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## NEARBY



### Survey to map virus spread starts today

NEW DELHI  
A serological survey to understand the spread of COVID-19 and immunity developed against the virus, by drawing blood samples of 20,000 random people across the city, will start from Saturday.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

### Need time to get health in order: Safoora

NEW DELHI  
Jamia Millia Islamia scholar Safoora Zargar, who was granted bail by the High Court earlier this week after being lodged in Tihar jail for nearly two months in connection with the northeast Delhi riots, said she needed time and space to get her health and life in order.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

### Why scheme only for Yes Bank, asks HC

NEW DELHI  
The Delhi High Court has directed the Reserve Bank of India and the Centre to explain why they decided to secure the interest of the depositors of scam-hit Yes Bank with a 'Reconstruction Scheme' as opposed to Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative Bank (PMC), another scam-hit bank.

CITY ▶ PAGE 4

# 'Noticeable thinning of Chinese troops along the LAC in Ladakh'

However, they have not vacated or removed semi-permanent structures: official



Tension continues: An IAF helicopter on a recent sortie near Leh in Ladakh. ■ AFP

Chinese troops have neither vacated nor removed any of the prefabricated or semi-permanent structures built since May at the disputed sites along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh, a senior government official told *The Hindu*.

However, the official added that in the past three days, there has been a "noticeable thinning of presence of Chinese troops" at some of the three friction points.

The removal of the structures was not a part of the original June 22 agreement at the Corps Commander-level talks, till the two parties met again with concrete proposals stitched together by the two governments, the official said.

"It was decided that there will be no patrolling, movement of troops and vehicles or any fresh construction activity by either side. This reduction [of structures] was not being expected," he said.

The three areas are Galwan, Hot Springs and the Finger area near Pangong Tso (lake) in Ladakh along the Line of Actual Control (LAC). China has also fortified positions at Depsang plains in the north.

Another official said the entire stretch along the LAC in Ladakh was seeing "worri-

some hardening of Chinese positions, including the placement of 10 mechanised and armoured regiments and at least 15 positions of artillery guns". The situation was particularly precarious in the Finger area near Pangong Tso, where the People's Liberation Army (PLA) of China has occupied positions till Finger 4, the first official said.

The distance between Finger 4-8, around 8 km, was till now patrolled both by India and China.

India considers its perception of the LAC to end at Finger 8. However, since April, the Chinese troops advanced till Finger 4 and have occupied the area where both

sides regularly patrolled and face-offs used to occur, the official said. On May 18, violent clashes occurred at this site, resulting in injuries to many soldiers.

After the June 22 Corps Commander-level talks, which took place in the aftermath of the June 15 Galwan incident, where 20 Indian Army personnel were killed in a clash, both China and India agreed to reduce their presence from the friction points where they are still "eyeball to eyeball," with Finger area emerging as a thorn in the discussion.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8  
MORE REPORTS ▶ PAGE 9

## 'Bid to alter status quo will have ripples'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
BEIJING

India on Friday warned China that trying to alter the status quo on the ground by resorting to force would not just damage the peace that existed in the border areas but could also have "ripples and repercussions" in the broader bilateral relationship. It demanded that Beijing stop its activities in eastern Ladakh.

The only way to resolve the current stand-off along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh is for Beijing to realise that trying to "change the status quo by resorting to force or coercion is not the right way forward," India's Ambassador to China Vikram Misri said in an interview.

The actions taken by the Chinese forces on the ground have damaged "considerable trust" in the bilateral relationship, the Indian ambassador added.

CHINESE ACTIONS DAMAGED  
TRUST IN TIES: ENVOY ▶ PAGE 9

# SC okays CBSE plan for Class X, XII exams

Assessment results to be out by July 15

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court accepted a Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) scheme, where students of Class X and XII will be assessed for the exams cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic by taking an average of their best performance in the papers they have already taken.

The cancelled exams were originally scheduled between July 1 and 15.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, for the CBSE, said the assessment scheme was available on the official website. "Assessment of the performance of students in the cancelled examinations will be done based on the assessment scheme," a three-judge Bench, led by Justice A.M. Khanwilkar, referred to the CBSE notification in a 10-page order.

The assessment results will be out by July 15.

The Bench said its order and the notification would govern "any petition pending in this court or any other court concerning the subject of conducting examinations for Classes 10 and 12 by the CBSE scheduled from July 1 to July 15".

The ICSE, represented by senior advocate Jaideep Gupta, said it would have a "slightly different" assessment scheme from that of

the CBSE. It had also cancelled exams scheduled between July 1 and 14. Mr. Gupta informed the court that its scheme would be available on its website in a week.

According to the CBSE scheme, students of Class X and XII, who have completed their exams, will be assessed on their performance.

Students who have taken the exam in more than three subjects will be assessed after the average in their three best performing subjects is taken to assess their scores for the cancelled papers. If students have appeared for only three exams so far, the average of the best two subjects will be taken as their scores in the cancelled papers.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## More micro containment zones in Delhi

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government's June 22 order to review and redesign containment zones has not only resulted in an increase in the number of such zones but may also lead to the demarcation of more 'micro containment zones'.

A State government official said the idea behind these smaller containment zones is to reduce inconvenience to people. "While only 19% of the total cases are from containment zones, around 45% of the cases show clustering, for example two to three cases from adjacent houses in an area," the official said.

Under the revised containment zoning, such clusters will be intensively identified, linked and contained. The district officials are working with the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) for this purpose.

The redesign is part of a 'Revised COVID Response Plan' adopted by the Delhi government on Monday based on directions from the Union Ministry of Home Affairs. With officials of all 11 city districts being directed to aggressively comb their areas, the number of containment zones increased from 261 on Monday to 280 on Friday and is expected to go up further.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## Snip in time



Shear delight: Workers engaged by NDMC spruce up the lawns along Rajpath on Friday with monsoon under way in Delhi. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

## Haryana fixes price caps for treatment

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GURUGRAM

Categorising the sickness due to COVID-19 as 'moderate', 'severe' and 'very severe', the Haryana government has fixed the maximum charges for the treatment in the State's private hospitals and medical colleges with a cap of ₹18,000 per day for treatment in ICUs with ventilator in JCI/NABH-accredited hospitals. The rates will include charges such as lab investigations, monitoring charges, drugs and consumables.

Besides, the shopping malls in Gurugram will open in a week's time with Standard Operating Procedures to be announced soon.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 3

# Total lockdown in Guwahati for 14 days

Curbs to kick in at midnight on Sunday; govt. imposes night curfew across Assam

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

The Assam government has decided to impose a total lockdown in Guwahati for 14 days from the midnight of June 28 in view of the rising COVID-19 cases.

The government has also decided to impose night curfew across the State and twice-a-week lockdown in all urban and semi-urban places with immediate effect.

### Community spread

"The COVID-19 cases in Guwahati have been increasing exponentially. Since June 15, we have recorded 676 cases of community transmission. We have thus decided to impose total lockdown in the city from June 28 midnight till July 12," Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Friday.

There would be no lockdown for rural areas but the



People buying essential goods in Guwahati on Friday. ■ PTI

night curfew from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. will be in force.

Apart from essential services, including movement of vehicles carrying essential commodities, nothing would remain open for the first seven days in Kamrup (Metro) district, of which Guwahati is a part. Grocery shops and vegetable markets would remain closed too.

"The administration and police have been told to ensure a strict lockdown. We will assess the situation next

funerals or cremations. However, farm and tea estate activities would function unlike during the first lockdown.

**Cases from other States**  
The Minister said Assam had so far tested 4.5 lakh swab samples with more samples being tested. "I have been told some States have done better, but an analysis of cases from 20 districts in Assam revealed that many cases were from such States. For instance, 82 positive cases were of people who had come from Kerala after that State was said to have flattened the curve. Similarly, 104 cases were from Karnataka," he said. On Friday, Assam recorded 6,646 positive patients, with 2,387 active cases and 4,247 people discharged. Nine persons have died, while three migrated to other States.

All religious places, hotels, restaurants and e-commerce would remain closed, while up to 20 people would be allowed to take part in

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Need time to get health in order: Safoora

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Jamia Millia Islamia scholar Safoora Zargar, who was granted bail by the High Court earlier this week after being lodged in Tihar jail for nearly two months in connection with the north-east Delhi riots, said she needed time and space to get her health and life in order.

She also thanked those who had supported her. "I am grateful to the almighty and all those who have spoken out for me within India and outside and deeply grateful to the Delhi High Court for this order of release," said Ms. Zargar, who is 23 weeks pregnant.

She also thanked her family for "standing by her and going through this trauma and worry" as well as her lawyers. Stating that she needed time to recover, she said that she did not wish to say anything else at this point.

She was arrested on April 28 and was in judicial custody at Tihar jail after being charged under the Unlawful Activities Prevention (Act).

Ms. Zargar is part of the Jamia Coordination Committee, a group of students and alumni from JMI who came together to protest the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the National Register of Citizens, after a police crackdown at JMI on December 15, 2019.

# Despite HC order, riot victims struggle to get compensation

They were not allowed to submit applications at Sub-Divisional Magistrate office

HEMANI BHANDARI  
NEW DELHI

Two victims of the riots that broke out in north-east Delhi in February this year were welcomed by a poster at the Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) office stating it is closed for public dealing, even though the High Court had passed an order on Monday stating that they could present their compensation applications there.

Neha Fareen (24) from Shiv Vihar, whose house was looted during the riots, spent her entire Tuesday at Karawal Nagar police station with her one-year-old son Zubin in the scorching heat only to get a copy of the FIR, which is to be attached to her compensation papers. She has to submit the papers at the SDM (Karawal Nagar) office. She said she was waiting for the copy for her own satisfaction.

However, on Wednesday, when she went to the SDM office in Nand Nagri, the guard allegedly told her that she won't be allowed to enter and she should check after July 1. Ms. Neha said a poster in Hindi read that public dealing in the DC office will remain shut due to the outbreak till further orders.

"I have visited the police station over five times only for the diary entry number. I have also visited the SDM office a few times, the latest being on Wednesday after



A vandalised house during riots in north-east Delhi.

• FILE PHOTO: SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Monday's court order. We are all really troubled because of depleting finances," she said.

On June 21, while hearing a plea by Ms. Fareen and another petitioner Mohammed Mohsin, the High Court had ordered that the government "shall accept the application of the petitioners without insisting on a copy of the FIR" and that "such applications shall be processed expeditiously".

Ms. Fareen had tried to lodge the FIR earlier but was informed that a diary entry has been lodged. The court was informed that her complaint has been clubbed with one of the FIRs registered in connection with the incident.

Ms. Fareen and her family had left for their village in Ut-

**C** The office is open and they [victims] can call me if they want to come. I get calls from so many riot victims

P.K. PATEL  
SDM (Karawal Nagar)

tar Pradesh to attend her sister's wedding a day before the riots broke out. They returned only in March to find that all their gold and cash, as well as an LCD TV had been looted.

Soon after this, the lockdown was announced due to which she couldn't process the compensation documents.

Subsequently, in May and June, several trips were made to the police station and SDM office. Similarly, 19-year-old

Mohsin, also a resident of Shiv Vihar, said his bakery shop and house were looted during the riots. He and his family had fled to their village in U.P. on February 25, soon after the riots broke out. They returned on March 16 and subsequently submitted their loot complaint at Idgah relief camp. "I have gone to the SDM office a number of times. When I went on Wednesday, I was told by the guard to come after July 1," he said.

SDM (Karawal Nagar) P.K. Patel said: "The office is open and they [victims] can call me if they want to come. I get calls from so many riot victims." Regarding the poster at the office, Mr. Patel said: "Public dealing is not encouraged and we are working by putting our lives at risk".

The court on Monday was also informed by the government's counsel that the relief application web portal, which wasn't functional will be rectified immediately.

However, advocate Mishika Singh appearing for riot victims said: "The web portal was working earlier and those who applied for compensation were given web IDs. Eventually, the domain was shut. After the court order, the website is running but after submission of application, no web ID or proof of receipt is generated," she said.

He added that someone hit Sanobar with an iron rod after which he fell unconscious. The mob continued to beat Suleiman.

## Chargesheet filed in man's murder during Delhi riots

The man was beaten to death by a mob

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

These persons were part of the mob that had been rioting and committing arson in the area. According to eyewitnesses, all four were actively involved in assaulting the victim

POLICE OFFICER

Meanwhile, Sanobar regained consciousness and managed to escape the spot. The mob paraded Suleman towards Prema Vihar culvert. They kept hitting him with sticks and rods, said the officer.

After this, the mob threw him near a toilet from where he was taken to GTB Hospital by a PCR van at 10.15 a.m. Suleman died during treatment, added the officer.

During the investigation, an extensive verification drive was conducted and based on accounts of eyewitnesses and technical evidence, the accused were nabbed.

These persons were part of the mob that had been rioting and committing arson in the area. According to eyewitnesses, all four were actively involved in assaulting the victim," the officer added.

"The arrested accused are in judicial custody while juveniles have been sent to correction home," said the officer.

## Schools to remain shut till July 31

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Education Minister Manish Sisodia on Friday said schools in Delhi will remain closed till July 31 keeping in mind the current situation due to the pandemic.

Mr. Sisodia after a meeting with the Directorate of Education said a plan would be designed to reopen schools post July 1 in a way that would prepare students to adjust to the new circumstances. "The aim of today's meeting was to design a plan of action for schools so that whenever they reopen after July, they are well prepared," said a DoE official.

The government said a district-wise report based on the suggestions from teachers, student and parents were presented at the meeting. Suggestions like primary classes should be held once or twice in a week with a strength of 12-15 students in a class, classes on alternate days, and reduction of the syllabus were discussed. For Classes 9 and 10, it was suggested that it should be taken in small groups once or twice a week while others were of the opinion that Class 10 students should have classes daily, the government said.

During the investigation, identification asked "The mob asked the victims of their identification. They asked Sunil, a Hindu, to leave the spot but he insisted on taking Sanobar and Suleman with him. The mob then thrashed Sunil and sent him away. After this, they started beating Sanobar and Suleman mercilessly," said an officer.

"The arrested accused are in judicial custody while juveniles have been sent to correction home," said the officer.

## Customer fear puts restaurants in a bind

Many worried about the future as rent and operational costs outweigh income

JAIDEEP DEO BHANJ  
NEW DELHI

A thermal check at the entrance followed by a dab of hand sanitiser and a brief on what to expect in terms of service are some of the new ways that restaurants are greeting customers – the few there are.

The government permitted eateries to open their dining areas on June 8, but over the last two weeks only a handful of restaurants have taken the leap to layout their tables. Most are rethinking their strategy given the high rent and fixed costs; and the fact that customers are staying away as they are apprehensive of getting infected.

While quick-service restaurants have adapted well as they mostly use disposable containers to serve customers, it is the traditional restaurants that are putting in the extra effort to ensure safety of customers and employees.

Measures include contactless menu cards, contactless payment, and transparent glass partitions between tables in the dining area. Strict sanitation rules are observed in the kitchen and employees have to wear protective gear.

The move to open restaurants was welcome news for the thousands who were left unemployed as the industry



A waiter cleans a table while customers wait for their lunch at the Town Hall restaurant in New Delhi. ■ AFP

tried to survive the lockdown on the little revenue it made from takeaway and delivery orders.

Randeep Bajaj, co-founder and partner, Ambrosia Hospitality, which runs restaurants such as Townhall in Khan Market, and Amour Bistro on Malcha Marg in Chanakyapuri, said: "Customer response has been positive so far which gives us some hope for the future and courage to fight, but the numbers are not enough to sustain models... but at least the system is running again."

Ashish Ahuja, who owns Pebble Street in New Friends Colony, said the fear in the minds of customers is too much for restaurants to start functioning normally again.

"Our restaurant in New Friends Colony is open but

the one in Connaught Place is still shut... the dining business is next to negligible," said Mr. Ahuja. Managers of restaurant located in commercial areas said that business has improved slightly.

Pradeep Mishra, general manager at Nathu's in Sunder Nagar, said they have changed the layout of the restaurant to ensure space between tables. There is also a divider to ensure that those who come for takeaway do not enter the dining area.

Earlier, many families would come. But now with children under the age of 10 and senior citizens not being allowed out, it is mostly individuals who are coming in for a quick bite," Mr. Mishra said, adding: "Since reopening, there has been a steady rise in customers... it is helping us sustain our business, but it will be a long time before things are back to normal."

Many restaurants said that the 9 p.m. curfew, which stops them from offering dinner service, and ban on serving alcohol are coming in the way of their unlock plans.

"Only very early diners can be catered too and if someone is supposed to go to work and then come for dinner, 9 p.m. seems like an impossible situation for them. Lifting the curfew, or at least pushing it to 11 p.m. will certainly help," said Mr. Bajaj.

## 2 arrested for stabbing man; 1 on the run

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 35-year-old man was stabbed by three persons after the former's motorcycle brushed past one of the accused in central Delhi's Hauz Qazi, the police said on Friday.

Two accused have been arrested while the third culprit is absconding, they added. DCP (Central) Sanjay Bhatia said the victim has been identified as Amiuddin. The accused have been identified as Suhaib, Sehzad and Kaif. Suhaib is on the run, Mr. Bhatia said. The victim has been discharged from the hospital, the police said.

## GOVERNMENT OF UTTARAKHAND Office of Superintending Engineer 10th NH Circle, P.W.D., Yamuna Colony, Dehradun

Ph/Fax No. 0135-2530251, Email: senh11@rediffmail.com

### Notice Inviting Bid

Letter No.1864/13 Yata-NH-10/2020

Date: 24-06-2020

For and on behalf of Governor of Uttarakhand, The Superintending Engineer, 10th NH Circle, PWD Dehradun Invites tender on Two Cover System through online only, for following work on EPC Mode as detailed below:

| Sl. No | Name of Work   | Approximate Value of work (Excluding GST) (Rs. In Lakh) | Cost of document (in Rs.)  | Period of completion             | Maintenance period |
|--------|--|---|----------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1      | Construction of RCC Pre-stressed bridge on Aamkheri Ghat in Khanpur Vidhan Sabha Constituency in District Haridwar under CRF | 1768.23   | Cost of tender Rs. 5000.00 | 12 months including rainy season | 5 Years            |

2. Tender documents are available online in the web-site <https://uktenders.gov.in> from 03.07.2020 to 03.08.2020 upto 12.00 hrs.

3. Submission of Tender online can be done upto 12.00 hrs of 03.08.2020.

4. Bids will be opened on 04.08.2020 by 15.00 hrs in the office of the Chief Engineer(NH), PWD, Yamuna colony, Dehradun (Uttarakhand).

5. The bidders must possess Digital Signature Certificate for submission of bids through online.

6. Pre-bid meeting will be held on 13.07.2020 in the office of the Chief Engineer (National Highway), Yamuna Colony, Dehradun (Uttarakhand). The original financial instruments such as cost of bidding document and the original/attested technical bid document shall be submitted at any of the office on or before 04.08.2020 at 12.00 hrs as under :-

(i) Superintending Engineer (NH), PWD, Yamuna Colony, Dehradun.

7. The bid shall be summarily rejected if the original financial instruments towards the cost of the documents and Bid security are not received within the stipulated time.

8. Further details can be seen on Web-site <https://uktenders.gov.in>.

9. Corrigendum/Addendum, if any will be published only in the above web-site.

Superintending Engineer  
10.N.H. CIRCLE, P.W.D.  
DEHRADUN

NIT No. — WBSDB/EE/CED-I/ NIT-02(e)/2020-21

e-tender are invited by the Executive Engineer, Civil Engineering Division No-I, Sundarban Development Board from the reliable bonafide resourceful contractors for Renovation & Repairing of B P Road and C C Road (Plan) (8 Nos.) in Sundarban Region (South 24 Parganas, West Bengal). Details may be had from the Notice Board of the office of the EE/CED-I/SDB on working days during office hours or in website <https://whitenders.gov.in>.

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WBPH&IDCL

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SD/-  
Assistant

Timings  
DELHI

|                      |
|----------------------|
| SATURDAY, JUN. 27    |
| RISE 05:26 SET 19:23 |
| RISE 11:18 SET 00:00 |
| SUNDAY, JUN. 28      |
| RISE 05:27 SET 19:24 |
| RISE 12:21 SET 00:12 |
| MONDAY, JUN. 29      |
| RISE 05:27 SET 19:24 |
| RISE 13:24 SET 00:48 |

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| Delhi Weather | max | min |
| Delhi City    | 37  | 27  |
| Safdarjung    | 37  | 27  |
| Palam         | 39  | 29  |

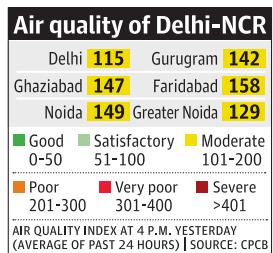
**Delhi Palam Today**  
36°C A partly cloudy sky with moderate wind during day and hot day condition. Chances of thunderstorm at few areas.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
39°C A partly cloudy sky with hot day condition. Moderate wind during day likely.

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THE HINDU

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IN BRIEF

**Satyendar Jain discharged after testing negative**

NEW DELHI  
Delhi Minister Satyendar Jain, who was admitted to a city hospital and had tested positive for COVID-19 last week, was discharged on Friday evening after he tested negative for the virus, said sources in AAP. "He will be under home isolation for the next few days," the source said.

**Nagrik Suvidha Kendra to reopen from June 29**

NEW DELHI  
The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) on Friday said that the "Nagrik Suvidha Kendra" will be reopened from June 29 to facilitate execution of lease deeds and submission of land conversion applications.

**DPCC chief detained while paying homage**

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI  
Delhi Congress chief Ch. Anil Kumar was detained by Delhi Police on Friday morning from India Gate while he was paying homage to Indian soldiers killed in Galwan Valley. Mr. Kumar was participating in a "Shaheedon Ko Salam Diwas", a silent protest, organised by the party.

While Mr. Kumar was speaking to the media, the police picked him up and put him in a bus and detained him.

Delhi Police in a statement said: "A few people had gathered near national stadium without any permission. They were told to disperse in view of the governments' directives. When they refused to pay heed, they were detained."

**Hire nurses, paramedics registered with DSSSB, expert tells govt.**

'Deploy MD, MS, DNB students only after they take their final exams'

NIKHIL M BABU  
NEW DELHI

An expert appointed by the Delhi government for deploying final-year nursing and MD, MS, DNB students at COVID-19 hospitals for six months has recommended hiring nurses and paramedics from a "large pool" registered for jobs with the Delhi Subordinate Services Selection

# Antibody testing: expect knock on the door for blood sample

City sees 3,460 fresh COVID-19 cases, tally now 77,240; 63 deaths also reported

NIKHIL M BABU  
NEW DELHI

A serological survey to understand the spread of COVID-19 and immunity developed against the virus, by drawing blood samples of 20,000 random people across the city, will be carried out starting Saturday.

People can expect a knock on their doors by officials for collection of blood samples till July 6. "A team will visit houses selected randomly and explain the survey to the people and if they agree, then their blood samples will be collected," a Delhi government official told *The Hindu*. People are free to say no and written consents from them are needed before drawing blood samples, the official said.

The move comes even as the city recorded 3,460 new COVID-19 cases in the past 24 hours, taking the total to 77,240. Delhi remains the city with the most number of cases after it surpassed Mumbai on Wednesday.

The health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Friday also stated that 63 more deaths were reported in the past 24 hours, taking the total to 2,492.

Of the total cases, 47,091 people have recovered and there are 27,657 active cases. As many as 21,144 tests were conducted in Delhi per day, taking the total number of tests to 4,59,156.

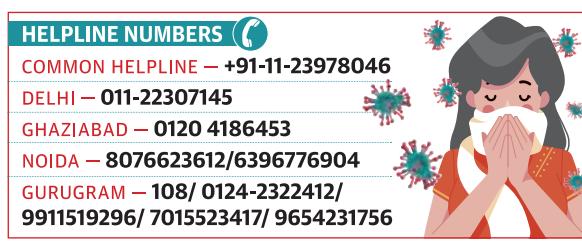
Antibody testing is an indirect test and it cannot find the virus, but it can determine if the immune system has encountered it.

Before stepping out to collect the samples, the authorities will decide on the number of blood samples to be collected from a particular area and the different age groups from which the sample will be taken.

**Mapping the virus**

The team will consist of at least two persons – a lab technician to collect the blood samples and another official to explain the survey.

"To make the survey fair,



**Virus spread**

| Total number of COVID-19 cases | Total deaths                    |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 77,240                         | 2,492                           |
| New cases in the past 24 hours | New deaths in the past 24 hours |
| 3,460                          | 63                              |

SOURCE: DELHI GOVERNMENT HEALTH BULLETIN

mine if the immune system has encountered it.

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"To make the survey fair,

**10,000-bed facility begins operations**

NEW DELHI

About 2,000 beds of the 10,000-bed COVID-19 facility in south Delhi became operational on Friday. The rest will be ready in a week's time, said B.M. Mishra, District Magistrate (South). A large tent has been set up on the campus of spiritual organisation Radha Soami Satsang Beas in Chhatarpur.

we will not ask the person whether she had any symptom of COVID-19. If we test more people who had symptoms, then more people will be positive and that would give us the correct picture about the spread of the disease," the official said.

A report will be submitted to the government by July 6 after the serological survey is completed. The survey is part of a 'Revised COVID-19 Response Plan' chalked out by the Delhi government on Monday, based on directions from the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.

In May-end, the Central government had done a similar study in Delhi and tested about 500 people using antibody testing kits and many had tested positive.

**Staffers protest at Hindu Rao**

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Nurses, paramedical staffers and health employees union of the Hindu Rao Hospital protested against the working conditions and non-payment of salaries on Friday.

The hospital, under the North Delhi Municipal Corporation, has been under the lens for non-payment of salaries of staffers. This time, nurses said that they had not been paid for the last two months.

Earlier this month, Hindu Rao was also designated a COVID-19 hospital. Staffers said that they were also demanding protocols laid down by the Union government be followed and that at present, there were deficiencies in terms of donning and doffing station for PPE kits, AC and accommodation.

Spokesperson for the civic body said that measures were being taken to improve infrastructure at the hospital.



Arvind Kejriwal •

used to conduct around 5,000-6,000 tests daily, out of which in 2,000-2,500 cases reports were positive. We have increased the testing three times, and now, instead of 5,000 tests per day, we are conducting 18,000-20,000 tests per day," he said.

"As of today, there are 74,000 COVID-19 cases in Delhi, but if we try to comprehend these cases, I would say that the situation is under control. It is worrisome but there is no need to panic. A few days back, we

duct 1-2 lakh tests daily it is natural to observe a spike in the number of cases. A favorable thing is that out of 74,000 cases, around 45,000 have recovered that shows that people are recovering swiftly," he also said.

For the last one week, he said, the number of hospital beds occupied by COVID-19 patients had remained stagnant. In the last week, Mr. Kejriwal said, the number of beds occupied had remained around 6,000. Even if there had been a spike in cases daily, the new cases did not require beds.

At a cabinet meeting on Friday, Mr. Kejriwal said, the Delhi Cabinet had sanctioned an increase in the capacity of beds by 450 at a newly constructed hospital in Burari. A banquet hall opposite to Loki Nayak Hospital has also been converted into a COVID-19 care facility with 100 beds.

We have seen that even if the testing has increased threefold in the last few days, the COVID-19-positive cases have only increased to 3,000-3,500 from 2,000. If in the coming days, we con-

## Teachers on duty are COVID-19 warriors: HC

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The High Court on Friday observed that teachers carrying out their duty during the virus outbreak can be equated to COVID-19 warriors, while lamenting that North Corporation school-teachers have not received arrears to the teachers.

The North body said that various categories of employees had not been paid as the Delhi government had not released funds.

## Haryana issues advisory on possible locust attack

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GURUGRAM

Haryana Agriculture Department on Friday issued an advisory asking residents of Gurugram to keep doors and windows of their houses shut in view of a possible locust attack on Saturday.

The swarms have reached a few villages in neighbouring Rewari, around 50 km from here.

Deputy Director, Agriculture, Gurugram, Atmaram

Godara, said the swarms flew from Mahendragarh to settle in four-five villages of Rewari near Kosli on Friday and are expected to hit parts of Gurugram on Saturday. "Their movement depends on the wind direction in the morning. It may go towards Jhajjar or Gurugram. In Gurugram, it is likely to hit parts of Pataudi," the official said. He claimed that the department was prepared to deal with the situation.

**Hire nurses, paramedics registered with DSSSB, expert tells govt.**

'Deploy MD, MS, DNB students only after they take their final exams'

NIKHIL M BABU  
NEW DELHI

An expert appointed by the Delhi government for deploying final-year nursing and MD, MS, DNB students at COVID-19 hospitals for six months has recommended hiring nurses and paramedics from a "large pool" registered for jobs with the Delhi Subordinate Services Selection

Board (DSSSB) and final-year MS, MD, DNB students, if still needed. The government will now take a decision on it," Mr. Verma told *The Hindu*.

**'At least 20 more days'**  
If the government goes by the recommendation, then the hiring of doctors will take at least 20 more days as the examination of students in GGSIPU will end by July 14 and Delhi University examinations, scheduled to start from July 10, will end by the last week of July.

Mr. Verma has also recom-

mended hiring doctors, who are already working in other areas, for COVID-19 duty through advertisements followed by interviews.

"Initially there was a lot of confusion regarding whether the students will be hired before or after their exams. Their exam is already delayed by two months and hiring them for six months before their exams will result in delaying the start of their career by six months. The government should stick to the recommendation and hire students only after their exams," said Parv Mittal, Presi-

## Haryana fixes price caps for COVID-19 treatment; malls to reopen in a week

List of 8 large outbreak regions issued

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GURUGRAM

fixed at ₹13,000 per day. For 'moderate' sickness, the charges for the NABH and non-NABH hospitals have been capped at ₹10,000 and ₹8,000 per day respectively.

However, the non-NABH-accredited hospitals can charge a maximum of ₹15,000 per day for treatment in ICUs with ventilator in JCI/NABH-accredited hospitals.

**COVID-19**

The rates will include charges, such as lab investigations, radiological diagnostics, monitoring charges, drugs, consumables, including PPE, doctor's consultation, nursing care, physiotherapy, procedural charges and transfusion of blood, among others.

The district administration on Friday issued a list of eight large outbreak regions (LORs) for carrying out intensive health campaigns to contain the spread of the virus. The LORs include Heera Nagar, Hari Nagar, Baldev Nagar, Nathupur abadi, and Dandahera, among others.

The administration said that there will be reasonable restrictions on the movement in these regions and minimum adverse impact on socio-economic activities with the permission for in-situ industries to work.

Besides, the shopping malls in the Millennium City will also open in a week's time with Standard Operating Procedures to be announced by the State soon.

As per the State government directions, a JCI/NABH-accredited hospital can charge a maximum of ₹15,000 per day for ICU treatment without ventilator care, categorised as 'severe' sickness.

For pregnant women, costs of delivery and newborn package are not included. Also, the rates will not include the cost of COVID-19 diagnostic tests as well as IL-6 Levels. All beds for the COVID-19 treatment will be at fixed package rates, subject to an upper limit of 60% of the total hospital bed capacity.

**Containment zones**  
The administration has also issued a fresh list of containment zones, reducing the number from 107 to 106.

## CBSE scheme will affect city students

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ  
NEW DELHI

Students in north-east Delhi may be the worst affected by the CBSE's alternative assessment scheme to replace pending board exams which have now been cancelled.

They make up the majority of the 2,400 students who have only completed one or two papers, as their exam schedule was disrupted by

HC declines petition on incoming calls

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday declined a petition seeking directions to Telecom Regulatory Authority of India and the Department of Telecommunications to ensure that operators do not block incoming services of subscribers during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Prateek Jalan said that courts cannot do charity at the cost of others as telecom companies also need money.

The plea had contended that telecom companies' action of blocking incoming calls and messages on account of failure to recharge subscription is causing grave hardship to people who cannot afford to spend money on it in the prevailing circumstances.

## Selja flays BJP govt. for petrol, diesel price hike

'Mass lay-offs in private sector'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

Haryana Congress president Kumari Selja on Friday hit out at the BJP government at the Centre for the sharp rise in petrol and diesel prices and blamed its policies to be the key reason behind increasing unemployment in the State.

### 'Public suffering'

"Prices of petrol and diesel have been increasing in the country for the last 20 days. At many places, diesel prices have outpaced prices of petrol. People who faced financial losses during the lockdown hoped that the Central and State governments would provide some relief. But far from it, this government is adding to their woes. The government has broken the backbone of farmers, transporters and the general public by increasing the prices of petrol and diesel," Ms. Selja said at a press conference in Narnaul.

**'Industries destroyed'**

"The industries set-up in Haryana during the Congress rule has been completely destroyed by this government. Mass layoffs are taking place in the private sector. At the same time, this government is not providing government jobs. Far from giving new jobs, it is bent on snatching them. In a latest decision, the government has decided that after joining Group-D posts, the applicant will not be allowed to apply in any other recruitment for the next five years," she said.

Ms. Selja said the law and order situation in Haryana has been deteriorating.

## Lakhs hit as Assam flood fury continues

Operation to cap OIL well in Tinsukia virtually abandoned; major rivers flowing above danger mark

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

Floods in Assam have claimed the 16th human life since May 22 as the rising water level displaced more than 2.52 lakh people across 16 districts on Friday.

Incessant heavy rain for almost a week also hit operations to cap the blowout well of Oil India Limited (OIL) in eastern Assam's Tinsukia district.

Officials of the Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) said a person drowned in Tengakhata area of Dibrugarh early on Friday morning, taking the death toll to 37. Of these, 16 died by drowning while landslips buried 21.

The number of flood-hit districts almost doubled from nine to 16 overnight. So far, 2,52,661 people have been displaced and 18,234 of them have taken refuge in relief camps across five districts,

"The number of flood-hit districts almost doubled from nine to 16 overnight. So far, 2,52,661 people have been displaced and 18,234 of them have taken refuge in relief camps across five districts," an ASDMA spokesperson said, adding that social distancing was being maintained in these camps due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Dhemaji continued to be the worst affected district followed by Tinsukia, Majuli and Dibrugarh. The other flood-hit districts are Baksa, Barpeta, Biswanath, Dar-



A boat plying on a flooded road after heavy rain in Dibrugarh on Friday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

rang, Golaghat, Jorhat, Kokrajhar, Lakhimpur, Nagaon, Nalbari, Sivasagar and Udalguri.

Eight rivers including the Brahmaputra have been flowing above the danger level, threatening to inundate more areas, officials said.

"Crops on 11,765.27 hectares across 704 villages have

In Tinsukia's Baghjan area, where one of OIL's wells had a blowout, operations for capping it had to be virtually abandoned.

### Bridge collapse

"A large part of the area is inundated and the levels of all the rivers are rising. And while a bridge on one of the access roads collapsed on June 24, the condition of another bridge on an alternative road is deteriorating," an OIL spokesperson said.

"We are in touch with the Army for constructing a Bailey bridge for transporting men and material to and from the Baghjan site," he added.

Heavy rain has affected the survey for assessing the damage toward compensating the people affected by the blowout, Tinsukia district officials said. Assessment of 530 families has been completed so far.

**Vini Mahajan  
new Punjab  
Chief Secretary**

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

Vini Mahajan on Friday took over as the first woman Chief Secretary of Punjab.

Ms. Mahajan replaced Karan Avtar Singh, who had a stand off with some State Ministers last month. He has been posted as Special Chief Secretary, Governance Reforms and Public Grievances.

Ms. Mahajan is the wife of State's Director General of Police Dinkar Gupta.

## Why scheme only for Yes Bank, asks HC

Explanation sought from RBI, Centre

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

ion of India accorded sanction to the Reconstruction Scheme," the High Court remarked.

"The affidavits will delve into the aspect as to how the depositors of PMC Bank are differently circumstanced in comparison to the depositors of Yes Bank," the court observed.

### Centre's affidavit

While the Centre, in its affidavit, stated that it has not invested any funds in Yes Bank, as well as the UOI (Union of India) had a crucial role to play in the decision taken to:

permit, firstly, the Reconstruction Scheme being brought into play and, secondly, to have it funded," Justice Rajiv Shakdher said.

"What has emerged upon perusal of the (Centre's) notification is that, both, the RBI as well as the UOI (Union of India) had a crucial role to play in the decision taken to: permit, firstly, the Reconstruction Scheme being brought into play and, secondly, to have it funded," Justice Rajiv Shakdher said.

"The RBI will file an affidavit as to what propelled it to take action in the 'public interest' to secure the interest of the depositors of Yes Bank and the reason why the Un-

## Centre's stand sought on EIA notification

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday asked the Centre to clarify any ambiguity on the extension of time granted to the public for giving opinion on the 2020 draft Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) notification due to the COVID-19 crisis.

A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Prateek Jalan asked the Environment Ministry to reply by June 29 whether there was any ambiguity in the Centre's May 8 notification extending the period for receiving objections and suggestions regarding the draft EIA 2020.

The High Court's direction came on petition by environmentalist Vikrant Tongad stating that the May 8 notification extended the period for receiving objections by another 60 days, but it was not clear as to when the initial period of 60 days commenced.

## APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General public is hereby informed that an unidentified person about 60-65 years of age whose name, residence and family is unknown had been found dead at Char Khamab, Nand Nagri, Delhi. In this regard a video has been registered with DD No: 21-A dated 10.06.2020 at P.S. Nand Nagri, Delhi. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to identify the deceased person but no clue has come to light so far.

The description of the UIDB is as under:  
**Sex: Male, Age: about 60-65, Height: 5'8", Complexion: Shallow, Built: Thin, Wearing: Off White colour kurta and pajama.**

If anyone has any information about his relatives, kindly inform the SHO/ Nand Nagri, Delhi.

E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in

Ph.: 011-24368638, 24368641

Fax : 011-24368639

P.S. Nand Nagri, Delhi, Ph. No. 011-22583307

## WB HIDCO

### N.I.T No.-09 of G.M (E)-II of 2020-2021

WB HIDCO invites online percentage rate open tender in two bid system for "Eucalyptus Bullah Piling with Drum Sheet Walling including Earth filling in low-lying area to prepare road alignment for Street No.-103 at Gitabitan Township, Bolpur, Birbhum" for resourceful bonafide Govt. Contractors and eligible outsiders in the manner as described in the detailed tender notice available on <http://wtbidders.gov.in> and from 25.06.2020 at 11.00 A.M.

Corrigendum / Addendum, if any to this e-tender would appear only on above Website and not be published.

General Manager (Engg)-II

WB HIDCO

Letter no: kha.Up.NI.01(Chini Vitran Yoina)-10/2020 - 729 Date - 26/06/2020  
**Government of Jharkhand**

### Directorate of Food & Consumer Affairs Ground Floor, Engineers Hostel, HEC, Sector - III Dhurwa, Ranchi - 834004, Jharkhand

Corrigendum Notice

Tender No:kha.Up.NI.01(Chini Vitran Yoina)-10/2020-487

Dated-20.05.2020

Corrigendum Notice regarding "Empanelment of Suppliers for supply of Free Flow white Crystal Sugar (Grade-S-30/ M -30) for Second Quarter (Jul-20 to Sep-20) of Financial Year 2020-21 Under Reverse Auction Mode".

With reference to advertisement under PR 228542 Directorate of Food and Consumer Affairs (20-21) and Tender No-kha.Up.NI.01(Chini Vitran Yoina)-10/2020-487 Dated- 20.05.2020, regarding "Notice for Empanelment of Suppliers for supply of Free Flow white Crystal Sugar (Grade-S-30/ M -30) for Second Quarter (Jul-20 to Sep-20) of Financial Year 2020-21 Under Reverse Auction Mode".

This is to inform all prospective Manufacturers/ Producers/ Traders that the reverse e-auction held on 16.06.2020 stands cancelled and the bids for the same stands null and void. kindly refer the Departmental website [https://jharkhand.gov.in](http://jharkhand.gov.in) or [https://www.nemil.in](http://www.nemil.in) for the re-auction schedule and further details.

Sd/-  
(Dilip Turkey)

Director  
Directorate of Food & Consumer Affairs

## TENDER NOTICE

| SR. NO. | NAME OF BOARD/ CORP/AUTH | NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER  | OPENING DATE | CLOSING DATE | AMOUNT / EMDO (APPROX.) IN RUPEES    | WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP/ AUTH                                      | NODAL OFFICER/ CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL     |
|---------|--------------------------|---|--------------|--------------|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| 1       | HAFED PANCHKULA          | ANNUAL MAINTENANCE CONTRACT FOR OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF COMPLIANCE RETENTION PROTECTION CARBON-DIOXIDE AND WET-SEWER SYSTEM INSTALLED AT HAFED CORPORATE OFFICE, SECTOR-5, PANCHKULA   | 29.06.2020   | 10.07.2020   | 16000/-                              | <a href="http://www.hafed.gov.in">www.hafed.gov.in</a>               | (0172)-2590520-26<br>hafed@hry.nic.in    |
| 2       | HAFED PANCHKULA          | RENTING OUT 2 SHOPS NO. R-7 AND R-8 MEASURING 21.46 SQM. AND 9.15 SQM LOCATED IN PANCHBATTI CHOWK, MI ROAD, HANUMOON HAVELI, JAIPUR (RAJASTHAN)   | 29.06.2020   | 10.07.2020   | 10000/-                              | <a href="http://www.hafed.gov.in">www.hafed.gov.in</a>               | (0172)-2590520-26<br>hafed@hry.nic.in    |
| 3       | HAFED PANCHKULA          | EX-TERMINAL NOTIFICATION ENGAGEMENT OF CONSULTANT AGENT/CONSULTANT TO FORMULATE THE BEST ACTION PLAN/STRATEGY FOR DISPOSAL OF AGRIPRODUCE   | 25.06.2020   | 16.07.2020   | As mentioned in the tender documents | <a href="http://www.hafed.gov.in">www.hafed.gov.in</a>               | 0172-2590520-26<br>hafed@hry.nic.in      |
| 4       | HAFED ASSANDH            | SALE OF MOLASSES, CHAIN SPARES, FORGED STEEL SHAFT FOR MILL ROLLER, C.S. TRASH PLATE, SCRAPER, TURBINE SPARES, S.S. TUBES, BOILER, TUBES, VARIOUS PLATES, REPAIRING OF PARTS OF CRANE, UNDERRAIL GRAB, NUT & BOLT, JOINT & PACKING, WELDING, ELECTRODE & ACCESSORIES, M.S. PIPE & FITTING, VALVES, IRON & STEEL, RE-SHELLING OF MILL ROLLER, G.M. BEARING, BUSH & WEAR PLATE, REPLACEMENT OF BOLE TUBES, TRANSPORTATION OF MOLASSES FROM VARIOUS PLANT RCDF, JAIPUR | 29.06.2020   | 06.07.2020   | 3.50 LACS                            | <a href="http://www.hafed.gov.in">www.hafed.gov.in</a>               | 9354235591<br>dgmhfd@gmail.com           |
| 5       | HSIIDC                   | WORK OF REPARING/RESURFACING OF ROADS AT PHASE-VI, UDYOG VIHAR GURUGRAM   | 01.07.2020   | 15.07.2020   | 121.21 LACS                          | <a href="http://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a> | 0124-2398418<br>ia.gurugram@hsidc.org.in |
| 6       | HSIIDC                   | CONSTRUCTION WORK FOR BALANCE PORTION OF 24 M WIDE (BITUMINOUS) ROAD IN GLOBAL CITY, SECTOR-37, GURUGRAM  | 01.07.2020   | 15.07.2020   | 10.78 LACS                           | <a href="http://etenders.hry.nic.in">https://etenders.hry.nic.in</a> | 0124-2398418<br>ia.gurugram@hsidc.org.in |

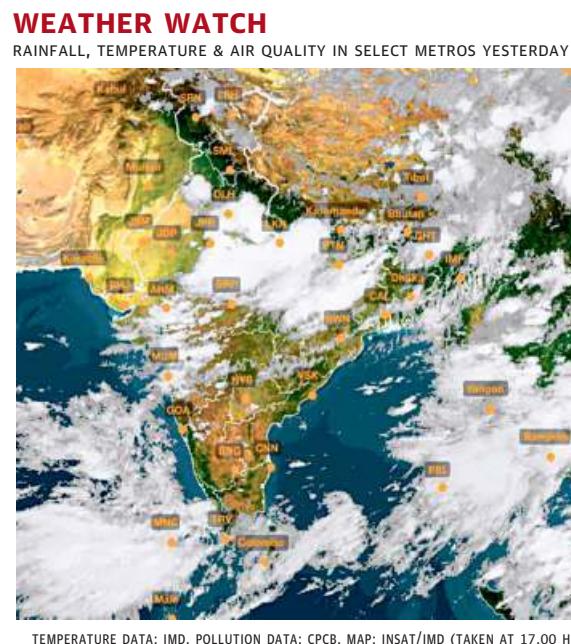
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : [www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in](http://www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in) or [www.etenders.hry.nic.in](http://etenders.hry.nic.in)

Samvad 81478

Government of Jammu & Kashmir  
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL HOSPITAL AND CENTRAL HEATING DIVISION  
SRINAGAR  
Telefax:- 0194-2496089, Email ID:- xemnhchdk@yahoo.in  
Gist of e-tender  
NIT No: MHCHD/TS/2020-21/24/e-tendering  
Dated:-22.06.2020

For and on behalf of the Governor of Jammu and Kashmir state, e-tenders, valid for 180 days, are invited from the Original equipment manufacturers of Lifts or their authorized dealers/ representatives or Registered/ reputed and experienced firms for the following works-

| Name of Work  | Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs) | Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees) | Earnest Money (Lacs of Rs) | Time of completion (in months) | Position of AAA/funds |
|---|-------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| 1   | 2                       | 3                          | 4                          | 5                              | 6                     |
| Design, Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning 04 No., 06 Passenger Lifts at Commercial Shopping Complex, SRTC yard, Anantnag. | 87.00                   | 2000                       | 1.74                       | 2 months                       | Demanded              |
| 2   |                         |                            |                            |                                |                       |
|   |                         |                            |                            |                                |                       |



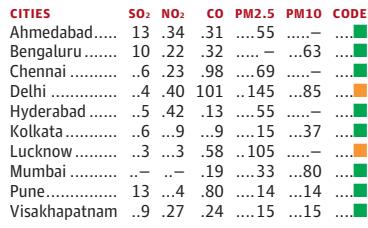
TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD; POLLUTION DATA: CPCB; MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

**Forecast for Saturday:** Thunderstorms accompanied by lightning very likely at a few places over east Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Assam, Odisha, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, central Maharashtra, Goa, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka

| CITY        | RAIN | MAX  | MIN  | CITY               | RAIN | MAX  | MIN  |
|-------------|------|------|------|--------------------|------|------|------|
| Agartala    | —    | 33.8 | 27.4 | Kozhikode          | —    | 8.4  | 29.0 |
| Ahmedabad   | —    | 37.6 | 28.8 | Kurnool            | —    | 4.9  | 36.9 |
| Aizawl      | —    | 23.9 | 18.0 | Lucknow            | 33.4 | 33.6 | 24.6 |
| Allahabad   | 14.1 | 35.3 | 26.5 | Madurai            | 26.8 | 36.6 | 22.6 |
| Bengaluru   | 39.6 | 29.6 | 20.4 | Mangaluru          | 2.1  | 31.0 | 23.9 |
| Bhopal      | 0.4  | 34.2 | 26.0 | Mumbai             | —    | 33.2 | 28.5 |
| Bhubaneswar | —    | 36.0 | 27.0 | Mysuru             | 3.6  | 31.0 | 21.0 |
| Chandigarh  | —    | 35.4 | 27.2 | New Delhi          | —    | 37.6 | 26.8 |
| Chennai     | —    | 35.9 | 26.6 | Patna              | 6.2  | 31.4 | 26.0 |
| Coimbatore  | 0.8  | 33.6 | 23.4 | Poil Blair         | 1.7  | 31.0 | 25.3 |
| Dehradun    | —    | 33.9 | 24.8 | Puducherry         | —    | 34.4 | 25.0 |
| Gangtok     | 37.4 | 19.5 | 17.9 | Pune               | 1.6  | 31.6 | 24.0 |
| Goa         | 15.4 | 32.4 | 26.3 | Raipur             | —    | 35.2 | 27.8 |
| Guwahati    | 33.1 | 28.1 | 23.8 | Ranchi             | —    | 29.8 | 23.0 |
| Hubballi    | —    | 30.0 | 22.0 | Shillong           | 44.5 | 19.9 | 18.0 |
| Hyderabad   | —    | 34.4 | 25.2 | Shimla             | —    | 27.4 | 19.5 |
| Imphal      | —    | 29.4 | 23.0 | Srinagar           | —    | 30.0 | 15.2 |
| Jaipur      | 1.4  | 40.0 | 28.8 | Thiruvananthapuram | 25.2 | 30.3 | 23.4 |
| Kochi       | 19.4 | 29.0 | 24.6 | Tiruchi            | 41.3 | 37.1 | 24.4 |
| Kohima      | 9.2  | 24.2 | 18.2 | Vijayawada         | 0.9  | 35.4 | 27.0 |
| Kolkata     | 0.1  | 35.3 | 26.0 | Visakhapatnam      | 0.6  | 34.0 | 28.6 |

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

#### Pollutants in the air you are breathing



Air Quality Code: ■ Poor □ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)  
**SO2:** 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.

**NO2:** Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

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

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

# COVID-19 effect: CM urges PM to back State on cancelling final exams

'Issue relevant instructions to apex bodies conducting professional courses'

ALOK DESHPANDE  
MUMBAI

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to instruct relevant apex bodies to cancel final year/semester exams of professional courses in view of the COVID-19 outbreak.

In a letter dated June 25, the Chief Minister said, "Considering the current COVID-19 situation, the State Disaster Management Authority, in a meeting on June 18, decided not to conduct final year/semester examinations of non-professional as well as professional courses, and award degrees to students based on a formula to be decided by universities."

"Further, an option would be given to students who want to take examinations whenever they are held," he said. Mr. Thackeray told Mr. Modi that it was also decided to get the decision on profes-



**Safe option:** The State has decided not to hold final year exams of non-professional courses and professional courses ■ FILE PHOTO

sional courses endorsed by the respective apex authorities as these are regulated by national level apex bodies like All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), Council for Architecture (COA), Pharmacy Council of India (PCD), Bar Council of India (BCI), National Council For Teachers Education (NCTE), and Na-

tional Council for Hotel Management and Catering Technology (NCHMCT).

"I request you to instruct the national-level apex authorities to endorse the decision of the State government regarding cancellation of final year/final semester examinations of non-professional courses as well as professional courses as the present atmosphere is not yet conducive to conduct any examination or classes.

## Awhad questions silence of actors on rising fuel prices

ALOK DESHPANDE  
MUMBAI

With fuel prices being hiked again, State's Housing Minister and Nationalist Congress Party leader Jitendra Awhad decided to question the silence of superstars Amitabh Bachchan and Akshay Kumar on the issue.

Mr. Awhad commented on the tweets put out by the actors highlighting the skyrocketing petrol and diesel prices in 2012. "Was that because the Dr. Manmohan Singh-led government was in power? I want to ask a few questions to superstars like Amitabh Bachchan and Akshay Kumar. You were

only voicing the concerns of citizens when they spoke against fuel hike in 2012. "I wonder why can't they do that now? Doesn't it hurt them now?" he said.

**Prices too steep'**

Referring to Mr. Bachchan's tweet on a person purchasing petrol to spray on his car and burn it as he cannot afford the costly fuel, Mr. Awhad said, "The costs have gone up so much that even just enough petrol to spray on a car is unaffordable."

Mr. Kumar has deleted his old tweet saying it is time to clean his bicycle and hit the road owing to the fuel hike.

Case filed against Marathi preacher over 'odd-even' remark for girl-boy child

Booked under sections of PCPNDT Act

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE  
PUNE

A case has been lodged under the Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (PCPNDT) Act against popular Marathi *kirtankar* (preacher) Nirvitti Maharaj Indurikar at a local court in Sangamner in Ahmednagar district over controversial remarks made by him at a sermon this year.

Dr. Bhaskar Bhavar, the medical superintendent of Sangamner, said the case against Mr. Indurikar was registered in a Judicial Magistrate First Class (JMFC) court under relevant sections of the PCPNDT Act.

He said a Mumbai-based journalist, a Sangamner-based activist and advocate Ranjana Gawande approached authorities with a complaint against Indurikar and a case was registered in the JMFC court on June 19.

Ms. Gawande said, "We were pressing for a case to be lodged against Indurikar as early as February 14, after we had approached the medical authorities in Sangamner with our complaint. However, the issue had been dragging on since then."

**Centre of controversy**

In February, Mr. Indurikar became the centre of a controversy following his alleged remarks during a sermon in Ahmednagar that intercourse by a couple on an even date would beget a male child, while on an odd date would result in the birth of a girl. "If the intercourse is done at an inauspicious time, the child that is born would bring a bad name to the family," the preacher allegedly said.

Since then, several ac-

vists and rationalist outfits like the Maharashtra Andhashradha Nirmoolan Samiti (MAN) had been clamouring for a police case to be lodged against Mr. Indurikar on grounds that his comments violated provisions of the PCPNDT Act.

However, while criticising his remarks, the political establishment, whether leaders in the ruling Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) or the opposition Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), had been ambivalent over prosecuting the *kirtankar*.

#### 'Taken out of context'

Indurikar, who is known for addressing social issues through his sermons by deploying witty, hard-edged satire, apologised in a handwritten note following the furore. The preacher, who has a large following in the State, claimed his remarks were taken out of context.

Minister of State for Women and Child Welfare Bachchu Kadu said the State government would not be filing a case against Mr. Indurikar as he was working to enlighten people.

BJP State president Chandralekha Patil, while admonishing the preacher, said his party stood by him and his work. However, gender rights activist and Bhumata Brigade leader Trupti Desai had been insisting on a case being lodged against the preacher. She said, "The case finally lodged against him is an instance of 'better late than never'. He had received great sympathy from the warkaris, while the BJP, too, had supported him. His derogatory remarks against women must not be allowed to go unpunished."

1993 blasts case  
convict Yusuf  
Memon dead

## 'Centre has failed to protect borders'

Cong. holds State-wide protests over PM's remarks on China

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI

Yusuf Memon, a 1993 Mumbai serial blasts case convict and brother of absconding accused Tiger Memon, died on Friday at Nashik Road Central Jail in Nashik district, police said.

Memon (57) complained of chest pain and breathing problem on Friday and was taken to the district civil hospital, where he died during treatment around 10.45 a.m., an official said.

"The cause of death was yet to be ascertained and the body would be sent to a hospital in Dhule for autopsy," the official said.

Nashik police commissioner Vishwas Nangre-Patil confirmed the death.

## 1,414 inmates above the age of 60, State tells HC

425 of them have co-morbidities

SONAM SAIGAL  
MUMBAI

The State government has informed the Bombay High Court that as of Friday, 1,414 inmates lodged in prisons across the State are above the age of 60, while 425 of them have co-morbidities.

Advocate General (AG) Ashutosh Kumbhakoni told a Division Bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice M.S. Karnik that as on May 11, there were 1,340 inmates, and as of June 26, the number was 1,414. The court expressed surprise over the numbers, to which the AG replied crime rate has not decreased.

Mr. Kumbhakoni also said the current prison staff members will go to temporary prisons too, and that they have not been able to recruit more staff for the 36 locations identified as temporary prisons.

CM Y

It is clear from the satellite images that China has not retreated from Galwan valley

PRITHVIRAJ CHAVAN  
Congress leader

has not infiltrated into India has proved beneficial to that country which has been telling the world that it did not encroach on the Indian territory.

benefit India at all.

Mr. Chavan, who was Minister of State with the PMO in the UPA government, said, "It is clear from the satellite images that China has not retreated from Galwan valley. There are Chinese military outposts, and military vehicles are moving around. About 10,000 troops are stationed in the area, including large stocks of ammunition. Construction is also underway in the Galwan valley."

#### Peaceful agitation

Earlier, Mr. Thorat along with some members of the State Cabinet and senior party leaders staged a peaceful agitation in front of the Mahatma Gandhi statue near Mantralaya. Similar protests were held across the State.

Pointing out that Mr. Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping have met 19 times in the last six years, Mr. Chavan said these meetings did not

## CBI opposes Indrani Mukerjea's bail plea

'No risk of contracting COVID-19 in jail'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
MUMBAI

Arthur Road jail. Mr. Khan was arrested in August 2015 for his involvement in Sheena's killing. While rejecting the accused's interim bail plea on Wednesday, special CBI judge J.C. Jagdale said, "Undoubtedly, some of the inmates of Arthur Road jail have been affected by COVID-19, but at present the situation is far better."

According to the authorities, of the 181 COVID-19 cases detected in the jail so far, 151 patients had recovered and only 30 were in treatment. The judge pointed out that no one had died of the deadly infection at Arthur Road jail, indicating that the recovery rate there was better than other parts of Mumbai. The judge also noted that Mr. Khan had tested negative for the infection.

The accused, a resident of Kolkata, had told the court that he would stay with a relative in Bandra if he gets bail.

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Umesh Yadav  
Indian Cricketer and RBI Employee

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## Mischief managed

The BJP has retained Manipur after another round of defections, but instability reigns

After winning the sole seat in the Rajya Sabha elections in Manipur by a slender margin on June 19, and through dubious means, and following the return of the NPP's legislators to the ruling coalition's fold, the BJP-led government has managed to stave off the crisis that threatened its survival. But fresh rumblings from other legislators, from both the BJP and its coalition partner, the NPP over the NPP's legislators retaining cabinet berths, suggest that a smooth sailing for the N. Biren Singh-led regime is far from guaranteed. This was not unexpected. The government in Manipur came to power despite the BJP winning only 21 of the 60 Assembly seats, seven short of the Congress's 28. It managed to manufacture a majority by orchestrating a defection of a Congress MLA who escaped any disciplinary action by the Speaker for three years before the Supreme Court weighed in on the matter. The MLA has, since March 2020, been disqualified but there were seven more defections from the Congress-fold too from earlier before the NPP suddenly withdrew support and three MLAs from the BJP crossed over. The Speaker saw it fit only to take selective action against the defectors in a way that did not upset the ruling coalition's apple cart during the Rajya Sabha polls. These Machiavellian manoeuvres, besides the BJP's other advantages – power at the Centre and control over most States in the Northeast – have helped it stave off the attempt by the Congress to push for a no-confidence motion. But these episodes only shine further light on the whimsical nature of political allegiance in the northeastern State.

It is always difficult for disparate political forces to come together in the case of hung Assemblies or Parliament. Forming a post-poll coalition that is not based simply on a division of the loaves of power requires parties to come to a programmatic understanding on governance priorities. The "common minimum programme" method which sometimes results in parties resorting to brinkmanship on issues has been criticised in the past for rendering coalitions unwieldy. But this allows for a battle of wits between different outfits in the same alliance while reflecting the electoral mandate more truly, and is therefore a principled form of coalition building. Alliances such as the one in Manipur now are built less on principle and more on accommodating various interests with carrots such as ministerial berths. The BJP, the NPP, the NPF, besides independents who have constituted the ruling coalition have not relied upon any programmatic understanding. The unseemly to-and-fro movement of legislators from both the ruling coalition and the Opposition is just an outcome of this form of alliance building. Disgruntlement over ministerial positions when cabinet strength is limited to a maximum of 12 berths is inevitable. When power is the only glue, mass defections that can change governments will be commonplace.

## Science vs nonsense

ICMR, CSIR must call out any breach of due process in the appraisal of any drug

The unrelenting spread of COVID-19 has set off both mass anxiety and a clamour for a panacea. Fear paves the way for profiteers. Patanjali Ayurved's recent claim of having discovered a "cure" and the publicity that this garnered, bypassing every regulatory requirement without any serious consequence so far, shows that India's regulatory checks and balances are wanting. The company said in Haridwar that its product, 'Coronil', had cured everyone in a clinical trial. While quackery and the potency of 'magic drugs' are a part of life in India, its declarations could not be ignored because of the tremendous influence its products wield and its claim to have proved the product through a clinical trial, which makes it open to evaluation by the standards of modern medicine.

As it now emerges, the company has probably misrepresented the drug's efficacy. The clinical trial tested the drug on 45 and another 50 were administered a placebo. All of the participants had tested positive for the virus. On the third day, 31 who were given the drug recovered and 25 of those on the placebo recovered. That is not a measurable improvement considering the small number enrolled in the trial. Moreover, they were mildly symptomatic. Ramdev claimed that by the seventh day, all had recovered. If this also included all those on the placebo, then it further weakens the claim that it was the drug alone that worked. The doctors in the trial have spelt out on the clinical trials registry the process they would employ to test the drug but said they had neither published their results nor submitted it for peer-review. Therefore, the company's claim of a cure by all accounts was a clear subversion of the scientific process. When hydroxychloroquine was being touted as a potential wonder drug for COVID-19, some of India's scientists were quick to join a global opprobrium that raised methodological issues with a study in *The Lancet*, that claimed no effect – and even harm – from HCQ. The study was retracted as it relied on a spurious database. But its overall finding that HCQ does not work has been borne out by other validated studies. Thus, more than the outcome, it is the method deployed that ought to be scrutinised by scientists to reinforce public trust in scientific assessment. There has always been a tension between traditional Indian systems of medicine and pharmaceutical drugs but there is now consensus in India's regulatory system that claims by both systems of developing safe efficacious drugs must pass clinical trials. It is well within the domain of institutions of the ICMR or the CSIR or national science academies to call out a breach of due process in the appraisal of any drug, whether allopathic, ayurvedic or homeopathic. To not do so would amount to criminal negligence.

# Getting out of the 'guns, germs and steel' crisis

India's choices are clear — to be bold and go on a rescue mission, or do nothing and hope the situation resolves itself



PRAVEEN CHAKRAVARTY

**I**ndia faces a "guns, germs and steel" crisis, to borrow from the title of Jared Diamond's classic book on the evolution of societies and nations, *Guns, Germs, and Steel: The Fates of Human Societies*. There are Chinese "guns" on the borders. There are coronavirus "germs" in our bodies. There are "steel" makers and other businesses on the verge of bankruptcy.

Arguably, this is the gravest confluence of military, health and economic crises threatening our nation in more than a generation. Each of these would qualify as an independent, large crisis by itself, warranting a specific resolution. The Chinese military threat calls for immediate and strategic action by our defence and foreign affairs establishments. The COVID-19 health epidemic is here to stay and needs constant monitoring by the Health Ministry and local administration. The economic collapse is an enormous challenge that needs to be overcome with prudent policy.

### Stand-off and Kargil parallel

The common thread across these is that its resolution requires significant financial resources. Standing up to a military threat by a superpower neighbour will pose an inevitable drain on the finances of the government.

India's war against Pakistan in Kargil in May 1999 provides hints of the financial burden of a military threat. India's defence expenditure in the war year shot up by nearly 20% from the previous year. It also forced the then government to increase India's defence budget for the next financial

year to 2.7% of nominal GDP, the highest in decades.

China is a far mightier power than Pakistan. In this face-off, 20 Indian soldiers have been brutally killed and many more injured by the Chinese Army. A portion of India's land in Ladakh has been grabbed by China. Surely, India is bound to assert its rights, which will necessitate higher expenditure. India's defence budget has been whittled down to just 2% of GDP for the financial year 2021. China's defence budget is nearly four times larger. In all likelihood, the Chinese conflict will stretch central government finances by an additional one to two percentage points of GDP, as India staves off the current threat and shores up its defence preparedness.

### Health care and economy

The health pandemic has exposed India's woefully inadequate health infrastructure. The combined public health expenditure of States and the central government in India is a mere 1.5% of GDP, compared to China's at 3% and America's at 9%. The COVID-19 epidemic is expected to linger on for another two years until a suitable vaccine is available at large. There is no option other than to significantly ramp up India's health expenditure. Many public health experts are of the opinion that the central government will need additional funds of the equivalent of at least one percentage point of GDP to continue the fight against COVID-19.

It is no secret that the extreme national lockdown has thrown India's economy into utter disarray. India's economy has four major drivers – people's spending on consumption, government spending, investment and external trade. Spending by people is the largest contributor to India's economic growth every year. For every ₹100 in incremental GDP, ₹60 to ₹70 comes from people's con-



sumption spending. The lockdown shut off people from spending for two full months, which will contract India's economy for the first time in nearly five decades, regardless of a strong agriculture performance.

Even prior to COVID-19 when the global economy was robust, India's trade levels had fallen from 55% of nominal GDP in 2014 to 40% in 2020. Now, with the global economy in tatters, trade is not a viable alternative to offset the loss from consumption. Investment is also not a viable option at this stage since the demand for goods and services has fallen dramatically.

### Incremental funds needed

The only options then are to either put money in the hands of the needy to stimulate immediate consumption or for the government to embark on a massive spending spree, akin to the "New Deal" which was a series of programmes and projects instituted by U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Based on estimates of loss of consumption, incomes and its multiplier impact, my estimate is that the government will need to inject incremental funds of five percentage points of GDP to absorb the economic shock and kick start the spending cycle again.

Thus, India's "guns, germs and steel" crisis will impose a total financial burden of an additional eight percentage points of GDP on the central government exchequer. Where will the government

get such a large sum of money from?

The government had expected a nominal GDP growth of 10% this year. It is clear now that GDP will not grow but shrink. There is much hullabaloo about a 'V' shaped economic recovery, which is a mere illusion. A 5% fall now and a 10% growth next year will be hailed as a sharp 'V' shaped recovery by economists and the International Monetary Fund. But as your local grocery store-keeper will elucidate, it only means that his total sales is a tad higher than two years ago. Central government revenues for this year were budgeted at 10% of GDP which will not be achieved. Revenues will likely fall short by two percentage points of GDP.

In sum, the government needs to spend an additional eight percentage points of GDP while revenues will be lower by two percentage points of GDP, a combined gap of 10% of GDP. Potential new sources of revenue such as a wealth tax or a large capital gains tax are ideas worth exploring for the medium term but will not be of much immediate help.

### The 'junk rating' risk

The only option for the government to finance its needs is to borrow copiously, which will obviously push up debt to ominous levels. When government debt rises dramatically, there will be a fourth dimension to the "guns, germs and steel crisis": a "junk" crisis. With rising debt levels, international ratings agencies will likely downgrade India's investment rating to "junk", which will then trigger panic among foreign investors. India thus faces a tough "Dasharatha" dilemma – save the country's borders, citizens and economy or prevent a "junk" rating.

Some economists argue that there is a magical third choice – to simply print how much ever money the government needs to over-

come these crises. Economic theory states that if money is printed at will, it can lead to a massive spike in prices and inflation. This theory has fallen flat in the past decade in developed nations such as America where the creation of phantom money has not led to inflation. Hence, the Reserve Bank of India can just create money at will and transfer them to government coffers electronically, is the argument.

There are multiple problems with this argument but the most important one is that regardless of whether money is printed or borrowed from others, it will still be counted as government debt and not escape a potential downgrade to a "junk" rating.

The U.S. dollar, by virtue of being the world's reserve currency, has an in-built protection against a currency crisis that can be triggered by at-will printing of money, that other developing nations such as India do not possess. If there were indeed no costs to printing money whenever governments need, then why tax citizens at all? Countries could just print money for all their expenses every year. The magical third choice is not a magic wand that can give the Indian government the money it needs and, also prevent a ratings downgrade.

The nation is at the precipice of an extremely challenging moment in her history. How India emerges from this crisis will shape not just India's destiny but the world's. The government's choices are either to be bold and embark on a rescue mission, or do nothing and hope the situation resolves itself. On balance, it seems that the best course of action is to borrow unashamedly to pull India out of the "guns, germs and steel" crisis and deal with the consequences of a potential "junk" nation label.

Praveen Chakravarty is a political economist and a senior office-bearer of the Congress party

# The pandemic imposes a steep learning curve

Though online instruction will shape education in the future, there is much to absorb in the context of COVID-19



SUJIN BABU & RAM RAMASWAMY

**A**cross the world, education has been drastically affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Most instruction has moved online; across the country, schools, colleges, universities and research establishments have been shut with no idea of when it will be possible to safely reopen. Higher education has gone digital where possible; or else it has simply been put on hold.

In the wake of the pandemic, other countries have embraced online education with mixed enthusiasm. Many universities in the United Kingdom and the United States have announced that the coming academic year will be held mainly online. At the same time, educationists and policy makers advise caution. Online education has not lived up to its potential.

Given our diversity in institutions of higher education – private and governmental colleges and universities, research institutes, professional colleges, State and central universities and so on – the Indian education system has had a very heterogeneous response to the pandemic. The reactions also reflect the contrast in rural versus urban infrastructure, the variable quality of staff, and the diverse types of subjects that are taught.

There will surely be serious

long-term effects, considering the scale of the social, political and economic changes that have been occurring these past several months.

### Subject-specific

From a purely pedagogic point of view, it is clear that technology will play a bigger role in education in the coming years.

However, it will be highly subject-specific. Courses that traditionally need a laboratory or practical component are an obvious example where online classes cannot offer an alternative. The adoption or integration of technology in education also depends on the specific institution and its location: there is a huge digital divide in the country in terms of bandwidth and reliable connectivity in their homes. This is more pronounced in rural areas and non-metro cities, and for lower income groups as well.

Beyond classroom lectures and courses, there has been a serious impact on academic research in all disciplines. There is need for close personal interaction and discussion in research supervision, and it is not clear when and how doctoral research and supervision can resume. In addition, the related economic crisis has consequences for funding, both of research as well as for the maintenance of research infrastructure. These are very long-term effects.

About a month ago we asked teachers and students across India to share their experiences of education during the crisis and to discuss their personal view of the future, keeping their institutions and subjects in mind. (These thoughtful articles can be read at Indian

Academy of Sciences; <https://bit.ly/3eCRSRh>)

### The hard truths

Some things are self-evident. Not all students have equal access to the Internet, and more than half in any class in any institution are simply not able to attend lectures in real time for want of the required combination of hardware and electrical connectivity in their homes. This is more pronounced in rural areas and non-metro cities, and for lower income groups as well.

Most teachers in India view online instruction with caution. The shift online is in response to a crisis and was poorly planned. Online teaching is a separate didactic genre in itself – one that requires investment of time and resources that very few teachers could come up with in a hurry. Many online classes are poorly executed video versions of regular classroom lectures. Across the board, teachers recognise this as unsatisfactory.

Online higher education using MOOCs, or massive open online classrooms, has been encouraged by the Ministry of Human Resource Development for some time now via the National Programme on Technology Enhanced Learning (NPTEL) and SWAYAM

platforms. (SWAYAM is a Hindi acronym for "Study Webs of Active-Learning for Young Aspiring Minds"). If this is to make a serious difference, both the quality and quantity of online courses need to be enhanced. These are presently used to augment classroom instruction but if these can be taken for credit, it may help address the question of access to quality education.

There is a positive aspect of even a partial move to online education: making lectures available online in public and open websites accelerates democratisation of knowledge and the wide distribution of learning opportunities.

### An opportunity for change

This is a chance to reimagine higher education in India. For long this has been elitist and exclusionary; education has been less about learning and more about acquiring degrees. The pandemic can change that if we let it.

Our higher education system can be more inclusive. If going online loses the human touch, the advantage of becoming available to many more people who aspire to learn is worth the trade. If giving proctored examinations in a socially distanced world is more difficult, what needs to change is the idea of proctored examinations. There are simpler ways to validate pedagogy, some of which can be found in our own traditions. Gandhiji's "Nai Talim" put a high premium on self study and experiential learning, for instance.

Significant qualitative changes can come about if we plan now. Digital tools such as artificial intelligence (AI) – already used in

teaching language – can be adapted to deliver personalised instruction based on the learning needs for each student. The use of AI can improve learning outcomes; in particular, this can be a boon for teaching students who are differently-abled.

The adoption of online education needs to be done with sensitivity. What is needed at this time is imagination and a commitment to decentralisation in education. Pedagogic material must be made available in our other national languages; this will extend access, and can help overcome staff shortages that plague remote institutions. The state will have to bear much of the responsibility, both to improve digital infrastructure and to ensure that every needy student has access to a laptop or smartphone.

Campuses across India are desolate now, empty and inactive. Estimates are that COVID-19 will be seasonal, recurring every so often till 2022 or maybe 2024. So when these institutions reopen, they must do so with extreme caution.

Blended modes of education will be unavoidable: online instruction where possible, and limited contact for laboratory instruction and individual mentoring. If this can lead to the emergence of a new pedagogic paradigm, we would have made the sweetest use of this adversity.

Sujin Babu is a research scholar in the Department of History, Madras Christian College, Chennai. Ram Ramaswamy is Visiting Professor, Department of Chemistry, IIT-Delhi. The views expressed are personal

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

**China issue**  
It is no exaggeration that India's relationship with China has turned topsy-turvy after the violent clashes our soldiers had with the Chinese soldiers. And it is difficult to predict how long it may take to repair this damage. The present government has not spared a single occasion to criticise Jawaharlal Nehru's government for creating the twin problems of Kashmir and China. Now the very same government has been caught in quicksand, if I may say so using evidence of a matter-of-fact situation

rather than levelling an accusation. Our leader had visited China a few times as India's Prime Minister, in addition to his earlier visits as a Chief Minister. The Chinese leader too was invited to India. Should not the Prime Minister have taken up with him this most important border dispute that has been simmering for decades? Therefore, the country as a whole is very anxious to get a proper answer from the Prime Minister. The people of India would not be satisfied with mere rhetoric of "saving every inch of our territory" (Editorial page,

"The myopia of 20/20 hindsight".  
B.M. BALIGA,  
Bangalore

**The state of Ayurveda**  
The central premise behind recognising Ayurveda as a medical system in its own right is that the Ayurvedic classics, when approached scientifically, can serve as repertoire of researchable, if not employable, medical information. Bypassing these classics and haphazardly recommending random formulations, as Ramdev's Patanjali Ayurved Limited seems to have done, would

be a defeat of this central premise. The Ministry of AYUSH has done the right thing by restraining the company from publicising its "proprietary pill" as a cure for COVID-19. But what is worrying is that the Ministry appears oblivious to its more fundamental role. Its mandate is to scientifically reform, popularise and regulate the practice of Ayurveda. Sadly, the Ministry's track record in scientifically reforming Ayurveda is dismal.

# Living on the margins, but central to the economy

The lockdown has lifted in most places and the economy is slowly re-opening, but there is a severe shortage of labour. **Ajeet Mahale and K.V. Aditya Bharadwaj** report on how cities that had turned their backs on migrant workers for more than two months now want them back

**U**ntil the novel coronavirus outbreak and the consequent lockdown imposed by the government to curb its spread, migrant workers lived hidden from the public gaze in the Garden City of India. The workers who had built the fast-growing city's houses, apartment complexes, workplaces, and other imposing and immediately visible structures, and others who had worked in them, were largely "invisible" themselves. They lived in structures held up flimsily by tin sheets; these were the boxes that these builders called home. Like the Indian community in London in Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses*, migrant labourers in Bengaluru were a "city visible but unseen".

But when the lockdown was imposed and economic activity came to a grinding halt, these workers emerged on the streets, demanding that they be allowed to go home. With no public transport to take them anywhere, and as they were abruptly left unemployed and hungry, many decided to do what was unthinkable until then – walk to their towns and villages situated as far as in Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, West Bengal and Jharkhand.

Seeing the humanitarian crisis unfold before its eyes, the Karnataka government then organised Shramik special trains to take the workers home. Since the beginning of May till June 24, around 4.6 lakh migrants, the majority of them working in Bengaluru, boarded 284 Shramik special trains to leave Karnataka. (The data does not include those who hitched rides or attempted to leave the city on foot.) Bengaluru is no longer under lockdown, but with a large section of its labour having left, the city finds itself crippled.

## Feeling the pinch

During the lockdown, apartments and residential townships did not allow domestic workers into their premises. Many families chose not to pay their domestic workers their monthly salaries. Now, with no signs of the pandemic abating, they have flung their gates open, but few are trickling in. WhatsApp groups of gated communities are flooded with messages seeking domestic workers. "Our domestic help was from West Bengal and has returned home. There is no guarantee she will return. The search for a new help has been unsuccessful till now," said Sapna Gowda, a resident of an apartment complex.

Gayathri Vasudevan, CEO and co-founder of LabourNet, a Bengaluru-based social enterprise working in the unorganised sector, said there has been a deluge of requests after the restrictions were eased. "Every day, we receive demands for at least 1,000 labourers, both skilled and unskilled. Employers have never approached us like this before," she said.

The requests LabourNet have received over the last few days give a glimpse of the impact of this loss of labour. "A baker called me asking for four people who could handle ovens. Most of those who handle ovens in the city's bakeries are from Tamil Nadu," said Vasudevan. "APMC [Agricultural Produce Market Committees] and warehouses in the city are facing an acute shortage of loaders. If you buy a geyser, it will take nearly a week for it to be installed as electricians are hard to come by. These instances only show how dependent we are on migrant workers."

It is not just residents, but small- and large-scale industries too that are feeling the pinch. Infrastructure projects such as the construction of a second terminal at the Kempegowda International Airport, road work, and the construction and hospitality sectors seem to be the worst hit by the crisis. "Nearly 40% of the labourers have left the city. This has crippled the hotel industry," said P. Chandrashekhar Hebbar, President of the Karnataka Pradesh Hotels and Restaurants Association.

While most construction project sites have resumed work, they are working with limited numbers. Other cities too are in a similar situation. India's engineering and construction behemoth Larsen and Toubro (L&T) said it is facing an acute shortage of labour as over one lakh workers, almost half its labour, have left their place of work. S.N. Subrahmanyam, MD and CEO, told *The Hindu* earlier: "We had 2.25 lakh labourers working with us pre-COVID-19; now we have 1.2 lakh people. We need to get back one lakh people to resume operations." More than a thousand project sites of L&T across the country await the return of labourers.

## Life under lockdown

The journey of the migrant workers back home from Karnataka was a long-drawn episode characterised by uncertainty, chaos and confusion. Neither the government nor the builders wanted to let the labourers return home. In early May, several Ministers led by the Chief Minister appealed to the workers to stay



Migrant workers who wished to go home wait at the Bangalore International Exhibition Centre in Bengaluru for arrangements to be made for their travel, on May 15, 2020. (Below): Migrant workers walk towards their home States, on the Mumbai - Agra highway in Bhiwandi, Thane district, on May 4, 2020. ■ K.V. ADITYA BHARADWAJ, SANDEEP RASAL



back in the State, assuring them that they would get work as the economy was reopening.

However, the workers were desperate to leave. They recounted bitter experiences of life under lockdown. Several said that they were not receiving any of the promised food and other rations. Ravindra Ram, 32, from Jharkhand, who was working at a construction site of a large apartment in south-east Bengaluru, pointed to a 31-storey apartment complex he had helped build. In the first week of May he told *The Hindu*: "We have built so many houses. Can't we just go back to our own home?"

On May 6, the Karnataka government decided to cancel all the Shramik special trains that it had scheduled to take the migrant workers back home. The fact that it made this decision soon after meeting the Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Association of India (CREDAI)'s Bengaluru chapter sparked anger among trade organisations, workers unions and activists. Faced with a massive backlash, the government has decided to re-introduce the trains on May 8. Thousands boarded these trains and left the city.

But others did not wait for the government to change its decision on train services and began walking back thousands of kilometres to U.P., Bihar, Jharkhand and other States. Carrying less than ₹1,000 in their pockets, they began their long journey home, sometimes aided by trucks on the highway. "We want to go home at any cost. We have had enough of the city," said Anis Khan, a carpenter walking back home to U.P., on May 8. Many labourers, forcefully evicted from their accommodations for non-payment of rent, said they had been rendered homeless by the lockdown.

Even when the government re-introduced train services, many chose to walk home. This was because the process to secure a berth on a train involved registering online on the Seva Sindhu portal and waiting for an SMS for confirmation, all of which was in English and ill-suited for the people it sought to serve. Thousands gathered outside police stations and camped there for several days, as police officers

are the nodal officers in charge of putting migrants on trains.

Now the city's civic body runs a transit centre where migrant labourers who want to return home can remain and stay until they catch a train home. The number of workers who want to return home has come down to a few hundred everyday. The State government is now bearing the cost of their journey home, unlike earlier.

## The question of coming back

With the lockdown lifted and the economy re-opening slowly and cautiously, CREDAI is now mulling running chartered trains from U.P. and Bihar to bring migrants back to Bengaluru to kick-start work. "We are confident that they will return. We are ready to run chartered trains to bring them back," said Suresh Hari, Chairman, CREDAI, Bengaluru.

But will the labourers return? Many vowed never to come back, but they may not have that luxury. Already some workers from the northern parts of Karnataka are returning to Bengaluru as they have been promised work. Industry remains optimistic of their return, at least after the ongoing monsoon sowing season, or once the COVID-19 curve is flattened.

Meanwhile, labour organisations hope that the crisis will serve as a wake-up call for the government, industry and citizens. "We see this as an opportunity to push for better living conditions for workers and better contracts. The crisis we face today is because the sector works under the informal subcontract system. Employers desperately seeking labour seem to be willing to listen, at least for now. I hope this is not temporary and will translate into a behavioural change," Vasudevan said.

## Exodus from Mumbai

The workers' longing to go back home and industry's hope that they will return is no different in Mumbai. Late last month, Jayram Raut and 30 others walked along the coast of Mumbai at Ha-

ji Ali in the scorching heat. "Majboori hai, isiliye ja rahe hain (We're helpless, that's why we are leaving)," Raut said. "In all my time in Mumbai, I never thought I would be leaving the city under such circumstances and that too in such a manner."

Home for him and his fellow workers is Ganjam district in Odisha. Their work involved renovating buildings. Raut, a painter by profession, said they had been working at a high-rise apartment at a tony neighbourhood at Kemps Corner when the lockdown was imposed. "We had received ₹2,000 each [from the contractor] last month [April] to get bare essentials, but now even that is over," he said as the group halted at a bus stop surrounded by high-rise buildings in Worli.

With very few trains going to Odisha, Raut and his group had grown fed up of waiting. They had engaged a truck to pick them up from Thane. When they got no transport to Thane, they decided to walk. "I have worked in so many buildings here," he said pointing to the skyline of high-rise buildings opposite the Nehru Planetarium.

With migrant workers like Raut fleeing the city, the construction sector is among the worst hit, said Sunil Rana, a contractor and supervisor working in Mumbai for nearly a decade. "The chances of new projects starting are low. Even current projects may find it hard to get additional labour if required," he said. Rana also left Mumbai

**GAYATHRI VASUDEVAN**  
CEO and co-founder, LabourNet



to return to his home in Jharkhand. "There was no work. Everything had stopped. It didn't make sense to stay. When work resumes, I will have to go back. There is nothing here for us," he said.

Construction workers were particularly hit during the lockdown due to the seasonal nature of their work. All construction activity comes to a halt when monsoons arrive in the city. During the four rainy months, no construction is possible, and many workers from Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal, Odisha and U.P. go back home. Workers typically start coming back to the city after Diwali and work until May the next year. "Under this lockdown we have lost two full months. Even our contractors started going back home because they were also not getting any income," said Gopal Das, who has been working in the construction sector for nearly two decades.

The wait for trains made the workers even more desperate as neither was there any sign of any income in the near future nor were the workers getting a seat on any of the Shramik special trains. "For six days I came to the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus in the hope of boarding a train. I was finally successful," said Naseer Haq, a migrant worker from Bihar, over the phone as his train was crossing Madhya Pradesh. Naseer was repairing a building in Churchgate and said that he had left all his belongings at the construction site. "I wanted to get back home and I will come back once things settle," he said.

Rana felt that even within the construction sector, the most neglected would be exterior building work. It is very labour-intensive compared to interior work, he said, and also cannot be done during the monsoons. "Interior work can continue even during the monsoon season, but getting labour for that will be a challenge too. People will come back only once they feel things are back to normal in the city. Even in villages there is fear of COVID-19. Many people like me have faced some form of social boycott in our villages after returning home," he said.

Most workers said that there was nothing for them in their villages. They said they would return to the city in search of better economic prospects when things improved. "Majboori" as Raut said, was the common sentiment amongst them. "We know there is nothing back home in terms of work. But at least we will be with our families and we won't get infected," he said. When asked if he and his group got any help from the residents of the high-rise buildings they were working in, Raut laughed. "Who thinks of the poor in this country," he asked.

The exodus of migrant workers peaked in the final days of May as both Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and Union Minister of Railways Piyush Goyal traded barbs over

**JAYRAM RAUT**  
Construction worker

the running of the Shramik special trains. Central Railway (CR), which caters to the bulk of the trains coming into the city from different parts of the country and especially those coming from States like Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal, witnessed a peak on May 25 and May 26 when 75 Shramik special trains were run, each carrying around 1,400 passengers.

Due to the labour crunch, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region Development Authority (MMRDA), which is building a slew of public infrastructure projects including several metro corridors, advertised for jobs on behalf of its contractors. An MMRDA spokesperson said that out of around 12,000 workers, about 6,000 had left the city, slowing down work across projects. "Many workers with small land holdings leave the city during the monsoon season. This time they left around 15-20 days earlier. We hope by the end of the monsoon season the situation in the city improves and they come back," MMRDA's spokesperson, B.G. Pawar, said. Workers who had left before Holi were already returning to the city in batches, he said.

## Return to the city

The number of Shramik special trains run by the Indian Railways also reduced in June. Railway officials said that since June 1 they have seen a steady increase in the number of passengers coming into the city on the scheduled trains being run by the Railways. "Many of the passengers, we have noticed, are daily-wage workers. Over the last week, we have seen all the trains that terminated in the city return full of passengers," a senior CR official said. Until June 24, 1.8 lakh passengers came into Mumbai using these trains, mostly from Gorakhpur, Lucknow and Varanasi. The three cities accounted for nearly half of all the passengers coming into the city, with other key centres being Howrah and Darbhanga.

The State government also started a special drive to screen migrant workers returning to Maharashtra. According to its estimates, around 13 lakh migrant workers who left the State during the extended lockdown are expected to return in July. The Maharashtra Police have been directed to conduct thermal screenings at border checkpoints, which are witnessing the entry of around 15,000 workers daily.

As the rain-gathering clouds gather over Mumbai, the question that remains is, when will all the workers return to the city that turned its back on them?

## FROM PAGE ONE

## 'Noticeable thinning of Chinese troops along LAC'

"The Chinese have reduced the presence in the Finger area but certainly they have not moved back an inch. It is anticipated that if they agree to do so, then they will use it as a leverage to assert their claim in some other disputed area," said the official, adding that the commanders on the ground were awaiting the outcome of diplomatic talks to take further action.

The government also tasked the National Technical Research Organisation (NTRO) to analyse the satellite images shared by foreign researchers on social media, which indicate that between June 15 and 22, China rebuilt the observation post and also set up structures reinforcing its positions at the clash site in Galwan area.

## SC okays CBSE plan for Class X, XII exams

In a few cases such as Delhi, if students have appeared in one or two subjects, the average of these marks along with their internal and practical scores will be used for assessment.

The assessment results, which will be out by July 15, will be treated as final for Class 10. However, Class 12 students can choose to appear for "optional examinations" to be held in future for the exams that were cancelled. These optional exams will be held when the health situation is "more conducive".

However, unlike the CBSE, Mr. Gupta said the ICSE may allow its Class 10 students to appear for an optional exams like their Class 12 counterparts.

### Optional exams

Parents, who are the petitioners in this case and represented by advocate Rishi Malhotra, said a time limit should be specified for the Class 12 CBSE students to decide whether they wanted to

"Around 300-500 images were analysed. The images shared on social media of the Galwan valley are 2D images, whereas the situation on the ground is different. The Chinese added structures after the June 15 incident, but no new structure has come up post June 22. The helipad one sees in the image, said to be on the Chinese side, was built by India a few days ago," one official said.

In the image, the Galwan river appears to be flowing on a flat surface when that was not the case on the ground.

"We have come to the conclusion that the images are of June 22 but no new structure has come up after the talks. Yes, the Chinese did construct many structures before that," he said.

While 139 new cases were imported, in people who had returned from abroad or other States, 11 got the disease from the community through local transmission.

Five local transmission cases were reported in Thiruvananthapuram, where large areas were declared containment zones after



**So near, yet so far:** Rajesh Yadav, a migrant worker from Bihar, has been put under quarantine even as his wife and children wait outside, with nowhere to go in Visakhapatnam. ■ K.R. DEEPAK

nearly 10 persons, including a family cluster of eight, acquired COVID-19 from the community. The Health department had not established an epidemiological link for these cases.

In Kannur too, six out of the 13 who tested positive were members of the CISF, while three were employees of the Army canteen. Two of the CISF personnel had been on duty at the Kannur airport.

Since COVID-19 arrived in Kerala, 3,876 persons had tested positive, of whom 2,006 had recovered.

With 10 more deaths in Karnataka, the toll rose to

180. Although non-COVID deaths went up to five, including that of a 60-year-old woman at K.C. General hospital, the Health Department was yet to take note of it in its update.

While three deaths were in Bengaluru [on June 11, 12, and 25], one each was reported from Kolar, Dharwad, Shivamogga, Bagalkot, Bidar, Kalaburagi, and Ballari.

Also, 445 new cases were reported, taking positive patient numbers to 11,005.

While 80 of 445 new cases had no contact or travel history, 144 were Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) cases. Bengaluru Urban again had the highest - 144.

Andhra Pradesh witnessed 10 more COVID-19 deaths and 605 fresh cases, the highest on a single-day taking the tally to 11,489. The toll rose to 146.

Among total cases, 9,353 were of locals while 1,764 were of people from other States and 372 foreign returnees.

Overall, there were 6,147 active patients, and recoveries rose to 5,196 including 208 fresh discharges.

Most new deaths were in Kurnool and Krishna districts at four cases each. Guntur and Visakhapatnam reported one death each.

**3,645 cases in T.N.**

Recording another high on Friday, Tamil Nadu reported 3,645 cases of COVID-19. Of this, Chennai recorded an all-time high of 1,956 cases – its overall tally inching closer to the 50,000-mark.

With this, Tamil Nadu's overall COVID-19 tally stood at 74,622.

The State's toll increased to 957 with 46 more fatalities, while total number of persons discharged rose to 41,357 as another 1,358 persons left hospitals on Friday. A total of 32,305 persons were under treatment.

(With inputs from Vijayawada, Bengaluru and Chennai bureaus)

## 'Ready to bring back students for NEET'

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOCHI

The Union government on Friday informed the Kerala High Court that it was ready to bring back students in Gulf countries, who had registered for the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET), under the Vande Bharat mission to enable them to write the test scheduled for July 26.

The submission was made by the Centre when a public interest litigation (PIL) petition seeking a directive to sanction examination centres in Gulf countries for NEET came up before a Division Bench. The Centre said the students could be brought back to the country under Vande Bharat, if they made the required applications before the embassies or consulates concerned.

The court had earlier asked the Centre to inform it about the possibility of bringing back the students to the country to write the examination when counsel for the National Testing Agency and the Medical Council of India (MCI) had submitted that it would not be possible to allot examination centres abroad for NEET. Unlike the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE), NEET was uniform entrance examination for admission to all medical courses. Besides, it was not feasible to conduct NEET in online mode, they had submitted.

The court reserved its verdict in the case.

## More micro containment zones likely in Delhi

"We have been sending day-to-day data on containment zones to the government. During this process, we have added 10 more containment zones in our district," an official of the East district said.

Delhi government officials said the actions taken under the redesign of containment zones and other actions mentioned in the revised response plan for

Delhi were discussed in a meeting with the Secretary of Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on Thursday.

"We were asked to look for clustering of cases. Earlier we had only three containment zones in the district and now there are nine containment zones and 18 buffer zones," said Shashi Kaushal, District Magistrate of North East Delhi.

Pointing out that "you can never predict how this conflict will emerge," Prof.



KERALA

Chomsky said "we are ultimately going to recover from the pandemic at terrible cost, but we will never recover from the melting of polar ice sheets and other consequences of global warming, which are going to have a hideous effect on the world."

On Kerala's fight against the pandemic, Prof. Chomsky said the State's reaction to the crisis was quite startling.

"It's quite amazing to see the reactions around the world. Not just Kerala, take Vietnam. They have not had a single death," he said.

No quick escape

Asserting that while it may be too pre-mature to talk about the eradication of SARS-CoV-2 virus and that it appears the COVID-19 virus will stay on because of the spread and transmission that has occurred over the last few months, Dr. Soumya Swaminathan, chief scientist at the World Health Organisation, said the world is watching how this virus is behaving and mutating.

VID-19 has the ability to infect larger numbers and in that make some people very sick, which is why it is called a dangerous pathogen."

Stressing the need to continue testing aggressively for the virus, Dr. Swaminathan said, "Testing is the only way to know where we are, where the population is and where we need to act. This will be the guiding map for governments across the globe. We can't fight this virus blindfolded."

### People ignored

Slamming the nationwide lockdown as a "disastrous arrangement" and the actions of a "war-time Napoleon", Nobel Laureate Amartya Sen said States and countries that took the public into confidence and had a history of public action, had the best response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Dr. Swaminathan further added that the world is learning a lot about this virus.

"Each week we understand more and more and therefore our thinking about it and the projections we are able to make do change. In science it is very common as you make advances scientist do debate and question each other and that is how knowledge advances. But for the general public it's a new experience to have all of this debate happening out in the public domain," she said.

Dr. Swaminathan noted that while COVID-19 isn't Ebola which kills two-third of the people it infects, "CO-

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'Understand the ethos of civil services'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Former President Pranab Mukherjee on Friday said it was important for civil service aspirants to understand the role of the administrative services in a multifaceted country like India.

"As aspirants for the coveted civil services of the nation, it is important for you to understand the ethos of a civil servant and what is the role of civil service administration in a multifaceted nation as India," the former President said at an e-conclave organised by Unacademy in association with *The Hindu*.

"From being instruments of the perpetuation of status quo, the civil service was envisaged as implementation agents of [a] mammoth socio-economic and political transformation," Mr. Mukherjee stated.

## Amid tensions, Army chief briefs Rajnath on Ladakh

Gen. Naravane had visited forward areas in the region on June 23-24

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Army chief Gen. Manoj Naravane on Friday met Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and briefed him on the ground situation along the border in Eastern Ladakh amid continuing tensions, a defence source said.

Gen. Naravane was in Ladakh on a two-day visit and oversaw operational preparedness while Mr. Singh returned on Thursday after a four-day visit to Russia.

The Army chief briefing was on the operational situation on the ground along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) following his recent visit, a defence source said. He also updated the Minister on the deliberations of the Army Commanders Conference (ACC) held early this week. Gen. Naravane met Mr. Singh at his residence.



On the job: An Indian Air Force C-17 Globemaster aircraft flying over Leh on Friday. ■ AFP

The Army chief visited the forward areas in Ladakh on June 23-24 where he interacted with troops, including those involved in the recent clashes with Chinese troops. The Phase-II of the bi-annual ACC, which was postponed in April due to the COVID-19

pandemic was also held on Monday and Tuesday.

### 'Long haul'

An Army source said full disengagement and return to earlier positions is going to be a long haul, specially in areas like Pangong Tso and

Depsang, where Chinese troops have made ingress and dug in well inside Indian territory which can alter the alignment of the LAC and create a new normal on the ground. The region will see the onset of winter in a few months and the tough conditions in the high altitude areas will pose a significant challenge to both sides in supporting troops and positions in such large numbers.

The agreement for limited de-escalation reached at the first Corps Commander talks was scuttled with the violent clash on June 15, resulting in the death of 20 Indian soldiers including a Commanding Officer. The modalities for disengagement from all the "all friction areas" in Eastern Ladakh agreed to at the second Corps Commander talks on June 22 is yet to get underway.

## Govt. can't shy away from securing borders: Sonia

'How will Modi regime take back our land in Ladakh?'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Centre cannot shy away from its responsibility of securing India's borders at a time of hostility with China and Prime Minister Narendra Modi must tell the nation how it will reclaim the land taken away by the Chinese in Ladakh, Congress president Sonia Gandhi said on Friday.

As part of the Congress's campaign, Shaheed Samman Divas, to honour the soldiers who died in clashes with the Chinese in the Galwan Valley, former party president Rahul Gandhi said China stood to benefit from Mr. Modi's statement that no Indian territory had been occupied by China when satellite images showed otherwise. At an official briefing, the party said the situation was explosive along the border as the Chinese were

When and how will the Modi government take back from China our land in Ladakh? Will the Prime Minister take the nation into confidence on the situation at the border?

SONIA GANDHI,  
CONGRESS  
PRESIDENT



campaign, Ms. Gandhi asked why the 20 soldiers were martyred when China had not captured any Indian territory, as claimed by the Prime Minister. "Today when there is a crisis-like situation on the India-China border, the Central government cannot shirk its responsibility [of securing it]," she said. "When and how will the Modi government take back from China our land in Ladakh... Will the Prime Minister take the nation into confidence on the situation at the border?" she said.

Stating that satellite images showed Chinese intrusions at three points, Mr. Gandhi said, "If you [the Prime Minister] say Indian land has not been taken by China and it has actually been taken, then China will stand to benefit".

barely 30 km from the Daulat Beg Oldi airstrip, which was within the Chinese "artillery range".

In a video message posted on Twitter, part of the SpekUpForOurJawans cam-

## Boy, CRPF jawan, 3 militants killed in Kashmir

J&K's regional parties condemn the attackers involved in boy's killing

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR

A boy, a CRPF jawan and three militants were killed in two separate shoot-outs in south Kashmir on Friday.

A police spokesman said militants fired upon a CRPF party of 90 Battalion around 12.15 p.m. in Anantnag's Bijbehara, resulting in injuries to a CRPF jawan and a minor boy. "Both the injured were shifted to a nearby hospital for treatment but they died their injuries," the police said.

Zahid Daas, a militant of the J&K Islamic State outfit, was found to be involved in the Bijbehara attack. "The police have registered an FIR against him," the police said. The boy was identified as six-

year-old Nehan Yawar from Kulgam's Machwa-Yaripora area and the CRPF jawan as Shyam Kumar.

J&K's regional political parties, including the National Conference (NC), the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the Peoples Conference, condemned the attackers involved in the killing of the boy.

### Encounter killings

In south Kashmir's Pulwama, the security forces called off an operation, which left three militants dead, after 20 hours in Tral's Chew Ullar village. "In the encounter, three terrorists were killed. Their identification and affiliation are being ascertained," the police said.



Tight security: Security personnel cordoning off a locality where militants opened fire in the Bijbehara area of Anantnag district on Friday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

## SC issues notice to J&K on lawyer's detention under PSA

Order was based on 4 'stale' FIRs, says Mian Abdul Qayoom

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday asked the Jammu and Kashmir government to respond to an appeal filed by the erstwhile State's High Court Bar Association president challenging his nearly one-year detention and solitary confinement in the Agra Central Prison.

A Vacation Bench of Justices S.K. Kaul and B.R. Gaivai, in a virtual court hearing, issued notice to the Union Territory of J&K, the Srinagar District Magistrate, the police and jail authorities in the Srinagar, Tihar

and Agra central jails. The court directed the plea filed by senior advocate Mian Abdul Qayoom, represented by senior advocate Dushyant Dave and advocate Vrinda Grover, to quash his detention under the Public Safety Act (PSA) to be listed immediately after court vacation.

In his appeal before the apex court, Mr. Qayoom argued that the J&K High Court rejected his *habeas corpus* petition to quash his "illegal and prolonged detention" on May 28. The High Court had declined his plea for personal liberty despite concluding that the detention

order was based on "some-what clumsy grounds".

Mr. Qayoom submitted that the detention order was based on four "stale, irrelevant" FIRs dating back to 2008 and 2010. He said he had never been arrested or charge-sheeted on the basis of these FIRs. In fact, he was detained in 2010 on the basis of these FIRs but the detention was subsequently revoked. The same FIRs could not be used a decade later to pass another order of detention in August 2019.

Mr. Qayoom was detained on the intervening night of August 4-5 last year.

## 'Mahagathbandhan should accommodate Left parties'

Primary responsibility is to defeat BJP, JD(U) in Bihar: Raja

SOBHANA K. NAIR  
NEW DELHI

With the allies of the Mahagathbandhan – the Opposition alliance in Bihar – beginning a dialogue ahead of the Assembly elections, CPI general secretary D. Raja has said the alliance should take lessons from the Lok Sabha polls where the Left parties were not accommodated.

Our primary responsibility must be to defeat the BJP and JD(U) combine in Bihar, and to do so all the secular parties need to come together, Mr. Raja said. He pointed out that the CPI and other Left parties had a steady fol-



lowing and vote base in the State. Though the CPI did not win a seat, it got nearly 2% of the vote share. The CPI (ML), on the other hand, won three seats in the Assembly elections.

"Aligning with the Left always renders an amount of

credibility to the alliance. In Bihar, we have a strong following and a cadre base. So all secular parties should be accommodative to each other," Mr. Raja said.

The Lok Sabha polls were a lesson to this point, he said. "During the Lok Sabha elections, I met Lalu Prasad Rao at Ranchi jail. But we weren't given a berth and the result was that the Mahagathbandhan colossally failed to mount a challenge to the NDA parties," Mr. Raja said. He said it was too early to speak about division of seats but a dialogue must begin in that direction.

Voters over 64 can opt for postal ballot

## IAS officer from Bihar granted domicile certificate in Jammu

He has been serving in J&K government for 26 years

PEERZADA ASHIQ  
SRINAGAR

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the Law Ministry has reduced the age limit for senior citizens who can opt for postal ballot in Lok Sabha and Assembly elections.

In October 2019, the Law Ministry amended the Conduct of Election Rules to allow people with disabilities and those who are 80 or older to opt for postal ballots.

The Election Commission approached the government to amend the rule further as the pandemic could continue till the end of the year. On June 19, the Ministry notified a fresh change, allowing those aged 65 years and above to opt for postal ballot.

of UT of J&K," reads the certificate, which went viral on social media.

### Eligibility clause

According to the officials, the applicant was eligible under Rule 5 of the Jammu and Kashmir Grant Domicile Certificate (Procedure) Rules, 2020, notified on May 18. Several categories were introduced through the new domicile laws to allow non-locals to apply for domicile certificate, which is mandatory for buying land and applying for jobs and admission to educational institutes in the Union Territory.

Over 32,000 applications have been received, mainly in the Jammu Division, from locals as well as non-locals

for domicile certificates.

National Conference (NC) vice president Omar Abdullah said, "All our misgivings about the new domicile rules in Jammu and Kashmir are coming to the fore. The NC opposed the changes because we could see a nefarious design behind the changes. The people on both sides of the Pir Panjal mountains will be the sufferers of these domicile rules."

A People's Democratic Party spokesperson said in a statement that the objective of population replacement was to change the Muslim majority character of Jammu and Kashmir at a time when everything in the country was viewed through the prism of religion.

## 'Chinese actions damaged trust in bilateral relations'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
BEIJING

The actions taken by the Chinese forces on the ground in eastern Ladakh have damaged "considerable trust" in the bilateral relationship, India's Ambassador to China Vikram Misri said in an interview. It was China's responsibility to take a careful view of the relations and decide which direction the ties should move, he said.

### 'Straight forward'

Noting that maintenance of peace and tranquillity "on the border is *sine qua non* for progress in the rest of bilateral relationship", Mr. Misri said: "The resolution of this issue is quite straight forward from our perspective. The Chinese side needs to stop creating obstruction and hindrance in the normal patrolling patterns of the Indian troops," he said.

Mr. Misri also termed China's claim of sovereignty over the Galwan Valley "completely untenable" and asserted that these kinds of exaggerated claims were not going to help the situation.

No. 29/13/2019-A & A  
Government of India  
**MINISTRY OF CULTURE**  
Re-advertisement for Filling up of the post of Director in the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya, Bhopal by deputation or short term contract basis

Reference is invited to the advertisement issued in Employment News/ Rozgar Samachar on 26 October - 1 November 2019 and in National Dailies on 27<sup>th</sup> October, 2019 in this regard. In supersession of that advertisement, the Ministry of Culture invites applications for filling up the one post of Director in the Indira Gandhi Rashtriya Manav Sangrahalaya at Bhopal, an autonomous organisation under the Ministry of Culture, with pay at Level 14 of the 7<sup>th</sup> CPC on deputation or short term contract basis for a period not exceeding 5 years. All those who have applied in response to the previous advertisement need not apply again. The applications may be sent through proper channel alongwith application in the prescribed format, addressed to the Chief Executive Officer, Development of Museums and Cultural Spaces (CEO-DMCS) at National Museum, Janpath, New Delhi-110011. The details regarding eligibility conditions, application format etc, please see the Ministry's website at [www.indiaculture.nic.in](http://www.indiaculture.nic.in) and IGRMS's website [www.igrms.gov.in](http://www.igrms.gov.in). The last date for submission of the application will be 19.07.2020. M.P. Madhyam/97748/2020

DIRECTORATE OF SFURTI  
KHADI AND VILLAGE INDUSTRIES COMMISSION  
Ministry of Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises  
Government of India  
Gramodaya, 3, Irla Road, Vile Parle (West), Mumbai – 400 056  
Tel.: 022-26713696, E-mail: sfurti.kvic@gov.in Website: [www.kvic.org.in](http://www.kvic.org.in)

**Inviting Expression of Interest  
for Empanelment of Technical Agencies for  
implementation of SFURTI Programme**

Directorate of SFURTI, Khadi & V.I. Commission, 3, Irla Road, Vile Parle (W) Mumbai – 400 056 invites "Expression of Interest" in the prescribed format from reputed Technical, Professional and Academic Institutions for their empanelment as Technical Agency for implementation of Scheme of Fund for Regeneration of Traditional Industries (SFURTI) programme across the country. Details may be downloaded from website [www.kvic.org.in](http://www.kvic.org.in) link Tender and the filled in application complete in all respect along with supporting documents and fees of Rs. 2,000/- (Rupees Two Thousand Only) to be paid by Demand Draft favouring CEO, KVIC payable at Mumbai, should reach Director (SFURTI), KVIC, Irla Road, Vile Parle (West), Mumbai-400 056 by 5.00 P.M on 27 July 2020. The bid will be opened on the same day at 5.00 P.M.

**Dy. Director I/c**

# Railways promises more special trains

However, running all available rakes will not be possible in near future, says Railway Board Chairman

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Following the increasing demand for trains on certain routes, the Railways on Friday said it would very soon announce more special trains for travellers.

Railway Board Chairman V.K. Yadav said running all available trains would not be possible in the "very near future", but the Railways was closely monitoring the situation and "is in the process of finalising trains...maybe in a week or ten days will announce more special trains."

Following the suspension of passenger services on March 22, the Railways started running 230 special passenger trains. Of these, Mr. Yadav said, 78 trains were running at more than 100% occupancy, 43 trains at 75-100% and 27 trains at 50-75% as on June 26.

"It is a very difficult situation and people are travelling only when essential... We will be adding more special



**For a safe journey:** Staff sanitising the coaches of a Rajdhani special train in Patna. •PTI

trains. However, running trains at full strength will take time and depends on how the COVID-19 situation changes," he said at a media briefing.

Mr. Yadav added that the Railways had seen an "encouraging" trend of increasing

occupancy in trains moving in the "reverse direction", for example, from States such as Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal and Bihar to Mumbai and Gurajat. "Now trains running from Gorakhpur, Uttar Pradesh, to Mumbai are at full occupan-

cy. Similar is the case with trains from Bihar to Mumbai, Uttar Pradesh to Ahmedabad... This is a good sign that economic activity has started and people are returning to work," he said.

The Railway Board Chairman said the demand for

Shramik Specials had been "fully satisfied", and there was no demand pending now. So far the Railways had run 4,594 such trains, ferrying 62.8 lakh passengers.

## COVID coaches

According to the Railways' estimate, it is spending ₹2 lakh per COVID care coach, including for minor modifications, maintenance, food and linen for patients, and protective gear for the staff. Mr. Yadav said this was being funded by the Central COVID care fund, and the Railways had already been allocated about ₹100 crore for the expenses on account of 5,213 such coaches. He said a total of ₹620 crore had been sanctioned from the fund to the Ministry of Railways.

On manufacturing of ventilators by the Railways, he said it was a "conscious decision" not to make ventilators given that it required a lot of testing before going to market.

# International routes will be opened case by case: DGCA

'Scheduled commercial operations suspended till July 15'

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

While most international flights will remain suspended in the country till July 15, the Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) on Friday said it was considering re-opening some overseas routes on a case-by-case basis.

"Scheduled commercial passenger operations will remain suspended till 23.59 hours of July 15," said the DGCA in a circular, extending its earlier restriction that was in force till June 30. It added, "international scheduled flights may be allowed on selected routes by the competent authority on a case to case basis (sic)."

While domestic flights resumed in the country from May 25, the ban imposed on international flights is in place for more than three months. The



Passengers stranded abroad have been coming back in batches. •PTI

DGCA barred international flights from March 23.

## Vande Bharat Mission

The only flights operating on international routes right now are those by Air India, and some domestic carriers, under the Vande Bharat Mission for repatriation of Indians. Some international airlines are also conducting relief flights to evacuate fo-

reign nationals from India.

The circular from the DGCA comes at a time when the Ministry of Civil Aviation has said it will enter into bilateral agreements with the U.K., the U.S., France and Germany for creating travel bubbles to allow passage for air travellers.

Recently, the U.S., France and the UAE raised objections over Air India's special flights under the Vande Bharat Mission aimed at repatriation of Indians from around the globe. While the U.S. has sought permission to operate flights to India, France has objected to Air India ferrying passengers into the country from India. The UAE too is known to be in discussions with the Indian government and has discussed a "formula" that can be used to allow the air-lines of the two countries to carry passengers.

## IN BRIEF



### Central team reviews situation in Ahmedabad

A Central team, led by Lav Kumar Agarwal, Joint Secretary in the Health Ministry, visited Ahmedabad to take stock of the COVID-19 situation in the city. On Friday, Gujarat recorded 580 new infections and 18 deaths, taking the total number of cases to 30,158 and the toll to 1,772. There are 6,348 active cases, including 61 patients on ventilator. Ahmedabad is the worst affected with 1,399 deaths.

### Punjab reports 188 cases, 2 more deaths

CHANDIGARH  
Punjab reported 188 fresh COVID-19 cases on Friday and two more deaths, taking the total number of cases to 4,957 and the toll to 122, an official statement said. The deaths were reported from Bathinda and Fategarh Sahib districts. Of the fresh cases, Ludhiana accounted for 67 and Patiala 31. The Health Department said the number of active cases stood at 1,634 and 3,201 patients had so far been discharged on recovery.

### Protest against Odisha govt. over 'inaction'

Bhubaneswar  
As many as twelve Opposition political parties staged a demonstration on Friday protesting against the alleged inaction of the Naveen Patnaik government in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic. The leaders submitted a 17-point demand to Governor Ganeshi Lal and requested him to intervene in issues affecting the people. The demands included assistance for workers in the unorganised sector.

# 'Threats won't stop me from speaking the truth'

Priyanka Gandhi takes on U.P. govt.

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI



Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Friday dared the Uttar Pradesh government to take action against her, adding that it could not stop Indira Gandhi's grand-daughter from speaking the truth.

Ms. Vadra's challenge to the U.P. government came a day after the State's child rights body issued a notice to her, asking her to file a reply within three days for a "misleading" comment on the Kanpur shelter home case, where some inmates were found to be pregnant and several tested positive

for COVID-19. "As a servant of the people, my duty is towards the people of Uttar Pradesh. And this duty is to put out the truth before them," Ms. Vadra tweeted.

"I am Indira Gandhi's granddaughter, not an undeclared BJP spokesperson like some of the opposition leaders," Ms. Vadra said.

# U.P. govt. helped save 85,000 lives: PM

Modi says the State did far better than developed nations in fighting pandemic

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

LUCKNOW

The efforts made by the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh during the COVID-19 pandemic succeeded in saving at least 85,000 lives, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday.

"If Yogi ji and his teammates had not prepared well, if U.P. would have also faced destruction like in America, then today in U.P. not 600 but 85,000 persons could have lost their lives," he said.

Mr. Modi was drawing a parallel between the COVID-19 situation in U.P., the most populous State with around 24 crore people, and



**State focus:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi launching the Atma Nirbhar Uttar Pradesh Rozgar Abhiyan on Friday. •PTI

the U.S., which has around 33 crore citizens.

Despite the "means and resources and modern technology" at its disposal, the U.S. was badly affected by

COVID-19 and lost 1.25 lakh lives but in comparison, U.P. has recorded around 600 deaths so far, Mr. Modi said.

Speaking through video-conference at the launch of

# Mamata flays 100% FDI in coal mining

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has expressed concern over the Union government's new policy to allow 100 per cent Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in the coal mining sector.

She asked it to reconsider the decision.

In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, she noted that this contradicted the "very essence of Atmanirbhar Bharat".

She said, "This policy can neither bring FDI or any new technology to which we don't have access at present."

When Coal India Limited (CIL), the world's largest coal mining company, had posted a profit of ₹27,000 crore in 2018-19 and held a reserve of ₹31,000 crore, the FDI decision would demean its capability, she stated.

"Moreover, allowing 100 per cent FDI in coal for multi-national companies will carry a wrong message as it would contradict the very essence of Atmanirbhar Bharat" and would also kill the vision of self-reliant policy that we have been following since beginning," the Chief Minister added.

**Coal India Limited (A Maharatna Company)**  
"All the tenders issued by CIL and its Subsidiaries for procurement of Goods, Works and Services are available on website of Coal India Ltd [www.coalindia.in](http://www.coalindia.in) and respective Subsidiary Company, CIL e-procurement portal <https://coalindependents.nic.in> and Central Public Procurement Portal <https://eprocure.gov.in>. In addition, procurement is also done through GeM portal <https://gem.gov.in>."

# No COVID-19 deaths in 4 NE States: Ministry

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The northeastern States have a comparatively lower number of COVID-19 cases in the country, with 3,731 active cases and 5,715 recoveries. Also the death rate continues to be low, with no deaths in Manipur, Mizoram, Nagaland and Sikkim, the Union Health Ministry said on Friday.

"A critical pillar which hampered the efforts of these States in combating the outbreak was lack of testing facilities. But because of the focussed attention of the Centre through the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, these States have 39 testing labs in the public sector and three in the private sector," said a senior Minister.

The States suffered from an acute lack of dedicated

## 5 lakhs & counting

### NEW CASES AND DEATHS IN INDIA

| CASES  | DEATHS | 7 DAY-CHANGE | 7 DAY-CHANGE |
|--------|--------|--------------|--------------|
| 18,020 | 387    | +15.4%       | +26.1%       |



hospitals, health centres and care centres, he added. "This problem too has been looked into and healthcare infrastructure across the

Northeast has been supplemented with 1,518 COVID-19 facilities. The Centre has also supported the States in stepping up ICU beds, isolation

beds, oxygen-supported beds and ventilators. This has played a critical role in effective management of cases," the Ministry said.

# SC to hear petitions of foreign nationals soon

Many blacklisted for Jamaat activities

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday decided to hear on June 29 the petitions by foreign nationals challenging the government orders that blacklisted 2,500 citizens from 35 countries for their alleged involvement in Tablighi Jamaat activities.

A Bench of Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and Dinesh Maheshwari asked counsel for the petitioners to serve copies of their petitions on the Centre. Four petitions have been filed by 34 individuals,

including a Thai national who is seven months pregnant, challenging the April 2 and June 4 orders that blacklisted over 2,500 foreign nationals currently in India.

"The impugned decision, by its very unilateral nature, infringes the principle of natural justice, particularly 'audi alteram partem' by blacklisting the said foreigners present in India without first granting an opportunity of being heard or notice of any form, and resultantly depriving the aggrieved foreign nationals of their right of locomotion and travelling back to the country of their citizenship," said the plea filed by the Thai woman.

The petitioners said the en-masse blacklisting of foreigners without any opportunity to defend themselves is a blatant violation of Article 21 (protection of life and personal liberty) of the Constitution.

# Hardship may push people into making drugs for a living: UNODC

Report looks at impact of pandemic on the illegal substances industry

## DEVESHK PANDEY

NEW DELHI

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), in its 2020 World Drug Report, has highlighted a wide range of possible consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on illegal drug production, supply and consumption.

The report, released on Friday, expressed concern over the adverse impact of the economic hardship caused by the pandemic. This could lead to an increase in the number of people resorting to illicit activities linked to drugs to make a living.

As experienced during the 2008 economic crisis, it could result in reductions in drug-related budgets of the governments; overall increase in drug use, with a shift towards cheaper and more harmful drugs.

The measures taken by govern-

**An uptick in heroin seizures in the Indian Ocean could be interpreted as an indication of an increase in the use of maritime routes for trafficking**  
UNITED NATIONS OFFICE ON DRUGS AND CRIME

rocco and Iran, have reported huge drug seizures, indicating large-scale drug trafficking, while some have reported an increase in interdiction resulting from increased controls.

The report, which is in six volumes, said the lockdown could hinder the production and sale of opiates in major producing countries. The key months for the opium harvest in Afghanistan are March to June. This year's harvest took place during the pandemic.

A recent uptick in heroin seizures in the Indian Ocean could be interpreted as an indication of an increase in the use of maritime routes for trafficking heroin to Europe along the 'southern route'. If confirmed, the shift ... would indicate a change in the strategy of drug trafficking organisations as a result of the COVID-19 measures," the report said.

## GOVERNMENT OF PUDUCHERRY OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER IRRIGATION DIVISION PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT

No. 711/PW/EEI/ID/EP-33/2020-2021

Puducherry, the 26.06.2020

### SHORT PRESS NOTICE

Invitation for Request for Proposal (RFP) through online (e-tender)

On behalf of the President of India RFP (e-Tenders) are invited from eligible applicants for the following works:-

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## IN BRIEF



Snubbed IAF chopper lands on expressway

CHANDIGARH/NEW DELHI An Indian Air Force (IAF) helicopter made an emergency landing on an expressway in Haryana on Friday after it developed a snag, officials said. There was no injury to anyone or damage to property. A Cheetah helicopter was proceeding from Hindan to Halwara for a routine Air Force task. Approximately 14 NM [nautical mile] out of Hindan, the helicopter developed a technical snag and carried out precautionary landing on Eastern Peripheral Expressway, the Defence Ministry said.

## CBI files another bank fraud case against Puris

NEW DELHI The CBI on Friday searched premises linked to the former directors of Moser Baer Solar Limited and others in connection with a new case alleging that they caused a loss of ₹787.25 crore to the Punjab National Bank and other lenders of a consortium. "The searches have been carried out on the premises of accused company directors, including Deepak Puri and his son Ratul Puri," said a CBI official. The role of unknown bank officials is also under investigation.

## Court rejects bail pleas of Varavara Rao, Shoma Sen

MUMBAI A sessions court in Mumbai on Friday rejected the interim medical bail pleas filed for the second time in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic by 81-year-old poet Varavara Rao and 61-year-old Prof. Shoma Sen, accused in the Bhima-Koregaon case. Earlier in the day, the court had reserved the order in both the applications after hearing the arguments. Reasons for rejecting the pleas are not known and a detailed order is expected in due course of time. Both Mr. Rao and Ms. Sen have comorbidities.

## INTERVIEW | K. SIVAN

## 'With industries not restarting production, ISRO projects affected'

As supply chains are yet to resume, planned launches and satellite activities have been delayed, says Chairman K. Sivan

MADHUMATHI D.S.  
BENGALURU

*On January 1, 2020, the Indian Space Research Organisation set out an ambitious target of 25 satellite and launch missions for the year. With three months now lost due to the COVID-19 pandemic, leaving the space agency without a single home launch yet, ISRO Chairman and Secretary, Department of Space K. Sivan said though supply of hardware from industries has been affected, work at each centre is on track.*

In the last three months how have ISRO and its centres been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic?

Definitely there has been some impact on our programme because of the lockdown. But we are not able to assess it now. We are yet to get stabilised output. We have two kinds of activities. One is in-house research and development. The other one is project or mission related, done outside in industry. ISRO's own activities are not affected. What is affected is the supply of hardware from

industries.

Most of our work is done outside in the industry and we are waiting for the industry to start functioning fully. Only then, after some time, can we review and make some assessments.

At the same time ISRO is not keeping quiet. Each centre has its in-house facilities and is carrying out many developmental activities in full steam.

When do you think you can resume launching satellites?

Because of the widespread



By hardware do you mean satellites, launch vehicles, rocket tanks and systems, etc? Could you please elaborate how hardware issues have impacted your projects?

Yes. Hardware for all our programmes is affected. Most of our hardware comes from Mumbai and other cities but our vendor industry is not yet fully functional. Project work is affected because industry is not fully geared up for production; inter-state movement [of supplies] is affected and also because employees' movements are not normal.

Around 500 small, medium and large industries con-

tribute to the space programme ... The virus and its effect are spread across the country. Even if hardware is made, transporting it [to the respective centres] is the problem. We cannot move the rakes, vehicles or the trailers. For example, if they go from Thiruvananthapuram to Bengaluru or from Thiruvananthapuram to Sriharikota, they must pass through Tamil Nadu and will have to get quarantined.

To what extent do you think the COVID-19 pandemic has hit your annual plan of missions? Sometime in March, GISAT-1 was to have been the first domestic

launch of 2020 but it got deferred.

As I said before, all projects which require industry support are affected. Activities like satellite launch and making rockets available are affected. Not only for the SSLV, it could be Gaganyaan, Chandrayaan[-3] or every project. It is all interlinked. For a launch to take place, launchpad related activities at Sriharikota are done, not by the personnel there but by people from Thiruvananthapuram. Those teams are not able to travel. However, whether it's SSLV, Gaganyaan or Chandrayaan[-3], every in-house activity is going on without a problem

## Monsoon has covered country at fastest pace since 2013: IMD

This year, it set in on the expected date of June 1

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The southwest monsoon has galloped to cover the entire country at a pace not seen since 2013, according to the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

The normal date for the monsoon to span the whole country is July 8. This year, the monsoon set in early on its expected date of June 1 and was only briefly stalled due to the impact of cyclone Nisarga that struck Maharashtra on June 2.

## Low pressure

"The early advance over Central & Northwest India was facilitated by formation of a low pressure area over Bay of Bengal which moved west-northwestwards, and another cyclonic circulation



TIME TO CHEER: People enjoying rainfall in Guwahati on Friday. ■ RITU RAJ KONWAR

over central India," the IMD said in a statement. "Considering southwest monsoon onset and advance over the country as a whole, there has been normal progress over south and east India, about a week delay in advance over northeast India and about 7-12 days early advance over Central and northwest India."

However, the monsoon's

advent into northwest India has not translated into significant rainfall in the region. The IMD says that most of the rainfall will be towards India's northeast, at least until June 29.

Usually the monsoon trough see-saws, in that heavy rain in the north-east translates to little rain over the rest of the country and when rains wane over the Hi-

malayan foothills and the east, it starts to pick up in the rest of the country. "Rains may revive over north India by June 28th, but they are unlikely to be very heavy," tweeted Mahesh Palawat, Vice-President, Meteorology, Skymet Pvt. Ltd.

So far the monsoon rainfall in June has been 21% more than what is normal for this time of the month.

## Centre rolls out anti-drug plan in 272 vulnerable districts

Campaign to focus on community outreach programmes

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

An annual anti-drug action plan for 272 vulnerable districts was launched by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment on Friday, the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking.

The 'Nasha Mukt Bharat', or drug-free India campaign will focus not just on institutional support but also on community outreach programmes in the districts identified in coordination with the Narcotics Control Bureau, R. Subrahmanyam,

Secretary, Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, said at the e-launch.

"Today, we want to herald a new change in the strategy against drugs. So far, we had been focussed on institutions, but we need to move the focus to working in society at large because the problem is not at the institutional level, it is at the level of society," he said, adding that while the Ministry would ramp up funding for institutions, it would also launch campaigns in schools and colleges to prevent drug abuse among youth. He said

the funding had gone up from ₹49 crore in 2017-2018 to ₹110 crore in 2019-2020, and ₹260 crore estimated for 2020-2021.

Mr. Subrahmanyam said the Integrated Rehabilitation Centre for Addicts (IRCA), funded by the Ministry, should reach out to their communities to help those affected by addiction.

Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Rattan Lal Kataria said it was important to sensitise parents to, and involve schools in, prevention of drug abuse.

## SC stays investigation against TV news anchor, web journalist

Amish Devgan was booked for remarks against Sufi saint

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday stayed the investigation into multiple FIRs registered in several States against TV news anchor Amish Devgan for his remarks against Sufi saint Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti.

A Vacation Bench of Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and Dinesh Maheshwari restrained the police from taking any action against Mr. Devgan. FIRs have been lodged against him in Rajasthan, Telangana and Maharashtra. Another Vacation

Bench of Justices S.K. Kaul and B.R. Gavai stayed the proceedings in FIRs registered by the West Bengal government on Press freedom.

The orders in both cases came a few days after the court refused to stay the investigation against senior journalist Vinod Dua for sedition for his telecast on the Delhi riots in February. Advocate Siddharth Luthra, for Mr. Devgan, submitted that his client had already tweeted a clarification, and added that errors cannot be construed as criminal offences.

## SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 12972      Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| P | O | T | I | N | A | B | E | T | T | O | R | S |
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| E | V | E | G | R | E | N | A | G | E | N |   |   |
| C | R | A | C | Q | R | L | T |   |   |   |   |   |
| R | O | M | E | D | U | C | A | E | C |   |   |   |
| U | A | S | E | W | X | R |   |   |   |   |   |   |
| S | A | L | I | S | T | R | A |   |   |   |   |   |
| T | S | S | E | Y | F | S |   |   |   |   |   |   |
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## FAITH

## Way of the devout

Suka explains to Parikshit that Vidura proceeds to meet Sage Maitreya on the banks of the Ganga, to receive instruction on the highest knowledge. Vidura begins the conversation with a series of questions about the Supreme Lord, His creation, His Maya, and so on. Maitreya notices Vidura's enlightened state of mind and is very much impressed that he wishes to get further immersed in the glories of the Lord and to know more about esoteric truths about the Lord's creation etc., pointed out Sri R. Krishnamurthy Sastrigal in a discourse. It is held that Vyasa too had felt an inexplicable sense of depression even after compiling the four Vedas, the Puranas and the Mahabharata. In fact, the Mahabharata holds up a mirror to many nuances in human life and shows the path of dharma that is to be followed while also highlighting the Lord's transcendent glories. Narada had then advised Vyasa to compose the Bhagavata Purana with the specific intention of describing the ineffable glories of the Lord. For, this awareness can inspire bhakti in people and lead them away from the world of senses towards mukti. Vidura now wants to hear the greatness of the Lord through the words of Maitreya.

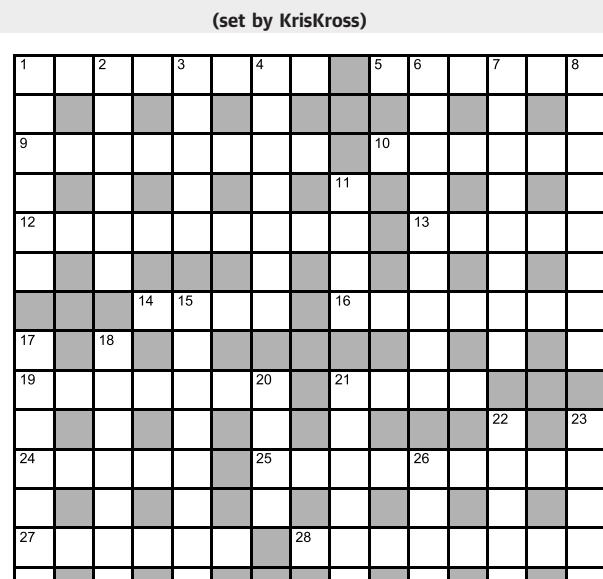
Devotees always find much fulfilment in the company of like-minded bhaktas and consider it a boon. One can imagine how getting into such company can be really beneficial to those who are bound to the world and its attractions and are not inclined to think of God. Ultimately, they neither attain happiness nor succeed in ending their sorrow. They are born repeatedly and suffer. But when their attention is directed to God, they begin to understand His glories and their own selves in the light of sastras. This instills bhakti and by seeking God's grace they can be freed from sorrow.

## TH CROSSWORD + 12973

(set by KrisKross)

There is no lockdown for your brain!  
Try solving a puzzle today!

@ <https://crossword.thehindu.com>



## ACROSS

- 1 Caretaker, for the most part, has appropriate clothes (8)
- 5 Indian state's move for improvement (6)
- 9 Crooked guide? (8)
- 10 Two vessels retreating to European city (6)
- 12 What could be bread for a man with many wives (9)
- 13 Borders of Hungary easily accessible (5)

- 14 Bad fortune from mischievous play, they say (4)
- 16 Demonstrating loyalty for soldiers (7)
- 19 Disgusting small criminal trapped in pound (7)
- 21 One unable to fly overhead, essentially (4)
- 24 Balanced, ultimately tight game (5)
- 25 Justification to share drink (9)
- 27 Man is transformed after welcoming one who is his ancestor (6)
- 28 Worthy doctor out to block Corona perhaps (8)
- 29 One smuggling fish (6)
- 30 Teacher and kid return playing station (8)
- DOWN
- 1 Plant used to be somewhat short (6)
- 2 Foul regularly, breaking rule, confused and repentant (6)
- 3 Cure using a herb (5)
- 4 Boyfriends pinching half your furniture (7)
- 6 Seat belt can break in the middle possibly (9)
- 7 More cruel one involved in drunken dancing (8)
- 8 Just married – want to go around with extremely lovely wife (8)
- 11 Dads working for tots (4)
- 15 Chased by a flirt, KrisKross will be uncomfortable (3,2,4)
- 17 He tests stupid people, therefore, with a bit of revision (8)
- 18 Star filled in by American agent about a fantastic role (8)
- 20 Earth is tired out, with no energy (4)
- 21 Man is terribly upset sampling wine (7)
- 22 Knives and arrows starting to zip around – woman killed (6)
- 23 Argue about a boy (6)
- 26 Animal, say, gets beheaded for nothing (5)



## Instapick

**Open Prison Voices:** Along the lines of Humans of New York, this photo project by Prison Aid + Action Research brings to light stories from the open prisons of Rajasthan. In these facilities, inmates serve their sentences with minimal supervision and perimeter security. From Sangana, Pooja Chhabra tells us why she chose to grow flowers, Samay Singh Gurjar talks about living with his family, while Abdul Karim tells us about the inmate friends he has made. Follow @openprisonvoices on Instagram.



## Talking point

**Covid-19 vaccine:** Novak Djokovic was in the news for all the wrong reasons earlier this week. The top-seeded tennis player has apologised for backing the ill-advised Adria Tour as he and wife Jelena, among others, have tested positive for Covid-19. Despite this, it looks like UFC's Fight Island matches will continue in Abu Dhabi as planned for July. And talks are on to host cricket's Asia Cup in either UAE or Sri Lanka in September or October. Wherever the sporting event, best tune in via TV.

## Pick of the week

**Concerts, stand-up and other online events you just can't miss.**  
The event preview and calendar will resume in a few weeks.



# Fashion goes to AI school

How designers can upskill during the pandemic to stand out on the virtual runway

SUSANNA MYRTLE LAZARUS

"Fake free. Couture curious" reads Nila's Instagram bio. India's first virtual model, represented by talent management agency, Inega, just might replace Bollywood showstoppers as the fashion industry goes virtual in the aftermath of the pandemic. With many designers forgoing models – thank social distancing and cancelled events – she could play a big role (along with older CGI models such as the US' Lil Miquela and the UK's Shudu Gram) in helping clothes do the talking.

In other news, on May 22, Congolese designer Anifa Mvuemba debuted her Pink Label capsule collection on Instagram, with 3D renderings of her clothes moving down the runway. Except, there were no models! The eerie, ghost-like effect aside, the focus was entirely on the outfits. This went well

beyond virtual runways, like the one hosted by YouTube in May, where names like Winnie Harlow and Ashley Graham modelled clothes from Fendi, Dior, Oscar de la Renta and others, from their homes.

**Tech in the background**  
With design houses looking for new ways to showcase their work in the post Covid-19 scenario, AI tech companies like Bigthinx are offering solutions. The Bengaluru-based outfit works on visualisation solutions for fashion and retail using a software called Lyfsize, which uses two smartphone pictures to determine 44 precise body measurements. "An additional software, Lyflike, uses a selfie to create a lifelike 3D virtual avatar and can recreate clothing in 3D from normal photos," explains co-founder Chandralika Hazarika-

**Future ready** (Left) The Bigthinx platform and (below) outfits from Anifa Mvuemba's show

, who caters to clients in the US, Europe and India. But when compared to Mvuemba's show, the result looks more animated, which can distract from the clothes. However, Shivang Desai, the CEO of Bigthinx, believes the digital effects will only improve as creators "look at pushing boundaries" using technology. "This requires environments and backgrounds that are engaging, interactive and personalised to offer user experiences tailored to the viewer's moods or personality," he adds.

The Fabricant, an Amsterdam-based digital platform, also creates solutions using both fashion and VFX industries. Clients include Japanese streetwear brand AAPE, for whom they translated physical craftsmanship into digital for their 2019 Spring-Summer collection. "The foundational knowledge of patterns and garment construction applies to these tools as much as they do in the real world. The technology should be in the background so they don't have to worry about

technicalities," says founder Kerry Murphy. They're working with American brand Tommy Hilfiger too, in their ongoing transition towards full digital design by Spring 2022.

**Time over money**  
For designers who want to get involved directly in the process, Murphy suggests tools like CLO3D, which are fairly easy to learn (with plenty of free online resources). He believes that investing in hardware is critical because professional tools will differentiate the novice from the pros. "I see the investment being less than it is for physical tools and materials. The whole fashion value chain can exist in one PC," he explains.

Desai adds that staying up-to-date does not need a big budget either. A yearly subscription for CLO3D, for instance, starts at around ₹35,000. "It does require time, effort and patience to catch up and stay informed of all new developments. Designers should spend a few hours a week on learning how to navigate it." After creating a virtual show for New York-based networking platform, Fashioninnovation, in early June, Bigthinx will be part of Lineapelle, the international leather fair in Italy, later this year.

In earlier interviews, Murphy predicted that designer virtual clothing is something that consumers will soon be willing to invest in. To encourage a move in this direction, The Fabricant has launched the beta version of Leela, a platform that allows users to try on digital fashion in a 3D avatar. If the pandemic continues to keep us indoors and isolated for the near future, retail therapy for our digital avatars just might be the way to go.



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## Playdates and comics

## Celebrity stories

## #LockdownWithWeekend

## Skill up your hospitality

## Playdates and comics

## Celebrity stories

## #LockdownWithWeekend

## Kevin Hart's new book *The Decision*

## This Sunday, join chef Eshaan Kashyap to learn how to make your kitchen a zero-waste

## space. Plus easy ways to make exciting dishes from vegetable

## peels and what to do with coffee powder, old banana

## peels, eggshells, fruit pulp or tea bags. In conversation with columnist Vasudha Rai at 5 pm @thehinduweekend. From

## earlier this week, influencer Anupriya Kapur's session on social media brand building,

## Astad Deboo on dance and social change and Shoojit Sircar's #DirectorsOnDirectors

## chat are now on IGTV.

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## Playdates and comics



DIVYA DUGAR

### 52 and counting

When we finally go back to train-hopping, we'll look for one boarding from a smaller station like Delhi Cantonment, to stay clear of the big crowds on the platform. The first class coupe is perfect for our family of six (pets are only allowed on Indian Railways' first AC), though it is quite an art for all of us to fit into the tiny space.

But over the last 52 train journeys with our dogs, we've mastered it. On entering, Pari will climb the stairs and settle on the upper berth, while

Marco-polo will grab the window seat. Tigress will settle down on her bed in the middle of the coupe, so she can watch everyone. Now, with five-

month-old Marius in hand, I imagine Tigress will snooze on his handmade mat next to his brother and me.

# Three dogs, a baby and a route map

How a travel influencer and her train-hopping family is now looking at self-driven holidays, charting familiar routes and remote locations

the unknown, as exciting as it used to be earlier, would be nerve-wracking now.

#### Rentals and routes

With most travel restricted to roads (the Indian Railways may resume normal operations only by mid-August), I will miss the little shared joys of enjoying a cup of *chai* at the railway station, chatting with co-passengers, and my dogs' excitement when attendants drop by with extra packets of soup sticks or a cup of vanilla ice cream. Instead, we must hit

the road, packing not only bags full of wipes and sanitisers, but also treats, home cooked meals, baby purees, flasks of hot water and packets of chips for the husband.

Road trips will be a new challenge because we don't own a car and we haven't got behind the wheel since the baby was born. However, there are plenty of rental services to pick from for a self-driven expedition. After my extensive research, we plan to toss a coin to choose between Avis India and Zoomcar

**Adventures and leashes**  
Snapshots from various adventures across the country in the last couple of years



### FOOD SPOT

## A memorable Vietnamese meal!

Food lovers can now try a range of eclectic dishes at a Khan Market eatery

RAHUL VERMA



Pleasing to the palate Vegetable Pho; (right) Prawn Har Gao ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ble time buying shrimps, ripe mangoes, fresh cucumbers and other veggies.

The shrimp (boiled), mango and cucumber (sliced) went into the rice paper, which she rolled up in such a way that the colours of the three ingredients looked like a dazzling palette. But along

with this she prepared another great dish. She added veggies to a broth of chicken that was bubbling away on the stove. Into this she added some rice noodles – and I had my first bowl of pho!

The Pho (pronounced phuh, as in duh) was sublime – and it came to my mind last week when

I was looking at the menu of Yum Yum Cha.

Yum Yum Cha is a restaurant in Khan Market run by Varun Tuli, the man behind Noshi, which has on the menu various kinds of pan-Asian dishes. In the good old days, we had eaten at Yum Yum Cha, and greatly enjoyed the meal. So we thought we would order food from the restaurant (Ph. 9810002994).

We had been sorely missing pork, so we asked for a plate of braised pork belly from the wok. We had also been missing eating lamb, so we asked for a dish of meat with basil and chilli. Two-thirds of the family loves prawns, so we asked for prawn har gao (a kind of dim sum). And then, to make it a balanced meal, we asked for a vegetarian pho.

We started with the Har Gao (₹385 for four pieces), and it was simply superb. The casing was light and thin, and the juicy stuff

ing – of chopped prawn, dill leaves and asparagus – was delicious. After that we had the Pho (₹685), which was a slurpy dish of noodles in a light broth peppered with tofu, smooth mushrooms and other veggies. I loved it, and was transported back to the time when our Vietnamese friend had cooked it for us – and a roomful of friends. I moved to the lamb (₹685), which was, again, memorable. The tender pieces were thinly sliced, and the chillies and basil gave the lamb a flavour that



lingered on.

What was disappointing was the pork (₹685). I thought the meat was a bit too chewy, and just too sweet. I know that pork works well with sweet ingredients (apple, pineapple, brown sugar, molasses etc), and I love it with a sweet sauce (though, right now, my favourite is the Coorgi Pandi curry). But the sweetness has to be balanced with other flavours; and I think in this case, it just overpowered every other taste.

A great thing about Yum Yum Cha is that they take full precautions in cooking and delivering food. All hygiene norms are maintained, and the food is delivered in tight plastic containers.

The sweetness of the pork notwithstanding, it was a happy meal that we greatly enjoyed. Yum Yum, I said, as I licked my platter clean.

The writer is a seasoned food critic

### FILM REVIEW

## Strikes at the putrid core of patriarchy

Anvita Dutt mixes the feudal with the supernatural, the spooky, the mythological and the fablesque in a thoughtful, moving and engaging manner

NAMRATA JOSHI

Back in 1962, in *Sahib Bibi Aur Ghulam*, Abrar Alvi took us in to one of the many crumbling *havelis* of a decaying feudal Bengal. Mansions in which the desires of lonely women are throttled by unfaithful aristocratic husbands, where they strike undefined relationships with other men without quite being able to take them to a logical conclusion. In her debut film, *Bulbul*, which starts off in Bengal Presidency in 1881, Anvita Dutt does something similar but adds to the locale. She mixes the feudal with the supernatural and the spooky, the mythological and the fablesque to strike at the putrid core of patriarchy in a thoughtful, moving, engag-

ing and powerful manner.

A word—*vash* (control) – and an image, that of *bichchue* (toe rings), conveys it all about the lot of young girls. *Bulbul*, a child bride, arrives in the



Bulbul

**DIRECTOR:** Anvita Dutt  
**CAST:** Tripti Dimri, Avinash Tiwary, Parambrata Chattopadhyay, Paoli Dam, Rahul Bose

extreme violence and violation. A doll here, the talk of broken bones there, a reference to falling down the stairs of the house – bit by bit the hints at the intrinsic oppression, and their repercussions, pile on and reach the peak in a rousing, powerful monologue by Binodini about "badi haveli ke bade raaz" (the big secrets of the big mansion) wherein women of the household might be showered with silk and jewellery, but told to stay silent about secrets. Dam packs in a punch as does Dimri in the lead.

From the vulnerable and the innocent to the transformation into the mysterious tease, Dimri is a stunner who speaks volumes with her eyes.

**Critical gaze:** *Bulbul* doesn't baulk from showing extreme violation ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

And the audience can do little but stay enraptured.

Dutt shows delicacy in dealing with the indecorous, a touch of the poignant and the poetic in highlighting the pain. The film is essentially about companionships that unknowingly blossom into more and then some friendships that crave to find a fruition that they can't. Then there are jealousies that raise their heads, as they do between Satya (Avinash Tiwary) and Dr Sudip (Parambrata Chattopadhyay, the confidante after my heart) due to unresolved emotions for Bulbul.

The film is essentially a re-imagination of the legend of *chudail* (witch) with the twisted feet as a devi with a cause and a mission but I was swept away by the overwhelming romance – unexpressed but implicit, fulsome in its tacitness. Like a simple conversation towards the end of the film, between Bulbul and Sudip, over a shared bidi (cigarette). The oblique talk of hope, boundaries and the unreachable between them even as their eyes stay transfixed on the other.

The gaze of love, or something like that, "Kahani poori kaise hogi," weeps Bulbul at one point in the film. No some love stories don't ever come a full circle to a conclusion. And that makes them all the more beautiful.

### THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13364

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|    | 2  | 3 | 4  | 5  | 6  | 7  |
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|    |    |   |    |    |    |    |
| 24 |    |   |    |    |    |    |

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#### ■ Across

- 1 Is sexually attracted to (informal) (3,3,4,3)
- 8 Irish county (7)
- 9 Uncovered (5)
- 10 English spa founded by the Romans (4)
- 11 Brainy (8)
- 13 Punctilious (6)
- 14 Norwegian port city (6)
- 17 Takes against (8)
- 21 Lenin (anag) – fabric (5)
- 22 Doubt – small weight (7)
- 24 Belittling words (13)

#### ■ Down

- 1 Open trough for carrying bricks (3)
- 2 Statesman – treason (anag) (7)
- 3 Author of *Les Misérables*, d. 1885 (4)

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

- 4 Stopped (6)
- 5 Offered for payment (8)
- 6 Fraud (5)
- 7 Mars (3,6)
- 10 Confused (9)
- 12 Spanish landed estate – I had acre (anag) (8)
- 15 Lay hold of (7)
- 16 Professional female companion for Japanese men (6)
- 18 Air-filled cavity in the skull (5)
- 20 On the house (4)
- 23 Scoff (3)

The solution will appear on July 2, 2020.

Solution No. 13363

|   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
| M | S | S | L |
| C | A | R | E |
| E | R | E | I |
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# ASEAN states warn of S. China Sea tensions

At regional meet, Vietnam and the Philippines raise concern over growing insecurity in the waters

REUTERS

HANOI

Vietnam and the Philippines warned of growing insecurity in Southeast Asia at a regional summit on Friday amid concerns that China was stepping up its activity in the disputed South China Sea during the coronavirus pandemic.

Both Hanoi and Manila lodged protests with China in April after Beijing unilaterally declared the creation of new administrative districts on islands in the troubled waterways to which Vietnam and the Philippines also have competing claims.

#### 'Abide by global law'

"Even as our region struggles to contain COVID-19, alarming incidents in the South China Sea occurred," Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte told an online meeting of Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)



**Rising tensions:** A beach ramp built by the Philippines on the island of Pag-asa, also known as Thitu, in the disputed South China Sea on June 9. ■ REUTERS

leaders on Friday.

"We call on parties to refrain from escalating tensions and abide by responsibilities under international law," he said.

China has been pushing

its presence in the Exclusive Economic Zones of other countries while claimants are preoccupied tackling the COVID-19 pandemic, prompting the United States to call on China to stop its

"bullying behaviour" there.

In early April, Vietnam said one of its fishing boats was sunk by a Chinese maritime surveillance vessel. China said that Vietnam's claims in South China sea are illegal

# Trump administration asks top court to axe Obamacare

Over 20 mn Americans will lose health coverage if it agrees

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON

As coronavirus cases rise in more than half of the states, President Donald Trump's administration is urging the Supreme Court to overturn the Affordable Care Act.

The administration's filing on Thursday came the same day the government reported that close to half a million people who lost their health insurance amid the economic shutdown to slow the spread of COVID-19 have gotten coverage through HealthCare.gov.

The administration's legal brief makes no mention of the virus.



Donald Trump

for the Trump administration's disastrous efforts to take away Americans' health care," she said in a statement.

Just as the nation seemed to be getting better control over the virus outbreak, states including Arizona, California, Florida, Georgia, Nevada and Texas are reporting a surge in cases. And more than half the states are seeing case increases.

Anger over problems with "Obamacare" was once a winning issue for Republicans, helping them gain control of the House in 2010 and the Senate in 2014. But the

politics of the issue flipped after Mr. Trump failed to deliver in 2017 on his vow to "repeal and replace" the health law.

Democrats were energised by their successful defence of the ACA, and that contributed to their winning back the House.

In the case before the Supreme Court, Texas and other conservative-led states argue that the ACA was essentially rendered unconstitutional after Congress passed tax legislation in 2017 that eliminated the law's unpopular fines for not having health insurance, but left in place its requirement that virtually all Americans have coverage.

Mr. Trump has put the weight of his administration behind the legal challenge.

If the health insurance requirement is invalidated, "then it necessarily follows that the rest of the ACA must also fall," Solicitor General Noel Francisco wrote on Thursday.

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"There is no legal justification and no moral excuse

for the Trump administration's disastrous efforts to take away Americans' health care," she said in a statement.

More than 20 million Americans could lose their health coverage and protections for people with preexisting health conditions also would be put at risk if the court agrees with the administration in a case that won't be heard before the fall.

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More than 20

MARKET WATCH

|           | 26-06-2020 | % CHANGE |
|-----------|------------|----------|
| Sensex    | 35,171     | -0.94    |
| US Dollar | 75.65      | 0.00     |
| Gold      | 49,058     | -0.03    |
| Brent oil | 40.68      | -0.79    |

NIFTY 50

|                   | PRICE    | CHANGE  |
|-------------------|----------|---------|
| Adani Ports       | 343.20   | -0.80   |
| Asian Paints      | 1686.75  | -2.25   |
| Axle Bank         | 424.85   | 3.15    |
| Bajaj Auto        | 2867.60  | -47.15  |
| Bajaj Finance     | 5946.30  | -74.85  |
| Bajaj Finance     | 2903.50  | -101.85 |
| Bharti Airtel     | 560.40   | 1.40    |
| BPCL              | 393.65   | 23.40   |
| Britannia Ind     | 3456.40  | 6.00    |
| Cipla             | 634.90   | 0.00    |
| Coal India        | 142.10   | 1.70    |
| Dr Reddy's Lab    | 3998.60  | -8.00   |
| Eicher Motors     | 18473.40 | 382.70  |
| GAIL (India)      | 105.15   | 2.05    |
| Grasim Ind        | 616.15   | 8.70    |
| HCL Tech.         | 562.40   | 12.35   |
| HDFC              | 1769.35  | -8.45   |
| HDFC Bank         | 1056.45  | 27.70   |
| Hero MotoCorp     | 2540.45  | -19.25  |
| Hindalco          | 151.05   | 4.45    |
| Hind Unilever     | 2154.20  | -18.95  |
| ICICI Bank        | 349.10   | -1.90   |
| IndusInd Bank     | 492.55   | 17.40   |
| Bharti Infratel   | 220.60   | -7.85   |
| Infosys           | 748.20   | 47.70   |
| Indian Oil Corp   | 89.15    | 4.10    |
| ITC               | 195.20   | -6.90   |
| JSW Steel         | 192.65   | -0.90   |
| Kotak Bank        | 1340.10  | -41.60  |
| L&T               | 962.20   | 19.10   |
| M&M               | 501.40   | -5.85   |
| Maruti Suzuki     | 5754.90  | -7.40   |
| Nestle India Ltd. | 16677.50 | -109.50 |
| NTPC              | 97.00    | 0.90    |
| ONGC              | 84.15    | 2.55    |
| PowerGrid Corp    | 179.20   | -0.15   |
| Reliance Ind      | 1741.65  | 23.75   |
| State Bank        | 184.60   | -0.65   |
| Shree Cement      | 2252.85  | 455.05  |
| Sun Pharma        | 479.95   | -7.70   |
| Tata Motors       | 101.40   | -2.40   |
| Tata Steel        | 323.85   | 0.75    |
| TCS               | 2118.85  | 102.75  |
| Tech Mahindra     | 560.85   | 6.70    |
| Titan             | 966.20   | -11.40  |
| UltraTech Cement  | 3860.60  | 58.25   |
| UPL               | 440.25   | -2.65   |
| Vedanta           | 109.95   | -1.30   |
| Wipro             | 225.45   | 7.25    |
| Zee Entertainment | 176.25   | 3.90    |

EXCHANGE RATES

| CURRENCY           | TT BUY | TT SELL |
|--------------------|--------|---------|
| US Dollar          | 75.43  | 75.75   |
| Euro               | 84.66  | 85.02   |
| British Pound      | 93.51  | 93.91   |
| Japanese Yen (100) | 70.53  | 70.85   |
| Chinese Yuan       | 10.65  | 10.70   |
| Swiss Franc        | 79.57  | 79.93   |
| Singapore Dollar   | 54.22  | 54.46   |
| Canadian Dollar    | 55.23  | 55.48   |
| Malaysian Ringgit  | 17.57  | 17.66   |
| Australian Dollar  | 51.90  | 52.14   |

Source: Indian Bank

RBI board reviews state of economy

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI  
The board of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), which met for the first time on Friday since the nationwide lockdown, discussed the current economic situation and the challenges posed by COVID-19. The meeting was held via video-conference.

"The board deliberated on the current economic situation and the evolving challenges posed by the pandemic," the RBI said in a statement. "Among others, the board also discussed the Reserve Bank's activities during the period [July 2019-June 2020], the budget for the next accounting year July 2020 to March 2021 [aligned with the government's financial year], other policy and operational matters," the RBI said.

## IRCTC expects business to normalise by October

'Adverse impact on Apr.-June revenue'

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA

NEW DELHI  
The Indian Railway Catering and Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), whose operations have been hit due to the suspension of passenger train services due to COVID-19, is hopeful that the business would normalise October onwards.

In a communiqué to the stock exchange, the state-owned firm said that it was a debt-free company and had no liquidity-related concerns.

"Due to the lockdown, the revenue and profitability are likely to be adversely impacted for the April-June, 2020 quarter. As the situation is very dynamic, the company is closely monitoring it. The company expects

## Auto, pharma unready to wean off China

Industries depend heavily on Chinese supplies; executives say becoming more self-reliant will take time

REUTERS

NEW DELHI

Days after a border clash with China this month in which 20 Indian soldiers were killed, New Delhi told firms to find ways to cut imports from China. But two big industries, automobiles and pharmaceuticals, say this is easier said than done.

Like many countries, India relies on China for products such as electronic components and drug ingredients because it cannot make them or source them elsewhere as cheaply, company and industry figures say. Thus, any moves to curb imports or make them costlier without developing alternatives will hurt local businesses.

"We don't import because we like to, but because we have no choice," said R.C.



Dragon fire: Curbing imports without developing alternatives will hurt local businesses, say industry officials. ■ REUTERS

Bhargava, chairman of Maruti Suzuki India Ltd., the country's biggest carmaker.

"To attract companies to produce locally, we need to be more competitive and lower our costs compared with other countries."

India imported about

\$70.3 billion of goods from China in the fiscal year to March 2019, and exported just \$16.7 billion – its widest trade deficit with any country. The government is now consulting with companies on tightening curbs on 1,173 non-essential products, a

trade body official said on condition of anonymity. They include toys, plastics, steel items, electronics and specific auto components – which feed vehicle manufacturing.

Self-reliance campaign

This is on top of plans to raise trade barriers and import duties on about 300 products from China and elsewhere, as part of a self-reliance campaign. In April, India also tightened rules for investments from neighbouring countries, including China, to prevent opportunistic takeovers after the pandemic.

Over a quarter of India's auto-part imports – \$4.2 billion – come from China in 2019, including engine and transmission parts, according to data from the Auto

Component Manufacturers' Association of India (ACMA).

Some of these components are critical and hard to source elsewhere immediately, said Vinnie Mehta, director general at ACMA.

Chinese supplies have also been a key factor in India's booming drug industry, which exports cheap generic medicines.

India gets about 70% of its supply of active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) from there, industry officials said.

"In the immediate future, we are going to continue to be reliant on China," said Sudarshan Jain, secretary general of the Indian Pharmaceutical Alliance, which represents major drug makers, although he believed there was only "a very low likelihood" of API supplies being cut off.



Dark clouds: S&P projects Asia-Pacific economies to lose about \$3 trillion in output over 2 years. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

## Economy in deep trouble, to shrink 5%

Balance-sheet recession looms: S&P

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

sheets, however."

One risk now looming larger is yet another 'balance sheet recession' in which at least one important sector of the economy – the government, firms, or households – tries to bolster its weak financial position by saving more, paying down debt and spending less, S&P said.

"India's economy is in deep trouble. Difficulties in containing the virus, an anaemic policy response, and underlying vulnerabilities, especially across the financial sector, are leading us to expect growth to fall by 5% this fiscal year before rebounding in 2021," S&P said in a report.

In its report titled 'Asia-Pacific loses near \$3 trillion as balance sheet recession looms,' S&P projected the region's economy to shrink by 1.3% in 2020, but grow by 6.9% in 2021. This implies a loss nearing \$3 trillion in output over these two years.

"Asia-Pacific has shown some success in containing COVID-19 and, by and large, responded with effective macroeconomic policies," said Shaun Roache, chief economist for Asia-Pacific at S&P Global Ratings.

Cushioning the blow

"This can help cushion the blow and provide a bridge to the recovery. The recovery looks set to be weighed down by indebted

Banks may lend less than they normally would in a recovery to focus on the overhang from the pandemic. Private firms may prefer to stabilise debt rather than ramp up spending on new investments, even though demand is improving.

S&P kept its forecasts for growth in the Chinese economy at 1.2% and 7.4% for 2020 and 2021, respectively.

## Asset quality of housing lenders likely to worsen: ICRA

Gross NPAs may rise 2.5-3% in FY21 from 1.7% last fiscal

REUTERS

MUMBAI

Indian housing finance companies (HFCs) are likely to face worsening of asset quality this year, with about 30% of their portfolios falling within the regulator-approved moratorium as of end-May, rating agency ICRA said on Friday.

ICRA said gross non-performing assets (GNPA) in the housing segment could increase 2.5-3% in the fiscal year through March 2021 from an estimated 1.7%, as of March this year. In the non-housing segment, the GNPA could be higher at 3-4.5% by the end of fiscal year 2021 from 2.5% at the end of this

fiscal year, the rating agency said. "While home loans are expected to show higher resilience on the asset quality front vis-a-vis other asset classes owing to their secured nature and majority also being self-occupied, the loss of income for borrowers could lead to an increase in

the GNPA in the housing loan segment as well," Supreeta Nijjar, vice-president, financial sector ratings at ICRA, said.

The rating agency, however, noted that lifetime losses may remain under control for the HFCs.

"The lifetime credit losses for the HFCs could be an interplay of factors such as the duration for revival of the borrowers' income levels, borrowers' emotional attachment to the property, and whether the properties are self-occupied or under construction," she said.

"Overall, the lifetime losses might still be the lowest in this asset class," she added.

## Focus on revival, not debt, says Finance panel

Not time for fiscal consolidation: Singh



N. K. Singh

## S&P cuts Axis Bank rating on risks to banks

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

S&P Global Ratings on Friday downgraded Axis Bank's rating to BBB- from BB+, saying the rating action reflected its view that economic risks had increased for banks operating in India.

"We have lowered our ratings on Axis to reflect our expectation that heightened economic risks facing India's banking system will affect the bank's asset quality and financial performance," it said.

S&P said while Axis's asset quality was superior to the Indian banking sector average, its level of non-performing assets (NPAs) will likely remain high compared with the international peers.

S&P expects the Indian economy to slip into recession in the current fiscal.

## The Hindu In School ePaper

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## Apparel retailers may see revenue fall 30-35%: Crisil

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## TV PICKS

**Premier League:** SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 4.40 p.m.  
**Bundesliga:** SS Select 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 7 p.m.  
**Serie A:** Sony Six (SD & HD), 8.40 p.m. & 11 p.m.; Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 1.10 a.m. (Sunday)  
**FA Cup:** Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 10 p.m.  
**PGA Tour:** Eurosport (SD & HD), 12.30 a.m. (Sunday)

## IN BRIEF



## Ivanisevic tests positive

ZAGREB Tennis great Goran Ivanisevic says he has tested positive for the coronavirus. The former Wimbledon champion coaches top-ranked Novak Djokovic and was at the recent Adria Tour exhibition series in Serbia and Croatia. He said he twice tested negative for the virus over the past 10 days, but has now tested positive. AP

## BAI plans camps from July 1 in Hyderabad

NEW DELHI Top Indian shuttlers, including P.V. Sindhu, will be able to hit the courts from July 1 if the Telangana government allows the Badminton Association of India (BAI) to organise a national camp in Hyderabad.

## NBA has 16 players positive after 302 tests

NEW YORK A total of 16 NBA players have tested positive for COVID-19 from 302 tests conducted last Tuesday, the league and its players union announced on Friday. None of the players or teams involved were revealed by the NBA in its two-sentence statement. AP



## Hughes fires 60 to take Travelers lead

NEW YORK Mackenzie Hughes lit up TPC River Highlands in Connecticut on Thursday, firing 10 birdies in a 10-under-par 60 to seize a three-shot lead in the US PGA Tour Travelers Championship. AFP

## Valencia goes down to Eibar

MADRID Valencia's chances of making LaLiga's top-four appeared to be over after it was beaten 1-0 by Eibar on Thursday. The results: Eibar 1 (Kondogbia 16-0g) bt Valencia 0; Betis 1 (Bartra 48) bt Espanyol 0. AGENCE

## Australia, NZ to host '23 women's football WC

GENEVA Australia and New Zealand will co-host the women's football World Cup in 2023, with the following edition possibly set to take place just two years later. The joint bid beat Colombia 22-13 in a vote on Thursday by FIFA's ruling council. AP

## ATK's Roy Krishna gets a contract extension

NEW DELHI Star Fijian striker Roy Krishna on Friday extended his contract with ISL side ATK till next year ahead of the upcoming seventh edition of the tournament. The 32-year-old Krishna was in magnificent form during ISL 2019-20, scoring 15 goals and providing six assists for ATK as it went on to clinch its third title. PTI



## Momota 'fully recovered' after crash

TOKYO Japan's badminton king Kento Momota said on Friday he had completely recovered from the eye injury caused by a car accident and vowed to bring home Gold at the postponed Tokyo Games. "I can see without any problem while I'm playing," the World No. 1, who underwent surgery for an eye socket fracture in February after the car crash, told reporters. AP

CM YK

# Liverpool's 30-year wait for league glory finally ends

Chelsea's win over defending champion Manchester City gives Klopp's dominant squad the bragging rights for this season

REUTERS  
LONDON

Liverpool's 30-year English title drought ended on Thursday as it was confirmed as Premier League champion courtesy second-placed Manchester City's 2-1 loss at Chelsea.

The result at Stamford Bridge means Liverpool has an unassailable 23-point lead over City with seven games left. Liverpool was last champion of England when it won the old First Division title in 1989-90 after which a decline in fortunes saw Manchester United and Arsenal, then Chelsea and Manchester City seize power.

## Rekindling the flame

Manager Jürgen Klopp has rekindled the Anfield flame though and delivered the club's 19th title, one behind arch-rival United's record of 20, after finishing runner-up to City in a thrilling title-race last season.

Despite the pandemic forcing a three-month suspension and delaying the coronation, Liverpool has won the title with a record seven games to spare. It eclipses the record jointly held by United (2000-01) and City (2017-18), who sealed their titles with five games left.

## Record beckons

City was the first team to breach the 100-point barrier in the Premier League two seasons ago but Liverpool is on course to shatter that mark, as well as records for most points at home (55) and most wins in a season (32).

Meanwhile on the field, a superb solo goal by Christian

## Red-letter day



Incredible run: Klopp's men won 28 out of 31 matches to seal the title with seven games to spare.

1 Liverpool's first English top-flight title in the Premier League era (starting 1992-93)

1 Klopp is the first German manager to win the English title in its 131-year history

7 With seven games still left to play, the Reds' victory is the earliest in England's top-flight football

7 Seven Liverpool players started a minimum of 26 out of 31 league games this season

8 Liverpool has now won the league in eight different decades, the only team to do so

## Points Table\*

| Team        | M  | W  | D  | L | GD | Pts. |
|-------------|----|----|----|---|----|------|
| Liverpool   | 31 | 28 | 2  | 1 | 49 | 86   |
| Man. City   | 31 | 20 | 3  | 8 | 44 | 63   |
| Leicester   | 31 | 16 | 7  | 8 | 30 | 55   |
| Chelsea     | 31 | 16 | 6  | 9 | 14 | 54   |
| Man. United | 31 | 13 | 10 | 8 | 17 | 49   |
| Wolves      | 31 | 12 | 13 | 6 | 10 | 49   |

Courtesy: BBC & ESPN

19 Liverpool's league titles, just one behind Manchester United

30 Years since Reds' previous title, in 1989-90, under Kenny Dalglish

\*TOP SIX

Ederson to open the scoring in the 36th minute.

Kevin de Bruyne put City level with a brilliant dipping free kick 10 minutes into the second half, but Chelsea took the lead again through Willian's 78th-minute penalty after Fernandinho was

sent off for handling the ball on the goal-line.

## The results:

Burnley 1 (Rodriguez 73) bt Watford 0; Chelsea 2 (Pulisic 36, Willian 78-pen) bt Manchester City 1 (De Bruyne 55).

Southampton 0 lost to Arsenal 2 (Nketiah 20, Wilcock 87).

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