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Chief Minister of Delhi

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NO MAJOR SPIKE SINCE JUNE 15, ARE COVID-19 CASES IN MUMBAI PLATEAuing? ►htnation p7

MORE DETAILS
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business p14

RULING PARTY IN GRAVE CRISIS: NEPAL PM
TALKS BETWEEN OLI, PRACHANDA FAIL; ANOTHER MEETING TODAY ►htworld p15

MONDAY, JULY 06, 2020

Another grim milestone: India No.3 in total cases

COVID CRISIS India overtakes Russia; only US and Brazil ahead of it; recovery rate improves

HT Correspondent

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NEWDELHI: With four consecutive days of record highs in new cases of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19), India on Sunday went past Russia in total infections to become the third biggest hot spot of the virus, ranking only behind the US and Brazil.

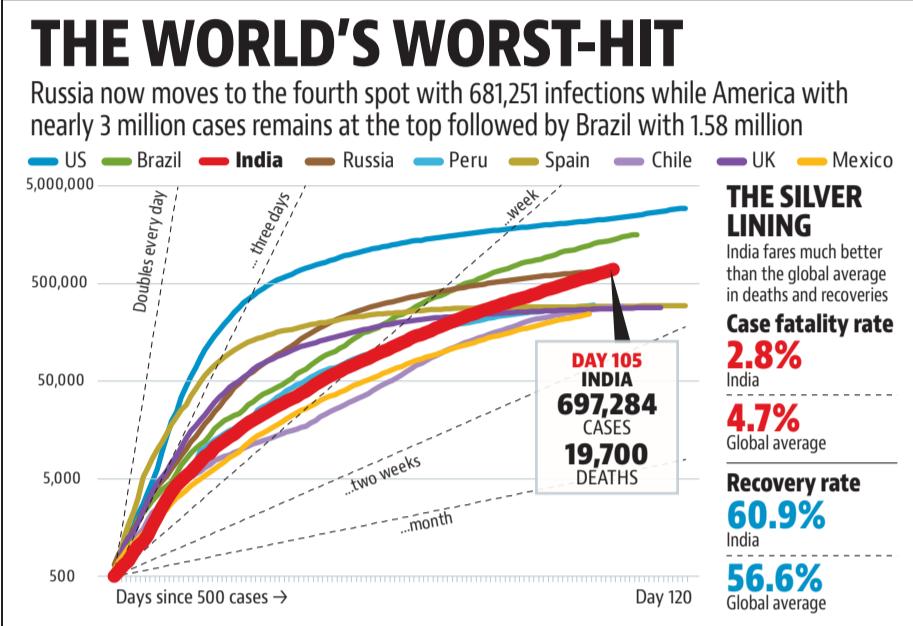
The country reported 24,422 new cases and 421 new deaths on Sunday, taking the total number of infections to 697,284 and fatalities to 19,700.

With nearly three million cases and 132,000 deaths, the United States is the worst-hit country in the world, followed by Brazil, which has nearly 1.6 million cases and over 64,000 deaths, according to worldometers.info. Russia, now at the fourth spot, has 681,251 Covid-19 infections and 10,161 deaths. Peru was placed fifth with over 299,000 cases and 10,000 deaths on Sunday night.

Public health experts say that while India has a high Covid-19 caseload, its case fatality rate, at 2.8%, is much lower than the global average of 4.7%.

Another statistic that offers hope is that 424,596 patients, or 60.9%, have recovered from the disease—better than the global recovery rate of 56.6%. The

CONTINUED ON P13



Delhi on cusp of 100,000 cases

NEW DELHI: Nearly 100,000 people in Delhi have been diagnosed with the coronavirus disease (Covid-19), with the national capital set to become only the third state in the country after Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu to cross the threshold. More than 70% of those

infected with Covid-19 in the city have recovered from the disease, and the average positivity rate—the rate at which samples test positive—has decreased to 11.6% from 21.6% two weeks ago. Till Sunday, 3,067 fatalities had been reported in the city. ►P4

NREGS schedule tweaked to accommodate migrants

Saubhadra Chatterji

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NEW DELHI: With millions of unskilled migrant workers in the cities having returned to rural India in the aftermath of the lockdown imposed for Covid-19 pandemic, the Narendra Modi government has tweaked the flagship Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) for the benefit of the workers.

The government notified on July 2 that unskilled workers can now participate in the construction of community sanitary complexes under its flagship Swachh Bharat scheme. The phrase "Unskilled wage component for construction of Community Sanitary Complexes in convergence with Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen)" has been



Migrant workers at a brick kiln in Patna. PARWAZ KHAN / HT

added to schedule 1 of the MGNREGS, which talks about "Rural sanitation related works, such as individual household latrines, School toilet units, Anganwadi toilets either independently or in convergence

with schemes of other Government Departments.

The arrangement would help get more hands for Swachh Bharat-related construction and for the unskilled workers, opens a dedicated area of work. ►P6

Railways in talks with states to get infra workers back

NEW DELHI: Indian Railways is in talks with states to get back labourers for construction work on its biggest infrastructure projects—the dedicated freight corridors. The project implementation agency, the Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Limited, which had been left with about 50% of its workforce after the Covid-19 lockdown has begun the process of getting back nearly 20,000 labourers and sought help from states including UP and Bihar. "We have major agencies including L&T, Tata, GMR group who requested us to get the labour back," said Anurag Sachan, MD, Dedicated Freight Corridor Corporation of India Limited.

With schemes of other Government Departments.

The arrangement would help get more hands for Swachh Bharat-related construction and for the unskilled workers, opens a dedicated area of work. ►P6

Bubonic plague case in China's Inner Mongolia

BEIJING: Authorities in a city in the Chinese region of Inner Mongolia issued a warning on Sunday, one day after a hospital reported a case of suspected bubonic plague.

The health committee of the city of Bayan Nur issued the third-level alert, the second lowest in a four-level system.

The alert forbids the hunting and eating of animals that could carry plague and asks the public to report any suspected cases of plague or fever with no clear causes, and to report any sick or dead marmots.

The bubonic plague, known as the "Black Death" in the Middle Ages, is a highly infectious and often fatal disease that is spread mostly by rodents. Plague cases are not uncommon in China, but outbreaks have become increasingly rare. From 2009 to 2018, China reported 26 cases and 11 deaths. ►P15

THE FACTORY IN MODINAGAR AREA, WHERE PARTY POPPERS WERE MANUFACTURED, WAS ILLEGAL, SAID A SENIOR POLICE OFFICIAL

village, where the factory is located.

"We have found laxity on part of the local police post-in-charge as he was prima facie expected to have knowledge about the factory. The CM has announced a compensation of ₹4 lakh each to the family of the deceased," Pandey said. SSP Kalanidhi Naithani said: "The factory was illegal as we have found no documents or records of its operation or permission." ►P15

An FIR will be lodged against the person operating the factory and he will be sent to jail, Pandey told reporters in Bakherwa

7 women among eight dead in fire at illegal factory in Ghaziabad

Peeyush Khandelwal

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GHAZIABAD: Seven women and an 18-year-old man were charred to death and 11 others injured in a fire that swept through an illegal factory manufacturing party poppers in Ghaziabad district's Modinagar town, officials said on Sunday.

Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath took note of the incident and asked authorities to conduct an immediate probe, district magistrate Ajay Shankar Pandey said. According to the CM, the factory was illegal as we have found no documents or records of its operation or permission." ►P15

In Fourth of July remarks, Trump—who has faced criticism over his handling of the pandemic—said the US was testing too much and falsely asserted that "by so doing, we show cases, 99% of which are totally harmless." The World Health Organization has said that about 20% of those diagnosed with Covid-19 progress to severe disease, including pneumonia and respiratory failure. ►P15

99% cases in the US are completely harmless: Trump

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump on Saturday claimed without evidence that 99% of coronavirus cases in the United States were "totally harmless" even as several American states marked a record number of new cases.

In Fourth of July remarks, Trump—who has faced criticism over his handling of the pandemic—said the US was testing too much and falsely asserted that "by so doing, we show cases, 99% of which are totally harmless." The World Health Organization has said that about 20% of those diagnosed with Covid-19 progress to severe disease, including pneumonia and respiratory failure. ►P15

5 start-ups in shortlist for Make in India video app

Deeksha Bhardwaj

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NEW DELHI: A video conferencing solution challenge launched by the ministry of electronics and information technology, aimed at finding an Indian alternative to Zoom, has thrown up a surprise—the top five companies to make it to the ministry's list are all start-ups.

The top three, which will be provided ₹20 lakh each as support from the government

INDIA EYES US PREDATOR-B DRONES FOR SURVEILLANCE

Shishir Gupta

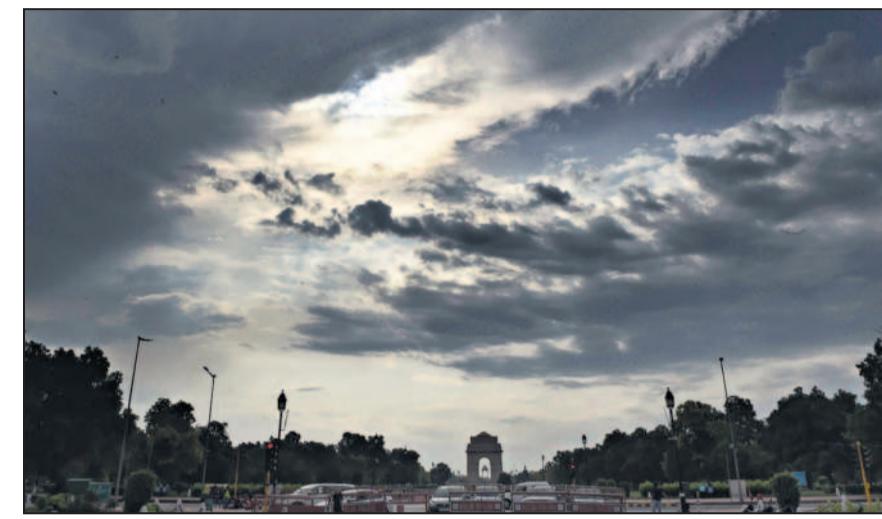
letters@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: In the wake of multiple prolonged standoffs with the Chinese army in eastern Ladakh, India has conveyed to the US its renewed interest in the medium-altitude long-endurance (MALE) armed Predator-B drone, which not only collects intelligence through surveillance and reconnaissance but also locates and destroys the target with missiles or laser-guided bombs.

While India is operating Israeli Heron unarmed drones in eastern Ladakh, the acquisition of an armed drone has acquired urgency, with China not only using Wing Loong II armed drone but also in the process of supplying two systems to Pakistan, ostensibly to protect the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the PLA Navy's new base at Gwadar in Balochistan province. ►P11

60 DAYS SINCE FACE-OFF, LAC REMAINS TENSE ►P11

DELHI WAKES UP TO SUNDAY SHOWERS



Clouds hover over India Gate in New Delhi on Sunday. A storm accompanying early morning showers uprooted trees and snapped power lines, causing outages in some parts of the Capital. More rain is expected over the next three to four days, the IMD said. ►P11

ARVIND YADAV/HT

Dubey had knowledge of raid: Arrested aide

Haidar Naqvi and Rohit K Singh

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KANPUR/LUCKNOW: Police in Uttar Pradesh have arrested an aide of criminal Vikas Dubey and intensified search for suspected informants in the force who could have tipped him off a raid that eventually led to the killing of eight personnel by his gang, officials said on Sunday.

Daya Shankar Agnihotri, suspected to be part of the gang



Vikas Dubey

that laid a trap for the police station informed the 48-year-old Dubey, who faces 60 criminal cases, about the raid. HT has seen the video. ►P8

arrested after a gunfight in Kalanpur area near Kanpur city. Agnihotri, who has three criminal cases including two cases of attempt to murder against him, suffered a bullet wound in his right leg. He carried a reward of ₹25,000.

Agnihotri said in a video statement that a caller from a police station informed the 48-year-old Dubey, who faces 60 criminal cases, about the raid. HT has seen the video. ►P8

India tests 10mn samples, to scale up exercise further

Rhythma Kaul

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NEW DELHI: India has tested 10 million samples for the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) in the past five-and-a-half months, with at least 200,000 samples being tested between January 22 and July 5 on average daily in the 1,100 laboratories that were identified, upgraded or established across the country at a breakneck speed to ramp up testing and prevent the spread of infections.

Covid-19 testing labs in the country approved by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) are capable of performing about 350,000 tests a day currently, an increase from about

DELHI HOSPITALS ORDERED TO TEST ALL AT 'HIGH RISK'

NEW DELHI: The Delhi government on Sunday made it mandatory for all hospitals to conduct rapid antigen testing on all people with influenza-like illness, all patients admitted with severe acute respiratory infection cases, all asymptomatic admitted patients or

those falling in the high-risk group seeking admission in their facility.

The order defines high-risk group as those undergoing chemotherapy, immunosuppressed, suffering from a malignancy, transplant patients and elderly with co-morbidities. ►P5

testing labs in all states, and the numbers are only growing as ICMR continues to expand the testing laboratory network. ►P7

testing labs in all states, and the numbers are only growing as ICMR continues to expand the testing laboratory network. ►P7

Lankan cricketer Mendis arrested after car accident

COLOMBO: Sri Lankan batsman Kumar Sangakkara, 25, was arrested on Sunday after the vehicle he was driving allegedly hit a 64-year-old cyclist and killed him on the spot.

The incident took place at 5am on the Old Galle Road in the Colombo suburb of Panadura.

Mendis will appear even as the police conduct an investigation into the accident. According to the police, Mendis's car crashed into the bicycle of the deceased who has been identified as a resident of Gokarella. The victim died as he was being admitted to the hospital. ►P16

10,000-BED FACILITY ADMITS PATIENTS



Health care workers at the Sardar Patel Covid Care Centre, the biggest of its kind in India, in south Delhi's Chhattarpur. The 10,000-bed facility started admitting coronavirus disease patients on Sunday evening. ►P4

VIPIN KUMAR/HT

ZOOM SUBSTITUTE

5 start-ups in shortlist for Make in India video app

OFFICIALS IN THE IT MINISTRY SAID OVER

2,000 APPLICATIONS HAD COME IN FOR THE CHALLENGE LAUNCHED ON APRIL 13

to develop an indigenous video conferencing application, are PeopleLink Unified Communications Pvt Ltd, Hyderabad; Sarv Webs Pvt Ltd, Jaipur; and Techgentsia

Software Technologies Private Ltd, Alappuzha.

The other two companies, Instrive Softwares Private Ltd, Chennai; and Soulpage IT Solutions Private Ltd, Hyderabad, will be given ₹15 lakh each to develop the final product.

Officials in the information and technology (IT) ministry said on condition of anonymity that over 2,000 applications had come in by potential participants in the video conferencing app challenge. ►CONTINUED ON P13

leisure, which was launched on April 13. The challenge came in the backdrop of the nationwide lockdown that led to the need for video conferencing apps to support the country's shift to working from home and comply with social distancing norms.

Initially, American-origin application Zoom gained wide popularity, with even certain ministries and a number of officials taking to it to communicate. Security con-

cerns over privacy and security led to its ban in India. ►P15

TRACKING THE VIRUS

WORLD

CASES 11,471,583 | DEATHS 553,072

United States 2,959,188 | Rest of the world 8,512,395

Maharashtra 2,06,619

Tamil Nadu 131,151

Delhi 99,444

Gujarat 36,123



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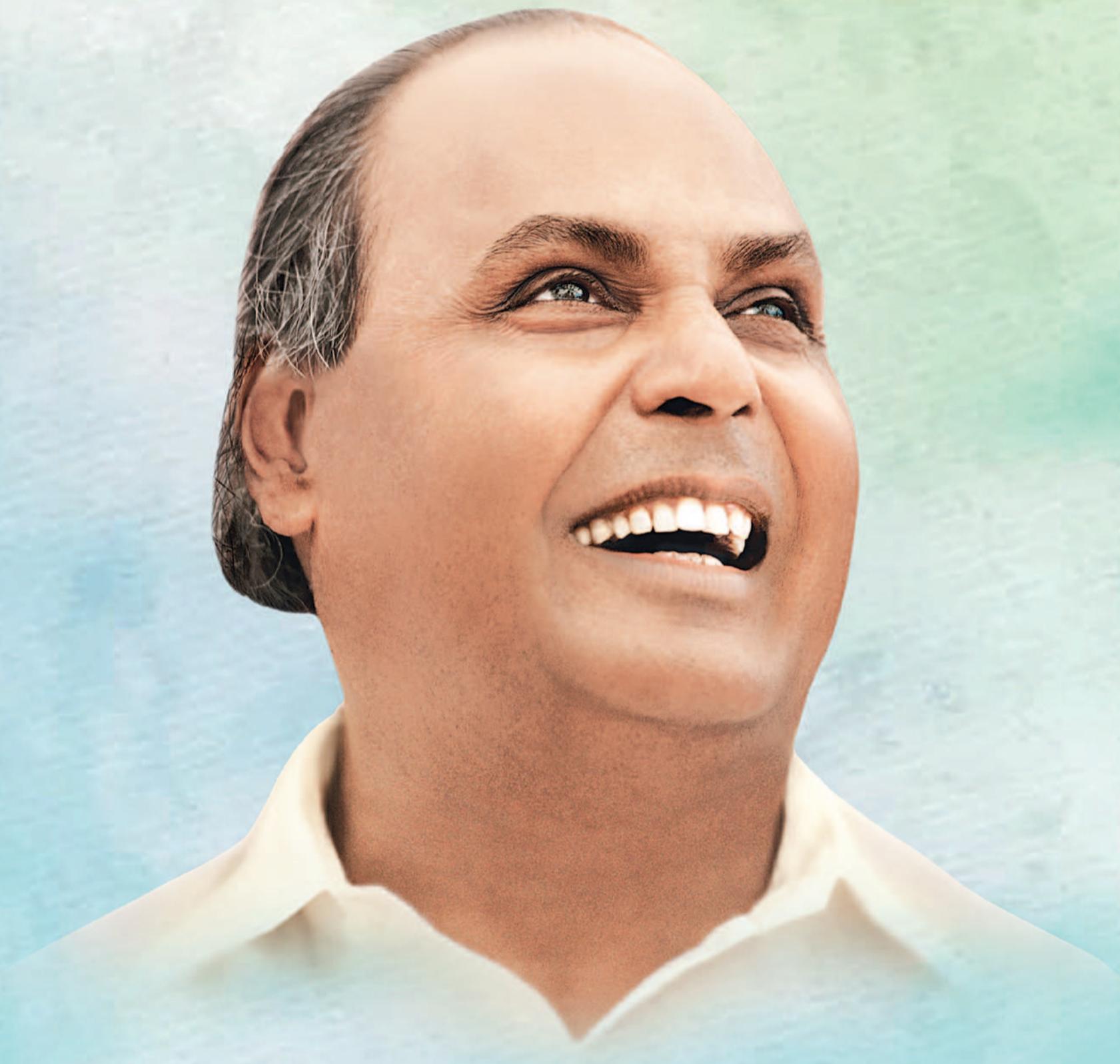
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अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥

The soul has no birth or death. It has no being and hence will never cease to be. Birthless, deathless and without a beginning or an end, the soul is not destroyed when the body is destroyed.

- Bhagavad Gita (Ch. 2 - Text 20)

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BOOST FOR CAPITAL'S COVID-19 INFRASTRUCTURE



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■ **SARDAR PATEL COVID CARE CENTRE** L-G Anil Baijal with ITBP director general SS Deswal at the Radha Soami Satsang Beas Covid care centre in Chhatarpur on Sunday. VVIPIN KUMAR/HT



1,000 BEDS

■ **SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL HOSPITAL** Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal, Union home minister Amit Shah, defence minister Rajnath Singh, and Union health minister Dr Harsh Vardhan at the Covid hospital – built by the DRDO – on Sunday. PTI



500 BEDS

■ **CWG VILLAGE CARE CENTRE** The facility will provide care to those with moderate symptoms, and is slated to be ready later this week. PTI

Delhi's case count likely to hit 100k today, fatality rate at 3%

HIGH RECOVERY RATE A silver lining for the city is the recovery rate, which stood at 71% on Sunday

HT Correspondent

■ letters@hindustantimes.com

NEWDELHI: With 2,244 new cases of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) on Sunday, the total number of confirmed infections in the national capital stood just 556 away from the 100,000 mark, 126 days since the first case was recorded in Delhi on March 2.

According to the Delhi government's daily health bulletin on Sunday, the Capital's Covid-19 tally was 99,444. Delhi has recorded 2,338 new cases of Covid-19 on average every day over the past week.

So far, 3,067 people have died due to the infection in the city, which means that Delhi has a case fatality rate (CFR) of 3%, slightly higher than the national average of 2.8%.

However, a silver lining for the national capital is the recovery rate, which on Saturday exceeded 70% for the first time. On Sunday, another 3,083 people recovered from the illness, taking the city's recovery tally to 71,339, even as the testing numbers continue to rise.

This means there are around 25,000 "active cases" — those still living with the infection — in the city. "Active cases" are a crucial metric because they directly correspond to the strain on a region's health care system.

According to the state government's "Delhi Corona" app, the Capital has 15,161 beds for Covid-19 patients, of which 5,294 are occupied and 9,867 vacant as of Sunday.

With 32,477 tests per million on Sunday, Delhi has among the highest testing rates in the country once the population is factored in.

With nearly two-thirds of the Capital's Covid-19 beds vacant,



■ Covid-19 patients at a care centre in Shehnai Banquet Hall play a board game on Sunday. SONU MEHTA/HT PHOTO

Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday tweeted: "Less and less people in Delhi are now requiring hospitalisation, more and more people are getting cured at home."

"Whereas there were around 2,300 new patients daily last week, no of patients in hospital has gone down from 6,200 to 5,300. Today, 9,900 corona beds are free," he said in another tweet.

Just over one in five people admitted to hospitals with Covid-19 in Delhi are admitted to intensive care units.

Testing numbers in the city have gone up since the com-

mencement of rapid antigen tests on June 18, as part of the Centre and state governments' efforts to stabilise the Covid-19 situation in the Capital. While the rapid tests were initially limited to the city's containment zones initially, administrations in all 11 revenue districts of the city began conducting these tests from Friday, in a move to bring a greater proportion of the population under the testing net.

The increase in the daily testing and the change in testing strategy to include asymptomatic people has meant that the positivity rate of cases has also dropped.

The average weekly positivity rate, which was 21.6% two weeks ago, has since dropped to 11.6% on Sunday, though it still remains one of the highest in the country. At its peak, this number crossed 30% on June 16, which meant that nearly one out of every three tests was coming back positive.

Government reports seen by HT showed that till Friday, 181,883 antigen tests were conducted across Delhi, of which 13,100 people were found positive. As per these reports, Shahdara district had the highest antigen test positivity rate in the national capital — 11.29%, while the most

tests had, as of Friday, been conducted in south-west district.

Jugal Kishore, head of the community medicine department at Safdarjung Hospital, said: "Our recoveries have more or less been on international lines. In fact, the recovery rate will get much higher in the coming days because the new cases that are being detected are mostly mild or asymptomatic. We have also had far fewer deaths than estimated earlier, which is positive as well, showing that we our understanding of the virus has evolved from the initial situation."

10k-bed care centre in Chhatarpur gets its 1st set of patients

Abhishek Dey

■ abhishek.dey@hindustantimes.com

NEWDELHI: The 10,000-bed Sardar Patel Covid Care Centre jointly set up by the Centre and the Delhi government at the campus of the Radha Soami Satsang Beas in south Delhi's Chhatarpur received its first Covid-19 patients on Sunday. By evening, at least 21 patients, including four with mild comorbidities, had been admitted to the centre — all aged between 20 and 50 years, senior government officials said.

Delhi's Lieutenant Governor (L-G) Anil Baijal on Sunday morning visited the facility, accompanied by SS Deswal, director-general of the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) — the nodal agency in charge of the facility.

South district magistrate BM Mishra said, "Around 1.30pm, a 35-year-old south Delhi resident was the first to be admitted in the centre. By 6pm, the centre had 21 Covid patients admitted with mild to moderate symptoms, of whom four have mild comorbidities."

He added, "The youngest patient is aged 20 years, the oldest is 50. Most people who did not have adequate space in their residences for home isolation."

More than 15,500 patients are recovering in their homes compared to 1,726 currently in around 15 CCCs across the city.

The centre has around 1,000 doctors and health staff and 1,000 other staff engaged in maintenance, management, quick response teams, helpdesk, control room and security, an ITBP statement read.

Dr Jugal Kishore, head of the community medicines department in Safdarjung Hospital, said, "For a health centre like that, proper strategy is needed to cover the management of patient movements, health care worker movements, toilets, changing rooms, equipment stores, etc. These security agencies have expertise in these areas."

Amit Shah, Rajnath, Kejriwal, Vardhan inaugurate DRDO Covid-19 hospital

HT Correspondent

■ htcorrespondent@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Union home minister Amit Shah, along with defence minister Rajnath Singh, health minister Harsh Vardhan and chief minister Arvind Kejriwal together inaugurated a 1,000-bed dedicated Covid hospital on Sunday set up by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) near the domestic terminal of the Indira Gandhi International Airport.

The hospital — named after Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel — was announced to be functional by Shah after Sunday's visit, the Union home ministry said.

As a tribute to the Indian soldiers who were killed last month in the Galwan valley skirmish with the Chinese Army, the 250-bed ICU ward of the hospital has been named after Col B Santosh Babu.

Three other medical wards have been named after Naib Subedar Mandeep Singh, Naib Subedar Satnam Singh and Naib Subedar Nuduram Soren, said a senior official of the home ministry.

Shah said in a statement, "The hospital will be operated by a team of doctors, nurses and support staff from the Armed Forces Medical Services (AFMS), while the facility will be maintained by the DRDO. Additionally, a psychological counselling centre for patients will also be set up and managed by DRDO here."

The centre has around 1,000 doctors and health staff and 1,000 other staff engaged in maintenance, management, quick response teams, helpdesk, control room and security, an ITBP statement read.

Dr Jugal Kishore, head of the community medicines department in Safdarjung Hospital, said, "For a health centre like that, proper strategy is needed to cover the management of patient movements, health care worker movements, toilets, changing rooms, equipment stores, etc. These security agencies have expertise in these areas."

DELHI ADDS ICU BEDS

Fewer patients now need admission: CM

Abhishek Dey

■ abhishek.dey@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said the number of Covid-19 patients in Delhi requiring hospital admission has been declining even as the state government announced that the number of intensive care unit (ICU) beds in three Delhi government hospitals has nearly tripled.

"Less and less people in Delhi are now requiring hospitalisation, more and more people are getting cured at home," Kejriwal tweeted.

As per a statement by Delhi government issued on Sunday, ICU beds in the three major covid-dedicated hospitals in the city — Lok Nayak (LNJP), Guru Teg Bahadur (GTB) and Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality hospitals — have witnessed a 169% increase.

After a visit to the temporary Covid hospital set up by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), along with Union home minister Amit Shah on Sunday, Kejriwal said ICU beds are "very much needed at the moment" in the Capital. "For now, there is no scarcity of hospital beds, we have over 15,000 beds out of which 5,300 are occupied. There is a paucity of

No ICU in northwest Delhi's only Covid govt hospital; critical care 30km away

Shiv Sunny

■ shiv.sunny@hindustantimes.com

NEWDELHI: Despite being the only Covid-designated government hospital in entire northwest Delhi, Satyawadi Raja Harish Chandra Hospital (SRHCH) in Narela does not have an intensive care unit (ICU) and ventilators.

The hospital caters to several neighbourhoods such as Narela, Bawana, Alipur and Rohini. The closest other Covid government hospital is Deep Chand Bandhu Hospital in Ashok Vihar — about 25 kilometres away.

"Our hospital doesn't have the central gas pipeline essential to provide ventilator support to patients. So, we only take in patients who have mild to moderate symptoms," said Dr Sanjay Kumar Jain, the medical superintendent of the hospital.

If a patient turns critical, he or she is rushed in an ambulance to either Lok Nayak Hospital or GTB Hospital — which are located 35 and 36 kilometres away respectively. "On an average, three such patients are sent to these two hospitals every day from here," says Jai Kishan, an official at the helpdesk at SRHCH.

Kishan said his job mostly revolves around connecting relatives to their patients. Patients admitted here are not only those referred from the nearby neighbourhoods, but also from as far as central Delhi localities, said Kishan.

"The other day, I received a call from a woman from south



■ The Satyawadi Raja Harish Chandra Hospital caters to several areas, such as Narela, Bawana, Alipur and Rohini. HT PHOTO

Delhi's Saket whose mother-in-law is admitted here. Her husband is away at work in another state and she didn't know how to make it this far to hand over food and clothing to her mother-in-law. I have been ensuring she gets regular health updates about the patient," Kishan said.

There are a host of private Covid-designated hospitals around, but local residents say that they are out of bounds given the economic background of the people in the neighbourhoods.

"You think the workers of the Narela or Bawana industrial areas can afford a private hospital?" asks Raghav Lal, a footwear factory manager whose elderly uncle is admitted here. "Barring the timing of meals, there is little to complain about the services of this hospital, but that is because this hospital is practically just an isolation centre with the availability of doctors," Lal says.

Besides ICU and ventilators, the hospital also doesn't have a Covid testing centre. The hospital, which was designed to accommodate 200 beds, has only 194 of them on offer for Covid patients.

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The hospital, which was designed to accommodate 200 beds, has only 194 of them on offer for Covid patients.

Of all Delhi government Covid-designated hospitals, this hospital has the highest rate of occupancy. On Sunday morning, the Delhi Corona app showed, it had an occupancy of 52%. Nearby Deep Chand Bandhu hospital had the second highest occupancy rate at 51%.

A Delhi government spokesperson acknowledged the problem of lack of ICU and ventilators, but said that it was being managed with the help of a strong ambulance service. "We do not delay even for a moment if a patient's health deteriorates here. The ambulances are able to transfer the patients to either Lok Nayak or GTB Hospital within an hour," said the spokesperson.

The spokesperson said efforts are on to deal with the problems. "There are private hospitals in which ICU beds are reserved for patients. For those who cannot afford these hospitals, we'll ready another government hospital in north-west Delhi and are working to get an ICU ready there," said the spokesperson.

The hospital superintendent confirmed the central gas pipeline work was in progress. "This process takes time, but it will be ready soon, before there is a great surge in cases," said Dr Jain.

Shrawan Kumar, who works as a welder, said his wife was admitted to the hospital five days ago. He said since relatives are not allowed inside, he visited the hospital for the first time on Friday.

Shrawan, who lives in west Delhi's Mayapuri, more than 30km from the hospital, said he did not have the means to commute so far. "Today, I requested my neighbour to bring me here in his auto-rickshaw," said Shrawan while handing over some dry food items to the security guard on the hospital's main gate.

Shankar Kumar, a tempo driver, had come from Subhash Nagar to visit the hospital for the first time in a week after his wife was hospitalised here.

Both seemed content with the treatment but said their only worry was if the condition of their patients turn critical they would be referred to some other hospital. "I am worried what to do if such a situation arises," said Shrawan.

Shankar nodded in agreement.

3 hotels delinked from city hospitals

Abhishek Dey

■ abhishek.dey@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: The Delhi government on Sunday delinked three prominent hotels in the city from the plan in which beds are being provided at city hotels, turning them into extended Covid hospitals, citing poor room occupancy and expenditure on staff and maintenance of facilities.

In June, the Delhi government had acquired 40 hotels in the city as part of a drive to augment covid-dedicated beds to 80,000 in the city by July 31. These hotels were part of the augmentation strategy.

In an order issued on Sunday evening, the government said Hotel Piccadilly in the Janakpuri District Centre complex which was linked to Mata Chanan Devi Hospital, Hotel Taj Vivanta in Dwarka which was linked to Akash Healthcare Super Speciality Hospital and Hotel Pride Plaza in Delhi Aerocity that was linked to Venkateswara Hospital in Dwarka have been delinked because of very poor bed occupancy.

As per the order, Hotel Welcome in Dwarka Sector 10 which was linked with Manipal Hospital in Sector 6 of Dwarka will now act as the extended Covid hotel for all the three other hospitals as well. The hotel has 300 rooms, said the order.

"It has come to the notice that during last fortnight, only 25 rooms out of 900 rooms of these hotels have been utilised by the

authorities has planned to set up 11,229 beds in 77 banquet halls, which will function under the Delhi government, and 4,628 beds in 40 hotels, which will be supervised by private hospitals.

hospitals till date. On the other hand, these hotels are requesting to make arrangements so that their premises are utilised as they are incurring huge expenditure on the salaries, maintenance and other related expenses for keeping the rooms of their hotels ready round the clock," the order said.

"In current scenario one hotel is sufficient to link all four hospitals as extended covid hospital. Proposals for the same was placed before the principal secretary health and the same has been accorded," said the order signed by the incident commander attached with sub-divisional magistrate in Dwarka," the order read.

Representatives of all four hotels said they will need time to respond since the order has come out late. Two of them said their public relations executives were not available since it is Sunday and hence they could not provide a comment.

Authorities has planned to set up 11,229 beds in 77 banquet halls, which will function under the Delhi government, and 4,628 beds in 40 hotels, which will be supervised by private hospitals.

htspotlight

Doorstep delivery yet to resume, people forced to travel to offices

COVID EFFECT Service was launched in Sept 2018, but halted in March this year due to the pandemic

Risha Chitlangia

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NEW DELHI: Shikhar Arora (18), a resident of Krishna Nagar, east Delhi, on Thursday returned disappointed from the subdivisional magistrate's office as he couldn't get an income certificate of his family, which he needs urgently to apply to the Delhi University.

Arora, who is seeking admission to a BA Pass course, said he won't be able to apply under the economically weaker section (EWS) category without the income certificate to show that he is eligible. "I have been going to the office for nearly a month, but have not been able to get the certificate. They have now asked me to apply online," he said.

Issuance of income certificate is one of the 70 services provided by the Delhi government under its ambitious doorstep delivery of services project, which was launched in September 2018. However, it was suspended this March in view of the nationwide lockdown to control the spread of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19).

While the government has further relaxed restrictions from July 1, under the Unlock 2.0 plan, the Delhi government is yet to restart the doorstep service delivery project.

Under the Delhi government project, 70 services from 10 different departments, including those of social welfare, transport, and food and supplies, among others, were being provided to citizens at their doorstep.



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HT PHOTO

I have been going to the office for nearly a month, but have not been able to get the certificate. They have now asked me to apply online.

SHIKHAR ARORA,
resident of Krishna Nagar

visited the SDM's office in Mehrauli to get an OBC (other backward class) certificate, a mandatory document to apply under the OBC quota.

"I was told that we will have to apply online since the staff at the SDM's office are currently busy with Covid-19 duty. I tried to fill the form online but the portal was not working properly. Still, I managed to apply for the certificate online and submitted the acknowledgement slip along with my admission form. But I don't know by when I would get the certificate itself," Mandal said.

A senior official at SDM Mehrauli said, "We are accepting applications online. We are trying to clear all EWS and income certificate related applications at the earliest as these are required by students."

The government, however,

has no immediate plan to restart the service.

A senior official with the administrative reforms department, on condition of anonymity, said, "The service was suspended due to Covid-19. Currently, there are a lot of Covid-19 cases being reported from the national capital. There is no immediate plan to resume the service in these circumstances. We will do so only when the Covid-19 situation is under control."

The official added, "The doorstep delivery was an additional service. People can still apply for essential documents either online or manually at the offices concerned."

Under the government's doorstep delivery scheme, people could just call on the centralised number -- 1076-- and place a service request. The services included the issuance of certifi-

cates (caste, income, domicile, delayed birth order; duplicate registration certificate of the vehicle, transfer of vehicle ownership), and new water and sewer connections, among others.

The government had outsourced the operations to VFS Global, which had set up the centralised call centre and hired 'mobile sahayaks' to ensure timely and hassle-free delivery of services.

"In light of the Covid-19 pandemic situation in Delhi, the doorstep delivery operations were suspended from March 23, 2020, and we are awaiting further instructions from the Delhi government," a VFS Global spokesperson said.

As the city crawls back to normalcy with further relaxations in restrictions imposed earlier to contain the spread of the infectious disease, citizens say the doorstep delivery of service should be resumed as people could then avoid visiting crowded places.

Aatul Goyal, president of United RWAs Joint Action (URJA), said, "It was a good scheme and would have proved beneficial during the present times when the number of Covid-19 cases are on the rise. While government offices have resumed public dealings, people want to avoid going to public places for fear of contracting the infection. But those who need crucial documents are forced to step out. The government should encourage online systems or provide doorstep delivery of services."

Explaining the reason why the service cannot be resumed, a government spokesperson said, "We can't resume services immediately, as the entire staff at the call centre and officials of the revenue department are deployed on Covid-19 duty. It will be restarted once the Covid situation improves."

1984 riots convict, lodged in Mandoli jail, dies of Covid

Shiv Sunny

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NEW DELHI: Mahender Yadav, a former legislator from Delhi's Palam constituency who was convicted in the 1984 anti-Sikh riots, died at a private hospital in Dwarka on Saturday, days after testing positive for Covid-19 at Mandoli Jail where he was lodged for the last 18 months.

Yadav is the second prisoner to have died of the disease in the national capital. The other Covid death, on June 19, had taken place in the same barracks where Yadav was lodged.

On Wednesday, Yadav's family had approached the Supreme Court seeking interim bail for him but the apex court rejected his petition saying prisoners suffering from coronavirus were not entitled to any special treatment or favours.

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A day after his tests results showed he was positive, Yadav developed "uneasiness and heart-related symptoms" after which he was referred to Deen Dayal Upadhyay Hospital, said Goyal. "The same day, he was referred to Lok Nayak Hospital," said Goyal.

On June 30, Yadav was moved to the Akash Healthcare Hospital in Dwarka. HT's efforts to reach Yadav's son did not elicit a response.

CORONAVIRUS: METRO

DU ADMISSIONS

Registrations at St Stephen's to be open from July 7

We won't be able to say anything till we see the marks. Cut-offs are determined on marks that come in and till students submit those marks in their final application, it will be difficult to comment.

MAHESH GOPALAN, admission tutor

demic. Admissions to the sports category will instead be based on academic performance, interviews with sports-related questions, and certificates of applicants who played sports at international, national, or state level or have secured the first or second place in zonal school games.

When asked if the cancellation of pending Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) exams

due to the pandemic and subsequent moderation of marks would impact the cut-offs, Mahesh Gopalan, admission tutor at the college, said it was too early to tell. "We won't be able to say anything till we see the marks. Cut-offs are determined on marks that come in and till students don't submit those marks in their final application, it will be difficult to say anything about it."

The college, however, is yet to release the schedule or decide the modalities of the interviews.

"The policy framework of this year's admissions has come out through the prospectus. The exact details are yet to be worked out through internal consultations within the college. Our task is to evolve different means of addressing the academic, technological, practical and ethical concerns in organising online interviews to make it as fair, inclusive and effective as possible," said NP Ashley, assistant professor of English and a governing body member of the college.

HT Correspondent

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NEW DELHI: Releasing its prospectus for admissions to the upcoming academic session, Delhi University's St Stephen's College (SSC) on Sunday said it would shift to online interviews, in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, and do away with the written test section of the entrance process.

Candidates will be allowed to register for admission between July 7 and 18, and will first have to register on the Delhi University (DU) website and enter the form number on the college's prospectus.

In its prospectus, uploaded on its website on Sunday morning, the college said, "Owing to the ongoing pandemic situation, interviews will be conducted online."

HT had on July 1 reported that the college was considering these changes.

Sandeep Goel, director general (Delhi Prisons), said the death of the other prisoner, Kanwar Singh, due to coronavirus had prompted the authorities to test all the other 29 inmates in that barracks. These 29 prisoners, including Yadav, were mostly senior citizens. "Seventeen of these 29 inmates tested positive in the first round on June 20. The others were tested again five days later and three more inmates were found to be infected. Yadav was found positive in the second round of testing," said Goel.

Since there will be no written tests this year, only interviews will be considered for the 15% weightage.

According to the college's prospectus, the interview will have three components this time — academic, co-curricular, and general awareness and sense of values.

Applicants appearing in interviews will have to keep several documents handy including printouts of the interview call letter, date of birth certificate and mark sheet of the qualifying exams.

Like Delhi University, the college will also not conduct sports trials this year due to the pan-

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ADMISSION NOTICE 2020-21

Online Applications are invited for admission to the following regular Programmes of Study for the Academic Session 2020-21 :

Graduate: B.Com, (Hons); B.J.M.C. (Journalism & Mass Communication); B.L.I.Sc. (Library & Information Sciences); and B.Tech. (Computer Science & Engineering)

Post-Graduate: M.A. (Economics, Education, English, Gandhian & Peace Studies, Hindi, Mathematics, Political Science, Public Administration, Sanskrit; and Sociology); M.Com; MBA; MJMC, M.Lib.Sc.; M.Sc. (Biotechnology, Botany, Chemistry, Mathematics, Physics; and Zoology); MSW; and M.Tech. (Computer Science & Engineering)

M.Phil.: Biotechnology; Botany; Chemistry; Commerce; Economics; Educational Studies; English; Gandhian & Peace Studies; Hindi; Library & Information Sciences; Management Sciences; Mathematics; Media Studies; Physics; Political Science; Sanskrit; Social Work; Sociology; and Zoology

Ph.D.: Biotechnology; Botany; Chemistry; Commerce; Computer Science; Economics; Educational Studies; English; Gandhian & Peace Studies; Hindi; Library & Information Sciences; Management Sciences; Mathematics; Media Studies; Physics; Political Science; Sanskrit; Social Work; Sociology; and Zoology

Important Dates

Opening of Link for submission of Application Form : Tuesday, 7th July 2020
Closing of Link for submission of Application Form : Friday, 31st July 2020
Dated: 6th July 2020
For more details, please visit the University Website
Website: www.mgcub.ac.in | E-mail: admissions@mgcub.ac.in

HSIIDC Announces Allotment of MULTI SPECIALITY HOSPITAL SITES at Faridabad, Karnal, Rohtak and Rai

HSIIDC Announces Allotment of
MULTI SPECIALITY HOSPITAL SITES
at Faridabad, Karnal, Rohtak and Rai

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IE Karnal, Sec 37	14377.5	14475
Rohtak (Ph-II)	12676.5	5522

*Area is tentative and may vary at the time of actual possession

- For complete details & updates if any, the intended parties may refer to EMP-2015 and 'E-auction Brochure' containing the procedure for e-auction & allotment of Plots, available on website of the Corporation at www.hsiidc.org.in
- All details including any Proposal Due Date extensions, clarifications amendments, addenda, corrigenda, e-auction date etc., will be uploaded only on the website of HSIIDC and will not be published in Newspapers. Applicants may regularly visit the website of HSIIDC www.hsiidc.org.in to keep themselves updated about such developments.
- The Corporation may without assigning any reason withdraw any or all the sites from e-auction at any stage. HSIIDC reserve the right to accept or reject any or all the bids even if they are above the reserve price or cancel/postpone the e-auction without assigning any reasons thereof.

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Three-time plasma donor spreads hope among Covid patients

Shiv Sunny

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NEW DELHI: Yogesh Dhakad, a 28-year-old nursing officer at Ram Manohar Lohia (RML) Hospital's paediatric surgery department, was infected by the coronavirus in April and he spent 21 days in isolation at Safdarjung Hospital.

Having recovered now, Dhakad has donated his plasma three times already – in 45 days of his discharge from the hospital. And he is not done.

"As long as my body continues producing sufficient antibodies, I'll continue donating every 15 days," says Dhakad, who has been serving at the hospital since December.

Plasma therapy is a process in which blood rich in antibodies from a Covid-19 recovered patient is transfused into the body of someone still struggling with the virus.

Dhakad, who shares a rented flat in east Delhi's Pandav Nagar with a friend, had been deployed in the Covid



Yogesh Dhakad

HT PHOTO

section of RML Hospital when he tested positive for the disease on April 18. "I must have been a little careless while dealing with patients," says Dhakad. During 21 days of isolation at Safdarjung Hospital, he was asymptomatic throughout and kept himself busy with a physical workout, meditation and diet.

It was on May 30 – nearly three weeks after his recovery – that he received the first request for donating plasma. "A social worker called me to ask if I could donate plasma for two patients admitted at Max Hospital," says Dhakad.

Dhakad, who weighs a little over 70 kilos, had no qualms. "I have donated blood about a dozen times since 2014. I am educated and aware that it is safe for a healthy person to donate plasma," says Dhakad.

In plasma donation, as against blood donation, plasma is extracted from the body while other components of the blood are injected back into the body, says Dr Sangita Pathak, senior consultant

and head of department for the blood bank at Max Healthcare. "It is a totally safe process as a single needle and kit are used in the entire process. About 96% of the donors don't feel any adverse effect. Some may feel dizziness and nausea, but it is a temporary effect and can be dealt with by taking sufficient liquid before and after the donation," says Dr Pathak.

But not every recovered Covid patient is eligible to donate. Over the next 30 days, Dhakad donated plasma to yet

another unknown patient during his visit to his hometown in Gwalior after a request from a known person, and then at Jaipur Golden Hospital in Rohini on receiving a call from RML Hospital.

"I don't know who the other two patients were or whether they got better, but it gives me immense satisfaction and a sense of pride to even think that I contributed to some families feeling hopeful," says Dhakad.

But Dhakad won't reveal about his contribution to his parents; his two sisters being the only two relatives who know of it. "My father is a farmer and my mother a homemaker. They won't understand that donating plasma is a safe, quick and painless process. When this crisis ends, I'll let them know," Dhakad says.

Smitri Tiwari, the PRO of RML Hospital, says that Dhakad has also made the hospital proud. "We are proud that a colleague has come forward to set an example."

htspotlight

CORONAVIRUS: NATION

Govt tweaks MGNREGS for benefit of unskilled workers

CHANGES Migrants can now participate in the construction of complexes under the flagship Swachh Bharat scheme

Saubhadra Chatterji

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NEW DELHI: With millions of unskilled migrant workers in the cities having returned to rural India in the aftermath of the lockdown imposed for the Covid-19 pandemic, the Narendra Modi government has tweaked the flagship Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS) for the benefit of the workers.

The government notified on July 2 that unskilled workers can now participate in the construction of community sanitary complexes under its flagship Swachh Bharat scheme—a priority welfare measure for the government.

The phrase "Unskilled wage component for construction of Community Sanitary Complexes in convergence with Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen)" has been added to schedule 1 of the MGNREGS where it talks about "Rural sanitation related works, such as, individual household latrines, School toilet units, Anganwadi toilets either independently or in convergence with schemes of other Government Departments to achieve "open defecation free status, and solid and liquid waste management".

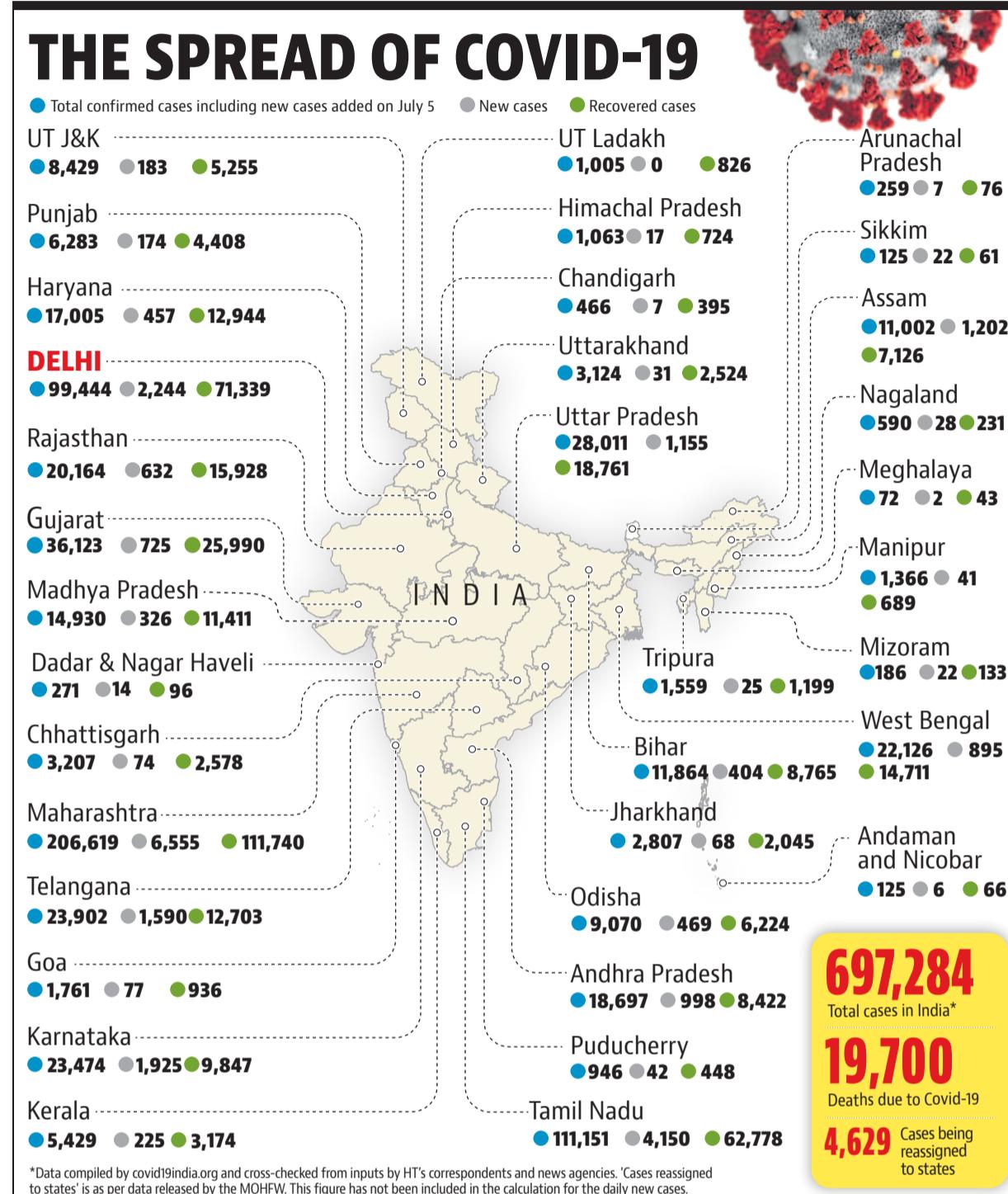
The arrangement, officials said, would help in getting more hands for Swachh Bharat-related construction and for the unskilled workers, opens a dedicated area of work. MGNREGS promises 100 days of manual work a year to at least one member of every rural household.

The government recently announced a targeted programme comprising 25 types of existing work to offer jobs to migrant labourers who have returned home in the wake of the Covid pandemic. Out of these 25, construction of community sanitation complexes was mentioned at the top of the presentation made at a press conference.

Public works worth ₹50,000 crore would be offered to create jobs for migrant workers through this programme.

The skill mapping done in 116 districts across six states for the rogar (employment) programme has revealed the high share of unskilled workers from the construction sector who came back to rural India during the pandemic. While construction workers comprised nearly 60% of all migrant daily-wagers, about 40% were unskilled.

Officials pointed out that last



Vaccine trial beginning of pandemic's end: Govt

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NEW DELHI: The announcement of indigenous vaccine candidates COVAXIN by Bharat Biotech and ZyCoV-D Vaccine by Zydus Cadila against the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) will mark the beginning of the end of the pandemic, the Union ministry of science and technology said on Sunday.

"...Now the nod given by the Drug Controller General of India CDSO (The Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation) for the conduct of the human trial for the vaccines, marks the beginning of the end," read parts of a feature published in the India Science Wire, a science and technology news portal under the ministry.

Indian institutions have also engaged in research and development on vaccines in India, including the India Council of Medical Research-run National Institute of Virology (NIV) in Pune, and Hyderabad-based Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology, which works under the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research.

The ministry's press release had initially mentioned that it would take anywhere between 15 and 18 months before a licence is issued for the vaccines, and that "none of these vaccines is unlikely to be ready for mass use before 2021."

The ministry, however, later retracted the portions that mentioned a timeline for the vaccine.

Even though the science ministry officially did not issue a

statement on the retraction, an official in the press information bureau of the government of India said on condition of anonymity that it had happened inadvertently; and that the purpose was to explain how vaccines work and the whole feature [published in the India Science Wire] was about that.

There was no time frame and that's why it had been modified, the official said.

Along with the two Indian vaccines, COVAXIN and ZyCoV-D, the world over, 11 out of 140 vaccine candidates have entered human trials.

One of the leading candidates is AZD1222, developed by the Jenner Institute of University of Oxford and licenced to AstraZeneca, a British-Swedish multinational pharmaceutical and biopharmaceutical company which is based in Cambridge, England.

The MRNA-1273 vaccine developed by Kaiser Permanente Washington Health Research Institute, Washington and taken up for production by the United States-based Moderna pharmaceutical is just a step behind.

Both these firms have already inked an agreement with Indian manufacturers for production of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) vaccines.

Rajasthan cancels UG, PG exams as Covid cases rise

HT Correspondent

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JAIPUR:

The Rajasthan government has decided to cancel all undergraduate and postgraduate exams for all the universities, colleges and technical educational institutions for the academic year 2019-2020, amid the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic.

The decision was taken by chief minister Ashok Gehlot after a meeting on Saturday.

"In view of the scenario of the corona epidemic, examinations of UG and PG courses of higher and technical education will not be conducted this year, and all students will be promoted to the next class without examination," said Gehlot.

With respect to the determination of the marks of the students being promoted, Gehlot said the Union ministry of human resource development will take appropriate decisions after studying the guidelines issued in the next few days.

"The process to determine marks of the students and the promotion to the next class will be decided after examining the guidelines which will be issued by the Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD)," the state government said.

The meeting was attended by state higher education minister Bhanwar Singh Bhati, minister of state for technical education Subhash Garg, chief secretary Rajiv Swarop, additional chief secretary finance Nirajan Arya, and higher education secretary Shuchi Sharma and other officers.

The state has reported 19,532 Covid-19 cases so far. Of these, over 400 patients have died.

Special trains that began plying from May 1 to ferry stranded migrants to their home states.

"So far around 8,000 labourers have returned and we are arranging transportation for more to return. Several of the special trains that are plying were returning nearly empty, we managed to make bookings in bulk for the labourers. States like UP and Bihar have also made of the migrants and their skills and we are in touch with them. At present we are still at 50% of our total workforce," Sachan added.

These workers are needed for technical jobs which cannot be done by local labour. Around 11,000 workers of the total workforce were skilled labour, officials said.

The ministry of railways is implementing two dedicated freight corridors, namely the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor from Ludhiana to Dankuni (1,856 km.) and Western Dedicated Freight Corridor from Dadri to Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust (1,504 km.). These corridors are targeted to be completed in phases by December 2021. DFCCL had completed a total of 500 kms till January this year.

The railway ministry last month said the trend of migrants returning by special trains from Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal --states with a high migrant worker population-- showed signs of economic activity picking up.

Special trains returning from high migrant population states have shown over 100% occupancy from June 26 till June 30, according to railway ministry data, indicating that many of them may be migrants who had gone back to their home states on Shramik Specials during the lockdown.

STATE MINISTER SAYS

'Community spread has begun in Assam'

Upal Parashar

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no longer blame Karnataka, Mumbai, Tamil Nadu or Delhi (from where returnees came back during May and June) for COVID-19 spread in our state," he said.

Assam government had imposed a 14-day total lockdown in Kamrup Metro from June 28 allowing only pharmacies to operate. However, with the number of cases not coming down, Sarma has indicated that the lockdown might get extended after the 14-day period on July 12.

"We might have to extend it by another week. There will be a need to find balance between allowing economic activity and risking lives of people," he said.

The minister also informed that a plasma bank has become operational in Guwahati Medical College Hospital and a doctor who recovered from Covid-19 was the first donor. The health department has also started administering Remdesivir, an anti-viral drug, to Covid-19 patients with serious complications.

coronanotes

GOA PORT TOWN COUNCILLOR DIES OF COVID

PANAJI: Mormugao municipality councillor Pascoal D'Souza, who had been undergoing treatment for Covid-19 at a dedicated hospital for a week, succumbed to the infection on Sunday. "Deeply pained by the passing away of Mormugao Councillor Pascoal D'Souza. He was truly a leader of masses and always worked to help the needy..." Leader of Opposition Digambar Kamat tweeted. The death toll in the state has risen to seven.

The union government is heavily banking on the MGNREGS to provide relief to India's vast rural sector. It has

TAJ MAHAL TO REMAIN SHUT FOR PUBLIC

AGRA: The Taj Mahal in Agra will not open for tourists from July 6, with 55 new cases of Covid-19 being detected within the last four days in the city. "55 new Covid-19 positive cases have been traced in the last four days in Agra. Similarly, the monuments of Sikandra, Itmad-ud-daula, Fatehpur Sikri and Agra Fort are to be considered within buffer zones," District Magistrate of Agra, Prabhu N Singh said.

MGNREGS is anyway demand-driven and works of Swachh Bharat were already

pumped in an additional ₹40,000 crore to beef up the MGNREGS annual budget to ₹1.05 lakh crore—the highest ever allocation to the rural job scheme. The government also plans to create 300 crore person-days of work under MGNREGS this financial year.

MGNREGS is good but the main question is where is the money? the government has hiked MGNREGS budget by ₹40,000 crore but the budget won't be sufficient for the entire year given the very high demand for work," said Himanshu, an associate professor at Jawaharlal Nehru University.

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#HTSALUTES

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Vanessa Viegas

vanessa.viegas@htlive.com

MUMBAI: As a non-practising medical doctor, Dipannita Kaushik decided she had to pitch in as the coronavirus pandemic raged across the globe. So the 29-year-old from Guwahati, Assam, who is currently pursuing a Masters in public health, decided to make face shields and masks for workers on the frontline with the help of her mother and her fiancé, reusing old X-ray and projector sheets.

"I know what it's like to not have proper gear, even in ordinary times," said Kaushik, who has served as a resident at an Apollo hospital and at Pratiksha Hospital in Assam.

"During an outbreak like this one, I can't even imagine the risks. Often the most under-equipped and severely affected

are the Asha [accredited social health activists], multipurpose health workers and anganwadi workers who are actually doing the grass root data collection and who act as a bridge between the healthcare community and the population. So I wanted to do this for them."

htspotlight

Are coronavirus cases in Mumbai plateauing?

EXPERTS DIFFER The city has not recorded any major spikes in the curve since June 15

Rupa Chakraborty and Jamie Mullick
letters@hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI/NEW DELHI: In the last 10 days, in descending order of dates from Sunday, recorded 1,287, 1,163, 1,338, 1,554, 1,487, 893, 1,226, 1,287, 1,402 and 1,297 cases, averaging 1,293 cases per day. This number was 1,275 for the week ending June 27, and 1,214 the week ending June 20. In the three weeks before that, Mumbai recorded 1,354, 1,273 and 1,375 new cases every day at an average.

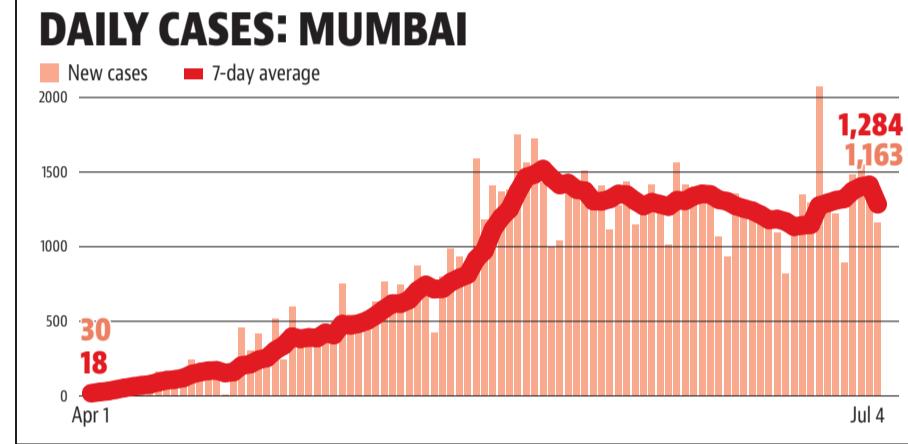
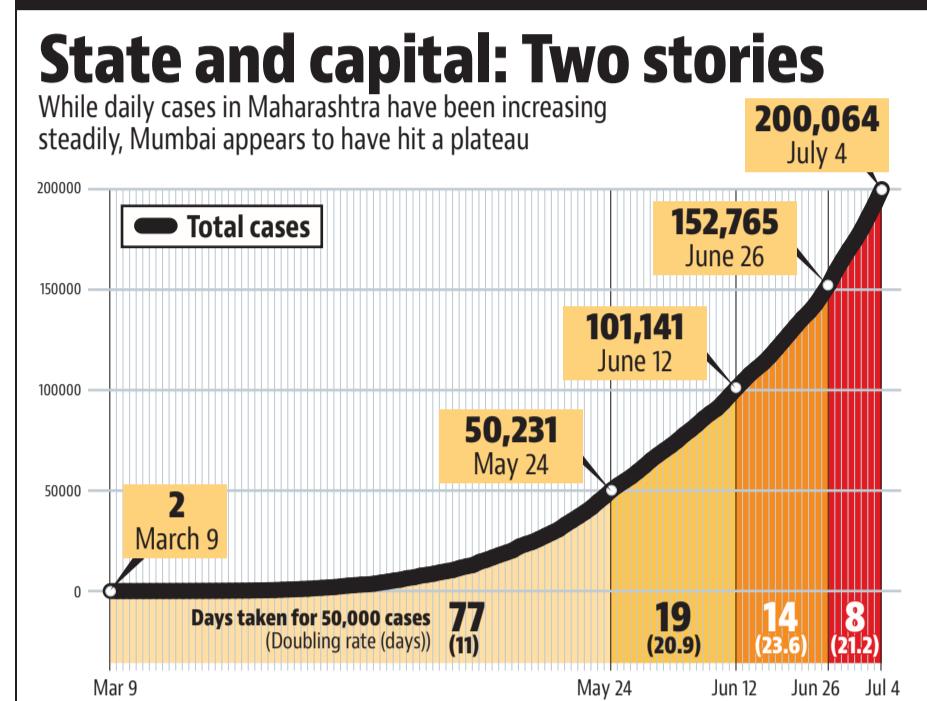
Since June 15, the city has not recorded major spikes in the pandemic curve, leading Maharashtra health officials to believe that the virus spread may have hit a plateau in Mumbai.

That is not the case for the rest of the state, however. If Maharashtra's 200,000 cases are divided into four bands of 50,000 cases each, an alarming trend emerges. The first 50,000 cases took 77 days (on May 24), while the next 50,000 came in the next 19 days on June 12. The state crossed 150,000 cases just two weeks later on June 26. The 200,000-case mark came just eight days later.

In the last week, Maharashtra reported 5,847 new cases every day on average—the highest ever recorded. The week before, this number was 4,418 and it was 3,376 the week before, all record highs until then. In fact, the average new case graph rose every day for nearly a month.

Another worry is the rise in active cases. In the last week, the state added nearly 15,700 active cases. The week before that, active cases increased a little over 9,500. Active cases is a crucial metric because it directly reflects the pressure on the health care system. As of Sunday, there are 86,040 active cases in the state. On June 25, there were 63,342. Recovery rate improved marginally from 52.42% to 54.08% in the same period.

Mumbai, however, appears to have hit a plateau, in daily cases as well as active cases. As of July 5, Mumbai's active cases stood at 23,732. The city recorded 55,884 recoveries out of 84,524 cumulative cases, logging a recovery rate of 66.12%. In contrast, on June 25,



Mumbai's active cases stood at 27,659, with 39,149 recoveries out of a total of 70,878 cases. The recovery rate in Mumbai was 55.23%. Since then, the recovery rate has risen by 10.89 percentage points, and active cases have dropped by 14.2%.

This is not enough to put Mumbai in the clear, according to Dr Abhijit More, co-convenor of Jan Arogya Abhiyaan, a pan-Maharashtra health sector NGO. He said testing in Mumbai was inadequate. "The number of tests has remained constant between 4,000

and 4,500. The identification of cases has therefore maintained a similar path. If the civic-body starts testing more, the pandemic curve will go up, rather than remaining constant," he said.

From June 25 to July 3, Mumbai averaged 5,025 samples tested a day, and from June 1 to June 24, it averaged 4,298 samples.

Dr Shashank Joshi, a member of the state Covid-19 task force, refuted More's claim and said when the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation was testing between 2,500 and 4,000 samples

every day in April, the positivity rate was higher. On April 28, when the city recorded its highest one-day spike with 2,105 cases, the BMC tested 4,093 samples. "In the last week of May, when we recorded the highest spike in cases, our testing figure was between 3,500 and 4,500 samples. Despite increasing the number of tests in June and July, the pandemic curve hasn't gone up. It has rather plateaued," Dr Joshi said.

Public health experts, however, said the plateauing is not uniform across the city.

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Amandeep Shukla
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NEW DELHI: Even as the Covid-19 epidemic has created hurdles in most teaching-learning activities, there is one aspect where its impact has been rather successfully negated — the training of teachers.

The country's premier education board — the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) — has, in the past three months, trained over 200,000 teachers, which, according to a senior official, is no less than a record.

"In the past also, the CBSE has actively carried the exercise to train teachers. However, with Covid-19, the entire exercise was moved online. Often in the past, with regular schools on, at times, there were factors that had to be considered regarding the availability of teachers for these training sessions. However, now, there has been a greater reach and the number of teachers only growing as ICMR continues to expand the testing laboratory network. Of the approved laboratories, 786 labs are in the government sector and 314 are private testing facilities.

To deal with the changes due to the Covid-19 pandemic, as well as to keep pace with other countries, the CBSE has been actively trying to modernise the curriculum and its teaching methodologies.

According to a circular issued by Biswajit Saha, the CBSE's director (trainings and skill education), immersive technology, such as Augmented Reality (AR), is going to be one of the most significant technologies of the future.

He said the CBSE will continue to hold training sessions for teachers. In the next phase, the CBSE will introduce AR and digital safety programmes for 30,000 students in each category, Sahas said. This month, the board has also launched an online course in experiential learning for teachers.

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Experts also say that testing is crucial to determine the corona-

virus disease burden.

"Unless you test you cannot know the actual disease prevalence. Targeted approach is about being able to know the disease burden as exactly as possible, and we now have the expertise and technology at our disposal to break things down to the lowest level. Looking for syndromic cases or guessing cases on the basis of clinical assessment doesn't make sense in today's day and age when science has advanced significantly. We have the resources and it is a good idea to make use of them," said Dr Lalit Kant, former head of the division of epidemiology, ICMR.

The national testing strategy is being constantly revised in line with the current trend of the outbreak.

Reverse transcriptase-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) is the gold standard testing method for the Sars-CoV-2 diagnosis and is in place at all the identified laboratories for diagnosing the disease, says ICMR. To ramp up testing, ICMR has also been exploring other testing mechanisms for diagnosis along with RT-PCR.

ICMR has developed guidelines ranging from the preparation of a network of government and private laboratories to ensure efficient validation and evaluation of new diagnostic kits.

Experts say India would need to test more as even 1% of the country's total population has currently been tested.

"It is important to test more because you cannot devise strategies for the remaining 99% of the population by looking at statistics coming from just 1% of the country's population," says Dr T Jacob John, former virology head at the Christian Medical College, Vellore.

Testing remains a cornerstone in our fight against Covid-19 and therefore ramping up testing is essentially critical to track, trace and treat all cases of Covid-19," said the director general of ICMR, Dr Balram Bhagava, in one of its letters to the Union health secretary, Preeti Sudan, last month.

On June 15, ICMR validated



From 13 labs in the first week of February to 123 on March 24, India now has 1,100 testing labs in all states.

SONU MEHTA/HT PHOTO

TN shuts down as part of Sunday plan

Press Trust of India

letters@hindustantimes.com

Chennai and its neighbouring districts of Kanchipuram, Tiruvallur and Chengalpet.

According to officials, relaxations will start in these districts from Monday, with the government allowing extension of business hours for vegetable shops, provision stores and restaurants, which can only serve takeaway orders. However, curbs would continue in Madurai and nearby areas till July 12.

Tea shops, closed since June 19, could resume functioning, while all kinds of showrooms, including textiles and jewellery, not situated in malls can open for business, chief minister K Palaniswami had said on Saturday.

IT firms and other private companies can also resume activity with safety precautions in place.

Tamil Nadu has the second highest number of virus cases in the country, behind Maharashtra, with a case count of 111,151, as of Sunday.

Chennai, Tiruvallur, Kanchipuram, Chengalpet and Madurai are among the worst-affected districts in the state due to Covid-19.

Additionally, police personnel were also posted at strategic junctions to ensure total implementation of the lockdown.

Earlier, the government had announced a complete lockdown from June 19 to July 5 in

TRACKING COVID-19 IN STATES
GUJARAT
68mn Population

5,952 Testing per million
7,344 National average
28 Rank in states and UT on tests per million

Total cases, active cases and daily deaths

Daily cases
Daily deaths

Low active cases despite high tally

Despite being the fourth worst-hit state in the country in terms of total cases and the third worst in terms of deaths, Gujarat has one of the lowest number of active cases in proportion to the total caseload. The active case count in the state stood at 8,058 as on Saturday night — meaning only 22% of all cases in the western state were 'active'.

People remained indoors across the state, as no commercial activities were witnessed. Shops, including those selling vegetables and groceries, were closed in many parts and there was no vehicular traffic on key roads in the state.

Additionally, police personnel were also posted at strategic junctions to ensure total implementation of the lockdown.

Earlier, the government had announced a complete lockdown from June 19 to July 5 in

the state, the statement said. The government had begun to take safety rules casually after relaxations. However, traders in the state said the tightening of norms may prove to be counterproductive for businesses.

Fine for those not wearing a mask has been increased to ₹10,000 or to a two-year jail term. These measures will be in force for one year unless notified otherwise.

ding parties to less than 50. For all social gatherings, protests and rallies, a written sanction of authorities will be needed, said their statement.

Spitting in public places has been made an offence punishable with a fine or jail term. In shops and other business establishments, the amendment limits the presence of people to a maximum of 20, depending on the size of the trading area. Even at work places, masks are mandatory and wearing them casually will also invite a fine. Business establishments have been asked to avoid air-conditioning and closed enclosures and told to maintain office temperature in the range of 25 and 27 degree Celsius.

While Indian Medical Association's Kerala chapter, which

wanted stricter norms, welcomed the move, traders and businessmen were guarded in their reaction.

"Containment measures are welcome but at the same time the government will have to ensure proper atmosphere for traders. Even at worst-hit areas in Tamil Nadu and Mumbai these norms are not extended to one year," said MP Prashanth, a trader in Chalai market in Thiruvananthapuram.

The decision came in the backdrop of a steady rise in coronavirus disease cases in the state. On Sunday, Kerala reported 225 Covid-19 cases, taking the state's tally to 5,429. One person succumbed to the infection, taking the toll up to 26.

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shortstories**2 DEAD IN PUNJAB WALL COLLAPSE**

AMRITSAR: Two persons died after a wall of a government school collapsed and fell on the adjoining houses during a heavy storm, police said on Sunday. The deceased persons have been identified as Satnam Singh and Kiran Bala, residents of Nawakot locality, police said. They died while they were asleep on Saturday night. Minister and local MLA O P Soni has announced a compensation of Rs 4 lakh for the families of the victims.

14-YR-OLD GIRL RAPED, BEATEN IN UP

MUZAFFARNAGAR: A 14-year-old girl was allegedly raped and later beaten up by a youth in a village in Uttar Pradesh's Muzaffarnagar district, police said on Sunday. The incident happened in a village under Chauthawal police station limits of the district on Saturday, its SHO Suresh Singh Yadav said. According to Yadav, a complaint was lodged by the girl's maternal uncle and a case was registered against the main accused and his three friends who beat up the victim. All the accused men are absconding while the victim has been sent to hospital for a medical examination, the SHO added.

BJP MP ALLOTTED HOUSE PRIYANKA TOLD TO VACATE

NEW DELHI: Days after cancelling the government accommodation allotted to Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, the Centre has given its nod to BJP MP Anil Baijani to move to the bungalow at 35 Lodhi Estate in New Delhi. Officials aware of the development said the Union ministry of housing and urban affairs has allotted the type 6B bungalow to the BJP spokesperson as per the current norms. "Once the notice is served to vacate the bungalow it can be allocated within two months," a senior ministry official said.

Dubey's aide held; search on for informers in police

UP SHOOT-OUT Suspected gang member arrested after a gunfight

Haidar Naqvi and Rohit K Singh

letters@hindustantimes.com

KANPUR/LUCKNOW: Police in Uttar Pradesh arrested an aide of criminal Vikas Dubey and intensified search for suspected informers in the force who could have tipped him off about a raid that eventually led to the killing of eight personnel by his gang, officials said on Sunday.

Data Shankar Agnihotri, suspected to be part of the gang that laid a trap for the police team raiding Kanpur Dehat's Bikru village and attacked them on Thursday, was arrested after a gunfight in Kalyanpur area near Kanpur. Agnihotri, who has three criminal cases including two cases of attempted murder against him, suffered a bullet wound in his right leg. He carried a reward of ₹25,000, and was allegedly Dubey's domestic help.

Agnihotri is said in a video statement that a caller from a police station informed Dubey, who faces 60 criminal cases, about the raid. HT has seen the video.

Officials suspect it could be the police station in Chaubeypur, about 14km from Bikru. It is the place where an attempt to murder case was registered against Dubey by a villager on Wednesday. The team that went to raid Dubey's village past Thursday midnight left from Chaubeypur. Agnihotri said at least 25 people were waiting with Dubey for the police team, which walked into the trap and was ambushed in a 15-minute onslaught, the official said.

Dubey's gang fired at them indiscriminately, killing a deputy superintendent, three sub-inspectors and four constables in an ambush that the police later said was a "well-planned conspiracy".

Hours later, security personnel launched a massive search for the criminals who escaped in the dark, and gunned down two suspected gang members about 3km from the village.

In a first information report (FIR) filed on Friday night, the police named a total of 22 people, the police have been deployed for the mis-



Police outside Vikas Dubey's residence in Kanpur on Sunday. PTI

including Dubey and Agnihotri, and 10 unidentified people.

INSIDER LINK?

On Saturday, Chaubeypur station officer (SO) Vinay Tiwari was questioned for nine hours over his role in the raid. He was later suspended and shifted to Lucknow. Officials did not specify the nature of allegations against him. Officials believe that Dubey, an influential gangster whose criminal records date back to 1993, has supporters in the police force and that they helped him and his gang enjoy a free run despite cases of murder, attempted murder and abduction against them.

Mohit Agarwal, inspector general of police, Kanpur range, said at least three policemen were suspected to be in touch with Dubey and an investigation was underway. "Services of police personnel in league with him will be terminated and they will face criminal trial," he said.

DUBEY'S WHEREABOUTS?

The police are yet to trace Dubey, who has been missing since the ambush. Director general of police (DGP) Hitesh Chandra Awasthi has sounded an alert in all 75 districts of Uttar Pradesh. On Saturday night, a reward of Rs 1 lakh was announced for his arrest. Fifty teams and over 3,000 police personnel across the state have been deployed for the mis-

sion. Police officials associated with the investigation, who did not want to be named, said an abandoned SUV parked on the roadside in Auraiya, 60km from Bikru, was recovered on Sunday. Bloodstains were found on the car window.

"There are multiple shortcuts and interior roads from Auraiya that lead to the Madhya Pradesh border," a senior police official in Kanpur said. There is a possibility that Dubey moved further to other states after entering Madhya Pradesh, he added.

DGP Awasthi said in Lucknow several inputs were being received that hinted Dubey entered Madhya Pradesh or Nepal. But nothing substantial has emerged, he said.

He confirmed that police recovered an abandoned SUV in Auraiya registered in the name of one Amit Dubey, a close aide of the gangster. Local authorities were trying to verify if Dubey and his aides were travelling in the vehicle and left it on the roadside.

A day after the police demolished the palatial house of Dubey in Bikru village, two kilograms of explosives, six country-made pistols, 25 live rounds and sharpens in a bunker there, according to officials. Police said Dubey built a bunker inside his house for stockpiling items in case of a siege. Police pulled down the house following inputs that criminals had hidden firearms on the premises.

Our men went down in first hail of bullets, says cop who survived

Ht Correspondent

letters@hindustantimes.com

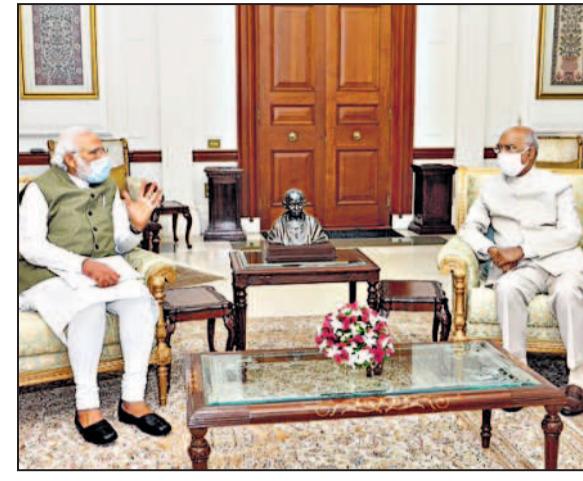
KANPUR: Station house officer(SHO), Bithoor, Kaushalendra Pratap Singh, one of the seven policemen injured in the shootout at Bikru village in Kanpur early on July 3, said he had been asked by station officer, Chaubeypur, Vinay Tiwari, who was suspended on Saturday, to accompany the raiding team.

On reaching Bikru village, the police team left their vehicles on the road and walked about 100 metres, said Singh at the hospital where he is being treated. They eventually found a heavy earth-moving machine blocking the road. The team, he said, somehow reached close to Dubey's house.

"Dubey's men were fully prepared. Each of them had weapons. They were using semi-automatic weapons. Suddenly, firing began from all the directions. We looked for safe places. But the majority of our men went down in the first hail of bullets," he said.

The remaining policemen fired back, he said, adding the criminals could see them but policemen could not.

"Two of my constables Ajay Sengar and Ajay Kashyap were injured. My priority at that time was to save them and take them to safer ground as others had fallen," he said. Singh was injured when he was taking the constables away. He said he came to know later when he saw visuals of the attack on social media that the firing was going on from three sides and that at the place where Circle Officer, Bilhaur, was hiding, firing was done from right above him.

PM MODI CALLS ON PRESIDENT

Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a meeting with President Ram Nath Kovind at Rashtrapati Bhavan on Sunday. ANI

NEW DELHI: Days after PM Narendra Modi visited Ladakh and interacted with the troops in the aftermath of the conflict at Galwan, he met President Ram Nath Kovind on Sunday and briefed him about issues of national and global importance. The PM is the first dignitary to meet the President after the latter cancelled all public engagements and restricted movement in the wake of Covid. After the meeting, Rashtrapati Bhavan tweeted a picture of the two. This comes after PM Modi's visit to Ladakh wherein he addressed the soldiers after a LAC stand-off on June 15 which killed 20 army personnel. Officials from both sides were tight-lipped about what transpired between the two in the meeting. HTC

Illegal factory fire kills 8 in Ghaziabad; probe ordered



NDRF personnel at the site in Modi Nagar on Sunday. SAKIB ALI/HT PHOTO

stoked at the complex caught fire around 4pm. Forensic experts were roped in. All the 11 injured are women.

"There were no safety measures and the factory did not have any licence. It was operating illegally. There were 25-30 women who were employed as workers; even children used to work here," said Bupender Kumar, a villager.

Villagers alleged that the factory was operated illegally by one Nitin Chaudhary and his partner Momeen. A police raid was conducted about a fortnight ago but the operations continued, they said. After the incident, officials in the Ghaziabad adminis-

tration and the police rushed to the spot. Modinagar legislator Manju Siwach, too, arrived.

"The factory was manufacturing poppers which are used for birthday celebrations. The work was going on illegally and explosive chemicals which were also stored, caught fire," she said.

Later, villagers blocked a road in protest. "Villagers were demanding strict action as the factory continued its operations. My aunt had been working there for the past year... She was given a job for Rs 4,500 a month. She went to work at 8am and later we found that she died in the fire," said Sahil, the nephew of a victim.

ht homage

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W/o Mr. Surat Singh
12.01.1957 - 06.07.2007

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Surat Singh
Pradeep Yadav
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I. ASHOK Kumar Garg S/o VK Garg R/o Kotli No. 33, Harcharan Singh Bagh, Sector 10, Noida, Noida-201301, have got Original Transfer of Plot No 2655 Sec-46, Gurugram, Hr, in favour of Vintii Vasundhara Aggarwal wife Vasika No. 10430 dated 04.01.2018, in the office of sub-registrar Wazirabad, Gurugram, HB. Findy PLS cont. at address above.

I RAM Niwas Bagaria S/o Sh Prabhakar R/o F-10, Flat No. 239, Lal Jyoti Apartment, Sec-9, Rohini, New Delhi-110185, have lost my above Flats No 8-10, Sarve Sanjhi Group Housing Society Dwarka Sec-9, Share Certificate & other Documents finder may Contact # 9350584788

LOST & FOUND**PUBLIC NOTICES****PUBLIC NOTICE**

This is to bring to kind notice of all concerned that the Company under the migration policy dated 18.02.2016 of Town and Country Planning Department, Haryana proposes to migrate part Licence No. 75 of 2011 granted for setting up of Commercial Colony for taking licence of Plotted Commercial Colony and the Company has not created any third party rights on the applied land under the migration policy on an area measuring 4.60 acres. In the event any allottee(s) of the licenced colony (under Licence No. 75 of 2011) has any objection, if any, the same may be submitted in the office of the District Town Planner, Gurugram, within 30 days from the issuance of the present Public Notice.

I. AMARJEET Thakur S/o Awadhesh Thakur R/o Village Chirand PS Doriganj, PO Chirand-Tehsil Chirand Dist-Dehradoon, State-Uttarakhand, India-247001. My brother name wrongly mentioned Navneet & his Date of Birth wrongly mentioned 14.01.1990 in my service records. I confirm that his actual & correct name is Navin Kumar & his actual & correct date of birth is 14.01.2002. This is my true statement.

I. VIKAS Bharthal S/o, Rameshwar Bharthal R/o F-10 Flat No 309 Pocket 9 Nasirpur Dwarka New Delhi 110045 have changed my name to Vikas Bharthal for all purposes.

I. HEMA D/o Narottam Joshi and W/o Harish Chandra Durgapal R/o House No. 8-219 Gali No.109 B-Block Sant Nagar Delhi-110084 have changed my name to Hema Durgapal for all future purpose.

I ARASHDEEV Singh S/o, Harcharan Kaur R/o H.No 259, Nanak Nagar, Sector 14, Gandhi Nagar, Jammu, Jammu And Kashmir. 180004 have changed my name to Arashdev Singh for all purposes.

I. DURGA Sakshi Nagpal D/o Subhash Chander Nagpal, R/o House No. 17, IARI, PUSA, New Delhi -110012, D.O.B. 25 June, 1985 have changed spelling of my middle name to Shakti. Henceforth, I shall be known as Durga Shakti Nagpal for all purposes.

I. DURGA Sakshi Nagpal D/o Subhash Chander Nagpal, R/o House No. 17, IARI, PUSA, New Delhi -110012, D.O.B. 25 June, 1985 have changed spelling of my middle name to Shakti. Henceforth, I shall be known as Durga Shakti Nagpal for all purposes.

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I. DURGA Sakshi Nagpal D/o Subhash Chander Nagpal, R/o House No. 17, IARI, PUSA, New Delhi -110012,

The urgency of defence reforms

The assumption of a competitive equilibrium no longer holds

India scrambling to buy weapons, from fighters to ammunition, on an emergency basis during a military crisis has become a familiar sight. India is fast-tracking the purchase of equipment worth ₹400 billion from foreign and domestic suppliers. This is largely about signalling determination in light of the military confrontation with China, but also the partial mobilisation by the Pakistani army. Many of these projects have simply been fast-tracked.

Some purchases are designed to provide a financial fillip to domestic Indian defence manufacturers severely stressed by the recession. Unfortunately, that these sort of emergency buys also took place during the Pulwama crisis and the earlier Doklam stand-off points to gaps in the country's defence equipment and the planning.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's defence policy has been inward-looking. The defence budget has been squeezed, in part to rid the military structure of the considerable flab it has accumulated. There has been an overwhelming emphasis on indigenous defence manufacturing, especially through the private sector. There has been a much-needed cleansing and streamlining of the arms procurement process. The past six years have seen a dizzying array of committees and reports on military reform. All of this is laudable, necessary and will pay dividends in the future. But this has also meant fewer weapons and more inferior ones being bought. The backdrop to all of this has been an assumption that India's strategic environment is relatively stable. Pakistan is around, but less a threat than an irritant. The big gamble was that India and China had reached a state of competitive equilibrium. Under present circumstances, this assumption no longer holds true.

India's defence reforms should continue. It remains an absurdity that a great power in the making has to import assault rifles. The lack of battlefield networking simply because of a desire to keep different foreign vendors happy is not working either. In the Balakot strike, India lost a fighter because it lacked a secure data link. It was China that used drones with lethal effect in the Galwan Valley. The deep-seated resistance to the massive expansion of smart weapons, unmanned aerial vehicles and greater investment in cyber-defensive capabilities needs to be overcome, and quickly. The world is becoming an increasingly unsafe place and that means security must reassume priority over shaking things up.

Evolve an integrated response to floods

The Assam floods are yet another reminder of the fragility of the ecosystem

Floods have hit 18 of the 33 districts in Assam, killing 37 people and affecting more than a million people and livestock. They have submerged large parts of the Kaziranga National Park and Tiger Reserve, Pobitora Wildlife Sanctuary, and Manas National Park. Floods are an annual feature in the state. Apart from incessant and heavy rainfall during the monsoon, there are natural and man-made factors that contribute to this. With a large basin area spanning China, India, Bangladesh and Bhutan, the Brahmaputra brings with it huge quantities of water and silt, leading to erosion and floods in Assam. In addition, because of the region's earthquake-prone nature, the river is not stable. The man-made problems include dams (which destroy the fragile ecology), deforestation in catchment areas leading to an increase in sediment load, embankments, and growing habitation along the banks and sandbars. These restrict the space for the excess river water to spread. When rainfall is heavy, the river breaches the embankments and destroys habitations along the banks and on the sandbars.

It is time the central and the state governments prepare a long-term plan that goes beyond piecemeal measures like building embankments and dredging to control floods. They must opt for an integrated basin management plan that brings all the basin-sharing countries on board. Addressing the issues only in Assam when the flood strikes can't be the solution — countries must come to an understanding about taking measures in the catchment areas. This becomes critical because the climate crisis, which is leading to intense rainfall in short periods of time, will only aggravate the existing challenges.

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comment

Shift focus to the maritime domain

To create negotiating space along the land border, India should turn to the seas



C UDAY BHASKAR

Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi's speech in Ladakh on July 3, where he addressed Indian Army personnel and commended them for their professionalism and valour, even while asserting that the "era of expansionism is over", marks the beginning of a definitive reset in the troubled but the up to now, violence-free India-China relationship.

The cordial tenor changed with the Galwan Valley incident in May/June where the People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops moved into previously uncontested locations in eastern Ladakh, taking advantage of the thin Indian tactical presence. This resulted in the loss of 20 Indian lives (PLA is yet to confirm the casualties it has sustained) and led to the surprise Modi visit to Nimmu in Ladakh. The signal to Beijing is that Delhi will not blink and that the Galwan knot, triggered by PLA's pre-meditated belligerence, will have to be untied by China.

On current evidence, it appears that PLA has hunkered down for an extended stay in the areas it has occupied and the two armies will be monitoring each other for compliance as per the agreed disengagement and return to status quo protocols. The received wisdom is that this going to be a long haul into the winter months, even as the freshly-minted Chinese claim to Galwan is on the territorial

expansion anvil. While Modi's reference to this expansionist characteristic refers to the unresolved territorial dispute on land across 3,800 kilometres which has morphed into a Line of Actual Control (LAC) and shifting claim lines, Beijing has already set a precedent in the maritime domain in an audacious and innovative manner.

The South China Sea (SCS) dispute that pitted Chinese Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs) and fishing rights claims against those of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) began with the adoption of the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas (UNCLOS).

China then invoked a historical, but dubious, nine-dash line formulation and adopted the might-is-right approach, much to the chagrin of the smaller nations. Consequently, the SCS dispute festered in an inconclusive manner for decades. The PLA began its creeping assertiveness by occupying certain atolls and enlarging the topography through artificial means and then staking a maximalist EEZ claim.

What does a smaller nation do when a bigger, more powerful neighbour refuses to engage in sincere dialogue to resolve a territorial jurisdiction matter? Seek third party arbitration or go to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). The Philippines took this path despite veiled warnings from China. Much to the consternation of Beijing, the international tribunal ruled in favour of Manila.

Predictably, China rejected this ruling and asserted that its historical claim was the only truth that mattered. This unabashed assertion of expansionism by Beijing caused distress in many capitals. But little was done in tangible terms to push back, since none of the



India should sherpa a cluster of Indo-Pacific nations into a "sagar panchayat" to uphold the rule of law at sea

Ladakh. India will now have to stay the course in managing the tensions that are bound to increase in the bilateral relationship.

Whether other nations will support Delhi or not remains opaque at this point. But India could look at other levers to temper the Chinese response and the maritime domain is the logical choice. Beijing has long harboured a deep anxiety about its vulnerability at sea — or what is referred to as the Malacca dilemma.

India has the potential to either stoke this anxiety along with like-minded nations, or assuage it as part of the common good order at sea. The four-nation Quad (United States, Japan, Australia and India) is a work in progress and India could shepherd a cluster of Indo-Pacific nations into a "sagar panchayat" and uphold the rule of law at sea. Some ASEAN nations may be willing to join such a grouping. Enhancing interoperability at sea, intelligence-sharing and capacity-building would be the early building blocks.

However, to be effective, India will have to invest in specific transborder military capabilities. The recent announcement by Canberra where it has committed \$70 billion to acquire new inventory is illustrative. Delhi will have to undertake a radical review of its defence budget despite the Covid-19 constraints to increase its naval/maritime allocations for over a decade-plus. This could enable creating credible military capability in the Andaman & Nicobar Islands, a proposal that has been on Delhi's pending list since 1963. With a suitably-fortified Andaman & Nicobar, the Malacca dilemma can become very real for Beijing.

India can create more negotiating space along the land border by turning to the seas. If this tenet is appropriately understood by Delhi, this policy transmutation could be the silver lining in the Galwan cloud.

*Uday Bhaskar is director, Society for Policy Studies, New Delhi
The views expressed are personal*

straightforward

SHASHI SHEKHAR



How China, under Xi, lost the world's goodwill

Its internal repression, aggressive nationalism, and belligerent foreign policy have alienated many countries

On Friday morning, before many of us were awake, Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi was on his way to the India-China border posts. He inspected the preparations at Nimmu, Ladakh. He met Indian Army and Indian Air Force soldiers as well as personnel from the Indo-Tibetan Border Police to ascertain the situation on the ground. He went to the Leh Sainik hospital where he met injured soldiers.

The visit by the PM in these fraught times sends out a message to the soldiers, the nation and the world — India will not give in to pressure from any quarter. This effort on the part of the PM was important in view of the grief and anger in the country after what happened in the Galwan Valley.

While it boosted the morale of the soldiers and offered some reassurance to the country, it was not lost on the Chinese as well. While the PM was still in Leh, a spokesperson for the foreign ministry in Beijing made a statement that negotiations were going on to resolve the border issue and that in this situation, no one should act in a manner that will worsen it. Was China going on the defensive or giving us some advice?

Whatever China's motive was in making the statement, PM's visit achieved its objective. This may further prove to be a road-block to China's ambitions. China, already in conflict with all the major powers of the world, is now confronting the elephant in its backyard, something which can hurt the dragon's ambitions.

Here we should also note the steps taken by Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison. He recently increased defence spending for the next decade by 40%, with a statement that the world is moving towards the situation which existed in 1930.

What happened in 1930? Those were the days of the Great Depression in the United States (US). Within a few years, World War II broke out. I am not suggesting that we are moving towards World War III. But China's aggression and ambition have triggered a reset in global diplomacy. China has always had a bitter-sweet relationship with India, Taiwan, Vietnam and Japan. Australia, however, had been ambivalent and was not in this mix; yet, it seems to apprehend China's trajectory.

The policy of aggressive nationalism, adopted by China's hyper-ambitious leader President Xi Jinping, will probably not work out well for his country in the long-run. Until a few weeks ago, many countries including Canada, England, New Zealand, and Germany were interested in strengthening ties with China. But the situation has changed rapidly.

The world has become suspicious of Beijing after the repression of Hong Kong and Xinjiang, the lack of transparency on the Covid-19 outbreak and its predator maritime policy. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson recently made a statement in his parliament against China and expressed solidarity with the agitating citizens of Hong

Kong. He even proposed giving British citizenship to the three million people of Hong Kong. The US House of Representatives unanimously passed the Hong Kong Autonomy Act to impose heavy fines and sanctions on banks and individuals involved in the suppression of democracy supporters in Hong Kong. German Chancellor Angela Merkel had already warned Beijing, whereas France and Japan have also expressed support for India after the Galwan incident. Canada's Prime Minister Justin Trudeau is considered a supporter of Beijing, but public sentiment in his country has turned against this. In one survey, there has been a decrease of more than 20% in China's popularity in the Galwan Valley.

It would be erroneous to think that Huawei and other Chinese companies will always function with the help of the government in the 5G tech business. Huawei is already considered a problem in the US and Europe. In today's world, where data is important, there are suspicions about what Chinese corporations are using our data for after offering tempting discounts on their technology. India has banned 59 Chinese apps based on this logic. Chinese companies have also lost many contracts. If this trend catches on in other countries, Beijing will be forced to rethink its policies.

US President Donald Trump wants to continue with this policy of shutting China out as much as possible. Joe Biden, who is most likely to challenge him in the next election, is also of the same view. We are approaching a situation where powerful western countries and larger Asian countries will be suspicious of China but where Latin American, African, East European and smaller Asian countries may still be locked into a relationship of dependence with China.

Irrespective of how things pan out, one thing is certain. China, with its belligerent attitude, has put a spoke in the works of the possibility of rewriting a magnificent chapter of human history going forward. It is a well-known fact that from the first century AD to 1820, India and China generated almost half the world's Gross Domestic Product. If the two countries work together, they could recreate some of the glory of the past and be a beacon to the world. But China, with its territorial ambitions and disregard for international law, has put paid to that for now.

Shashi Shekhar is the editor-in-chief, Hindustan Times

The views expressed are personal

WE ARE APPROACHING A SITUATION WHERE WESTERN AND LARGER ASIAN COUNTRIES WILL BE SUSPICIOUS OF CHINA BUT LATIN AMERICAN, AFRICAN, EAST EUROPEAN MAY STILL BE LOCKED INTO A RELATIONSHIP OF DEPENDENCE WITH CHINA

Guarding the guards is essential for rule of law

A culture of impunity rages across India, with excessive use of force. The security apparatus must be sensitised

MADAN LOKUR



instances in the recent past where allegations have been made against the police for the use of excessive force and instances where apparently normal policemen and women have turned brutal.

Last December, four persons accused of raping and killing a young lady were shot dead by armed policemen on the outskirts of Hyderabad. The accused were in police custody when the extrajudicial killings took place. A magisterial inquiry was ordered into the incident but the inquiry report (if any) is not in the public domain. Was this or was this not a manifestation of police brutality?

In February, police in riot gear attacked students in the library of Jamia Millia Islamia. Investigations into the incident are continuing and it is difficult to conclude whether or not the police used excessive force. However, it does appear to be yet another manifestation of police excess.

In March, videos were shown on national television of migrants being humiliated by the police who made them squat and hop for violating the lockdown. Some policemen have been suspended. But what has happened thereafter is not in the public domain. This is another facet of the display of brute power and authority.

Recently, two men were brutalised by the police in Tamil Nadu, leading to their death. Investigations into allegations of murder have been levelled against some police officers. But the result will be known only after the investigations are concluded. Meanwhile, there are allegations of the police destroying evidence and witnesses being intimidated.

A culture of impunity is festering and unless all of us are vigilant, some freedoms may slip out of our hands. A recent study by the Chicago University Law School titled *Deadly Discretion: The Failure of Police Use of Force Policies to Meet Fundamental International Human Rights Law and Standards* evaluates the police policies from the 20 largest cities in the United States (US) during 2017 to 2018". It concludes that each one of them failed to meet international human rights law and standards. Where would India's police force stand in such an evaluation?

The big question is how can we as a society humanise the police? Even in the US, where the SPE was conducted and lessons learnt even after the Abu Ghraib trial, it has not been possible to humanise the police as the recent choking of George Floyd suggests. Ratifying the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment is perhaps one answer. Faithfully implementing the judgment of the Supreme Court in the case of Prakash Singh in bringing about police reforms is another answer. But, these might end up being a little more than cosmetic solutions. There is an imperative and aggressive need to sensitise police forces and other law enforcement agencies and drill some compassion into them. It's a huge task, worth undertaking, for if we do not guard the guards, we invite the destruction of the rule of law.

*Madan Lokur is a retired judge, Supreme Court of India
The views expressed are personal*

htspotlight

India eyes acquisition of Predator drones from US

BORDER TENSION The armed drone is battle-proven in the Iraq, Afghanistan and Syrian theatres

Shishir Gupta

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NEWDELHI: In the wake of multiple prolonged stand-offs with the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) in eastern Ladakh, India has conveyed to the US its renewed interest in the medium-altitude long-endurance (MALE) armed Predator-B drone, which not only collects intelligence through surveillance and reconnaissance but also locates and destroys the target with missiles or laser-guided bombs.

While India is operating Israeli Heron unarmed drones in eastern Ladakh, the acquisition of an armed drone has acquired urgency with China not only using Wing Loong II armed drone but also in the process of supplying two systems (one system has two drones and a ground station) to Pakistan, ostensibly to protect the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the PLA Navy's new base at Gwadar in the highly restive Balochistan province. Pakistan is also tying up with China to jointly produce 48 armed drones for use by the Pakistan Air Force. The GJ-2, military version of Wing Loong II, is said to be armed with 12 air-to-surface missiles and is currently being used in the Libyan civil war with limited success.

Although the US has offered to sell 30 Sea Guardians (unarmed naval variant, or UAV, of the Predator-B made by General Atomics) for over \$4 billion, national security planners feel that due to the prohibitive cost of the UAV it would be better to have an all-in-one drone rather



An IAF aircraft flies over Leh on June 26. AFP

than separate ones for surveillance and targeting. Even though the Indian Navy is playing a lead role in negotiations with the US, the Indian Army is all in favour of the Predator-B. Also called the MQ-9 Reaper, the armed drone is battle-proven in the Iraq, Afghanistan and Syrian theatres with the capability of carrying four Hell-Fire missiles and two 500 pounds of laser-guided bombs.

While the US is willing to support India's high-tech weapon requirements, it is wary of supplying the Predator-B drone for fear of leakage of the technology to Russia, New Delhi's other hardware supplier.

As it is, Washington is unhappy with India purchasing the S-400 missile system from Russia as it fears that the surface-to-air missile system may

acquire signatures of US aerial platforms with India and convey them to Moscow. China has already acquired the S-400 system from Russia and currently deployed it across Arunachal Pradesh.

Even though Indian private sector companies based in Noida, on the outskirts of New Delhi, are now in the process of developing MALE drones for India, the capacity to acquire armed drones is some distance away.

A number of experiments done in Ladakh have not been entirely successful with the drone being lost in high-velocity winds on the Tibetan plateau. The Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) has plans to produce the MALE Rustom drone prototype and two 500 pounds of laser-guided bombs.

On Twitter, the Dalai Lama

Dalai Lama's 85th birthday spotlights strained China ties

Shishir Gupta

letters@hindustantimes.com

NEWDELHI: As soldiers of India and China stay locked in a bitter stand-off along the Line of Actual Control in eastern Ladakh, another aspect of the uneasy relationship between the two countries will be under a spotlight on Monday when India, and the world celebrates exiled Tibetan supreme spiritual leader His Holiness the 14th Dalai Lama's 85th birthday.

On Twitter, the Dalai Lama has announced plans for a special online screening of a new film about the American physicist David Bohm, who the spiritual leader describes as "one of my science gurus". On Sunday, the Dalai Lama gave what he described as a general teaching on mind training to mark his 85th birthday celebrations being held in Taiwan.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had called him to wish him on his birthday last year. The Dalai Lama had been travelling and was on his way back home when the call came.

India had given refuge to the Dalai Lama when he, as a 23-year-old, crossed into Arunachal Pradesh's Tawang in April 1959 to escape the Chinese that had invaded Tibet nine years earlier and had brutally suppressed the uprising against Beijing's rule.

India had given refuge to the

AFTER VIOLENT PANGONG TSO CLASH

60 days on, LAC remains tense

Rahul Singh

rahul.singh@hindustantimes.com

NEW DELHI: Exactly two months after a violent face-off near Pangong Tso in eastern Ladakh brought the latest round of border tensions with China to the fore, the situation along the contested Line of Actual Control (LAC) remains tense and unpredictable with the stand-off showing no signs of easing even five days after top military commanders agreed to work on an "expeditious, phased and step-wise de-escalation" of the ongoing conflict "of priority," people familiar with the matter said on Sunday. "Neither has anything changed on the ground nor is it expected to anytime soon. There has been no disengagement of troops at the friction points or de-escalation of conflict," one of the persons cited above said requesting anonymity.

The two months saw hostilities grow between the two armies, aggressive posturing by both sides, multiple rounds of military and diplomatic-level negotiations yielding no breakthrough.

The disengagement of Indian and Chinese troops at face-off sites and the de-escalation of the conflict may make slow progress because of deep distrust.

It is becoming increasingly clear that both armies are likely to hold their positions in the region till the onset of winter (September), said a second person.

PM's visit raised morale of armed forces: ITBP DG

Press Trust of India

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NEW DELHI: The morale of the Indian armed forces is "very high" and the troops are ready to sacrifice their lives for the nation like in the past, Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) chief S S Deswal said on Sunday as the military stand-off with China continued in Ladakh.

The ITBP Director General (DG) said the recent visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to Ladakh and his address to troops in Nimu "have raised the morale of all the forces at the border."

"The complete national leadership, political leadership and the forces and jawans... they are dedicated to the nation.

"They are dedicated to border security and the morale of all forces, be it the Indian Army, Air Force or ITBP, is very high," Deswal told reporters on the sidelines of an event to inaugurate an over-10,000-bed Covid care centre here. Delhi Lieutenant Governor Anil Baijal inaugurated the facility for which the mountain-warfare trained force is the nodal agency.

In the cacophony that followed as countries took sides, Pakistan was understandably the loudest voice in support of China despite some uneasiness in the foreign policy circles of Islamabad.

The ITBP is primarily tasked with guarding the 3,488-km Line of Actual Control (LAC) with China on the country's eastern flank and its troops are present, along with the Army, to counter the Chinese forces during the ongoing standoff in eastern Ladakh's Galwan valley area and other locations.

Timeline of the LAC border dispute

As global attention remains focused on the border row, here is a timeline of the dispute that has plunged India-China ties to a new low

MAY

5-6 Violent clash between rival patrols on the northern bank of Pangong Tso.

9 Tension spreads to the eastern sector. Four Indian and seven Chinese soldiers injured during a violent face-off involving 150 soldiers at Naku La in north Sikkim.

12 Reports of tension building up in Galwan Valley emerge.

19 As tension simmers in Pangong Tso, Galwan Valley and Hot Springs, China's foreign ministry accuses Indian soldiers of trespassing across the LAC.

21 The external affairs ministry says Indian activities entirely on the Indian side of the LAC and China hindering India's normal patrolling patterns.

22 Army chief General Manoj Mukund Naravane makes a low-key visit to Leh HQs 14 Corps for a security review.

30 Defence minister Rajnath Singh says India, China are talking to each other at military and diplomatic levels to resolve the issue.

JUNE



13 Army chief says disengagement of both the forces taking place in a "phased manner" and the situation is "under control".

15 A brutal clash in Galwan Valley leaves 20 Indian and an unconfirmed number of Chinese troops dead.

22 Army delegations, led by corps commanders, hold a second meeting and hammer out a consensus on disengagement.

25 New satellite images capture the PLA build-up in Ladakh.

30 Senior military commanders meet for the third time and agree to work on an de-escalation".



3 On an unscheduled visit to Ladakh, PM Narendra Modi declares that the 'era of expansionism is over', sending a strong signal to China.

China's Bhutan move aimed at India

Sutirtho Patranobis

spatranobis@htlive.com

BEIJING: The Chinese government's decision for the first time to publicly put on record that it has a boundary dispute with Bhutan in the eastern sector is a calibrated manner of launching a diplomatic attack on Thimphu's ally India on a new front.

The key could be the proximity of Bhutan's "eastern sector" to Arunachal Pradesh – which China claims in its entirety as part of "south Tibet". It could be the primary reason for Beijing to talk about differing boundary perceptions with Bhutan now.

Frist at a multilateral environment forum in June, where India was present, and then through a statement to HT, the Chinese foreign ministry has said it has a border dispute with Bhutan in the eastern sector, surprising many who are following developments in the region.

Besides multiplying pressure on New Delhi during the ongoing, and most serious border tension in decades, it is also a ploy by China to simultaneously internationalise an issue it has seldom done before – the boundary problem with its tiny neighbour.

BESIDES MULTIPLYING PRESSURE ON INDIA DURING THE ONGOING, AND MOST SERIOUS BORDER TENSION IN DECADES, IT IS ALSO A PLOY BY CHINA TO INTERNATIONALISE THE ISSUE

bour. Though China might not have said it publicly, it's not surprising if Beijing was opposed to the India-Bhutan boundary delimitation agreement, which was signed in 2006 – more so because of Bhutan's borders with Arunachal Pradesh.

The Chinese foreign ministry, in a statement issued to Hindustan Times last week, said the China-Bhutan boundary has never been delimited and there "have been disputes over the eastern, central and western sections for a long time". The statement in Mandarin further said "a third party should not point fingers" in the China-Bhutan border issue – an apparent reference to India.

"You got to see the Chinese claims in continuation to their strategy of territorial claims elsewhere," a New Delhi-based Asia expert said on condition of anonymity.

China's state-controlled media and Chinese academics consistently blame India for Beijing-Thimphu not having diplomatic ties.

"As far as I know, the China-Bhutan boundary issue was almost resolved 20 years ago. The two sides have a common understanding on how to sign the final agreement. But for Bhutan, it is difficult because of the India factor."

Referring to Chinese foreign

ministry's statement saying the disputes in the three areas have been there "for a long time", Constantino Xavier, fellow in foreign policy studies at the think-tank Brookings India, said the timing chosen by Beijing to raise the issue – amid the ongoing Sino-India border tension – was important.

"Even while this Chinese claim may not be new, the timing and the multilateral setting of Beijing's statement reflect intent to put pressure on Bhutan and India, seeking to create a wedge between both countries," Xavier added.

"You got to see the Chinese claims in continuation to their strategy of territorial claims elsewhere," a New Delhi-based Asia expert said on condition of anonymity.

China's state-controlled media and Chinese academics consistently blame India for Beijing-Thimphu not having diplomatic ties.

"As far as I know, the China-Bhutan boundary issue was almost resolved 20 years ago. The two sides have a common understanding on how to sign the final agreement. But for Bhutan, it is difficult because of the India factor."

Referring to Chinese foreign

tor. That is the same reason why China and Bhutan have not signed the agreement," Lin Minwang, assistant dean at the Institute of International Studies at Shanghai's Fudan University, said.

Will publicising the problem now help China?

"But using Bhutan to target India may turn out to be counterproductive for China: it will lose political capital in Bhutan and is actually facilitating closer diplomatic coordination between Thimphu and Delhi," said Xavier.

In 2018 July, vice foreign minister Kong Xuanyou led a rare high-level visit from China to Bhutan; he was accompanied by Luo Zhaohui, the then Chinese envoy to India.

The Chinese foreign ministry statement released at the end of his visit said: "China highly values its traditional friendly relations with Bhutan, and will always respect Bhutan's independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, respect the political system and development path chosen by Bhutan based on its own national conditions, and respect the independent foreign policy of peace upheld by Bhutan."

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Several weather stations in Delhi experienced moderate category rains with Saffdarjung receiving 34.8 mm, Lodhi Road 32.2mm and Delhi Ridge 46.6mm, according to the Regional Weather Forecasting Centre (RWFC) of the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

Delhi-NCR will receive more rains over the next three to four days as a monsoon trough is passing very close to the national capital.

"There is a lot of moisture because of easterly winds and there was intense heating for the last three to four days with maximum temperatures of over 40 degrees C. We are expecting some thunderstorm activity and light rain for a few days," said Kuldeep

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REGD. NO. D. L.-33004/99


भारत का राजपत्र
The Gazette of India

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असाधारण

EXTRAORDINARY

भाग II—खण्ड 3—उप-खण्ड (ii)

PART II-Section 3-Sub-section (ii)

प्राधिकार से प्रकाशित

PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY

सं. 1949] नई दिल्ली, शुक्रवार, जुलाई 3, 2020 / आषाढ़ 12, 1942

No. 1949] NEW DELHI, FRIDAY, JULY 3, 2020/ASADHA 12, 1942

MINISTRY OF ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS**NOTIFICATION**

New Delhi, the 3rd July, 2020

S.O. 2203(E).— Whereas by the notification of the Government of India in the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways, number S.O. 4674 (E), dated 26 December 2019, published in the Gazette of India, Extraordinary, Part II, Section 3, Sub-section (ii) and issued under sub-section (1) of section 3A of the National Highway Act, 1956 (of 1956) (hereinafter referred to as the said Act), the Central Government declared its intention to acquire the land specified in the Schedule annexed to the said notification for building (widening/two lane with paved shoulder etc.), maintenance, management and operation on National Highway No. 94 on the stretch of land from Km. 65.00 to Km. 76.00 (Dandasali Uttari to Nakot Laga Joulangi Section) in the District of Tehri Garhwal in the State of Uttarakhand.

And whereas the substance of the said notification has been published in "Dainik Jagran" and "Hindustan" both dated 01 January 2020; under sub-section (3) of section 3A of the said Act;

And whereas no objection has been received from any person by the competent Authority;

And whereas, in pursuance of Sub-Section (1) of Section 3D of the said Act, the competent authority has submitted its report to the Central Government;

Now, therefore, upon receipt of the said report of the competent authority and in exercise of the powers conferred by the Sub-Section (1) of Section 3D of the said Act, the Central Government hereby declares that the land specified in the said Schedule should be acquired for the aforesaid purpose;

And further, in pursuance of Sub-Section (2) of Section 3D of the said Act, the Central Government hereby declares that on publication of this notification in the Official Gazette, the land specified in the said Schedule shall vest absolutely in the Central Government, free from all encumbrances.

SCHEDULE

Brief Description of the land to be acquired with or without structures for building (widening/two lane with paved shoulder etc.), maintenance, management and operation falling on National Highway No. 94 in the stretch of land from Km 65.00 to Km 76.00 (Dandasali Uttari to Nakot Laga Joulangi Section) in the District of Tehri Garhwal in the State of Uttarakhand.

State: UTTARAKHAND District: TEHRI GARHWAL

Sr. No.	Survey Number	Type of Land	Nature of Land	Area In Hectare	Name of the Land Owner/ Interested Person Part Survey No:
1	1256M	Private	Structure	0.008	Saty Singh/Gyan Singh/Mudiagaon
2	1301	Private	Agriculture	0.006	Rekha Devi/W/o Arvind Singh village Dharkot

GST consensus under threat as revenue falls

LOCKDOWN WOES Differences may emerge over the Centre's obligation to make up for states' GST losses over the last 2 months

Gireesh Chandra Prasad

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■ Union finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman chairing a GST Council meeting in June. PTI

NEWDELHI: Consensus has guided 40 meetings of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council since its inception, but differences between the Centre and fiscally stressed states within the federal tax body are becoming increasingly difficult to reconcile.

The Council, which will meet later this month, is set to see sharp differences emerge over the central government's obligation to make up for states' GST losses, which has gone up due to the two-month national lockdown to contain the coronavirus pandemic, a situation that wasn't anticipated in GST laws.

States have for long been complaining about delays in getting their assured compensation. Some states such as Kerala have been demanding the Centre borrow from the market to pay dues to states. They contend that the Centre can repay the borrowings by extending the cess imposition on items such as automobiles and tobacco beyond 2022 when these levies expire.

Bihar deputy chief minister Sushil Kumar Modi, who is the convenor of several ministerial

panels within the GST Council and is regarded as the go-to person for resolving disputes within the council, said in an interview that states may make statements for political reasons but they need to be realistic about their compensation demands as the Union government is also facing revenue losses.

Kerala finance minister Thomas Isaac told the council at its meeting in December, citing its former chairperson Arun Jaitley, that the council could borrow to fund the compensation requirement and extend the levy of cess from five to six years, minutes of the meeting showed.

Modi, who is also the convenor of the group of ministers on revenue analysis, said that the Centre

INTEREST COVERAGE RATIO OF 311 FIRMS IN THE BSE 500 INDEX FELL TO 2.73 IN MAR QUARTER

giving the full-year expansion to 4.2% against 6.1% in FY19.

"The interest coverage was impacted by weakening earnings," said analysts. A Mint analysis of the same companies showed that aggregate net profit for the same period, after adjusting for one-time gains or losses, plunged 33.95% year-on-year, the lowest in at least 20 quarters,

I-T dept revises TDS form, asks deductors for more details

Press Trust of India

feedback@livemint.com

NEW DELHI: The income tax (I-T) department has amended the TDS form, making it more comprehensive and mandating deductors to state reasons for non-deduction of tax. As per the amended form, banks will also have to report Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) for cash withdrawals above ₹1 crore.

Through a notification, the Central Board of Direct Taxes has amended Income Tax Rules to include TDS on e-commerce operators, dividend distributed by mutual funds and business trusts, cash withdrawals, professional fees and interest. Nangia & Co LLP Partner Shailesh Kumar said with this notification, the government has revised the format of forms 26Q and 27Q, where details of TDS amount deducted and deposited on various resident and non-resident payments are required to be filled.

Form 26Q is used for quarterly filing of TDS returns on any payment other than salary to Indian residents by the government or corporates operating in India. Form 27Q is used for quarterly filing of TDS returns electronically on any payment other than salary to non-residents.

From a growth of 5.29% in the March quarter of FY19, net sales also declined 8.29% in the quarter ended March, against a growth of 15.72% corresponding quarter last fiscal.

Aggregated interest cost of these companies rose 11.56%

year-on-year in the March quarter, against an increase of 31.37% in the corresponding quarter last fiscal. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has lowered its repo rate by 185 basis points (bps) to 4% in the one-year period ending May. Lenders have also lowered their interest rates in that period, tracking the rates in that period, tracking the

Adani Ports eyes \$1.25bn fundraise via dollar bonds

Swaraj Singh Dhanjal

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MUMBAI: Billionaire Gautam Adani's ports business Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Ltd's board will meet on Tuesday to consider raising up to \$1.25 billion through dollar bonds, the company said in a stock exchange filing on Saturday.

"We would like to inform you that the meeting of the board of directors of the company will be held on Tuesday, 7 July, 2020, to consider raising funds by way of issuance of dollar-denominated foreign currency bonds... provided that the total amount does not exceed \$1.25 billion on a private placement basis, or otherwise," it added.

Last December, Mint had reported that after tapping the dollar bond market twice in 2019, Adani Ports was preparing for a fresh issuance of dollar bonds in 2020.

In June 2019, Adani Ports had raised \$75 million through a bond sale, and followed it up with a \$650-million buy back offer for bonds maturing in 2020 in the following month.

In 2019, Adani group companies issued five dollar bond offerings, including two bonds



■ The board will meet on Tuesday to consider raising funds. MINT

by the ports operator, totalling about \$2.76 billion.

Its renewable energy business Adani Green Energy Ltd raised \$500 million in May 2019 and another \$362.5 million via bond issuance last October.

Adani Transmission, the power transmission and distribution business of the group, raised \$500 million last November.

In February, Adani Electricity Mumbai Ltd, raised \$1 billion in its maiden dollar bond offering.

Covid-19 crisis takes a toll on co-living biz

Madhurima Nandy & Salman SH

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THE SHAKE-UP IN THE CO-LIVING SPACE IS ALSO LIKELY TO SPUR CONSOLIDATION

ups, some have even waived minimum rental guarantees for 3 or 6 months.

"Organic demand, from students and migrants, is taking a hit. Before the lockdown, we were predicting a 5x to 6x growth in demand for the year, but that has now slowed. A lot of the migrant population has moved back to their hometowns, and some 60-70% of our users are working from home," Khan said.

Anindya Dutta, MD, Stanza Living said other than rental discounts, it has renegotiated rent obligations, in some cases for 12-18 months, with landlords assuming tenants will begin to return over the next two months. "Once things normalise, we believe the demand for branded managed accommodation will rise because of hygiene and sanitisation factors," Dutta said.

MiNest, which has been incubated by Shearwater Ventures and has three facilities in Gurugram and Delhi, is also remodeling rental contracts. Rajeev Bairathi, CEO and MD, Shearwater said co-living was always a high-volume, low-margin business, but both volumes and margins are impacted.

India Inc's ability to repay loans deteriorates in Q4

Nasrin Sultana and Shayan Ghosh

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MUMBAI: The ability of Indian companies to pay loan interest from their earnings worsened in the March quarter, a Mint analysis of Capitaline data showed, coinciding with falling earnings and a slow economy.

The interest coverage ratio (ICR) of 311 companies in the BSE 500 index fell to 2.73 in the March quarter, the lowest in at least 24 quarters, from 3.89 in the December quarter and 4.48 a year ago. The ratio is derived by

dividing a company's Ebitda (earnings before interest, tax, depreciation and amortisation) with its interest cost. A lower ratio indicates less capability to pay interest from operating earnings.

The downward trend, visible even before the Covid-19 pandemic hit, signals reduced margin of safety for these companies against a backdrop of weak sales and profit growth. Companies under review exclude banks, financials, and oil and gas companies. The Indian economy grew at 3.1% in the March quarter, the slowest in 11 years, drag-

ging the full-year expansion to 4.2% against 6.1% in FY19.

"The interest coverage was impacted by weakening earnings," said analysts. A Mint analysis of the same companies showed that aggregate net profit for the same period, after adjusting for one-time gains or losses, plunged 33.95% year-on-year, the lowest in at least 20 quarters,

from a growth of 5.29% in the March quarter of FY19. Net sales also declined 8.29% in the quarter ended March, against a growth of 15.72% corresponding quarter last fiscal.

According to Soumya Kanti Ghosh, group chief economic adviser at State Bank of India, though sectors such as automobile, FMCG and consumer durables have reported negative growth in all key parameters in Q4FY20, they have the requisite balance sheet strength to survive the crisis. "The automobile sector has a debt to equity (DE) ratio of 0.20 and debt service coverage ratio (DSCR) and interest service coverage ratio (ISCR) of 1.57 and 5.56 respectively," he wrote in a note on July 3.

Aggregated interest cost of these companies rose 11.56%

year-on-year in the March quarter, against an increase of 31.37% in the corresponding quarter last fiscal. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has lowered its repo rate by 185 basis points (bps) to 4% in the one-year period ending May. Lenders have also lowered their interest rates in that period, tracking the

NEWS

Political economy of petrol-diesel price hike

Roshan Kishore, Abhishek Jha and Vineet Sachdev

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NEWDELHI: Petrol and diesel prices have gone up by ₹ 9.17 and 11.14 per litre respectively between June 6 and July 3 in Delhi. An HT analysis published on June 24 showed that the gap between retail prices in Delhi and international crude price reached an all-time high in March 2020; this still continues to be significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels. This is because of an increase in taxes on petrol and diesel. Between April 1 and July 1, the share of central and state taxes in petrol and diesel prices in Delhi increased from 45% to 63% for diesel and 54% to 64% for petrol. Central taxes per litre are almost twice state taxes. And while fuel prices vary across states, the trend across India is pretty much the same. (See Chart 1)

As is to be expected, the tax-driven hike in petrol-diesel prices has become a political issue. The Congress and other opposition parties are demanding a reduction in taxes.

The central government has justified the move by saying that the tax proceeds are being used for spending on "healthcare, generating employment and giving people financial security" and claimed that the common man has not been hit by the price hike as their consumption has decreased due to the lockdown. The truth, as is often the case, lies somewhere in the middle.

Unlike developed countries, a very small share of Indians own cars. According to the 2011 census, only 4.5% of households owned a car, jeep, or van. The 2015-16 National Family and Health Survey (NFHS) puts the share of households owning a car or truck at 6%.

To be sure, the share of households owning a motorized two-wheeler is significantly higher, 21% according to the 2011 census and 38% as per the 2015-16 NFHS.

The 2011-12 Consumption Expenditure Survey (latest available data) shows that an overwhelming majority of Indian households either do not spend or spend very little on petrol and diesel.

Petrol and diesel had a share of

WITH ECONOMIC ACTIVITY COLLAPSING DURING THE PANDEMIC, PETROL AND DIESEL PRICES HAVE EMERGED AN IMPORTANT CUSHION FOR REVENUE MOBILISATION FOR BOTH CENTRAL AND STATE GOVERNMENTS

2.4% in average Monthly Per Capita Expenditure (MPCE) in 2011-12. This increased from 0.1% for the bottom 10% of households to 4.2% for the top 10%. So, there is some merit to the claim that an increase in petrol-diesel prices does not affect household budgets directly. (See Chart 2)

Does this mean that rise in petrol-diesel prices are a non-issue for the common man? Not necessarily. Petrol and diesel are crucial inputs for some of the poorest entrepreneurs in the Indian economy.

Farmers use diesel as fuel in tractors and irrigation pumps. According to farmers activist Ramandeep Singh Mann, the diesel price hike might wipe out the benefit of the entire increase in Minimum Support Price (MSP) for paddy. It takes 25-30 litres of diesel to prepare an acre for cropping and another 75 litres of diesel over the entire season for irrigation. The All India Motor Transport Congress.

The increase in the basic transport cost will eventually affect many sectors, said Himanshu, associate professor of economics at Jawaharlal Nehru University.

This includes the food sector which has seen inflation in the last few months, he added.

Even if the market is bad, transporters will have to increase prices to cover their costs, Himanshu said.

Not everyone agrees. Madan Sabnavis, chief economist at CARE Ratings, said that with the quantum of goods transported being lower than before, operators may not increase the cost and bear it themselves, in the hope that this is temporary.

With economic activity collapsing during the pandemic, petrol and diesel prices have emerged an important cushion

ployed people (36%) in India's non-agricultural workforce. Some states have a significantly higher share of workers in this sector than others. (See Chart 3)

The passenger transport sector is bound to have suffered a huge fall in revenue due to the Covid-19 virus. A rise in fuel prices must have made matters worse, as passenger volumes continue to stay low. The poor financial health is certain to affect workers in the sector.

What about the cascading effect of higher fuel prices on other commodities? Transport operators say that diesel prices comprise around 65% of their operational cost. Mahendra Arya, President, All India Transporters Welfare Association, said that diesel prices have increased by around 22% since the lockdown was imposed on March 25. Accordingly, their transport costs have increased by around 14%, he added. The operators also complained of their inability to transfer the increased transport costs to their customers at present.

With transportation demand down by almost half in the last few months due to Covid-19, operators do not have much leverage over customers and are not able to fully pass on the cost, said Naveen Gupta, secretary general at the All India Motor Transport Congress.

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With economic activity collapsing during the pandemic, petrol and diesel prices have emerged an important cushion

Do petrol prices affect the common man?

CHART 1 PRICE BREAKUP OF PETROL & DIESEL

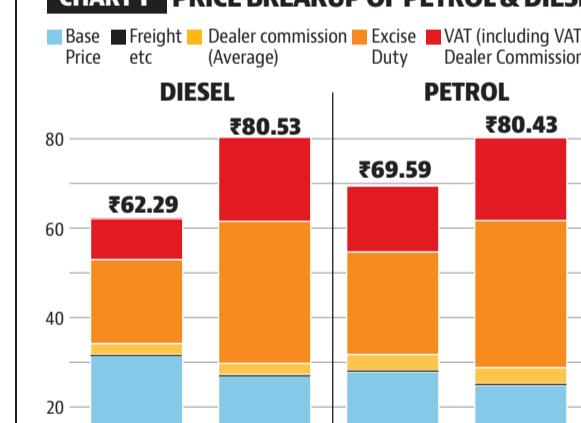
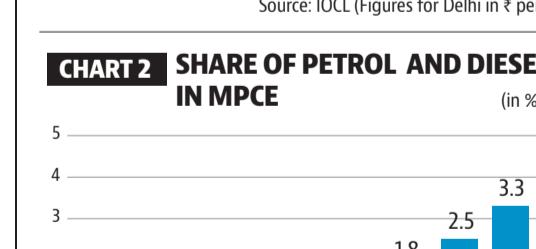


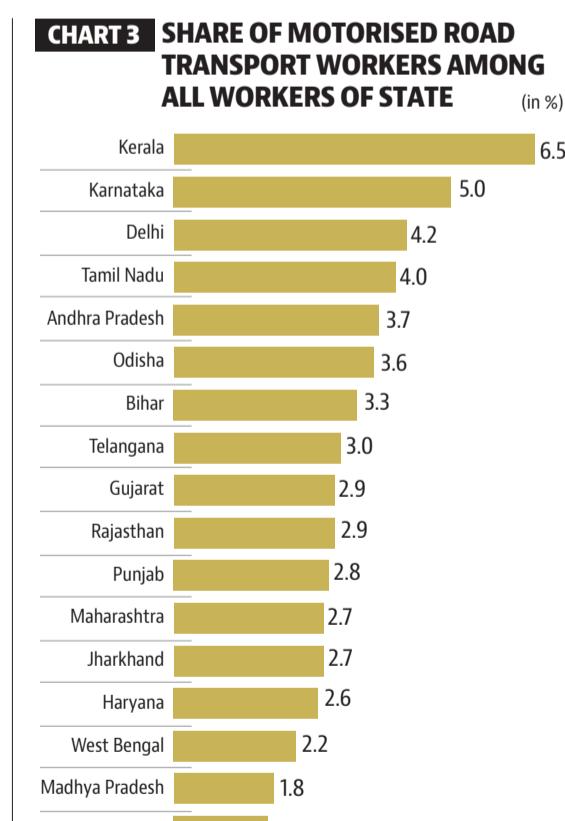
CHART 2 SHARE OF PETROL AND DIESEL IN MPCE



Pradesh, for example, has increased the ad valorem VAT on petrol from 28% to 33% and the fixed VAT from ₹1.5/litre to ₹3.5/litre in May this year. Rajasthan increased the ad valorem VAT from 26% last year to 36% in May this year and to 38% in June. Because the Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell website does not give a historical archive of state taxes, this analysis has compared June tax rates with online archives for February 2019 and May 2020.

Petrol and diesel consumption fell sharply because of the lockdown. April consumption in physical terms was less than half the consumption last year. Things improved in May, and the

CHART 3 SHARE OF MOTORISED ROAD TRANSPORT WORKERS AMONG ALL WORKERS OF STATE (in %)



htworld

WE'VE SEEN NOT ONLY THE GREATEST CHALLENGE THE NHS HAS EVER FACED, BUT ALSO AN UNPRECEDENTED OUTPOURING OF... SUPPORT FOR THAT INSTITUTION.

> BORIS JOHNSON, UK PM, on the 72nd birthday of the state-run British health service

WHO reports record daily Covid cases

NO END IN SIGHT 212,326 new cases recorded globally; Mexico crosses France to become 5th in fatality numbers; Spain orders second lockdown after cases rise

Agencies

■ letters@hindustantimes.com

WASHINGTON/ ISLAMABAD: The World Health Organization reported a record single-day increase in global coronavirus cases on Saturday, with the total rising by 212,326 in 24 hours.

The biggest increases were from the United States, Brazil and India, according to a daily report. The previous WHO record for new cases was 189,077 on June 28. Deaths remained steady at about 5,000 a day.

Global coronavirus cases exceeded 11 million on Friday, according to a Reuters tally, marking another milestone in the spread of the disease that has killed more than half a million people in seven months.

Iran and Indonesia reported their deadliest days of the coronavirus pandemic so far as cases continued to climb around the globe. In Iran, the number of fatalities rose to 163 on Sunday, one more than the previous highest daily toll set a week ago. The death count reached 11,571 from a total of 240,438 known infections, with 2,560 new cases reported overnight.

Indonesia reported 82 deaths from the coronavirus on Sunday, the highest single-day spike in fatalities, taking the total to 3,171, the health ministry said. The country with the most infections in Southeast Asia also reported 1,607 new cases in the past 24 hours, taking the total to 63,749.

Mexico overtook France with the fifth-deadliest outbreak. Deaths in the North American country reached 30,366, while the number of infections rose by a daily record 6,914 to 252,165, according to data from the health ministry. Like in other Latin American countries, Mexican officials have had to balance their response to the virus with consideration for significant groups of people who must work to meet basic daily needs.

Israel is in a state of emergency due to a resurgent coronavirus outbreak, and additional steps are needed to stem the spread, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Sunday.

The cabinet will reconvene within the coming day to decide on new restrictions.

Ghana's President Nana Akufo-Addo will isolate for 14 days starting July 4 after being exposed to a Covid-19 case, the information ministry said in a statement late Saturday. He tested negative on that day, it added.

If confirmed, two new suspected cases would end Hong Kong's three-week stretch of no fresh local infections.

Hong Kong had relaxed social-distancing measures in mid-June, allowing public gatherings of up to 50 people. The city's government is in talks with Guangdong provincial authorities for a plan to ease cross-border travel restrictions, including lifting the 14-day mandatory quarantine for qualified people.

MAN IN 9/11 PHOTO DIES A New York electrical engineer photographed in a crowd fleeing the smoldering World Trade Center in 2001 died of the coronavirus, the Palm Beach Post reported, citing his family. Stephen Cooper, 78, died on March 28 in Delray Beach, Florida, where he lived part-time. The photograph was widely published and is part of the 9/11 Memorial Museum in New York.

2ND LOCKDOWN IN SPAIN A lockdown has been ordered for a region of Galicia in northwestern Spain, restricting travel in and out of A Marina for about 70,000 residents. The five-day measure was ordered after cases started to rise from two different outbreaks.

Spain put an agricultural region with more than 200,000 residents under indefinite lockdown on Saturday. The number of cases in the Segria region of 21,000 has soared 20% in the past two weeks to 3,312.

Four of nine outbreaks currently being monitored by authorities are associated with companies harvesting and processing fruit and vegetables.

PAK FM HOSPITALISED Pakistan foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi was shifted to a military hospital in Rawalpindi on Saturday, a day after he tested positive for the coronavirus and went into self-isolation.

Qureshi on Friday announced on Twitter that he had tested posi-

tive for the coronavirus. Qureshi has been moved to Combined Military Hospital in Rawalpindi, the Geo News reported on Saturday, citing sources.

PUBS OPEN IN BRITAIN People in England appear to have broadly behaved themselves as pubs reopened this weekend. Britain's health minister Matt Hancock said on Sunday after the latest step towards a return to normality from the coronavirus lockdown.

Thousands of people flocked to pubs, restaurants and bars around England on Saturday as large parts of the hospitality sector reopened for the first time since March.

Many of the social distancing rules drilled in by ministers at daily televised briefings appeared to go out the window in Soho, where groups of people meandered between pubs and restaurants without a facemask in sight.

"From what I've seen, although there's some pictures to the contrary, very very largely people have acted responsibly," health minister Matt Hancock told Sky News.

But the head of Britain's police federation said he ended up dealing with "naked men, happy drunks, angry drunks, fights and more angry drunks" while on shift.

"What was crystal clear is that drunk people can't won't socially distance," John Apter told London radio.



■ LET LOOSE: Revellers pack a street outside pubs in the Soho area of London.

CORONAVIRUS IS AIRBORNE, SAY 239 EXPERTS

NEW DELHI: Amid a frightening rise in new Covid-19 cluster infections, 239 experts have written an open letter to the WHO, outlining evidence showing that smaller airborne particles containing the virus can infect people, The New York Times reported on Sunday.

Whether carried aloft by large droplets that zoom through the air after a sneeze, or by much smaller exhaled droplets that may glide the length of a room, the experts said, the coronavirus is borne through air and can infect people when inhaled.

The scientists from 32 countries are calling on the UN health agency to revise its recommendations and plan to publish their letter in a scientific journal.

If airborne transmission is a significant factor in the pandemic, especially in crowded spaces with poor ventilation, the consequences for containment will be significant, NYT reported. Masks may be needed indoors, even in socially distant settings. Health care workers may need N95 masks that filter out even the smallest respiratory droplets as they care for coronavirus patients, it said.

Ventilation systems in schools, nursing homes, residences and businesses may need to minimize recirculating air and add powerful new filters. Ultraviolet lights may be needed to kill particles floating indoors. HTC

Tokyo governor Yuriko Koike wins another term

Agencies

■ letters@hindustantimes.com

TOKYO: Tokyo Gov Yuriko Koike has won a second term to head the Japanese capital, propelled to an election victory Sunday by public support for her handling of the coronavirus crisis despite a recent rise in infections that has raised concerns of a resurgence of the disease.

In her victory speech, Koike, the first woman to lead Tokyo, pledged to continue to take measures to protect the city's 14 million people amid the pandemic, calling it her "most pressing task."

Japanese public broadcaster NHK said its exit polls showed that 74% of respondents supported Koike, with 63% saying they approved of her handling of the coronavirus crisis.

NZ PM JACINDA ARDERN LAUNCHES CAMPAIGN With promises of extra financing for small businesses and more jobs as a severe economic downturn looms, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern on Sunday launched her party's campaign ahead of September general election.

Ardern's rise to become New Zealand's most popular prime minister in a century, buoyed by her response to the Covid-19 pandemic that has left the country largely unscathed, has boosted her prospects in the September 19 election.

Ardern's Labour Party, governing in a coalition with the Greens and the nationalist New Zealand First party, will face the National Party in what is expected to be a pandemic-dominated campaign.



■ Fireworks over Washington Monument to mark July 4. AFP

Yashwant Raj & Agencies

■ letters@hindustantimes.com

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump has claimed without evidence that 99% of Covid-19 cases in the country were "totally harmless," as the 4th of July weekend to mark US Independence Day added to worries of further spread of the pandemic.

Many states broke records in new cases. In Texas for instance, 7,890 patients were hospitalized. Florida has reported a new record of 11,445 cases.

Trump once again blamed China for the pandemic and held out hopes of a vaccine by the end of the year. He held the 4th of July celebrations against warnings that the virus is spreading through such large gatherings.

Deaths in US were nearing 130,000 on Sunday as cases topped 2.8 million, with more than 45,000 in the past 24 hours.

"China must be held fully accountable", Trump said, blaming Beijing for misreporting and misleading the world, while claiming again that the high number of cases in the US was

due to more testing.

"Now we have tested, almost 40 million people, 99% of which are totally harmless", he said.

The president went on to hold hopes of a breakthrough in the hunt of a vaccine, saying, "We'll likely have a therapeutic and/or a vaccine solution long before the end of the year."

Trump said China must be held fully accountable for its "secrecy, deception and cover-up" that allowed it to spread the coronavirus all over the world. He touted the country's "progress" against the pandemic saying, "We have the manufacturing record for ventilators. We have the most and the finest testing anywhere in the world."

"We are producing gowns, masks, and surgical equipment in our country... It was almost exclusively made in foreign lands, in particular, China, where ironically this virus and others came from.

"China's secrecy, deception, and cover-up allowed it to spread all over the world, 189 countries and China must be held fully accountable."

Tiger kills zookeeper in Zurich

Agencies

■ letters@hindustantimes.com

BERLIN: A female Siberian tiger attacked and killed a 55-year-old zookeeper at Zurich's zoo on Saturday, the authorities said.

Rescue crews were unable to save the woman, who died on the spot.

A park visitor reported the attack and zoo staff lured the five-year-old tiger named Irina away from the victim and into a stall, police and the zoo said.

Circumstances of the attack were still under investigation.

The zoo said an internal alarm was sounded at 1:20 pm local time that the keeper had been attacked in the tiger enclosure, prompting staff members to rush to her aid.

The other keepers were able to lure the Siberian tiger away from their colleague and out of the enclosure.



■ The male tiger Sayan in the restricted area of the zoo in Zurich. AP

First responders tried to revive the woman but she died at the scene. The zoo said an investigation has been launched into the "tragic incident," including why the keeper was in the enclosure at the same time as the tiger.

The tiger enclosure in Zurich also holds a four-year-old male called Sayan, according to the zoo's website.

Irina, who was still alive after the incident, originally came from a zoo in Odense, Denmark, a year ago and replaced a female who died from complications after a fight with Sayan.

"This is a young animal that so far has behaved entirely naturally as a tiger does," Zoo director Severin Dressen told reporters.

KATHMANDU: The crucial talks between embattled Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli and the ruling Nepal Communist Party's executive chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' on the issue of power-sharing failed on Sunday, but they agreed to meet again on Monday to sort out their differences ahead of the party's powerful Standing Committee meeting.

The Prachanda faction, backed by senior leaders including Madhav Nepal and Jhalanath Khanal, has been demanding that Oli step down both as party chair and prime minister.

The two leaders failed to reach any agreement. As both the leaders stick to their respective stands, the talk could not bear any fruit, said a source close to Prime Minister Oli.

However, they have agreed to sit again for dialogue on Monday ahead of the scheduled Standing Committee meeting to sort out differences, a senior minister told PTI.

"The two leaders discussed a wide range of issues but no common ground was reached," he said.

The twice postponed powerful



■ Nepal PM KP Sharma Oli AFP

Standing Committee meeting of the party on Monday is expected to decide on the political future of 68-year-old prime minister.

On Saturday, a crucial meeting of the 45-member Standing Committee was postponed until Monday to allow more time for the top leadership to iron out their differences over Oli's style of functioning and anti-India statements.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Oli met with former prime minister and president of the opposition Nepali Congress Sher Bahadur Deuba. There is speculation that Oli might have sought Deuba's backing to save his government in case the ruling party splits.

Plague cases are not uncommon in China, but outbreaks have become increasingly rare. From 2009 to 2018, China reported 26 cases and 11 deaths.

Warning in China over suspected bubonic plague

Reuters

■ letters@hindustantimes.com

BEIJING: Authorities in a city in the Chinese region of Inner Mongolia issued a warning on Sunday, one day after a hospital reported a case of suspected bubonic plague.

The health committee of the city of Bayan Nur issued the third-level alert, the second lowest in a four-level system.

The alert forbids the hunting and eating of animals that could carry plague and asks the public to report any suspected cases of plague or fever with no clear causes, and to report any sick or dead marmots.

Sunday's warning follows four reported cases of plague in people from Inner Mongolia last November, including two of pneumonic plague, a deadlier variant of plague.

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Oli met with former prime minister and president of the opposition Nepali Congress Sher Bahadur Deuba. There is speculation that Oli might have sought Deuba's backing to save his government in case the ruling party splits.

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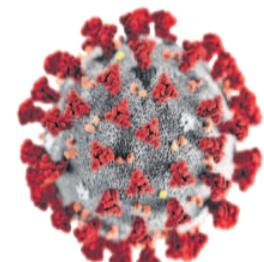
VIRUS TRACKER

11,471,583

GLOBAL CASES

535,072

GLOBAL DEATHS



WORST-HIT NATIONS (BY CASES)

COUNTRY	CASES	DEATHS
1 US	2,959,188	132,418
2 BRAZIL	1,578,376	64,365
3 INDIA*	697,284	19,700
4 RUSSIA	681,251	10,161
5 PERU	299,080	10,412
6 SPAIN	297,625	28,385
7 CHILE	295,532	6,308
8 UK	285,416	44,220
9 MEXICO	252,165	30,366
10 ITALY	241,611	34,861

(AS OF 10:40 PM IST) SOURCE: WORLDOMETER * COMPILED BY HT



■ An anti-racism protest in Minneapolis, Minnesota. AFP

Trump vows to defeat radical left; Columbus statue pulled down

HT Correspondent

Bottas fires opening salvo as F1 returns

AUSTRIAN GP Hit with penalties before and after the race, Hamilton comes home in fourth

Agence France-Presse

sportsdesk@hindustantimes.com

SPIELBERG (AUSTRIA): Valtteri Bottas stayed calm in a stormy race on Sunday to claim a measured victory for Mercedes as Formula One returned with a bang in a belated, dramatic and incident-strewn 2020 season-opening Austrian Grand Prix.

Seven months after the final race of 2019, the Finn, who had started from the 12th pole position of his career, led from start to finish to come home ahead on the road of teammate six-time champion Lewis Hamilton.

The Briton, however, had been given a five-second penalty during the race and was demoted to fourth behind Charles Leclerc, who brought his Ferrari home second and Briton Lando Norris who claimed his maiden podium for McLaren. Hamilton, hit with a late pre-race grid penalty that dropped him from second to fifth, had clashed with Red Bull's Alex Albon in the final laps, forcing him into a spin off track.

"There was definitely quite a bit of pressure on me there," said Bottas, speaking through a face mask afterwards. "One safety car was okay, but I was like 'another one? And come on?' Lewis was quick but I was able to control it."

Leclerc admitted the result was a surprise after Ferrari's dismal form in practice and qualifying. "I did not expect this—it's a huge surprise but a good one. We did everything perfectly to finish second." Norris said: "I'm speechless - there were a few points where I thought I had



Fourteen out of the 20 Formula One drivers, including multiple world champions Lewis Hamilton and Sebastian Vettel, took the knee to protest against racism ahead of the race on Sunday. AFP

fudged it. I am so proud of the team for coming back from where we were a couple of years ago."

In a race of three safety car interventions, run behind closed doors at the Red Bull Ring, Ferrari-bound Carlos Sainz finished fifth in the second McLaren ahead of Sergio Perez of Racing Point. Pierre Gasly was sixth for Alpha Tauri and Esteban Ocon eighth on his return to racing with Renault ahead of Antonio Giovinazzi and Alfa Romeo teammate Kimi Raikkonen also chose to stay on their feet.

On a very warm day in the Styrian Alps and following a late Red Bull protest that pushed Hamilton to fifth from second on the grid, Bottas was coolness personified. At lights out, he pulled clear to open a gap ahead of the Ferrari, finishing 10th.

Before the race even started, there was drama when six of the 20 drivers opted against taking a knee to protest against racism.

Hamilton wore a Black Lives

Matter t-shirt while other drivers, who all lined up with him at the front of the grid, sported black tops saying "End Racism".

Leclerc and Red Bull's Max Verstappen had confirmed a split among F1 drivers when they said they would not take a knee on the grid but that they remained committed to fighting racism. Carlos Sainz of McLaren, Daniel Ricciardo of Alpha Tauri, Antonio Giovinazzi and Alfa Romeo teammate Kimi Raikkonen also chose to stay on their feet.

On a very warm day in the Styrian Alps and following a late Red Bull protest that pushed Hamilton to fifth from second on the grid, Bottas was coolness personified. At lights out, he pulled clear to open a gap ahead of the

battling duo of Verstappen and Norris behind him.

Hamilton, fired by his penalty for ignoring yellow flags in Q3 on Saturday, was soon in a rhythm and by lap 10 was up to third, 10 seconds behind Bottas and seven off Verstappen. Within a lap, he was second when Verstappen slowed, his engine spluttering, gifting the champion a pass to pursue the leader as the 'black arrows' took control.

A full 217 days after the last race, many teams struggled for reliability and it was clearly a battle of attrition led, almost inevitably, after their practice domination, by Mercedes until lap 25 when Kevin Magnussen went off at turn three in his Haas following brake problems.

Dybala proves Covid recovery with goals

Dhiman Sarkar

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KOLKATA: Standing bare feet on the grass, arms wide, Paulo Dybala is looking skywards in the Instagram post. "My face says it all, I'm finally cured from Covid-19," is his message. The post came nearly 45 days after the Juventus forward had tested positive on March 22.

In an early April video, Dybala had spoken of "being tired very quickly" at training and being "short of breath after five minutes". After testing positive, Dybala said he developed more symptoms; a "cough", "a tired body." "When I slept, I felt very cold," he said. By late April, media reports said Dybala had tested positive four times.

Proof of how well the 26-year-old Argentine has recovered came in 12 days and four games since Serie A leaders Juventus resumed their league campaign on June 22. In all the games—against Bologna, Lecce, Genoa and Torino on Saturday—Dybala has scored.

From right-back Juan Cuadrado's assist, he got going early in the Turin derby, netting in the third minute with a neat piece of individual skill. Juventus won 4-1 with goals from Cuadrado, Cristiano Ronaldo and an own goal from Kofi Djidji, moving seven points



Juventus' Paulo Dybala, who started this celebration in 2016, said it originates from the film Gladiator. REUTERS

assists in a league campaign that could give Juventus their ninth successive title, Dybala has walked the talk. With more starts and assists than Ronaldo.

PLAYSTATION MOVE
Former teammate Paul Pogba has compared Dybala's ability to turn and shoot inside the penalty area to a PlayStation move; Diego Forlan said he is so sharp he makes a difference and Aaron Ramsey has called him an unbelievable player.

"He is very gifted—a team player—and some of the things he has done in training and some of the games this season has been quite breathtaking," Ramsey told sports website The Athlete.

With Ramsey in midfield and

Dybala's Palermo were relegated in his first season. When he plays for Argentina, he lives in the long shadow of another left-foot master—Lionel Messi. It is difficult to play alongside geniuses, Dybala had said after Argentina's implosion in the 2018 World Cup. And at Juventus, over the past two seasons, he has been sharing the locker room with Ronaldo.

"A lot of the time, you have difficult moments and you have to go out there and fight anyway: not just in football, in life," Dybala, nicknamed 'La Joya (The Jewel)' told The Guardian in January. With 11 goals and 10

Cuadrado, Dybala has forged a good understanding in Maurizio Sarri's Juventus who play a high line and focus on possession. Against Inter before football stopped in Italy, Dybala scored a goal that showcased his class and technique. With the outside of his right foot he controlled a long ball from Rodrigo Bentancur, beat left-back Ashley Young, found Ramsey, moved in to receive the return pass, beat Young again and scored with the outside of his left foot.

Trailing 0-1 away to Atalanta last November, Dybala and Cuadrado helped Gonzalo

Conflict complaint received against Kohli, says BCCI ethics officer Jain

HTC and PTI
sportsdesk@hindustantimes.com

MUMBAI: The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) said on Sunday that it has received a complaint against India skipper Virat Kohli alleging conflict of interest. "I have received a complaint. I will examine it and then see if the case is made out or not. If yes, then I have to afford an opportunity to him (Kohli) to respond," BCCI ethics officer DK Jain, told PTI.

The complainant Sanjeev Gupta, life member of the Madhya Pradesh Cricket Association, had filed similar complaints in the past against Rahul Dravid, Sourav Ganguly, VVS Laxman and Kapil Dev which were deemed "infructuous".

Gupta has submitted that Kohli and Amit Arun Saigade are directors of Virat Kohli Sports LLP and Cornerstone Venture Partners LLP and that the second firm also has Binny Bharat Khimji as director. Gupta submitted that Sajdeh and Khimji are also directors/owners of Cornerstone Sport and Entertainment Pvt Ltd, a talent management company that manages the commercial interests of Kohli and players such as KL Rahul, Ravinder Jadeja, Rishabh Pant, Umesh Yadav and Kuldeep Yadav.

The complaint claims Kohli holding more than one post violates rule 39(4) of BCCI's constitution. "Shri Virat Kohli is occupying two posts at a time in blatant violation to BCCI Rule 38 (4) approved by Supreme Court of India. As such, he must relinquish his one post at once in compliance..." Gupta wrote.

HT sought a reaction from Cornerstone, but had not received a response till going to press.

I NEEDED TO SCORE FROM A FREE-KICK TO GET SOME CONFIDENCE BACK.

CHRISTIANO RONALDO, after converting a free-kick on his 43rd attempt in two seasons

After stellar round, Atwal says still shaking off rust

HTC and PTI
sportsdesk@hindustantimes.com

DETROIT: Indian golfer Arjun Atwal said getting back his fitness was key to his improved performance at the Rocket Mortgage Classic here in Detroit.

After a solid third-round card of 6-under 66 on Saturday, that leapfrogged him to the top 20, the 47-year-old said: "I am feeling great. When I came back at the start of the year from India, I was like 205 pounds. Working on my fitness was my goal for the year. Eating well, working out, weights; no alcohol and so on. I came down to 185, which is what I was in my first season on the PGA

in 2004. I'm still trying to shake off the rust as well. I haven't walked because when I'm playing at friends but I stopped because I did not feel great. So the past two weeks before coming here I barely lifted a club. I hit well but didn't putt too well, though I holed some big ones. That put on 18 from 60 feet had so many ups and downs and twists and the speed was 14. I hit it well but was 10-12 feet short. The second putt stopped at the top of the lip. That hurt," said Atwal.

"A pity he had to finish like that with a three-putt, just like the start. That's three three-putts this week and two in a single day," he said. His three-putts came on first and 18th.

short passes

MENDIS ARRESTED OVER FATAL CRASH

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka batsman Kusal Mendis was arrested on Sunday after being allegedly involved in a fatal crash with a cyclist, who died instantly, just outside the country's capital Colombo, police said. The 25-year-old was driving an SUV at Panadura before dawn when the incident happened, police said. Mendis has been named in the 16-player squad for a two-match home Test series against England in March but the tour was cancelled because of the coronavirus pandemic. More than 3,000 people are killed annually in traffic accidents in Sri Lanka. A former spin bowler, Kaushal Lokurachchi, was given a four-year suspended jail sentence for crashing into a woman pedestrian and killing her in 2003.

PIN-point Ramos holds nerve again as Madrid beat Bilbao

MADRID: Sergio Ramos scored his 22nd consecutive penalty on Sunday as Real Madrid held on for another 1-0 win over Athletic Bilbao to inch closer to winning La Liga. Ramos' fifth goal in seven games gives Madrid a seven-point lead over Barcelona, who later play an in-form Villarreal. Anything but a victory for Barca would probably leave them too much to do with four games remaining, especially as Madrid own the superior record head-to-head.

Bayern thrash Leverkusen to win 20th German Cup title

BERLIN: Bundesliga champions Bayern Munich kept their hopes of a treble alive after beating Bayer Leverkusen 4-2 at the Olympiastadion here on Saturday to win the German Cup for the 20th time. David Alaba gave Bayern the lead with a free kick in the 16th minute after Robert Lewandowski was fouled at the edge of the box with the defender's effort sailing over the wall and beating the outstretched arm of goalkeeper Lukas Hradecky.

Arsenal half Wolves charge while Chelsea bounce back

LONDON: Arsenal put a dent in Wolverhampton Wanderers' hopes of a top-four finish as Bukayo Saka's first Premier League goal helped them to an impressive 2-0 away victory on Saturday. The 18-year-old Saka's controlled finish on the turn just before the end of a low-key first half put Arsenal ahead. Adam Traore fired over as in-form Wolves lacked the attacking potency that has put them in sight of a possible place in next season's Champions League. Alexandre Lacazette came off the bench late on to secure the points for Mikel Arteta's side with a clinical angled finish. Later, Chelsea retook their place in the top four as goals from Olivier Giroud, Willian and Ross Barkley capped a dominant display to beat Watford 3-0 and leave the Hornets still precariously placed just one point outside the relegation zone. Manchester United's 5-2 win over Bournemouth saw Chelsea slip outside the top four but the Blues bounced back.

the crosswords

CRYPTIC CLUES

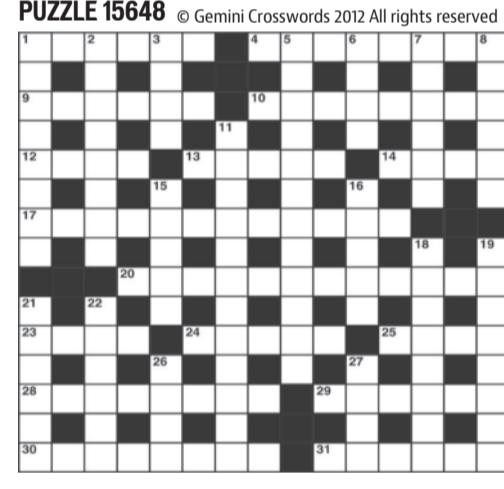
ACROSS

- 1 The way a sailor turns beds (6)
- 4 Is this what liquidates solid assets? (8)
- 9 Roman Catholics can count on it (6)
- 10 See 24 Across
- 12 It flows out of line (4)
- 13 Get on a governing body (5)
- 14 Blue due to failure to score? (4)
- 17 I get strained badly and go to pieces (12)
- 20 Shows what a discontented group does (12)
- 23 Some considered England paradise (4)
- 24 and 10 Across: Evidently not turning to crime (5,8)
- 25 Heroic story in the news again (4)
- 28 Directions on a ship for finding the coast (8)
- 29 Mother has the first murderer brought back - a deranged person (6)
- 30 An accommodating woman (8)
- 31 Puzzling variations in game perhaps (6)

DOWN

- 1 Various needs are expressed in music (8)
- 2 Not still lacking support (8)
- 3 Exhaust once (4)
- 5 Bold break in using a crowbar (12)
- 6 Some come up in a carriage (4)
- 7 Musical journals? (6)
- 8 Annoy with stinging words? (6)
- 11 Got up and blushed pink (4-8)
- 15 Line of points (5)
- 16 Tale of Troy's ruin (5)
- 18 Taking things the wrong way? (8)
- 19 Local ranch where Icas are perhaps (8)
- 21 Craft in which wives seldom excel (6)
- 22 Stay to check mother in (6)
- 26 One of the football team will keep it (4)
- 27 Sea chief (4)

PUZZLE 15648 © Gemini Crosswords 2012 All rights reserved



QUICK CLUES

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| ACROSS | 1 Capital of Poland (6) |
| 4 Occurring just once (8) | |
| 9 Unevenly performed (6) | |
| 10 Avid reader (8) | |
| 12 Strategem (4) | |
| 13 Spiteful (5) | |
| 14 An attempt (4) | |
| 17 Astound (12) | |
| 20 Stoody and well-balanced (2,2,4) | |
| 23 Owl's cry (4) | |
| 24 A stone fruit (5) | |
| 25 Rumour (4) | |
| 28 Charitable gift (8) | |
| 29 Sheen on old woodwork (6) | |
| 30 Catch unawares (8) | |
| 31 Hurt (6) | |

YESTERDAY'S SOLUTIONS (15647)

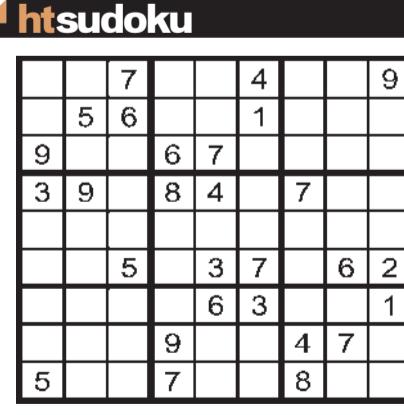
CRYPTIC



QUICK

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| DOWN | 1 Cupboard for clothes (8) |
| 2 Official list (8) | |
| 3 So be it (4) | |
| 5 Russian composer d. 1975 (12) | |
| 6 Such (4) | |
| 7 Prize of victory (6) | |
| 8 Reserve in rank (6) | |
| 11 Quarrelsome (12) | |
| 15 In agreement (2,3) | |
| 16 Without let-up (2,2) | |
| 18 Mistaken belief (8) | |
| 19 Severe snowstorm (8) | |
| 21 Greek Aegean island (6) | |
| 22 Embarrassing position (6) | |
| 26 Have leading role (4) | |
| 27 Volcanic effluent (4) | |

htsudoku



Fill in all the squares in the grid so that each row, column and each of the 9x9 squares contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

DIFFICULTY LEVEL ★★★

htweather

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
Generally cloudy sky with light rain	Generally cloudy sky with light rain	Generally cloudy sky with moderate rain
36°C 27°C	35°C 27°C	34°C 25°C
TEMPERATURE - HIGH · LOW	TEMPERATURE - HIGH · LOW	TEMPERATURE - HIGH · LOW
FOR A 6-DAY FORECAST, USE HT ACTIVE	FOR A 6-DAY FORECAST, USE HT ACTIVE	FOR A 6-DAY FORECAST, USE HT ACTIVE

ALMANAC Today is 6th July 2020
14 Ohul Qadah 1441
Paksha: Shukra
Samvat: 2077
Sunset: Monday at 0722 p.m.
Moonrise: Tuesday at 0921 p.m.
Moonset: Wednesday at 0816 a.m.

BILLING

Unlock 2.0: Lights, camera, action, challenges!

Shreya Mukherjee

With TV shoots resuming after almost 100 days since their shutdown amid the Covid-19 crisis, actors are excited, yet extra cautious about their safety on the set. A popular daily sitcom recently shot for a few episodes and its lead actors admit to having experiences like never before.

Glad to be back at work, actor Shubhangi Atre confesses that there's a constant fear of being exposed to the virus. "There are scenes where I am supposed to sit on the bed or sofa or work in the kitchen; it requires me to touch something that would have been touched by other people, too. Even though they are sanitised properly, darr toh lagta hai," she says.

The actor also opens up on why the idea of wearing face shields even while shooting the scenes had to be dropped. "Every time we would start speaking, the shields would get foggy, so

we had to remove it and shoot again. Also, wearing a mask messes up the makeup, especially the lipstick, so I had to do the touch-up myself," adds the actor, who prefers doing makeup herself.

Actor Asif Sheikh, one of the male leads of the show, shares that while he was sure about resuming work, his family was skeptical. "They wanted me to wait because I'm 55 and more vulnerable... so I am becoming more careful," he says.

Elaborating on changes made on the set, Sheikh points out that the crew has come down from 50 to just 20 people, that too in shifts.

"Those who do the lights fix them and leave. We're using three cameras to shoot. There are only four to five actors on set and we maintain distance. We only remove the mask while facing the camera.

Even during rehearsals, we keep them on," he says, adding that scenes are wrapped within 30 to 45 minutes to finish shoot early.

Outlining how scenes are



Shubhangi Atre (above) on the sets; (right) Asif Sheikh

PHOTOS: INSTAGRAM/SHUBHANGIATREOFFICIAL



being planned keeping social distancing in mind, Atre adds, "Shots where would simply hug or push my onscreen husband, we are avoiding those."

Elaborating on other challenges, Sheikh quips how it has become difficult to recognise people behind masks and PPE kits. "The set looks weird and at times, following directions becomes a challenge because you don't know who is saying what. But we're managing," he says.

■ shreya.mukherjee@htlive.com

'The One' and only Shikhar brings cheer to refugee colony

Etti Bali

A ce cricketer, doting daddy and a Good Samaritan, Shikhar Dhawan has added another feather to his hat. On Saturday morning (July 4), he visited the Hindu refugee colony near Majlis Park Metro Station in Delhi to distribute cricket kits, toilets and bedding amenities. The area houses a number of Hindu refugees from Pakistan, who are taken care of by the Delhi Riding Club Foundation (DRCF).

"I like to contribute to the society and this was a great experience. The Delhi Riding Club Foundation has been doing a lot of work there, so it was good to collaborate with them. I'm in a position where I can contribute in that direction and it gives me immense joy and peace," says the Delhi-born batsman.

The residents had no idea about Dhawan's visit, which made it all the more special. "They were quite shocked at first. They were very happy I came, I could feel their happiness. They asked me about my moustache and asked me to do the thigh fives (his signature celebratory gesture). They told me they enjoy watching my game and the (on-field) celebrations," he adds.

Dhawan believes these kits



Shikhar Dhawan paid a surprise visit to a Hindu refugee colony in Delhi

will help them take up sports and practice better. "You just have to give them direction in life. It is very important to educate them. Cricket unites the whole community. It promotes a sense of bonding. You learn how to share, and wait your turn. These little things have a huge impact in life," he concludes.

■ etti.bali@htlive.com

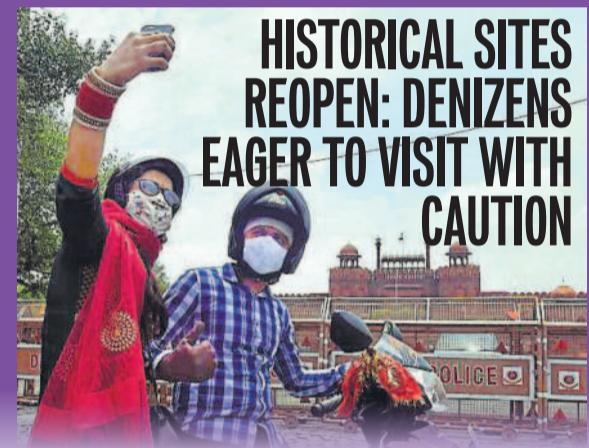
SAROJ KHAN OPENED THE DOORS OF CHOREOGRAPHY FOR FEMALES: VAIBHAVI



Saroj Khan and Vaibhavi Merchant

PHOTO: INSTAGRAM/VAIBHAVI.MERCHANT

PHOTO: SONU MEHTA/HT



HISTORICAL SITES REOPEN: DENIZENS EAGER TO VISIT WITH CAUTION

Aprajita Sharad

The government recently announced reopening of historical monuments from July 6. As per safety guidelines, Delhi's Qutab Minar and Red Fort are also expected to allow entry of 1,500 visitors during a particular slot from today. And the decision has been hailed by denizens, who look forward to visiting these sites, albeit cautiously.

"As the city is slowly being unlocked, access to heritage monuments was bound to be given at some time," opines Ramit Mitra, founder and chief explorer at DelhiByFoot. He suggests having time stamps on tickets to regulate people's time inside a monument. "If crowd isn't controlled properly, there will be an issue. At the end, everything is dependent on how successfully people practice social distancing," he adds.

Asserting that if malls can be reopened so can heritage sites, Vikramjit Singh Rooprai, founder, Heritageshaala, says, "I have plans to visit the monuments when the weather is better. In fact, this is the perfect time for photographers and people who love to research."

Commenting on plans of noting down numbers of all visitors so that they can be traced, if needed, Rooprai says, "Even though I have battled and recovered from Covid-19, I would still want to go to a monument as it's peaceful and serene to sit in a lawn!" He, however, feels that the onus of maintaining social distancing lies on visitors.

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