



RJD leader Raghuvaran resigns from top party post; 5 MLAs join JD(U)
page 9



CBI to quiz former Manipur CM Ibobi in embezzlement case
page 9



Decision likely today on CBSE Class 10 and 12 exams, SC told
page 11



Djokovic tests positive for coronavirus, apologises to other players
page 14

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NEARBY



Record 3,947 fresh COVID-19 cases in Capital

NEW DELHI
Delhi witnessed the biggest single-day spike of 3,947 new COVID-19 cases in the past 24 hours, taking the total to 66,602, said a government health bulletin. Also, 68 more deaths were reported, pushing the toll to 2,301.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

Sisodia writes to L-G to scrap new guidelines

NEW DELHI
Deputy CM Manish Sisodia on Tuesday said he has written to L-G Anil Baijal urging him to end the new system under which COVID-19-positive people have to visit a 'COVID Care Centre' to get examined.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

Haryana to bear transport cost of migrant workers

GURUGRAM
The Haryana government on Tuesday announced that it would bear the transportation cost of the migrant labourers willing to return to the State.

NORTH & EAST ▶ PAGE 4

DIVYAKAR ACADEMY ONLINE
(Option to Convert to Offline After Lockdown)
SOCIOLOGY FOUNDATION BATCH
Starts: 29 June COMPLETE COVERAGE OF SYLLABUS OR MONEY BACK
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OPPORTUNITIES ▶ PAGE 11

India, China to 'cool down' LAC tension

Both countries agree to disengage after detailed talks were held between Corps Commanders

DINAKAR PERI
ANANTH KRISHNAN
NEW DELHI

India and China have arrived at a "mutual consensus" to disengage on their disputed eastern Ladakh boundary, an Army official said on Tuesday after detailed talks between Corps Commanders on Monday.

The disengagement, eight days after 20 Indian soldiers were killed by Chinese troops in the Galwan Valley of Ladakh, came on a day Army chief M.M. Naravane visited his injured colleagues in a Leh hospital.

Beijing, too, echoed the sentiments expressed in New Delhi, with the Foreign Ministry spokesman welcoming the Corps Commander-level talks "to take necessary measures to cool down the situation". He said arrangements towards de-escalation were being coordinated by the two militaries on the ground.

Phased disengagement

An Indian Army official, who wished not to be named, said, "The Corps Commander-level talks between India and China on June 22 were held at Moldo 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."



Altitude control: Indian soldiers patrolling the mountainous terrain in Leh on Tuesday. ■ AFP

Another Army official said the disengagement would be done from different places in a phased manner without giving a specific time frame or sequence. There would be more ground-level talks to take forward the disengagement.

In the first Corps Commander talks on June 6, both sides identified five locations of conflict – Patrolling Point (PP) 14, 15, 17A, North bank of Pangong Tso and Chushul – and agreed on limited "disengagement" in some of the places. But that consensus ended with the Galwan clash.

Interestingly, both rounds

of talks between the Corps Commanders took place in Moldo, the designated meeting point on the Chinese side. They were reportedly sought by the Chinese side and hosted by the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

False information'
The Chinese Foreign Ministry rejected a statement made by Gen. V.K. Singh (retd.) that China lost more than 40 soldiers in the June 15 clash, terming it "false information". Beijing has not revealed the number of casualties from the Galwan clash.

The Ministry said the holding of Monday's Corps

Commanders meeting, the first since the clash, "showed that the two sides hope to resolve differences, and control and ease the situation through dialogue and consultation".

When asked about Monday's agreement to disengage, Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian said, "The relevant measures are being coordinated and arranged by the border forces of the two countries on the ground."

The Ministry said both sides agreed to take forward the consensus reached on June 6.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

India, China need no help, says Lavrov

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE
NEW DELHI

Russia has appreciated India and China for not resorting to "non-diplomatic" language during the tension at the Line of Actual Control near Ladakh.

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said at the Russia-India-China Foreign Minister-level virtual interaction on Tuesday that both countries were capable of solving the crisis without escalation. The discussions among Mr. Lavrov and his Indian and Chinese counterparts backed an upgrade of the group to include inter-ministerial meetings covering defence, health, culture and technology.

New Delhi and Beijing have shown commitment to peaceful resolution after they initiated contacts between military officers and Foreign Ministers. Neither side has made any statement regarding finding non-diplomatic solution... I don't see any reason for Russia or anyone else to impose its services to help India and China," he said.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Slash staff at mission, India tells Pakistan

New Delhi cuts numbers at Islamabad

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

Protesting "espionage" and "terrorism-related" activities by officials of the Pakistan High Commission in Delhi as well as the "ill treatment" of Indian High Commission officials in Islamabad, the government has decided to reduce the staff strength at both missions by half.

The government's decision, which will bring down Indian staff strength in Pakistan to 55, follows the return of two Indian staffers from Pakistan on Monday, who had been subjected to torture by Pakistan security agencies earlier this month, the MEA said.

On Tuesday, MEA's Joint Secretary Deepak Mittal summoned Pakistan's Charge d' Affaires Syed Haidar Shah to inform him of the decision, giving Pakistan seven days to complete the process.

2001 Parliament attack
The last time this kind of reduction of diplomats was seen was in 2001, after the attack on Parliament.

Pakistan has denied all allegations and responded by asking India to reduce its staff in Islamabad.

"The behaviour of Pakistan and its officials is not in conformity with the Vienna

Downward spiral

A look at the changes in the Indo-Pak. relationship

2019

Feb. 15: India revokes Pakistan's MFN trade status after Pulwama attack

Aug. 7: Pak. expels Indian High Commissioner, suspends trade ties over decision on Article 370 and J&K re-organisation

2020

May 31: India expels 2 Pak. High Commission officials accused of espionage

June 16: Pak. CDA summoned, protest lodged over abduction of Indian High Commission staffers

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," the MEA said in its statement.

It referred both to the arrest and expulsion of two Pakistan High Commission officials on May 31 for suspected spying activities and attempting to recruit an agent, and the arrest and torture of two Indian staffers in Islamabad on June 15.

CRPF jawan, two militants killed in J&K

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

Two unidentified militants and a CRPF jawan were killed in an encounter in south Kashmir's Pulwama on Tuesday.

A police spokesman said the terrorists were killed in the gunfight and their bodies were retrieved from the site of the encounter in Budzoo area of Pulwama.

A CRPF jawan also received critical gunshot injuries. "He succumbed to his injuries in a hospital," the police said. He was identified as head constable Sunil Kala of the CRPF's 182 Battalion.

The identification and the affiliation of the killed terrorists are being ascertained, the police added.

At least 108 militants have been killed so far this year.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

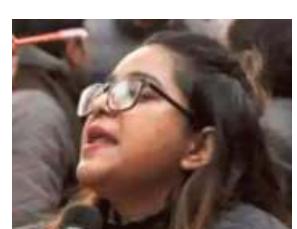
Crowds pull out



Pandemic impact: The wooden chariots of Lord Jagannath, elder brother Lord Balabhadra and sister Goddess Subhadra outside the temple in Puri on Tuesday. The Rath Yatra this year was a pale shadow of the grand spectacle, with the pilgrim town under curfew and the sea of devotees missing due to the COVID-19 pandemic. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT (REPORT ON PAGE 11)

+ HC grants bail to Safoora Zargar on 'humanitarian grounds'

Centre agrees to the release of pregnant Jamia activist



Safoora Zargar was arrested in connection with Delhi riots. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

indulge in activities for which she had been investigated. She should refrain from influencing or hampering the investigation and seek the permission of the court concerned if she was required to go out of Delhi.

Mr. Mehta also sought that Ms. Zargar be present at the police station concerned every 15 days, but Justice Shakdher declined the plea, saying an interaction with

'No precedent'

Mr. Mehta said the order granting her bail should not be made a precedent in any other case and insisted on a slew of conditions to be followed by Ms. Zargar. Taking note of his request, the court said Ms. Zargar should not

be granted bail.

Justice Rajiv Shakdher passed the order after the Central government, represented by Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, agreed to the grant of bail to Ms. Zargar, who is 23-week pregnant, "purely on humanitarian grounds".

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Timings

DELHI

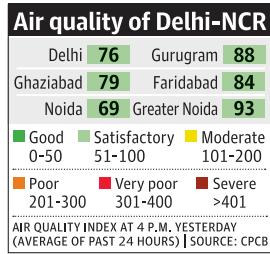
WEDNESDAY, JUN. 24
RISE 05:25 SET 19:23
RISE 08:07 SET 22:11
THURSDAY, JUN. 25
RISE 05:26 SET 19:23
RISE 09:11 SET 22:55
FRIDAY, JUN. 26
RISE 05:26 SET 19:23
RISE 10:14 SET 23:35

Delhi Weather max min
Delhi City 37 28
Safdarjung 37 28
Palam 39 27

Delhi Palam Today
35°C A cloudy sky with warm and humid condition. Few spells of light rain or thundershower at some places.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
34°C Spells of rain or thundershower with mainly overcast sky likely.

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IN BRIEF

Woman found dead in Malviya Nagar

NEW DELHI
A decomposed body of a woman was found at her residence in Malviya Nagar on Monday. The police said on Tuesday. The 36-year-old woman, who lived alone, is suspected to have died five days ago. The police received a call on Monday from the deceased's neighbours who said there was no movement in her house and a foul smell emanating from inside it. On reaching the spot, the police found her body. A few medicines were found. Enquiry revealed that her mother had died a month ago and she was upset.

Employer raises ₹3.5 lakh after help's husband dies

Hospital issued ₹6.5 lakh bill after death of COVID-19 patient

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

When 26-year-old Sapan Shah found out that his domestic help's husband died of COVID-19 at a private hospital in Saket and she was handed over a bill of ₹6.5 lakh, he decided to help raise funds for her.

Mr. Shah, a consultant from south Delhi's Alaknanda, has been raising money for Rangamma (40), a resident of Dakshinpur.

The woman's 48-year-old husband Selvaraj, a contractual worker with the South Delhi Municipal Corporation, was admitted to Max Super Speciality Hospital in Saket on June 10, where he died last Saturday.

Their daughter Divya (23) told *The Hindu* that her father had been going to work throughout the lockdown period. He had a fever in the first week of June and when he complained of breathlessness, the family took him to a private hospital in Ashram.

"They conducted tests and said he might have COVID-19. They refused to admit him and asked us to take him elsewhere. We brought him home," she said. The next day, Selvaraj was taken to the hospital in Saket.



Selvaraj died of COVID-19 on June 20. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"We knew we couldn't afford it but my father asked us to take him to a better hospital. He had heard about the conditions of government hospitals and how patients were not treated properly. At the time, we only thought about his well-being," she added.

Initially, Mr. Sapan was clueless about the situation. "I called her to ask if she was doing fine and she told me her husband was in hospital. A few days later, my cook told me that he had died."

Mr. Sapan said that when Rangamma told him about the bill, he along with his flatmate pooled in ₹50,000 and decided to raise funds online. By June 23, they had raised ₹3.5 lakh.

"She's been working at my place for a year and has been taking care of the house, it's natural that we take care of her," he said.

Woman alleges rape on court premises

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi police on Tuesday arrested an orderly of Rouse Avenue Court in central Delhi for allegedly raping a woman on the court premises.

The police said they received a PCR call on Monday from a 38-year-old woman

accusing a court staffer (ardali) of raping her inside a room in Rouse Avenue Court. The medical examination of the complainant has been conducted, said the police.

The accused, Rajendra Singh, a resident of the Kalyanpuri area, has been recorded before a magistrate, said the police.

The hospital allegedly told the family that they had to pay at least ₹3.5 lakh before they could take the body. The remaining can be paid in instalments, the hospital authorities told the family.

Spokesperson of Max Super Speciality Hospital did not respond to several calls.

Used up savings'

"We used my father's savings, which he had kept for me and my sister's wedding. We also took loans from relatives and friends," she said.

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NDMC ongoing waste collection drive.

NDMC collecting door to door covid19 household waste from quarantine home for disposal in scientific manners.

With the aim to collection of highly infected covid19 waste from quarantine houses and its proper disposal in scientific manner, New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) has made a mechanism to collect household waste from door to door of quarantine home in which covid19 related person or patients are residing in its jurisdictional area.

Every day at 07:00 am, NDMC start collecting Bio-Medical hazardous Waste from each and every house who have people with covid19 affected person or patients in quarantine.

The list of the houses is being provided by the District Magistrate - New Delhi office in advance on daily basis of approximately 30 to 40 in numbers.

This agency is also collecting the waste from Birla Mandir Dharmshala quarantine centre and YWCA isolation centre for covid19 patients in NDMC area.

RGIFT has been ranked 134th in NIRF-2020 in Engineering Category

Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Petroleum Technology (RGIFT), Jais, Amethi has received its first ranking in NIRF-2020 in engineering category, published by MHRD, Government of India every year to assess the relative performance of the Institutes across the country.

RGIFT is ranked 134th in the category of Engineering Institutions and 9th in the state of Uttar Pradesh. This is quite an achievement for the Institution considering RGIFT is a domain specific Institution and relatively new with 11 years of functional experience.

Our academic activities are restricted to Petroleum and Chemical Engineering disciplines with limited students' strength. The expectation now is to enter into the top 100 of Indian Engineering Institutions by the next year. The whole fraternity of the Institution has expressed deep satisfaction and happiness over this achievement.

HUDO Organized Webinar to Mark 6th International Yoga Day

Housing and Urban Development Corporation Ltd. (HUDCO), organized a Webinar on 'AYUSH for Holistic Healthcare during COVID Outbreak', to mark the 6th International Yoga Day. The Chief Guest Shri. Durga Shanker Mishra Secretary, MOHUA stressed the benefits of traditional Indian medicine systems in boosting immunity and promoting wellbeing by achieving a healthy balance between mind and body. Further, he highlighted the revival of these systems, which have been an integral part of Indian culture, and now their global acceptance.

Shri. M.Nagaraj, CMD HUDCO shared information about the sanitation/ social distancing/ health care measures taken by HUDCO to ensure a safe working environment.

It is a matter of pride for Himachal Pradesh that it has succeeded in controlling the epidemic to a greater extent as compared to neighbouring states as well as many other large states of the country in fighting the Corona virus. Himachal has proved itself to be the best in the recovery of Corona infected persons amid relief operations during the lockdown.

According to the statistics of the Ministry of

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Virus graph gets steeper with 3,947 fresh cases

This is the fourth time in 5 days city has seen 3K or more cases

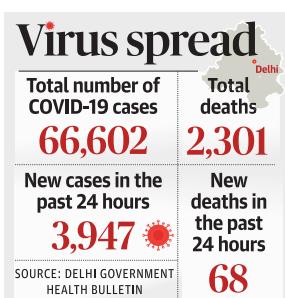
STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi witnessed the biggest single-day spike with 3,947 new COVID-19 cases being reported in the past 24 hours, taking the total number of cases to 66,602, according to a Delhi government health bulletin issued on Tuesday.

Also, 68 more deaths have been reported in the past 24 hours, taking the total number of deaths to 2,301.

In four of the last five days, the city has witnessed 3,000 or more cases, and according to the government's estimates, there will be one lakh cases by June 30, 2.25 lakh cases by July 15, and 5.5 lakh cases by July 31.

The sudden surge in numbers could be because of the government using rapid antigen testing, which gives re-



sults in 30 minutes.

7,125 vacant beds

Of the current total cases, 39,313 people have recovered and there are 24,988 active cases. There are a total of 13,389 hospital beds available and 7,125 of them were vacant on Tuesday.

A total of 12,963 people, who had tested positive, were under home isolation. Also, 16,952 tests were done in a day and there were 261

containment zones, according to the bulletin.

Jain's condition better

Meanwhile, Health Minister Satyendar Jain, who was tested positive for COVID-19, is better and does not have fever, according to sources.

The Minister is currently admitted at Max Hospital, Saket. He was administered plasma therapy at the hospital last week and moved out of the ICU to a normal room on Monday.

He was admitted to the Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital in the early hours of June 16 after he experienced high-grade fever and a sudden drop in his oxygen levels. While initial test reports found him negative for COVID-19, Mr. Jain tested positive for the virus the next day.

Sisodia asks L-G to scrap new guidelines

Officials say it is hard to get every mild or asymptomatic patient to a care centre

NIKHIL M BABU
NEW DELHI

Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Tuesday said he has written to Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal urging him to end the new system under which people who test positive for COVID-19 will have to visit a 'COVID Care Centre' (CCC) to get examined.

Currently, there are two types of COVID-19 tests done in the Capital: rapid antigen test, which gives result in 30 minutes, and RT-PCR test, which takes more time.

If a patient has moderate or severe symptoms, he will be transferred to a hospital.

However, patients with mild symptoms or who are pre-symptomatic will be shifted to a care centre to assess eligibility for home isolation, state the new SoP issued on Monday.

On Sunday, Union Home Minister Amit Shah had said that all COVID-19 positive cases should be first referred to a CCC. The new SoP was issued following this note.

During a video briefing on Tuesday, Mr. Sisodia said: "I have written to the L-G to implement the earlier sys-



Rapid antigen testing in progress at a government school in the Capital on Tuesday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

tem in Delhi, in which, if a person tests positive, then a government medical team visits him, and if he does not have any symptom then he is home quarantined. If he has any symptoms, then he is shifted to a hospital and if his house is not appropriate, then he is moved to a quarantine centre."

Around 3,000 people test positive for the virus and if they are to stand in queues in quarantine centres, then their problems will increase, Mr. Sisodia said, adding: "I have urged the L-G to end the new SoP and I hope he will call a meeting of the State Disaster Management Authority [SDMA] and

change the policy and end people's misery."

"Every new COVID-19 patient is worried that he will have to stand in the line at a quarantine centre and get examined. Why should he go? How will he go? The government should help him or increase his difficulty," Mr. Sisodia added.

Facing difficulties

Officials in three of the 11 districts in Delhi said that they were finding it difficult to implement the new policy.

"In all RT-PCR positive cases, a team, including a medical officer, is going to the patient's house. If it is a mild case, we tell them that

they have to go to a CCC for examination, but if they oppose, then the medical officer examines the patient at their house itself," said an official in south-west district.

The official said that taking every mild case to a CCC is not possible.

"We have few ambulances to take these people to a CCC. It is easy to say it in theory, but it is very difficult to implement," said an official of the south district.

Practical step

An official of the north district said that mild cases should be sent to dispensaries instead of care centres for assessment.

"The district has only one CCC, but has 33 dispensaries and each one has a medical officer. So it's more practical and feasible to take them to a dispensary for assessment," the official said.

The administration added that it will be the prerogative of departments to call patients directly or screen them through tele-consultation before giving a physical appointment. Between March 25 and June 10, the hospital provided 61,000 telemedicine consultations.

AIIMS set to restart OPD tomorrow

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
NEW DELHI

The All India Institute of Medical Science in Delhi is all set to start its outpatient department (OPD) services, which have been shut for three months, from June 25 with priority to follow-up patients.

"AIIMS has approved the resumption of physical appointment for old/follow-up patients. It will be enhanced in a few days. In addition, requisite appointments for a limited number of new patients will also be given. However, no appointments will be given for evening speciality clinics in the first phase of reopening. The order is valid for 15 days after which it will be reviewed," read a release issued by AIIMS.

The administration added that it will be the prerogative of departments to call patients directly or screen them through tele-consultation before giving a physical appointment. Between March 25 and June 10, the hospital provided 61,000 telemedicine consultations.

Meanwhile, V.K. Paul, member (Health), NITI Aayog emphasised that in order to control the pandemic, it is imperative that the public health approach should be implemented effectively on the ground.

He added that public health approach to contain the disease through trace, test, isolate, quarantine and timely referral must be implemented on the ground effectively by the government, civil agencies, communities and stakeholders.

Cong. hits out at govt's over fuel price hike

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Congress on Tuesday hit out at the BJP government at the Centre and the AAP government in Delhi for the steep hike in petrol and diesel prices over the last 17 days.

Delhi Congress chief Ch. Anil Kumar said, "When crude oil prices are among the lowest in the world, instead of passing on the benefits to consumers in these difficult times, the government is making money at the cost of the citizens."

He added that the Kejriwal government also increased VAT on petrol and diesel, "which is like adding insult to injury for the people".

The party added that the V.K. Paul Committee report that was submitted to the Home Ministry on Sunday had validated Congress suggestions that there was a need to increase testing and tracing; and institutional isolation for those with smaller than two BHK residential premises.

Baijal appoints new principal secy. (home)

B.S. Bhalla also to manage pandemic crisis

JATIN ANAND
NEW DELHI

Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal on Tuesday appointed 1990-batch AGMUT cadre IAS officer Bhupinder Singh Bhalla as principal secretary of the Delhi government's Home Department as well as the nodal officer for the "overall management of COVID-19" in the Delhi government.

Second top meeting
The decision follows a high-level meeting – the second of its kind in as many weeks – chaired by Union Home Minister Amit Shah in the wake of the climbing trajectory of COVID-19 cases on last Sunday.

A week after the Former Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Commerce and Industry was repatriated from central deputation to the Delhi government, Mr. Bhalla's posting was viewed as a step further in the Centre's bid to helm, and the AAP government ceding

more ground to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) regarding administrative matters related to the COVID-19 outbreak, said sources in the bureaucracy.

According to the L-G's orders, Mr. Bhalla would exercise "required supervision in all the matters related to the prevention and management of COVID-19" in the Delhi government. His responsibilities would also include the implementation of the "decisions taken/directives issued by the Government of India and Government of the NCT of Delhi" viz. the ongoing pandemic.

Mr. Bhalla was transferred by the MHA to the Delhi government on June 17, a day after its request to this effect, following a review meeting of the COVID-19 situation in the city chaired by Mr. Shah, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and L-G Anil Baijal among others, at North Block on June 14.

Nadda praises Centre's work in six years

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The "mysterious" death of Bharatiya Jana Sangh founder Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee on June 23, 1953, was the first sacrifice for the integrity of fragmented India, BJP national president Jagat Prakash Nadda said in a videoconference address to an estimated 25 lakh party volunteers on Tuesday.

"The Modi government has done more work in only six years than what was not done in the country during the last six decades of the Congress rule," he said. "On August 5, 2019, Article 370 was abolished in the Parliament and with the will power of Modi ji and strategy of Amit Shah, the dream of Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee was fulfilled," he said.

ITBP to operate 10,000-bed COVID facility in Chhatarpur

Amit Shah says it will be largely operational by June 26

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Tuesday that the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) has been given the responsibility to operate the 10,000-bed COVID-19 centre at Radha Soami Satsang Beas (RSSB) campus in south Delhi's Chhatarpur.

The tweet came in reaction to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's request for deployment of doctors and nurses from the ITBP and the Army at the centre, which is located near the Delhi-Haryana border.

In full swing
"Dear Kejriwal ji, It has already been decided in our meeting 3 days back and MHA has assigned the work

of operating the 10,000 bed COVID-19 Care Centre at Radha Soami Beas in Delhi to ITBP. The work is in full swing and a large part of the facility will be operational by 26 Jun. [sic]," Mr. Shah tweeted.

1,000-bed hospital

Responding to the tweet, Mr. Kejriwal said: "The country's military, doctors, social institutions, central government and Delhi government - all are working unitedly for Delhi. I am sure we will all together beat Corona. Thank you for helping the Delhi government and the people of Delhi in these difficult circumstances."

Mr. Kejriwal also invited Mr. Shah to inspect the centre.

In a subsequent tweet, Mr. Shah said a 1,000-bed hospital with 250 ICU beds was being developed for COVID-19 patients by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) and Tata Trust. This COVID-19 care centre will be manned by Armed Forces personnel and be ready in the next 10 days, Mr. Shah added.

"Armed Forces personnel

will provide medical care and attention to COVID-19 patients housed in railway coaches in Delhi; 8,000 additional beds have already been placed at Delhi government's disposal for making COVID care centres,

as per requirement," he stated in a subsequent tweet.

High Court rejects plea of Air Force civilian cooks

'They can't be called COVID-19 warriors'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has rejected a plea of civilian cooks working in the kitchen at the Air Force stations to be treated as 'COVID-19 warriors' and the benefits that comes with it.

"We are also unable to see as to how the civilian cooks of the Air Force who are during the hearing described as Group 'C' non-industrial employees of the Air Force, are entitled to be treated as 'COVID-19 warriors' and entitled to benefits thereof," a Bench of Justice Rajiv Sahai Endlaw

and Justice Asha Menon said. The court order came on a petition by the All India Air Force Civilian Cooks Association, contending that they thus, being forced to stay away from their homes for 28 days in a month and out of which, for 14 days their services are not utilised, by keeping them quarantined.

"While working in the kitchen at the Air Force stations, the members of the petitioner cannot be said to be exposed to COVID-19, to claim themselves to be 'frontline workers'," the court remarked.

Unacademy Summit: A 3-Day Conclave for Civil Services Aspirants

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Kapil Dev,
Former India Captain



Dr. Kiran Bedi, IPS (Retd),
Lt. Governor (Puducherry)



LET'S CRACK IT!
UNACADEMY SUMMIT 2020
THE HINDU GROUP

as Pranab Mukherjee, Dr. Shashi Tharoor, Dr. Kiran Bedi, Kapil Dev, Jairam Ramesh, D P Agrawal, Rajkummar Rao will also be conducting live sessions to share their experiences and success stories with the learners.

The summit will cover all queries and general doubts of aspirants such as the future prospects of pursuing Civil Services as a career, the most appropriate strategy to prepare for the UPSC exam, quick and handy tips for preparation, maintaining a balance between personal and academic life as well as the importance of mental and

physical wellness while preparing for the exam. The summit will also keep the learners and speakers engaged by organizing sessions, workshops, panel discussions, strategy for optional subjects and activities for learners such as essay writing and more.

To view the complete schedule and be a part of the summit, learners can visit unacademy.com/upscsummit2020 and register for free.

Mrunal Patel, Top Educator at Unacademy said, "For UPSC CSE, Unacademy has a large volume of structured educational videos and study material

About Unacademy:

Unacademy is an education technology platform founded by Gaurav Munjal, Roman Saini and Hemesh Singh in 2015. It was started as a YouTube channel by Gaurav Munjal in 2010. Headquartered in Bengaluru, Unacademy is India's largest learning platform that brings expert educators together with millions of learners in need of quality education. With a growing network of more than 10,000 registered educators and 13 million learners, Unacademy is changing the way Indians learn. The Unacademy group consists of Unacademy, Unacademy Subscription, Wifistudy, Chamomile Tea with Toppers and Let's Crack it Brands. The company is backed by prominent investors such as General Atlantic, Sequoia India, SAIFF Partners, Nexus Venture Partners, Steadview Capital, and Blume Ventures.

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on its platform that any candidate from any part of India can access from the convenience of their homes. This Unacademy Summit is a continuation of Unacademy's initiatives to help aspirants prepare for competitive exams."

Sidharth Arora, Top Educator at Unacademy said, "The road to a long journey starts with a small step and a guiding hand. The Unacademy Summit has various speakers from different walks of life who will guide and motivate learners in their journey to crack the UPSC exam. Aspirants will benefit greatly by being a part of this summit."

The Unacademy Summit is being conducted in association with The Hindu.



Illegally made disinfectant spray seized

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

An inventory of disinfectant spray worth ₹18 lakh was seized during a raid by Haryana Foods and Drugs Administration team at Sector 35 here on Tuesday. The spray was being manufactured illegally as Ayurvedic Proprietary Medicine and not the valid drugs licence.

Gurugram Drugs Control Officer Amandeep said a raid was conducted at the manufacturing unit of the spray at Sector 35 and the inventory was seized. Mr. Amandeep said that manufacturing of the disinfectant required licence under the Drugs and Cosmetics Act. He said the complaint would be filed before the Chief Judicial Magistrate after the investigation. The raid was conducted a day after the samples of the disinfectant spray were seized from a shop at DLF Phase-IV Supermart following a tip-off.

The department had also lodged a FIR against a shopkeeper in DLF Phase-I on Monday for overcharging for hand sanitiser.

Haryana to give ₹1,500 for transport to workers

Welfare panel to launch schemes for migrant labourers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

Haryana Deputy Chief Minister Dushyant Chautala on Tuesday announced that the government would bear the transportation cost of the migrant labourers who are willing to return to the State. He said the government would provide financial assistance of ₹1,500 as transport fare to each construction labourer.

The decision was taken during the meeting of the Labour-Welfare Board in Panchkula. The Board also decided to launch schemes for the welfare of the labourers at the directorate level.

Minister of State for Labour-Employment Department Anup Dhanak, Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Om Prakash Yadav and members of the Board were also present in the meeting.

Later, speaking to newsmen in Chandigarh, Mr. Chautala said the companies in the building and other construction sectors want to bring back migrant labourers



Dushyant Chautala.
• FILE PHOTO

for which the State government would not only provide all basic facilities but would also bear the transportation expenditure worth ₹1,500 of each labourer.

Mr. Chautala told that this amount would be given as subsidy whenever they reach here and the facility would be offered for the next two months. He said the government can also facilitate its buses to bring such labourers back to the State.

The Deputy CM added despite prevailing crisis due to COVID-19 pandemic, the State government has disbursed ₹154 crore to 3.10 lakh labourers at around

₹1,000 per week per head.

Mr. Dhanak said that to bring transparency in the welfare schemes of the labourers, the sanction would be given at the directorate level. He said there were numerous complaints regarding delay in giving relief to the labourers in various schemes and labourers were forced to visit the district offices of the department but the decision was taken in the meeting that the directorate would be the sanctioning authority for these schemes.

9 COVID-19 deaths

Nine coronavirus deaths, six of them from worst-hit Gurugram and Faridabad districts, were reported from Haryana on Tuesday while the total number of cases in the State rose to 11,520 with 495 fresh infections, officials said.

Faridabad and Gurgaon reported three deaths each, while one fatality each was from Sonipat, Rohtak and Jind districts, according to the State health department.



Employees at Maruti Suzuki India's Manesar plant.

• FILE PHOTO

Workers who jumped quarantine not our staff

They are on contract: Maruti Suzuki

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

Automobile major Maruti Suzuki issued a statement on Tuesday clarifying that 17 workers who had jumped quarantine after testing positive for COVID-19 a week ago are not its employees but contractual vigilance staff.

An FIR had been registered against the 17 persons at the instance of the medical officer at the Primary Health Centre in Bhangrola. The workers were found positive for COVID-19, but many of them had left for their native places in Rajasthan and Haryana even be-

fore the test results came.

Assistant Commissioner of Police Hitesh Yadav said they were traced after the employer provided their address and were directed to be in home isolation. Mr. Yadav claimed they were tested before joining duty.

The company, in a press statement, said: "The people in question are not Maruti Suzuki employees. They are outsourced/contractual vigilance staff deputed with Maruti Suzuki. The company is following all the government guidelines and directives and will extend all assistance and cooperation wherever required."

Pollution panel revokes OIL well closure order

PCBA has set conditions for withdrawal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The Pollution Control Board, Assam (PCBA) has revoked its June 19 closure notice to Oil India Limited (OIL) with certain conditions after the latter gave an undertaking to respond to queries concerning its operations.

The withdrawal letter issued late on Monday night by PCBA Member-Secretary D.N. Das followed discussions between OIL's Chairman and Managing Director Sushil Chandra Mishra and PCBA Chairman Y. Suryanarayana.

Soon after receiving the closure notice, OIL had asked PCBA to withdraw the order that was "technically not feasible" to comply with. The exploration major had also threatened to go to court to stay the order.

The five conditions that the PCBA seat included "submission of a detailed time-bound environmental management plan" within 15 days of receiving the withdrawal letter for "environmental mitigation and extinguishing of the fire" at the

Bagjan oilfield.

The other conditions set by PCBA pertain to the disposal of hazardous waste by adhering to the Water (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act, 1974, and the Air (Prevention & Control of Pollution) Act, 1981.

The PCBA had in its closure notice said OIL had not taken environmental clearances to operate in the Bagjan area. This was among 10 conditions it said OIL had violated while operating in the area for more than eight years.

OIL has been producing a sizeable quantity of crude oil and almost 29% of its natural gas in eastern Assam from the Bagjan oilfield.

Meanwhile, the Gauhati High Court has postponed to July 13 the hearing of a PIL against the Centre's approval to OIL for drilling at seven locations under the Dibrugarh-Saikhowa National Park. The drilling, OIL said, is through the sophisticated extended reach drilling technology that will allow them to explore horizontally from spots beyond the park.

One drowned as floods hit Assam again

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

One person drowned in eastern Assam's Sivasagar district on Tuesday as heavy rainfall triggered another wave of floods in the State.

"A person died in Nazira as fresh floods displaced 36,707 people in four districts with 1,071 of them moving into relief camps," a spokesperson of the Assam State Disaster Management Authority said.

The flood-hit districts are Dhemaji, Dibrugarh, Jorhat and Sivasagar. Dhemaji is the worst affected followed by Sivasagar. Officials said river Brahmaputra was flowing above the danger mark in Jorhat and Dhubri districts, rivers Dikhow and Disang in Sivasagar district, Dhansiri in Golaghat district and Jia-Bharali in Sonitpur.

Two Assam villages still under curfew

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Two villages near eastern Assam's Dibrugarh town on Tuesday continued to be under curfew after the murder of a 20-year-old man on June 19 sparked communal tension.

A team of the State Disaster Response Force had fished out the body of Saurav Das from a river on the night he was allegedly murdered by members of the family of a girl he was said to be dating.

On June 20, people of Lezai area blocked the highway to Dibrugarh, demanding punishment to the accused persons belonging to a different faith. It was the second such killing after that of Rituparna Pegu, who belonged to the indigenous Mising community, in Guwahati on June 12.

The situation has improved compared to two days ago after a meeting with all the stakeholders at the Deputy Commissioner's office on Monday. Apart from the district administration handing over a compensation cheque to the victim's family, a peace committee was formed, Dibrugarh district's SP Sreejith T. told The Hindu on Tuesday. He added the curfew in Lezai and Dewanbari areas, imposed on June 20, was still on. "We have arrested three people so far and are awaiting the post-mortem report," Mr. Sreejith said.

PORT MANAGEMENT BOARD ANDAMAN & NICOBAR ISLANDS

E-Tender No. 7047 Dated 22.06.2020

e-TENDER NOTICE

E-tenders are invited for "Hiring of a Tug for Port Management Board, Andaman and Nicobar Islands for a period of 3 (Three) years". The e-tender document can be downloaded from website www.eprocure.andaman.gov.in and www.eprocure.gov.in from 22.06.2020 to 25.08.2020 till 1200 Hrs. However, the submission of the tender will be done online at www.eprocure.andaman.gov.in. www.eprocure.gov.in Tender ID: 2020_TCELL_309_1 eprocure.gov.in/TenderID: 2020_PMB_541224_1

MISSION DIRECTOR, NATIONAL HEALTH MISSION, J&K
Jammu Office: Regional Institute of Health & Family Welfare, Nagrota, Jammu- 181221
Fax: 0191-2674114; Telephone : 2674244
e-mail: mdnmhk@gmail.com
Kashmir office: Block 'A', Ground Floor, Old Secretariat, Srinagar Pin: 190001
Fax: 0194-2470486; 2477309; Telephone: 2477337; e-mail: mdnmhk@gmail.com
NIN HelpLine for Jammu Division: 18001800104; Kashmir Division: 18001800102

Notice Inviting On-line Proposal(s) from ICMR approved Labs for undertaking RT-PCR Testing, alongwith reporting as per ICMR Testing Protocols of Samples from J&K for COVID-19 on 'As & When Required Basis'

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, online proposals are invited for on-line proposal(s) from ICMR approved labs for undertaking RT-PCR testing, and reporting of samples from J&K for COVID-19, in time-bound manner, on 'As & When Requirement Basis'. As per the terms & conditions mentioned in the Notice Inviting Proposals available on the website(s) www.jktenders.gov.in and www.jknhm.com

S. No. **Particulars** **Date / Time**
1 Date of Publishing SBD 22.06.2020 at 1000 Hrs
2 Start Date of Downloading SBD from Website 22.06.2020 from 1000 Hrs
3 Websites for Downloading SBD www.jktenders.gov.in www.jknhm.com
4 Last date of Downloading SBD from Website 27.06.2020 upto 1400 Hrs

Sd/-
Mission Director
National Health Mission
Jammu

SHSN/HJM/J&K/COVID-19/3840-46 Dated : 02/06/2020

DIP/J-586-P/20

-Sd/-
Project Director, APFBC Society,
Assam, Panjabari-37

Janasanyog/CF/906/20

GOVERNMENT OF ASSAM
PROJECT MANAGEMENT UNIT
ASSAM PROJECT ON FOREST AND BIODIVERSITY
CONSERVATION SOCIETY
ARANYA BHAWAN,
PANJABARI, GUWAHATI - 781037

No.APFBC/PMU/Phase-II/EOI&RFP/Audit Firm/2020-21/31

INVITATION FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST
FOR AUDITOR

The Project Director, PMU, APFBC Society invites EoI from experienced and Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India empanelled firms/agencies for auditing accounts of the Assam Project on Forest and Biodiversity Conservation Society.

The last date of receipt of sealed EoI documents (1 original, 4 copies and soft copy of the same (either in CD or in Pendrive)) in English at the above mentioned address is 23rd of July, 2020 by 03:00 P.M.

For detailed information firms/agencies may visit society's website www.apfbcnic.in

-Sd/-
Project Director, APFBC Society,
Assam, Panjabari-37

Janasanyog/CF/906/20

NOTICE OF PUBLIC AUCTION OF CARDIAC CATHETERIZATION LAB SYSTEM dated : 24 June 2020

NOTICE INVITING AUCTION Sealed bids are hereby invited from bidders having experience in auction of Medical Equipments. Auction of Medical hereby intended to ARMY HOSPITAL (RESEARCH & REFERRAL) DELHI CANTT-110010 "ON AS IT WHERE BASIS".

DETAILS OF THE AUCTION

Description of Equipment Non-working NW/22DG/19388 Single Plane Flat Panel Digital Cardiac Catheterization Lab System Artis Zee Floor S.135380

Date & Time of submission of bid 16 July 2020 upto 1400 Hrs

Date & Time of bid opening 16 July 2020 at 1430 Hrs

Place of Auction Deptt of GI Surgery, Ground Floor, Army Hosp (R&R) Delhi Cantt-110010

Earliest Money (EMD) Rs 20,000.00

AUCTION TERM AND CONDITIONS

1. Bid should be addressed to the Commandant, Army Hosp (R&R) Delhi Cantt-110010 indicating thereon "Auction of Cardiac Catheterization Lab System and submitted to the office of DGLP Procurement Cell CTVS building under sealed cover failing which bid shall be rejected.

2. The persons interested to participate in the auction to purchase the submitted ebid shall deposit earnest money (EMD) of Rs 20,000.00 by way of cash/DD drawn in favor of "Commandant Army Hospital (R & R) Delhi Cantt-110010" and deposit the same with the authorized officer before commencement of auction. The persons who have deposited the EMD or above are alone eligible to participate in the auction.

3. The ebid shall be sold "ON AS IT WHERE BASIS" condition to the bidder who offers highest price. However the Army Hospital (R & R) Delhi Cantt-110010 reserves its rights not to accept the bid or cancel the sale without assigning any reason. The successful bidder/purchaser will have to deposit 25% of the bid amount within 48 hrs from the date of auction itself, with the authorized officer and the balance amount within 15 days.

4. If the 25% of the bid amount is not paid within 48 hrs from the date of auction itself or balance amount is not paid within 15 days or if the successful bidder fails to adhere to the terms of the sale limit or commits default in any manner, the earnest money deposit will be forfeited and the bidder will be liable to sell the property again without any notice.

5. The vendor/parties interested in bidding for the beyond economical repair (BER) equipments and items can inspect during office hours between 0900 hrs to 1600 hrs on any working day after obtaining prior permission from the concerned authority of Army Hospital (R&R) Delhi Cantt-110010, Lt Col Vivek Contact No. 7331078560 and obtain the list of BER equipments for which amount will be bidded.

6. The bidder should quote in figures, as well in words the amount of bid quoted by him alteration/overruling unless legally attested by bidder shall disqualify the bid.

7. Any action on the part of bidder to influence anybody in the said institute will be taken as an offence. He will not be allowed to participate in the auction and his bid will not be opened.

8. All the liabilities regarding Tax/Levies if any, will be upon the successful bidder only.

9. The selected bidder shall have to start listing of auctioned items on very next day after depositing full bid amount and will clear the site within fifteen days failing which the EMD will be forfeited.

10. Bidders submitting bid shall be considered to have accepted all the terms and conditions. No enquiry/verbal written shall be entertained in respect of acceptance or rejections of the bid.

11. Any damage to the property of Army Hosp (R&R) if noticed, due to the fault of successful bidder during lifting of items shall be recovered from the concerned bidder and the decision of the Commandant, Army Hosp (R&R) shall be binding on the bidder.

12. Bidders will read and understand the terms and condition of auction before bidding.

13. The decision of the Commandant Army Hospital (R&R) Delhi Cantt-110010 regarding sale of the ebid is final, binding and unquestionable and he reserves its right to cancel or postpone the sale without assigning any reason.

Sd/-
Authorized Officer
For Commandant
Army Hospital (R&R)

Date: 24 June 2020

WB HIDCO

NOTICE

Special kitchen scheme for poor to be launched in Rajasthan

The State government will spend ₹100 crore annually on its implementation

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

JAIPIUR
A new kitchen scheme named after former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi will shortly be launched in Rajasthan for providing nutritious food to the poor and needy twice a day at concessional rates.

The State government will spend ₹100 crore every year on the scheme's implementation.

Chief Minister Ashok Geh-

lot said the Indira Rasoi Yojana would fulfil the State government's promise of "no one sleeps hungry".

The local non-government organisations will be roped in for running the scheme and its effective monitoring will be done with the help of information technology.

Mr. Gehlot made the announcement while inaugurating an awareness campaign on COVID-19 through videoconferencing from his official residence.

While the prices for the meals are yet to be finalised, the food will be prepared keeping in mind the requirements and tastes of every municipal area.

The previous Bharatiya Janata Party government in the State had also launched a subsidised meal scheme, Annapurna Rasoi Yojana, in December 2016, offering breakfast and lunch for ₹5 and ₹8 respectively on the lines of Tamil Nadu's Amma Unavagam (Mother's Canteen).

Awareness drive

Mr. Gehlot released five different types of posters, audio jingles and video films on the awareness drive and flagged off five mobile vans loaded with publicity material and equipment provided by the National Health Mission and the United Nations Population Fund.

A Chinese veteran pleads for peace

Wang Qi stayed in India after accidentally crossing into Indian territory in 1963

SIDHARTH YADAV

BHOPAL
The resentment of not being able to see his mother one last time has stayed with Wang Qi, 81, a Chinese soldier during the 1962 war with India. He says he accidentally crossed into the Indian territory, and has remained here since.

"I fought for my mother, whom I could not see after the war ended," Mr. Wang said in broken Hindi. "People on both sides will have no benefit from fighting. *Yeh acha baat nahi hai. Samjhauta kar!* [This is not a good thing. Come to an agreement]. Why let people die over a piece of land?"

A surveyor in the People's Liberation Army, Mr. Wang strayed into Arunachal Pradesh while on a stroll from his camp in January 1963. Tired and hungry, he hailed a Red Cross vehicle, only to be blindfolded and handed over to the Indian Army. The next seven years he was



Wang Qi with his family. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

jailed in Ajmer, Delhi, Bhopal, Jabalpur and finally in Balaghat district of Madhya Pradesh before being freed.

On the ongoing border conflict, Mr. Wang, who joined the Army at 21, said: "I am just a former soldier... I have been away from my homeland. This is what conflict brings. People only lose. If border tension escalates, I will never be able to go back to China."

Upon his release, Mr. Wang began working at a flour mill in Tirodi village. "They even named him Bahadur," recalled his son Vish-

nu Wang. Soon, he won over the trust of his employer, who arranged his marriage to a local woman in 1975.

"Every night, I cried remembering my mother. The war split us forever," said Mr. Wang.

However, his heart pined for his homeland. "I told the Indian government that they could keep me here, but at least allow me to visit my home once," he said, recalling the requests he had made over years. When Rajiv Gandhi was the Prime Minister, Mr. Wang sent an air letter to his family members in

Shaanxi province, who were relieved to know he was alive. Only in 2017 could he visit them for three months along with Mr. Vishnu, his wife and daughter, on a trip sponsored by the Indian government. At his hometown Xianyang, crowds cheered for him holding banners that read: "Welcome home soldier, it has been a rough journey". It was too late by then; his mother died in 2006.

The Indian government promised him a piece of land but to no avail, said Mr. Vishnu. His two sisters depend on the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act for work.

While the rest of his family have Indian citizenship, Mr. Wang never got one. He instead secured Chinese citizenship in 2013, and lives with his family here on visa. "It expired in March. We have requested the government to extend it as we can't travel for renewal owing to the lockdown," said his son.

+ 8,900 workers reached Pune in few days'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

PUNE
Over 8,900 labourers have arrived in Pune in the last few days and the labour department is monitoring the movement of migrant workers who are returning to the city, district Collector Naval Kishore Ram said.

After the lockdown was enforced in March and COVID-19 cases started increasing in Pune district, scores of migrant labourers working in various industrial belts, construction sites, hotels and other commercial establishments, went back to their home towns.

Following the resumption of rail services recently on some key routes, 144 trains crossed the Pune railway station and nearly 23,000 passengers deboarded, the Collector told reporters on Monday.

Helping hand



Reaching out: Members of a social group along with Saheli, an NGO, handing over dry ration sacks to sex workers at Budhwarpeth in Pune on Tuesday. ■ JIGNEH MISTRY

Taloja jail to submit ex-IL&FS official's health reports

HC direction comes during hearing on Hari Sankaran's interim application

SONAM SAIGAL

MUMBAI
The Bombay High Court on Tuesday directed the Taloja jail authorities to submit medical reports of Hari Sankaran, former vice-chairman of Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services (IL&FS), to show if he is vulnerable to COVID-19.

A single Judge Bench of Justice Revati Mohitdene was hearing an interim application filed by Mr. Sankaran, seeking to vacate the stay on the bail granted by the sessions court.

On April 28, Mr. Sankaran was granted temporary bail for a period of eight weeks by the trial court on furnishing a surety of ₹50,000.

However on May 5, the HC had cancelled the temporary



bail after Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) counsel Hiten Venegarkar had said that Mr. Sankaran's bail application itself was premature as the HC had stayed its own order of quashing criminal proceedings against him and other auditors for eight weeks.

He was arrested by the SFIO in April 2019 in connection with an IL&FS case for alleged irregularities.

Family to be informed in 48 hours if prisoner tests positive, govt. tells HC

All the inmates will be allowed to contact their lawyers through phone and email, the draft guidelines said.

Last week, the government submitted a detailed draft of guidelines that provided for daily thermal screening of all the inmates, creation of temporary quarantine and COVID care centres at requisitioned buildings across 26 districts, and a regular health check-up of inmates with co-morbidities.

The government made the submission before a Bench led by Chief Justice Dipankar Datta during the hearing of a bunch of Public Interest Litigations (PILs).

Advocate General Ashutosh Kumbhakoni submitted to the court revised draft guidelines for safeguarding the health of inmates of prisons across the State, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bhima-Koregaon: Centre seeks time to reply to plea against transfer of probe

SONAM SAIGAL

MUMBAI

The Union government on Tuesday sought time to file its reply before the Bombay High Court in response to a plea filed by two accused in the Bhima-Koregaon violence case, challenging the transfer of investigation to the National Investigation Agency (NIA).

A Division Bench of Justices S.S. Shinde and Abhay Ahuja was hearing the petition filed by advocate Surendra Gadling and journalist Sudhir Dhawale on June 19. They were arrested on June 6, 2018, for their alleged links with the Communist Party of India (Maoist), and are currently lodged at Taloja jail.

They moved the HC through advocate Madhavi Ayyappan, challenging the Centre's decision to transfer the investigation into the case from the Pune Police to the NIA, on the grounds that the transfer is contrary to provisions of the NIA Act.

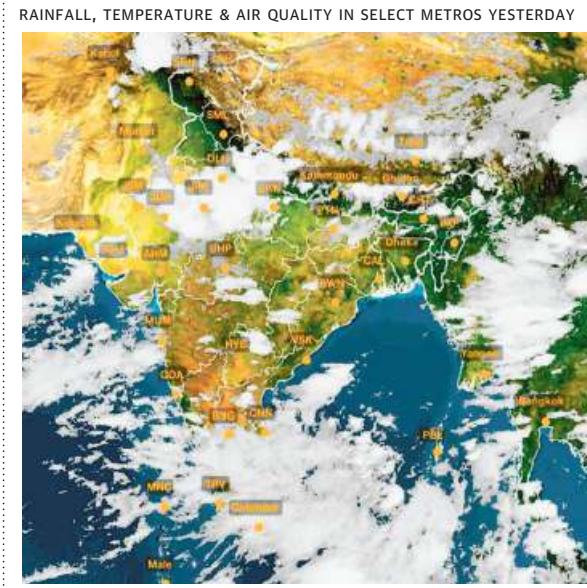
Their petition said, "There is no provision that empowers the Central government to transfer the investigation after completion

of the probe and filing of the charge sheet, particularly when there were no compelling circumstances necessitating the transfer. The transfer of investigation to the NIA amounts to re-investigation." The 190-page petition further said in order to keep the false implications and wrongful incarcerations of innocent people unconnected with the Bhima-Koregaon case, the investigation was transferred by the Central government to the NIA, immediately after the Bharatiya Janata Party lost power in Maharashtra.

"The allegations that Mr. Dhawale of Kabir Kala Manch was making provocative statements, performing inflammatory street plays and songs, and distorting the history as per the agenda of the CPI (Maoist), were vague and cryptic, and it is not possible to infer from such allegations that the petitioners are organisers of Elgar Parishad," the plea said.

Additional Solicitor General Anil Singh sought time to file an affidavit. The matter will be heard on July 14.

WEATHER WATCH



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD; POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17:30)
Forecast for Wednesday: Heavy/heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit-Baltistan, Delhi, west Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, coastal Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Lakshadweep and Andaman & Nicobar Islands

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	3.7...	34.3...	22.6	Kozhikode	4.4...	31.5...	23.8
Ahmedabad	...37.5...	27.4	22.6	Kurnool	3...	34.0...	25.5
Aizawl	...26.9...	19.1	14.5	Lucknow	...35.1...	27.2	27.2
Allahabad	14.5...	35.1...	26.8	Madurai	...37.0...	28.0	28.0
Bengaluru	2.4...	30.4...	20.6	Mangaluru	19.3...	30.6...	23.1
Bhopal	5.4...	33.5...	23.5	Mumbai	5.6...	33.5...	26.0
Bhubaneswar	...35.4...	27.5	22.6	Mysuru	2.1...	30.5...	21.0
Chandigarh	24...	35.0...	22.6	New Delhi	...37.0...	27.8	27.8
Chennai	...38.0...	27.5	22.6	Patna	11.2...	33.0...	27.4
Coimbatore	...30.4...	22.5	22.5	Port Blair	...31.3...	25.3	25.3
Dehradun	...34.6...	25.1	22.5	Puducherry	3.9...	33.4...	25.8
Gangtok	43...	22.2...	18.2	Pune	...32.0...	28.8	22.8
Goa	...31.4...	28.6	22.5	Raipur	120.8...	31.6...	23.2
Guwahati	14.7...	33.6...	24.4	Ranchi	2.3...	27.3...	23.0
Hubballi	...28.0...	22.0	22.0	Shillong	4.1...	25.7...	19.0
Hyderabad	...34...	24.2	22.6	Shimla	...26.4...	20.6	20.6
Imphal	11.7...	30.4...	22.6	Srinagar	...31.2...	15.9	15.9
Jaipur	...40.2...	28.6	22.6	Thiruvananthapuram	...31.9...	25.1	25.1
Kochi	9.2...	31.4...	23.4	Tiruchi	...36.5...	27.8	27.8
Kohima	11...	25.0...	18.2	Vijayawada	...35.0...	25.8	25.8
Kolkata	...33.4...	27.0	22.0	Visakhapatnam	...35.0...	29.1	29.1

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Yesterday

CITIES	SO	NO	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	14	.20	.24	.39	—	■
Bengaluru18	.38	.25	.44	■
Chennai18	.98	.66	—	■
Delhi	13	.15	.152	.45	.65	■
Hyderabad	15	.16	.12	.34	.51	■
Kolkata3	.10	.17	.34	■
Lucknow3	.2	.47	.107	■
Mumbai6	.11	.23	.17	■
Pune	22	.8	.45	.28	.27	■
Visakhapatnam	13	.49	.28	.47	.87	■

In observation made at 4.00 pm, Amritsar, Punjab recorded overall air quality index (AQI) score of 169 indicating a moderate level of pollution. In contrast, Aizawl, Mizoram recorded a healthy AQI score of 12

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

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

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

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

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



Undesirable acquittal

HC verdict in caste murder case, a setback to push for protecting freedom of marital choice

There is understandable disbelief and shock over the Madras High Court's judgment acquitting a man found guilty of ordering the heinous murder of a Dalit youth married to his daughter. While the lower court, after an expeditious trial, had awarded the death sentence to B. Chinnasamy in the sensational Udumalpet Shankar murder case, the High Court has ruled that no conspiracy has been proved. It is indeed disappointing that an emblematic case of murder against a member of the SC in the name of preserving the honour of a dominant caste has been reduced to a narrative without an author. None other than five hirings unknown to the victim has been found guilty. Their death sentences have been commuted to a life sentence without remission for 25 years. V. Shankar had succumbed to as many as 33 injuries inflicted under the gaze of CCTV cameras at a busy marketplace at Udumalpet town in Tamil Nadu in March 2016. The assailants grievously attacked his wife Kowsalya, Chinnasamy's daughter. Fortunately, she survived and her courageous deposition against her parents and fellow members of the dominant Thevar community led to the trial court sentencing her father and five assailants to death. The verdict was a shot in the arm for progressive sections concerned about the rising trend in murders and attacks related to caste pride. The exoneration of Kowsalya's family impedes the social agenda of protecting the freedom of women to make marital choices.

The failure to prove the conspiracy charge reflects poorly on the investigation and prosecution. The main question that arises is who had sent the assailants to eliminate the couple, if not Kowsalya's parents. It is indeed true that a conspiracy ought to be proved through an unbroken chain of circumstances, and that strong suspicion cannot take the place of proof. However, it is unfortunate that the court treated a peaceful parting of ways in the family soon after their temple wedding in 2015 – when Kowsalya gave a written statement before the police that her parents did not interfere with her marital life and her father's complaint that Shankar had 'abducted' her was closed – as evidence that her father could not have plotted to attack them. It is not beyond human nature to suppress one's anger in public and strike at a more opportune time. It is possible to say the court could have taken a different view of the call records that showed Chinnasamy being in contact with the assailants and withdrawing money close to the crime. Despite some flaws in its case, the prosecution is expected to appeal against the verdict. It will be in the society's interest that the Supreme Court gets to examine the full dimensions of this horrific crime.

Downing the shutters

Trump's visa halt may run into opposition from America Inc. before the November poll

The White House has made a proclamation restricting the issuance of non-immigrant work visas across the board, purportedly to clamp down on American jobs going to foreign workers, a consistent policy priority of the Donald Trump administration. The broad-brush order includes the H-1B visa for skilled workers, which is widely garnered by Indian nationals, the H-2B visa issued to seasonal workers in the landscaping and hospitality industries, the L-1 visa for intra-company transfers, and the J-1 visa for students on work-study summer programmes. It will also impact the H-4 visa for dependents of H-1B visa holders. The proclamation will enter into force on June 24 and be applicable until the end of the calendar year, which notably includes the November 3 presidential election. It is intended as a follow-on order reducing the number of foreigners entering the U.S., as it comes on the back of the 60-day halt in legal migration that began on April 23. While a broad swathe of workers is likely to be affected by the latest pause in visa processing, the latest restrictions will not apply to visa-holders who are already within the U.S., or those who are outside it and have already been issued valid visas. The reasoning offered by the White House is that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has "significantly disrupted Americans' livelihoods," to the extent that the overall unemployment rate in the country nearly quadrupled between February and May 2020 to 13.3%.

There is little doubt that the policies of the Trump White House are likely to genuflect to the broader requirements of the 2020 presidential campaign, one of which is a sharp focus on "America First," or in this case the need to project aggressive action against American jobs allegedly being lost to foreign workers. This week's proclamation offered data to bolster that claim, noting that between February and April, "more than 20 million U.S. workers lost their jobs in key industries where employers are currently requesting H-1B and L workers to fill positions". It also observed that similar or higher numbers could be found in the other listed visa categories. However, Mr. Trump may find that the blowback from America Inc., the employers of millions of non-immigrant foreign workers, is speedy and savage. Already Google CEO Sundar Pichai has responded by tweeting, "Immigration has contributed immensely to America's economic success, making it a global leader in tech, and also Google the company it is today. Disappointed by today's proclamation – we'll continue to stand with immigrants and work to expand opportunity for all." If more captains of the Fortune 500 companies strike this note of disappointment – and lobby quietly behind closed doors to boost the prospects of Mr. Trump's rival in the November election, former Democratic Vice-President Joe Biden – this might be the straw that breaks the back of the Trump campaign juggernaut.

Arrest the virus of arbitrary power

What is worrisome today is the whimsical curtailment of liberty and brazen partisanship



RAJEEV BHARGAVA

In the early days of the lockdown, when COVID-19 cases began to rise, we witnessed a second virus spreading equally rapidly in the country – the virus of communalism. But there is a third virus around which is less spoken about; a virus eating into and severely corroding our democratic structure – the virus of arbitrary power. There is no better evidence of this than the denial of bail to a pregnant student-activist, arrested for creating disorder on an 'unprecedented scale' when all she appeared to have done was actively participate, like many others, in a protest against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, 2019, proposed by the government.

Tyranny and slavery

This arbitrary use of power, implied by the absence or selective use of law, is deeply troublesome. More so, when exercised by a democratically elected government. Frequent arbitrariness in the political domain leads to tyranny, quite like when persistently present in the social sphere, it leads to slavery. Either way, it tramples upon basic freedoms. But what, one might ask, is the connection between arbitrariness and the loss of freedoms?

Individuals, communities or citizens cannot function freely without a stable set of expectations. By stabilising expectations, laws enable significant freedoms, even as they restrict some others. To take just one example, once it is widely known that I am legally restricted to driving only on the left, I drive with greater freedom, knowing that headlong collision is unlikely.

This is equally true of the arbitrary exercise of social power, for instance under social slavery. A slave must comply with any, just any whimsical order of his master.

I regulate the speed of travel and calculate the time to get from home to office. This helps me schedule my work for the day and coordinate with others who likewise make their own schedules. By jointly accomplishing our goals, we enhance our freedom. Laws enable our actions and interactions to become broadly predictable. Many of our freedoms require that the arbitrary, by which is meant 'unpredictable, random or unexpected' does not throw us off balance. The arbitrary blocks freedom.

However, an even more basic feature of arbitrariness, one that produces much greater harm, is to be at the mercy of the whim or fancy of someone else, especially the powerful. Return to the traffic example. Suppose that two vehicles stop at the traffic light but just beyond the zebra crossing. The policeman, embodying the entire might of the state, issues a ticket or a *challan* to one but not the other. Worse, instead of fining the violators, he seizes the driving licence of a careful driver, who has stopped a good metre behind the crossing, merely because he dislikes the make of his car. Surely, this arbitrary implementation of the law is grossly unjust. This shows that the minutest aspect of daily life – travelling to work – can be dependent upon the arbitrary opinion of someone else. When power is exercised arbitrarily by the state, a person is made to act not in accordance with a legitimate, general rule but at the pleasure of state officials. The most extreme example of this is political enslavement, when an entire people are colonised, subjected to the will of the colonisers, where laws, good or bad, flow from the like and dislike of colonial masters.

and at the Centre, I know that an occupational hazard of a finance job is having to say "no" most of the time. Ministers and colleagues approach the Finance Secretary with projects and initiatives to seek funding. Charged as the Finance Secretary is with balancing the government's books, saying "no" becomes unavoidable, no matter your inclination to be positive. But how you say "no" makes a difference. It is here that BPRV stood out. He heard out everyone's proposal with an open mind, gave them the benefit of the doubt and took a final view balancing the merits of the proposal and the finances available. And even when he said "no", he did so in such an agreeable way that the other party left his office possibly disappointed but never disgruntled. It was these traits – professionalism, pragmatism and an open mind – that earned him the confidence of stalwart Chief Ministers, the respect of colleagues and made him a role model for junior officers posted in the Finance Department. And he was such a colossus that even Finance Secretaries of other States looked up to him for advice and guidance on critical public finance issues.

A balancing act
BPRV was a member of the Tenth Finance Commission (1992-94). As war in Vietnam and its rapacious needs. When Rev. Martin Luther King criticised these policy shifts that laid waste two nations and its resources in a seminal speech in Riverside church in New York, it soon spelt the end of the road for him (King). Therefore, what the U.S. currently needs is not the "reactionary nativism" of Presidents such as Ronald Reagan and Donald Trump, nor the "technocratic subservience" of pretentious liberals such as Bill Clinton and Barack Obama. After the brutal murder of George Floyd, and for the first time in recent American memory, there are a lot of young people of all races, united and braving their hearts while marching in the streets for economic and social justice. Their symbols of hope and light will have to be unifiers just as Rev. Martin Luther King, Fannie Lou Hamer and the distinguished dissident intellectuals like Noam Chomsky. A return to the failed myopic vision of the past would be squandering this precious opportunity to build an inclusive nation.

G. PARAMESWARAN,
Coimbatore

Nod for festival
The green signal given by the Supreme Court to conduct the Puri Rath Yatra with a "bare minimum number of people", along with 11 other conditions – including permitting only those who have been tested COVID-19 negative being allowed to pull the chariots and participate in the rituals – will most probably prevent the spread of the virus in the event (Inside)



Since the master owns him, the master is legally permitted to do just about anything with the slave. The slave breathes at his pleasure, sits or stands at his pleasure, eats, works, sleeps at his pleasure. Slaves can be awakened and asked to work in the field at an unearthly hour of the night, if the master so desires. They are never sure of what to expect from the master. One moment, objects of affection or charity, at the very next, they are treated with utter disdain, sold, even killed. After all, the master can dispose of his property at will. Such arbitrary power was routinely exercised by the patriarch in the family and continues even today. Likewise, unbridled capitalism is marked by an absence of laws to regulate labour; workers can be hired or fired at the will of the employer and no fixed hours of work exist. Unregulated wage-labour works pretty much like slavery. Are not domestic workers still treated in many homes like slaves?

The Emergency and now

These examples strengthen my point about an inverse relation between arbitrary political power and freedom. In dictatorships, entire populations are subject to the whim of the supreme leader or a tiny elite. Who did not fear the midnight knock in the regimes of Hitler and Stalin? While the devastation they caused is well chronicled, smaller tyrannies abound in

our world too. Even democracies contain authoritarian spaces within them where the law can be used to continuously harass opponents. Anyone who has lived through the Emergency knows that Opposition leaders were thrown in jail on the false charge of conspiring against the state and thereafter a small crack unit began to arbitrarily control the activity of anyone politically significant. Surely that experience should have sufficed to make all of us realise the supreme value of freedom from arbitrary rule. However, with the number of first information reports (FIRs) being filed at the behest of random persons, on unsubstantiated complaints and little explanation, largely uncontested by a tired, silent political Opposition, one begins to wonder if we are headed in that awful direction once again.

Upending rights

Consider the arrest of activists. Article 21 of the Constitution gives every citizen the right of basic liberty and security. No one can be deprived of liberty, held without properly following procedures prescribed by law. Article 22 requires that anyone arrested and detained must be informed of the ground for such an arrest and must be brought before a competent legal authority within a prescribed time frame. Legal scholars have rightly pointed out that the best interpretation of this Article requires that the grounds of arrest and detention must be reasonable. The grounds of preventive detention, to be used in very rare cases, must likewise assume that the suspicion of offence is well-grounded, based on available evidence, on relevant information that satisfies any objective observer, and not on mischievous allegations. But reality seems to confirm what every other Indian movie has shown about police acting on the caprice of a ruling leader, and the law being used to harass citizens. Is suspi-

cion always supported by available facts? Is the 'offender' really a threat to internal security, or merely present at the scene of the 'crime'? Whatever the facts of the case, was the offence committed by a pregnant student-activist so grave that bail could not be granted until yesterday, on her 4th attempt? If ordinary persons could smell arbitrariness here, why could not the sessions judge? Anyhow, why fill our coronavirus-infested jails with what are largely political prisoners, when other countries are releasing even non-political inmates? Minimum lock-up during lockdown should be the political slogan in our catastrophic times.

Arbitrary curtailment of liberty existed under previous State and central governments. This is deplorable. Yet, what is worrisome today is its frequency and brazen partisanship. We should remind ourselves that participants in the anti-corruption movement of 2011-12 were not thrown in jail. Nor was the media muzzled when it went after the central government of the day. Why are political activists and journalists charged sheeted today for simply doing their job?

The Emergency, whose anniversary falls tomorrow, was meant to be a watershed in the life of Indian democracy, a brief, critical phase when the Indian political system could have gone either the way of authoritarian rule or mature as a democracy. By restoring faith in democracy, India appeared to have passed one of its crucial tests and firmly taken the second route. But are we on the verge of giving up the gains from that chastening experience? Has the struggle against the suspension of democracy been in vain? Have a small section of its victims now become perpetrators?

Rajeev Bhargava is Professor, Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS), Delhi

A tribute to a quintessential finance man

B.P.R. Vithal's traits, of professionalism, pragmatism and an open mind, were what made him a colossus



DUVVURI SUBBARAO

Intellectual bureaucrat – an oxymoron? Perish the thought. B.P.R. Vithal (BPRV), who passed away at 93 last week in Hyderabad, was a stellar example of a true blue Renaissance man whose scholarship straddled a host of disciplines – economics, philosophy, theology, physics, history, literature, and political science, just to cite a few. And he had the erudition to combine all that into a worldview that was at once humane and pragmatic.

BPRV was a quintessential finance man. He was the Finance Secretary of Andhra Pradesh for over a decade (1972-82). In some sense he defined the job and the job defined him. In a career in the Indian Administrative Service (IAS), where flitting from one job to another and one department to another is the norm, that BPRV had such an extended stint as Finance Secretary was a testimonial to his exceptional personal and professional traits.

Having been Finance Secretary myself, both in Andhra Pradesh



and at the Centre, I know that an occupational hazard of a finance job is having to say "no" most of the time. Ministers and colleagues approach the Finance Secretary with projects and initiatives to seek funding. Charged as the Finance Secretary is with balancing the government's books, saying "no" becomes unavoidable, no matter your inclination to be positive. But how you say "no" makes a difference. It is here that BPRV stood out. He heard out everyone's proposal with an open mind, gave them the benefit of the doubt and took a final view balancing the merits of the proposal and the finances available. And even when he said "no", he did so in such an agreeable way that the other party left his office possibly disappointed but never disgruntled.

It was these traits – professionalism, pragmatism and an open mind – that earned him the confidence of stalwart Chief Ministers, the respect of colleagues and made him a role model for junior officers posted in the Finance Department. And he was such a colossus that even Finance Secretaries of other States looked up to him for advice and guidance on critical public finance issues.

A balancing act
BPRV was a member of the Tenth Finance Commission (1992-94). As

mises to facilitate his work. I suspected, and honestly even hoped, that BPRV would be biased towards the States, especially as he was steeped in State finances. I was proved wrong. I was impressed by how he was able to combine his appreciation of the States' needs with his firm nationalistic outlook that you cannot have strong States without a strong Centre.

For a full day last week after I got the sad news of his passing, I was engrossed in going through our e-mail correspondence going back over more than two decades. It was nostalgia but it was also an intellectual *tour de force* – a reminder of his sharp intellect and wisdom. As goes with wise people, he also had remarkable wit. Here is just one example.

The bank seal

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI), set up in 1935, celebrated its platinum jubilee year in 2009-10 and I was privileged to be the RBI Governor at that time. To mark the occasion, the RBI brought out a special edition of *Without Reserve*, its in-house magazine, pulling together snippets from its history. One of the items there was about the RBI seal which was adapted from the East India Company's gold *mhur*, with the lion there changed to a tiger! "The Tiger," wrote Sir James Taylor, the Deputy

Governor at the time of RBI's establishment, was unhappy with the tiger on the seal which did not quite look like a tiger! "The Tiger," wrote Sir James, apparently inclined to a bit ribald, "looks like some species of dog, and I am afraid that a design of a dog and a tree would arouse derision among the irreverent."

I sent a copy of the magazine to BPRV and he sent me the following e-mail reply:

"A dog and a tree on the RBI seal! The Governor should get a sketch of a dog actually doing what Sir James was thinking of and leave it to the viewers to imagine what the tree stands for, the dog – watchdog – being the RBI, of course! Whenever the dog is upset with its master, this is the least it can do!"

When news of his passing came, I was not surprised; age had been showing up on his health for the last few years. But there is a deep sense of vacuum for having lost a teacher, guide, well-wisher and someone who had genuine affection for me. A remarkable man in many respects, BPRV will be long remembered for the dignity and distinction with which he served the government, society and the nation.

Duvvuri Subbarao is a former Governor of the Reserve Bank of India



To read more letters online, scan the QR code.

cricket, scalping 637 Ranji Trophy wickets.
R. SIVAKUMAR,
Chennai

Rajinder Goel

It is saddening that left-arm spinner Rajinder Goel could never represent India despite being an immensely talented bowler ('Sport/Life' page, "A spinner and a gentleman", June 23). Even at the peak of his professional career, he had to live in the shadows of Bishan Singh Bedi, as this was the time when the Indian spin quartet was ruling the roost. Nevertheless, Goel proved to be a king in domestic

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

In "Who does Galwan Valley belong to?" (FAQ page, June 21, 2020), it was erroneously mentioned that the Galwan River "flows east to Ladakh." It should be corrected to say "flows from the east to Ladakh."

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The sharp end of military power

Unless there is vision and an acceptance of the importance of air power along the LAC, there is danger



ARJUN SUBRAMANIAM

In 1962, an uninformed political leadership, dominant Army brass, and diffident Air Force leadership ensured that a reasonably potent offensive element of the Indian Air Force (IAF) watched from the sidelines as the People's Liberation Army (PLA) rolled into Ladakh and down the Sela Pass into Bomdila. Swayed by the assessments of a British Operations Research expert, Patrick Blackett, and the U.S. Ambassador to New Delhi, John Kenneth Galbraith, then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru balked at the idea of using the IAF to stem the Chinese tide. IAF fighter pilots posted at air bases that could impact operations in Ladakh and the Tawang Sector (Pathankot and Tezpur) recall that they were battle ready and waited for the call to action that never came.

Defensive and offensive strategy

Fast forward to the winter of 1986 and the summer of 1987. Following the establishment of a camp at Wangdung grazing grounds in the Sumdorong Chu Valley (northwest of Tawang and in the same area where Indian forces were overwhelmed in 1962), the trio of General Krishnaswamy Sundarji, Lieutenant General Narahari and Major General J.M. Singh put together a logically viable envelopment strategy that spooked the Chinese with numbers, firepower, and aggression without needless confrontation. An important element of this strategy was the use of helicopters and transport aircraft to facilitate and sustain this deployment.

That was not all. They even developed an offensive strategy to take the battle to Le, the forward most PLA base in the sector. There was close coordination between 4 Corps in Tezpur and the fighter base close by and training was stepped up in the valleys to support offensive operations if required. In an interview with the author, Major General J.M. Singh was emphatic that air power held the key in operations on the Tibetan Plateau.



"In the next decade or so, the IAF will lose its competitive advantage with the PLAAF as the latter has invested heavily in modernisation." A Su-30 MKI of the IAF lands at Dimapur airport during a routine training exercise in Dimapur, Nagaland in 2019. ■PTI

He argued, "We must have the capability to gain and maintain a favourable air situation for limited periods of time, and carry out interdiction to back shallow multi-pronged thrusts across road-less terrain to outflank the Chinese build-up that will take place on the existing road and rail networks."

The IAF's advantage

On June 15, 2020, there was a violent clash at Patrolling Point 14 in Galwan. The ground situation across the entire Line of Actual Control (LAC) is largely one of parity and for any tangible gains or tactical advantage to be gained on the ground the Indian Army needs a numerical superiority of at least 5:1. Therefore, if there is any asymmetric advantage to be gained, it is air power that will prove to be decisive in depleting the PLA's combat potential before it is applied along the LAC.

By all recent operational assessments including one by the Harvard Kennedy School, the IAF currently enjoys both a qualitative and quanti-

tative advantage over the People's Liberation Army Air Force (PLAAF) across the LAC. It's fighter fleet of 4th Generation Aircraft (Su-30 MKIs, Mirage-2000s and MiG-29s) are superior in almost every respect to the PLAAF's J-10s, J-11s and SU-30 MKKs. The IAF has more operational bases than the PLAAF close to the LAC. There is reasonable redundancy and survivability to withstand an initial attack on IAF bases by the PLA Rocket Force (PLARF).

There are, however, two areas of concern. The first is a strong ground-based air defence network strung up by the PLAAF in Tibet comprising the S-300, S-400 and HQ-9 systems that the IAF will have to contest during its offensive operations. The second is the advantage that the PLAAF has in long-range air delivered cruise missiles (500-3,000 km) from the H-6 bomber. As compared to this, the IAF's Su-30 MKI has just been cleared to carry the BrahMos land attack cruise missile with a range of 300 km which could be a significant force multiplier against targets in Ak-

teu. He argued, "We must have the capability to gain and maintain a favourable air situation for limited periods of time, and carry out interdiction to back shallow multi-pronged thrusts across road-less terrain to outflank the Chinese build-up that will take place on the existing road and rail networks."

Arjun Subramaniam is a retired Air Vice Marshal from the IAF and a military historian

sai Chin and Tibet.

The other area of significant advantage enjoyed by the IAF is in the aerial mobility department where the IAF transport fleet of C-17s, IL-76s, An-32s and C-130s are as proficient in diverse roles as the best air forces in the world. Whether it is rapid troop induction into major bases or at Advance Landing Grounds like DBO, Nyoma or Mechuka, or inter-valley transfer and insertion of special forces with helicopters like the recently inducted Chinooks and the versatile Mi-17 series, these are areas that will provide great confidence to the Indian Army. After initial setbacks in Afghanistan, the U.S. Army has figured out a way to exploit the lethal firepower of the Apache Attack Helicopter at altitudes of 12,000-14,000 feet. It would be reasonable to expect that the IAF's Apaches would add significant firepower in Ladakh.

Finally, in the area of surveillance, China possesses a large complement of the Yaogan series of low earth orbit surveillance satellites that offer it an almost persistent stare capability over areas of interest. To counter this India must leverage its existing space-based surveillance assets and airborne surveillance platforms to support wide-spectrum operations and provide better situational awareness.

The importance of air power

Unless there is vision and an acceptance of the importance of air power in what has till now a significantly land-centric operational philosophy across the LAC, there is a clear and present danger. In the next decade or so, the IAF will lose its competitive advantage with the PLAAF as the latter has invested heavily in modernisation and is continuing to do so.

On the other hand, with deep budgetary cuts and the likelihood of the slowing down of the induction of cutting-edge platforms and weapon systems, the choice is not about what the IAF wants but what the country needs in the prevailing complex security environment. Air power represents the sharp end of contemporary military power. We need to ensure that it does not get blunt.

Arjun Subramaniam is a retired Air Vice Marshal from the IAF and a military historian

Transforming education

Instead of presenting each discipline as distinct and separate, we ought to integrate their domains with the natural world



SUJATHA BYRAVAN

COVID-19 has knocked down economies, stranded people, hit education, work and travel, and cut short people's lives. If the pandemic has one lesson for humanity, it is that people, places and non-human entities and processes are connected. These connections have long been ignored in most spheres, including economic landscapes, food systems and pedagogies.

At this time, there has been a lot of talk about investing in a "green economy" with more renewables, reduced motorised transport or travel, and more working from home. These are all good ideas but they could also be interpreted as mere tinkering at the edges. In another 15-18 months, perhaps with a vaccine in place, the understanding we have gained during the lockdown may be all but forgotten. The green economy, as promising as it could be to tackle climate change, may leave the discourse on development untouched. If we want long-lasting and transformational changes to connect sustainably with the web of life, we have to do along with new learning. Curriculum developers will have to restructure and rebuild materials used to impart knowledge.

In *Unruly Waters*, historian Sunil Amrit describes the subcontinent's history by looking at the rain, rivers and coasts. He writes how water was studied, managed and divided as a result of human activity through political and economic development. In *Indica*, Pranay Lal teaches geology and natural history simultaneously. Amitav Ghosh's *The Great Derangement* is about imperialism and its role in climate change. The economic historian, Prasannan Partha Sarathi, is preparing new materials to teach modern history incorporating ecological changes, and novelists and poets are beginning to integrate the Anthropocene in their writing. The initial waft of change we see in some areas of knowledge will have to deepen and spread.

The Gaia hypothesis put forth by James Lovelock is an ecological theory proposing that living creatures and the physical world are in a complex interacting system that maintains equilibrium. One might imagine the COVID-19 crisis as Gaia giving us a warning, showing how flimsy human life and the structures we rely upon are. Unchecked rapaciousness has been unleashed by policies that support "growth at any cost". It will ultimately fail since all goods used in any economy arise from the natural world. Our educational system needs to lay down the bricks for this understanding.

Sujatha Byravan is a scientist who studies technology, science and development policy

Crop of ironies

Food security and farmer welfare are intertwined

MADHURIKA SANKAR

It is ironic that it took a devastating pandemic to force the government's hand for long-overdue agrarian reforms. Amendments have been made to the Essential Commodities Act, 1955. The Finance Minister has urged States to dismantle the Agricultural Produce Market Committees. Several long-term changes have been made to the agricultural sector, such as fair pricing and e-trading, along with liquidity measures. The Centre has also encouraged the State governments to adopt three model laws on contract farming, agricultural land leasing, and marketing.

These developments came as the Indian agriculture sector was impacted by lockdowns across States following the COVID-19 outbreak. Migrant farm workers fled the fields en masse, unable to sustain their livelihoods. Crippling bottlenecks in the supply chain resulted in prices sky-rocketing in consumer markets, even as farmers, stuck with inventory, started dumping them at throwaway prices. Many remained hungry even as the Food Corporation of India's godowns overflowed with grain stock at three times the buffer stock norms.

It is an irony that many migrants to the cities who come from farming backgrounds sought the city for a better life but it is the same cities and their employers that have forced them to return to their homes. What India has been witnessing over the past few months is a historic reverse migration. It is an irony that the very people who ensure food security in this nation are being made to go hungry now. It is equally an irony that the lockdown was imposed to contain COVID-19 but migration of the poor and vulnerable might be taking the virus to the hinterland of India.

While the concept of One Nation, One Ration Card has potential, people are concerned about immediate relief for the hungry. This is being provided with the release of fixed quantities of free foodgrains and pulses to the migrants, even to those without ration cards, for the months



of June and July. Implementation needs to be seen through. India has always struggled to fill the gap between policy prescriptions and implementation.

Just as rabi crops were set to be harvested, unseasonal rain and hail arrived at the beginning of the year. Parts of the country reeled under a pernicious locust invasion. Looming loans could push farmers into a tailspin of poverty. The Reserve Bank of India announced an extension of the moratorium on loan EMIs by three months, but given that many farmers rely on a system of informal borrowing, this negates the intended effect. The government has also hiked the MSP of 14 kharif crops, but some argue that this may not offer the intended extent of relief due to a lack of manpower, working capital, machinery (stuck in other States) and storage.

Steps that economists suggest are to switch from cash to food crops; listen to the Prime Minister's "go local" message and invest in redirecting supply chains locally; increase government allocations to poor farmers through the PM KISAN scheme by including everyone, even those who do not own land; ensure timely availability of seeds and fertilizers for the next season by roping in gram sabhas to verify claimants; and involve Farmer Producer Organisations in the process to ensure the safeguarding of farmers' rights.

The world observed World Hunger Day on May 28, 2020. India was ranked 102 out of 117 qualifying countries on the Global Hunger Index. Although agriculture accounts for around 17% of India's GDP, nearly 50% of the country's population depends on farm-based income. The Prime Minister's vision for doubling farmers' income in two years seems a distant dream in the wake of the pandemic. Climate scientists warn about climate change. The resilience of Indian farmers has meant that the nation was fed even through multiple lockdowns. Now, it is our turn to give them a brighter day.

Madhurika Sankar is a Chennai-based writer



DATA POINT

No exit from the dragon

Amid border clashes, calls for boycotting Chinese products have intensified. While India relies heavily on imports from China, a much smaller portion of China's imports are from India. India's unicorns are also heavily dependent on investments from China. An economic boycott seems infeasible

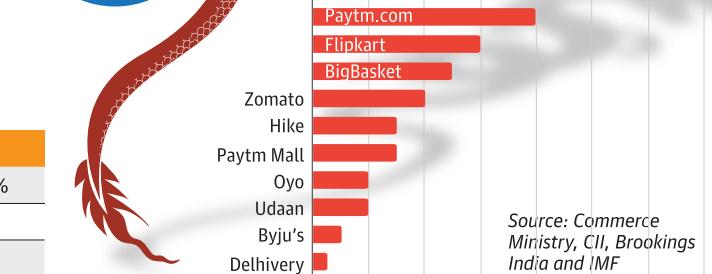
ONE-WAY TRAFFIC In FY19, 5.1% of India's exports were destined for China, while only 3% of China's came to India. Also, 13.7% of India's imports were from China, while only 0.9% of China's were from India

Year	India-China (% of total)		China-India (% of total)	
	Export	Import	Export	Import
FY15	3.9	13.5	2.6	0.8
FY16	3.4	16.2	2.8	0.7
FY17	3.7	15.9	3.0	0.9
FY18	4.4	16.4	3.1	0.9
FY19	5.1	13.7	3.0	0.9

TOP PARTNER Imports from China accounted for over 14% of India's total imports in FY20 (until Feb.), the highest share among all the nations. Exports to China accounted for over 5% of India's exports, the third highest

Top 3 imports	Top 3 exports							
	China	U.S.	U.S.	UAE	UAE	China	China	UAE
Vehicle accessories	14.09%	16.93%	7.58%	9.32%	6.39%	16.93%	5.33%	6.39%
Antibiotics								
Nitrogen compounds								
Diodes and transistors								
Tubes, pipes of iron & steel								
Electric accumulators								
LCD/LED/OLED panels for TVs								
Pesticides, insecticides								
Data processing machines								
ACs and fans								
Mineral and chemical fertilizers								
Air/vacuum pumps								
Audiovisual equipment								
Electrical parts for phones								

10.6%
China's Share of India's total Trade in FY20



FROM PAGE ONE

India, China to 'cool down' LAC tension

"During the meeting, based on the consensus reached at the first Commander-level meeting, the two sides have had candid and in-depth exchange of views on outstanding issues related to border control, and agreed to take necessary measures to cool down the situation," said Mr. Zhao. "The two sides agreed to maintain dialogue and work together for peace and tranquillity in border areas."

To a query about Chinese casualties, Mr. Zhao said, "China and India are in dialogue and talks with each other to resolve this issue through diplomatic and military channels. As for what you saw in the media, for example some people alleged that casualties on the Chi-

nese amounted to 40, I can tell you for sure this is false information."

Indian Army chief General Naravane, meanwhile, is on a two-day visit to review operational preparedness on the ground in Ladakh. "The Army chief will be visiting Ladakh for reviewing the ground situation, discuss the ongoing stand-off with ground commanders, visit forward locations and interact with troops on the ground," a source said.

Upon reaching Leh, Gen. Naravane interacted with soldiers at the military hospital. This is his second visit to Ladakh since the stand-off with the Chinese troops that began in May. He visited the Leh-based 14 Corps Headquarters on May 22.

India, China need no help, says Lavrov

"Russia, India and China consistently speak in favour of inter-state relations based on a firm and, let me stress this, generally recognised international legal basis in order to ensure global stability and general prosperity," Mr. Lavrov said in his opening remarks.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said upholding the fundamental principles of international relations was necessary for maintaining order in the world.

"Leading voices of the world must be exemplars in every way. Respecting international law, recognising

legitimate interests of partners, supporting multi-lateralism and promoting common good is the only way to build a durable world order. This special meeting reiterates our belief in time-tested principles of international relations, but the challenge today is not of concepts and norms but equally of their practice," he said.

However, Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi subtly hinted at bilateral issues. He called for revitalisation of the three countries, while "correctly treating and properly handling sensitive factors in bilateral relations".

India tells Pakistan to slash staff at mission

"These officials who have returned to India on June 22 have provided graphic details of the barbaric treatment that they experienced at the hands of Pakistani agencies," the MEA said.

Pakistan denied the allegations, and summoned the Indian Charge d'affaires Gaurav Sabharwal to inform him that they intended to reduce the Indian mission in Islamabad's strength by 50%, and also gave them seven days to carry out the reductions.

"The MEA's statement is another effort to distort facts and deny the culpability of these Indian High Commission officials in criminal offences," Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)

said in a statement on Tuesday evening. The reduction in staff strengths in the latest in a series of measures taken by New Delhi and Islamabad who have seen bilateral ties plummet since the Pulwama terror attack last year and the government's decision to amend Article 370 of the Constitution and reorganise the State of Jammu and Kashmir. In the past year both sides have snapped trade ties, reduced visas to a minimum and cancelled overflight rights for a few months.

In August last year, Pakistan expelled the Indian High Commissioner Ajay Bisaria, and both missions have functioned without a High Commissioner since then.

CRPF jawan, two militants killed in J&K

"The operation was launched on a specific input generated by the Pulwama police regarding their presence in Bundzoo area. They were given the opportunity to surrender. However, they fired indiscriminately upon the joint search party," said the police spokesman.

The villagers claimed the slain militants were locals.

"The bodies of the terrorists have been sent to

Handwara for their last rites after conducting medico-legal formalities, including collection of their DNA. In case any family claims them to be their kith or kin, they can come forward for the identification and participation in the last rites," the police said.

The police said incriminating material, including two AK rifles and ammunition, were recovered from the site.

Ayush lens on Ramdev's COVID-19 cure

"69% of the 45, when tested on the third day, were found clear of the virus and half of those on the placebo recovered," said Dr. Sharma. That works out to 31 of those on the treatment tested negative, and 25 of those on placebo tested negative.

No other details on the profiles of the COVID-19 positive persons – the degree of sickness in those who enrolled for the trial, their age, whether they were on other medication prior to enrol-

ment – were immediately available. A check on the clinical trial registry, where all trials must be registered, showed that a wide spectrum of patients were solicited. The medicine regime involved are the Tablet Swarsi Ras (500 mg), Tablet Pure Ashwagandha Extract (500 mg), Tablet Pure Giloy Extract (500 mg), Tablet Pure Tulsi Extract (500 mg) and Anu Taila (nasal drop), according to information on the clinical trial website.

T.N., Karnataka, A.P. toll up, Telangana case tally soars

38 more die in Tamil Nadu; Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka reported eight deaths each; one dies in Kerala

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Andhra Pradesh witnessed eight new COVID-19 deaths in the highest single-day spike so far, and Telangana recorded 879 positive tests for the infection. With eight more deaths on Tuesday, Karnataka's toll touched 150.

Kerala reported one more death and 141 new cases of COVID-19. With 60 recover-

began was 3,451, of whom, 1,807 had recovered.

On Tuesday, of 141 new cases recorded, local transmission resulted in 10 cases, including that of a health care worker at Ernakulam. The rest were imported cases – people from abroad or other States.

Health department data showed 2,811 cases in the State since May 4, and 2,545 were imported cases.

COVID-19

ies, the active cases were 1,620. The death toll in the State stood at 22.

A 68-year-old man belonging to Mayyanad, Kollam, died at Kollam Government Medical College hospital. He had returned from Delhi on June 10 and was in hospital since June 15 after he developed fever and tested COVID-19 positive.

The cumulative cases reported since the outbreak

The toll in Andhra Pradesh with eight new fatalities rose to 119. Three new deaths occurred in both Krishna and Kurnool and one each in Guntur and Kadapa.

In the past five days, 27 deaths were reported, and Krishna district continued to register the highest number of deaths, standing at 40.

Meanwhile, the State detected 462 new cases after 20,639 samples were tested in 24 hours. Of the total, 407

fresh cases were of locals. The overall tally mounted to 9,834, including 7,858 local cases.

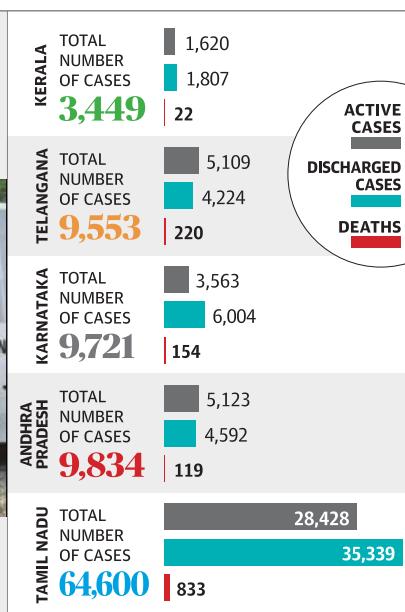
In another daily of high case numbers, Telangana recorded 879 positive tests on

Ramping up

With the COVID-19 numbers increasing, the Andhra Pradesh government is fighting to contain its spread by setting up six mobile centres to test samples in Vijayawada



Cleaning drive: A corporation worker sanitising the COVID iMASQ mobile testing centre in Vijayawada on Tuesday. ■ V. RAJU



deaths were from Bengaluru Urban, one death each was reported from Dakshina Kannada and Ballari.

Bengaluru Urban had 107 new cases, while Ballari and Bidar reported 53 and 22 cases respectively.

For the seventh consecutive day, Tamil Nadu recorded 2,000-plus cases of COVID-19 on Tuesday. With 2,516 new cases of COVID-19, the State's overall tally climbed to 64,600, and the Health department instructed districts witnessing a spike to strengthen surveillance of Influenza Like Illness (ILI).

Another 1,227 persons were discharged, taking the number of persons discharged so far to 35,339. There were 28,428 active cases. The death toll exceeded 800 with 39 more persons succumbing to the infection.

(With inputs from Vijayawada, Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Chennai bureaus)

Karnataka govt. fixes fee for treatment in private hospitals

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The Karnataka government on Tuesday fixed the rates for COVID-19 treatment in private hospitals, with charges ranging from ₹5,200 to ₹25,000, depending on the category and severity of the infection. Rates have been fixed for both Ayushman Bharat-Arogya Karnataka (AB-ArK) patients and other insurance/cash paying patients.

In an order, the State gover-

nment said 50% of beds in private hospitals having facilities to treat COVID-19 patients should be reserved for patients referred by the public health authorities.

The government, it is learnt, did not want to wait till the Cabinet approved it as the need for referring pa-

tients to private hospitals is high, with the number of cases on the rise every day.

While the rate per day for the general ward has been fixed at ₹5,200 for AB-ArK patients and ₹10,000 for other insurance and cash patients. And for Isolation ICU with ventilator, the rate is ₹10,000 for AB-ArK and ₹25,000 for other insurance and cash patients.

₹12,000 for other insurance and cash patients.

The rate for Isolation ICU has been fixed at ₹8,500 for AB-ArK and ₹15,000 for other insurance and cash patients. And for Isolation ICU with ventilator, the rate is ₹10,000 for AB-ArK and ₹25,000 for other insurance and cash patients.

HC for action against lockdown violators

'Set up mechanism for complaints'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Taking a serious note of violations of lockdown regulations by political figures and elected representatives, the Karnataka High Court on Tuesday directed the State government to take strict action against them.

"The State must ensure that strict action is taken against everyone violating lockdown regulations, especially political figures and elected representatives. It will send a wrong signal if no action is initiated against them," the court said, pointing out that some sections of society have thrown the norms to the wind.

A Division Bench com-

prising Chief Justice Abhay Shreenivas Oka and Justice Nataraj Rangaswamy issued the direction while admitting a PIL petition filed by the city-based Letzkit Foundation. The petitioner had produced records of violations of lockdown regulations such as not wearing masks and not maintaining social distance by people, including political leaders.

Also, the Bench directed the government to set up within a week a Grievance Redressal Mechanism to enable the citizens to lodge complaints about violation of lockdown regulations through e-mails, WhatsApp messages, SMS and to send photos of instances of such violations.



IN BRIEF



'Ensure house site pattas are distributed by July 8'

GUNTUR
Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Tuesday asked district Collectors to ensure house sites are handed over to all eligible beneficiaries by July 8. "I would like to achieve the target of disbursing 25 lakh house site documents before July 8. I want total compliance on this and I also want the process of identification of beneficiaries through the lottery system," Mr. Jagan said.

Kerala HC nod for estate acquisition for airport

KOCHI
The Kerala High Court on Tuesday allowed the State government to go ahead with the proceedings to acquire the Cheruvally estate for the proposed Sabarimala greenfield airport. The court said that nothing prevents the government from taking over the land while adhering to the Land Acquisition Act of 2013. However, the court said the petitioner shall not forcibly be dispossessed from the occupation of the land.

NEET centres cannot be allotted abroad, HC told

KOCHI
The National Testing Agency and the Medical Council of India on Tuesday submitted before the Kerala High Court that it was not possible to allot test centres abroad for the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) scheduled for July 26. The court has sought the views of the External, Home and Civil Aviation Ministries on whether applicants can come to India to write the exam.

Man held for social media posts on YSRCP leaders

VISAKHAPATNAM
CID officials have arrested Nalanda Kishore over the 'objectionable contents' on YSRCP leaders he allegedly posted on a social media platform. TDP MLA Ganta Srinivasa Rao said, "Mr. Kishore just forwarded the posts sent to him by somebody. He did not post the contents intentionally. The posts do not target any YSRCP leader. The CID arrested the 68-year-old man post midnight as if he had committed a major crime."

Public exhibit



On display: The Russian built Mi-8 helicopter, which served the Indian Air Force for more than 35 years before being decommissioned from service, being fixed on a platform at Shankumugham in Thiruvananthapuram on Tuesday. ■ S. MAHINSHA

Rules flouted to bail out Mohanlal?

K.S. SUDHI
KOCHI

The Forest Department issued ownership certificates for four elephant tusks to actor Mohanlal by violating the "due process" of the Wildlife (Protection) Act and without holding a "proper inquiry" regarding the legitimacy of tusks and ivory", reveals a document of the Forest Department accessed by *The Hindu*.

The External Affairs Ministry, which held discussions with various Indian missions abroad following the stance taken by the Cabinet, has informed the State that Rapid Antibody Tests were being conducted in the United Arab Emirates and TrueNat test could not be conducted.

The violations were high-

lighted in a statement prepared by Surendrakumar, Chief Wildlife Warden, to be submitted before the Kerala High Court.

The document, forwarded to the Additional Chief Secretary, Forest and Wildlife, is yet to be submitted to the court. Yet, it has been made available to all senior law officers of the State and the Forest Department, sources said.

On his application, the go-

vernment on December 16, 2015, issued an order assigning the ownership of the tusks to Mr. Mohanlal. But the order was not published in the gazette.

The possession of ivory and tusks surfaced after an income tax raid at the actor's Kochi residence. Recently, the government issued a No Objection Certificate for withdrawing the prosecution against him for the possession of ivory.

date, said there was nothing wrong in having four versions of a common theme.

Ali Akbar, filmmaker and fellow-traveller of the BJP, took to Facebook to say that his movie 1921 will portray the real heroes behind the incident. His post also left a hint that the film may not be showing Variyamkunath Haji as a hero.

100 years later, Malabar Rebellion fights for screen space

Four films on the theme have been announced back-to-back within two days; actor Prithviraj fires the first salvo

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHEE

The 1921 Malabar Rebellion has once again caught the creative imagination of Malayalam.

With the rebellion turning 100 next year, four movies

comes almost 32 years after the late filmmaker I.V. Sasi gave his version of the rebellion through the movie 1921.

Three of them will narrate

Variyamkunath Kunhammed Haji, who was shot dead by the British police at Kottakkunnu, Malappuram, while the fourth film is said to 'bring out the real truth behind the incident'.

The battle on screen comes almost 32 years after the late filmmaker I.V. Sasi gave his version of the rebellion through the movie 1921.

Three of them will narrate

Actor Prithviraj Sukumaran fired the first salvo when he announced through social media his titular role in *Variyamkunnam* on Monday. Ashique Abu and Muhsin Parari will be directing the movie. The creative team was at the receiving end of a social media attack by right-wing radicals on Tuesday after they opposed the portrayal

India plans international flights

But U.S. has threatened to ban Air India services under Vande Bharat Mission

JAGRITI CHANDRA
NEW DELHI

India is likely to enter into bilateral agreements with the U.S., the U.K., France and Germany to restart international air travel. The government is discussing a template known as "travel bubble", which permits relatively unrestricted and risk-free travel between two countries positioned similarly vis-a-vis the spread of COVID-19.

"As we contemplate further opening up in response to demands, we are looking at the prospect of establishing individual bilateral bubbles – India-U.S., India-France, India-Germany, India-U.K. These are all destinations where demand for travel has not diminished. Final deci-



The decision was made public on the day the U.S. served an ultimatum to Air India.

sions pursuant to negotiations are expected to be taken soon," a spokesperson of the Ministry of Civil Aviation said.

U.S. ultimatum

The decision was made public on a day the U.S. served an ultimatum of 30 days to Air India, threatening to ban

it from conducting repatriation charters under the Vande Bharat Mission. The U.S. said the special flights were putting American airlines at a "competitive disadvantage" because India did not allow them a share of the pie, which also allegedly amounted to the denial of reciprocal rights enshrined under the Air Services Agreement of 2005 signed between the two countries.

"Air India's so-called evacuation charters have gone beyond true evacuations [at least on the India to the United States segments] and involved sales to any member of the general public able to enter the United States. As such, it appears that Air India may be using its passenger repatriation charters as a

way of circumventing the GoI (Government of India)-imposed prohibition of all scheduled services," said the U.S. Department of Transportation (DoT) in its order.

The DoT said Delta Air Lines had not received a response to its request made to India's Ministry of Civil Aviation (MoCA) on May 26 to perform repatriation charter services. The MoCA issued a rebuttal: "We have also had one round of negotiations with the U.S. on 15 June 2020 with representatives of U.S. Department of Transportation and U.S. Embassy on this issue. They were invited to submit precise proposals in this respect. A communication has now been received on 19 June, 2020 detailing these requests."

Five RJD MLCs join JD(U) in Bihar

Twin blow for Opposition party as Raghuvaresh Prasad Singh resigns as V-P

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA

In poll-bound Bihar, the Opposition Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) on Tuesday suffered a shock with five of its MLCS quitting the party to join the ruling Janata Dal(U). Another blow came to the party when ailing senior party leader and former Union Minister Raghuvaresh Prasad Singh resigned from the post of national vice-president.

The five RJD MLCS – Sanjay Prasad, Radha Charan Seth, Ranviraj Kumar Singh, S.M. Qamar Alam and Dilip Rai – met Acting Chairman of the Legislative Council Awadhesh Narain Singh and handed over their resignation letters. They requested Mr. Singh to allow their group to merge with the JD



Major setback: Former MP Raghuvaresh Prasad Singh, right, with RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav. ■ FILE PHOTO

(U). With five of the RJD's total eight members in the Upper House having resigned, party leader Rabri Devi may lose her position as Leader of the Opposition in the 75-member Council. Under the rules, the main Opposition party must have at least 10% of the total seats in the Upper House for its leader to

don the post of Leader of the Opposition.

JD(U) leader Rajiv Ranjan alias Lalan Singh said, "the RJD does not respect its party leaders ...we welcome them to our party."

However, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav said, "Since elections are coming, leaders from one party will

switch over to another party...but, this has also exposed that the JD(U) has no vote bank of its own and it throws all kinds of allurements to other party leaders to remain in power." The RJD leaders held a meeting at the official residence of Ms. Rabri Devi to review the situation.

In another blow, Raghuvaresh Prasad Singh resigned from the post of party's national vice-president (V-P). He is currently undergoing treatment for COVID-19. Mr. Singh, the four-time RJD MP from Vaishali, is said to be miffed over the recent meeting of his rival Rama Kishore Singh with Mr. Yadav. The buzz in RJD is that Mr. Rama Kishore Singh is to join the RJD on June 29.

Chidambaram hits back at BJP president

'Govt. mishandled LAC situation'

At virtual CWC meet, Sonia also slams Centre on its handling of COVID-19 crisis

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Former Union Finance Minister P. Chidambaram on Tuesday hit back at BJP president J.P. Nadda for accusing the Congress of 'signing a memorandum of understanding with the Chinese Communist Party' and blaming Rahul Gandhi of trying to divide the nation and demoralise the armed forces.

In a series of tweets, he said, "BJP President Mr Nadda asked ex-PM Dr Manmohan Singh to explain the 600 Chinese incursions into India between 2010 and 2013. Yes, there were incursions but no Indian territory was occupied by China and no lives of Indian soldiers were lost in violent clashes. Will Mr Nadda please ask the present PM to explain the 2264 Chinese incursions since 2015? I bet he will not dare to ask that question."

Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Tuesday told a virtual meeting of the Congress Working Committee (CWC) that the Narendra Modi government "gravely mishandled the border situation with China that has resulted in a full-blown crisis and is attributable to the wrong policies of the government".

While former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said the border crisis could lead to a serious situation if not tackled firmly, former party chief Rahul Gandhi said it was a "complete and total failure of diplomacy".

After starting the proceed-

ings with two-minute silence and homage to Colonel B. Santosh Babu and the 19 jawans who were killed in the violent face-off with the Chinese troops last week, the CWC adopted three separate resolutions: the face-off with China, the Centre 'abandoning' the States in handling COVID-19 cases and the 'exorbitant increases in petrol and diesel prices'.

Ms. Gandhi said India had been hit by a terrible economic crisis, a pandemic of huge proportions and a full-blown crisis on the borders with China and the cumulative effect of "widespread misery, fear, and danger to the security and territorial

integrity of the country". "Mature diplomacy and decisive leadership should inform the Modi government's actions in protecting India's territorial integrity", she stated. The Prime Minister was "called out" when he announced that no one had intruded into Indian territory in Ladakh, she observed.

The undeniable fact is that since April-May, 2020 till date, Chinese troops have committed brazen transgressions into our territory in Pangong Tso Lake area and the Galwan Valley, Ladakh. True to its character, the government is in denial," said Ms. Gandhi, adding, "...there is a growing feeling among

people that the government has gravely mishandled the situation," she said

Mr. Gandhi said, "The es-

CBI to quiz former Manipur CM in embezzlement case

Move comes days after Cong. staked claim to form govt.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A Central Bureau of Investigation team (CBI) is in Manipur to question former Manipur Chief Minister O. Ibobi Singh and some officials in connection with the alleged embezzlement of ₹322 crore by the four former chairmen of the Manipur Development Society (MDS).

At the CWC, Rajasthan CM Ashok Gehlot, backed by others, is learnt to have pitched for Mr. Rahul Gandhi to take over as party chief again. But at the press conference, the party denied that it was discussed.

The CBI visit comes just days after Mr. Ibobi Singh, as head of the Congress legislature party, staked claim to form a new government in Manipur. "Mr. Ibobi Singh, who was the MDS chairman

during the check period, has been asked to appear before the probe team on Wednesday," a CBI official said.

"The CBI wanted to record his statement at their Imphal office. We requested them to go for videoconfe-

rence or visit our residence in view of the COVID-19 scenario. They agreed to come to our house tomorrow [on Wednesday]. We are not running away anywhere," a member of Mr. Ibobi Singh's family said. The former Chief Minister could not be contacted.

In November last year, the agency had registered the case and searched multiple locations in Gurugram, Aizawl and Imphal, on the day when Manipur Congress legislators led by the former CM staged a protest in Delhi against the Naga Accord.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY
PROJECT ORGANISATION

For and on behalf of the President of India, the Deputy Chief Signal and Telecommunication Engineer, Projects, Podanur, Southern Railway, Coimbatore - 641 203, invites E-TENDER from the tenderers for the following work:

1. Tender Notice No.	E-Tender Notice No: E-Tender Notice No: SG/PROJ/PTJ/IV-DIV-HASSDAC/2020/EOT(03) (Revised) Dt: 19.06.2020	Dt: 22.06.2020
2. Name of the work	Provision of Dual Detection with High Availability Single Section Digital Axle Counter (HASSDAC) in 30 Block Sections Thiruvananthapuram Division over Southern Railway.	
3. Approximate cost of the work	Rs. 9,74,49,841.00	Rs. 7,21,04,538.13
4. Cost of Tender document	Rs. 11,200/-	Rs. 11,200/-
5. Earnest Money to be deposited	Rs. 6,37,300/-	Rs. 5,10,500/-
6. Completion period of the work	12 Months from the date of issuance of LOA	
7. Date & time for closing of tender	Closing at 14:00hrs. of 14.07.2020	Closing at 14:00hrs. of 16.07.2020
8. Website particulars from where tender documents can be downloaded :	www.irps.gov.in	

Note : For more details, terms and conditions, the tenderer is advised to refer the tender documents. (Volume I and Volume II)

Deputy Chief Signal and Telecommunication Engineer/Projects/Podanur.

Follow us on : [@twitter.com/GMSRailway](https://twitter.com/GMSRailway)

TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD
Nanthancode, Thiruvananthapuram - 695 003
Phone: 0471-2314284. E-Mail: dcotdb@gmail.com
Website: [www.travancoredevaswomboard.org](http://travancoredevaswomboard.org)

TRAVANCORE DEVASWOM BOARD INVITES E-TENDERS FOR THE SUPPLY OF:

Dry Rice, Raw Rice, Jaggery Powder, Sugar Candy, Black Raisins, Cardamom, Dry Ginger, Cumminseed, Green Gram Dal, Beaten Rice, Butter Paper Bag, Pure Ghee, Ghee Pouch, Carton Box, BOP Tape, Composite Cans, Easy Open Lids in connection with the festival period 1196 ME (2020-2021) of Sree Dharmasastha Temple, Sabarimala.

E-Tender Starting Date : 24-06-2020 - 11.00 AM
E-Tender Closing Date : 10-07-2020 - 05.00 PM
E-Tender Opening Date : 13-07-2020 - 11.00 AM

Venue : Office of The Commissioner, Travancore Devaswom Board, Thiruvananthapuram

Detailed e-tender notifications and special instructions to the bidders are available on www.travancoredevaswomboard.org For the submission of tender visit the website : www.e-tenders.kerala.gov.in

ROC NO : 4/20/Sub. Sd/- DEVASWOM COMMISSIONER Dated : 24-06-2020 (For and behalf of Travancore Devaswom Board)

THE PONDICHERRY CO-OP. SUGAR MILLS LIMITED (PCSM),
P315, LINGAREDDIPALAYAM, PUDUCHERRY-605502

TENDER FOR LONG TERM LEASE OF SUGAR MILL
e-Tender No: 2020_COOP_6269_1

e-Tenders are invited from reputed Companies/Consortium/Proprietary Firms/Partnership Firms/Trust/Society for long term lease of Sugar Mill for 20 years on Lease, Develop, Operate and Transfer (LDOT) basis along with Existing Liabilities.

Tender Documents can be downloaded from the portal <https://pudutenders.gov.in> starting from 24.06.2020.

MANAGING DIRECTOR
No.063/DIP/AD(Press)/2020-21

POSTGRADUATE INSTITUTE OF MEDICAL EDUCATION & RESEARCH, CHANDIGARH
Online counselling Notice

Registration for online counselling of MD/MS courses for July 2020 session will be held on 24.06.2020 & 25.06.2020 upto 10.00 PM. Eligible candidates are advised to visit website i.e. pgimer.edu.in for registration & exercise their choices of speciality. The list of eligible candidates for 1st round of counselling is available on PGIMER website. For further details kindly visit institute's website.

PGI/RC/Advt./20/HR-000439

REGISTRAR

BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE

Office of the Executive Engineer, Hebbal Division,
2nd Floor, BBMP Building,
J.C. Nagar Main Road, Munireddy Palya, Bengaluru.

No. : BBMP/EE/HBL/TEND/PR/13/2019-20 Date : 22-06-2020

INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDERS (IFT)

(Two Cover System) (Through GOK e-Procurement Portal only)

The Executive Engineer, Hebbal Division, on behalf of the Commissioner, BBMP invites tenders from registered contractors of BBMP or equivalent registration with CPWD / KPWD / Railways / MES or any state Government Organisations for the work detailed in the table below.

Sl. No.	Name of Work	Estimate Cost (Rs. in Lakhs)	EMD (in Rs.)
1.	Drilling of Borewells, Installation of Pump and Commissioning of Motor in Muneshwara Layout, Ayappa Layout and Surrounding Areas in Ward No. 22 V. Nagenahalli.	100.00	2,00,000.00
2.	Improvements to Roads and Drains in Cross Roads of Hanuman Layout, 11th Cross Manorayanapalya and Surrounding Areas in Ward No. 22, V. Nagenahalli.	100.00	2,00,000.00

(1) Tender Documents may be downloaded from the e-Procurement portal of GOK from 25-06-2020. (2) Pre Bid Meeting will be held on 29-06-2020 at 3.00 pm in the Office of the Chief Engineer (East Zone), PUB Building, Mayohall, MG Road, Bengaluru - 560 001. (3) Last Date for uploading the Filled Tender Document is 04-07-2020 upto 4.00 pm.

(4) Technical Bids will be opened on the Website : <http://eproc.karnataka.gov.in> in the Office of the Executive Engineer, Hebbal Division, on 06-07-2020 at 4.30 pm if possible. (5.) Date of Opening of Financial Bid is on 07-07-2020 at 11.00 am if possible.

The Details regarding participation for this tender can be obtained by logging on to : [https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in](http://eproc.karnataka.gov.in).

Sd/- Executive Engineer, Hebbal Division.

Pay Development Charges, Help to Develop Bengaluru

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU
TIRUVANNAMALAI MUNICIPALITY
Tender Notice No.: 179/2014/E Dated: 22.06.2020

NOTICE INVITING REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION (RFQ) for Construction of New Bus Stand in Tiruvannamalai Municipality on Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer (DBOT) basis

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION (RFQ) - TENDER DATE upto 30.07.2020

Tiruvannamalai is a Temple and also known for its trading activities. The existing Bus stand of the Tiruvannamalai Municipality was constructed around 20 years back with 50 bus bays as "A" class bus stand being operated at present to connect surrounding villages and towns. Considering the future growth of the town, Tiruvannamalai Municipal Council approved the proposal to construct a new bus stand with all required amenities in Municipal land situated at New Survey 261,262,27,28,291,293,295... Esaniyam in Tiruvannamalai.

"Request for Qualification (RFQ)" is invited from Developers for construction of Bus Stand on Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer (DBOT) basis for a period of 22 years. Interested Developers may apply for the project based on their eligibility as per eligibility criteria mentioned in the RFQ document (para 34 to 38). The bidder should be single Business Entity incorporated as a Public / Private Limited Company, incorporated under the Companies Act, 1956 and having valid business license.

The eligible bidders shall be evaluated as per the qualifying criteria and become eligible to participate in the Request for Proposal (RFP).

The RFP document can be obtained on payment of Rs.10,000/- (Non refundable) from the Tiruvannamalai Municipality office from 25.06.2020 to 29.07.2020 up to 3.00 p.m. RFQ document can also be downloaded from the following websites: <http://tenders.tn.gov.in> and <http://tnrb.tn.gov.in>.

Proposals will be opened on 30.07.2020 at 15.30 hrs. at the address indicated below.

Commissioner, Tiruvannamalai Municipality, Tiruvannamalai - 606 601. Tamilnadu

DTP/2381/Tender/2020

KERALA STATE TRANSPORT PROJECT
GOVERNMENT OF KERALA
INVITATIONS FOR BIDS (IFB)

E-Procurement Notice, (Engineering, Procurement, Construction ("EPC") Contract following Two Envelope Bidding Process with e-Procurement)

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING

Dated: 24.06.2020

1. The Government of India has received financing as Development policy loans from the World Bank towards the cost of rebuilding climate resilient infrastructures in Kerala and Government of Kerala (GoK) intends to apply a part of the funds to cover eligible payments under the contract for construction of works as detailed below.

2. Bidding will be conducted through National Competitive Bidding procedures as per the World Bank & GoK guidelines. Bidding is open to all eligible bidders as defined in the World Bank's Guidelines: Procurement of Goods, Works

Tech giants slam visa curbs

We will continue to stand with immigrants, says Google CEO Sundar Pichai

SIRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON DC

U.S. President Donald Trump's executive order on Monday suspending new H-1B visas till the end of the year in an effort to ease unemployment will impact both IT firms like TCS, Cognizant and Infosys as well as big tech companies like Google, Apple, Amazon and Facebook, who use the H-1B programme for their staffing needs. Each year, the U.S. issues 85,000 new H-1Bs, most of which go to Indians.

"While the May [unemployment] rate of 13.3% reflects a marked decline from April, millions of Americans remain out of work," the pre-



Donald Trump

reau of Labour Statistics analysed by the National Foundation for American Policy, a non-partisan research organisation.

The decision has been criticised both in the U.S. and India with tech leaders voicing dismay.

Tesla founder and former

Trump adviser Elon Musk said the skillsset brought by visa holders are not job creators. "Visa reform makes sense, but this is too broad," he tweeted.

Google CEO Sundar Pichai, who immigrated to the U.S. from India, underscored the importance of immigration in Google's journey.

"Immigration has contri-

buted immensely to America's economic success, making it a global leader in tech, and also Google the company it is today. Disappointed by today's proclamation – we'll continue to stand with immigrants and work to expand opportunity for all," Mr. Pichai tweeted.

"The H-1B programme in particular plays a crucial role in addressing our dangerous shortage of health care professionals while also providing other key sectors of our economy with talent from around the world to not only fill jobs, but create new ones," Indian-American Congressman from Illinois, Raja Krishnamoorthi said.

SAD-BJP to attend all-party meet convened by Punjab CM

Meeting will discuss three ordinances passed by the Centre

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHANDIGARH

The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) and its ally Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Tuesday decided to attend an all-party meeting called by Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on June 24 over the issue of three ordinances related to the agriculture sector passed by the Centre recently.

This was decided at a meeting of the SAD-BJP coordination committee which was presided over by SAD chief Sukhbir Singh Badal and State BJP president Ash-

wani Kumar.

The CM had convened an all-party meeting to evolve a consensus on the Union government's agriculture related ordinances.

Capt. Amarinder had already said that the ordinances were totally unacceptable to the State as they were against the interests of farmers and could spell the end of the minimum support price (MSP) regime.

The ordinances

The Centre had recently passed three ordinances – the Farmers Produce Trade

and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Ordinance, Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Ordinance, and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Ordinance. It had said these would transform the farm sector and help raise farmers' income.

The SAD-BJP coordination committee demanded that the CM call another meeting next week to discuss the illicit liquor, seed and ration scams besides other burning issues concerning the State.

J&K govt. prepares for Amarnath Yatra

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

The Jammu & Kashmir administration on Tuesday decided to speed up preparations for the annual Amarnath Yatra in Kashmir, even as no dates or details on the flow of pilgrims have been formalised so far in the wake of COVID-19.

"All the rituals with morning and evening pooja or aarti shall take place at the Holy Cave from July 5 [Vyas Poornima] to August 3 [Raksha Bandhan]," Lieutenant-Governor Girish Chandra Murmu, who is also the chairman of the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board, said.

IN BRIEF



Mayawati seeks probe into infections at shelter

LUCKNOW
Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati on Tuesday demanded a high-level independent probe into the case of 57 girl inmates of a government shelter home in Kanpur, including five who were pregnant, testing positive for COVID-19. Taking to Twitter, Ms. Mayawati asked the Uttar Pradesh government to take strict action against the accused and not cover up the issue.

CBI books Videocon CMD on graft charges

NEW DELHI
The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has booked Venugopal Dhoot, chairman-cum-managing director (CMD) of Videocon Industries Limited, and unknown officials of a consortium led by the State Bank of India, for alleged undue pecuniary gains to Videocon. The agency had last year initiated a preliminary inquiry against unknown officials of ONGC Videsh Limited, Oil India Limited, Bharat Petro Resources Limited, and the consortium of banks (SBI, IDBI Bank and ICICI Bank).

Delhi riots: ED conducts searches at six places

NEW DELHI
The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday conducted searches at six places in Delhi and Noida in connection with the 2020 Delhi riots cases. "The premises of suspended Aam Aadmi Party councillor Tahir Hussain have also been searched. The money laundering probe pertains to the cases registered by the Delhi police against those involved in the riots in February," said a ED official. The money laundering probe is based on an FIR lodged by the police against Mr. Hussain and others.

PM CARES finances ventilators

Fund has allocated ₹2,000 crore for 50,000 'Made-in-India' machines: govt.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The PM CARES Fund Trust has allocated ₹2,000 crore for the supply of 50,000 "Made-in-India" ventilators to government-run COVID-19 hospitals in all States and Union Territories. Further, ₹1,000 crore has been allocated for the welfare of migrant labourers, a Union government release said on Tuesday.

The Indian companies involved in manufacturing the ventilators include Bharat Electronics Ltd., AgVa Healthcare and AMTZ Basic.

"So far 2,923 ventilators have been manufactured of which 1,340 have already been delivered to the States/UTs," the release said.

The prominent recipients include Maharashtra (275), Delhi (275), Gujarat (175), Bihar (100), Karnataka (90) and Rajasthan (75). By month-end, 14,000 more will be delivered to cover all States and Union Territories.

"Further, ₹1,000 crore

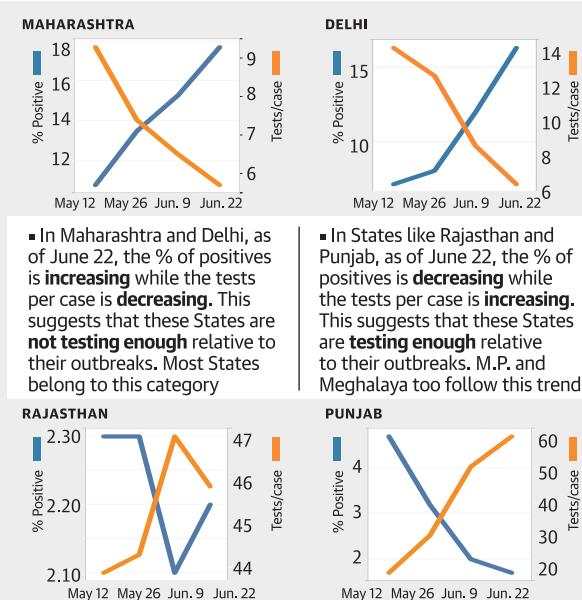
Hights and lows

With 15,687 new COVID-19 cases and 465 fatalities, the total infections stood at 4,55,788 while total deaths were 14,479 as of 10.30 p.m. on Tuesday. Lately, many States are not testing enough. The graphs plot the tests conducted per confirmed case — and the number of positive cases for every 100 tests — on four different dates to gauge the States' testing rates

ON TUESDAY	NEW CASES	NEW DEATHS	7 DAY-CHANGE
15,687	465		+18.6%
			+44.9%

has already been released to States/UTs for the welfare of the migrant labourers."

The distribution of the fund is based on the formula of 50% weightage for the population as per the 2011 Census, 40% weightage for the number of positive CO-



VID-19 cases and 10% for equal distribution among all the States/UTs.

"This assistance is to be used for arranging accommodation, food, medical treatment and transportation of the migrants. The main recipients of the grant

SC gives nod to woman to abort foetus

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has allowed a woman in her 25th week of pregnancy bearing twins to medically terminate one of the foetuses detected with substantial abnormalities.

The Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act of 1971 bars abortion if the foetus has crossed the 20-week mark. An exception to the law is made if a registered medical practitioner certifies to a court that the continued pregnancy is life-threatening for the mother.

In the present case, a three-judge Bench led by Justice R. Banumathi set aside the Bombay High Court's rejection. It allowed the woman to go ahead with the "selective foetal reduction" procedure after a medical expert reported that the process would not harm the other normal foetus or the mother.

Centre to reimburse applicants for Haj

No international pilgrims this year

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Following a phone call by Saudi Arabia's Haj and Umrah Minister Mohammad Saleh Bin Taher Benten to Union Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi informing him that no international pilgrims will be allowed for Haj due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Indian government said it would reimburse payments made by Indian pilgrims for the same.

"Honouring the decision of the Saudi Arabia government because of serious challenges of corona pandemic and keeping in mind the health and well-being of the people, it has been decided that Muslims from India will not go to Saudi Arabia to perform Haj (1441 H/2020 AD)," said Mr. Naqvi in a statement.

2,13,000 applications
He said that the process of immediately refunding

(without deductions) the amount deposited by pilgrims for the journey was being initiated.

Around 2,13,000 applications had been received for Haj 2020. The money will be refunded through online DBT mode into the bank accounts of the applicants, he added.

Women pilgrims
Of these pilgrims, 50% were women, with 3,040 women having performed Haj after the Union government ensured Muslim women can perform Haj without *Mehram* (male companion) in 2018.

This year too, more than 2,300 women had applied to perform Haj without *Mehram*. These women pilgrims will be allowed to go to Haj 2021 on the basis of this year's application.

Women pilgrims who file a new application for the journey will also be considered for Haj next year.

Change in ICMR rules delays local test kits

Rapid rise in COVID-19 cases has forced the States to adopt faster tests

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

COVID-19 testing kits developed by labs of the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) are yet to make it to the market thanks to a change in rules by the ICMR that now requires additional data and not just results from laboratory-controlled conditions.

With nearly 4,50,000 positive cases nationally, several States have adopted testing strategies beyond the standard-of-diagnosis RT-PCR kits. The Delhi government

last week allowed the use of a cheaper, rapid antigen test that gives quicker results but is less reliable when there is limited background prevalence of the disease. The ICMR recommends the kit developed by SD Biosensor, a South Korean company, but manufactured in India, as a confirmatory for positive test but a requires a re-test with PCR if the person tests negative.

On May 5, the CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB) announced a collaboration with Tata Sons Ltd. to develop a paper-based test,

called FELUDA, that could detect the presence of the virus. Unlike the conventional RT-PCR test that requires a specialised machine, FELUDA (FNCas-9 Editor Linked Uniform Detection Assay), was relatively more adaptable and could be used in conventional pathology labs that didn't have a PCR machine. Moreover the results, its developers say, would be available in one hour.

Early results

However, officials said approvals for FELUDA would take more time. The FELUDA kit, which uses a CRISPR-

cas9 gene editing system to detect the coronavirus, was developed completely in-house and based on the results, Tata Sons decided to take it up for production. In March and April, when ICMR was approving homegrown kits, it only needed a single batch of test kits to pass muster.

Following the change in the ICMR's rules, Dr. Anurag Agrawal, Director, CSIR-IGIB said, "Now at least three batches have to be made and, by the company, in their facilities."

Following the earlier nod, Dr Agrawal said, "Tata Sons

got a factory in place in Chennai but due to the lockdown, there were delays in readying it as well as in procuring some of the equipment needed for the test."

Another testing kit announced in April by the Sri Chitra Tirunal Institute for Medical Sciences and Technology (SCTIMS), Thiruvananthapuram, that was initially approved by the Pune-based ICMR-National Institute of Virology (NIV) sister-lab in Alappuzha, and commercially developed along with Ernakulam-based Agape Technologies, is nowhere near ready.

NPP MLAs flown out to meet BJP leadership

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
IMPHAL/GUWAHATI

Four MLAs of the National People's Party (NPP), who had withdrawn support to the BJP-led government triggering a political crisis in Manipur last week, were on Tuesday flown to Guwahati.

They were expected to be flown to Delhi from Guwahati for a meeting with the BJP's central leadership to bring them back to the government.

For the second time in 48 hours, Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad K. Sangma and Assam Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma took a special flight to Imphal on Tues-

day to hold closed-door parleys with the NPP lawmakers and three BJP leaders who had quit.

While Mr. Sangma is the national president of the NPP, Mr. Sarma is the BJP's trouble-shooter and convener of the North East Democratic Alliance, a BJP-led forum of most regional parties in the region.

The Nongthombam Biren government was reduced to a minority after nine MLAs – the four of NPP, the three of the BJP, one of the Trinamool Congress and an Independent – withdrew support and went to the Opposition Congress.

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12969

A	B	E	R	I	R	A	B	B
L	U	E	R	G	A	B	A	A
O	R	D	M	A	Y	O	E	B
N	E	A	R	I	S	N	I	V
E	N	S	A	P	M	E	N	V
A	N	M	S	P	L	A	N	I
P	Y	R	I	A	D	P	Y	R
R	A	U	E	O	F	R	A	U
A	L	T	B	A	I	E	L	T

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

Russia to speed up defence deals

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Russia has said that it will accelerate deliveries of some defence contracts with India. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Tuesday in Moscow after meeting Russian Deputy Prime Minister Yury Borisov.

"I have been assured that ongoing contracts will be maintained and not just maintained, in a number of cases will be taken forward in a shorter time. All our proposals have received positive response from the Russian side. I am fully satisfied with my discussions," Mr. Singh elaborated in a statement.

India has been asking Russia to speed up deliveries of the S-400 long range air defence system in addition to spares and support for military hardware.

Mr. Singh is in Moscow to participate in the Victory Day parade to mark the 75th anniversary of the Second World War. On Wednesday, an Indian tri-service contingent comprising 75 personnel will march in the parade at the Red Square.

On the India-China border tensions, a defence source said Mr. Singh conveyed that India is a peace loving country and never in history has it looked at other people's territory. "We are on for resolving all disputes by dialogue. But if there are any questions on sovereignty and territorial integrity, our resolve to protect our interests at any cost cannot be doubted," the source quoted Mr. Singh as having said.

Centre and CBSE likely to take decision today

Top court also asks ICSE to abide by govt. plan on exams

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI



The Union government and the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) on Tuesday informed the Supreme Court that the "decision-making process" on whether the remaining Class X and XII exams from July 1 to 15 should be held amid the pandemic was at an "advanced stage".

"Solicitor-General has informed us that the expert body is in the process of taking a final decision in the matter very shortly and hopefully by tomorrow, June 24. In the circumstances, we defer the hearing of these matter(s) to June 25, 2020 at 2:00 p.m.," a three-judge Bench led by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar said in a short order.

Parents' pleas

The court said it would consider on Thursday separate petitions filed by parents of students of both the CBSE stream and those of the ICSE (Indian Certificate of Secondary Education), an examination conducted by the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examination.

Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta, for the Centre and the CBSE, said that "we understand the anxiety of the students" and a decision may be finalised by "tomorrow [June 24] evening".

Advocate Rishi Malhotra, on behalf of the parents, said the students were worried about the uncertainty caused by the pandemic. A

group of parents has sought the quashing of a notification to conduct the remaining Class X and XII exams in July.

They have asked for students to be awarded marks based on an internal assessment or in line with the marks allotted for practical exams.

A similar request has been made by the Maharashtra, Delhi and Odisha governments to the Ministry of Human Resource and Development.

The parents said in the plea that students could potentially be exposed to COVID-19 infection if they appeared for exams amid an increase in the number of coronavirus cases.

"The government is deciding... Let the government take a decision. These times are unprecedented," Justice Khanwilkar, flanked by Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and Sanjiv Khanna, told Mr. Malhotra orally.

ICSE exams case

The Bench also took up a separate petition filed seeking clarity on the part of the ICSE authorities regarding

the pending examinations. The Bombay High Court had raised concerns over the conduct of the exams in the middle of rising COVID-19 cases and deaths.

The court asked the ICSE authorities to make their stand clear on the examinations.

The court asked the ICSE, represented by senior advocate Jaideep Gupta, to "take the informed decision of the government [about conduct of exams] seriously and abide by it".

The government initially told the court that it could not decide for the ICSE.

"We cannot decide for the ICSE. They have to say 'we will follow the decision of the government'. We cannot bind the ICSE to our decision, they have to bind themselves," Mr. Mehta said.

Students in focus

But the court told Mr. Gupta that the ICSE should go by what the government decided.

"In the interest of students, ICSE should go by what the government decides about the conduct of the exams. The decision of the government will be taken after consultations with experts. It will be an informed decision. You [ICSE] abide by it," Justice Khanwilkar addressed Mr. Gupta.

Mr. Gupta, at one point, asked the court to defer the case in the Bombay High Court.

He urged the court to list it with the CBSE matter coming up on June 25.

Traditional servitors who tested negative for COVID-19 performed the rituals

STAFF REPORTER
BHUBANESWAR

The annual Rath Yatra of Lord Jagannath was held in Puri on Tuesday without the usual congregation of devotees, a historic departure from the centuries-old tradition.

The traditional servitors of Shree Jagannath Temple, who tested negative for COVID-19, performed the rituals associated with the Rath Yatra, which was allowed by the Supreme Court with stringent conditions.

Break from tradition: Fire service personnel spray a sanitising solution during the Rath Yatra in Puri. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

to witness the grand festival every year.

However, in view of the pandemic, the Supreme Court directed the State government not to allow devotees to gather for the festival.

The State government imposed a 41-hour shutdown in Puri. The situation was normal in the temple. The tradition-

al servitors started performing rituals since the early hours.

As ordered by the Supreme Court, the Puri district administration conducted a COVID-19 test on 1,143 servitors. One of them tested positive. The administration said tracing of the contacts of the lone servitor was under way.

Around noon, the servitors started towing the chariots. Before the decorated chariots rolled on the 3 km Grand Road, fire service personnel sanitised the whole stretch. The police had sealed the entrance of every lane leading to the Grand Road.

PUCL flays action against journalist

STAFF REPORTER
CHENNAI

The People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) has condemned the attempt at criminalising the writings of Supriya Sharma, executive editor of the digital news publication Scroll.in.

In a statement, PUCL president Ravi Kiran Jain and general secretary V. Suresh said the criminal provisions invoked against the journalist do not apply to the complaint made by the aggrieved individual.

"The FIR against Supriya is an attempt to harass her via the police machinery as she showed the failure of the State to protect livelihoods," the statement read.

Symbolic Rath Yatra held within temple in Ahmedabad

Gujarat HC rejected govt. plea to allow street procession

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
AHMEDABAD

that of the State government, seeking the court's permission to allow the Lord Jagannath Rath Yatra.

The Division Bench of Chief Justice Vikram Nath and Justice J.B. Pardiwala turned down the State government's proposal to allow the procession to be taken out in curfew, and said that it was proper that the chariots' movement was restricted to Lord Jagannathji Temple premises in Ahmedabad.

Chief Minister Vijay Rupani conducted the "pahind" ritual to kickstart the Yatra. A few political leaders and some devotees were present.

In an urgent hearing that continued till 2 a.m. on Tuesday, a Division Bench of the Gujarat High Court rejected six pleas, including

Jagannath Rath Yatra procession in Puri, Odisha.

The Gujarat government, in its plea, contended that the traditional annual Rath Yatra should be allowed with limited devotees and curfew along the procession route.

It also contended that the yatra, which was begun in 1878, had never been interrupted and, therefore, that tradition should continue this year too, with restrictions in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The State authorities had even prepared the route and issued advisories for traffic movements in anticipation of a favourable court ruling.

THE HINDU

OPPORTUNITIES

HUMAN RESOURCES DEVELOPMENT • JOBS • TECHNOLOGY

New additions to the HR lexicon

Work-from-home and other workplace realities of these times have sent HR professionals back to the drawing board

LIFFY THOMAS

'COVID leave' is the latest addition to the HR lexicon, and in some companies employees are getting familiar with synonyms of it.

Texas Instruments has introduced a four-week 'COVID leave' as a category of special paid leave. Shubhra Bhandari, Director HR, Texas Instruments India explains it could be availed on account of any personal challenges arising out of the COVID-19 situation, including treatment.

Similarly Bolo Indya, a Gurugram-based start-up, has made it mandatory that six days of "casual compensated leave" must be taken by every employee, every quarter.

Previously, though this was made available, it was not made mandatory and the COVID-19 crisis has led to the new directive.

"After we introduced WFH arrangement, some of my colleagues were not having fixed work hours and their day would extend till the wee hours, and so this leave is essentially an exercise to help them find some work-life balance in the new normal," says Varun Saxena, founder, Bolo Indya.

Both the companies have worked on their WFH policies, giving it wider scope to cover allowance to buy or rent ergonomic furniture and other technology tools.

Bolo Indya has also announced that it will also be taking care of operational expenses of air-conditioners in the work-from-home area of the employees' home.

A work in progress

HR professionals point out that regulatory and legal fra-

meworks supporting WFH are a work in progress.

In May, NASSCOM submitted its recommendations to the Government of India on enabling WFH, and these include "changes in labour laws to redefine working hours, re-look at safety and health in the context of the new work environment and change in IT laws as expenses incurred by employers to enable WFH".

Continuous process

HR managers say a policy or a framework must reflect the organisational philosophy, what is happening around it and it should have an element of continuity to it. COVID has become an opportunity for many companies to revise old policies.

Among the queries that banking and finance lawyer Abhishek Ray, working as principal associate with J. Sagar Associates, has been getting is applicability of 'force majeure' provisions in various commercial contracts.

Other contracts

Parties to commercial agreements, who are facing various operational issues in the current situation, are evaluating various contractual terms including *force majeure*, sometimes to terminate an agreement or understand how it can be used," says Ray. Other concerns in relation to working from home that may arise could be in relation to information security compliances, he says.

Pay band and qualification

The details regarding posts & procedure of applying are available on University website www.nusranchi.ac.in. The last date for receiving application is 31/07/2019 5:00 PM.

Sd/- Assistant Registrar (I/c)

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF STUDY AND RESEARCH IN LAW, RANCHI
At Nagri, PO-Bukru, Kanke-Pithora Road, Kanke, Ranchi 834006

Ref: NUSR/LNC/2019/9339 Date: 26/06/2019

Faculty Recruitment

National University of Study and Research in Law, Ranchi invites applications from suitable candidates in the discipline of law as Faculty in the University. The applications are invited for the following posts.

Sr. No.	Post	No. of Posts
1.	Professors (Law) (Regular)	2
2.	Associate Professors (Law) (Contractual)	2
3.	Assistant Professors (Law) (Regular)	2

Pay band and qualification as per UGC norms.

The details regarding posts & procedure of applying are available on University website www.nusranchi.ac.in. The last date for receiving application is 31/07/2019 5:00 PM.

Sd/- Assistant Registrar (I/c)

INDIAN INSTITUTE OF PETROLEUM & ENERGY
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Visakhapatnam-530003

ADVT NO. IIPE/Recruit/01/2020-21, JUNE 2020

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*For Faculty Positions Persons of Indian Origins (PIOs) & Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs) can also apply.

Detailed advertisement and application form are available at <http://www.iiipe.ac.in/>

Career transition services for laid-off employees

Job search site Naukri.com has launched 'Naukri FastForward Transition Services' designed to support

employers assist the laid-off employees in their career transition journey. Motivational speaker workshops, job search counselling and job assistance services also come under these services, says a release. Prior to the

launch of this initiative, Naukri conducted a survey of 1600 HR heads and recruiters and it showed that 60% of them are keen on exploring career transition services for their laid-off employees.

GENERAL



State Bank of India

CENTRAL RECRUITMENT & PROMOTION DEPARTMENT
CORPORATE CENTRE, MUMBAI
(Phone: 022-2282 0427; Fax: 022-2282 0411; E-mail: crpd@sbi.co.in)

Applications are invited from Indian citizens for the following posts on regular/contract basis:

Sr.	Post	Vacancy	Grade	Nature of Engagement	Advertisement No.
1.	Head (Product, Investments & Research)	1			CRPD/SCO-Wealth/2020-21/03
2.	Relationship Manager	48			
3.	Relationship Manager (Team Lead)	3			
4.	Central Research Team (Portfolio Analysis & Data Analytics)	1			
5.	Central Research Team (Support)	1			
6.	Investment Officer	9			
7.	Project Development Manager (Technology)	1			
8.	Product Manager	6	MMGS III		



Plus points It's a good city car, a great highway cruiser and pretty efficient too • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Skoda sedan with its combination of build quality, excellent dynamics and practicality, gets the fundamentals right

HORMAZD SORABJEE

With the transition to BS-VI, the Skoda Rapid has seen a big transformation under the bonnet. The 1.5 TDI diesel engine has been discontinued and the ageing 1.6-litre naturally-aspirated petrol engine has made way for the high-tech 999cc, three-cylinder turbo-petrol engine from the VW Group's EA211 family. This new, compact and light direct-injection turbo-petrol unit is now the sole engine powering the Rapid range. So how good is the new Rapid TSI?

To start with, at 110hp and 175Nm, this new TSI engine makes 5hp and 22Nm more than the old 1.6-litre unit. It's paired with a new 6-speed manual gearbox for now (a 6-speed torque converter automatic option will become available in September). It also boasts substantially better fuel efficiency at 18.97kpl. The big shocker, however, is the price. The base Rider variant starts at just ₹7.49 lakh, which drops it in premium hatchback territory, meaning it is cheaper than even the VW Polo 1.0 TSI that uses the same engine.

Speedy wheels

The new 1.0 TSI is nearly 600cc down on the Rapid's previous 1.6-litre engine, but its performance is much stronger. A scant 0-100kph time of 10.09 seconds, a full second faster than the 1.6 Rapid, makes it one of the fastest cars in its class. At 140kph, the gap increases by over three seconds although the outdated EA111 1.6-litre engine was never the last word on performance.

For a proper perspective, it makes sense to stack the Rapid's figures against the segment benchmark, the Honda City.

A Rapid upgrade



The Rapid pips the City (10.13sec) to 100kph and widens the gap a bit to 140kph (19.6sec vs 19.93sec), but for all practical purposes, they are evenly matched in a drag test. Even more impressive is the Rapid TSI's strong mid-range performance. With the turbo spooled up, it simply runs away from its rivals in our in-gear acceleration tests. In the 40-100kph slog in fourth gear, the Rapid is almost three seconds quicker than the Honda.

The secret to this is the wide spread of torque and well-judged gear ratios that extract the most from this engine. From just under 3,000rpm, this engine pulls hard and strong until the 6,700rpm redline. In fact, the more you rev it, the smoother it gets, and it is only that characteristic thrum that gives it away as a three-cylinder mill. This superbly balanced engine is largely vibration-free. It

is when it is at idle that you feel it gently rocking on its mounts.

If there is a weakness, it is low-speed responses. Mash the throttle below 100kph, when the turbocharger is off boost, and you will get a tepid response. On part-throttle, this unit is pretty responsive, but when you want a burst of acceleration in slow-moving traffic, you will be fumbling for a lower gear to keep the engine in the thick of the powerband. The suspension is the same as before, which, in fact, complements the extra power. The damping is a touch on the stiff side, though overall ride quality is very absorbent.

Tight body control and confidence-inspiring high-speed manners have been hallmarks of the Rapid, and now combined with a punchy engine and taller gearing, it is an even more effective highway cruiser. The steering does



SKODA RAPID 1.0 TSI SPECIFICATIONS

LENGTH:	4413 mm
WIDTH:	1699 mm
HEIGHT:	1466 mm
WHEELBASE:	2552 mm
KERB WEIGHT:	1138 kg
TYRE SIZE:	195/55 R16
BOOT CAPACITY:	460 litres
GROUND CLEARANCE:	116 mm (laden)
ENGINE:	999cc, 3-cyls, turbo-petrol
POWER:	110hp at 5000-5500 rpm
TORQUE:	175Nm at 1750-4000 rpm
GEARBOX:	6-speed manual

not bristle with feel, nor is it particularly responsive, but it is accurate and has a reassuring amount of heft that gives you the confidence to enjoy yourself on a winding road.

Analogue throwback

The cabin is unchanged as well, and while one does appreciate the solid



build, spot-on ergonomics and the fuss-free design, there is no doubt that the interiors look dated. The seats themselves are very supportive and comfortable, as always. Legroom at the rear is good, though not as generous as in the Ciaz and City. The mildly-tinted windows and rear window shades are welcome additions to the Rapid range.

Taking centre stage on the dashboard is Skoda's 8.0-inch Android-based infotainment system that is

squeezed into the centre console as a retrofit. The high-res screen is sharp, easy to read and does not pick up reflections but it is not very intuitive. There is no Android Auto or Apple CarPlay connectivity; users get phone screen mirroring via the third party 'EasyConnection' app, but the experience isn't particularly seamless.

On the equipment front, the Monte Carlo variants get auto headlamps, rain-sensing wipers, 16-inch alloy wheels, tilt-telescopic steering, rear-view camera and climate control as notable features. The more affordable Style variant gets side airbags, which the Monte-Carlo misses. Features like LED headlamps, cooled seats, sunroof, engine start-stop button, six airbags, ESP and tyre pressure monitor are not an option on any Rapid variant.

The Rapid was last given a facelift in 2016 but its clean and sharp design has aged rather gracefully. It now gets a fresh lease of life with the potent 1.0 TSI, which complements the brilliant chassis and dramatically lifts the car's appeal. It is a good city car, a great highway cruiser and pretty efficient too. The top-spec Monte Carlo edition is reasonably equipped for the price (₹11.79 lakh), but the Rider variant that has grabbed plenty of attention with its ₹7.49 lakh price tag has no touch-screen or alloy wheels. For those willing to shop for these as aftermarket kit, this variant is a real bargain.

The Skoda Rapid doesn't have the latest tech offered by rivals, and it feels a touch analogue in comparison, but the rein lies its charm. Few cars combine build quality, excellent dynamics and practicality like the Rapid. It is a car that has its fundamentals right. If you love to drive and need a safe and solid mid-size sedan that won't break the bank, the 2020 Skoda Rapid 1.0 TSI is for you.

Buying a used Tata Hexa



It is a well-built, practical and comfortable SUV, and at these prices, it is a great deal

JAY PATIL

With the Hexa, Tata Motors showed they could do a premium segment car well. Launched in 2017, the model has made its way into the used car market and, thanks to high depreciation, makes for a good value buy. Fully-loaded, used examples sit around the ₹13-14 lakh mark, which is equivalent to the price of a new Nexon, a much smaller car in comparison. Also, the fact that the Hexa is discontinued (at least for the moment) helps a lot with negotiations. You can haggle for a significantly lower price and get a great deal.

The Hexa is powered by a 2.2-litre diesel engine and is available with manual and automatic transmission options. The 6-speed manual is available with an all-wheel drive on the top-spec XT trim, and with a two-wheel drive on the mid-spec XMA and top-spec XTA trims. So, if you want an all-wheel drive, the manual gearbox is the only option.

However, the manual here is not one of the best. The gear-



shifts are notchy, and the lack of well-defined gates make it difficult to engage them. Then there is the clutch that is inconsistent and lacks progression, resulting in jerky shifts. Other flaws include the absence of a dead pedal on the manual version and a rather small



Premium purchase

Thanks to high depreciation, it makes for a good value buy • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



footwell for the driver. The automatic is the one we highly recommend. The 6-speed auto is smooth, refined and works in perfect tandem with the engine.

A point to be kept in mind is that the Hexa is known to be thirsty, especially with the automatic transmission. Even in Eco mode, the economy hovers around the 6-7kpl mark in city traffic and goes just a shade above 10kpl on the highway.

The interior is one of the big highlights of the Hexa, as it offers good levels of quality and material. The seats, for one, are fantastic and very comfortable, and the overall cabin build is good too. That said, there are some issues. The all-black dashboard heats up a fair bit on a hot day and some plastics down low aren't up to the standards of the ones up top, and they tend to rattle on older cars. The door lock pins tend to wear out easily

and even malfunction in some cases. Also, the touchscreen infotainment system tends to freeze and some owners have also reported issues with the subwoofer.

Though this is a Tata product, since it's priced higher up in its portfolio, maintenance

and spare part prices are on the higher side. A basic service every 1 year/10,000km will cost you anywhere between ₹7,000-9,000, and insuring a three-year-old model will set you back by approximately ₹15,000 annually.

Tata offered a 3-year/1,00,000km warranty on the Hexa and most cars on the market are still well under that mark, so look for these models specifically. The Hexa is a well-built, practical and comfortable SUV, and at these prices, it's a great deal.

Worth knowing

The Hexa was also available in a base variant that had no frills and came with lesser power and torque (150hp/320Nm as against 156hp/400Nm on higher variants). These examples can be fetched for as little as ₹11 lakh.

On higher versions, you could choose between a 6-seater variant, with captain's seats for the middle row, or a 7-seater variant with a bench seat.

How much to spend

Given that the Hexa is out of production and there aren't too many on the market, you can be on the front foot of the negotiations. Offer no more than ₹13 lakh for a top-spec trim. If it is an automatic version, the maximum offer should be ₹14 lakh. A low-spec version can even go for as little as ₹11 lakh.

Q AND A WITH HORMAZD

Shine on

Dawood Ahamed, Chennai: I need your suggestion on upgrading stock headlights. I own a 2019 Ford Freestyle 1.2 Petrol Titanium and I am happy with it; it is value for money and has all the required bells and whistles. Its performance and handling are great and have brought out the enthusiast in me. However, it requires improvements and topping the list would be its stock headlamps. They have very poor visibility and do not have a good throw. My neighbour's Kwid performs comparatively better. I take my car for long drives, but due to the headlamps' poor night-time visibility, I don't take it when I go with family. Should I upgrade the stock headlights from halogen to projected HID, or go for Philips X-treme or OSRAM Night Breaker halogen lights? I don't want anything that will void the vehicle's warranty.

Since your car is almost brand new and still under warranty, we suggest upgrading to equivalent wattage halogen bulbs from the OSRAM Night Breaker series. This would be a plug-and-play solution and should solve your concerns to a great extent with their overall better light intensity.



A good choice

Vishesh Kedia, Bengaluru: Which car should I buy between the Ford Endeavour, Toyota Fortuner, Mahindra Alturas G4, Skoda Kodiaq, Superb and Mini Cooper convertible?

Firstly, we are wondering how a Mini Cooper convertible got onto your shortlist when you are mainly considering SUVs! So let's address the Cooper first. This cheeky hatchback is good if you are going to be driving it yourself, but it's a waste as a daily driver in Bengaluru traffic and should be bought only if you have a great place to drive to during a weekend. The Superb, which is the only sedan in your shortlist, is ideal if your usage is mainly in town and you are chauffeur driven. Coming to the SUVs, it only makes sense to look at them if you are regularly driving out of town and travel with luggage and lots of people. The Endeavour, which has been upgraded with a new engine and a 10-speed automatic gearbox, is the one we would pick. It is more comfortable, more premium and offers better value than the others. The Skoda Kodiaq is worth considering too, but there's no diesel variant and you'll have to wait to consider a BS-VI petrol.

Hormazd Sorabjee is the editor of Autocar India. Mail your feedback and queries to roadshow@thehindu.co.in

CM YK



HOMING IN

For this week's **Playlist**, we skip the words and let the music do the talking. Founder of the Non Violinist Project, **Shravan Sridhar**, recommends songs in which the violin is the star of the show

SWETA AKUNDI

'Darlene' by L Shankar

Darlene is a perfect blend of extremely virtuosic violin playing and strong melodies, set in raga Bilahari. It is part of an album produced by the legendary Frank Zappa, and L Shankar is, of course, one of the greatest violin players out there.



'Adbhut' by Ganesh and Kumaresh

This one is from their album *Spark*. It was one of the very first 'fusion' songs on violin that I had heard, and it inspired me to approach the violin in a fresh manner, and I understood how it can be incorporated into a band setting. This masterpiece weaves in so many ragas within itself and has shaped my song writing immensely.



'Kashmir' by Lucia Micarelli

This is a song originally by Led Zeppelin, but this version by Lucia Micarelli, plays a Jean Sibelius composition first as an intro, and then goes into Kashmir. It showed me how a violin can sit in a rock music setting. I drew inspiration from this as to how musicians can vibe at stage performances, with a heavier format of music.



'Conversations' by L Subramaniam and Jean Luc Ponty

The collision of worlds between Indian Classical violin, Western Classical violin and Jazz violin opened my mind. L Subramaniam is that quintessential violinist who incorporates a certain world flavour in his playing. It is inspirational.



'Chicken Fried' by Zac Brown Band

It's not actually a violin-oriented song like the rest, but this one has an elaborate country fiddle style of violin solo, and I fell in love with this entire genre after listening to this song. This is also a style that I like to experiment with from time to time. It pulled me into a world of country music, which is extremely feel-good and full of positive vibes.

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

A demon called Coronavirus

Margi, a Thiruvananthapuram-based cultural organisation, uses Kathakali to spread awareness on precautions and measures to be taken against COVID-19

SARASWATHY NAGARAJAN

The stage is set for a battle between COVID-19 and humanity.

As the demon Coronavirus stomps around the world, consuming lives, man watches in despair and fear. A *rakshakan* (protector) appears on the scene and advises mankind on how to defeat the virus. By following his advice – wearing masks, using sanitisers and staying at home – they manage to escape. Finally, the virus is erased from earth and mankind is set free.

Narrated in the Kathakali format, the

play *Jagratha* was composed and enacted by Margi, a cultural organisation and training centre for traditional art forms in Thiruvananthapuram.

Although Kathakali has many memorable battle scenes in its repertoire, veteran Kathakali artiste Margi Vijayakumar was taken aback when he was requested to come up with a short play on COVID-19 that depicted precautions and measures to stop its spread. But he did conceptualise, write and choreograph the five-minute play, which depicts the novel Coronavirus as a demon on rampage.

Vijayakumar, principal of Margi, says, "I am not a writer or a poet. So when S Srinivasan, secretary of Margi, wanted me to conceptualise a social awareness message in the medium of Kathakali, I was a little hesitant," he says.

Nevertheless, he wrote a few verses and sent it to be polished to linguist and Kathakali connoisseur Prabodhachandran Nayar. Once the scholar finished the work, Vijayakumar refined it and got down to work on it.

"This verse had to be enacted in the

visual language of Kathakali and so I had to make sure that the words could be translated into the performance idiom of the art form. For instance, I had to use my imagination to find a word for 'lockdown' as there is no *mudra* (hand gesture) to depict that. Instead of using that particular word, I came up with lines that suggested people locking up themselves in their houses and staying behind closed doors and windows," explains Vijayakumar.

Three characters narrate the theme.



Changing with the times A traditional art form that has a strict syntax has been adapted to narrate a contemporary theme
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Vijayakumar visualised the virus as Kali, one of the characters in the story of *Nalacharitham*, a play excerpted from the *Mahabharatha*. Dressed in black, Kali is an evil spirit that poisons Nala's mind and creates problems in his life.

"One of the other two characters represents mankind; the third is the *arakshan*. In the present scenario, the protector could symbolise health workers, Government machinery, administration and so on," says Vijayakumar. Margi Suresh, Margi Vijayan and Margi Balasubrahmanyam play the three characters.

Composed in ragas Punnagavarali and Vaghdehswari, the songs have been rendered by Kalanilayam Vishnu while the *melam* has been led by Margi Krishnadas and Margi Ratnakaran.

"We had several rehearsals at Margi's performance space before recording it. I was satisfied when many appreciated the piece, especially because it showcased how even a traditional art form that has a strict syntax can be imaginatively adapted to narrate a contemporary theme," says Vijayakumar.

Srinivasan, who set the ball rolling

says that he is happy that Margi was able to come up with such a theme within a short time.

The recording was done at Invis Studio in Thiruvananthapuram.

To see the play, visit drisyavedi.org.

POOCH CAFE



PEANUTS



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



CALVIN AND HOBBES



TIGER



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



China warns risk of naval conflict with U.S.

U.S. deployment of 3,75,000 soldiers, 60% of warships in Indo-Pacific region a cause of worry: report

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BEIJING

The U.S. military is deploying "unprecedented" numbers to the Asia-Pacific region, raising the risk of an incident with China's Navy, a senior Chinese official said on Tuesday.

Tensions between the two superpowers have soared on multiple fronts since President Donald Trump took office in 2017, with both countries flexing their diplomatic and military muscle.

'Freedom of navigation'
The United States' regular "freedom of navigation" operations in the South China Sea – where China and neighbouring countries have competing claims – angers Beijing, and China's Navy usually warns off the U.S. ships.

For its part, Beijing has infuriated other nations by building artificial islands



Brewing storm: The U.S. military deployment in the Asia-Pacific region is unprecedented, says a new report by a Chinese government think tank. •REUTERS/FILE

with military installations in parts of the sea.

"The U.S. military deployment in the Asia-Pacific region is unprecedented," said Wu Sicun, president of the National Institute of South China Sea Studies, a government think tank.

Mr. Wu spoke at the pre-

"The possibility of a military incident or an accidental shot fired is rising," Mr. Wu said.

"If a crisis were to erupt, the repercussions on bilateral relations would be catastrophic."

Mr. Wu spoke at the pre-

sentation of a report by his institute on the U.S. military presence in the region.

The report said the U.S. has deployed 3,75,000 soldiers and 60% of its warships in the Indo-Pacific region. Three US aircraft carriers have been sent to the region.

Pandemic 'accelerating' as cases top 9 million

Greater threat is not the virus, but the lack of global solidarity and leadership, says WHO chief

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
DUBAI

Global coronavirus infections topped nine million as the World Health Organization (WHO) warned the pandemic was accelerating.

Europe has steadily eased its travel lockdowns in recent weeks, and France on Monday took its biggest step back to normality by allowing millions of children to return to school.

But many parts of the world, including Latin America and South Asia, are only beginning to feel the full force of the pandemic, while other regions are being hit with second waves.

The pandemic is still ac-



Tedros Adhanom

pact of shutdowns is worse than the virus itself.

More than 50,000 people have been confirmed to have died from the virus in Brazil, with the true number believed to be far higher.

Brazil's official death toll is

second only to the U.S., which has recorded 120,000 fatalities, and President Donald Trump's handling of the crisis has been widely criticised as erratic and chaotic.

Mr. Trump on Monday said the American toll could surpass 1,50,000, as two more members of his team that helped organise a controversial weekend rally for him in Oklahoma tested positive.

Mexico, Peru, Chile and Argentina are also coping with crises – Mexico City being forced to delay plans for a broad reopening of the economy as the country's death toll raced past 20,000.

With a vaccine still far away, the WHO has called for

a rapid increase in production of the steroid dexamethasone, which has been shown to have life-saving potential.

French celebrations

Thousands of French people danced and partied in the streets well into Monday for an annual music festival, in the first big blowout since the lockdown. Many felt the authorities were too lax.

"This is not what a gradual end to the lockdown looks like," said Dr. Gilbert Deray.

"I understand that the Festival of Music is something of a liberation, but did we really have to have it this year?"

'Paris deal was a charade that gave leeway to India, China'

In his book, Bolton plays down the 2019 India-Pak. crisis

SIRIRAM LAKSHMAN

Former U.S. National Security Adviser (NSA) John Bolton's book, *The Room Where It Happened*, was officially released in the U.S. on Tuesday but much has been written about it in the press already.

India finds a few mentions in the book, none of them positive, many neutral, and several as a country that has not fallen in line in the context of international treaties.

High-level military meetings should resume, a direct phone line should be opened and joint naval manoeuvres should be done, it says.

The report says China does not regard the United States as a potential rival or "envise a new cold or hot war with the U.S."

The document warns that "deteriorating military relations would substantially increase the possibility of a dangerous incident, a conflict or even a crisis."



Former U.S. National Security Adviser John Bolton. •AP

derground nuclear testing."

Six-month exemption

In November 2018, India was one of eight countries that got a six-month exemption from U.S. sanctions on the purchase of Iranian oil, after the U.S. decided to unilaterally pull out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), an international treaty signed deal during the Obama years that sought to limit Iran's nuclear programme.

China, for example, had the greatest proportion of its large, growing, already-deployed missile capabilities in the INF-forbidden range, endangering U.S. allies like Japan and South Korea, as well as India and Russia itself, a fine irony," Mr. Bolton writes. He goes on to add India to the list of countries, along with Iran, North Korea and Pakistan whose nuclear arsenals were poised to expand. The U.S. quit the treaty in August last year, having announced its intention to leave six months prior to that.

On the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, Mr. Bolton notes that "other nuclear powers" like India and China have neither ratified nor signed the treaty. "...Unsigning the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty should be a priority, so the United States can again conduct un-

would have to pay market prices – Iran had been charging below market prices to get rid of its oil.

On Afghanistan, Mr. Trump was complaining, as per Mr. Bolton, about how the U.S. was spending all these resources and that it was time to withdraw. "We'll never get out. This was done by a stupid person named George Bush," he told me.

"India builds a library and advertises it all over," Mr. Trump had allegedly said.

On the India-Pakistan crisis in early 2019 (the Balakot air strikes following the Pulwama terror attack), Mr. Bolton questions whether there was a real crisis at all. He talks about phone calls with U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, then acting Secretary of Defence Patrick Shanahan and then Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Joseph Dunford:

"After hours of phone calls, the crisis passed, perhaps because, in substance, there never really had been one. But when two nuclear powers spin up their military capabilities, it is best not to ignore it. No one else cared at the time, but the point was clear to me: this was what happened when people didn't take nuclear proliferation from the likes of Iran and North Korea seriously."

Only 1,000 pilgrims can attend Hajj

It is limited to devotees below 65 and those without any chronic illnesses

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
RIYADH

Saudi Arabia on Tuesday said only around 1,000 pilgrims of various nationalities already in the kingdom will be allowed to perform a dramatically scaled-down Hajj, as it battles a coronavirus surge.

The decision to exclude pilgrims outside Saudi Arabia, a first in the Kingdom's modern history, sparked disappointment among Muslims worldwide.

The reduced number is a far cry from the 2.5 million who attended the five-day ri-



Devotion and safety: Worshippers praying at the Kaaba, Islam's holiest shrine, in Mecca. •AFP

tual last year and it remains unclear what the selection process will be for this year's Hajj, scheduled for the end of July.

"The number of pilgrims

will be around 1,000, maybe less, maybe a little more," Haj Minister Mohammad Benten told reporters in Riyadh.

"The number won't be in tens or hundreds of thousands" this year, he added.

The pilgrimage will be limited to those below 65 years of age and with no chronic illnesses, Health Minister Tawfiq al-Rabiah said.

The pilgrims will be tested for COVID-19 before arriving in the holy city of Mecca and will be required to quarantine at home after the ritual, Mr. Rabiah added.

After Tulsa, Trump heads to virus hotspot Arizona

Low turnout at Tulsa sharpens the focus on his future rallies

ASSOCIATED PRESS
WASHINGTON

Regrouping after a humbling weekend rally, President Donald Trump faces another test of his ability to draw a crowd during a pandemic Tuesday as he visits Arizona and tries to remind voters of one of his key 2016 campaign promises.

Mr. Trump's weekend rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma, was meant to be a sign of the nation's reopening and a show of political force but instead

generated thousands of empty seats and questions about the President's campaign leadership and his case for another term. The low turnout has sharpened the focus on Mr. Trump's visit to Arizona, which doubles as both a 2020 battleground state and a surging coronavirus hot spot.

First, the President will travel to Yuma to mark the construction of more than 322 km of wall along the U.S.-Mexico border, an issue

that he built his campaign on four years ago. Later, he will address a group of young Republicans.

Throughout the trip, the COVID-19 pandemic will shadow Mr. Trump. The Democratic Mayor of Phoenix raised safety concerns.

"Everyone attending tomorrow's event, particularly any elected official, should set an example to residents by wearing a mask," said Mayor Kate Gallego. "This includes the President."

British police to further quiz terror suspect

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

British counter-terrorism police have been given until June 27 to question a suspect in an attack which saw three people stabbed to death in a park, officers said.

A 25-year-old man, identified as Libyan Khairi Saadallah, was arrested near the scene of Saturday's attack in Reading, west of London.

Detective Chief Superintendent Kath Barnes said the investigation into the attack was "continuing".

ELSEWHERE



Riyadh says it destroyed Yemen rebel drones

DUBAI

Saudi Arabia on Tuesday said it destroyed ballistic missiles and bomb-laden drones launched by Yemen's Houthi rebels. The Houthis claimed they targeted the headquarters of Saudi Arabia's Defence Ministry, the King Salman air base and an intelligence building in the capital, along with other military buildings in the regions of Najran and Jizan in the kingdom's south. AP

U.S. seeks to widen nuclear deal with Russia

VIENNA

The U.S. wants to broaden its nuclear arms control pact with Russia to include all their atomic weapons, a U.S. envoy said on Tuesday after talks with Moscow on a new accord. U.S. special presidential envoy Marshall Billingslea urged China to join the talks on replacing the 2010 New Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (New START), which expires in February. REUTERS

Anti-racism protests turn spotlight on icons of U.S. history

Initial anger was directed at statues of Confederate generals



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

As the wave of anti-racism protests rocking the U.S. brings down monuments to figures linked to the country's history of slavery, the spotlight is shifting to historic characters long considered untouchable.

Although protesters initially focused on removing statues of Confederate generals, the movement has begun to turn its focus to icons of U.S. history, including the nation's founders Thomas Jefferson and George Washington, and President Theodore Roosevelt.

The death of George Floyd, a black man, in Minneapolis police custody on May 25 has sparked debate around statues and monuments honouring people central to the U.S.' slave system, some of which have been pulled down or vandalised.

The ongoing protests are "a battle over the narrative of American history in the



American history: Protesters trying to topple the statue of former President Andrew Jackson in Washington. •REUTERS

realm of statues," Carolyn Gallaher, a professor at American University in Washington, told AFP.

"In the South, people decided to venerate confederates. Protesters are saying, 'No more.'

In Virginia, where some of the first English colonies were established before becoming the heart of American slave country, protesters have called for the removal of a statue of General Robert E Lee, the leader of the Confederate army.

In Washington, a statue of

Confederate general Albert Pike was torn down last week.

Increasingly, other figures who hold large places in American history are also not safe, and on Monday evening a crowd tried to topple the statue of Andrew Jackson, the seventh President, in Lafayette Park, close to the White House.

President Donald Trump

DR. BABU JAGJIVAN RAM LEATHER INDUSTRIES DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION LTD., (A Government of Karnataka Enterprise)

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Date: 19-06-2020

E-TENDER NOTIFICATION

Dr.BABU JAGJIVAN RAM LEATHER INDUSTRIES DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION Ltd., (LIDKAR) invites Tenders from Manufacturers / Fabricators/ Dealers for supply of Footwear & Leather Goods maker Toolkit, Flat Bed single needle heavy duty sewing machines, Modern Kiosk and Raw materials as per the terms and conditions laid down in the Tender Document. Tenders are floated through e-procurement and Tenderers shall submit the Tenders through e-procurement only. For necessary details visit the Website <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in> help line No. 080-25501216/1227.

SI No	Particulars	FW & LG MAKER TOOLKIT	LEATHER STITCHING MACHINE WITH MOTOR	RAW MATERIAL	MODERN KIOSK
1.	Tender Reference No and date	Lidkar/Tech/2020-21/273 Dated: 19-06-2020	Short term e-Tender notification no: Lidkar/Tech/2020-21/271, Dated: 19-06-2020	Tender Notification No: Lidkar/Devt/2020-21/270 Dated: 19-06-2020	
2.	Last date & Time for submission of Tender	20-07-2020 at 14:00 hrs	20-07-2020		

MARKET WATCH

	PRICE	CHANGE
Sensex	35,430	-1.49
US Dollar	75.66	-0.49
Gold	48,931	0.25
Brent oil	43.52	2.81

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	355.65	6.05
Asian Paints	1683.90	31.75
Axist Bank	443.65	13.50
Bajaj Auto	2862.15	6.40
Bajaj Finserv	6319.65	136.10
Bajaj Finance	2025.50	185.20
Bharti Airtel	578.80	-2.25
BPCL	392.00	6.85
Britannia Ind	3467.05	45.85
Cipla	659.80	3.85
Coal India	143.85	0.20
Dr Reddys Lab	4108.85	76.00
Eicher Motors	17891.15	302.20
GAIL (India)	99.25	0.95
Grasim Ind	622.35	4.75
HCL Tech	580.25	10.65
HDPC	1838.10	18.70
Hero MotoCorp	2418.85	6.25
Hindalco	158.35	8.25
Hind Unilever	2155.95	55.15
ICICI Bank	376.15	8.60
IndusInd Bank	520.40	30.50
Bharti Infratel	232.35	9.50
Infosys	720.65	16.95
Indian Oil Corp	89.35	1.30
ITC	185.85	0.85
JSW Steel	201.65	3.70
Kotak Bank	1389.90	34.55
L&T	967.60	60.15
M&M	516.40	17.65
Maruti Suzuki	5886.50	-9.50
Nestle India Ltd.	16548.45	407.65
NTPC	100.75	5.45
ONGC	85.65	0.80
PowerGrid Corp	187.45	8.85
Reliance Ind	1720.90	-25.25
State Bank	192.45	4.75
Shree Cement	22756.25	738.65
Sun Pharma	500.45	7.25
Tata Motors	104.40	1.75
Tata Steel	332.00	6.30
TCS	2035.30	7.35
Tech Mahindra	556.80	10.30
Titan	999.25	19.75
UltraTech Cement	3942.80	117.55
UPL	463.10	16.90
Vedanta	110.00	-0.05
Wipro	220.60	2.55
Zee Entertainment	181.95	17.72

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar.....	75.45	75.77
Euro.....	85.16	85.53
British Pound	93.91	94.32
Japanese Yen (100).....	70.43	70.76
Chinese Yuan.....	10.67	10.72
Swiss Franc.....	79.81	80.15
Singapore Dollar.....	54.18	54.42
Canadian Dollar.....	55.77	56.01
Malaysian Ringgit.....	17.64	17.72
Australian Dollar.....	52.23	52.46

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF

L&T committed to achieve self-reliance*
MUMBAI
Larsen & Toubro (L&T) is committed to achieving self-reliance for the domestic industry by creating a strong and feasible 'Made in India' ecosystem. S. N. Subrahmanyam, CEO & MD, L&T, said: "we firmly stand with the policy of manufacturing best-in-class products locally through Make in India."

Govt. mulls customs levy on solar equipment

NEW DELHI
The government is considering levying a basic customs duty (BCD) of about 20% on solar energy equipment to give an edge to domestic manufacturers and discourage imports, especially from China. However, solar energy developers say it will be counterproductive in view of India's ambitious target of achieving 100 GW of solar energy by 2022. PTI

'Prompt policy steps boosted economy'

NEW DELHI
The Finance Ministry on Tuesday cited "green shoots" of recovery in agriculture, manufacturing and services' sectors, and said the prompt policy measures undertaken by the government and the RBI have helped reinvigorate the economy with a minimal damage. "The government and the RBI have taken prompt policy measures in a calibrated manner to reinvigorate the economy at the earliest with a minimal damage," it said. PTI

Titan Europe to pare stake in Wheels India

CHENNAI
Titan Europe Ltd., the foreign promoter of Wheels India Ltd., has decided to cut its stake by up to 5.09% in the auto ancillary firm. In a regulatory filing, Indian promoter Sundaram Finance Holdings Ltd. (SFHL) said it planned to buy up to 5.09% stake of Wheels India from Titan Europe. The price at which the shares are proposed to be acquired will be in accordance with applicable block/bulk deal and other relevant regulations, SFHL said.

SEBI makes raising funds easier for stressed companies

Regulator to relax pricing methodology for preferential issues by listed firms

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has relaxed the norms for preferential allotment for companies that have stressed assets, thereby making it easier for such entities to raise funds.

"SEBI has decided to relax the pricing methodology for preferential issues by listed companies having stressed assets and exempt allottees of preferential issues from open offer obligations in such cases, with immediate effect," the regulator said in a release on Tuesday.

The capital markets regulator said listed entities with stressed assets can make preferential allotment at a price that is "not less than the average of the weekly high and low of the volume weighted average prices of the related equity shares



A preferential issue, however, cannot be made to entities that are part of the promoter group.

■PAUL NORONHA

during the two weeks preceding the relevant date."

Further, the watchdog has exempted allottees in such issuances from having to make an open offer even if the quantum of acquisition triggers an open offer or there is a change in control in terms of Takeover Regulations.

A company would be eligible to be called stressed if it has defaulted on its payment obligations for more than 90 days or if the credit rating agencies have downgraded its securities to 'D'.

An entity, which has an inter-creditor agreement in terms of Reserve Bank of India (Prudential Framework for Resolution of Stressed Assets) Directions 2019, will also be applicable on the shares allotted in such a preferential allotment.

SEBI also included certain checks to ensure the relaxations are not misused. The preferential issue cannot be made to entities that are part of the promoter group or those that have been identified as undischarged insolvent, wilful defaulter or fugitive economic offender.

The resolution for such a preferential allotment and the exemption from an open offer will have to be passed by the majority of minority shareholders and the proposed end-use of proceeds of such preferential issue will have to be disclosed.

Not for loan repayment'

Also, the proceeds cannot be used for repayment of any loans taken from the promoter group/ or group companies.

A three-year lock-in will also be applicable on the shares allotted in such a preferential allotment.

"We suspect that the recent increase reflects higher



People hoarding cash, parking money in deposits: analysts

REUTERS

MUMBAI

Heightened uncertainty caused by the COVID-19 pandemic has led to a surge in currency in circulation as people hoard cash or park money in accessible deposits to safeguard themselves against salary cuts or job losses.

According to RBI data, M3 money supply rose 6.7% in the first five months compared with the same period last year, the highest growth in seven years.

Currency in circulation, which measures money with the public and in banks, has also surged.

Gross capital formation, or total investments toward fixed capital, fell 7% in the March quarter, a seven-year low, and analysts expect a further deterioration.

Lenders too are unwilling to take risks as slowing discretionary spending slows demand for manufactured and industrial goods.

"Risk-averse individuals

are putting money in bank deposits, given the high and rising uncertainty, while on the other hand risk-averse lenders are not lending to those who need it," said Kunal Kumar Kundu, India economist at Societe Generale.

However, growth in currency notes held by public was much higher than the deposits made in banks.

Since the end of March, currency held by the public rose 8.2% compared with a 4.1% increase in term deposits, the data showed. Savings and current account deposits fell 8% due to higher withdrawals.

"At the margin, people have curtailed their discretionary spending as they're not sure of their permanent income," said Rupa Rege Nitire, chief economist at L&T Financial Holdings. "There is still heightened uncertainty about the duration of the pandemic."

H-1B curbs misguided, harmful'

Visa move may worsen U.S. economic pain, warns Nasscom

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The move by the U.S. to restrict non-immigrant visas, including the H-1B, until the end of 2020, is "misguided and harmful to the U.S. economy," Indian software industry body Nasscom said.

Noting that virtually every segment of the American economy, including manufacturing and medicine, employ skilled workers from other countries for innovation and productivity, Nasscom urged the U.S. administration to shorten the duration of curbs to 90 days.

"Lengthening these burdensome restrictions on U.S. companies that are trying to recover from the economic fallout of the COVID-19 pandemic will only serve to harm our economy," it said.

It added with very few exceptions, Indian nationals and others, who are granted new H-1Bs or L-1s as well as other visa types after June 23, will not be allowed to enter the United States until the proclamation expires.

"American workers are facing greater challenges than they have in years, but that does not mean that talent shortages do not continue to exist," Nasscom said, pointing out that despite national unemployment trends across the economy, the National Foundation for American Progress found that the unemployment rate for computer professionals actually dropped from 3% in January 2020 to 2.8% in April 2020.

The Confederation of Indian Industry expressed disappointment with the order, stating businesses across the U.S. rely on temporary visas to supplement local hiring efforts and enable highly-skilled and talented professionals from across the world to enhance U.S.' competitiveness globally.

Mildly negative

As per research agency ICRA, the move will be "mildly negative" for the Indian IT services sector considering their high dependence on such visas.

Currently, Indian IT Services is the major beneficiary of the H-1B visa programme. USCIS issued a total of 3,88,403 H-1B visas during FY2019, ICRA said.

Nasscom said without their continued contributions to the U.S. economy, the economic pain would worsen, industry would slow and the timeline for a treatment and cure of COVID-19 would lengthen.

"Moreover, the people who come to U.S. on H-1B and L-1 visas pay taxes and contribute to their communities and to local economies in myriad other ways as well," it said.

Provision coverage ratio improved significantly to 81.33% compared with 77.77% as on December 31, 2019.



improved significantly to 81.33% compared with 77.77% as on December 31, 2019.

Total income rose 14% to ₹6,334 crore. Net interest income also increased 14% to ₹2,003 crore. Net interest margin stood at 2.96%.

Non-performing loan provision coverage ratio was 73.05% (65.72%).

Gross non-performing assets declined to 6.87% from 7.11% while net NPAs contracted 62 basis points to 3.13%.

Recovery from bad debts improved by 65%. The bank reported a total business of ₹4,66,116 crore with a YoY growth of 8%.

Trading gains help BoB post ₹507-cr. profit in Q4

CASA ratio improves for merged entity

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

Bank of Baroda (BoB) reported a profit of ₹507 crore for the January-March quarter on the back of healthy trading gains compared with the ₹991 crore loss in the year-earlier period following higher provisioning.

During the period under review, the bank's provisions and contingencies rose to ₹1,435 crore, said the bank.

The amalgamation was designed to ensure that the complementarity with the three banks are fully leveraged," said Sanjiv Chadha, MD & CEO, BoB.

"The improvement in the CASA ratio is one of the biggest benefits which has come. Vijaya Bank was largely funded by wholesale deposits with CASA at 25%. For BoB, it was 39%. When we began the year for the combined entity, it was 37%. We have been able to improve it by 180 bps," he said.

Federal Bank to raise up to ₹12,000 crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Djokovic tests positive for COVID-19

World No. 1 is the most high-profile casualty at the controversy-ridden Adria Tour

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BELGRADE

Novak Djokovic tested positive for the coronavirus on Tuesday after taking part in a tennis exhibition series – the Adria Tour – he organised in Serbia and Croatia.

The World No. 1 is the fourth player to test positive for the virus after first playing in Belgrade and then again last weekend in Zadar, Croatia. His wife also tested positive.

"The moment we arrived in Belgrade we went to be tested. My result is positive, just as Jelena's, while the results of our children are negative," Djokovic said in a statement.

Criticism

Djokovic has been criticised for organising the tournament and bringing in players from other countries amid the pandemic. There were no social distancing mea-



Suffering the consequences: Novak Djokovic and wife Jelena, who has also tested positive, seen at one of the matches of the exhibition series he organised. ■ AP

sures observed at the matches in both Serbia and Croatia.

Earlier in the day, Viktor Troicki had said he and his pregnant wife had both been diagnosed with the virus. Grigor Dimitrov, a three-time Grand Slam semifinalist from Bulgaria, on Sunday and Borna Coric, on Monday, had also tested positive.

The Serb defended the ex-

hibition series. "Everything we did in the past month, we did with a pure heart and sincere intentions," Djokovic said. "Our tournament was meant to unite and share a message of solidarity and compassion throughout the region."

He apologised to anyone who had been infected as a result of the series.

Timeline of events

- **May 26:** World No. 1 Novak Djokovic announces the Adria Tour, across five locations in the Balkans, with fellow top players Grigor Dimitrov, Alexander Zverev, Borna Coric and Marin Cilic as invitees
- **June 13:** At the first leg in Belgrade (June 13–14), Djokovic is severely criticised for allowing thousands of fans to congregate with scant regard for distancing norms and without wearing masks
- **June 14:** Djokovic defends himself saying the Tour was following "Serbian government regulations" and since Serbia has "better numbers," it's very difficult to think of "international standards"
- **June 16:** Videos emerge of Djokovic, Zverev and Dimitrov dancing at a packed party hall in Belgrade
- **June 21:** Tour moves from Belgrade to Zadar and Dimitrov announces that he has tested positive for COVID-19 after returning to his base in Monaco. "I am so sorry for any harm I might have caused," he says
- **June 22:** The final of the Zadar leg, between Djokovic and Andrey Rublev, is cancelled
- **June 23:** Djokovic tests positive on his arrival in Belgrade

Compiled by N. Sudarshan

TV PICKS

Premier League: Star Sports 1, 3, SS Select 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 10.15 p.m.; Star Sports 1 & SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 12.40 a.m. (Thursday).
Serie A: Sony Ten 2 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 11 p.m. & 1.10 a.m. (Thursday).

Harikrishna crashes out

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

P. Harikrishna exited from the \$150,000 Chessable Masters with a final-round defeat to Alexander Grischuk on Monday.

Harikrishna, who started with the day with a loss against overnight leader Vladislav Artemiev, Carlsen, Dubov and Nakamura before losing to Grischuk.

The Indian scored three points from 10 round-robin rounds to finish last in the six-player Group A.

The results: Group A: 10th round: Alexander Grischuk (Rus, 5) bt P. Harikrishna (3), Magnus Carlsen (Nor, 6) drew with Vladislav Artemiev (Rus, 6), Hikaru Nakamura (USA, 5) bt Daniil Dubov (Rus, 5); Ninth: Harikrishna drew with Nakamura, Dubov lost to Carlsen, Artemiev drew with Grischuk.

Eighth: Harikrishna drew with Dubov, Artemiev drew with Nakamura, Grischuk drew with Carlsen.

Seventh: Carlsen drew with Harikrishna, Dubov bt Artemiev, Nakamura drew with Grischuk.

Group B: Sixth round: Anish Giri (Ned, 3.5) drew with Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (Fra, 3.5), Ding Liren (Chn, 3) drew with Fabiano Caruana (USA, 3), Teimour Radjabov (Aze, 2) bt Ian Nepomniachtchi (Rus, 3).

'Reinvention key in post-pandemic phase'

Paes stresses on the importance of creative learning and time-management

TENNIS

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

Olympic medallist and 18-time Grand Slam champion Leander Paes is a reservoir of knowledge.

Ever willing to share his rich experience, the 47-year-old, addressed as 'forever young' Paes by Radhakrishnan Sreenivasan in his chat show, addressed a few salient points.

Stressing that adapting to the new normal would be the way forward in the post-pandemic world, Leander said that he had reinvented himself multiple times in his three decades as a professional.

"We have to reinvent ourselves. Many have to look at other opportunities for a liv-



Key elements: Creativity and learning skill will lead to progress, according to Leander Paes. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ing. The world is going to be different. Maximising your skill-set is the call of the day," said Leander, about the stark realities of the impending future.

Conceding that he has had a "blessed career", Paes said that he was able to appreciate the time on hand in

the current scenario and be with his family.

"No matter how good, a hotel is only four walls and a TV," he said, looking back at those 40 odd weeks in each year that he spent travelling.

In a sport that is so rich in competition across the world, Paes said that he had

to maximise on his 'God-given talent', with hard work and a strong mental attitude.

Channelising time

"I sleep only about five to six hours a day. I channelise the time to train myself to be better. So, when I compete with the others, I am physically and mentally sharper," said Paes.

Stating that he had a collection of nearly a thousand racquets that can trace his career graph, Paes said that he resumed playing tennis recently with a wooden racket to take up the challenge of hitting the sweet spot within a small frame.

Learning from the best was his mantra, Paes said, and observed that "creativity and learning skill will move you to the forefront."

Smart planning is very important, says Sindhu

The lockdown also helped us learn new things in life'

BADMINTON

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM
HYDERABAD

World champion P.V. Sindhu feels it is very important to plan the tournament schedule smartly whenever it is viable to resume.

"Yes, we all wanted to play in the 2020 Olympics which was just two months away when the COVID-19 crisis hit hard globally.

Will be ready

"But, then again, it is a question of one year and, hopefully, we will all be ready for

the Games if everything goes fine," the 24-year-old Sindhu said during a live interaction on Instagram as part of the Olympic Day Workout on Tuesday which featured 21 top athletes from across the world.

These are hard times and it is equally important to keep oneself busy to stay positive," she said.

"This lockdown also helped us learn new things in life," she added.

"Life comes first so the emphasis right now is on safety and that is the reason I have been training at home to stay in touch with the game," she replied to a query.

"Fitness is obviously the priority during this phase and I am glad that I am in the

right frame of mind," she added.

The Rio Olympics silver medallist also said that she is ready and keeps believing in herself.

"I have five medals in the Worlds – two bronze, two silver and a gold – but definitely eager to win some more. Working really hard and will give my best," she said with a big smile.

Sindhu also gave a glimpse of her fitness consciousness, saying, "I do yoga, meditation apart from the regular exercises to keep my body fit as they help us stay focused."



P.V. Sindhu. ■ FILE PHOTO

The quiet champion who just kept playing



BETWEEN WICKETS

SURESH MENON

Can a player be called 'great' – that most misused term in sports – if he hasn't performed at the highest level? Or won the most important tournament in his sport? Does not having won Wimbledon make Ivan Lendl or Ken Rosewall lesser players, or are they 'great' regardless?

Barry Richards was a fabulous player, probably the best batsman of his time, whose Test career was restricted to four matches owing to South Africa's policy of apartheid which caused them to be banned from international cricket.

He finished with a Test average of 72.57, but is that enough for 'greatness' alongside his 28,000 runs in first class cricket (average 54.74)?

It takes a leap of faith to imagine that consistent performers at the domestic level would, given the opportunity, excel at the international level too.

Meanwhile, there has been a spike in coronavirus cases in Victoria and Paine said "all options are on the table" as far as the venue for the Boxing Day Test is concerned. It is traditionally held at the MCG.

the leap all the time – sometimes they see in their mind's eye a successful career for a player despite a modest domestic record, and at other times they intuit that a statistically significant record in domestic matches is no guarantee of success at the highest level. Being human, they get it right sometimes, and mess it up at other times.

Had the late Rajinder Goel been born in any other country or even in India at another time, he might have qualified for the title of 'great'. He might have been – one can never be sure of these things that require a leap of faith – the finest spin bowler never to have played Test cricket.

In a warm and generous tribute, Bishan Bedi, the man who kept him out of the Test side, said that when he made his debut, Goel was the better bowler but Bedi himself got the lucky break. But Goel himself always conceded that Bedi was superior. There was another infection point some eight years later when Bedi was dropped for the Bengaluru Test against Clive Lloyd's West Indies and Goel was in the squad.

Skipper Tiger Pataudi didn't insist that Goel play on that turner, a decision that might (leap of faith again!) have swung the game in India's favour. "Had Goel played," Bedi said later, "India would certainly have won

the Test." It was difficult to shake off the feeling that Bedi was being protected by the powers that be. It was, said Dilip Doshi, a successor to Bedi, a cowardly decision. The point is not whether Goel would have finished with more wickets than Bedi's 266 or led India – but that he was not given the opportunity.

Unbelievable motivation Amazingly, and that was the kind of person he was, Goel was less troubled by all this than most people who followed the game. It took unbelievable motivation to keep bowling over after over, day in and day out, year after year knowing that the big prize was not within grasp any more.

Goel, four years older than Bedi was still playing four years after the Test man had retired. On his Ranji debut, Goel played against Lala Amarnath, and in his final match dismissed Sanjay Manjrekar. There are a few generations who played in other times.

They were different types of bowlers (Goel flatter and quicker through the air) and different types of men (Goel diffident, agreeable, even deferential, words you never associated with Bedi!). Both men were given the C K Nayudu Lifetime Achievement Award by the Board of Control for Cricket in India. Goel seemed almost

embarrassed by the honour, but that evening at the ceremony you could see the pride in his eyes. It was validation for a player who never sought validation. He was happy he had taken more wickets in the national championship than anybody else.

Statistical quirk

It is a statistical quirk that only one of six batsmen with the highest aggregates in the national championship has played Test cricket while only one of the top six bowlers hasn't. Goel, that lone bowler, didn't dwell on this too much. He came, he bowled, he conquered. He wore out the batsman, he seldom bowled a loose ball.

He was a captain's delight, a foot soldier who made no demands, who was happy with the field he was given. No one had a harsh word for him, which in the competitive world of sport is an achievement in itself.

Was he a great bowler? Perhaps. That greatness might have existed in potential, but did not have the chance to assert itself over a career spanning 27 years. In the end, he came up against a better bowler and a future captain, understood his role and made his peace with that. There is a lesson here for the easily disappointed who complain about unfair treatment by selectors anywhere.

IN BRIEF

Jaffer is Uttarakhand's Ranji head coach

MUMBAI

Former India opener and domestic stalwart Wasim Jaffer has been appointed head coach of the Uttarakhand Ranji team for the upcoming domestic season. Jaffer's contract is for a year. The highest run-getter in Ranji Trophy, Jaffer retired in March this year after playing for over two decades, primarily for the BAI on Tuesday.



Mumbai and Vidarbha. This will be his first stint as a head coach with a team. PTI

New Zealand tour of Bangladesh postponed

DHAKA

New Zealand's Test tour of Bangladesh has been postponed because of the pandemic, the Bangladesh Cricket Board said on Tuesday. New Zealand was due to play two Tests in Bangladesh in August–September as part of the ICC World Test Championship. Three Bangladeshi cricketers, including former ODI captain Mashrafe Mortaza, have tested positive in recent days. PTI



Seven more Pakistan cricketers test positive

KARACHI

Seven more Pakistan players due to tour England in August have tested positive for

coronavirus, the country's cricket board said Tuesday, taking the total to 10 since the first results were announced this week. Fakhar Zaman (in pic), Mohammad Rizwan, Wahab Riaz, Imran Khan, Mohammad Hafeez, Mohammad Hasnain, Kashif Bhatti were all diagnosed with the virus. It comes after three teammates – Shadab Khan, Haris Rauf and Haider Ali – tested positive on Monday. Pakistan is due to play three Tests and three Twenty20 Internationals. AFP

Former hooper Ragunath passes away

BENGALURU

Former India and Karnataka basketball player K. Ragunath passed away here. He was 75. Ragunath represented the Indian All-Star team which toured Sri Lanka in 1962, and played for the State with distinction in the 1960s. Ragunath was also one of the founders of popular city-based club Beagles BC.

Swimming Bulletin's 40th edition released



On the dot: Meenakshi Pahuja, Maneka Sanjay Gandhi and Dr. Supriya Pahuja at the launch of Swimming Bulletin on its usual date of June 23. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

The swimming pools across the country remain closed due to COVID-19, but the 40th edition of the VK Pahuja Swimming Bulletin came out as per schedule.

Compiled by Meenakshi Pahuja, Asst. Professor of Physical Education, Lady Shri Ram College, the book was released by former Union Minister Maneka Sanjay Gandhi at her residence here on Tuesday. Only Meenakshi's sister Dr. Supriya and brother Priyank were

present at the release.

The book, released on June 23 every year, has packed a lot in 440 pages.