

on Sunday



UN award for Bhutan's Queen Mother Gyalyum Sangay Choden

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NCB arrests comedian Bharti Singh, seizes ganja from her house

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Georgia Governor certifies Biden's win after hand-count

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Thiem overcomes Djokovic, enters summit clash of ATP Finals

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## NEARBY



Opposition candidates being detained: Farooq

SRINAGAR  
National Conference president and Peoples Alliance for Gupkar Declaration chairman Farooq Abdullah on Saturday approached the State Election Commission and alleged that Opposition candidates contesting the District Development Council polls were being prevented from campaigning.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 7

## DU admissions under special list from Nov. 24

NEW DELHI  
Delhi University on Saturday announced that admissions to undergraduate courses under the special cut-off list will begin from November 24. The university further said the sixth and seventh cut-off lists will be declared on November 30 and December 7 respectively.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

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# Parliamentary panel bats for laws to counter bio-terrorism

Low testing, poor contact tracing responsible for spike in COVID-19 cases: report

SOBHA NAIR  
NEW DELHI

Formulating effective laws to counter bio-terrorism is one of the important lessons to be learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic, a Parliamentary Standing Committee on Health has said in a report, "The Outbreak of Pandemic COVID-19 And its Management."

Among other things, the report said low testing and shoddy contact tracing were responsible for the spike in cases.

The committee, headed by Samajwadi Party MP Ramgopal Yadav, submitted its report to the Rajya Sabha Chairman on Saturday.

### Strategic partnerships

"The adverse effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have taught the lesson on the importance of controlling biological agents and the need for strategic partnerships among different nations. The committee, therefore, feels that the present time is the most appropriate for the government to formulate effective laws to counter bio-terrorism," the report said.

This conclusion is based on the deliberations that the committee had with the Department of Health and Fa-

**The way ahead |** A look at the panel's key observations and suggestions:



**Health check:** A man registering for COVID-19 testing at the Delhi-Noida border. ■ AP

**Growth rate slows:** The growth rate of COVID-19 cases at the beginning of the lockdown was 3.6% while during unlock, it had come down to 3.3%.

**Bed shortage:** There are 7,13,986 govt. hospital beds, which amounts to 0.55 per 1,000 people. However, 12 States rank below the national average

**Oxygen usage:** The oxygen production in the country is roughly 6,900 metric tonnes per day. Of this, the highest consumption of medical oxygen was reported in mid-September, when it was almost 3,000 metric tonnes per day

**Creation of IHS:** The committee underlined an urgent need for capacity building and maintaining the pool of health resources to fight the pandemic

**Testing facilities:** The committee observed that initially only NIV-Pune was equipped to carry out COVID-19 testing. However, by April 1, testing facilities were increased to 151

**It supported the demand for an Indian Health Service (IHS) on the pattern of the Indian Administrative Service to help streamline healthcare delivery as envisaged in the National Health Policy 2017**

mily Welfare, which submitted a seven-point action plan that is needed to ensure security against biological weapons.

These include "strengthening disease surveillance, including at animal-human interface, training and capacity building for management of public health emergencies arising from use of bio-weapons and strengthening research and surveillance activities related to development of diagnostics, vaccines and drugs."

The report has suggested that the Health Ministry should engage with agencies and actively participate in ongoing international treaties.

### Capacity building

"The committee strongly recommends the Ministry to conduct more research and work towards training and capacity building for management of public health emergencies arising from the use of bio-weapons," the report said.

The report did not explicitly state that the COVID-19 virus was a bio-weapon.

The international scientific community has also repeatedly debunked the conspiracy theory that the COVID-19 virus was developed as a bio-weapon.

The standing committee report blamed "poor contact tracing and slow testing" for the alarming rise of positive cases in the first few months of the pandemic.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 6

# Ready to help Delhi fight pandemic, says Amarinder

91.1% ICU beds with ventilators occupied in national capital; 5,879 new cases reported in last 24 hours

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH/NEW DELHI

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Saturday said the State government was ready to help Delhi manage its spiralling COVID-19 cases.

The national capital, which has seen a sharp spike in daily COVID-19 cases in the festival season, witnessed 5,879 new cases in the last 24 hours, taking the total to 5,23,117, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government. Also, 111 more deaths were reported in the city in the past 24 hours, pushing the toll to 8,270.

"Delhi is fighting a tough



Health workers conducting door-to-door COVID-19 test at Jahangirpuri in north Delhi on Saturday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

battle and we are there to help if needed. I have said this earlier too," Capt. Amarinder said. "While nobody knows when the second wave of the epidemic will

strike Punjab, the experience of the National Capital Region and other States shows that it is an almost certain eventuality." He assured the people that his government

was taking all possible measures to meet the situation.

The Punjab CM was speaking after digitally launching 107 wellness centres to boost healthcare infrastructure in the State and provide health services to patients at their doorsteps, in both rural and urban areas.

### Beds running out

In Delhi, 91.1% ICU beds with ventilators reserved for COVID-19 treatment were occupied on Saturday night and 84.5% of ICU beds without ventilators were taken, according to the city government data. Many hospitals, including

Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital and Safdarjung Hospital, did not have a single ICU bed with ventilator. Also, of the total 17,311 beds available for COVID-19 treatment, 55.1% were occupied.

The positivity rate (percentage of people testing positive for every 100 tests done) in Delhi was 12.9%.

The overall positivity rate till now is 9.08%.

A door-to-door survey to identify people with symptoms of the virus continued for the second day on Saturday and is expected to be completed by November 25.

SEE ALSO ▶ PAGE 3

Ayurveda PGs will perform surgeries soon

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Postgraduate students in Ayurveda will now be trained and allowed to perform a variety of general surgery, ENT, ophthalmology, and dental procedures. The decision comes after the Central Council of Indian Medicine (CCIM) amended the Indian Medicine Central Council (Post Graduate Ayurveda Education) Regulations, 2016, to include the regulation to allow PG students of Ayurveda to practise general surgery.

"The CCIM, with the previous sanction of the Central Government, makes the following regulations to amend the Indian Medicine Central Council (Post Graduate Ayurveda Education) Regulations, 2016," the notification said. The Act has been renamed Indian Medicine Central Council (Post Graduate Ayurveda Education) Amendment Regulations, 2020.

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T.N. Governor can decide on Perarivalan's release: CBI

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation told the Supreme Court that convict A.G. Perarivalan has nothing to do with the further investigation conducted by its Multi-Disciplinary Monitoring Agency (MDMA) into the "larger conspiracy" behind the assassination of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi in 1991.

The CBI said it was entirely left to Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit to decide whether to release Perarivalan, who is serving a life sentence. Perarivalan's mother has appealed to the Governor for his release. He was arrested at the age of 19 and is in his late forties now.

The central agency said it has no role whatsoever in the issue, and the question of remission is wholly between Governor Purohit and Perarivalan.

"It is for the office of His Excellency Governor of Tamil Nadu to take a call on the issue of whether remission is to be granted ... So far as relief in the present matter is concerned, CBI has no role," a 24-page affidavit filed by the agency in the top court said.

The CBI affidavit said Perarivalan is "not the subject matter of the further investigation carried out by the MDMA". "The further investigation conducted by the MDMA is only limited to the mandate provided by the Jain Commission Report," the agency said.

The Jain Commission of Inquiry had recommended further probe into the killing.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 6

# Punjab farmers to lift rail blockade

CM asks Centre to restore train services



**Reasoning it out:** Punjab CM Amarinder Singh meeting members of farmers' unions in Chandigarh on Saturday. ■ ANI

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

Members of 30 farmers' outfits in Punjab on Saturday decided to lift the rail blockade on November 23, after nearly two months of their protest against the Centre's new agriculture laws.

The Railways had suspended train services to the State after the farmers began their rail roko agitation on October 1.

"We have decided to lift the rail blockade by the evening of November 23; so from November 24, both passenger and goods trains can have a smooth movement. The decision has been taken keeping in view the problems being faced by the people of Punjab – be it traders, industrialists or workers. Already, we announced on October 21 that movement of goods trains would be allowed, but the Central government is not running them," Jagmohan Singh, general secretary, Bharatiya Kisan Union (Dakhauna), told *The Hindu*, after a joint meeting of farmers' outfits here.

They also held a meeting with Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh.

"We, however, want to

make it clear that we are allowing the movement of trains for 15 days from November 24. If, in the meantime, our demands are not met or talks by the Central government are not held with regard to our new agriculture laws.

The Railways had suspended train services to the State after the farmers began their rail roko agitation on October 1.

"We have decided to lift the rail blockade by the evening of November 23; so from November 24, both passenger and goods trains can have a smooth movement. The decision has been taken keeping in view the problems being faced by the people of Punjab – be it traders, industrialists or workers. Already, we announced on October 21 that movement of goods trains would be allowed, but the Central government is not running them," Jagmohan Singh, general secretary, Bharatiya Kisan Union (Dakhauna), told *The Hindu*, after a joint meeting of farmers' outfits here.

He assured the farmer leaders that he would meet the Prime Minister and the Union Home Minister soon to press their demands.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 6

# 'AIADMK-BJP tie-up will continue in 2021'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

The AIADMK leadership on Saturday declared in the presence of Union Home Minister Amit Shah here that the party's alliance with the BJP

would continue for the 2021 Assembly election in Tamil Nadu.

Mr. Shah responded by lauding the "good governance" provided by Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palanis

wami, especially in the fight against COVID-19. He said the Narendra Modi government at the Centre would stand by the AIADMK government "like a rock" for the development of Tamil Nadu.

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Chief Engineer PMGSY (JKRRDA) Jammu for and on behalf of The Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir, invites e-tenders for stage contractson item Rate Basis from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K State Govt, CPWD, Railways or equivalent and other State Govts up to 5.00 PM on 04-12-2020 for each of the following works.

S. No	Name of Work/ Package No.	Name of the PII	Cost of documents (Rs.)	Earnest Money (Rs.)	Time Allowed for Call of tender	Time and date of opening of tenders	Class of contractor	Any registered contractor with State PWD/CPWD/ Railways or equivalent qualifying eligibility criteria as provided in the Standard Bidding Documents can tender for the works
1	Restoration of roads under the jurisdiction of PMGSY Division Dodra on Emergency basis i.e (Motorable Paths only) by way of Clearance of Snow/Slips likely to occur during financial year 2020-2021 On - i. Kharo to Bhagwah road, ii. Bhagwah to Nara, Jk04-16, Length = 55 Kms, iii. Dangrota to Ganika , Package No. JK04-305, Length = 7.43 Kms, iii. ChilMorth to Bhup Bridge, Package No.,JK04-306, Length = 4.00Kms, iv. Ganika to Bhupapul, Package No.JK04-338, Length=2.00 Kms, v. Bhagwah to Dessa, Package No. JK04-219, Length = 10.05 Kms, vi.Chil to Chandal road, Package No. JK04-224,Length = 20.00 Kms, vii.Saras to Kastigarh, Package No. JK04-172,Length =16.32Kms. Total Length = 74.33 Kms		23000.00	1000.00	01 Day	1st	10:00 AM 05-12-2020	Thathri
2	Restoration of roads under the jurisdiction of PMGSY Division Dodra on Emergency basis i.e (Motorable Paths only) by way of Clearance of Snow/Slips likely to occur during financial year 2020-2021 On - i. Kharo to Bhagwah road, ii. Bhagwah to Nara, Jk04-16, Length = 55 Kms, iii. KallanjiDrangaBharghan to Behola Part-II, Package No. JK04-270,Length = 14.00 Kms, iii. Bharan to Rote, Package No.,JK04-289, Length = 13.00 Kms, vi. Marsoo to Charote , Part-I, PackageNo- JK04-175, Length = 10.00 Kms, v. Marsoo to Charote Part-II, Package No. JK04-474, Length = 13.50 Kms Total Length = 65.50 Kms		13600.00	1000.00	01 Day	1st	10:00 AM 05-12-2020	Thathri
3	Restoration of roads under the jurisdiction of PMGSY Division Dodra on Emergency basis i.e (Motorable Paths only) by way of Clearance of Snow/Slips likely to occur during financial year 2020-2021 On - i. Beoli to Bijarani, Package No. JK04-187,Length= 6.00 Kms, ii. Beoli to Goldi , Package No. JK04-290, Length = 5.20Kms, iii. Beoli to Koli, Package No. JK04-220, Length = 14.40 Kms, iv. Shiva to Sharema, Package No.- JK04-477,Length= 5.00Kms. v. Kehote to Shiva, Package No. JK04183, Length = 3.80 Kms. vi. Pran to Masi, Package No.,JK04-460, Length = 10.00 Kms, vii. Banjara to Ujh, Package No. JK04-180, Length = 5.00Kms. viii. Dher to Dashnan, Package No. JK04-294, Length= 6.80 Kms, ix. Bhabor to Jigote, Package No. JK04-298, Length = 15.00 Kms. x. Udaipur to Hanch, Package No.: JK04-218, Length = 6.65 Kmsxi. Chakri to Kalihand, Package No.- JK04-174, Length = 10.88 Kms Total Length = 93.95 Kms		29400.00	1000.00	01 Day	1st	10:00 AM 05-12-2020	Thathri
4	Restoration of roads under the jurisdiction of PMGSY Division Dodra on Emergency basis i.e (Motorable Paths only) by way of Clearance of Snow/Slips likely to occur during financial year 2020-2021 On - i. Dali to Kalihand , Package No.: JK04-182, Length = 8.20 Kms. ii. Doda Bharat road Km 23rd to Km 26th RD 450, Package No.: JK04-176, Length= 3.500 Kms. vii. Doda Bharat road to Bagh, Package No. JK04-184,Length = 8.40 Kms. viii. Dher to MalwanJajirPart-I, Package No.- JK04-641, Length = 10.00Kms. ix. Jodhpur to Parsooda Part-II, Package No. JK04-326, Length = 20.00 Kms. x. Jodhpur to Prashoola Part-II, Package No. JK04-473, Length =12.00 Kms. xi. Dongroo to Gadar, Package No. JK04-224, Length = 20.00 Kms Total Length = 70.70 Kms		25700.00	1000.00	01 Day	1st	10:00 AM 05-12-2020	Thathri
5	Restoration of roads under the jurisdiction of PMGSY Division Dodra on Emergency basis i.e (Motorable Paths only) by way of Clearance of Snow/Slips likely to occur during financial year 2020-2021 On - i. B.B. BhagwahGanika to Koli, Package No.- JK04-217, Length = 11.52 Kms, ii. B.B. BhagwahKastigarh to Chilli via Gogla, Package No. JK04-458, Length = 14.10 Kms. iii. Chilli to Saras, Package No. JK04-307, Length = 4.00 Kms, iv. Gangalwar to Sarsi , Part-4, Package No. JK04-288, Length = 11.50 Kms, v. KheleinDrangaJuf to Saras, Package No JK04-476, Length = 4.00 Kms Total Length = 45.12 Kms		7820.00	1000.00	01 Day	1st	10:00 AM 05-12-2020	Thathri
6	Restoration of roads under the jurisdiction of PMGSY Division Dodra on Emergency basis i.e (Motorable Paths only) by way of Clearance of Snow/Slips likely to occur during financial year 2020-2021 On - i. Sarthingle to Katyra, Package No.: JK04-216, Length = 6.00 Kms. ii. Km 2nd of Nagar Lanchan to Kansar, Package No. JK04-459, Length =7.70 Kms. iii. Dallian to Dhumunda, Package No. JK04-211, Length = 11.96 Kms. iv.Cheka to Matoda, Package No. JK04-173, Length = 4.25 Kms, v. Gatha to Dhalwal, Package No. JK04- 291, Length = 4.40 Kms. vi. Bhara to Gurekha, Package No. JK04-221, Length = 10.93 Kms. vii. Bhara to Dige, Package No. JK04-292, Length = 4.15 Kms. Total Length = 48.03 Kms		8000.00	1000.00	01 Day	1st	10:00 AM 05-12-2020	Thathri
7	Restoration of roads under the jurisdiction of PMGSY Division Dodra on Emergency basis i.e (Motorable Paths only) by way of Clearance of Snow/Slips likely to occur during financial year 2020-2021 On - i. Kheri to Chatta, Package No.: JK04-295, Length = 6.00 Kms. ii. Dhrudu to Manawa , Package No. JK04-296, Length = 9.30 Kms. iii. Dhrudu to Dhar, Package No. JK04-236, Length = 7.55 Kms iv. Malhotri to Dugti , Package No. JK04-181, Length = 5.00 Kms. vi. Km 4th of Bherubhashti to Dugti , Package No. JK04- 222, Length =11.00 Kms. vii. Bhalla to Gajoth, Package No. JK04-472, Length = 7.50 Kms. viii. Bhalla to 29th, Package No. JK04-297, Length = 5.00 Kms. ix. Bhalla to Tarwora, Package No. JK04-529, Length = 13.00 Kms. x. Bhalla to Taisana, Package No.- JK04-525, Length = 13.20 Kms Total Length = 77.37 Kms		11200.00	1000.00	01 Day	1st	10:00 AM 05-12-2020	Thathri
8	Restoration of roads under the jurisdiction of PMGSY Division Banial on Emergency basis i.e (Motorable Paths only) by way of Clearance of Snow/Slips likely to occur during financial year 2020-2021 On - i. Zara to Banial Road Km. 1st to 4th , Package No.: JK04-198, Length= 4.00 Km. ii. BanialLammer Road (Nowgam Lammer Sector) Package No.- JK04-481, Length= 4.60 Km.. iii. BanialChanglo Road Km.2nd to 4th , Package No.: JK04-443 Length: 3.00 Km. iv. BanialDolganj Road (change 4500 to 5000) Package No.: JK04-400, Length= 4.00 Km. v. Neel Perhander Road Package No.:JK04-229, Length: 4.00 Km. Total Length: 19.60 Km.		45800.00	1000.00	01 Day	1st	10:00 AM 05-12-2020	Banial
9	Restoration of roads under the jurisdiction of PMGSY Division Banial on Emergency basis i.e (Motorable Paths only) by way of Clearance of Snow/Slips likely to occur during financial year 2020-2021 On - i. Kharo to Tanta , Package No.: JK04-405, Length: 8.00 Kms. ii. Shalgam Panchal Road, Package No.- JK04-303, Length: 6.30 Kms. iii. Almabas to Hochak Road , Package No.: JK04-227 Length: 3.00 Kms. iv. Hewagenhordhar Road Km. 6th to 11th, Package No.: JK04-228 Length: 6.00 Kms Total Length: 17.79 Kms		32000.00	1000.00	01 Day	1st	10:00 AM 05-12-2020	Banial
10	Restoration of roads under the jurisdiction of PMGSY Division Banial on Emergency basis i.e (Motorable Paths only) by way of Clearance of Snow/Slips likely to occur during financial year 2020-2021 On - i. Extension of UkhralMalgamProl Road , (Change 7500 To 15500) , Package No.:JK04-404 Length: 8.00 Kms. ii. Shalgam Panchal Road, Package No.- JK04-303, Length: 6.30 Kms. iii. Almabas to Hochak Road , Package No.: JK04-227 Length: 3.00 Kms. iv. Hewagenhordhar Road Km. 6th to 11th, Package No.: JK04-228 Length: 6.00 Kms Total Length: 23.00 Kms		49000.00	1000.00	01 Day	1st	10:00 AM 05-12-2020	Banial
11	Restoration of roads under the jurisdiction of PMGSY Division Banial on Emergency basis i.e (Motorable Paths only) by way of Clearance of Snow/Slips likely to occur during financial year 2020-2021 On - i. BanialMangit Road Km. 9th -38th Package No.: JK04-228 Length: 30.00 Kms		50000.00	1000.00	01 Day	1st	10:00 AM 05-12-2020	Banial
12	Restoration of road under the jurisdiction of PMGSY Division Thathri on emergency basis i.e (Motorable paths only by way of clearance of snow / slips likely to occur during financial year 2020-2021 on - i. Bhele to Gosti , Package No.: JK04- 209, Length: 16.00 Kms. ii. Bhele to Parwani , Package No.: JK04-201, Length = 10.00 Kms. iii. Km 26th NH1B to Srinagar, Package No.: JK04-404, Length = 15.00 Kms iv. Thathella to Jopota , Package No.: JK04-285, Length = 7.00 Kms Total Length = 30.00 Kms		12000	1000.00	01 Day	1st	10:00 AM 05-12-2020	Thathri
13	Restoration of road under the jurisdiction of PMGSY Division Thathri on emergency basis i.e (Motorable paths only by way of clearance of snow / slips likely to occur during financial year 2020-2021 on - i.Khara to Tanta , Package No.- JK04-405, Length: 8.00 Kms. ii. Halaran to ChilMorth , Package No.: JK04-285, Length = 6.00 Kms. iii. Km 13th TKN road to Chiller , Package No.: JK04-147, Length =16.00 Kms Total Length = 42.00 Kms		7800.00	1000.00	01 Day	1st	10:00 AM 05-12-2020	Thathri
14	Restoration of road under the jurisdiction of PMGSY Division Thathri on emergency basis i.e (Motorable paths only by way of clearance of snow / slips likely to occur during financial year 2020-2021 on - i. Km 76th NH1B to Kandote , PackageNo- JK04-202, Length: 4.00Kms ii. Km76th NH1B Kandote to Ideralla, Package No.: JK04-471, Length: 5.00 Kms. iii. Thathri to Kathawa , Package No.: JK04-472, Length = 10.00 Kms. iv. Thathri to Ching , Package No.: JK04-492, Length = 11.00 Kms Total Length = 30.00 Kms							
15	Restoration of road under the jurisdiction of PMGSY Division Thathri on emergency basis i.e (Motorable paths only by way of clearance of snow / slips likely to occur during financial year 2020-2021 on - i. Chang to Khalqas , Package No.: JK04-203, Length: 4.00 Kms. ii. Chang to Dukwe , Package No.: JK04-203, Length: 4.00 Kms. iii. Chang to Thaloran , Package No.: JK04-208, Length = 6.00 Kms. vi. Kharangal to Chouari , Package No.: JK04-208, Length: 3.00 Kms. vii. Budwar to Chant , Package No.: JK04-202, Length: 2.20 Kms. viii. Budwar to Champal , Package No.: JK04-207, Length = 11.80Kms Total Length = 27.50 Kms							
16	Restoration of road under the jurisdiction of PMGSY Division Thathri on emergency basis i.e (Motorable paths only by way of clearance of snow / slips likely to occur during financial year 2020-2021 on - i. Jakays to Gandow , Package No.: JK04-200, Length: 4.00Kms ii. Jakays to Chong , Package No.: JK04-481, Length: 3.00 Kms. iii. Bhatiyas to Teela , Package No.: JK04-202, Length: 2.20 Kms. vi. L201 to Champal , Package No.: JK04-207, Length = 11.80Kms Total Length = 27.50 Kms							
17	Restoration of road under the jurisdiction of PMGSY Division Thathri on emergency basis i.e (Motorable paths only by way of clearance of snow / slips likely to occur during financial year 2020-2021 on - i. Jakays to Gandow , Package No.: JK04-200, Length: 4.00Kms ii. Jakays to Chong , Package No.: JK04-481, Length: 3.00 Kms. iii. Bhatiyas to Teela , Package No.: JK04-202, Length: 2.20 Kms. vi. L201 to Champal , Package No.: JK04-207, Length = 11.80Kms Total Length = 27.50 Kms							
18	Restoration of road under the jurisdiction of PMGSY Division Thathri on emergency basis i.e (Motorable paths only by way of clearance of snow / slips likely to occur during financial year 2020-2021 on - i. TKN road km 7th Dunadi to Bunjwah , Package No.: JK04-18, Length = 13.00 Kms. ii. Kewa pull to Kithee , Package No.: JK04-09, Length: 6.77 Kms. iii. TipuPatna , Package No.: JK04-96, Length: 4.00 Kms. iv. Patna to Kithi , Package No.: JK04-403, Length: 6.40 Kms. v. Gokhri to Kithi , Package No.: JK04-283, Length: 1.00 Kms. vi. Govan to Bhati . , Package No.: JK04-406, Length: 7.00 Kms. vii. Bhati to Dhonse , Package No.: JK04-152, Length = 1.50 Kms. viii. Km 33 rd ID 175 Bangro to Shingani , Package No.: JK04-190, Length = 9.00 Kms Total Length = 42.500 Kms							
19	Restoration of road under the jurisdiction of PMGSY Division Kishwar on emergency basis i.e (Motorable paths only by way of clearance of snow / slips likely to occur during financial year 2020-2021 on - i. Kishwar to Drakhana , Package No.: JK04-129, Length: 8.00 Kms. ii. Kishwar to Kalchanda , Package No.: JK04-335, Length: 5.00 KMS. iii. Sandhi to Chalasu , Package no.: JK04-423 Length: 15.00 kms. iv. Chalase to Tatani , Package no.: JK04-110, Length: 12.40 kms. v. Machipal to Chamaoti , Package no.: JK04-145 Length: 10.00 kms Total Length:42.420 Kms							
20	Restoration of road under the jurisdiction of PMGSY Division Kishwar on emergency basis i.e (Motorable paths only by way of clearance of snow / slips likely to occur during financial year 2020-2021 on - i. Lower Palmar to Upper Palmar , Package No.:JK04-30 Length: 6.00 Kms. ii. Shivnagar to Sarawan , Package no.: JK04-34, Length: 4.00 Kms. iii. Kishwar to Dharan , Package no.: JK04-41 Length: 13.00 Kms. iv. Kishwar road , Package No.: JK04-411 Length: 10.38 Kms. v. Km 10th of KurniaKeshwan road to Nagni , Package no.: JK04-38, Length: 15.9 kms. vi. Shivnagar to Sarawan , Package no.: JK04-404 Length: 13.50 kms Total length: 55.63 Kms							
21	Restoration of road under the jurisdiction of PMGSY Division Kishwar on emergency basis i.e (Motorable paths only by way of clearance of snow / slips likely to occur during financial year 2020-2021 on - i. Gurjan to Pochal , Package No.: JK04-422, Length: 7.00 kms. iii. Shahmal to Trigam , Package no.: JK04-45, Length: 11.50 Kms.ii.Kuleed to Hullar , Package no.: JK04-424 Length: 10.00 kms Total Length:24,500Kms							
22	Restoration of road under the jurisdiction of PMGSY Division Kishwar on emergency basis i.e (Motorable paths only by way of clearance of snow / slips likely to occur during financial year 2020-2021 on - i. Agral to Karod , Package No.: JK04-43, Length: 1.70 kms. iii. Karod to Badin , Package No.: JK04-124 Length: 1.70 Kms. vi. Karod to Lawa , Package No.: JK04-333, Length: 2.38 kms iv. Duri to Ghan , Package no.: JK04-127, Length: 6.30 kms vi. HSD km 21st to 24th Karod , Package no.: JK04-634, Length: 4.00 kms Total Length:26,380 Kms							
23	Restoration of road under the jurisdiction of PMGSY Division Kishwar on emergency basis i.e (Motorable paths only by way of clearance of snow / slips likely to occur during financial year 2020-2021 on - i. Kundal to Afani , Package No.: JK04-276, Length: 4.50 Kms. ii. Atholi to Palai , Package no.: JK04-95, Length: 12.20 Kms iii. Gulabgarh to Ligri , Package no.: JK04-294, Length: 13.57 Kms Total Length: 30.270 Kms							
24	Rest							

Timings  
DELHI

SUNDAY, NOV. 22	
RISE 06:50	SET 17:26
RISE 13:13	SET 00:00
MONDAY, NOV. 23	
RISE 06:50	SET 17:25
RISE 13:46	SET 00:27
TUESDAY, NOV. 24	
RISE 06:51	SET 17:25
RISE 14:17	SET 01:22

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	25	09
Safdarjung	25	09
Palam	23	10

**Delhi Palam Today**  
24°C Morning remain cold with mist and shallow fog. A Pleasant day with few clouds and cool winds likely.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
25°C Shallow fog/mist likely during with dry weather very light winds and few clouds may appear.

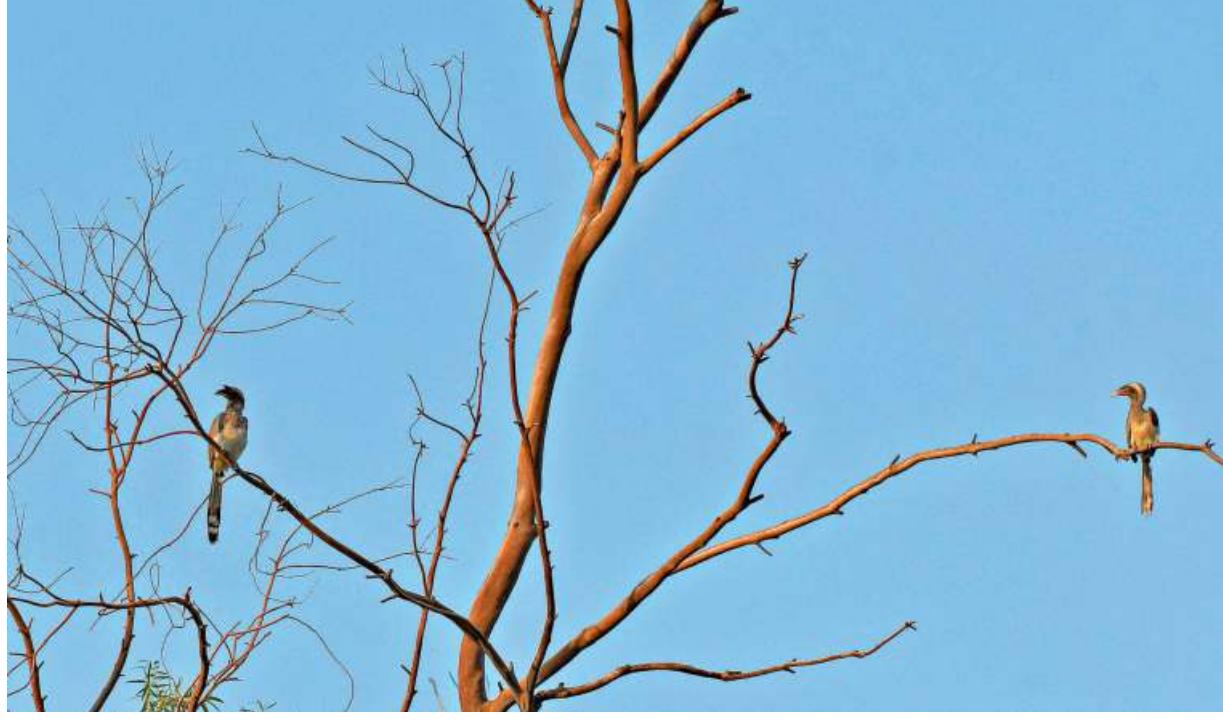
© Copyright Skymet Weather 2019 All rights reserved.

**IN BRIEF**

**Three criminals held after gunfight in Greater Noida Noida**

Three criminals were arrested in U.P.'s Greater Noida after a gunfight in which two of them were injured, the police said on Saturday. The accused were held near Maicha underpass on Friday night, a senior officer said.

**Keeping watch**



**Early birds:** A pair of grey hornbills sit on a tree in the city on Saturday. ■ V.V. KRISHNAN

## Akbar, Ramani nudged about possibility of out-of-court settlement

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

A Delhi court on Saturday asked former Union Minister M.J. Akbar and journalist Priya Ramani whether there was a chance of settlement between them in a criminal defamation complaint filed by him against her.

Mr. Akbar had filed the complaint against Ms. Ramani for allegedly defaming him by accusing him of sexual misconduct around 20 years ago when he was a journalist.

Ms. Ramani had said the allegations against Mr. Akbar, made in the wake of

#MeToo movement in 2018, were her truth and were made in public good.

**Judge transferred**

Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate (ACMM) Ravindra Kumar Pandey posed the query on Saturday as he started hearing afresh the fi-

nal arguments in the case since the previous judge hearing the matter was transferred to another court on Wednesday.

Senior advocate Geeta Luthra, appearing for Mr. Akbar, said she needed time to talk to her client before making a decision on the issue.

The counsel for Ms. Ramani, advocate Bhavook Chauhan, said there was less chance of any settlement since the facts of the case were peculiar.

The court asked both the parties to respond on the point of settlement and get back on November 24.

## 37-year-old man nabbed for extorting taxi drivers

Accused posed as recovery agent: police

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

A 37-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly extorting money from taxi drivers on the pretext of recovering instalments against their car loan, the police said on Saturday.

The accused – Bijender alias Lala – has been found to be involved in two previous robbery incidents, they said.

The matter came to fore on Friday when a taxi driver from New Usmanpur registered a complaint with the police. He had purchased a second-hand commercial car one-and-a-half years ago for ₹30,000. On Thursday, when he was taking a passenger to RML Hospital and was passing by the ISBT at Kashmere Gate, his car was intercepted by another car.

One of the passengers from the other car approached the complainant and said he had defaulted on his car loan. On the pretext of sorting out the matter, the accused asked the complainant to sit in their vehicle.

The police recovered ₹10,000 from the accused and efforts are being made to nab his accomplices. During interrogation, the accused disclosed that he used to work for recovery agencies.

## 12 hurt after bus collides with tree on Mathura Road

**STAFF REPORTER**  
NEW DELHI

Twelve people were injured after an Uttar Pradesh roadways bus collided with a tree on Mathura Road here early on Saturday, the police said.

The driver fled the spot after the accident, they said. The police were informed about the accident at 3.22 a.m..

The crash took place in front of the Central Road Research Institute near a CNG pump, a senior officer said. The bus was coming from Bah in Agra and was headed for Inter State Bus Terminal Sarai Kale Khan, he added.

Twelve passengers suffered minor injuries and were shifted to the AIIMS Trauma Centre while 10 more were given first-aid at the spot by CATS ambulance staff, said DCP (South-East) R.P. Meena.

A case of accident has been registered and an investigation is under way, he added.

**OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL, MEDICAL EDUCATION & TRAINING, UTTAR PRADESH, 6TH FLOOR, JAWAHAR BHAWAN, LUCKNOW.**

No. ME-3/2020/2280 Lucknow: Dated 21 November 2020

Following is the time Schedule for UP NEET UG 2020 Second round of Online counseling for Government/Private Medical/Dental Colleges/Institutions/University (MBBS/BDS) Courses:-

Date of online registration 24th November 2020 from 11:00 AM to 26th November 2020

Date of declaration of online merit list 27th November 2020

Date of document verification of academic certificates/Caste/ other documents and submission of security money 02nd December 2020 from 05th December 2020

Date of online choice filling 12th December 2020 from 11:00 AM to 14th December 2020

Date of declaration of seat allotment 16th December 2020

Date for downloading allotment letters & admission 17th December 2020 from 21st December 2020

For participation in counseling of UP NEET UG 2020, candidates will have to compulsorily register online by depositing Rs. 2000/- online through Website <https://upneet.gov.in>

Candidates registered in 1st round of counseling need not to register again for 2nd round of counseling.

Registered candidates who were not able to pay their registration fee in 1st round of counseling can deposit their registration fee and participate in 2nd round of counseling.

Candidates who were not able to register themselves in 1st round of counseling due to some unforeseen reasons, can now participate in 2nd round of counseling by depositing registration fee of Rs. 2000/- only (Through online Debit card/Credit card/net banking).

Candidates who were allotted seats in 1st round of counseling, but have not taken admission, can again participate in 2nd round of counseling by depositing prescribed amount bank Demand Draft of security fee at the self chosen document verification nodal center.

Candidates who were not allotted any seat in 1st round of counseling and do not want to participate in 2nd round of counseling further, can collect their respective Demand Draft of security money from self chosen document verification nodal centre, separate notification will be issued after the second round of counseling for this on website.

Candidates who did not submit some documents like, Caste/Ews/ or any other certificates at the time of 1st round of document verification can resubmit their documents during 2nd round of document verification at self chosen verification nodal centres.

For participating in 2nd round of counseling newly registered candidates need to deposit security fee of (Rs. 30,000/- for Government seats, Rs. 2,000/- for Private Medical seats & Rs. 100,000/- for Private Dental seats) as CTS Bank Demand Draft in the name of "Director General Medical Education & Training, U.P.", Payable at Lucknow, at self chosen document verification nodal centre.

Candidates who have deposited Rs. 1,00,000/- Demand Draft in 1st round of counseling for admission in private Dental Colleges (BDS) and have taken admission at the allotted seats, further want to participate in 2nd round of counseling for private Medical Colleges (MBBS/BDS) need to submit the additional Demand Draft of Rs. 1,00,000/- at the document verification centre mandatorily.

For further important and detailed information kindly visit the website <https://upneet.gov.in> & [www.updgmre.in](http://www.updgmre.in) regularly.

Director General

₹2,000 fine for violations will encourage bribery: BJP

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The government's decision to charge ₹2,000 fine for not wearing masks will not solve the problem but encourage bribery, said Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta on Saturday.

In an order, the health department said contact tracing should be paid proper attention and it should be ensured that the contacts traced be subjected to immediate testing and be kept under effective isolation until test results come.

Meanwhile, Nigambodh Ghat, the biggest cremation facility in Delhi, is likely to get three more CNG-based furnaces from next week, officials said on Saturday.

In the last ten days, there were instances where the maximum daily cremation count of COVID-19 victims reached 22, they added.

A total of 210 COVID-19 victims were cremated at the ghat from November 10 to November 21, said officials of the North Delhi Municipal Corporation.

Twenty COVID-19 victims were cremated till 5.30 p.m. on Saturday.

Will expose 'rampant corruption' in BJP-led municipalities: AAP

'We will hold 181 press conferences'

**STAFF REPORTER**

NEW DELHI

Aam Aadmi Party chief spokesperson Saurabh Bharadwaj on Saturday said that to expose the "rampant corruption" in the BJP-ruled municipal corporations, the party will be holding 181 press conferences to inform people about "181 corruption schemes of the BJP".

"When the municipal corporation elections were held in 2017, the BJP leadership was aware that their councillors have a bad image due to involvement in corruption. So, the BJP decided to replace the old councillors with new faces and the campaign *Naye Chehre, Nayi Udaan*," Mr. Bharadwaj said.

"This decision would have made a difference if Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had asked the market associations, traders associations, social organisations, civil defense, RWA and others to help spread awareness regarding COVID-19," he alleged. "How will the poor, who find it difficult to earn bread and butter, pay a fine of ₹2,000 for not wearing a mask?" Mr. Gupta asked.

He added that the elections were fought in the name of the central BJP leadership and 181 councillors from the party were elected.

"The BJP has been ruling all three civic bodies for the last 15 years. But the new councillors have broken the records of even the old councillors in terms of corruption. We will hold a series of press conferences in which we will be informing you about every scheme of the civic bodies

which we will be informing you about every scheme of the civic bodies

SAURABH BHARADWAJ  
AAP chief spokesperson

creating Unique Property Identification Card, but nothing was done to implement it and the money was diverted into the pockets of the leaders and officials.

**Main source of revenue**

"What is the main issue of the BJP in the civic bodies? They say they do not have money and revenue. The main source of revenue of the municipal corporations across India is property tax. The surprising fact is that in Delhi, the property tax is one of the highest in the country, but the civic bodies say they do not have revenue. The civic bodies here are poor but the councilors are rich," the Aam Aadmi Party said.

## BJP holds blood donation camp

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

NEW DELHI

Donating blood is a great virtue and it has health benefits too, said Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan on Saturday as he inaugurated a blood donation camp organised by the Delhi BJP Yuva Morcha.

Mr. Vardhan thanked the Delhi BJP for the camp, which was held at the Indian Red Cross Society headquarters.

**TO ADVERTISE  
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**Mr. N SELVA KUMAR**

**PH: 9820350726**

**selvakumar.n@thehindu.co.in**

**THE HINDU**

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- NOIDA, Nirula's Sec-2, Near Metro Station, Sec-15, Noida, UP
- LAJPAT NAGAR, 49, Main Ring Road, Adj. Haldi Ram, Near Moolchand Crossing

Government of Jammu & Kashmir

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL HOSPITAL AND

CENTRAL HEATING DIVISION SRINAGAR

Telefax:- 0194-2496089, Email ID:- xenmhchdk@yahoo.in

**GIST of e-NIT No:**

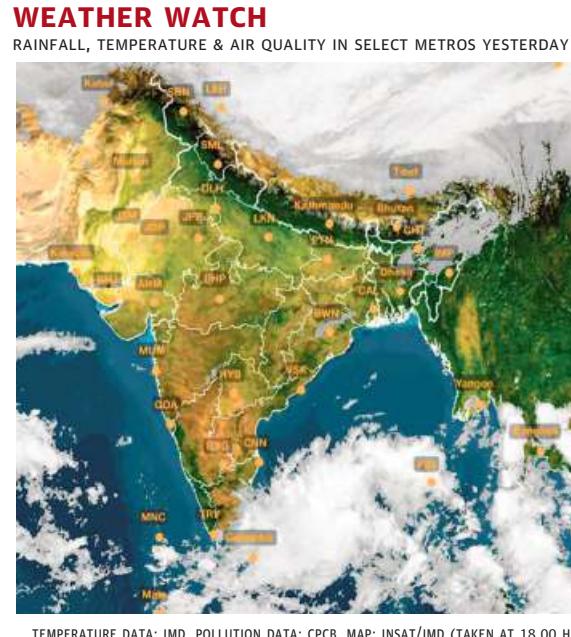
NIT No: MHCHD/TS /2020-21/198/e-tendering Dated:-19.11.2020

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K State e-tenders are invited from registered/reputed/experienced firms with J&K State Govt., CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for the below mentioned work:-

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


<tbl\_r cells="6" ix="2" maxcspan="





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

**Forecast for Sunday:** Thunderstorm with lightning likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit-Baltistan, Muzaffarabad, Himachal Pradesh and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Dense fog likely at isolated places over Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura and Odisha

**CITY** RAIN MAX MIN CITY RAIN MAX MIN

Agarata	... 25.6	20.5	Kozhikode	... 33.8	24.4
Ahmedabad	... 29.2	16.0	Kurnool	... 34.6	19.1
Aizawl	... 22.9	13.4	Lucknow	... 25.2	11.8
Allahabad	... 26.8	12.7	Madurai	... 31.8	21.1
Bengaluru	... 29.6	17.0	Mangaluru	... 33.8	22.4
Bhopal	... 25.0	12.0	Mumbai	... 32.9	20.5
Bhubaneswar	... 32.7	22.3	Mysuru	... 29.0	17.0
Chandigarh	... 23.1	10.7	New Delhi	... 24.6	8.5
Chennai	... 31.3	23.0	Patna	... 24.0	16.4
Coimbatore	... 31.6	20.8	Poorni	... 32.0	26.2
Dehradun	... 24.0	8.7	Puducherry	... 31.0	21.6
Gangtok	... 15.5	9.2	Pune	... 22.4	20.1
Goa	... 34.0	23.4	Raipur	... 0.4	33.6
Guwahati	... 26.3	16.9	Ranchi	... 24.8	17.7
Hubballi	... 31.0	17.0	Shillong	... 20.5	10.5
Hyderabad	... 33.0	18.9	Shimla	... 16.1	6.9
Imphal	... 23.4	9.8	Srinagar	... 10.2	2.5
Jaipur	... 24.8	11.6	Thiruvananthapuram	... 2.4	22.3
Kochi	... 30.4	22.8	Tiruchi	... 32.6	21.8
Kohima	... 24.2	8.2	Vijayawada	... 33.6	22.2
Kolkata	... 36.6	26.3	Visakhapatnam	... 32.0	23.8

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

**Pollutants in the air you are breathing**

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>x</sub>	CO	PM <sub>2.5</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	CODE
Ahmedabad	15	.75	49	.97	.125	■■■■■
Bengaluru	.3	.20	.33	.125	■■■■■	■■■■■
Chennai	11	.3	.39	.117	■■■■■	■■■■■
Delhi	12	.76	44	.307	.241	■■■■■
Hyderabad	13	.40	.9	.10	.111	■■■■■
Kolkata	16	.18	.10	.316	.167	■■■■■
Lucknow	.9	.51	.19	.264	.193	■■■■■
Mumbai	13	.108	.39	.206	.186	■■■■■
Pune	.57	.57	.60	.61	.61	■■■■■
Visakhapatnam	12	.32	.40	.130	.123	■■■■■

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)  
**SO<sub>2</sub>:** Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

**NO<sub>x</sub>:** 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.

**PM<sub>2.5</sub> & PM<sub>10</sub>:** 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

## 57 Mussoorie trainees test COVID-19 positive

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

As many as 57 civil services officer trainees have tested positive for coronavirus at Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration at Mussoorie, prompting authorities to close "all non-essential departments" there.

The academy is taking every measure to break the chain of COVID-19 spread, a statement issued by the Personnel Ministry on Saturday said. All officer trainees, who have tested positive, have been quarantined in a dedicated COVID care centre, it said.

## Night curfew in Rajasthan

Fine for no mask raised after record 3,007 daily virus cases

MOHAMMED IQBAL  
JAIPUR

The Rajasthan government on Saturday imposed night curfew, between 8 p.m. and 6 a.m., in eight cities with the highest COVID-19 infection and raised the penalty for not wearing face mask at public places from ₹200 to ₹500, after a record 3,007 positive cases were detected on a single day across the State.

The district headquarters where the night curfew was clamped were Jaipur, Jodhpur, Kota, Bikaner, Udaipur, Ajmer, Alwar and Bhilwara. Markets, restaurants, shopping malls and other commercial establishments in the urban areas of these dis-



Ashok Gehlot. ■ FILE PHOTO.

tricts will be allowed to remain open till 7 p.m.

The decisions were taken at an urgent meeting of the Council of Ministers convened here late in the night in view of the virus infection spreading fast during the festive season and the cold weather conditions. Over 550 positive cases were reported on Saturday in Jaipur,

followed by 444 in Jodhpur, 215 in Bikaner and 210 in Ajmer.

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot presided over the meeting, while some Ministers attended it through videoconferencing. Mr. Gehlot said the preventive steps were the need of the hour and several States were taking stringent measures and had withdrawn the decisions to open schools and allow public gatherings.

Senior officers of the Medical & Health Department informed the meeting that the gatherings during Deepavali, recent municipal elections and wedding ceremonies had contributed to the increase in positive cases.

## U.P. CM asks officials to act tough in illicit liquor case

'Seize their properties, book accused under Gangsters Act'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath instructed officials on Saturday to seize the properties of those involved in the sale of spurious liquor. Four persons died and five were hospitalised in Phulpur area of Prayagraj on Saturday, allegedly after consuming illicit liquor.

The properties would be auctioned and the amount generated from it should be used to provide support

to the families of the victims, the Chief Minister said.

A government spokesman said Mr. Adityanath had instructed officials to book those involved in the sale of spurious liquor under the Gangsters Act.

District Magistrate Prayagraj Bhanu Chandra Goswami said the deaths took place in Amiliya village. The exact cause would be known after post mortem on the bodies and laboratory testing of the liquor samples collected from the shop. The salesman at the shop was arrested, police said.

Mr. Goswami said police were probing all angles, including reports that the shop had faced action in the past too.

## Opposition corners Odisha govt. over custodial deaths

Book Puri SP for murder, suspension is not punishment: BJP

STAFF REPORTER  
BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha Assembly on Saturday witnessed uproarious scenes over custodial deaths with the Opposition parties seeking sterner action.

The Bharatiya Janata Party took out a rally against alleged police high-handedness leading to death of K. Ramesh in Baselsihai police station in Puri town.

The party also demanded suspension of proceedings for discussion on cases of custodial deaths.

"The Puri Superintendent of Police should be booked under murder charges. His transfer from district is not punishment. He should be suspended. A judicial probe should be ordered," demanded Leader of the Oppo-

sition Pradipta Kumar Naik.

Veteran Congress leader Narasingha Mishra said, "The law and order situation has collapsed completely... jungle raj is prevailing... I have been reiterating at different fora. I have again repeated in the Assembly.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik should have taken stern action in two custodial cases."

"Allegations have been published in some print and electronic media about assault of some persons forwarded to jail by Pipili police station. An inquiry by DIG of Police, Central Range, Cuttack, has been ordered," a statement issued by the State Police Headquarters said.

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published in some print and electronic media about assault of some persons forwarded to jail by Pipili police station. An inquiry by DIG of Police, Central Range, Cuttack, has been ordered," a statement issued by the State Police Headquarters said.

"It is not a custodial death, but custodial murder. The culprits should be booked under Section 302 of IPC," he said.

(With PTI inputs)

The State government on Friday transferred Akhileshwar Singh, Puri SP, to police headquarters. Three police personnel of Baselsihai police station have been placed under suspension.

### Probe ordered

The Odisha Police ordered a Deputy Inspector General-level inquiry into the alleged custodial torture of six persons.

"Allegations have been published in some print and electronic media about assault of some persons forwarded to jail by Pipili police station. An inquiry by DIG of Police, Central Range, Cuttack, has been ordered," a statement issued by the State Police Headquarters said.

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## FROM PAGE ONE

## Panel bats for laws to counter bio-terrorism

The plethora of guidelines issued by the Health Ministry caused confusion and chaos, the report noted. Many of these guidelines were contradictory and different quarantine rules imposed by the State governments added to the panic, the report said.

The committee has also pulled up the Union Health Ministry for "grossly inadequate" number of hospital beds in government hospitals. Citing an example, the report said, "The committee is pained to observe that in RML Hospital, out of 1,572 beds, only 242 were dedicated to cap their price."

## 'T.N. Governor can decide on Perarivalan's release'

Its mandate included the monitoring/ tracking of absconding persons suspected of the crime, probe into the role of 2 Sri Lankan and Indian suspects identified by the Commission, looking into the delay in the interception of messages, among other things.

The CBI clarified that it did not receive any request from the Governor's office to divulge the status or details of the investigation. However, a status report has been filed in the Supreme Court.

The CBI has thus agreed with the apex court's oral remarks that the probe into the larger conspiracy does not concern convicts like Perarivalan.

"Larger conspiracy probe is only to prove if any other people are involved. It is not for them [people already convicted]," Justice L. Na-geswara Rao, leading a three-judge Bench, had observed orally during a hearing on November 3.

Perarivalan had applied to the Governor for pardon on December 30, 2015. Almost three years later, on September 2018, the Supreme Court asked the Go-

vern to decide the pardon plea as he "deemed fit". Three days after this court order, on September 9, the Tamil Nadu Cabinet recommended to the Governor to remit Mr. Perarivalan's sentence and release him forthwith.

However, it seems neither the recommendation was signed by the Tamil Nadu Governor neither the order of September 6 has been honoured by Governor for the past two years," an application filed by Perarivalan, through his lawyer, Prabu Ramasubramanian, said.

On January 20, the apex court had sought information from Tamil Nadu, represented by Additional Advocate General Balaji Srinivasan and Yogesh Kan-na, on the steps taken by the Governor pursuant to the September 6 order and the Cabinet's recommendation.

In February, the State government informed the court that the Cabinet recommendation had been sent to the Governor for his signature. The court had responded by asking the State to ensure that the Cabinet decision to release Perarivalan is enforced.

## Punjab farmers to lift rail blockade tomorrow

"Let us together put pressure on the Centre to see our point of view and understand how these laws would ruin Punjab," he said, adding that he was with the farmers in their fight. "We all have farmer blood in our veins," he said.

The Chief Minister also promised the farmer representatives that he would look into their other demands, including those relating to sugarcane price hike and clearance of dues, as well as withdrawal of FIRs registered in stubble burning cases. He said he would hold talks with them on these issues within the next one week, and would also set up a committee of officers to discuss the matter.

## Ayurveda PGs will perform surgeries soon

The notification, issued on November 19, states that students will be trained in two streams of surgery and would be awarded titles of MS (Ayurved) Shalya Tantra – (General Surgery and MS (Ayurved) Shalaka Tantra (Disease of Eye, Ear, Nose, Throat, Head and Oro-Dentistry).

The list of procedures that will be taught include – all types of skin grafting, ear lobe repair, excision of simple cyst and benign tumours (lipoma, fibroma, schwannoma, etc.) of non-vital organs, excision/amputation of gangrene, traumatic wound management – all types of suturing, ligation and repair of tendon and muscles, foreign body removal from stomach, colosto-

my, cataract surgery, local anaesthesia in the eye, rhinoplasty, hair lip repair, loose tooth extraction, carries tooth/teeth, root canal treatment.

The Indian Medical Association has been opposing the Centre's move to allow traditional systems of Ayurveda, Yoga and Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha, and Homoeopathy (AYUSH) to offer allopathic therapies and treatment.

IMA in its release on Saturday has demanded the withdrawal of the order. It added that "corrupting modern medicine by mixing with other systems and poaching the disciplines of modern medicine through back door means is foul play."

A Division Bench, com-

## Kerala seeks nod to probe Ramesh Chennithala

Allegations of bribery were made by hotelier Biju Ramesh

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala government has reportedly sought the permission of Governor Arif Mohammad Khan to conduct a pre-budget anti-corruption inquiry against Leader of the Opposition Ramesh Chennithala.

The inquiry is based on an allegation by hotelier Biju Ramesh that the Kerala Bar Hotel Association (KBHA) had paid ₹1 crore as bribe to the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) to salvage their business from a proposed crippling hike in bar licence fees during the tenure of the previous Oommen Chandy government. Mr. Ramesh had alleged that KBHA office-bearers had delivered ₹1 crore to the office of Mr. Babu in the Secretariat. Another KBHA emissary deli-

**C** The Pinarayi Vijayan government has attempted in vain to breathe new life into a dead and discredited controversy in a futile bid to turn public opinion against the United Democratic Front ahead of the local body polls. Mr. Vijayan's plot to draw public attention from his follies will prove hollow at the election hustings

RAMESH CHENNITHALA, CONGRESS LEADER

Indira Bhavan here. Mr. Chennithala was the KPCC president at the time.

Mr. Ramesh had alleged that in a pre-budget meeting with hoteliers, the then Ex-vice Minister K. Babu had informed them of a proposal to hike the bar permit fee steeply.

The KBHA had collected money from its members to bribe the administration and stall the hike.

He had alleged that KBHA office-bearers had delivered ₹1 crore to the office of Mr. Babu in the Secretariat. Another KBHA emissary deli-

vered ₹25 lakh at the house of V.S. Sivakumar, MLA. Both leaders have denied the allegation.

CPI(M) acting State secretary and Left Democratic Front convener A. Vijayaraghavan had demanded an inquiry into the allegations raised by the hotelier.

**Political hit job**

While Mr. Chennithala has welcomed the probe, Congress Working Committee member and former Chief Minister Oommen Chandy and KPCC president Mullappally Ramachandran termed

the move a "political hit job".

Mr. Chennithala said on Saturday that he was ready to face any probe and added no such acts of intimidation could silence him from exposing the wrongdoings of the Left Democratic Front government.

**'Bogus claims'**

He claimed that the probe was based on bogus claims originally made by Mr. Ramesh six years ago. A preliminary investigation had now been ordered despite there being no new disclosure, he claimed at a press conference.

The Pinarayi Vijayan government had attempted in vain to breathe new life into a dead and discredited controversy in a futile bid to turn public opinion against the UDF ahead of the local body polls.

Mr. Vijayan's plot to draw public attention from his follies will prove hollow at

the election hustings, he said.

The complainant had then released an audio clip that was subsequently found to be fake following forensic examinations conducted in the State and in Ahmedabad.

The purported revelations had been investigated by both the LDF government and the previous United Democratic Front government. They were dismissed by the Vigilance and Anti Corruption Bureau due to lack of evidence when Jacob Thomas and N. Shankar Reddy were at its helm. The preliminary investigation has now been ordered despite there being no new disclosure," he said.

Considering that the cases were pending before the Kerala High Court and the Thiruvananthapuram Vigilance court, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's action amounted to sub-judice, Mr. Chennithala said.

He accused the LDF government of scuttling the ongoing probes into the UAE consulate-linked gold smuggling case by misusing its various agencies.

"Such attempts are being made at the Chief Minister's behest on realising that the Central enforcement agencies are closing in on him. Why has he now changed stance after claiming initially that the investigation was progressing in the right direction," he asked.

Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) president Mullappally Ramachandran demanded to know why the government decided against investigating Kerala Congress (M) leader Jose K. Mani's role despite being named by Mr. Ramesh in his complaint. He challenged the Chief Minister to institute a probe into the reported allegations of two of his Cabinet colleagues acquiring benami property in Maharashtra.

## IN BRIEF



**Jagan promises more seaports, fishing harbours**

VIJAYAWADA Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Saturday said the government had drawn up plans for the construction of seaports at Ramayapatnam, Bhavanapadu and Machilipatnam at a total cost of ₹10,000 crore. A sum of ₹3,500 crore had been earmarked to establish eight fishing harbours and develop 25 aquaculture hubs. These facilities would improve the living standards of fishermen, he said.

**A.P. govt. accepts CMO's resignation**

VIJAYAWADA The Andhra Pradesh government on Saturday accepted the resignation of retired IAS officer P.V. Ramesh from the post of Additional Chief Secretary to the Chief Minister with effect from November 1. Dr. Ramesh was inducted into the CMO in June 2019 and was handling medical, health and education departments. A reallocation of subjects in the CMO in July left him with no specific portfolio.

**₹85 lakh stolen from SBI branch in Guntur**

GUNTUR Unidentified robbers broke open the cash chest in the State Bank of India's Nadikudi branch here in Andhra Pradesh and decamped with ₹85 lakh late on Friday night. Superintendent of Police, Guntur Rural, Vishal Gunni, said the robbers cut off the CCTV lines and sprinkled chilli powder to avoid detection by the dog squad. Anyone having information about the culprits could call or WhatsApp details to 8866268999, the SP said.

## Sabarimala shrine witnesses highest footfall of the season

STAFF REPORTER  
KOTTAYAM



Seven days after the annual pilgrimage began at Sabarimala, the Ayyappa temple on Saturday witnessed the highest daily footfall with 2,000 pilgrims visiting the shrine.

Unlike the previous days, the Valiyana-dapandal leading to the temple witnessed a moderate rush during the morning hours.

Except on weekends, the daily number of pilgrims to the temple has been limited to 1,000.

In view of the COVID-19 situation, 351 markings were made at the location to ensure physical distancing between the devotees. Arrangements are also in place for the devotees to help them clean their legs and hands.

The Travancore Devasa-

wom Board (TDB) is distributing free meals to the pilgrims at the Sannidhanam, Pampa and Nilackal. Seats for devotees have been arranged in line with the COVID-19 protocol while the food is served in disinfected plates.

Food is served at Sannidhanam from 5.30 a.m. till 9 p.m., when the temple closes for the day. The Annada-

na Mandapam, near Malikkappuram, in the Sannidhanam currently employs 40 people, including Travancore Devaswom Board staff and temporary staff, for the preparation and distribution of food.

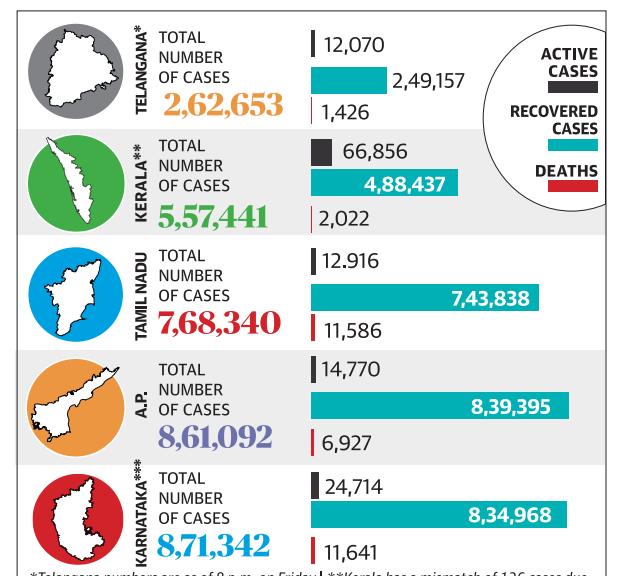
Food distribution at Pam-pa begins by 7 p.m. and ends at 10 p.m. There are currently 20 people on board for cooking and serving food.

Meanwhile, the Pathanamthitta District Medical Office has erected boards and banners in six different languages at different locations, including the trekking route, to create awareness on COVID-19 guidelines and other health emergencies.

This is in addition to the announcements at Pampa, Nilackal and the Sannidhanam in various languages and the social media campaign.

## High testing levels stressed to prevent second wave

Kerala positivity at above 9%; experts in Karnataka, with 1.46%, want testing momentum maintained



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala's test positivity rate of 9.59% for COVID-19 was reflected in 5,722 new cases on Saturday from testing of 60,210 samples.

The test positivity rate was 9%-10% for the past three days.

COVID-19 deaths on Saturday rose again as 25 more fa-

**COVID-19**

talities were added.

Seven deaths were reported from Thiruvananthapuram, five from Alappuzha, four from Kozhikode, three from Palakkad, two each from Malappuram and Kot-

tayam and one each from Thrissur and Kollam.

Andhra Pradesh added 1,160 infections and seven deaths on Saturday.

The total samples tested, at 95,43,177, had a positivity rate of 9.02%, while 68,307 fresh samples tested had 1.70%.

Chittoor reported two deaths and Anantapur, East Godavari, Guntur, Kadapa and Krishna one death each.

Telangana recorded 925 cases and three deaths on Friday. There were 161 cases in Greater Hyderabad, 91 in Medchal Malkajgiri, 75 in Rangareddy and five in Medak.

Karnataka's total tests crossed one crore on Saturday, but experts wanted continued high testing till March to avoid a second wave.

The test positivity rate (TPR) was 1.46% in the last three days.

Tamil Nadu reported 1,663 more COVID-19 cases on Saturday, taking the total case count in the State to 7,68,340.

It also reported 18 more deaths and 2,133 recoveries. The total deaths and recoveries so far in the State stood at 11,586 and 7,43,838 respectively.

Chennai reported 486 cases. Six other districts recorded more than 50 cases.

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

## HC upholds life term for murder

It rejects defence of 'sudden provocation' from youth who stabbed a girl

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU



The Karnataka High Court upheld a 2016 trial court verdict of life imprisonment for a youth who had stabbed a girl to death at her home after she declined his proposal.

Rejecting the convict's plea for leniency that he had stabbed the victim after "grave and sudden provocation" after she rejected his proposal, the court said agreeing to his claim will have the "effect of robbing the victim of her right to express her choice".

In other words, the defence of "grave and sudden provocation" shall not avail an accused if the result of permitting such a defence is to dehumanise the person of victim, stultify her individual autonomy, agency and dignity," the Bench observed.

Prising Justice S. Sunil Dutt Yadav and Justice P. Krishna Bhat, delivered the verdict while upholding a trial court's 2016 order of convicting Vijay alias Vijendra, a resident of Javalagala in Aland taluk of Kalaburagi district, and sentencing him to life imprisonment.

The convict, who was a

B.Ed. student, stabbed Pushpa, 18, at her house in the presence of another woman in 2009.

The Bench noted that Vijay had gone to Pushpa's house with a knife, imposed himself upon her to marry him, and on her refusal, stabbed her.

**Asserting domain**

"In other words, he was trying to assert some kind of domain over her only because he was a male and he was unwilling to reconcile to the situation that victim as a woman could rebuff the same and assert her individual autonomy and agency to take a decision on the choice of her life partner," the Bench observed

# COVID-19 is world's biggest challenge: PM

Modi offers India's IT prowess for efficient working of G20

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI/RIYADH/BEIJING

The COVID-19 pandemic is the biggest challenge the world is facing since the Second World War and is a turning point in the history of humanity, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said at the G20 Summit on Saturday, as he offered India's IT prowess for efficient functioning of the grouping.

Mr. Modi also said that "Work from Anywhere" is a new normal in the post-COVID-19 world and suggested creation of a virtual G20 secretariat.

The Prime Minister also suggested developing a new global index for the post-corona world that comprised four key elements – creation of a vast talent pool, ensuring that technology reached all segments of society, transparency in systems of governance and dealing with Mother Earth with a spirit of trusteeship.

Based on this, the G20 could lay the foundation of a new world, he said.

India to host in 2022

Saudi Arabia's King Salman opened the Group of 20 Summit as the coronavirus



Common concerns: PM Narendra Modi addressing the G20 summit via video link from New Delhi on Saturday. ■ ANI

pandemic overshadowed this year's gathering of heads of state that is being held in the virtual format. India is scheduled to host the G20 Summit in 2022.

**China favours dialogue** Addressing the G20 Summit, President Xi Jinping said China was ready to pursue peaceful coexistence with all countries on the basis of mutual respect, equality and mutual benefit.

He suggested narrowing differences through dialogue and resolving disputes through negotiations.

Mr. Xi said China would always be a builder of global peace, a contributor to global development and a defender of international order.

Mr. Modi offered India's IT prowess to further develop digital facilities for efficient functioning of the G20.

"Had a very fruitful discussion with G20 leaders."

Coordinated efforts by the largest economies of the world will surely lead to faster recovery from this pandemic. Thanked Saudi Arabia for hosting the Virtual Summit," Mr. Modi tweeted.

"Transparency in our processes helps in inspiring our societies to fight crisis collectively and with confidence. Spirit of trusteeship towards planet Earth will inspire us for a healthy and holistic lifestyle," he said.

## Soldier killed, three injured in Pak. firing

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR

One soldier was killed and another was injured on Saturday in Pakistan Army's firing along the Line of Control (LoC) in the Pir Panjal valley's Rajouri district.

"Pakistan Army resorted to unprovoked ceasefire violation on the LoC in the Nowshera Sector of Rajouri. Our troops responded strongly to the enemy fire," a Jammu-based Army spokesperson said.

The Army said Havaldar Patil Sangram Shivaji was critically injured in the firing. "He later succumbed to his injuries," the spokesperson said. The soldier hailed from Maharashtra.

In a statement, a defence spokesman said Havaldar Shivaji, a resident of Nigave village in Kolhapur, was a brave, highly motivated and sincere soldier. "The nation will always remain indebted to him for his supreme sacrifice and devotion to duty," he said.

Two women were injured in Pakistani firing in the Poonch sector in the evening. They were identified as Mansha Bi, 18, and Sakina Bi, 40. "They are undergoing treatment at hospital," officials said.

(With PTI inputs)

## Honour for Bhutan's Queen Mother

Gyalum Sangay Choden Wangchuck gets UN award for work on sexual health

SUHASINI HAIDAR  
NEW DELHI

In a first for the Himalayan Kingdom, and a rare honour in the subcontinent, Bhutan's Queen Mother Gyalum Sangay Choden Wangchuck has been awarded the United Nations Population Award in the individual category for 2020 for her work on sexual health and ending gender violence.

The awardee in the organisational category is HelpAge India that works on elder care. Only two Indians have been awarded in the past four decades since the award was established in 1981: former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1983 and industrialist-philanthropist J.R.D.Tata in 1992.

"It is of great honour to our region as the recipients of the prestigious UNFPA Population award this year, both in the individual and institutional category are from the Indian sub-continent," the Bhutanese Queen Mother, who will receive the UN award on December 10, told *The Hindu*, in replies to questions from Thimphu. "I am truly humbled by this recognition for the achievements that Bhutan has made over the past decade in the areas of sexual and reproductive health."

**Enabling environment** In particular, the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) that announced the award said Gyalum Sangay Choden, popularly called "Ashi Sangay" (Princess Sangay) has been recognised for creating an enabling environment to openly discuss sexual reproductive health in the [Bhutanese] kingdom" and for founding a volunteer organisation called



Queen of hearts: Gyalum Sangay Choden Wangchuck has been helping victims of gender violence through the organisation, RENEW. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Respect, Educate, Nurture and Empower Women' (RENEW). Since its start in 2004, RENEW has been involved in spreading sexual education amongst students, ensuring reproductive healthcare for women and counselling services. India has supported RENEW through the Embassy in Thimphu, and helped construct the RENEW crisis centre as well as Bhutan's first shelter for victims of gender-based violence, "Gawaling Happy Home".

Gyalum Sangay Choden Wangchuck, 57, is the youngest of four sisters, all married to Bhutan's former monarch, the Fourth King Jigme Singye Wangchuck, who abdicated in favour of his son Jigme Khesar Namgyel Wangchuck in 2006. Despite the abdication, each of the Bhutanese royals stays engaged with public engagements and charity work, and much of Ashi Sangay's work is supported by the Fourth and Fifth Kings and the Bhutanese government, as well as foreign grants.

In 1999, the Queen Mother was appointed UNFPA Goodwill Ambassador. Recounting the beginning of her fieldwork, which she clearly takes beyond celebrity endorsements and photo-ops, Ashi Sangay said sexual and reproductive issues were considered "taboo subjects" in Bhutan.

**Challenging years** Although the first case of HIV/AIDS in the country was detected in 1993, it was hardly spoken of. The numbers have grown to about 627 cases last year, a reason for some concern in a small country with a population of just 7,71,000 people.

The initial years were very challenging as there was an inherent denial and non-acceptance to address sexual and reproductive health issues which were obviously prevalent in our society," Ashi Sangay, told *The Hindu*. "Some of my travels have involved perilous journeys on foot, pony and even yaks through unforgiving terrain. Through these very personal interactions I was able to identify the needs of the people,"

## ED conducts searches in J&K Bank case

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate conducted searches at seven places in Kashmir on Saturday in connection with a case related to suspicious transactions in the J&K Bank.

"Of them, six are in Srinagar and one is in Anantnag district," said an official.

The ED probe is based on an FIR registered by the Srinagar CID against officials of the J&K Bank and others. It is alleged that the bank's accounts were used for routing money belonging to public servants as well as some private parties. Bank officials deliberately did not raise alerts, as is required under the anti-

money laundering norms.

The money laundering probe had revealed that the transactions in many of these bank accounts were not genuine. Based on the findings, the agency searched the premises of Mohammed Ibrahim Dar, Murtaza Enterprises, Azad Agro Traders, M&M Cottage Industries and Mohammed Sultan Teli.

"The parties covered under searches are involved in the hospitality and agro-based industries, civil construction and real estate. Statements of the persons covered in the searches are being recorded," the official said.

## Grand offering



Prayer time: Women worshipping the sun on the last day of Chhath Puja at a makeshift pond in the Sagar Pur area of New Delhi on Saturday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

## + Pak. summons Indian envoy, rejects charge

India had flagged Nagrota incident

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan on Saturday summoned the Charge d'Affaires of the Indian High Commission and rejected India's assertion that Pakistan-based terror group Jaish-e-Mohammed was planning to carry out attacks in Jammu and Kashmir ahead of local elections there.

The move came hours after India summoned the Charge d'Affaires of the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi and demanded that Pakistan desist from its policy of supporting terrorists and terror groups operating from its territory and dismantle the terror infrastructure operated by terror-

ist outfits to launch attacks in other countries.

Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in a statement rejected the charge and expressed the hope that India would desist from making any miscalculation.

Earlier in New Delhi, the Ministry of External Affairs, referring to the Nagrota incident, told the senior Pakistani diplomat that the huge cache of arms, ammunition and explosive material indicate detailed planning for a "major attack to destabilise peace and security" in the UT of Jammu and Kashmir... to derail the ongoing democratic exercise of conduct of local district development council polls.

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## We have nowhere to go, says dancer

Bharatanatyam teacher Rani Shinghal told to vacate house allotted by govt.

### Rethink move, says RSS wing

Sanskrit Bharti, a Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) affiliate, on Saturday came out in support of artistes facing eviction and urged the government to re-think its decision. Amid the pandemic, decisions that add to their problems shouldn't be taken, it said.

member 9 saying that she would not be able to vacate. "Where will we go? We have no other house in Delhi. This is our place of work," she said.

**Licence fee increased** "We were not informed that the Culture Ministry did not give recommendations since 2014. We were also not informed that our licence fees were increased and we only came to know when they told us that we had to pay lakhs in arrears. They have

increased our fees to ₹15,000 a month while expecting our income to be less than ₹20,000," she said.

She added that since the COVID-19 pandemic started and classes had to be cancelled at Natya Sudha, the institute started by her father – the late N.V. Venkatraman – in 1959 and run by her now, there had been no income for the past seven months.

"We are not against the government giving accommodation to other artistes. They should have told us earlier; now we won't find any other house. We want justice. They should give us an extension and come up with a solution, like giving us alternative accommodation," Ms. Shinghal said.

Earlier, Union Culture Minister Prahlad Singh Patel had said the artistes would be asked to vacate by December 31 or pay market rent. He said the criteria for selection would be revisited once the houses were vacated.

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**Under the artistes quota, the Culture Ministry recommends eminent artistes to the Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry's DoE for allotting houses. The houses were allotted for an initial period of three years starting from the 1970s to 2004, with extensions being given over**

the years. The artistes had to have an income of less than ₹20,000 a month and not own any other house in the National Capital Region.

**jobs followed by eight in Kalimpong and two in Coochbehar. Districts like Jalpaiguri and Alipurduar where forests are intersected by tea gardens with habitations on its fringes are hot spots of encounters with elephants.**

**Similarly, in south Bengal districts, Bankura where 62 candidates have been selected, Paschim Medinipur (47) and Jhargram (46) are other areas of human-elephant conflict.**

**Tiger in Sunderbans** The notification also points out that 66 persons whose family members died in South 24 Parganas will be given jobs. Senior forest officials said most of these deaths are due to human-tiger encounters in the Sunderbans region, the mangrove forests home to Royal Bengal Tigers. "There may be one or two deaths due to crocodile deaths but most deaths are due to tiger attacks," a forest official said.

## Jobs for kin of wildlife conflict victims

West Bengal will appoint 434 as home guard volunteers in the Police Department

SHIV SAHAY SINGH

KOLKATA

The West Bengal government has announced that 434 next of kin of persons killed in conflict with wildlife will get jobs with the State police.

According to a government notification released on Friday, 584 persons were killed in the State in human-wildlife conflict over the past five years.

The 434 next of kin will be appointed as home guard volunteers in the West Bengal police.

The decision to provide jobs to 74.3% of families of those killed in conflict with wildlife comes just months ahead of the Assembly polls in the State. More than the timing, the decision is likely to have an impact on wildlife conservation and raises concerns over whether giving jobs to victims' families, can lead to better wildlife management and mitigating the conflict.



Mammoth problem: The human-elephant conflict is acute in pockets of north and south Bengal. ■ FILE PHOTO

due to elephant attacks, as per the data tabled in the Upper House in February, 2020.

According to the State government's notification 434 people from 11 districts will be appointed of which 205 persons are from five north Bengal districts.

Most candidates from the families of those killed are from Jalpaiguri (96), followed by Alipurduar (73) in north Bengal. Twenty-six people in Darjeeling will get



Rani Shinghal at a stage show. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

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# The End of an Era: unravelling the mysteries of India's last days in Tibet

Reasons for the closure of the Indian Consulate in Lhasa in December 1962 remain unclear, according to scholar Claude Arpi, who has researched official documents

## ANANTH KRISHNAN

For a development as significant as the end of India's presence in Tibet, the events surrounding the closure of India's Consulate General in Lhasa in December 1962 still remain a small footnote in the history of that period, forgotten in the immediate aftermath of the war earlier that year.

*The End of an Era: India Exits Tibet* is the fourth volume of a sweeping work of research by the south India-based scholar Claude Arpi, who has drawn on official documents to write the most detailed history yet of India-Tibet relations from 1947 to 1962.

In the book, Mr. Arpi notes that information about

the Lhasa Consulate and this period in history remains scarce. "Unfortunately," he laments, "the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) still zealously keeps classified all documents related to 1961-62."

He does, however, piece together the chain of events leading up to the fateful decision, which was, finally, conveyed "in a laconic note" from the MEA to a surprised Chinese Embassy in India, saying it had "decided to discontinue the Indian Consulates in Lhasa and Shanghai from December 15, 1962."

Mr. Arpi writes that even the Indian Embassy in Beijing appeared to be kept in the dark.

The then charge d'affaires P.K. Banerjee, would write in

his memoirs that Delhi took the call on Shanghai "because there was hardly any work to carry out."

### Unsettled matters

That certainly wasn't the case in Tibet, at a time when, not only was being in Lhasa crucial in the aftermath of the war, but there was also the unsettled matter of 3,900 Indian PoWs in Tibet.

In the memoirs, Mr. Banerjee suggests one reason could have been Delhi being "anxious" to close Chinese consulates in Mumbai and Kolkata because "they were indulging in activities other than consular work", but that doesn't explain why Delhi would voluntarily close Lhasa.

What we do know is that



Diplomatic ties: Jawaharlal Nehru with China's Premier Mao Tse-tung in October 1954. The Panchsheel agreement was signed earlier that year. ■ THE HINDU ARCHIVES

in the lead up to the war, Indian officials in Lhasa began to come under increasing harassment from Chinese auth-

orities. On October 9, 11 days before China launched its offensive, the consulate's telegraphic lines were cut, as

were its telephone lines and courier communication. All outsiders were barred from entering the Dekyilinka area where the mission was located, while supplies of essential commodities like milk and eggs were also stopped.

On November 4, 1962, the MEA in a note complained this treatment was "against all established norms" and its staff were subject "to the most willful harassment by local Chinese authorities."

### 1962 ceasefire

Yet after the November 20, 1962 ceasefire, this would stop, Mr. Arpi notes, leaving unclear why the closure still went ahead.

"These are among the many questions without answers," he writes.

Mr. Arpi traces the closure to India's gradual withdrawal from Tibet, where it was also maintaining trade agencies in Yatung, Gyantse and Gar-tok under the 1954 agreement on trade and intercourse – now famous as the "Panchsheel" agreement – and its decision to not renew the agreement when it expired in April 1962.

Beijing had offered a renewal, but India's contention was that with every tenet of panchsheel violated by then – the MEA highlighted China's actions in Aksai Chin starting in 1957-58 – it could not renew. The trade agencies, where Indians were coming under increasing restrictions, were all shut, and by the end of the year, the consulate would follow.

India would later try unsuccessfully on numerous occasions to return to Lhasa. In 2006, Mr. Arpi notes, when both sides agreed to open new consulates, India suggested Lhasa but had to settle for Guangzhou, while China returned to Kolkata. As trade boomed, India had also returned to Shanghai and China reopened Mumbai, but Lhasa still remained off-limits.

In 2015, an agreement was reached for India to open a consulate in Chengdu and for China to open one in Chennai, although that remains stalled.

That year, India had again sought Lhasa but was turned down again, unable to return to the city it left under a cloud of mystery.

## IN BRIEF



### Fuel prices hiked for second day in a row

NEW DELHI  
Petrol price on Saturday was hiked by 15 paise per litre and diesel by 20 paise, the second straight day of increase in rates after firming international oil rates broke nearly a two-month-long hiatus in price revision. The price of petrol in Delhi was hiked to ₹81.38 per litre from ₹81.23, according to a notification from oil marketing companies. Diesel rates went up from ₹70.68 to ₹70.88 per litre. PTI

### IAS couple Tina Dabi, Athar Aamir to separate

JAIPUR  
IAS officers Tina Dabi and Athar Aamir-ul-Shafi Khan, who had tied the knot in 2018, have filed for divorce by mutual consent in a family court in Jaipur. Both of them are officers of the Rajasthan cadre. Ms. Dabi, 27, had stood first in the Union Public Service Commission's examination in 2015, while Mr. Khan, 28, who hails from Kashmir, had come second. The couple's wedding made headlines when it was hailed as an example of communal harmony.

### Hathras rape victim's kin living in fear: PUCL

LUCKNOW  
A civil rights body on Saturday claimed that members of the Hathras rape victim's family were living in conditions akin to house arrest and they feared for their lives once the CRPF cover given to them was withdrawn. The People's Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) also released a report on the state of investigation into the case. The PUCL demanded security for the family and their rehabilitation through the Nirbhaya fund.

## Remdesivir is no magic bullet but it has its uses'

Doctor warns that there are many logistic, efficacy issues

### BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN NEW DELHI

Many doctors who have been treating COVID-19 patients in India say that remdesivir is no magic bullet but it may still have its uses. The World Health Organisation has recently been advising against the use of remdesivir, which is listed as experimental therapy for COVID-19 by the Health Ministry.

The doctors said that to read the WHO recommendation as a strict do or do-not-do might be a "misinterpretation of the evidence".

Neeraj Nischal, associate professor in the Department of Medicine, All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), said, "The final decision (to use or avoid the drug) should be done after discussion with the patient. They should be given facts about the relative lack of benefit of the drug on the ultimate survival."

Dr. Nischal noted that remdesivir, which was initially developed for use in the treatment of ebola and hepatitis C was found to be a promising candidate for COVID-19 through in vitro studies. "There has been a lot of hype regarding remdesivir since the start of pandemic. It was hyped so much that it was seen as a magic bullet by the general public. The medical community, however, was reserved in judging its effect and utility barring any evidence for its use. However, the drug eventually became the drug of choice for COVID-19 treatment, not due to its efficacy, but mainly through its popularity. This frenzy put social pressure on doctors for its use in even mild disease. This has



Debate still on: The WHO has advised against the use of remdesivir for the treatment of COVID-19. ■ AFP

led to indiscriminate use of this drug," he said.

**Expensive drug**  
The doctor warned that there are many logistic and efficacy issues with remdesivir.

"It is an expensive drug requiring IV administration, and the timing and duration of therapy are still fairly unknown. The side effect profile of the drug has also been largely unknown and there are chances that some of its side effects may have been wrongly attributed to COVID-19," he said.

The Health Ministry on its part has been advising against the wide and indiscriminate use of experimental therapies such as remdesivir and plasma therapy.

Rakesh Malhotra, head, Trauma Centre, AIIMS, notes that there are several reasons why hospitals are still using the drug. "Certain trials have shown that remdesivir reduces the time needed for recovery and they showed improvement in patients needing low flow oxygen. We are using remdesivir in early stages of the

disease and have had good results with minimum side effects. But we cannot attribute it to remdesivir alone, as all these patients are candidates for and received steroids as well. Even we believe that it may not be of much use once disease has advanced in severity," he said.

A.S. Soin, chief hepatobiliary and liver transplant surgeon of Medanta, said, "This is no silver bullet and yes it is widely used. But we cannot blindly take in or give up any drug or therapy right now in a dynamic situation like this unfolding pandemic."

Meanwhile, the Health Ministry on Saturday said that India has conducted 10,66,022 COVID-19 tests in the last 24 hours, which has increased India's total cumulative tests to 13,06,57,808.

Also in the last 24 hours, 46,232 persons were found to be infected with COVID-19 while 49,715 new recoveries were registered during the same period. Maharashtra, Delhi and West Bengal have registered the maximum number of fatalities in 24 hours.

## Central team in Gujarat as COVID-19 cases surge

Night curfew imposed in major cities

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT AHMEDABAD

A three-member Central team met top officials in Gujarat in the wake of a surge in COVID-19 infections, as the State imposed weekend curfew in Ahmedabad and night curfew in major cities to contain the pandemic.

The team – led by Dr. Sujeet Kumar Singh, Director of the National Centre for Disease Control – met senior officials of the State Health Department in Gandhinagar and visited the civic body-run SVP Hospital in Ahmedabad, where several patients have been admitted.

According to Dr. Singh, the team will make a realistic assessment of the situation after getting feedback

from the ground.

"We met the State Principal Secretary, the Health Commissioner, the Municipal Commissioner and other senior Health Department officials, and discussed the COVID-19 situation in Gujarat. They have shared detailed information on how the number of cases rose and told us about the measures taken by the State," Dr. Singh said.

Meanwhile, Gujarat on Saturday recorded its highest daily case load of 1,515 new infections and nine deaths. The total number of cases rose to 1,95,917 while the fatality count has touched 3,846.

The daily life came to a standstill in Ahmedabad as the curfew progressed.

## Comedian Bharti Singh arrested in drug case

NCB seizes ganja from her house

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

Comedian Bharti Singh was arrested by the Narcotics Control Bureau on Saturday for possession and consumption of cannabis.

This was confirmed to *The Hindu* by Sameer Wankhede, the Indian Revenue Services officer leading the investigation.

Mr. Wankhede said Ms. Bharti's husband Harsh Limbachiya was still being questioned by the NCB. Their residence and official premises were searched and 86 grams of cannabis was found. Ms. Bharti was arrested under several provisions of the Narcotics Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act.

"Both Ms. Bharti Singh



Bharti Singh

and her husband Harsh Limbachiya admitted to consumption of ganja," an NCB release said.

The quantity allegedly seized from Ms. Singh's possession is considered "small." Up to 1,000 gm of ganja is considered small quantity and attracts a jail term of up to six months and/or fine of ₹10,000. Possession of commercial quantity – 20 kg or more – can attract up to 20 years in jail.

## Paddy procurement goes up by 18% +

Punjab alone has contributed 201 lakh tonnes, or 68.2% of the total, data shows

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Almost two months after the kharif harvest procurement began, the level of paddy procurement is 18% higher than last year, according to Agriculture Ministry data. About 70% of rice procured so far is from Punjab, which is more than the entire procurement from the State last year.

At the same time, more than 40% of rabi or winter season sowing is complete, with a 10% increase in acreage mostly coming from increased sowing of pulses this year.

Paddy procurement began earlier than usual this year, starting on September 26 in Punjab and Haryana



Good crop: Labourers loading sacks of newly harvested paddy in Bathinda, Punjab. ■ PTI

of the total. According to Food Corporation of India data, 133 lakh tonnes of rice have already been procured from Punjab so far this year, a 23% increase from the full amount of rice procured during the last kharif mar-

## One killed as jawans fire at protesters in Tripura

Stir against plan to settle refugees

### SYED SAJJAD ALI AGARTALA

One person was killed and two others suffered bullet injuries on Saturday when jawans of the Tripura State Rifles fired at a huge mob that turned violent while protesting against a plan to settle Bru refugees from Mizoram in the Kanchanpur subdivision in north Tripura.

The deceased has been identified as Srikanta Das, a resident of Kanchanpur.

Twenty-three people, including 15 police and fire service personnel, were injured in subsequent clashes between the police and the protesters. The injured were admitted to two hospitals of the district.

"Bondas are extremely cautious about preserving their unique culture and tradition. We will take action if Bondas are being taken away for cheap labour," Mr. Agarwal said.

Police claimed protesters



A vehicle burnt by protesters at Panisagar in Tripura. ■ ANI

damaged five security vehicles.

The incident occurred when at least 15,000 protesters marched to Chaitilla in the adjacent Panisagar subdivision to block the Assam-Tripura National Highway. The Joint Movement Committee (JMC) spearheaded the strike that had started in Kanchanpur on November 16 against the government's plan to rehabilitate 5,000 Brus.

## Odisha tribe sees rise in migration

Bonda youth have moved to work in towns, children are dropping out of school

### SATYASUNDAR BARIK ANDRAHAL

Perched at a height of 3,500ft above sea level in the hilly Malkangiri district of Odisha, this village is difficult to access and so are its inhabitants – the Bondas, a particularly vulnerable tribal group, known for their secluded lives away from the mainstream.

However, young people from the tribal group have been forced to leave their pristine hamlets for low-paid jobs in distant towns of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and States even farther. The COVID-19 pandemic appears to have quickened the 'distress' migration.

Sombari Muduli, 60, has visited the Malkangiri district headquarters, 80 km from her village, just once in her life. However, her 16-year-old daughter Gurubari has crossed State borders to work in a prawn processing plant in Visakhapatnam.

Without waiting for the



COVID-19 pandemic to abate, Gurubari left her single room hut months ago. In her neighbourhood, Pradan Baria, 16, and Khiju Sisa, 17, too migrated to Andhra Pradesh immediately after the lockdown.

The disturbing trend of distress migration has also caught up with Bonda students who were studying in residential schools before the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to Sada Hantal, a resident of Andrahala, stu-

dents sat idle for months as they could not pursue their education due to lack of online facilities.

"The moment they came in contact with labour agents, they did not take much time to decide. They brought down the curtain on their studies. Arjun Sisa (Class 8) and Krushna Sisa (Class 9) have already migrated to work," Mr. Hantal said, adding that the list of students dropping out of school was growing.

Police claimed protesters

## SUDOKU

# Georgia Governor certifies Biden's win

This comes after a hand-count of 5 million votes that was requested by the Trump campaign

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN  
WASHINGTON DC

In another setback for U.S. President Donald Trump who is fighting to have his loss in the presidential elections overturned, Governor Brian Kemp of Georgia certified the results of a hand-count of votes in his State, giving Joe Biden, the President-elect and Democratic candidate, the State's 16 Electoral College votes.

The certification happened following the conclusion on Thursday of the hand-count of the 5 million votes requested by the Trump campaign, resulting in a 12,670 vote lead for Mr. Biden. The State had also announced an audit of the first count, required by law.

Georgia Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger, who described himself as a "passionate conservative" and a "proud Trump supporter",



Make it count: Election workers sorting out ballots in Georgia, in this file photo. ■ AFP

said he was disappointed, like other Republicans, that their candidate did not win the State.

"People feel their side was cheated. We saw this from the Democrats in 2018 and we see this from Republicans today," Mr. Raffensperger said. "Working as an engineer throughout my life, I

live by the motto that numbers don't lie," he said, adding that the numbers presented today were correct.

Mr. Raffensperger had told the *Washington Post* earlier this week that he and his wife had received death threats in the run up to the announcement and that he was under pressure from Re-

publicans, including Senator Lindsay Graham to not count legally cast ballots (hypothetically, on the basis of non-matching signatures in mailed-in ballots).

On Friday evening, Mr. Kemp said thousands of uncounted votes (5,262) resulting in a net gain of 496 for Mr. Trump as per the website

of Georgia's Secretary of State) were found after the audit, something he called "unacceptable". Mr. Kemp said the audit did not get into the signature matching issue. "It is important for Georgians to know that the vast number of local election workers did their job well under unprecedented circumstances."

The Governor did not explicitly say that Mr. Biden had won but said since he had, to, by law, formalise the certified results that had been presented by Mr. Raffensperger, "which paves the way for the Trump campaign to pursue other legal options and a separate recount if they choose."

Georgia will hold run-off elections for two Senate seats on January 5, the results of which will determine whether Democrats or Republicans control the Senate in the next Congress.

## On inauguration day, Twitter to give Biden control of @POTUS

Existing tweets on @POTUS, @FLOTUS, @VP will be archived

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
WASHINGTON

Twitter will hand control of the presidential @POTUS account to Joe Biden when he is sworn in on inauguration day, even if President Donald Trump has not conceded his election loss, U.S. media reported on Friday.

The social media giant is "actively preparing to support the transition of White House institutional Twitter accounts on January 20th, 2021," Twitter spokesperson Nick Pacilio told *Politico* in an email. The process is be-



ing done in consultation with the National Archives, as it was in 2017, he said.

The handover will see all existing tweets on @POTUS, as well as @FLOTUS, @VP and other official accounts, archived. The accounts will then be reset to zero tweets

and transferred to the incoming Mr. Biden White House that day.

Mr. Trump, who still has not conceded his November 3 loss, used Twitter to help build his political brand and, later, wield the power of the presidency – though he mainly uses his personal account, @realDonaldTrump, whose 88 million followers dwarf @POTUS's 32 million.

The @POTUS account is largely used to retweet Mr. Trump's personal account as well as the White House and other accounts.

## Trump objects to vote counting in Wisconsin

He seeks rejection of absentee ballots

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
MADISON

The recount of the presidential election in Wisconsin's two most heavily Democratic counties began on Friday with President Donald Trump's campaign seeking to discard tens of thousands of absentee ballots that it alleged should not have been counted.

Mr. Trump's three objections attempting to discard the ballots were denied by the three-member Dane County Board of Canvassers, twice on bipartisan votes. Dane County Clerk Scott McDonell said he ex-

pected the campaign was building a record before filing a lawsuit.

Joe Biden won Wisconsin by 20,600 votes and carried Dane and Milwaukee counties by a 2-to-1 margin. Mr. Trump only paid for recounts in those two counties, not in the 70 others, 58 of which he won.

Trump attorney Christ Troupis argued that certification envelopes filled out by people who voted absentee in person do not count under the law as a written application, even though the envelope is identified as such.

## + U.S., Taiwan step up economic partnership

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
TAIPEI

The U.S. and Taiwan are stepping up cooperation in a newly created economic dialogue, in another move from the outgoing Trump administration to increase official exchanges with the self-ruled island.

The two sides signed a five-year agreement establishing the U.S.-Taiwan Economic Prosperity Partnership Dialogue, which is meant to be held annually. The deal falls short of a long-desired bilateral trade agreement, but is a significant step that increases ties between Washington and Taipei.

China, which views Taiwan as its own territory to be reunited by force if necessary, has criticized such steps as provocation.

"The U.S.-Taiwan economic dialogue signifies that not only is the United States-Taiwan economic relationship strong, but it continues to deepen and grow," said Brent Christensen, director of the American Institute in Taipei, the de-facto embassy.

Taiwan and the U.S. do not have a free trade agreement. However, Taiwan in August announced the easing of restrictions on imports of American beef and pork, lowering a trade barrier for U.S. businesses that is expected to pave the way for further trade negotiations.

U.S. trade with Taiwan totalled an estimated \$103.9 billion in 2019, according to the latest figures from the U.S. Trade Representative's office.

The dialogue addressed areas of further cooperation, such as the State Department's new Clean Network project and 5G security, semiconductors, as well as investment screening and science and technology.

Taiwan's Foreign Minister Joseph Wu called the dialogue an "important milestone" and "the highest level regular economic dialogue between the U.S. and Taiwan."

## In Pakistan, tens of thousands mourn radical cleric's death

Khadim Hussain Rizvi led the extremist Tehreek-e-Labiak party

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LAHORE

Massive crowds of maskless mourners gathered in Lahore on Saturday for the funeral of hardline Pakistani cleric Khadim Hussain Rizvi, who for years terrorised the country's religious minorities, incited riots and advocated the destruction of European nations in the name of fighting blasphemy.

Rizvi's party, Tehreek-e-Labiak, holds only two seats in Parliament, but his movement has repeatedly pressed its cause by staging large-scale demonstrations.

Rizvi led last Sunday thousands of his followers at a sit-in in Islamabad, protesting the republishing in France of caricatures of the Prophet Mohammed, which he deemed blasphemous. Demonstrators briefly clashed with se-



curity forces at the rally, which was one in a wave of protests across the country expressing outrage over the caricatures.

**Defender of blasphemy laws**  
The government promised on Tuesday that the protesters' demands for cutting diplomatic ties with France and expelling the French Ambassador would be dis-

cussed in Parliament.

In just a few short years, the cleric, known for his profanity-laced speeches, gained mass support and rose to become one of the country's most feared figures.

"In some ways, he was even more dangerous than the Taliban, with his supporters not limited to remote tribal areas, but present in large numbers in the country's heartlands," said Omar Waraich from Amnesty International.

In 2018, the TLP brought the country to a standstill with riots following the acquittal of Christian woman Asia Bibi, who had been falsely accused of disrespecting the Prophet Mohammed. The party has also called for the assassination of Supreme Court judges, pleaded for a mutiny in the armed forces and vowed to wipe out European nations such as France and the Netherlands.

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## Trump tries to leverage power of office to subvert Biden win

Michigan lawmakers say they see no reason to alter result

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump sought to leverage the power of the Oval Office on Friday in an extraordinary attempt to block President-elect Joe Biden's victory, but his pleas to Michigan lawmakers to overturn the will of their constituents appeared to have left them unswayed.

Mr. Trump summoned a delegation of the battleground state's Republican leadership, including the Senate majority leader and House speaker, in an apparent extension of his efforts to persuade judges and election officials to set aside Mr. Biden's 1,54,000-vote margin of victory and grant Mr. Trump the State's electors. It came amid mounting criticism that Mr. Trump's futile efforts to subvert the results of the 2020 election could do long-lasting damage to democratic traditions.

### Maintaining grasp

Mr. Trump's efforts extended to other States that Mr. Biden carried as well, amounting to an unprecedented attempt by a sitting President to maintain his grasp on power, or in failure, to delegitimise his opponent's victory in the eyes of his army of supporters.

Rick Hasen, an election law expert and professor who has been meticulously chronicling the 2020 race, wrote that there would be "rioting" in the streets if an effort was made to set aside the vote in Michigan, calling it tantamount to an attempted coup.

"We should worry because this is profoundly anti-democratic and is delegitimising the victory of Joe Biden in a free and fair election," he said.



Donald Trump

tion," Mr. Hasen wrote on his blog. "It is profoundly depressing we still have to discuss this. But it is extremely unlikely to lead to any different result for president."

In a joint statement after the White House meeting, Michigan Senate Majority Leader Mike Shirkey and House Speaker Lee Chatfield said allegations of fraud should be investigated but indicated they were unmoved by Mr. Trump's claims thus far. "We have not yet been made aware of any information that would change the outcome of the election in Michigan and as legislative leaders, we will follow the law and follow the normal process regarding Michigan's electors, just as we have said throughout this election," he said.

"The President could be calling Republican legislators and others to the White House to try and squeeze them," they added, saying they used the meeting with Mr. Trump to press him for more pandemic aid money for their State.

The President on Friday again falsely claimed victory, declaring as an aside during a White House announcement on drug pricing, "I won, by the way, but you know, we'll find that out."

## ELSEWHERE



Donald Trump Jr. tests positive for COVID-19

WASHINGTON  
Donald Trump Jr., the son of U.S. President Donald Trump, tested positive for COVID-19 this week, although he is experiencing no symptoms, according to his spokesman.

Mr. Trump Jr. tested positive at the start of the week and has been "quarantining at his cabin since the result," the spokesman said. REUTERS

### Russia imposes sanctions on 25 British officials

MOSCOW  
Russia on Saturday imposed sanctions on 25 British officials, responding to penalties Britain imposed in July against the same number of Russians over human rights violations. Britain sanctioned the Russian officials for their alleged role in the death of lawyer Sergei Magnitsky. AFP

## Pompeo meets Taliban, Afghan govt. negotiators

Rocket attack in Kabul kills eight

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
DOHA

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo met negotiators from the Afghan government and the Taliban in Doha on Saturday, amid signs of progress in their talks as Washington speeds up its withdrawal.

He also met Qatar's ruler, Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al-Thani, and Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al-Thani, the foreign minister, on his stop in Doha, which is the Taliban's base for diplomacy.

The outgoing top U.S. diplomat is on a seven-nation tour of Europe and the Middle East, as President Donald Trump shoves up late-term priorities.

Earlier this week, the Pentagon said it would soon pull some 2,000 troops out of Afghanistan, speeding up the timeline established in a February deal between the U.S. and the Taliban.

The Taliban denied responsibility and the Islamic State group claimed the deadly strike.

"I would be most interested in getting your thoughts

on how we can increase the probability of a successful outcome," Mr. Pompeo said as he met the Afghan government side, noting the shared interest in such a scenario.

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SNAPSHOTS



**Stellar fingerprints**

It is known that tree rings record traces of the seasons and climate change happening around. New research indicates that supernovas that take place relatively close to the earth can disrupt its climate and have done so four times in the last 40,000 years. The researchers studied records held in tree rings, to ascertain this.



**Hurricanes reach out**

Study finds that in future, as the world warms, hurricanes can reach further inland than they do today and are likely to be more destructive. In the study published in *Nature*, the researchers looked at North Atlantic hurricanes in the last fifty years and found that the hurricanes weakened slowly compared with those that occurred fifty years ago.

# Ethics of denying COVID-19 vaccine to placebo group

Offering to the placebo group will mean unblinding the study, making it almost impossible to gather further information on vaccine efficacy

R. PRASAD

On November 20, Pfizer tweeted saying that it would, along with BioNTech, be submitting a request the same day to the U.S. FDA for Emergency Use Authorisation (EUA) of the mRNA COVID-19 vaccine candidate. The FDA is likely to grant the authorisation by the end of the month, based on which the company says the vaccine will "potentially" be enabled for use in high-risk populations in the U.S. by middle-to-end of December.

The announcement comes two days after Pfizer said in a press release that in the primary efficacy analysis, the vaccine was 95% effective against COVID-19 disease beginning 28 days after the first dose. The analysis was carried out on 170 confirmed cases of COVID-19 disease, of which 162 were in the placebo group and just eight were in the vaccine arm.

Now that the vaccine has been found to be highly efficacious, including in older adults, and can prevent severe disease, a tricky question is whether it would be ethi-

cal to deny the vaccine to those participants who have received the placebo when FDA grants an EUA and vaccination of high-risk groups begins in December.

But offering the vaccine right away to those in the placebo group will first require unblinding the study. Unblinding the study and offering the vaccine to the placebo group will make it almost impossible to gather further information on vaccine efficacy, thus making full licensure challenging.

**Giving a choice**

"My understanding is that participants are offered the vaccine at the end of the designated follow up period, but participants are also given updated information on what is happening with vaccine development as soon as it is available (treating informed consent as a process instead of just at the entry into the study). Which means that when an EUA is granted, the information should be conveyed to all participants and they should be asked what they would like to do," Dr. Gagandeep Kang, Professor of Microbiology at CMC



**Stick to plans:** The trials should go on and complete their full pre-established planned duration, says Anant Bhan. ■ GETTY IMAGES

Vellore says in an email to *The Hindu*.

**Standard of care**

"We are dealing with a novel virus and a new vaccine platform. We need longer term data on safety, efficacy and durable immunity. An interim short-term analysis does not provide us with this information. So, the trials

should go on and complete their full pre-established planned duration," Dr. Anant Bhan, a researcher in global health and bioethics, says in an email to *The Hindu*. "Those in the placebo group cannot be 'denied' the vaccine if they want to get it based on an EUA, but since an EUA does not equate to a changed standard of care in

my opinion, it would not be ethically required to offer the vaccine candidate to them."

Virologist Dr. Jacob John too agrees that those in the placebo group cannot be given the vaccine before the completion of the Phase-3 trial. "I don't think that vaccine will be or should be offered to placebo recipients right away, but only after reg-

ulatory agency approves the product's safety and efficacy," he says in an email.

Though vaccination of high-risk groups may begin in December, majority of trial participants, including those in the placebo group, will not belong to a priority group that would get the vaccine for at least one year. Hence, delay until vaccine registration may be justified, says Dr. John.

**Unblinding the trial**

Under these circumstances, should the trial be unblinded and participants in the placebo group be vaccinated? "This could mean that we might delay getting data for a full licensure," Dr. Kang says.

The independent Data Safety and Monitoring Boards (DSMB) makes sure that trial participants are protected and the integrity of the study is maintained. "So, deliberation is important with all of the stakeholders. This is a complex discussion and cannot have a simple answer for every participant in a trial," she says.

But it is important that all trial participants are informed of the interim efficacy

results and about the EUA for the vaccine, if the FDA grants one. The vaccine should be offered to participants in the placebo group under two scenarios. In the first case, any trial participants belonging to the high-risk group who would otherwise have got the vaccine on priority should be informed of their eligibility and offered the vaccine. This will decrease the power of the study to define accurately how well the vaccine works in them.

But we will have ways of designing effectiveness studies to address how we get this information, Dr. Kang says. Since participants should get only two and not four doses of the vaccine, it will require unblinding of the status of the participants.

**Second scenario**

The second scenario would be when the trial is stopped on DSMB's recommendation based on an interim analysis of vaccine efficacy or when the trial reaches term and the vaccine candidate is found to be efficacious and the vaccine achieves full licensure from a regulatory agency.

## Twice hit by climate change

Global warming may have killed many dinosaurs 179 MYA

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE



Most people know that land-dwelling dinosaurs were wiped out some 66 million years ago when a huge asteroid crashed into Earth.

If not this, the plunge in global temperature on a planet with little or no ice, caused by a blanket of heat-shielding debris in the atmosphere, would have killed them.

New research says, more than 100 million years earlier, another climate change cataclysm - a global warming - devastated a different set of dinosaur species, with many going extinct.

Scientists have found evidence of this traumatic event some 179 million years ago in plant fossils in Argentine Patagonia.

**Dinosaur discovered**  
They also discovered a previously unknown dinosaur, named *Bagualia alba*. This is in the family of massive, long-necked sauropods, the largest animals to walk the Earth.

Before the global warm-

ing event, sauropods were only one branch of the Sauropodomorpha lineage.

Other dinosaurs in the same group were smaller and lightly built, with some no bigger than a goat, according to a study published in the *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*.

But gave *B. alba* an advantage over other Sauropodomorpha dinosaurs, said Pol, head of the science department at the Egidio Feruglio palaeontology museum in Patagonia.

Sauropods' new diet saw them expanded in size from 10 metres to 40 metres in length, as large digestion chambers were needed to cope. They became the dominant group of herbivores and eventually the largest animals to ever walk the Earth.

larger sauropods - like *Bagualia alba* - thrived.

"Sauropods are massive, four-legged animals with long necks," which meant they could reach the tops of trees, palaeontologist and lead author Diego Pol told Agence France-Presse.

"Their very robust mandibles and spoon-shaped teeth were adapted to feed on all kinds of plants such as conifer trees."

**Distinct diet**

Conifers in the early Jurassic had tough and leathery leaves that would be a challenge for any herbivore.

But that gave *B. alba* an advantage over other Sauropodomorpha dinosaurs, said Pol, head of the science department at the Egidio Feruglio palaeontology museum in Patagonia.

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In a recent paper published in *PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases* a team

## How kala-azar was eliminated from a highly endemic district in Bihar

Integrated control strategy in Vaishali district helped reduce cases from 664 in 2014 to 163 in 2016

ASWATHI PACHA

Kala-azar or visceral leishmaniasis (VL) is a tropical disease characterised by irregular fever, weight loss, anaemia and swelling of the spleen and liver. It is caused by protozoan Leishmania parasite and is transmitted to humans by the bite of infected female sandflies. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), globally, about 7 to 10 lakh new cases occur annually.

**WHO initiative**

India accounts for about two-thirds of the total global cases, and the disease is endemic to Bihar, Jharkhand, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. An initiative was launched by WHO to eliminate VL as a public health problem from the South East Asia region by 2020. The deadline has now been extended to 2023.

In a recent paper published in *PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases* a team

from Rajendra Memorial Research Institute of Medical Sciences (ICMR), tells the success story of how they eliminated the disease from Vaishali, a district in Bihar where the disease is highly endemic. With an area of 2,036 square kilometres, Vaishali has a population of over 35 lakh and about 22% in the district get affected by VL each year. Their integrated control strategy helped reduce the number of cases from 664 in 2014 to 163 in 2016. "We call a disease eliminated when the annual incidence is reduced to less than 1 case per 10,000 people at the sub-district or block level."

**Training programmes:** Nearly 2,500 ASHA workers and 1,000 field workers were trained. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

about 48% reduction in cases within a year."

**Campaigns, measures**

Their programme included mapping of the case distribution, early case detection and chemical-based vector control. "We also carried out community awareness campaigns. Hospital staff and medical doctors in these regions were trained," adds Dr. Das. "Once a person is diagnosed with VL, indoor resi-

dual spraying was done at his house and at the neighbouring houses within 500 metres. Though the disease is not contagious, the infected sand fly may be present in the area and the chemical spray will help kill them." Nearly 2,500 ASHA workers and 1,000 field workers were also trained.

**Monitoring disease**

Rakesh Mandal, one of the authors of the work in an

We say a disease is eliminated when the annual incidence is reduced to less than 1 case per 10,000 people at the sub-district or block level.

PRADEEP DAS  
RMRIMS, PATNA

email to *The Hindu* adds: "A strong supervision and monitoring system is required. GIS-based mapping, and case data management and spatial visualisation system are required for the proper implementation of control strategies."

He writes that routine monitoring is needed to identify if the Kala-azar vector has developed resistance to insecticides. "Also frequent monitoring of active cases - track, test, and treat strategy - in the hotspot region is very important at the current stage."

writes Dr. Mandal, who completed his PhD from the institute under the guidance of Dr. Das.

## A successful solution to the 'slash and burn' problem

Field trials of the Pusa decomposer in Delhi, Haryana region show promise



### SPEAKING OF SCIENCE

D. BALASUBRAMANIAN



**Core feature:** Pusa Decomposer uses eight or so fungi in order to quicken the decomposition of the stubble. ■ RITU RAJ KONWAR

between 301-400 and severe above 400 (as in today's Delhi region, where stubble burning continues).

**Viable solution**

The Government of Delhi has recently come up with a viable solution to handle this problem of stubble burning, thanks to its collaboration with the Indian Agricultural Research Institute (IARI) at Pusa, in the city. Called 'Pusa Decomposer', they have come up with a set of capsules, which are dissolved in water containing jaggery, chickpea flour and a set of about eight types of microorganisms (fungi), essential to quicken the decomposition of the stubble. This is then fermented for three-to-four days, and the liquid so obtained is ready to be sprayed in the farmers' field in order to decompose the left over biomass.

They state that four such capsules are enough to make 25 litres, which can be used to decompose the crop

residue per hectare of the field. Thereby, the stubble gets converted into manure in the field.

**Decomposing stubble**

Note here that Pusa Decomposer uses eight or so fungi in order to quicken the decomposition of the stubble. An earlier report by da Costa and others in the journal *Applied and Environmental Microbiology*, March 2018, 84

ing the stubble? It was with this logic that IARI seems to have come up with its Pusa Decomposer formula. As we note, this has worked well.

Incidentally, it is interesting to note that food grains produced using the Pusa Decomposer qualify as organic farming, since it involves no growth hormones, antibiotics, no genetically modified organisms, and no leaching of surface water or ground water.

**Jongue's method**

Indeed, if we look at the origin and development of farming itself of plants and foodgrains over millennia, it was organic in nature, until almost the industrial revolution in the eighteenth century, and the developments in chemistry which led to the discovery of fertilizers and related chemicals which were added to increase food production. In this connection, it is interesting to read what Stephanie Hanes points out in her article in *Christian Science Monitor*, in 2008 (<https://csmonitor.com/Environment/2008/0430/p13s01-st.htm>). The traditional method has been 'slash and burn' (as we too have been doing in our wheat farming). But a farmer called Jongue in Mozambique in East Africa did not burn his corn farm, but let the corn stalks rot. In

one part of his farm, rather than slash and burn, he mixed tomatoes and peanuts in the field to rot. Then he let the mice in the field eat up this stuff - a natural way of removing the rotting material. (If the mouse population became too large, he brought in cats to restrict the mice!) He also tried planting sorghum with success. This was what one may call organic farming. The yield and the quality were good enough to sell the corn or sorghum in the market.

His organic farming was based on the use of mice as the source of the necessary molecular ingredients such as fungi, and no other additives. In a way, the Pusa Decomposer, with its jaggery, chickpea flour and naturally occurring fungi is the modern day Jongue approach!

As field trials in the Delhi, Haryana region have been found successful, Pusa Decomposer should be tried in areas of Northeast India where 'slash and burn' (locally called 'jhum') is still followed (in Tripura, Arunachal Pradesh and Meghalaya, for instance). IARI might try and introduce it there as well. It will also improve the AQI in the region (Agartala in Tripura is 'moderate' to 'unhealthy', currently).



**Bright spider**

**Why do some tarantulas have vivid blue and green colours?**

mechanisms, showing the colour did not evolve to deter predators but to woo a potential mate.

"Our finding that blueness was lost multiple times in the New World, while regained in the Old, is intriguing. This leaves fascinating avenues for future research when considering how the ecological pressures in the New and the Old

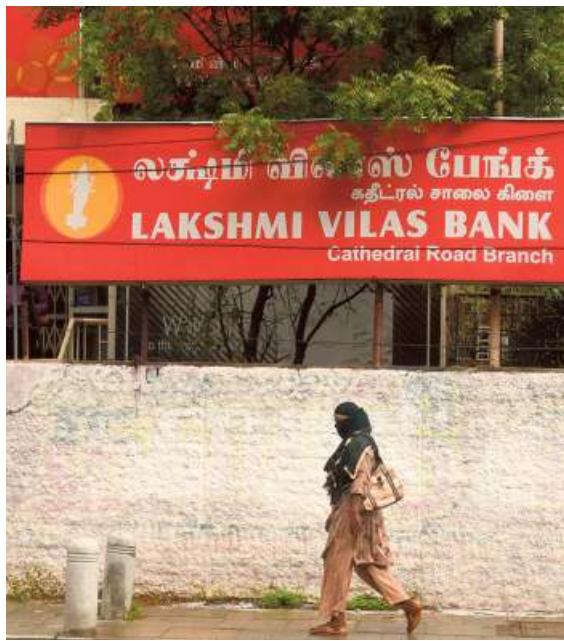


**Monocentropus balfouri**, a blue tarantula.  
■ ETY Images

"Worlds vary," said one of the authors Vinod Kumar Saranathan in a press release. "For instance, one hypothesis would be differences in the light environments of the habitats between the New and the Old World, which can affect how these colours might be perceived if indeed they can be, as our results suggest."

Readers may send their questions / answers to [questioncorner@thehindu.co.in](mailto:questioncorner@thehindu.co.in)

*dbala@lpe.org*



The RBI imposed a moratorium on the stressed Lakshmi Vilas Bank on November 17. ■ BIJOY GHOSH

## Moratorium on banks

When does the Reserve Bank of India intervene and what are some of the key steps it takes?

K. BHARAT KUMAR

**The story so far:** On November 17, the Centre, acting on the recommendation of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), imposed a moratorium on Lakshmi Vilas Bank (LVB) for a period of 30 days. The 94-year-old bank, based in Karur, Tamil Nadu, has been struggling with losses for three years. As its financial position deteriorated, the regulator placed it under the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework, which restricts certain operations depending on the severity of financial stress. After allowing time for the bank to find investors to shore up its capital, the RBI has appointed an administrator for the bank and mooted a merger with the Indian subsidiary of the Singapore-based DBS Bank. Similar moratoria were placed in the recent past on other lenders too, including Yes Bank and Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative Bank.

### What is a moratorium?

The RBI, the regulatory body overseeing the country's financial system, has the power to ask the government to have a moratorium placed on a bank's operations for a specified period of time. Under such a moratorium, depositors will not be able to withdraw funds at will.

Usually, there is a ceiling that limits the amount of money that can be withdrawn by the bank's customers. In the case of LVB, depositors cannot withdraw more than ₹25,000 during the one-month moratorium period. In most cases, the regulator allows for funds of a larger quantum to be withdrawn in case of an urgent

requirement, such as medical emergencies, but only after the depositor provides the required proof.

Often, the moratorium is lifted even before the originally stipulated deadline is reached. For instance, Yes Bank, which went into a spiral while unsuccessfully trying to find an investor, was placed on a one-month moratorium starting

Even if depositors face restricted access to funds, there is a high probability that a struggling bank, placed under a moratorium, will soon return to normal functioning once a bailout is arranged

March 5, with a cap of ₹50,000 on withdrawals. With investors led by State Bank of India (SBI) infusing ₹10,000 crore into Yes Bank, the moratorium was lifted on March 18.

### When does it come into play?

Usually, the RBI steps in if it judges that a bank's net worth is fast eroding and it may reach a state where it may not be able to repay its depositors. When a bank's assets (mainly the value of loans given to borrowers) decline below the level of liabilities (deposits), it is in danger of failing to meet its obligations to depositors.

After banks were nationalised in 1969, the RBI sought to always intervene to protect depositors' interests and prevent commercial banks from failing. In 2004, it nudged State-owned Oriental Bank of Commerce (OBC) to take over the troubled private lender Global Trust Bank (GTB). As in the case of LVB, GTB was given time to find a suitor for a merger. When it failed to come up with any names, but proposed infusion of foreign capital, the RBI refused permission and instead insisted on the merger with OBC.

### How does a moratorium prevent a 'run' on the bank?

A moratorium primarily helps prevent what is known as a 'run' on a bank, by clamping down on rapid outflow of funds by wary depositors, who seek to take their money out in fear of the bank's imminent collapse. Temporarily, it does affect depositors who may have placed, for example, their retirement with the bank, or creditors who are owed funds by the bank but are struggling with the collection.

A moratorium gives both the regulator and the acquirer time to first take stock of the actual financial situation at the troubled bank. It allows for a realistic estimation of assets and liabilities, and for the regulator to facilitate capital infusion, should it find that necessary. Singapore's DBS bank has promised to infuse ₹2,500 crore into the merged entity, once it takes over LVB.

A key objective of a moratorium is to protect the interests of depositors. Even if they are temporarily handicapped by facing restricted access to their funds, there is a high probability that the bank would soon return to normal functioning once a bailout is arranged.

### Is the safety of funds assured?

It depends on whether the struggling bank or the regulator is able to find acquirers or investors to save the day. In the case of Yes Bank, the RBI was able to bring in investors who infused adequate funds. With Lakshmi Vilas Bank, the regulator had a ready acquirer with a sound capital base in DBS Bank India. In the case of Punjab and Maharashtra Co-operative Bank, which is headquartered in Mumbai, the moratorium – despite being gradually relaxed for depositors – is still in force, over a year after it was imposed, and there is still no sign of a buyer.

# Why did India stay out of the RCEP deal?

What were its concerns and is there a possibility of rejoining the grouping later?

SUHASINI HAIDAR

**The story so far:** On November 15, the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) was signed by 15 countries led by China, Japan, South Korea, Australia, New Zealand, and the 10-country ASEAN group. It is billed as one of the world's largest Free Trade Agreement (FTA), accounting for nearly 30% of the global GDP covering 30% of the world's population. After long negotiations, India exited the grouping last November, saying it wanted to protect its economy from rising trade deficits with a number of RCEP members. India's decision is still the subject of much debate, and the RCEP has left a special window open for India to rejoin at a future date.

### Are FTAs bad for India? What are the other objections to RCEP?

Of the 15 countries in RCEP, India had previously signed an FTA with the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN), and also with Japan and South Korea, all three of which are now under review. "If you look at India's experience with the already signed free trade agreements with the ASEAN group, South Korea and Japan, you will see that India's trade deficit with these countries or groups rose very sharply during this period," says R. Ramakumar, NABARD Chair Professor at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, who backs India's decision to quit RCEP, saying that between 2011 and 2019, "India's trade deficit with ASEAN rose from about \$5 billion to about \$22 billion, [now pegged at \$24 billion, according to government reports in August]," he says. In the last decade, our trade deficit with Japan rose from \$4 billion to about \$8 billion, he points out, and with South Korea from about \$8 billion to \$12 billion.

The trade deficit with China has burgeoned from about \$4 billion in 2005-06 to nearly \$50 billion today, even without a trade agreement. In fiscal year 2019-20, India's trade deficit with China was \$48.64 billion, which was lower than the trade deficit of \$53.56 billion in 2018-19.

### Why are trade deficits growing?

Other experts contest the FTA argument on two accounts. In a 2019 paper entitled 'India's Trade Agreements and the Future of Indian Trade Policy', Johns Hopkins University professor, Pravin Krishna, explained that while deficits have increased for India in all foreign trade, India's FTAs or PTAs (Preferential Trade Agreements) do not account for a bigger chunk of the trade deficit than they did before. "Trade deficits with India's bilateral partners accounted for 12.6% of the overall trade deficit in the year 2007. In 2017, they accounted for a considerably smaller 7.5%," said the paper. Another explanation for the growing trade deficits comes from the downturn in India's GDP since 2016, and the decline in manufacturing. In addition, says Amitendu Palit, senior research fellow at the National University of Singapore's Institute of South Asian Studies, FTAs are not the only reason imports from RCEP countries, especially China, are rising. "If one looks at China, 75% of the imports from China on machinery, bulk drugs, chemicals, and other equipment are [goods] that are not available in India in sufficient amounts or at competitive prices. There is this view that imports from China would have flooded had India entered RCEP, but haven't they already flooded the country?" Mr. Palit asks.

### How has the COVID-19 pandemic changed the debate?

The COVID-19 pandemic has left the global economy in a state of disarray. For the first time in 60 years, nearly every country in the RCEP grouping is facing a recession. The fears over individual losses, combined with the trend worldwide against globalisation, are driving countries to formulate smaller trading coalitions outside of the World Trade Organization. In addition, travel between countries is being restricted by the spread of the virus, further



Representatives of member countries during the signing ceremony for the RCEP pact on November 15. ■ AFP

Several countries of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership hope that India will reconsider its decision. For China, having India in the RCEP opens up India's market and also provides a forum which does not include the U.S., its biggest rival

(People's Liberation Army) aggressions at the Line of Actual Control this year, and the continued standoff between their armies have hardened its position on RCEP, and officials say events during the pandemic have only "vindicated" India's stand on staying out of the grouping.

### Who wants India in?

Several RCEP countries still hope India will reconsider its decision of staying out. For Japan and Australia, the large size of the Indian economy and its negotiating heft would pose a valuable counterpoint to China within the grouping. It is for this reason that Japan led the drafting of the special statement on India, which would waive the 18-month mandatory waiting period if India applied formally to rejoin the group. For ASEAN countries that led the RCEP negotiations, India's presence would provide weight to the centrality of the ASEAN grouping in the region. The importance of drawing India into the agreement was underlined when leaders of all ten ASEAN countries travelled to India as the Republic Day chief guests in 2018. For China, too, having India within the RCEP tent would not just open up India's market access for Beijing, but would also provide one more forum on which to cooperate that does not include the United States (U.S.), its biggest rival.

Finally, there is the question of how the Quad (Quadrilateral Security Dialogue) would operate on

economic issues, particularly in terms of securing supply chains, with the U.S. walking out of the Comprehensive and Progressive agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), and India exiting the RCEP.

### Did RCEP address India's concerns?

India's concerns over Chinese goods flooding the Indian market through other markets under the RCEP, without clear guidelines on rules of origin, find clear mention and an entire chapter devoted to it in the final RCEP text of 20 chapters, despite the fact that India is no longer in the grouping. There is also a chapter on allowing trade in services (Chapter 8), particularly financial, telecommunications and professional services, which was another key demand by India during the seven years that it continued to negotiate the RCEP. In addition, there is a summary of objections by various RCEP members to different parts of the agreement, which are expected to be resolved in the next few years as the treaty goes through ratification processes across the region. Even so, the Indian government says there is no rethinking the decision to stay out of the RCEP. India has skipped every meeting of the grouping in the past year.

The next big question is whether India will accept the invitation from RCEP countries to be an "observer" at their meetings. When asked this week, Ministry of External Affairs spokesperson Anurag Srivastava declined a direct reply. "Our position regarding joining RCEP is very well-known. We conveyed our position not to join RCEP as some of the significant issues of core interest remain unresolved," he said. On November 16, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar had said the "mantra of an open and globalised economy" was used to justify unfair trade and production practices against India. "The effect of past trade agreements has been to de-industrialise some sectors. The consequences of future ones would lock us into global commitments, many of them not to our advantage," he had said. Without mentioning RCEP directly, the Minister was saying that India does not plan to use the special window at present, and rather than suffer trade deficits that had been the outcome of various FTAs India had signed, India would prefer to go it alone, or as he put it, have "the courage to think through the problem for ourselves".

(With inputs from Ananth Krishnan)

# A host of vaccines and the fight against COVID-19

What are the hurdles as pharma majors race to find a way to stem the march of the SARS-CoV-2 virus?

RAMYA KANNAN

**The story so far:** Herculean and nearly unparalleled efforts in science over the past few months have yielded at least two COVID-19 vaccines with promise, in a historically short span of time. Global efforts to find a vaccine to stem the march of the SARS-CoV-2 virus seem to be bearing fruit. By November, certain candidates emerged that claimed to offer safe and efficacious action against the virus. Pfizer and Moderna are among the leaders, while progress continues on the Oxford vaccine after a hiatus; China and Russia have claimed successes too.

### Who are the top contenders at this stage?

The past two weeks have been brimming with hope after announcements from major pharma companies, Pfizer and Moderna, about over 90% efficacy in their mRNA vaccine trials.

On Saturday, Pfizer and its German partner BioNTech applied to the U.S. drug regulatory authority (Food and Drug Administration, or FDA) seeking emergency use authorisation (EUA) for its COVID-19 vaccine, labelled 'BNT162b2'. On November 8, Pfizer released preliminary results from 94 people – it had found just over 90% efficacy with its vaccine. In a subsequent announcement later, the company claimed that the vaccine had over 95% efficacy. In all, of over 43,000 volunteers, 170 contracted COVID-19 in Pfizer's trial, and 162 of them had only received the placebo. Two doses of the vaccine were administered.

Moderna followed Pfizer's initial announcement with one of its own. It claimed that its vaccine was 94.5% effective in a 30,000-participant study in the U.S. The results were based on an initial analysis of 95 cases, of which 90 cases of COVID-19 were recorded in the placebo group, and five cases in the vaccine arm. Moderna also plans to apply for an EUA soon. While reviewing safety aspects, both firms recorded that the majority of adverse events were mild or moderate in severity.

The U.S. FDA had determined a minimum efficacy of 50% for a vaccine candidate. The results revealed so far are higher than what was originally thought possible. Seeking to reassure those with apprehensions about the "incredible speed in vaccine development", Anthony Fauci, Director, National Institute of Allergy and



Infectious Diseases, U.S., said during a White House briefing: "It is unprecedented. But it did not compromise the safety of the vaccine or the scientific integrity of the process ... we need to put to rest any concern that this was rushed in an inappropriate way. This is really solid." It is expected that the two companies could produce doses for about 20 million people in the U.S. by December. The first doses will go to people in the high-risk category, including healthcare workers.

### Which are the other vaccines in the pipeline?

Oxford University and its partner AstraZeneca are expecting the results of their phase-3 trials by Christmas, and have reportedly seen a good immune response in earlier trials among senior citizens. Adar Poonawalla, CEO of Serum Institute of India, Oxford University's partner in India, said last week that "the Oxford COVID-19 vaccine should be available for healthcare workers and elderly people by around February 2021 and by April for the general public". He added that it will be available in the market at ₹1,000 for two necessary doses, depending on the final trial results and regulatory approvals.

China's CanSino Biologics said it had developed a vaccine based on an adenovirus, in partnership with the Institute of Biology of the Academy of Military Medical Sciences. Claiming that evidence from the phase-2 trial had demonstrated that the vaccine produced a strong immune response, the Chinese military authorised the use of the vaccine as a specially needed drug in June-end, according to media reports. It has since continued with

phase-3 trials in other partner countries.

In August, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the arrival of an indigenous vaccine, reportedly before phase-3 trials. Later, the country clarified that the final approval would depend on the results of the phase-3 trials, to be conducted on about 40,000 volunteers. Russia also reached out to other nations to sign agreements to test its most promising vaccine candidate, Sputnik V, based on two adenoviruses. India joined the trials in October.

Johnson and Johnson reported that it had started phase-3 vaccine trials to assess the safety and effectiveness in up to 60,000 participants. Some media reports peg the release of this data at the end of this year, or early next.

### What are the challenges?

While the biggest challenge is making the vaccine available and affordable to all, there are other hurdles too. Investments to establish massive infrastructure to produce several hundred billion doses will be required. Once that hurdle is crossed, there is the complex logistics of rolling out the vaccine for use. Additionally, with the mRNA vaccine requiring deep cooling, with temperatures several degrees below zero, and two of the top contenders being built on the mRNA platform, elaborate systems of drug delivery and the investment for that should be guaranteed. Otherwise, the vaccines will self-destruct at high temperatures. In countries that do not have a robust cold-chain system, this will be a challenge. While several governments are pre-booking large consignments of doses, the question that remains is how poor and middle-income countries will cope, even as they are offered assistance from agencies such as UNICEF and Gavi, The Vaccine Alliance.

Meanwhile, efforts to reduce transmission by wearing masks, maintaining physical distance, and frequent hand washing must not suffer, epidemiologists warn.

## MARYAM NAWAZ

# The daughter who is shaking up Pakistan

Like what Benazir Bhutto did in the 1980s, Maryam Nawaz is mobilising millions against the government and its military backers

KALLOL BHATTACHERJEE

**T**he Generals of Rawalpindi are historically worried of daughters who want to avenge the wrongs done to their fathers. Maryam Nawaz knows this, and she infuses her speeches generously with tales of her father. Nawaz Sharif, the former Prime Minister, fell gravely ill and nearly died in the custody of the military-backed government of Prime Minister Imran Khan, she would say. "You love Nawaz Sharif and he is suffering and you too are suffering," she said at a rally last week in Mansehra, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, connecting the tottering economic condition of Pakistan with the ailing condition of Mr. Sharif, who is undergoing treatment in London.

In the absence of her father and other leading relatives, Ms. Maryam, the eldest of the third generation of the Sharif dynasty, is credited with scripting the current political movement that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has undertaken to bring the masses to the streets. From Punjab to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh, her public meetings are being attended by millions of people who are concerned about the deteriorating economic condition of the country.

Apart from the already existing debt regarding the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, there is the burden of the Saudi debt. With the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic and the country staying on the 'grey list' of the dirty money watchdog Financial Action Task Force

(FATF), the Pakistani economy faces an uncertain future. Ms. Maryam and other opposition leaders blame the government for the economic woes of the country.

Ms. Maryam was a teenager when the 'daughter of the east' Benazir Bhutto returned to Lahore in April 1986. The sea of humanity

**Nawaz Sharif backed Maryam over her brothers, first to take over the family's education institutions and then the reins of the party, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz**

that came to meet Benazir at the airport was the first signal that the foundation of the military dictatorship of General Zia ul Haq was shaky. From the first rally of April 10 onward, Benazir spoke of her father former Prime Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, who was executed, and her brother Shahbaz, who was allegedly poisoned to death in France. Ms. Maryam has borrowed the same language from Benazir's legacy and is using these expertly to shake the Imran Khan government.

Ms. Maryam often talks of the political exile of her father and the death of her mother Kulsum, whose funeral parts of the family could not attend. She says the anti-corruption case that sent Mr. Sharif to jail for 10 years and gave her a seven-year jail term are politically motivated. Mr. Sharif's political pro-

blems are connected to the publication of the Panama Papers in July 2017, which alleged that the Sharifs had acquired a huge amount of wealth that they had stored in offshore companies.

The narrative has shifted in three years. If the government's plan was to strike terror in the heart of the PML-N by sending Mr. Sharif on a compromise exile, what seems to have happened is just the opposite. During Ms. Maryam's rallies, the road-sides are plastered with the image of the daughter standing tall next to her father.

**Chosen successor**

Born on October 28, 1973, in Lahore, she got her early education from the Convent of Jesus and Mary in the city. In the late 1980s, she enrolled in King Edward Medical College in Lahore to become a doctor. But she did not complete the degree. Following the 1999 military coup of Gen. Pervez Musharraf, which toppled Mr. Sharif's government, she remained under house arrest for four months, before being sent to Saudi Arabia with her family.

She became active in politics in the early 2010s, after the fall of the military regime. In the 2013 general election, Ms. Maryam was in charge of Mr. Sharif's election campaign. The PML-N won 166 seats in the 342-member National Assembly and Mr. Sharif became the Prime Minister for the third time.

Within the family and the party, Mr. Sharif backed Ms. Maryam over her brothers Hassan and Hussein to take over the leadership. Before



stage and said, "No longer will husbands and brothers of Balochistan go missing." It was a powerful gesture that also drew criticism, with newspapers reminding Ms. Maryam about the red lines of Pakistani politics.

Ms. Qambrani's three brothers were taken away by the military. After the rally, she consoled grieving women who had members of their families missing because of the continued crackdown. The images from Quetta are unprecedented as politicians of Islamabad have rarely empathised with the suffering of the families of the activists and students who have gone missing.

### Strong women leaders

Mr. Iqbal says Ms. Maryam, in her public mannerisms and activities, has brought hints of South Asian strong women leaders as diverse as Benazir Bhutto and Jayalalithaa. "She is approximately the age when Jayalalithaa made her mark, and has a narrative force to back her," said Mr. Iqbal.

Married at the age of 19, Ms. Maryam, 47 now, is already a grandmother. In 2015, Prime Minister Narendra Modi dropped by at the Sharif property near Lahore when her daughter was married.

The rallies that have propelled Ms. Maryam to the headlines are being carefully supported by her close party colleagues. She is being supported by Rana Sanaullah, a party stalwart, her husband Safdar Awan, and Baloch leader Akhtar Mengal, among others. The rough behaviour of the authorities when they arrested her husband from their hotel room in Karachi, which came to be known as the "Karachi incident", had triggered strong protests.

A key challenge for Ms. Maryam will be establishing links with the powerful military, which has not fully repaired ties with the Sharif family since Mr. Sharif joined hands with Benazir in 2006 to overthrow the Musharraf regime. Now, Ms. Maryam is attacking the military from public platforms over its support for the Khan government. But ultimately, tackling the Generals would be the biggest test of Ms. Maryam's political career.

she took the reins of the party, Mr. Sharif encouraged her to take over the family's charitable and educational arms.

In 2018, Mr. Sharif had to resign after the Supreme Court disqualified him from holding public office after his name appeared in the Panama Papers. Following Mr. Khan's rise to power, the government turned against the opposition in the name of fighting corruption. Ms. Maryam was suddenly in the forefront of the fight-back against the regime, which is backed by the military.

When she was jailed and released in October 2019, Ms. Maryam turned it into a political drama, which is a feature of South Asian politics, and the people of Pakistan were not getting that under the Khan government. "In Maryam, they are sensing the emotional connect once again."

Ms. Maryam has already gone where no Pakistani political leader of her kind had gone earlier. In a rally in Quetta, the capital of the restive Balochistan province, she confidently called activist Adeeba Qambrani to the

### In Focus

■ Born on October 28, 1973, in Lahore, Maryam became active in politics in early 2010s when the PML-N was trying to make a political comeback after years in wilderness

■ In 2013, when the PML-N won the election narrowly and returned to power, Maryam was her father Nawaz Sharif's campaign chief

■ After Imran Khan came to power in 2018 and turned against the Opposition, she took the reins of the party, organising many rallies across the country

## BOEING 737 MAX

# Ready to take off again

The narrowbody jets, grounded after two crashes, can now return to the skies

MURALI N. KRISHNASWAMY

In what has been described as a comprehensive and safety review process that took 20 months in all to complete, the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) of the U.S., on November 18, signed an order that clears the way for the aircraft, the Boeing 737 MAX, to return to passenger service.

The step follows the global grounding of the latest iteration of Boeing's best-selling narrowbody jet after two crashes in five months that claimed 346 lives. The 13-minute flight of Indonesia's Lion Air Flight 610, on October 29, 2018, that ended in the Java Sea, and that of Ethiopian Airlines Flight 302, on March 10, 2019, airborne for six minutes before a hard impact in the countryside in Ethiopia, had pointed to clues of serious safety issues having overwhelmed the flight crew.

As questions swirled thick and fast around the fate of the fourth generation version of the popular plane which promises economic efficiency as its key selling point, and the image of its manufacturer, the over 100-year-old aerospace company, Boeing, regulators, in collaborative and independent efforts, scrambled to find remedies to the core issues involving the craft's design, certification and operation processes. In the process, there have been quiet and far-reaching changes to the aviation eco-



system, especially to regulation, safety practices and quality in the U.S.

What are the modifications that have been made to get the MAX back in the skies after the grounding estimated to have cost \$20 billion? To begin with, the crucial pilot training programme, specifically for the 737 MAX is populated with the recommendations of a Joint Operations Evaluation Board (JOEB), which comprises civil aviation authorities from the U.S., Brazil, Canada, and the EU.

The FAA has released an Airworthiness Directive with specific and crucial design changes that must be made before the twin-engine jet returns to service, a Continued Airworthiness Notification to the International Community (CANIC) and MAX training requirements.

The FAA has to approve the MAX pilot training programme revisions for every American airline operating the type. Importantly, the

view in the U.S., one that has been of global collaboration, will now translate into validation in various countries and regions. Europe, Canada and Brazil are expected to make a decision soon, though it could take longer in China. SpiceJet, India's sole MAX operator, has 13 aircraft on the ground out of an estimated order of 205 planes. It has been reported that India's Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) will carry out its own valuations before re-certifying the aircraft. In a statement, a Boeing official said: "Boeing is placing a 737 MAX simulator in India to provide increased training support in the region." However, Capt. Mohan Ranganathan, a senior aviation safety expert, has a word of caution: "In the overseeing of the MAX training, it is important that the DGCA person from the Flight Standards Division is a qualified 737 MAX pilot. It is very important that the DGCA shall not allow any shortcuts in training."

In his remarks in September, after his test flight on a revamped 737 MAX, FAA Administrator Stephen Dickson said, "I like what I saw [during the flight]." The flying machine was designed for a market where airlines needed new planes and when fuel prices were high. But much has changed. The hard part now is whether passengers will indeed be convinced of the safety changes in the backdrop of a COVID-19 world that has sapped travel demand.

## ILHAM ALIYEV

The President who went to war

Azerbaijan's leader launched an offensive to reclaim the land lost to Armenia

GARIMELLA SUBRAMANIAM

With the recent military victory over Armenia, Ilham Heydar oglu Aliyev, Azerbaijan's President, has regained some of the territory the country lost to its neighbour in the 1991-94 war. The bigger challenge before the 56-year-old leader is to win the hearts of the thousands of Armenians in the area restored to his country, who must live alongside the Azerbaijani population that has been fed on mistrust and hatred about them. Right through the six-week confrontation, however, Mr. Aliyev demanded an apology from Armenia, ruled out a dialogue and insisted on the capture through military force of the Armenian majority region of Nagorno-Karabakh, which seceded from Azerbaijan towards the end of the Soviet Union.

The President's handling of the decades-long dispute demonstrated a total disregard of the 1975 Helsinki principles of the Organisation for European Security and Cooperation (OESC), which prohibit the use of force and accord recognition for the equal right to self-determination.

The long political career of the oil executive, who has received a doctorate in political science and other honours for his contribution in the arena of sports, predates his anointment as Prime Minister by his ailing father and former President ahead of the 2003 Presiden-



tial bid. While that election was widely criticised as rigged, Mr. Aliyev's 17-year rule has been marked by an authoritarian style of governance at home, leveraging the country's oil wealth and the pursuit of deft diplomacy abroad.

Mr. Aliyev dispensed with the constitutionally stipulated two term limit for the President in a 2009 referendum, one year after his re-election. He was merely following in the footsteps of his father who, in a 2002 plebiscite, made a provision for the President to be succeeded by the Prime Minister, rather than the Speaker of Parliament.

His tightly controlled 2016 referendum to alter the constitution was severely criticised by the Venice Commission, a Council of Europe body which monitors constitutional law. Among the sweeping changes were the extension of the presidential term from five to seven years and the crea-

tion of the office of Vice President. The position, occupied by Mr. Aliyev's wife Mehriban Aliyeva since February 2017, makes her a potential frontrunner for the presidency. Activists alleged that the move contravened the provisions of an anti-corruption law that barred officials from appointing close relatives to serve under them. Another change, to dispense with the age criterion for candidates, sparked speculation that Mr. Aliyev could be grooming his son for high office one day.

The release among others, of Khadija Ismayilova, the investigative journalist who was sentenced to seven and a half years was seen as an attempt to mollify western powers by Mr. Aliyev's government faced with a financial crunch following the slump in oil prices.

And then he launched the war in late September and the military gains seem to have bolstered his strongman image. After six weeks of fighting, Mr. Aliyev agreed to end the operations in the Russia-brokered deal, however, is not substantially different from the ceasefire of the 1990s the senior Aliyev brokered but without any lasting settlement. That's the challenge President Ilham Aliyev is facing amid victory.

2018 of Ilgar Mammadov, a prominent opposition politician, who had proposed to contest the 2013 presidential race. Mr. Mammadov was finally acquitted in April 2020.

In 2016, U.S. Congressmen proposed the Azerbaijan Democracy Act to sanction individuals in the higher echelons of the country's political and administrative apparatus. The European Parliament in the previous year adopted a resolution condemning the ban on peaceful protests in the capital Baku since 2006 and the intimidation and repression of defenders of human rights under Mr. Aliyev's watch.

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## TV PICKS

**Serie A:** Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 5 p.m. onwards & Sony Six (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m.  
**Premier League:** SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 5.30 p.m. onwards  
**ISL:** Star Sports 2 (SD & HD) & Star Sports 3, 7.30 p.m.  
**ATP Finals:** Sony Six (SD & HD), 11.30 p.m.

## IN BRIEF



## Hamstring getting better, says Rohit

NEW DELHI  
Rohit Sharma revealed that he always knew his hamstring injury was not serious and would be ready for the tour of Australia. "Hamstring is feeling absolutely fine. Just started the process of getting it nice and strong. That's the reason I'm at the NCA," said Rohit. PTI

## Pranjala stuns Gavrilova

MELBOURNE  
Y. Pranjala returned to competition with a 4-6, 6-4, [10-6] win over former World No. 20 Daria Gavrilova in a league match of the UTR Pro tennis tournament on Saturday. "It is good to be back on court again," said the 21-year-old Pranjala. "It was my first match after months, and it was against Gavrilova. I am glad I played well."

## Prajnesh in summit clash

## SPORTS BUREAU

ORLANDO  
Prajnesh Gunneswaran beat Chris Eubanks 6-4, 7-6 (2) to enter the final of the Orlando Open Challenger tournament on Saturday.

Fourth seed Prajnesh had outplayed sixth seed Dmitry Popko of Kazakhstan 6-0, 6-3 in the quarterfinals of the \$52,080 tournament.

American Eubanks had knocked out second-seeded countryman Denis Kudla in three sets in the last-eight phase.

In the ITF men's event in Egypt, Siddhant Bantia and Aidan Mchugh of Britain lost in the doubles final to Aldin Setkic and Yaraslav Shyla.

**The results:** \$52,080 Challenger, Orlando, US; **Semifinal:** Prajnesh Gunneswaran bt Chris Eubanks 6-4, 7-6(2); **Quarterfinal:** Prajnesh bt Dmitry Popko (Kaz) 6-0, 6-3. \$15,000 ITF, Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt; **Doubles (final):** Aldin Setkic (BIH) & Yaraslav Shyla (BLR) bt Aidan Mchugh (GBR) & Siddhant Bantia 7-6(2), 6-3.

## Vidit faces Firouzja

## RAKESH RAO

NEW DELHI  
Armed with white, Vidit Gujrathi will take on Iranian teenager Alireza Firouzja in his campaign-opener of the star-studded Skilling Open online chess tournament on Sunday.

On a day when five rounds are scheduled, Vidit's other rivals are Armenia's Levon Aronian (white), Poland's Janusz Krzysztof Duda (black), China's Ding Liren (white) and the Netherlands' Anish Giri (black).

The first round begins at 10.30 p.m. IST and the official broadcaster is chess24.com.

World champion Magnus Carlsen begins with black against Russia's Ian Nepomniachtchi while second seed Ding Liren, with black, takes on another Russian Sergey Karjakin.

Fifteen rounds, spread over the first three days, will be played in this 16-player all-play-all league phase. Thereafter, the top eight will advance to the knockouts.

The quarterfinals, semifinals and final will be over two days each. Each knockout round comprises two four-game rapid matches. In case of a 1-1 deadlock, two blitz games will follow. If the tie persists, an Armageddon game will decide the winner.

## NorthEast stuns MCFC

Appiah nets a penalty; Jahouh sees red for Lobera's side

## ISL 2020-21

## SPORTS BUREAU

NorthEast United FC, which hasn't won its opening game in the Indian Super League since 2016, finally broke the curse as it defeated 10-man Mumbai City FC 1-0, thanks to Kwesi Appiah's spot-kick, at the Tilak Maidan in Vasco on Saturday.

While NEUFC manager Gerard Nus began his ISL sojourn with victory, MCFC earned the dubious record of becoming the first side managed by Sergio Lobera to not register a single shot on target in an ISL outing.

Lobera surprisingly decided to leave out Mourtada Fall, the defender with most goals in ISL history, and employed Hernan Santana and Sarthak Golui as centre-backs. The duo was hardly troubled as Mumbai maintained more than 70% possession in the first half. However, Ahmed Jahouh's red card in the 43rd changed the complexion of the game.

The Moroccan midfielder lunged in from behind on NorthEast's Khassa Camara, the result:



Off to celebrate! NEUFC's Appiah, left, is gung-ho after slotting home from the spot. ■ ISL/SPORTSPICS

making contact just above the ankle. Referee R. Venkatesh, who had a clear view of the incident, didn't hesitate to send off Jahouh.

In the 47th minute, off a NEUFC corner, centre-back Dylan Fox headed the ball towards MCFC midfielder Rowlin Borges, who handled it. Ghanaian striker Appiah sent goalkeeper Amrinder Singh the wrong way to give his side the lead.

Later, despite multiple attacking substitutions, both teams struggled to create clear-cut chances.

Mumbai won eight cor-

ners, but was unable to test NEUFC custodian Subhasish Roy Chowdhury. The Highlanders held on to the slender lead to bag three points. MCFC's Raynier Fernandes was the second player to be substituted due to injury after ATKMB's Michael Soosairaj on the opening night.

NorthEast United FC 1 (Apiah 47) bt Mumbai City FC 0.

## SUNDAY'S MATCH

FC Goa vs Bengaluru FC  
7.30 p.m.

STAR SPORTS 2 (SD & HD) AND 3

## Security measures announced for ADHM

World women's marathon record holder Kosgei confirms participation

**C** The ADHM is going to be the launch of Indian athletics towards the Olympic Games

— ADILLE SUMARIWALLA

they would follow the highest standards with bio-security zones and government-mandated protocols.

## Bio-secure zones

Bio-secure zones with COVID-negative certificates mandatory would be created at the hotel for elite athletes and at the JLN Stadium for media, crew and guests respectively with restricted entry.

All participants will need a COVID-19 negative test and will be tested twice before race day.

The venue team will also be tested the day before besides daily temperature checks, oximeter checks, isolation areas and sanitizers at specific entry points to the stadium.

Washing the course and using eco-safe technology to clear pollution would also continue from previous years.

## Funds

Sports secretary Ravi Mittal assured of sufficient funds for more such runs on the occasion that also saw the launch of the ADHM mobile app for amateur runners to register.

**Highest standards**

Given safety and health concerns amidst rising pollution and COVID-19 cases, the organisers insisted

## Bharat, Yash and Shiva shine for Telefunken

Half-centuries by Bharat Sindhwan and Yash Dabas, who added 106 for the fourth wicket, and three wickets by left-arm spinner Shiva Singh saw Telefunken Club beat Bal Bhawan School by five wickets to enter the pre-quarterfinals of the 30th all-India Om Nath Sood memorial tournament.

**The scores:** BBS 200/9 in 40 overs (Dinesh Mor 70, Shiva Singh 3/41) lost to Telefunken Club 205/3 in 38.3 overs (Bharat Zindgani 63, Yash Dabas 54, Yogesh Nagar 30).

**Zeehan bowls well; all-round show by Gurinder**

India Under-19 bowler Zeehan Ansari took three wickets as Uttar Pradesh Cricket Association beat Life Care, Lucknow, by 41 runs to enter the quarterfinals of the Ganaur Premier League. In another game, Chandigarh all-rounder Gurinder Singh

scored an unbeaten 50 and picked up four wickets as Minerwa Academy edged Uday Gupte Academy.

**The scores:** UPCA 110/8 in 20 overs (Priyanshu Srivastav 37, Shivam Sharma 2/13, Rohit Dangwal 2/25) bt Life Care 69 in 15.2 overs (Yash Garg 27 n.o., Zeeshan Ansari 3/16, Jamshed Alam 2/12, Saurav Dubey 2/15).

Minerva Academy 123/7 in 20 overs (Gurinder Singh 50 n.o., Jagmeet Singh 38, Divij Mehra 3/16, Raghav Singh Chahar 2/24) bt UGA 115/6 in 20 overs (Abhishek Gosain 37, Gurinder Singh 4/15).

**Vishal and Ayush set up Sehgal & Chaudhary's win**

Vishal Chaudhary (4/14) and Ayush Chauhan (3/4) were the architects of Sehgal & Chaudhary's eight-wicket win over Hari Singh Academy in the Unique T20 tournament. **The scores:** HSA 65 in 14 overs (Vishal Chaudhary 4/14, Ayush Chauhan 3/4) lost to SCA 66/2 in 9 overs.

## Ziya-ul-Haq, Jonty and Aman do it for LB Shastri

Ziya-ul-Haq (4/26), Jonty Sidhu (72) and Aman Gurnani (72) helped LB Shastri Club score a four-wicket win against Haryana Academy in the BR Sharma memorial tournament.

**The scores:** Haryana Academy 269 in 36.5 overs (Kuldeep Devatwal 82, Rajat Paliwal 65, Mayank Kumar 61, Zia-ul-Haq 4/26, Ansh Chaudhary 3/58) lost to LB Shastri Club 273/6 in 39.3 overs (Aman Gurnani 72, Jonty Sidhu 72, Priyanshu Arya 34).

**Neeraj scalps four**

Neeraj Yadav took four wickets as Rohtak Road Gymkhana beat Delhi Colts by five wickets in the Swastik Cup.

**The scores:** Delhi Colts 138 in 29.3 overs (Sahil Rana 44, Avirod 37, Neeraj Yadav 4/27, Shekhar Sehrawat 3/20) lost to CPW Academy 158/3 in 36 overs (Mohsin Khan 60 n.o., Vinay Kumar 45).

## Gagan, Ekansh star for Uday Gupte CA

Gagan Vats' 136 and an all-round show by Ekansh Gulati (82 and 3/19) were the highlights of Uday Gupte Cricket Academy's 151-run win over Sai Develop Zone in the first Tripathi Premier League.

**The scores:** UGA 297/6 in 40 overs (Gagan Vats 136, Ekansh Gulati 82, Wasim Ahmed 3/49) bt SDZ 146 in 27.4 overs (Sandeep Saini 52, Ekansh Gulati 3/19, Vishesh Kapoor 3/14).

**Good spell by Shubham**

Shubham Deswal (4/17) set up Cap Pathan Wing Academy's seven-wicket win over Positive Roads Academy in the first P.T. Wing Sports tournament.

**The scores:** PTA 154 in 37.1

overs (Riyansh Kapoor 40, Shubham Deswal 4/17) lost to CPW Academy 158/3 in 36 overs (Mohsin Khan 60 n.o., Vinay Kumar 45).

## AT A GLANCE

## Sohail Tanvir tests positive for coronavirus

COLOMBO  
Two foreign players tested positive for coronavirus after arrival in Sri Lanka for the thrice-delayed Lanka Premier League T20 tournament. Pakistan's Sohail Tanvir and Canada's Ravinderpal Singh were isolated and placed under medical care on Friday as their on-arrival COVID-19 tests showed they were infected, officials said. AFP

## Gangjee lies tied 49th

MIYAKO (JAPAN)  
Rahil Gangjee carded an even par 71 in the third round of the Dunlop Phoenix Open, here. Gangjee now has rounds of 71, 72, 71 and at one-over is tied 49th. PTI

## Kim gets nose in front

TAMPA  
Kim Sei-young fired a five-under 65 to take a one-shot lead at the halfway stage of the LPGA Tour's Pelican Women's Championship here on Friday. Ally McDonald of the USA is in second place. AFP

## Lovekush wins senior boys' 100m crown; Kajal bags 800m title

## SPORTS BUREAU

KARNAK

Lovekush won the senior boys' 100m title in a time of 11.18 seconds, beating Atul and Avinash, in the Sports is Education athletic meet organised by Women Sports Foundation at the Karan Stadium.

The senior girls' 800m crown was won by Kajal in 2 minutes, 55 seconds as she beat Gunjan and Jyoti with a lot to spare.

"This unit test series is to assess and teach the students. It provides them the

much required platform to practice their skills and enhance the confidence level," said the president of the

foundation, Piyush Sachdeva, who awarded medals, certificates and gift hampers to the top three in each

event. More such events are planned to be hosted across the country to drive home the point that sports in itself

## Smashing Blue tipped for Youngsters Plate

HYDERABAD: Trainer R.H. Sequiera's ward Smashing Blue, unbeaten in her last four starts, should not find it difficult to win the Youngsters Plate (Div. I), the main event of the races here Sunday (Nov. 22).

**RECOMMENDER PLATE (DIV. II)**

1 (1,200m), rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 20.5: 1. N.R.I Heights (8) Darshan R.N. 60, 2. Golden Hope (12) Md. Ismail 59, 3. Tiger Of The Sea (12) Prakash 59, 4. Hurricane (12) Surya Prakash 59, 5. Hurricane (12) Deepak Singh 57, 6. Shiloh (12) Deepak Singh 55, 7. Solo Winner (14) C.P. Bopanna 57, 8. Curcum (1) Jitendra Singh 56.5, 9. Joy Of Giving (13) Gaurav Singh 56, 10. Brush The Sky (16) Ajeth Kumar 53.5, 11. Stormy (4) Irvan Singh 53, 12. Royal Style (17) Kuldeep Singh 55, 13. Starlight (2) Afroz Khan 54.5, 14. Spice (3) Ajith Kumar 54.5, 15. Sun Dance (3) Jitendra Singh 52, 16. Valley Ikon (9) Gurdas 53.5, 17. Proud Legacy (12) Darshan R.N. 53.5, 18. Silver Set (13) Surya Prakash 53.5, 19. Sugar An Spice (6) 52.5, 15. Tough And Go (15) R.S. Jodha 52.5, 16. Flying Queen (7) Gaddam 51.5 and 17. Ice Berry (11) Nakhat Singh 51.5.

**DEMOCRACY PLATE (DIV. I)**

3 (1,200m), rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 20.5: 1. The Special One (4) Abhay Singh 60, 2. New State (1) Irvan Singh 59, 3. Best Friend (12) Jitendra Singh 58.5, 4. Man Apart (5) Gaurav Singh 58.5, 5. Promiseofhappiness (7) A.C. Vikrant 57.5, 6. Wood Bridge (11) Ajeeth Kumar 58.5, 7. Royal Green (3) Md. Ismail 56.5, 8. Secretariat (12) Surya Prakash 56.5, 9. Starboy (8) Ashad Asbar 55, 10. Super Act (2) Kuldeep Singh 54.5, 11. Ajmal Birju (10) B.R. Kumar 54, 14. Art In Motion (6) G. Naresh 53, 15. Brisbane (4) Ajeeth Kumar 53, 16. Castorock (5) S. Zervan 52.5, 17. Southern Safar (13) Gopal Singh 52.5 and 18. Sun Dance (3) Jitendra Singh 52.

**1. SOUTHERN PRINCESS, 2. HOUSE OF DIAMONDS, 3. PRINCESS**

6 (1,200m), 5-y-o & over, rated 20 to 45 (Cat. III), 3.50: 1. The Special One (4) Abhay Singh 60, 2. New State (1) Irvan Singh 59, 3. Best Friend (12) Jitendra Singh 58.5, 4. Man Apart (5) Gaurav Singh