. Here are a few more reasons to get behind the wheel.

Buying a car is aspirational

Today, aspirations coupled with ambitions are reaching the stars. It is a popular saying that size matters, and indeed so, for those who are passionate about the four wheels, a brand new swanky car outside the garage is the pride of place!

Indeed, for the well-heeled as also those who like to show off their ware, cars always top the list. You would notice aficionados meticulously cleaning out their cars every Sunday and giving them for wash and servicing regularly. And nothing gives more pleasure than the loud vroom vroom zooming on the roads!

Buying a car gets the family together

You have to plan your four wheel buy in accordance to your needs and budget accordingly. After all, it is a big decision which also has a lot of sentimental value attached to it. You would not want your grandmother to sit cramped in a small car or your child wailing for space in the front seat pushed upfront. So if you are looking for extended family needs, then a SUV is ideal for you. Or maybe an automobile for more comfort, then a sedan is apt. A small car works wonders if you are going to use it only for official purposes. Rides smooth and fits well in small parking spaces as well. Today in the markets, there is an automobile available in multiple brands in different segments among all pocket sizes. So look to your family needs, match your pocket size and choose well!

The Telegraph
BUSINESS
CALCUTTA WEDNESDAY 24 JUNE 2020 XXCE

"We are fully pushing ahead with next steps there (India). We'll have further investment there

Foxconn chairman **Liu Young-way**

STOCK CHECK

Sensex intra-day movement

Previous 34911.32

CURRENCIES

US $	75.64
UK Pound	94.54
Euro	85.41

INDICES

BSE		
Sensex	35430.43	+519.11
Midcap	13283.47	+220.80
Smallcap	12668.18	+224.23
NSE		
Nifty	10471.00	+159.80
Next 50	26188.85	+465.55
Nifty 500	8621.10	+134.65

Most active on NSE

Scrip	Price*	Traded value#
Bajaj Fin	3104	4746.13
Glenmark	485.25	3235.40.
Reliance	1721.	3,034.42
IndusInd	521.90	2347.09
IbulHsgFin	240.40	1495.77

*In Rs; #In Rs crore

MONEY MARKET

	Yield (%)
Call rate	1.8-4.05
91-day T-Bill	3.28
1-year Gilt	3.71
5-year Gilt	5.41
10-year Gilt	5.90

Trump suspends H-1B visas

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi: President Donald Trump suspended the entry into the United States of certain foreign workers on Monday, a move the White House said would help the coronavirus-battered economy, but which business groups strongly oppose.

Trump issued a presidential proclamation that temporarily blocks foreign workers entering on H-1B visas for skilled employees, and L visas, for managers and specialised workers being transferred within a company. The visa suspension, which takes effect on Wednesday until the end of the year, will open up 525,000 jobs for US workers, a senior US administration official said on a call with reporters.

The US move has sparked dismay in the Indian tech industry. Indian IT industry's apex body Nasscom has criticised the the order saying it is "misguided and harmful to the US economy...We urge the administration to shorten the duration of these restrictions to 90 days. Lengthening these burdensome restrictions on US companies that are trying to recover from the economic fallout of the Covid-19 pandemic will only serve to harm the economy."

"Finally, we hope that the administration will rethink its stated plans to move forward on a series of regulatory changes that would place additional restrictions and costs on visa programs while doing little more than amplifying the harm already being done to the US economy," it added.

The decision will impact a large number of Indian IT professionals and several American and Indian companies who were issued H-1B visas by the US government for the fiscal year 2021 beginning October 1.They would now have to wait at least till the end of the current calendar year before approaching the US diplomatic missions to get stamping. It would also impact a large number of Indian IT professionals who are seeking renewal of their H-1B visas.

The H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. The technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

In April, Trump signed an immigration proclamation targeting people outside of the US seeking to legally migrate to the US, with some exceptions. That order, which was set to lapse, will be extended until the end of 2020 and expanded to include some guest worker visas. The new visas included are L-1 visas for intracompany transfers, H-1Bs for workers in specialty occupations as well as the H-4 visa for spouses, H-2Bs for temporary non-agricultural workers and most J-1 visas for exchange visitors.

The new rules would apply only to those who are outside the US, do not have a valid non-immigrant visa and an official travel document other than a visa to enter the US.

SELF GOAL: US FIRMS CORNER BULK OF THE VISAS

"America's continued success depends on companies having access to the best talent from around the world... Disappointed by the proclamation"

SUNDAR PICHAI, Google CEO

Patrick Pichette, Twitter's Canadian chairman

- A message to all you H-1B seekers; just look to the North, where we welcome you (and your family) with open arms... Did I mention free healthcare?

More voices

- **Amazon:** Preventing high skilled professionals from entering the country and contributing to America's economic recovery puts its global competitiveness at risk
- **Facebook:** Highly-skilled visa holders play a critical role in driving innovation... that's something we should encourage, not restrict
- **Thomas Donohue of the US Chamber of Commerce:** Putting up a 'not welcome' sign for engineers, executives, IT experts, doctors, nurses and other workers won't help our country

NEW H-1B VISAS

2018-19 (Oct-Sept)

Google	2111
Amazon	1612
TCS	1367
Facebook	1132
Apple	991
CTS	920
Microsoft	917
IBM	749
TechM	599
Capgemini	466

Climbdown in aviation row with US

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

WAY OUT

New Delhi: India is considering establishing "individual bilateral bubbles" with the US, the UK, Germany and France, allowing the airlines of each country in the pact to operate international passenger flights, said the aviation ministry on Tuesday.

The ministry's statement has come after the US department of transportation announced on Monday that it has barred Air India from operating chartered flights between India and the United States from July 22 without its prior approval, in an apparent retaliation for the Indian government not allowing American carriers to operate between the two countries.

The aviation ministry said, "As we contemplate further opening up in response to demands, we are looking at the prospect of establishing individual bilateral bubbles, India-US, India-France, India-Germany, India-UK. These are all destinations where demand for travel has not diminished. Final decisions pursuant to negotiations are expected to be taken soon."

"We have received requests from authorities in several countries, including the US, France, Germany among others, requesting that their air carriers be allowed to participate in the transportation of passengers along the line being conducted by Air India under Vande Bharat Mission. These requests are being examined," it added.

Scheduled international passenger flights have been suspended in India since March 25 because of the coronavirus pandemic.

Air India started international chartered flights under Vande Bharat Mission from May 6 to help people stranded amid the pandemic to reach their destinations.

The US Department of Transport (DOT) said on Monday it appears that Air India may be using its passenger repatriation charters as a way of circumventing government of India-imposed prohibition of all scheduled international services.

"We are taking this action (of allowing only those Air India flights from July 22 that have DoT"s approval) because the government of India has impaired the operating rights of US carriers and has engaged in discriminatory and restrictive practices with respect to US carrier services to and from India," the DoT said.

The aviation ministry said on Tuesday that it had one round of negotiations with the representatives of the DoT and US Embassy on June 15 about letting American carriers operate flights.

"They were invited to submit precise proposals in this respect. A communication has now been received on 19 June, 2020 detailing these requests," the ministry said.

IN BRIEF

Signs of green shoots

NEW DELHI: The finance ministry on Tuesday cited "green shoots" of recovery in agriculture, manufacturing and services sectors, and said the prompt policy measures taken by the government and RBI have helped to reinvigorate the economy with minimal damage. Stating that agricultural sector remains the foundation of the Indian economy, the ministry said that a normal monsoon, as has been forecast, should support the rebooting of economy. PTI

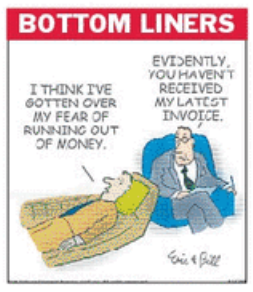
Adani buy

NEW DELHI: Adani Power will acquire US-based AES Corporation's 49 per cent equity stake in Odisha Power Generation Corporation for $135 million (around Rs 1,019 crore), the Adani group firm said on Tuesday. PTI

Yes Bank

MUMBAI: Domestic rating agency Icra on Tuesday downgraded the rating on certain bonds of Yes Bank, days after the RBI restrained the lender from making repayments to bondholders on account of capital being below the mandated levels. PTI

BOTTOM LINERS



RIL upbeat on Aramco deal

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Mukesh Ambani

Mumbai: Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) is pursuing the deal with Saudi Aramco under which the Saudi Arabia energy giant is expected to pick up a 20 per cent stake in RIL's oil-to-chemicals business for $15 billion based on an enterprise valuation of $75 billion.

In a letter to shareholders in the company's annual report for 2019-20, RIL chairman Mukesh Ambani said: "In the energy businesses, Reliance is working to complete the contours of a strategic partnership with Saudi Aramco. The partnership gives our refineries access to a wide portfolio of value-accretive crude grades and enhanced feedstock security for a higher oil-to-chemicals conversion."

A flurry of deals in Jio Platforms has helped Reliance to raise over Rs 1 lakh crore from a gaggle of overseas investors, including Facebook, and along with a Rs 53,000cr rights issue in May, helped it to become a net debt free company long before a deadline set for March next year.

But it was the Aramco deal that created the buzz last year when Ambani announced that the two sides had reached a memorandum of understanding for the stake purchase by the Saudi giant in Reliance's oil-to-chemical business.

Since then the prospects of an agreement faded because of the Covid-19 pandemic and the troubles at Aramco itself.

Ambani is now looking to seal the deal later this year, with several analysts indicating RIL could pull it off sooner rather than later though there may be a change in the valuation.

In a May report, analysts at HSBC Securities valued the oil-to-chemical business of RIL at a lower level $65 billion, meaning Reliance will get $13 billion from Aramco.

The analysts said though the crash in oil prices had raised doubts about the deal, there are significant advantages for Aramco join hands with Ambani. Besides, the additional cash flow will shift Reliance into a strong net cash position from net debt.

"RIL's refinery is one of the most complex refineries in the world, allowing it to earn a significant premium to the benchmark Singapore gross refining margin. The combined petrochemical and refining business should provide a lot more stability to the income stream, reducing the volatility of earnings," the report said.

The annual report further disclosed that Jio's passive infrastructure, which includes 1,75,000 towers and 1.1 million route kilometers for fiber, has already been transferred through a scheme as of March 31, 2019, to two separate Infrastructure Investment Trusts (InvIT) — a tower InvIT and a fiber InvIT.

During the year, RIL signed a binding agreement with Brookfield Infrastructure Partners LP and its institutional partners for investment in the units to be issued by the tower InvIT. Brookfield and affiliates will invest Rs 25,215 crore in the tower InvIT. The report said that discussions with potential investors for fiber InvIT are in progress.

Foxconn to ramp up presence

Taipei: Taiwan's Foxconn is planning further investment in India and may announce details in the next few months as the world's largest contract manufacturer views the outlook there very favourably, its chairman said on Tuesday.

Foxconn already makes smartphones in India for Apple Inc and Xiaomi Corp, though in March said it suspended production due to the novel coronavirus outbreak.

Chairman Liu Young-way told Foxconn's annual general meeting that looking ahead, India was a bright spot for development even though there was a "certain impact" at present due to the virus.

"We are fully pushing ahead with next steps there, and maybe in a few months' time we can reveal on our website the next steps and report back to everyone. We'll have further investment there," Liu said, without detailing plans or reasons for the firm's view on the business outlook in India.

Foxconn's January-March profit plunged to its lowest in two decades after the outbreak forced the firm to suspend manufacturing in China and knocked demand from customers including Apple.

But the firm, formally Hon Hai Precision Industry Co Ltd, last month said the worst of the outbreak for it was over.

Liu described the first-quarter results as a "special case" that reflected the effect of the virus. He said there were no infections at its China plants so it was able to resume operations earlier than it expected.

Foxconn is seeking to make up virus-related losses at its China plants with "resources" from customers and local governments. Reuters

Preferential pricing leeway

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

EASY RULES

Mumbai: The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has decided to relax the pricing methodology for preferential issues by listed firms having stressed assets even as it also exempted allottees of preferential issues from open offer obligations in these cases with immediate effect.

The announcement comes ahead of the Sebi board meet on June 25

Listed companies having 'stressed assets' generally witness a fall in their share price and they also face various difficulties in raising capital through the conventional means. The market regulator, therefore, eased the pricing methodology of preferential issues by such firms.

The new framework is aimed at helping stressed companies raise capital through timely financial intervention and at the same time protecting the interest of shareholders.

"Eligible listed companies having stressed assets will be able to determine pricing of their preferential allotments at not less than the average of the weekly high and low of the volume weighted average prices of the related equity shares during the two weeks preceding the relevant date," Sebi said in a statement on Tuesday.

At present, the determination of the pricing covers a period of 26 weeks or more for frequently traded shares.

Sebi said allottees of preferential issue in such eligible companies will be exempted from making an open offer if the acquisition is beyond the prescribed threshold or if the open offer is warranted due to change in control in terms of Sebi takeover regulations.

Defaulted debt securities

Sebi on Tuesday allowed transactions in defaulted debt securities and put in place operational framework for such transactions.

This comes after the regulator received representations from market participants and investors to allow transactions in debt securities where the redemption amount has not been paid on maturity or redemption date.

BoB setback

OUR LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi: The Supreme Court has permitted the RBI to take regulatory action against the Bank of Baroda for failing to honour a bank guarantee.

Indian Oil Corporation had won a case in the Calcutta High Court on February 10 against BoB for failing the oil refiner from cashing out a bank guarantee issued by a defaulter. The high court permitted regulatory action against the bank. BoB had challenged the high court order before the apex court.

The matter related to a bank guarantee issued on behalf of Simplex Projects Ltd. A guarantee of Rs 6.97 crore was furnished by BoB to Indian Oil Corporation (IOCL) on behalf of Simplex.

IOCL had raised a demand to encash the amounts under the bank guarantee, which the lender did not release since the guarantee was not valid on the date of its invocation. The Supreme Court has refused to interfere with the Calcutta High Court order which had asked Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to revoke the license of BoB r

"We do not find any ground to interfere against the Order impugned in the Special Leave Petitions. The Special Leave Petitions are, accordingly, dismissed. However, it shall be open to the Reserve Bank of India to take such action as may be necessary in the facts and circumstances of the case, in the modification of the direction of the High Court as contained in page 4 of the impugned order..." a vacation bench of Justices Hemant Gupta and Justice Aniruddha Bose said in an order passed on Monday.

Infratel meet

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Mumbai: The board of Bharti Infratel is set to meet on Wednesday to discuss the merger with Indus Towers.

It may be recalled that June 24 is the long-stop date for the proposed merger. The board may decide whether to go ahead with the merger now or postpone till there is greater clarity on the telecom (AGR) dues that Bharti Airtel needs to pay.

The principal shareholders, Bharti Group and Vodafone, have chosen a share-swap arrangement instead of the original plan, under which Bharti Infratel was to acquire Vodafone Idea's entire 11.15 per cent stake in the tower firm for about Rs 4,500 crore in cash. Under the new plan, which was one of the options in the scheme of arrangement, Vodafone Idea and Providence Equity Partners, an investor in Indus Towers, will be issued fresh shares in the merged entity.

The telecom infrastructure company had on June 13 rescheduled its board meeting, which was slated to be held on that day to take final call on the merger with Indus Towers

"Certain inputs that would have been required by the board for it to deliberate and take a final decision have been delayed given the current environment," the company had said.

It added that the board meeting has been "rescheduled for a later date but definitely on or before the current long stop date of June 24".

Sizzle puzzle: Birla Tyres outguns Kesoram

SAMBIT SAHA

Calcutta: When Kesoram decided to split its tyres and cement businesses into two halves last year and won the National Company Law Tribunal's approval in November, it created two mirror-image companies in terms of shareholding structure.

Kesoram, the flagship of Basant Kumar Birla Group, held the intermittently profitable and much bigger cement business while hiving off the chronically sick tyre outfit to Birla Tyres Ltd (BTL), which debuted on the bourses on February 10.

Four and half months down the road, BTL on Tuesday outgunned Kesoram in terms of market capitalisation, leaving many in the stock market shaking their heads in disbelief.

The Birla Tyres stock ended the day at Rs 39.50 on the BSE and Rs 36.15 on the NSE — opening an excellent arbitrage window if only they could exploit it. But with the stock hitting an upper circuit of 5 per cent every single day from March 27 onwards, punters have had little chance to grab the opportunity.

In contrast, Kesoram has been purring along at a sedate Rs 35.85 per share on the NSE.

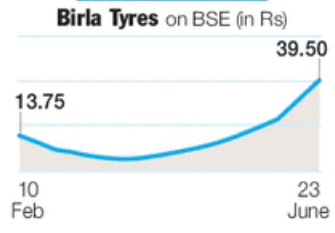
BTL did not have a glorious debut on the bourses. After listing at Rs 13.75, the stock hit the skids, tumbling to Rs 2.52 on March 26, a day before it began its spectacular recovery.

"There is no apparent reason why Birla Tyre should go up. This business has been a huge drag on the profitable cement division, forcing Kesoram to post losses.

"This is precisely the reason why the management hived off Birla Tyres into a separate entity," a long-time Kesoram watcher said, wondering if some operators were responsible for priming the stock.

SHARE SPRINT

Birla Tyres on BSE (in Rs)



According to the last publicly available results, the cement division earned four times more revenue than the tyre business.

In the three months ending September 30, 2019, the tyre business recorded revenues of Rs 139.84 crore compared with Rs 586.20 crore for the cement operations on a consolidated basis.

While cement made Rs 51.03 crore of pre-tax profit, tyre had recorded a loss of Rs 49.04 crore in the second quarter of last fiscal.

Roller-coaster ride

The Kesoram management has been looking to fix the tyre business for years but a turnaround has proved elusive. In 2016, it sold the more modern Haridwar unit to JK Tyre for Rs 2,195 crore in order to pare its mounting debts while retaining the older Balasore plant in Odisha.

With an eye to expand into the fast-growing radial passenger car tyre segment, it had planned to set up a unit which has remained unfinished for many years. A fund infusion of Rs 700 crore is required to complete the plant, according to one estimate.

Built in 1991, the Balasore plant has been operating intermittently. It primarily manufactures two wheeler and bus and truck tyres. It employs close to 3,000 people, including temporary and contractual workers. It still uses a lot of manual processes. There have been complaints that salaries and wages are not being paid regularly.

Led by Manjushree Khaitan, daughter of late B.K. Birla, Kesoram had been trying to rope in foreign partners to revive the tyre business. Talks were also initiated with at least one European and one Chinese manufacturer.

"It could be that investors are buying the stock hoping that a tyre major will pick up a stake," said one market participant while trying to explain the meteoric rise in the stock.

Both Kesoram and BTL defaulted on the payment of outstanding loans in the fourth quarter. Total outstanding debt of Kesoram stood at Rs 2070.87 crore while Birla Tyres had Rs 913.18 crore.

THE TIP

Encourage toddlers to drink pure, unsweetened fruit juice. Research says it will help them choose healthy foods later

The Telegraph

WELLNESS

WEDNESDAY 24 JUNE 2020 XXCE

Eat right to win the fight

ISTOCK

Certain foods give our innate immunity a boost. **Sujata Mukherjee** has the dietary dos and don'ts to defeat monsoon diseases and the coronavirus

The Covid-19 pandemic is fast approaching its peak in India. Experts say that novel coronavirus cases will peak at the end of July. And with the arrival of the monsoon, the viral pandemic will run hand in hand with the usual suspects of the season — dengue, malaria, typhoid, flu and gastroenteritis. This, therefore, is the right time to give your immune system a boost and fortify it to fight contagions, old and new, with some modification in lifestyle, food and exercise habits, and sleep patterns. At this time, home-cooked food is your safest best. Do not eat anything from outside. And try and eat a balanced diet. Given below are some of the things you should include in your daily diet.

Protein

You now need to have a whole lot of this food group. If you are a vegetarian or have problems in procuring fresh fish or chicken, add pulses, grams, kidney beans, soyabean, curd, paneer and cheese to your diet. Nuts and sprouts will give you protein, fibre, vitamin and minerals.

Vitamins

Vitamin C is an important antioxidant that can tame inflammation, a key characteristic of Covid-19 infection. Fresh fruits, especially citrus fruits such as lemon, are a must in the daily diet.

Vitamin D is another key weapon in the fight against the coronavirus. Our skin usually creates it from sunlight exposure but the lockdown has forced people indoors and limited their exposure to the sun. Also, sunshine is scant in the monsoon months. We have to therefore get this vitamin by consuming foods rich in it. This includes oily fish, egg yolk, mushroom, liver and milk fortified with the vitamin.

Do not exclude oil and fat completely from your diet because Vitamin D is absorbed through fatty substances. If you can't get enough of this vitamin from your diet, you'll need supplements. In addition, have homemade curd to maintain the health of friendly bacteria in your gut. These bugs strengthen your capacity to fight a viral infection.

Herbs and spices

Before Dalgona coffee, the trendy drink of choice worldwide was turmeric latte — concocted with turmeric, almonds and cashew nuts. Many cafes in the UK, US and Australia serve turmeric latte. Some of them also have "golden milk" — spiced with turmeric, ginger, pepper, cinnamon and honey or maple syrup on the menu. These spiced hot drinks can keep the common cold and other infections at bay.

Curcumin, the active ingredient in turmeric, fights infection and keeps inflammation under control. Inflammation makes you vulnerable to microbial infections of the monsoon as well as the coronavirus. You can try a teaspoon of freshly-ground turmeric with a glass of milk in the morning and evening. Adding a bit of pepper to the mix makes for a stronger impact. Piperine is the component that makes pepper a disease fighter.

Cinnamon can lower cholesterol, fasting sugar and resistance to insulin — factors that make you vulnerable to the novel coronavirus and other infections. Its active component is coumarin. Gingerol in ginger also fights microbial infections.

If you don't fancy adding them to your tea or latte, use a variety of spices — ginger, garlic, turmeric, cumin and cinnamon — in your cooking. Add coriander, mint, tulsi and curry leaves for seasoning. These herbs and spices are known to boost immunity.

What to avoid

Avoid processed food as much as possible. They are loaded with artificial colour, preservatives and an excess of sugar and salt, which decreases immunity. Give cold drinks, packed fruit juice and caffeinated drinks a miss. Avoid consuming too many sweets, chocolates, cakes and pastries as they usher in inflammation, which makes you vulnerable.

If you try and live by these dietary rules, you will have a fighting chance against all infections, including Covid-19.

Food hygiene tips

Remove any unnecessary packaging and dispose into a waste bin with a lid. Packaging such as cans can be wiped clean with a disinfectant. Wash your hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, or use a hand sanitiser, immediately afterwards

Wash unpackaged produce, such as fruit and vegetables, thoroughly under running water

Wash your hands thoroughly with soap before preparing, cooking and serving food

Use separate chopping boards for uncooked meat and fish and fresh produce

Cook food to the recommended temperature

Where possible, keep perishable items refrigerated or frozen, and pay attention to product expiry dates

Recycle or dispose of food waste and packaging in a correct and sanitary manner. Avoid build-up of refuse. It could attract pests

Wash your hands with soap for at least 20 seconds before eating and make sure your children do the same. Always use clean utensils.

Source: Unicef

Keep the cold away

YOUR HEALTH

DR GITA MATHAI

These have always been considered mild, irritating but self-limiting infections. They usually last 7-10 days. They affect everyone three to four times a year when the weather changes. The symptoms are a runny nose, cough and mild fever in the range of 100-101°F. Unfortunately, the entire family is affected by this infection, one after the other.

Most of these infections are caused by a variety of "cold" viruses. The initial virus infection may be followed by a secondary bacterial infection by organisms such as chlamydia, mycoplasma and streptococcus.

A change in weather (particularly, cold air) can cause blood vessels in the nose to constrict. This can help viruses to gain a foothold. Pollen in the air can also irritate the nose and make the person susceptible to infection.

Viral infections do not need aggressive treatment. Rest, reducing the headache and fever with antipyretics (paracetamol), and mucolytics and cough suppressants are usually all that is required. Bacterial infections respond to specific antibiotics provided the dosage and duration of treatment are adequate.

Most people acquire some immunity to common viruses. The frequency and severity of infections gradually decrease. The coronavirus pandemic is an exception. It is a novel virus that people have not been exposed to. There is no herd immunity. In some people, it causes a virulent "hyper response" where oxygenation in the lungs is affected. Clotting can occur in blood vessels all over the body and result in multi-organ failure.

ISTOCK

Japan has had relatively fewer cases than other countries. They did not have a total lockdown or impose severe restrictions on the movement of people. As a country, they anyway tend to maintain social distancing and many wear masks normally. They sanitise hands and also gargle regularly. Scientific studies have shown that gargling reduces the incidence of colds and sore throat. Some of the studies used a solution of povidone-iodine while others used just a heaped teaspoon of salt in 250ml of water. Steam inhalations using just hot water also reduced the occurrence of common colds and sore throats.

The Indian government has been touting these preventive measures for the past three months. Unfortunately, unlike the Japanese we are not inclined to listen. The coronavirus spreads through droplet infection. It does not travel for more than two metres but can survive for several hours on tables, bannisters and walls. From there it can be passively transferred, by touching these surfaces and then your face.

Immunity plays an important role in whether we acquire disease and the severity of its manifestation. Immunity is poor at the extremes of life — the very young and the old. Women generally have better immunity.

To boost your immunity:

- Exercise for 40 minutes a day. Do breathing exercises and meditation for 10 minutes each
- Eat 4-6 helpings of fresh fruits and vegetables daily. They will provide essential micronutrients and antioxidants to fight inflammation
- Regular intake of turmeric, pepper, tulsi, neem and mint is probably beneficial if used long-term
- Gargle with salted water and take steam inhalations twice a day
- Wear a triple-layered mask that can be washed daily. Maintain social distancing.

No vaccine has been developed yet, but untested immunity boosters are being lapped up by the frightened population.

The writer is a paediatrician with a family practice at Vellore and the author of *Staying Healthy in Modern India*. If you have any questions on health issues please write to *yourhealthgm@yahoo.co.in*

FITCHITS

ISTOCK

Work-from-home tips

If you're working from home because of the Covid-19 pandemic, you must be careful about posture and ergonomics, say orthopedic experts at Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore, US. Take regular breaks to get up and move around. When sitting at your desk, rest your feet flat on the floor. Thighs should be parallel to the ground, with a two-finger space between the back of the knees and the chair. Place a small pillow or rolled towel behind you for lower back support. Your head should be level, facing forward and in line with your torso. The top of your computer screen should be at or slightly below eye level. The screen itself should be at arm's length. Also, perform stretches or yoga in between work tasks.

Extra benefits of bone drugs

Osteoporosis drugs with nitrogen-containing bisphosphonates may reduce the risk of pneumonia. The drugs cut down the risk of getting pneumonia by 24 per cent and reduce the risk

ISTOCK

of dying from it by 35 per cent. The study, published in the *Journal of Bone and Mineral Research*, adjusted for the use of many other medicines. Bisphosphonates lowered the risk even in people already vaccinated against seasonal flu and pneumococcus, two common causes of pneumonia. However, it is too early to be prescribing these drugs for pneumonia. But if physicians prescribe them to treat a fracture, the patient might get a bonus of reduced pneumonia risk.

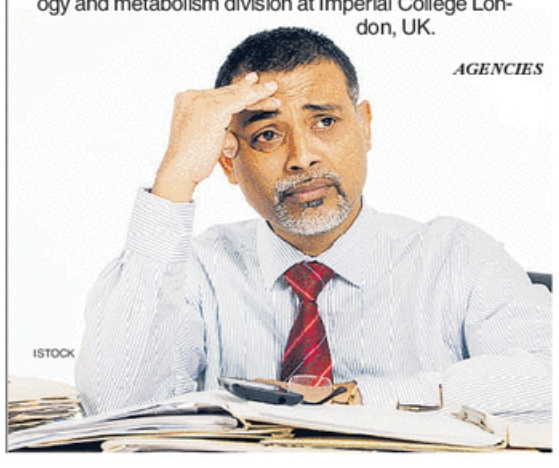
Sleeping pills and tubal pregnancy

Women who take benzodiazepines, such as Valium or Xanax, during pregnancy may be at increased risk of ectopic pregnancy, a new study found. An ectopic, or tubal, pregnancy is life-threatening. Benzodiazepines are widely prescribed for anxiety and sleep problems. The study, published in *Human Reproduction*, used a database of 16,91,366 pregnancies to track prescriptions for the drugs in the 90 days before conception. The women who used them were 47 per cent more likely to have a tubal pregnancy.

Stress makes Covid severe

High levels of the stress hormone cortisol are associated with an increased risk of death among Covid-19 patients, according to a new study. The findings could be used to identify Covid-19 patients more likely to require intensive care, the researchers suggested. Cortisol levels can rise when the body is stressed due to an illness. High levels are dangerous, leading to an increased risk of infection and poor outcomes. "From an endocrinologist's perspective, it makes sense that those Covid-19 patients who are the sickest will have higher levels of cortisol, but these levels are worryingly high," said study leader Waljit Dhillo, who heads the diabetes, endocrinology and metabolism division at Imperial College London, UK.

AGENCIES



ISTOCK

HAPPENINGS

LPU had announced free education for frontline workers of COVID 19

LPU had offered free education to the frontline workers and their wards,who are affected with COVID 19 while saving the nation from the infection. For the victims, (whether survivors or deceased) and their wards, a 100% tuition fee waiver was offered as a token of LPU's gratitude towards their service for the nation. The university also announced scholarships worth Rs 20 Crore to support the workers involved in India's fight against COVID-19 including medical professionals, policemen, media persons, administrative staff, railway and airline employees, bank employees and others.

Sastra had introduced online exams

The Academic Council of Sastra conducted its 38th meeting in virtual mode on June 3, 2020. The council discussed at length the issues of student attendance, end-semester examinations & assessment and approved the following: The end-semester exams were to be conducted online followed by an oral assessment for the graduating batch of 2020 in all disciplines. The council also approved that faculty were to be given the discretion to administer project based end-semester exams for eligible students belonging to junior batches. Also students with minimum 50% class attendance (regular & deemed 100% online) were to be permitted for assessment.

Liberty Shoes has introduced new business strategy

The challenges triggered by the Covid-19 pandemic and now the tensions at the border have prompted Liberty Shoes to change their business acumen. Earlier, what attracted the Indian distributors and MBO owners for export from China was the timely delivery along with the price efficiency involved. But this pandemic eclipsed all these things. Liberty Shoes already took the pledge to strengthen the roots with Vocal for Local campaign with the name #MajbootKadamTayaarHum which was launched under the leadership of Marketing Head at Liberty Shoes, Mr. Barun Prabhakar. As a home-grown brand Liberty has taken steps in the making of an AtmaNirbharBharat.

NUJS Alumni had helped migrant workers during lockdown

The COVID-19 pandemic engulfed the nation and led to a lockdown which created a lasting impact in each and every one of us. The need to go home was very strong for migrant workers for economic and emotional reasons.

With the special trains overbooked and bus tickets costing marginally less than airfare, mission Aahan Vaahan, the vehicle of dawn ventured into flying as many migrant workers back home as possible. The NUJS family joined hands with Mission Aahaan Vahaan - an initiative started by NLS Alumni. Amount of rupees 15 lakhs was raised within a span of four days with the help of NUJS family, and well-wishers.

CIL signed SOI with NITI Aayog

CIL had signed a Statement of Intent (SOI) with AIM (Atal Innovation Mission) - NITI Aayog, to accelerate growth and build an innovative ecosystem in India. Coal India Limited has planned to collaborate with NITI Aayog's flagship program, Atal Innovation Mission, to support various initiatives of AIM programs

such as Atal New India Challenge (ANIC), Atal Incubation Centre (AIC), Atal Community Innovation Centres (ACIC), Atal Tinkering Lab (ATL) and Atal Research & Innovation for Small Enterprises (ARISE). Shri. Binay Dayal, Director – Technical, CIL signed the SOI on behalf of CIL and Shri. R. Ramanan, Mission Director, AIM, signed on behalf of NITI Aayog.

HP had introduced 'Contactless Service on Wheels'

HP had launched an innovative Contactless Service on Wheels, to address the PC and print servicing needs of consumers in India. Given the ongoing health emergency and social distancing norms, professionals and home users are relying on technology to continue working, learning or entertaining from home. The Contactless Service on Wheels is part of HP's commitment to provide uninterrupted support to its customers with safety.

VIT had introduced Post Graduate admission based on UG performance

Vellore Institute of Technology's (VIT) M.Tech and MCA admissions were based on Bachelor's (Under Graduate) degree performance, instead of entrance exam due to the present Covid-19 pandemic scenario. GATE qualified candidates their accorded priority in admissions. Non GATE candidates were admitted based on their academic records (upto pre-final year performance). The admission counselling was conducted online. VIT offered 23 M.Tech programmes in its Vellore, Chennai, AP and Bhopal campuses.

IEM-UEM had become the first in India to take online exams

In this global crisis due to the outbreak of the deadly corona virus -Institute of Engineering & Management (IEM) and University of Engineering Management (UEM, Kolkata & Jaipur Campus) had made it a mandate to not succumb under negative circumstances by continuing with the academic curriculum as per schedule in a virtual mode where online classes were being held and regular assignments given. Amid this pandemic IEM UEM (Kolkata & Jaipur) continued with examinations through online procedures.

Anshuman Khurana has become the new brand ambassador of Tide India

Tide, one of the leading fabric care brands in India from P&G, has appointed the very talented and versatile

Ayushmann Khurrana as their brand ambassador for India. The partnership was launched with the first Tide advertisement featuring the actor, for the Tide Ultra variant designed specifically for the washing machine. Launched in India in 2000, Tide provides 'Outstanding Cleaning' and has set a high standard for laundry care. What started as a detergent for hand wash household has now evolved for machine usage as well with the launch of Tide Ultra. It has been further improved with stain magnets.

The Telegraph NO ONE KNOWS OUR CITY BETTER

METRO

1 RESCUED HYACINTH MACAW, 21 OTHERS FIND HOME AT ZOO

COLLEGES, UNIVERSITIES SHUT TILL JULY 31 P9 ● MASK-LESS FACE POLICE VAN RIDE P9

CALCUTTA WEDNESDAY 24 JUNE 2020 XXCE

CBSE exam decision today: Centre to SC

OUR LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

New Delhi: The Centre on Tuesday assured the Supreme Court that a final decision on postponement of Class X and XII exams of CBSE would be taken by Wednesday evening, amid concerns among parents over conducting the tests during the Covid pandemic.

CBSE is to conduct the pending Class X and XII tests from July 1 across the country. The decision has raised hackles of parents, who fear their children might be infected by the coronavirus if they step out to write the papers.

The number of Covid cases in the country touched 4.4 lakh on Tuesday.

Solicitor-general Tushar Mehta, appearing for CBSE, told a bench headed by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar that the "decision-making process and discussions" on the exams were at "an advanced stage" and a "decision would be taken by tomorrow evening".

Hence, he urged the court to adjourn the hearing till Thursday, so the government could communicate its final decision to the court during the next hearing.

Appearing for the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE), which conducts the ISC (Class XII) and ICSE (Class X) exams, senior counsel Jaideep Gupta submitted that it might broadly follow the government's decision on CBSE.

Mehta told the court the government could not compel CISCE to be bound by its decision on exams as it was an autonomous body. The council, he said, has "to voluntarily bind itself" to any decision on CBSE.

The court said the council was at liberty to take an "informed decision" on the issue.

Mehta said "the government understands the anxiety of students and parents".

The bench, also comprising Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and Sanjiv Khanna, was hearing a batch of petitions filed by students and parents seeking quashing of CBSE's notification on resumption of Class X and Class XII exams on July 1. Some ICSE students, too, wanted postponement of the exams.

Parents aver that holding the exams now might expose the students to the threat of contracting Covid-19.

Advocate Rishi Malhotra, appearing for some petitioners, insisted that the matter be taken up on Thursday as students and parents were anxious about the outcome.

Around 50 papers in Class X and XII exams are pending as CBSE had suspended the tests in March because of the Covid outbreak.

Later, it declared that tests in 29 main papers would be held in July.

CBSE is supposed to hold exams for six papers of Class X in North-East Delhi, which witnessed communal violence.

Early reporting of cases and use of anti-viral drugs among reasons for trend: Doctors

Fewer Covid patients turn critical

SANJAY MANDAL

Calcutta: The percentage of Covid-19 patients turning critical after being admitted to hospital has gone down over the past month, conversations with doctors at some of Calcutta's private hospitals suggest.

Officials of some private laboratories and hospitals where the test for the disease is being conducted said the average viral load in patients testing positive was less compared with the average load a month ago.

People reporting illness early, doctors gaining experience in Covid treatment and use of some anti-viral drugs could be the reasons for the drop in the number of patients turning critical and in the average viral load of those testing positive, said doctors across hospitals.

Peerless Hospital had eight Covid-19 patients a month back, of whom four were in critical condition and in need of ventilator.

On Tuesday, the hospital had 41 Covid-19 patients but only two were critical, said hospital officials.

AMRI Hospitals Salt Lake, a designated Covid-19 treatment centre, has 25 beds in its critical care and high dependency units, which are reserved for patients with severe symptoms.

"About a month back, all critical care and high dependency unit beds were full. General beds were vacant. Now, about five critical care beds are vacant but all 40 general beds are occupied," said Rupak Barua, group CEO, AMRI.

Medica Superspecialty Hospital on Tuesday had 82 Covid patients, around half of whom were in need of critical care.

"About a month back, most patients admitted in our hospital had severe symptoms, requiring critical care," said Aviral Roy, senior consultant, critical care, Medica.

The Telegraph reported on Tuesday that the recovery rate of Covid patients in Bengal on Monday was 60.5 per cent, an improvement of 13 per cent over the past week. On Tuesday, the rate increased to 62.58 per cent.

"Today, 370 cases were detected and 531 were discharged," a health department official said.

"Fewer patients with moderate symptoms such as respiratory distress are now developing severe symptoms like organ failure," said critical care specialist Ajoy Krishna Sarkar. Early reporting by patients, he said, could be one reason for the trend.

"In the initial stages of the outbreak, most people were scared to go for a test even if they had symptoms. Also, there were fewer testing facilities. Back then, the disease had already progressed to a critical stage in many patients by the time they were brought to hospital," Sarkar said.

He said for many patients with moderate symptoms, supportive treatment is effective. Providing oxygen support at the right moment, giving anti-coagulant drugs to prevent blood clot, a common complication in Covid-19, were some of the treatments that are helping patients.

"Initially, the fear of getting stigmatised was preventing many from getting tested. Now, with time, people have become aware and with easy availability of testing, we are getting many asymptomatic and mildly symptomatic patients," said Sumit Sengupta, senior consultant for respiratory medicine, who has treated more than 200 Covid patients at AMRI Salt Lake.

He said doctors, too, have gained experience over the past few months in management of the disease. "Earlier, we were not confident about using some drugs and protocols. There was reluctance in using non-invasive ventilation, which is now being used," said Sengupta.

A WhatsApp group of doctors treating Covid patients in India, Australia, Singapore and the US and the UK has been formed, where the members are sharing their experiences in treating the coronavirus disease.

"The doctors are treating Covid patients at different levels. Some are in primary care, while others in critical care. Everyone is sharing documents and experiences. That has helped," he said.

Quick team for critical Covid patients

SANJAY MANDAL

Calcutta: Government-run Covid hospitals will set up quick response teams to monitor and manage critical patients, the state health department said on Tuesday.

Each quick response team will have an anaesthetist, a "medical officer" (who is a senior government doctor), two junior doctors (a postgraduate trainee and a housestaff) and a nurse trained in critical care.

"Proper and proactive intervention at the right time can decrease mortality to a great extent. This is also evident from the model procedure adopted in some hospitals dealing with Covid patients," an order issued by the health department on Tuesday states.

The team should be functional 24 hours and attend to any critical patient, any time of the day or night, the order adds.

The team will attend to critical patients immediately after they are identified by attending doctors after every visit in the morning and evening. The medical superintendents will hand over a list of critical patients to the quick response team of the respective hospitals.

MR Bangur Superspeciality District Hospital in Tollygunge had set up such a team about two months back, the first government hospital dedicated for Covid treatment to do so.

"The number of Covid beds at the hospital has gone up from 150 to 1,100. There were only a few Covid hospitals back then and MR Bangur was always flooded with patients," said an official. "Initially, there was confusion among doctors and nurses on how to handle such patients."

Many patients admitted to the hospital had alleged that nurses were not coming near them or monitoring their health. Bodies of Covid patients were allegedly lying in the wards for hours.

"About a couple of months back, we set up a quick response team comprising a senior physician and two postgraduate trainees of the medicine department. It was important to identify critical patients and ensure better management," said Sishir Naskar, the medical superintendent of MR Bangur hospital.

"Initially, doctors were visiting patients and writing down instructions about treatment. But there was a need to monitor the condition of critical patients between two rounds of visit. If someone's condition worsens, intervention has to be prompt," he said.

The team was later expanded. Now, a quick response team is continuously deployed throughout the day.

"They are concentrating on those patients who have been identified as critical by doctors and the hospital authorities," said Naskar.

CA's two-year hunt for perfect way to kill

67-page 'suicide note' with epic title

MONALISA CHAUDHURI AND K.M. RAKESH

Calcutta/Bangalore: Amit Agarwal, the 42-year-old chartered accountant who allegedly killed his estranged wife in Bangalore and then his mother-in-law in Calcutta hours later before committing suicide, has left behind a 67-page purported suicide note titled: "Mahabharata of my life", police sources said.

The printed note, found in the Kankurgachhi apartment of his in-laws, suggests the accused had been trying over the past two years to find a way to kill wife Shilpi, also a chartered accountant, and in-laws.

The couple, who were living separately in Bangalore, were going through divorce proceedings and their 10-year-old son was with his mother.

"In the note, Amit has written about his journey across Bihar, Jharkhand and Tamil Nadu looking for the accurate way of killing his estranged wife. He had contemplated poisoning, snake bite and accident, too," said an officer who is part of the probe.

The note mentions that Amit wanted to leave the document with one of his friends but finally decided against it as he could not trust any of them.

Police officers said they learnt from both families that Amit was a domineering husband and he was incensed that Shilpi had moved out with their child after filing a divorce suit against him.

"The two had met at a CA institute in Calcutta. They had a two-year courtship before getting married in 2006. Both were successful professionally and had been shifting across Hyderabad, Bangalore and Calcutta, pursuing their careers," a senior officer said.

"Shilpi was apparently unable to cope with him because of his dominating nature."

Shilpi's father Subhas Dhandhania, who could run out of the apartment after his wife was shot dead because Amit's gun had jammed, and family members have told the police that the accused was from a "humble background" and was jealous of Shilpi because of her professional success and also the fact that she had got a job before him.

Metro could not contact Amit's family members to verify the allegations.

The couple had separated two years ago and Amit had permission to meet his son, who was in his mother's custody, once a week. Amit had last met his son on Saturday and took him out.

"He kept his son somewhere and came back to Shilpi's apartment at Mahadevpura in Whitefield and murdered her on Sunday or early on Monday. He went back to his son and told him that his mother had left for Calcutta and they, too, should move," said an officer.

The child had no inkling till Monday night that both his parents were dead.

After reaching Calcutta on an afternoon flight, Agarwal asked another person (whose identity the police did not divulge) to drop the boy at his elder brother's house in Dum Dum. He then left for his in-laws' flat in a cab,

Bangalore police found Shilpi's body in the Mahadevpura apartment after getting an alert from the Calcutta police on Monday evening.

On Tuesday, the Bangalore police said they were waiting for someone from her family to claim the body before conducting the post-mortem.

The deputy commissioner of police, Whitefield, M.N. Anuchet, told The Telegraph on Tuesday that the body had been shifted to a government hospital's mortuary.

"We have been told that her father and brother would come to repatriate the body to Calcutta," the officer said, adding the post-mortem would be conducted on Wednesday.

Shilpi's body was found in a sitting position on the couch in the living room of the apartment when the Bangalore police broke in on Monday evening.

The Kankurgachhi apartment building where Amit Agarwal's in-laws lived.
Picture by Gautam Bose

Escape as gun jammed twice

MONALISA CHAUDHURI

Kankurgachhi: Subhas Dhandhania, the 70-year-old who saw his wife Lalita being shot dead by son-in-law Amit Agarwal, had a close shave after Amit had pulled the trigger targeting the gun at him at least twice on Monday evening, police said on Tuesday.

The improvised gun malfunctioned on both occasions.

"'*Aap logon ka luck achchha hai* (you are lucky)', Amit said when the gun did not function the first time," a police officer quoted Subhas as saying.

The septuagenarian ran for his life when he found a moment to sneak out of the apartment while Agarwal was busy repairing the gun with a screwdriver after killing Lalita.

Subhas ran out of the apartment in Rameshwaram Building, on RK Samadhi Road in Kankurgachhi, and bolted the door from outside before alerting Phoolbagan police station.

The police on entering the flat found Lalita and Amit dead. Hours before, the police said, Amit had killed wife Shilpi in Bangalore and took a flight to Calcutta.

Findings of preliminary investigations by the police suggest that Amit had gone to the Kankurgachhi flat prepared to kill both his in-laws and then end his life.

"He had called his brother-in-law Vineet, a software engineer in Gurgaon, and asked him to come to Calcutta. It is apparent that he wanted to kill Vineet, too, and eliminate the entire family of his in-laws," said an officer in the homicide wing of the detective department.

Amit, a chartered accountant, had entered the Dhandhania apartment around 5.30pm. Subhas has told the police that the 42-year-old took out a gun immediately after stepping in and aimed it at him. The son-in-law was standing near the entrance of the apartment, blocking the way out.

"The gun did not fire the first time he pulled the trigger. He started looking for a screwdriver. The elderly couple were frozen with shock and could barely move. By then the accused, who had been a regular visitor to the house, retrieved a screwdriver and repaired the gun," the officer said.

He pulled the trigger a second time. This time the gun fired but the bullet missed the target.

Lalita was hit close to her chest in the third attempt.

Subhas saw his wife slump and Amit aim the gun at him again. But the gun got stuck yet again.

As Amit picked up the screwdriver for a second time to repair the gun, the elderly man took his chance and ran out.

The police said the gun seized from the apartment, and suspected to have been used in the murder and suicide, was an improvised weapon resembling the look of a 7mm gun.

"Amit got the gun on Monday, after returning from Bangalore. We are looking for the person who handed it to him," an officer said.

Lalita and Amit's bodies underwent post-mortem on Tuesday. Both had one bullet each lodged.

TOXIC WORK ENVIRONMENT, LACK OF TRUST: FACULTY. DON'T PAY HEED TO HEARSAY: DIRECTOR

IIM leadership under fire from teachers

SUBHANKAR CHOWDHURY

Joka: The board of governors of IIM Calcutta has started talking to some of the teachers who had earlier written to them about misgivings they have about the institute's current leadership.

This weekend, 22 teachers attended an online meeting of a committee constituted by the board.

Some of the teachers who attended the meeting told Metro they had spoken about the "absence of any forward-looking initiative over the past one-and-a-half years" and "the institute losing ground to other IIMs".

The teachers said what they told the committee was a follow-up to the letter that 51 teachers had written to the board in December.

Fifty-one of 83 teachers had signed a letter to the board pointing out what they termed "deficiencies in the current administration".

In that letter, the teachers had spoken about "a toxic work environment with a significant trust deficit between the faculty and the leadership", the leadership's mistrust of the faculty, an administration with "slow, erratic and gridlocked decision-making, absence of plurality of views on the campus".

On Tuesday, a teacher told Metro IIM Ahmedabad and IIM Bangalore had started new courses besides running the full-time residential courses. "But our institute has not witnessed the launch of any forward-looking initiative."

He spoke of a "new data centre with massive processing capacity to facilitate data protection and processing of data for research by faculty and students" at IIM Bangalore and "facilities in Dubai to capture the executive education market" by IIM Ahmedabad.

"Newer IIMs such as the one in Kozhikode have launched master's courses in emerging areas such as public policy. We don't see anything in IIM-C," the teacher said.

One of the teachers said he had highlighted before the committee the authorities' lack of effort in filling up vacant posts.

"In January 2019, we had 90 teachers. Now, we are down to 83," a teacher said. The sanctioned strength at IIM-C is 124.

"Bangalore and Ahmedabad (IIMs) have more than 20 per cent greater faculty strength," he said.

A teacher said the leadership was cutting down on research in the name of cost control without realising that the course quality would take a hit.

"The consultative and deliberative capacity of the academic council has been curbed substantially compared to other IIMs.... The apathy to the consultative process is leading to over centralization and predominance of arbitrariness over rules," another teacher said.

Most of the allegations were directed at the current administration led by Anju Seth, who took over as IIM Calcutta's first woman director in 2018.

"We do not comment on the internal affairs of the institute. On the other hand, you should be aware that IIM Calcutta ranked first in the Outreach & Inclusivity Parameter of the India Ranking 2020 by NIRF. This parameter considers the representation of women across roles among other key points of inclusive learning and opportunities," director Seth said.

"Last month, we were recognised as the only B school in the country to rank in the top-25 best B schools in the world by CEOWORLD — Best business schools in the world for 2020 rankings. IIM Calcutta was also ranked first amongst India's B schools and 17th globally in Financial Times Masters in Management rankings, 2019.

"These are amongst many other recognitions received in the last 18 months. I, as a proud alumna of IIM Calcutta, along with the board of governors and faculty, am committed to building IIM Calcutta as the top B school in India and amongst the best in the world.

"I will also expect you to not be selective about using my quote in your story. You must use it in full. Please be advised to not pay heed to hearsay."

The committee is expected to submit a report to the board that would meet on June 25.

WEATHER

YESTERDAY

Maximum: 32.5°C (0)

Minimum: 27°C (0)

RAINFALL: 2mm;

HUMIDITY: Max: 94%, Min: 71%

THE FORECAST

Maximum: 33°C

Minimum: 27°C

EXPECTED: Thundershower

SUNSET: 6.24pm

SUNRISE: 4.54am

Colleges, varsities shut till July 31

SUBHANKAR CHOWDHURY

Calcutta: Colleges, universities and private educational institutions will remain closed till July 31, the Bengal government announced on Tuesday.

"On May 30, the government had announced that all colleges, universities and private educational institutions will remain closed till June 30. In continuation of that order it has now been decided that closure will be extended till July 31," education minister Partha Chatterjee told **Metro** on Tuesday afternoon.

Hours after the announcement, the higher education secretary Manish Jain issued a notice saying "all government, government-aided, private educational institutions, training institutions, including hostels, will remain closed till July 31 in public interest".

The education department had in mid-June extended the closure of schools till July 31 "in public interest".

A university vice-chancellor said extending the closure till July 31 was inevitable, considering that minister Chatterjee had on June 13 said it would not be possible to start the academic session in the middle of a pandemic.

In Bengal, the academic session in colleges and universities starts in mid-July after the publication of the Plus II board exam results in June.

This year, the Plus II board exams are still to be completed and all boards are trying various models on how to complete the pending exams.

"It has already been decided that graduating students will not sit for term exams. They will be assessed on their pre-semester results and internal assessments," the VC said.

Another VC said the HRD ministry had already announced that campuses would remain closed till August 15. "The education department is implementing in phases what the ministry has decided."

In a meeting with minister Chatterjee on June 13, several VCs had suggested to keep campuses closed in July, too, in view of the rising number of coronavirus patients and few transport options, an education department official said.

A VC present at that meeting said he and the others had told the minister that the World Health Organisation had projected cases would peak in July.

"We had requested him to consider the situation on the ground and defer the start of the academic session as far as possible," the VC said.

Lockdown restrictions have been eased but transport options are still "inadequate"; so, a student will find it difficult to reach his/her institute, another VC said.

"We have been seeing how officegoers are travelling on buses disregarding distancing rules because transport options are few. If students are forced to travel like this, they will invite health hazard to campuses," a college principal said.

"It is better to keep campuses shut as long as possible till the situation on the ground improves."

30 picked up at Central Avenue and fined

Cops ask a man not wearing a mask to board a police van in Chandni Chowk on Tuesday evening. Picture by Gautam Bose

Mask-less face police van ride

OUR SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Chandni Chowk: A middle-aged man stepping out of an insurance office and a motorcyclist with a person on the pillion were among those police prosecuted on CR Avenue on Tuesday for having their faces uncovered.

In the afternoon, a team of cops — some in plain clothes — near E Mall stopped anyone who had not covered their faces, the police said.

The offenders were asked to board a police van. The van left for Bowbazar police station the moment it was full. "They were allowed to go after a warning and a fine," an officer said.

The drill was repeated once while **Metro** was there.

Cops conducted similar drives at multiple places in the city, an officer in Lalbazar said.

Several motorists have been prosecuted in the past few days for not wearing masks, a traffic police officer said.

"As most establishments have opened, we are not prosecuting motorists for being out on the roads any more. But the drive against people stepping out of homes without masks is on," the officer in Lalbazar said.

On Tuesday, cops stopped the middle-aged man when he stepped out of an office of the Life Insurance Corporation of India. He was lost for words when cops sought an explanation for the absence of mask. "I came out for two minutes. I will go back again," he mumbled before being led into the van.

Another man, when stopped, pulled a mask out of his pocket. "I came to the Chandni market to repair my phone. I always carry a mask," he tried to explain. "The mask is for covering your face, not to be kept in your pocket," a policeman told him sternly before pushing him into the van.

"We have picked up at least 30 men in the past hour," a policeman told **Metro** around 4.10pm.

At one point, there were three people waiting on the footpath as the van had gone to the police station.

One of the cops at Chandni Chowk was heard telling a colleague: "We should have pushed more people into the van."

The colleague did not seem impressed. "To increase their and our chances of getting infected... is that what you want," he asked.

Hyacinth macaw finds home in zoo

SNEHAL SENGUPTA

Calcutta: The Hyacinth macaw and the other birds rescued at the airport on Monday will find a new home at Alipore zoo.

The Hyacinth macaw — a pair costs upwards of Rs 40 lakh, a little less than a BMW 3 Series — is the largest macaw species native to South America and is a prized possession of private collectors, a forest official said.

Ashis Kumar Samanta, the director of Alipore zoo, said he could not recall when was the last time a Hyacinth macaw had been put on display at the zoo. "This is an exotic bird and we are planning to allot a large enclosure for it. We will keep some of the other rescued macaws in it."

The bird, according to zoo officials, is a juvenile. It is in the zoo hospital and will remain there for at least 20 days, a zoo official said. Doctors are keeping a round-the-clock check on its health and keepers are ensuring it gets its favourite fruits (apples and grapes) and nuts.

"Since their beaks are quite hard they are fond of walnuts. They can break the tough shells easily," the zoo official said.

The bird, along with 21 other macaws, had been rescued from the airport. The consignment had been smuggled into the country from Bangladesh and was headed to Bangalore.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF BIOMEDICAL GENOMICS
(An Autonomous Institution of the Govt. of India, Dept. of Biotechnology)
P.O. : N. S. S. Kalyani 741251, West Bengal, INDIA

RECRUITMENT NOTIFICATION

Advertisement No. NIBMG/Admn/Estd/Rectt/2020-2021/061 Date : 23.06.2020

Applications are invited from suitable candidates for the following positions :

Post ID	Post	No.(s) of Vacancies	Category
2001	Associate Director	Two (02)	UR
2002	Assistant Professor	Two (02)	OBC (01), SC (01)
2003	NIBMG Fellow (Contractual)	Two (02)	UR

Interested and eligible candidates may please visit the Institute website www.nibmg.ac.in for details. The last date for receipt of application at NIBMG is **45 days** from the date of publication of this advertisement in the Employment News and **60 days** for the candidates residing abroad, Andaman and Nicobar and Lakshadweep Islands, States/Union Territories in the North-Eastern Region, Ladakh Region of J&K, Sikkim, Sub-division Chamba and Lahaul and Spiti districts of Himachal Pradesh.

Manager (Administration)

INDIAN RAILWAYS
Government of India
Ministry of Railways (Railway Board)
CORRIGENDUM
Sub:- Appointment to the posts of Vice-Chairman (Judicial) and Judicial Member in Railway Claims Tribunal (RCT)
Advertisement for 02 posts of Vice-Chairman (Judicial) and 15 posts of Judicial Member in Railway Claims Tribunal (RCT) were advertised in leading daily newspapers on 13.05.2020 wherein the closing date for receipt of applications was mentioned as sixty days from the date of publication of this short notice in Employment News/Rojgar Samachar.
The closing date for receipt of applications may be rectified to be read as 13.07.2020. 1413/2020
Serving Customers With A Smile

Super Speciality Cancer Institute & Hospital
C.G. City, Sultanpur Road, Lucknow-226002
An autonomous institute of the Dept. of Medical Education, GoUP
RE-TENDER / E-TENDER NOTICE
Tender id. **2020_SSCIH_456350_1** for Binocular Colposcope has been cancelled. The Bidders, who had earlier submitted offers may please re-submit with proof of deposit of EMD. Bidders who have participated earlier will be required to pay the tender fees again. Please see **https://etender.up.nic.in** & for details visit **https://cancerinstitute.edu.in**
Advt No. SSCI/PRO-04/2020-21 Email: jdmm.sscih@gmail.com DIRECTOR

INDIAN RAILWAYS
GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS
(RAILWAY BOARD)
E-Tender No. 2019RSI8743TC
CORRIGENDUM NO. 2
1.0 Tender quantity of e-Tender No. 2019RSI8743TC may please be read as 1,11,183 Nos. CTRB instead of 37803 CTRBs.
2.0 Tender will be closed at 15:00 hrs. on 13.07.2020.
3.0 All other terms and conditions of the tender will remain unchanged.
Director, Railway Stores (W),
Ministry of Railways, Railway Board, New Delhi
1410/20
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

PUNJAB STATE POWER CORPORATION LIMITED
(Regd. Office : PSEB Head Office, The Mall, Patiala – 147001)
Corporate Identity Number U40109PB2010SGC033813
Website: www.pspcl.in
Open Tender Enquiry No. 274/P-3/MA/EMP-W 11626 dt. 18.06.2020
Scope of Work: Rubber lining of tanks, pipes and pipe fitting in water treatment plant stage-II & III at GGSSTP, Rupnagar
Time Period: As per NIT
EMD: @2% of quoted rates. (Minimum Rs. 5000/- and maximum Rs. 10 Lac)
Last date & time for sale of tender document: 27.07.20 & 11.00 AM
Date & time for apply for registration: 20.07.20 & 05.00 PM
Date & time up to which tender shall be received: 30-07-20 & 11.00 AM
Date & time of opening of tender: 30-07-20 & 11.30 AM
A set of tender documents containing detailed technical specifications, General instructions and terms & conditions can be obtained from the office of Dy. CE/Monitoring, V & P.C. Ghanauli, GGSSTP, Rupnagar on payment of **Rs. 500 + GST @18%** by cash or demand draft drawn in favour of Accounts officer/O&M, GGSSTP, Rupnagar payable at Rupnagar (Ropar) Punjab.
Note: The prospective bidders are requested to visit the PSPCL's website: **www.pspcl.in** periodically even after purchasing the tender documents to check for corrigendum issued, if any. No corrigendum shall be published in newspaper.
Sd/-
DY.CE/Monitoring
GGSSTP, Rupnagar
RTP-27/2020

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY
DIRECTORATE OF PURCHASE & STORES
NRB PURCHASE & STORES UNIT (NRBPSU)
E-TENDER NOTICE
NRBPSU invites **ONLINE** tenders for the supply of items mentioned below as per the tender notice given in our E-Tender portal **http://etenders.dpsdae.gov.in.** The suppliers need to get enrolled in the E-Tender portal and only online tenders will be accepted. However, cost of EMD in the form of DD, drawn in favour of **PAY & ACCOUNTS OFFICER, NRB, MUMBAI** should be sent by post, before Tender Due Date, to our Mumbai Office. **No paper quotation will be accepted.**
SUB : CORRIGENDUM OF FOLLOWING TENDER NO.
1. DPS/NRBPSU/03/N1/203-TPT
2. DPS/NRBPSU/03/N2/206-TPT
3. DPS/NRBPSU/03/N2/213-TPT
KINDLY NOTE THAT :
The Due Date for ONLINE sub missioning tender is extended as follows:

Sr. No	Tender Number	Tender Name	Revised due date: Last Date of Uploading the tender	Revised due date: Opening Date of the Tender
1	DPS/NRBPSU/03/N1/203-TPT	Instrumentation and Control for Head End Systems,	08/07/2020	08/07/2020
2	DPS/NRBPSU/03/N2/206-TPT	Clariflocculator	08/07/2020	08/07/2020
3	DPS/NRBPSU/03/N2/213-TPT	Passenger & Passenger cum Service Lifts	06/08/2020	06/08/2020

Details of EMD, Pre-Bid Meeting (if applicable) are given on the above portal. Bidders shall ensure that, minutes of pre-bid meeting and / or corrigendum if any uploaded on the E-Tender portal would be viewed / verified for any modification before uploading their offer.
For details on Bid Preparation, please see the user manual in the portal. For technical assistance please contact help desk 020-25315555 or email: support.dpsdae@nextenders.com Website-etenders.dpsdae.gov.in
Part II opening date in the tender will be intimated after evaluation of part-I to only those bidders who have been technically selected. Date of pre-bid meeting if any, is given the tender.
The online bids for tenders floated through the above portal are required to be digitally signed.
Regional Director, (NRBPSU)

LOST & FOUND
SOONGACHI TEA INDUSTRIES (P) LTD.
17, Ganesh Chandra Avenue,
Kolkata-700013
Ph : 98310 00912
Email: sng17gc@gmai.com
NOTICE is hereby given that the Original Lease Deed No.980 of 2007 pertaining to Nakhati Tea Estate, Mouza Nakhati Cha Bagan, J.L.No.03, Khatian no.02, Police Station Matelli, District Jalpaiguri of SOONGACHI TEA INDUSTRIES (P) LTD. had been deposited with Punjab National Bank as security for the financial assistance availed by the Company. The said lease deed was misplaced from the custody of Punjab National Bank, as mentioned by them in the F.I.R/G.D. no.1341 dated 17.03.2020 lodged with The Officer-in-Charge, Hare Street Police Station, Kolkata. The loan has been taken over by State Bank of India, SME Exim Branch, Kolkata.
Any person/having knowledge of the aforesaid lease deed and or its whereabouts are hereby requested to intimate the State Bank of India SME Exim Branch, 1, Strand Road, Kolkata-700001 forthwith for taking necessary action.
In the event no information is received within 14 days from date hereof, Original Lease Deed No. 980 shall be treated as irrecoverably lost.

CORRIGENDUM NO. 01
There is some modifications in E-Tender Notice No. KIR/Engg./14 of 2020; dated: 13-06-2020. For details please visit website http://www.ireps.gov.in.
DRM (Works), Katihar
NORTHEAST FRONTIER RAILWAY
"Serving Customers with a smile"

S. E. Railway Tender
Tender No. : (1) E-KGP-BRIDGE-01-2020, (2) E-KGP-BRIDGE-02-2020, (3) E-KGP-BRIDGE-04-2020, (4) E-KGP-BRIDGE-03-2019, (5) E-KGP-BRIDGE-05-2020. e-Tenders are invited by the Divisional Railway Manager (Engg.), South Eastern Railway, Kharagpur-721301 for and on behalf of the President of India for the following works **before 15.00 hrs.** on the date mentioned against items and will be **opened at 15.30 hrs. Sl. No., Description of work, Tender Value and Earnest Money** are as follows :- **(1)** (i) Provision of pathways on Bridge No. 53 DN (10 x 30.5 m) in KGP-TATA Section, 215 DN (2 x 18.3 m + 11 x 45.7 m) in KGP-BHC Section in the jurisdiction of SSE/Bridge/KGP-II under AXEN/BRL/KGP & (ii) Provision of Pathways on Bridge No. 84 UP (7 x 30.5 m FB girder), 59 UP (2 x 12.2 m + 1 x 45.7 m girder), 59 DN (1 x 12.2 m + 1 x 45.7 m girder), 58 UP (3 x 12.2 m girder) in DTE-KGP Section in the jurisdiction of SSE/Bridge/KGP-I under AXEN/BRL/KGP, ₹ 3,01,62,393.56, ₹ 3,00,800/-. **(2)** Provision of Pathways on Bridge no. : 57 UP (2 x 30.5 m + 7 x 91.5 m + 2 x 30.5 m) between DTE-KIG and 51 UP (7 x 30.5 m)(KGY-3ZN) in HWH-KGP Section in the jurisdiction of SSE/Bridge/KIG under AXEN/BRL/KGP, ₹ 2,01,68,894.10, ₹ 2,50,900/-. **(3)** Metalising of girder bridges in the jurisdiction of SSE/BR/KGP-II under AXEN/BRL/KGP in KGP Division, ₹ 2,09,81,787.65, ₹ 2,54,900/-. **(4)** Kharagpur Division : Replacement of bearing for 25 ton axle load in the section of SSE/Br./KGP/II under AXEN/BRL/KGP (3rd call), ₹ 1,78,96,170.49, ₹ 2,39,500/-. **(5)** Kharagpur Division : Replacement of bearing for 25 ton axle load in the section of SSE/Br./KGP/I&KIG under AXEN/BRL/ KGP (3rd call) ₹ 2,53,00,910.19, ₹ 2,76,500/-. **Completion period of the work :** 12 (twelve) months for Sl. No. 1 to 5. **Cost of Tender Documents :** ₹ 10,000/- for Sl. No. 1, 2, 3 & 5 and ₹ 5,000 for Sl. No. 4. **Date of opening:** 23.07.2020 for Sl. No. 1, 2 & 3 and 16.07.2020 for Sl. No. 4 & 5. **Date of submission :** From 09.07.2020 and upto 15.00 hrs on 23.07.2020 for Sl. No. 1, 2 & 3 and From 02.07.2020 and upto 15.00 hrs on 16.07.2020 for Sl. No. 4 & 5. Interested Tenderers may visit website **www.ireps.gov.in** for full details/description of the Tenders and submit their bids online. In no case manual tenders for these works will be accepted. **N.B.:** Prospective Bidders may regularly visit **www.ireps.gov.in** to participate in all tenders. PR-112

सी.एस.आई.आर.–भारतीय रासायनिक जीवविज्ञान संस्थान
CSIR-INDIAN INSTITUTE OF CHEMICAL BIOLOGY
(COUNCIL OF SCIENTIFIC & INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH)
4, Raja S.C. Mullick Road, Jadavpur, Kolkata – 700032 (W.B.) India
Advertisement No. R&C/532/2020
Interview for JRF (Project), SRF (Project), RA - I (Project)
Interview will be conducted through Skype during **13th & 14th July, 2020** to select around 9 positions of JRF(Project), SRF(Project), RA-I(Project) in the areas as given below:

Sl No	Position	Educational Qualification and Experience	Upper age limit	Remuneration per month (Rs.)
A	JRF (Project)	M.Sc in Biochemistry, Physiology, Zoology, Genetics, Biotechnology or Microbiology with at least 55% marks and NET/GATE	28 Yrs.	31,000/- plus HRA
B		M.Sc in Chemistry (Specialization in organic chemistry) with at least 55% marks and NET/GATE		
C		M.Sc in Biological Science with at least 55% marks and NET/GATE		
D		M.Tech in Biotechnology / M.Sc in Life Science with at least 55% marks and NET/GATE		
E	SRF (Project)	M.Tech in Biotechnology/ Computer Science/IT with at least 60% marks and NET/GATE plus 2 years of Research Experience	32 Yrs.	35,000/- plus HRA
F	RA - I (Project)	Ph.D in Biological Science	35 Yrs.	47,000/- plus HRA

For detailed advertisement and other information such as, experience, disciplines, vacancies, eligibility criteria, age, tenure, last date of submission of application etc. the interested candidates may visit the institute website : **career.iicb.res.in → Recruitment Notice.**
Administrative Officer

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ASSAM/ ARUNACHAL/ MEGHALAYA/ NAGALAND/ MIZORAM TRIPURA/ MANIPUR: 1.00 MUMBAI AND BEYOND: 5.00; DELHI AND BEYOND/ CHENNAI AND BEYOND/ BANGALORE/ PORT BLAIR: 7.00.

IN MEMORIAM

LATE NEBULAL SHAW
Died: 24.06.2000
We pay our respectful homage to the departed soul whose towering personality cannot be substituted in our lifetime. With innumerable pleasant memories you always reside in our hearts and will remain so forever. May your eternal soul rest in peace. Deeply mourned by Jaiswal family & relatives.
43/44/1, Bhairab Dutta Lane, Salkia Howrah-6.
3059996

SWEET MEMORY OF LATE MOHINI DEVI MALANI
With profound grief we the following members always keep remembering this day 24.06.1999, when you left us for your heavenly abode, leaving us to feel your absence. Bereaved family members - Sons : Krishna-Indu, Vinod-Vandana, Daughter: Manju-K.K.Daga, Grandsons: Mayank-Shraddha, Anirudh-Karuna, Sudhansu-Rachita, Great Grand Daughters: Sakshi, Shikha, Myra & Kyra.
18118 3057739
The Telegraph Classified
• 7044400205

TENDER
TENDER NOTICE
Sale on "as-is-where is basis" of material damaged by Fire/Heat/ Smoke.
Sealed tenders are invited from prospective buyers for disposal of the following goods on "as-is-where is basis" lying as under:
Insured/Seller:
M/s. Pampar Ovenfresh Foods Pvt. Ltd., 'Vardaan' Suite # 403, 4th Floor, 25A Camac Street, Kolkata - 700016
Mobile Nos.:
Mr. Pankaj Agarwala - 9830092791,
Mr. Sudhir Agarwal - 9830451199
Description of Goods: Potato Chips Line with Electrical Motors, Extrusion Fried Line with Electrical Motors, Extrusion Roasted Line with Electrical Motors, Potato Pallets Line with Electrical Motors, Packing Machines with Auto-Weighers (with Metal Detectors), Bucket Elevator & Platform, TTO Printers & Formers, Take-Off Conveyors & Rotary Conveyors etc. and other accessories with Electrical Motors, Conveyors with Electrical Motors, Iron structures consisting of Beams, Columns, Angles, Channels, Plates, Pipes, Rods, Stiffener etc., Colour Coated Roofing Sheets, Electrical Wires & Cables.
Site Address:
Sudharas Food Park Phase-II, Plot No. F12, NH-6, Vill.: Sandhipur, PO: Kanduah, PS: Sankrail, Dhulagarh, Howrah - 711302
Mobile No.:
Mr. Brijendra Verma - 8335050071
Surveyor:
M/s. Kothari Insurance Surveyors & Loss Assessors Investigators Pvt. Ltd.
Om Tower, Suite No. 505, 32, Jawaharlal Nehru Road, (near Park Street Metro Station) Kolkata - 700071
Mobile: 9830451773
Note:
1) The amount of offer must be above Rs.71,00,000/- (Rupees Seventy-one Lakhs only), which is kept as 'RESERVED PRICE'.
2) Tender Forms with terms and conditions along with the complete details of the damaged materials can be obtained from the Surveyor's office or Insured's office on payment of Rs. 300/- in cash.
3) Inspection at site from 10 am to 5 pm between 24th June, 2020 to 9th July, 2020. Tenders to be submitted before 5 pm on 10th July, 2020.
17056 3060122

CORRIGENDUM
Dated Chandel 22.6.2020 NER/CDL/DST/ TENDER 2020: In partial modification of the Tender Notification of the Chandel District Community Resource Management Society vide notification no. NER/CDL/DST/ TENDER 2020, dated 22nd June 2020, published in The Telegraph, page no. 9, dated 22nd June 2020, the Web address mentioned www.nercormps.org may be read as www.necorps.org
Lily Rose Jajo
District Project Director
NERCORMP-Chandel
1146294 3059965

To book advertisements in The Telegraph Classified for 28.6.2020 Sunday please call Calcutta
• 9433185185
Outside Calcutta
• 8017745199

JOBS
MULTIPLE VACANCIES
KOLKATA PORT TRUST
KOLKATA DOCK SYSTEM
Kolkata Port Trust intends to engage Security Officer, on contract basis, provisionally for three years, from among willing candidates who retired from Army / Navy / Air Force & CISF/ other Para-Military forces as JCO/Petty Officer/ Warrant Officer/ Inspector or above. For details please visit KoPT's website www.kolkata porttrust.gov.in
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247048 3058548

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100% guaranteed expd online/offline professionals provided for ICSE/ISC/CBSE/WB/ IB/JEE/IIT/SAT all area. 9674964981
6786 3056723

कोलकाता पत्तन न्यास
KOLKATA PORT TRUST
HALDIA DOCK COMPLEX
ADDENDUM NOTICE
E-Tender ID. 2020_KoPT_552891_1 was invited for Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of Outdoor type 3.3 KV, 1010 KVA Diesel Generator Set with AMF Panel including Comprehensive Maintenance Contract (CMC) for the period of 5 years after expiry of 2 years guarantee period for Lock Entrance, Haldia Dock Complex, KoPT. Some changes in the Tender Document have been incorporated in Corrigendum -IV & Addendum-V which are available at https://eprocure.gov.in/epublish/app and www.kolkataporttrust.gov.in

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WESTERN RAILWAY
VARIOUS ENGINEERING WORKS
No. W.118/9/IREPS/BCT(WA), Date: 22.06.2020

Sr. No.	Executive	Tender Notice No. & Date	Work and Location	Approx. cost of work	EMD
1	DEN (CENTRAL) BCT	BCT/20-21/141 dtd. 22.06.2020	Joravasan - Surat Sec:- TRR(P) = 5.275 km & TFR = 3.637km in connection of sanctioned Track work (i) TRR(P) = 14.503km (ii) TBR = 65.587km, TFTR= 18 kms &TFR = 24.537 kms.	₹ 86,53,896.60	₹ 1,73,100.00
2	DEN (CENTRAL) BCT	BCT/20-21/142 dtd. 22.06.2020	Joravasan - Surat Sec:- CTR (S/P)=8.290 Km in connection of sanctioned work CTR(S/P)=15.524 Km.	₹ 1,45,53,490.24	₹ 2,22,800.00
3	DEN (CENTRAL) BCT	BCT/20-21/143 dtd. 22.06.2020	Joravasan - Surat Sec:- TTR (P)=40 Nos. in connection of sanctioned TTR(P)=119 Nos.	₹ 36,31,013.18	₹ 72,600.00

Sr. No. 1, 2 & 3: Date & Time of submission & Opening of Tender: Submission Up to 15.00 Hrs on **21.07.2020** and Opening at 15.30 hrs on the same day. Regarding detailed nature of work, containing cost of tender document (non refundable), EMD, eligibility criteria, similar nature of work, detailed tender conditions, please visit **www.ireps.gov.in.** Manual offers will not be considered. D-08
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90735 28655 (Mon - Sat | 10am - 8pm) <ADM>5667711 admissiontree@abp.in
ad infinitus

The Telegraph

WEDNESDAY 24 JUNE 2020 VOL. XXXVIII NO. 346

FAITH FULL

When the Supreme Court rules on the basis of the overriding importance of public health during a pandemic, it is truly reassuring. A few days ago it had banned the holding of *rath yatra* in Puri and elsewhere because large gatherings spread contagion. Odisha, and independently Puri, are experiencing sharp rises in the Covid-19 infection, and 10 to 12 lakh people are usually expected for *rath yatra*. It seems this had prompted the Supreme Court to say, persuasively, that Lord Jagannath would not forgive the court should it allow the festival. Article 25 of the Constitution makes the right to profess, practice and propagate religion subject to morality, public order and health. But faith in Indian society seems opposed to reasonableness. In response to petitions against the ban, the Supreme Court stated on Monday that the decision regarding *rath yatra* would be taken by the state government, the temple committee and the Centre — reportedly, it did not wish to micromanage the *yatra*. But it imposed strict restrictions: Puri has been closed to public entry, and the rituals are being conducted under curfew. The state government, complying with the court's directions, has ensured that a fixed number of temple servitors and police personnel are present during the *yatra* and associated activities, and that all those conducting the rituals test negative for Covid-19 and maintain social distancing. The court's second ruling was celebrated everywhere, by devotees who can watch the event on television, by the state government which can now please devotees with safety measures in place and, most remarkably, by the Central government, which had the Union home minister welcoming this "special day" on behalf of the nation.

The Union home minister's remark indicates that the satisfactory resolution of this dilemma through the court's wisdom and firmness does not ameliorate the problems caused by giving one faith and public sentiment priority over other issues and identifying the nation with it. The assumption of the nation's gratitude in the name of a specific ritual implicitly underlines the 'anti-national'. It may be recalled that only when members of other religions congregate for discussion or prayers that the virus spreads, according to India's ruling elites. So what if the numbers of the devotees from the majority community who gather during traditional rituals are so much greater?

WITHIN RANGE

If the numbers are anything to go by, then 'Operation Rajya Sabha' — the Bharatiya Janata Party's mission to gain a majority in the upper House of Parliament — has moved closer to completion. The results of the latest round of the biennial elections to the Rajya Sabha show that the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance has gained a significant advantage — it now has close to 100 seats out of 245 in the House. With the BJP winning eight of the 19 seats across the voting states, the party now has 86 seats on its own, while the Congress's tally has been whittled down to 41. The outcome of the elections is, of course, an indicator of the political dominance of the BJP. It has done well in the states where it is in power. But the election results, it can also be argued, are a reflection of murky tactics. The defection of several legislators, including Jyotiraditya Scindia, who has now made it to the Rajya Sabha, had helped the BJP reconquer Madhya Pradesh from the Congress: it has, expectedly, won two of the three seats from the state. This kind of chicanery also helped the BJP bag the lone Rajya Sabha seat in Manipur where the Speaker disqualified three Congress MLAs and the sole Trinamul Congress legislator before the contest, paving the way for the election of the BJP's candidate.

An aggressive BJP can legitimately claim credit for the demise of ethics at the hands of political opportunism. But the Rajya Sabha poll results are also an indicator of the pathetic state of disarray in which the Opposition finds itself. The Congress, struggling with disaffection and a paralysed leadership, is no longer able to keep its flock together. Gujarat, from which the saffron party won three seats, witnessed as many as eight Congress MLAs switch over to the BJP. These defections, encouraged by the absence of an effective legislation, bring forth another grim reminder: fidelity to ideology can be negated by the lure of perks and power. This bodes ill for India's democratic pedestal. But the BJP would not have any complaints. Given its near consolidation in both Houses, it will be far easier for the party to push through contentious legislations. The lack of numbers in the Rajya Sabha had kept some of these questionable policies in check; but the change in the composition of the House will further weaken the opposition. The likelihood of an irreversible impact on India's constitutional fabric can no longer be ignored.

SCRIPSI

'The unconscious is the ocean of the unsayable, of what has been expelled from the land of language, removed as a result of ancient prohibitions'

ITALO CALVINO

Pandemics bind the medieval to the modern

Flea and flu

UDDALAK MUKHERJEE

Virat Kohli was, apparently, diligent as a kid. During an interaction with youngsters on *Cricket Connected*, Kohli said that he seldom skipped homework in spite of the demands that the game put on his young shoulders. But homework can be a chore. Consider the task that the University Grants Commission has set for colleges and universities. Even though the higher education regulator should, ideally, play an advisory role, it has, in a letter, demanded that every campus should conduct — not one but — two studies. The first would examine how rural India is responding to the coronavirus pandemic; the second would research India's response to the Spanish Flu outbreak that took place a little over a hundred years ago.

A member of the academic fraternity has described this exercise as "moronic". The criticism is not unwarranted. Evaluating New India's response with what colonial India did — or failed to do — could well be an insidious attempt to burnish Narendra Modi's [mis]handling of the Covid-19 crisis. But this is not the only bone to be picked with the UGC. The Spanish Flu is far from being an ideal reference point to assess the scale of destruction of the Covid-19 pandemic or societal responses to contain such outbreaks. The Medieval Black Death, Mark Welford shows in his fascinating and instructive book, *Geographies of Plague Pandemics: The Spatial-Temporal Behaviour of Plague to the Modern Day*, can make a far more convincing claim of being the progenitor of Covid-19 when it comes to disruptions in an astounding range of human activities.

This is not to suggest that there aren't any divergences between the two pestilences separated by almost seven hundred years. Records maintained in parishes suggest that the Black Death, a strain of pneumonic plague, killed between 75-200 million people in Eurasia and Africa with a frightening mortality rate: 60-70 per cent in Venice; 39-90 per cent in Montpellier; over 50 per cent in Suffolk, England; around 60 per cent in Florence and so on. Covid-19's decimation in terms of human lives is expected to be modest in comparison. The coronavirus's link to bats or such other vector species as pangolins remains specious at present; contrastingly, scientific evidence has uncovered the complicity of fleas in the spread of Black Death.

The Triumph of Death by Pieter Bruegel the Elder, *circa* 1562

But the similarities between the two crises are striking, and Welford documents these convergent traits painstakingly. Wuhan in China unleashed Covid-19 on to the world; "[P]ossibly originating in China in the 1330s," writes Welford, "it [Black Death] moved along caravan trading routes across Central Asia... before arriving... at the gates of [K]affa (Crimea)." Both outbreaks are truly global in scale. The novel coronavirus is now found in over 200 countries; it is merely following in the Great Plague's footsteps that had marched along the Silk Road — as opposed to airports — to conquer three continents. There is even an ecological parallel. The medieval plague's occurrence had been preceded, Welford discovers, by severe climatic turbulence, including volcanic eruptions, the melting of ice caps and unpredictable weather patterns; Covid-19, too, has reared its ugly spores at a time of unprecedented climate upheaval. The economic climates, too, are not dissimilar. The United Nations had noted not too long ago that inequality has afflicted as much as two-thirds of the globe today. In the Middle Ages, the gap in wealth and social capital between the landed gentry/clergy and the serf was as formidable.

Virus-afflicted India has witnessed its right-wing constituency using the Tablighi Jamaat controversy as a stick to beat — figuratively and literally — Muslims with. Even this mutation of the virus — from a medical to a social pathogen — is not unprecedented. Welford estimates that in the time of Black Death, anti-Semitism led to the extermination of as many as 210 Jewish communities by 1351 "across German-speaking Europe, France, Spain and the Low Countries". There are other, shared sufferings. The serfs, like their migrant brethren in India, had escaped medieval cities, causing a shortage of labour in centres of production. India, too, is experiencing this kind of reverse migration.

The Black Death altered the countenance of cities. In one of the first recorded instances of mass quarantine, Milan shut itself from the world in 1348. Welford does not quite tell us if the Milanese had banged utensils in support of the lockdown. But quarantine, of city and self, is, unlike the coronavirus, not quite novel. Fashion changed, then and now. Sartorial design, Welford argues, acquired a distinct gendered edge after 1340. Today, clothes are transitioning towards uniformity, with the mask becoming *de rigueur*. The push towards an online curriculum precipitated by the coronavirus has a resonance in medieval universities — the University of Florence was one example — accommodating fresher ideas and new curriculum that culminated in the Renaissance.

Astonishingly, even Donald Trump figures in this comparative analysis. The Fantastic Mr Trump has alleged that Covid-19 could well be a rogue biological weapon that escaped its Chinese handlers. Genoese traders would agree; history tells us that they were the first victims of biological warfare. During the siege of Kaffa, the attacking Mongol army was being snuffed out by the plague. But then Jani Beg, the Khan, retaliated by catapulting the decaying corpses of his soldiers over the city walls, infecting the Genoese.

This list of similarities should convince the UGC that the analogy between Black Death and the (new) Big C is not implausible.

Writing in 2018, Welford, in a prescient passage, even predicted the possibility of a "newly emergent influenza pandemic". But what he does not answer — or question — is whether pandemics that transcend time and space merit an investigation of not just mortality but also morality. For each epidemic has not only exposed the perils of human *hubris* — a near-fatal, false sense of infallibility — but also proved that viruses fatten themselves on cleavages: economic, ethnic and religious.

Dexamethasone may turn out to be effective against Covid-19. But can it cure the strains that have infected, poisoned, our moral code?

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Learning from past mistakes

CHARU SUDAN KASTURI

The parallels with 1962 are obvious. A strongman leader in China, in power for as long as he wishes to stay — or until he dies. An Indian prime minister who is unchallenged domestically but is under pressure to demonstrate strength to Beijing. Clashes and stand-offs break out along their undecided border. These incidents appear unconnected, but each builds up towards a perfect storm.

Except 2020 doesn't have to go that way. The key for Prime Minister Narendra Modi and President Xi Jinping will be to avoid falling into the trap that Mao Zedong and Jawaharlal Nehru succumbed to 58 years ago — by learning from the past without becoming hostage to it.

In a brutal clash last week, Indian and Chinese soldiers came to blows with stones and clubs, resulting in the death of 20 Indian soldiers in the Galwan Valley in Ladakh. There's no clear evidence of how many — if any — Chinese soldiers died. Then, on late Thursday, China released 10 Indian soldiers it had captured after that brutal melee, with both Beijing and New Delhi officially denying that such a prisoner transfer had occurred.

These are the toughest days the India-China relationship has seen in several decades. And while it's tempting to build conspiracy theories about how the crisis helps both governments distract attention from the coronavirus pandemic and economic recession, in reality the border scenario could prove to be a dramatic political setback for whoever — Modi or Xi — appears to come off worse. As the former prime minister, Manmohan Singh, said in a statement on Monday: "At this moment, we stand at historic crossroads. Our government's decisions and actions will have serious bearings on how the future generations perceive us."

But a few rays of hope are nevertheless shining through the otherwise grim Ladakh skies. The Modi government is so far abstaining from over-the-top warmongering that we've seen from the prime minister and his lieutenants with Pakistan in the past. Instead of threatening to cut off or reduce diplomatic contact, the two nations have, in fact, ramped up exchanges between their military and civilian officials.

On Monday, their corps commanders met on the Chinese side of the disputed Line of Actual Control to try to tamp down tensions and find a face-saver that helps both governments. Such crises are rarely resolved through one or two meetings, and it is likely that ultimately Modi and Xi will need to get on the phone to settle on some core principles for the relationship to go forward. But Monday's meeting is part of a series of initiatives that will help lay the ground for that call. On Tuesday, the foreign minister, S. Jaishankar, met his Chinese counterpart, Wang Yi, over a video call, on the margins of a trilateral summit with the Russian foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov.

And the handling of the return of soldiers demonstrated an uncharacteristic political maturity from New Delhi. On the one hand, the government could not have publicly acknowledged that 10 of its soldiers were in Chinese captivity. At the same time, by quietly securing their release through a deal whose details we don't know, the Indian government showed the astuteness to engage in necessary negotiations. Meanwhile, China's decision to not advertise the fact that it had held Indian soldiers for several days shows it too is keen not to aggravate public opinion in India further.

That maturity has so far also been evident in the government's approach to WhatsApp and street calls for a boycott of Chinese goods. It has quietly encouraged these demands, without formally endorsing them. China is India's second-largest trading partner, and one of the biggest investors in the country. India's much-feted drugs industry imports 90 per cent of the active pharmaceutical ingredients it needs, mostly from China. Snapping or severely downgrading economic ties with China would be akin to cutting off the nose to spite the face.

So what *should* India do to make China think twice about expanding its claims in Ladakh and other border regions? First, it needs to fortify its posts at places where they are vulnerable to Chinese intrusions. This can't be a temporary measure. Next, it needs to involve itself more visibly in the selection of the next Dalai Lama — thereby reminding Beijing that India, too, can needle China.

On the economic front, the Indian government can identify specific Chinese businesses that are vulnerable if disrupted. Apart from the tech major Huawei, which has been seeking entry for the past couple of years, an obvious candidate is ByteDance. The Chinese firm behind TikTok needs the Indian market — TikTok's largest — to fuel its rapid growth. Seemingly innocuous regulatory holdups for the operations of foreign businesses are a skill India's bureaucracy has refined over the years. Now is the time to deploy them as a powerful message to China.

And beyond India's borders, New Delhi should move to dramatically upgrade strategic and military ties with other countries on China's periphery with similar concerns — such as Indonesia and Vietnam.

Will this prevent future border flare-ups? No. But it will ensure that China knows the costs India can impose without engaging in a military confrontation. Neither side wants a war. Modi and Xi need to make sure they don't end up there accidentally.

Dark side

■ Sir — It was disappointing to see a number of established news channels — both on television and on the internet — invite astrologers to comment upon the so-called impact of the solar eclipse on the lives of people. Entertaining astrologers on popular platforms can mislead the gullible sections of the population, many among whom are already superstitious. Discussions on phenomena like eclipses should be based on astronomy, so that people are encouraged to learn the science behind them. Even if the perspectives of astrologers are to be aired, running a disclaimer should be made mandatory.

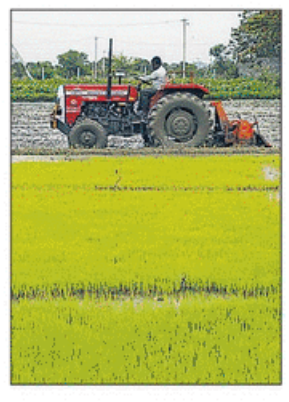
Ranjana Sikdar,
Calcutta

Speak up

■ Sir — The open letter penned by 500 eminent personalities associated with the Indian Cultural Forum — these include actors from Bengal such as Soumitra Chatterjee, Aparna Sen and Dhritiman Chatterjee — expressing concern for rights activists languishing in prisons in Maharashtra and elsewhere in the country, and demanding their immediate release on bail is timely and welcome ("Cultural forum plea to release activists", June 20). With the Covid-19 pandemic raging across the country, prisons are likely to have been affected severely. Yet, the authorities have refused to let out a number of activists, especially those who were arrested in connection to the Bhima-Koregaon case, such as Varavara Rao, Sudha Bhardwaj, Shoma Sen, Anand Teltumbde, Gautam Navlakha, Arun Ferreira and Vernon Gonsalvez, to name only a few. Among the names mentioned in the letter, Safoora Zargar, a 27-year-old MPhil student who is around 23 weeks pregnant and in need of medical care, spent months in jail for having protested against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. After her initial pleas for release were rejected, the Delhi High Court finally granted her bail yesterday.

While it remains to be seen if there is any response to this letter on the part of the government, what is expected is the characteristic, resounding silence. On an earlier occasion, it was reported that the government did not respond to any of the 15 letters addressed to the prime minister, Narendra Modi, written by retired bureaucrats, voicing their concern about the rising threat to the core values of democracy in India. However, a similar letter written by film personalities and scholars, including Aparna Sen, addressing the prime minister in 2019, imploring him to take action to stop the lynching of Muslims, Dalits and other minority communities, was met with a first information report lodged by a supporter of the ruling party in a Bihar court. They were branded 'anti-nationals'. One wonders what kind of events will unfold this time.

Jahar Saha,
Calcutta



Way ahead

■ Sir — It was inspiring to learn that as many as 500 prominent personalities have written to the Centre to ensure that imprisoned activists are granted bail in view of the pandemic. It is surprising that while many Indian prisoners — undertrials included — are being freed on interim bail to decongest jails, no amount of persuasion seems to be earning the activists arrested for the Bhima-Koregaon case any relief.

However, what is reassuring is the fact that in spite of the pandemic and tensions on the border, not everyone has forgotten about the plight of those who have been arrested. This shows that there is still hope for India to continue being a democracy.

Ujjal Kumar Bose,
North 24 Parganas

Find new ways

■ Sir — The Indian government has recently passed an ordinance based on the model contract farming act formulated in 2018. This could be beneficial to farmers, as contract farming would offer them both assured market and easy access to production support. While the Centre is pursuing such a measure, the state government of Telangana has decided to go for regulated crop cultivation. Under this scheme, the farmers would have to abide by the government directives on which crop to grow in which season and where, if they wish to avail of the government's subsidy.

Marginal farmers account for nearly 70 per cent of farm holdings in India. They should not be caught between the two policies. Both approaches have their advantages and disadvantages. As such, dovetailing these two might maximize the benefits for the farmers. If this works, it can be extended to all states, leading to scientific farm management, assisted by crop planning, on sub-regional, regional and national levels. Regulatory oversight can then be put in place to safeguard the interests of both the farmer and the purchaser.

R. Narayanan,
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