



After being freed, Kafeel Khan says he will stay outside U.P. for now  
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In Kenosha, Trump calls anti-racism protests 'domestic terror'  
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Nadal gets past Klarn, meets Thiem in second round of U.S. Open  
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## NEARBY



Manjhi's HAM(S) joins hands with NDA

PATNA  
In a sudden move, president of the Hindustani Awami Morcha (Secular) Jitan Ram Manjhi on Wednesday announced that his party has become a part of the BJP-led NDA. He, however, made it clear that his party would not "merge" with the JD(U).

NEWS ▶ PAGE 10

New COVID cases touch 2-month high in Delhi

NEW DELHI  
The national capital on Wednesday recorded the highest number of daily new COVID-19 cases in over two months with 2,509 cases being reported in the past 24 hours, said a health bulletin released by the Delhi government. The total number of cases stood at 1,79,569.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

Delhi HC refuses to stay streaming of Netflix film

NEW DELHI  
The Delhi High Court on Wednesday declined a petition by the Centre and the IAF to stay the streaming of Netflix film *Gunjan Saxena - The Kargil Girl*. It said it would hear directly from former Flight Lieutenant Gunjan Saxena on the allegations against the movie.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

# Question Hour dropped in LS schedule of monsoon session

In view of the pandemic, private members business also given a miss

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha Secretariat on Wednesday officially released the schedule for the monsoon Parliament session that starts on September 14, with Question Hour being dropped.

Opposition leaders, including Congress leader in the House Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, had written to Speaker Om Birla not to curtail Question Hour as it amounted to "encroaching upon a member's right" and denied them an opportunity to question the government.

In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, private members business, usually fixed for every Friday, has also been skipped.

**'Extraordinary situation'**  
Asked about protests from the Opposition on Question Hour cancellation, Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said Parliament was being held in the midst of an extraordinary situation. He said his colleague, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi, was in touch with all parties, holding talks and would update at an appropriate time.

In a statement late in the evening, Mr. Joshi said the Lok Sabha Speaker and Ra-

## New timetable

The monsoon session, which was delayed by the pandemic, will commence on September 14 and end on October 1. It will have 18 sittings, including on Saturdays and Sundays

### LOK SABHA SCHEDULE

Sept. 14: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

From Sept. 15: 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

### RAJYA SABHA

Sept. 14: 3 p.m. to 7 p.m.

From Sept. 15: 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Both Houses will be disinfected between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.

**C** The proposal to exclude Question Hour is arbitrary and undemocratic. It is members' privilege and the very life of a session  
ANAND SHARMA, Congress MP

**C** The Parliamentary Affairs Minister and the Defence Minister spoke to the parties and they all supported this move. But now suddenly they have changed their stand  
ANIL BALANI, BJP MP

jya Sabha Chairman Venkaiah Naidu were discussing the possibility of allowing unstarred questions, answers to which are given in writing and laid on the floor of the House. Mr. Joshi also said that except Trinamool Congress leader Derek O'Brien, other leaders didn't strongly object to cancelling the Question Hour.

Mr. Joshi said they had requested the presiding officers of both Houses to have Zero Hour – when an MP can raise any important issue – for at least 30 minutes.

The session will have staggered timings to accommodate members of one House in both chambers and follow strict physical distancing norms. On the first day, the Lok Sabha will have proceedings from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. From September 15 to October 1, it will sit from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. Similarly, on September 14, the Rajya Sabha will sit from 3 p.m. to 7 p.m. From the second day, it will transact business between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## Move upsets Opposition parties

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The government's decision to suspend Question Hour in the monsoon session of Parliament triggered widespread outrage among Opposition parties, which accused the government of using the pandemic as an excuse to do away with any form of accountability.

Floor leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury urged the government to revisit its decision. Question Hour was an important instrument for both the Opposition and the treasury benches, he said.

"Delayed monsoon session is one of special significance after the lockdown and phased unlocking. The proposal to exclude Question Hour is arbitrary, shocking and undemocratic. It is members' privilege and the very life of a session," tweeted Congress's deputy leader in the Rajya Sabha Anand Sharma.

'RIGHT LOST' ▶ PAGE 10

## App ban 2.0

A select list of the 118 mobile applications that were banned by the government on Wednesday:

- PUBG Mobile
- WeChat
- VPN for TikTok
- Baidu
- Alipay
- CamoCR
- AppLock
- Gallery Vault-Hide Pictures and Videos
- Cyber hunter
- Mafia City
- Gallery.HD
- Taobao
- U-Dictionary
- Cleaner-Phone Booster
- Z-Camera



of the Information Technology (Procedure and Safeguards for Blocking of Access of Information by Public) Rules 2009, and "in view of the emergent nature of threats has decided to block 118 mobile apps...[that are] engaged in activities which are prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of State and public order".

This is in addition to the ban on 59 Chinese applications, including TikTok, Shareit, Mi Video Call, Club Factory and Cam Scanner, in June last.

Floor leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury urged the government to revisit its decision. Question Hour was an important instrument for both the Opposition and the treasury benches, he said.

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'RIGHT LOST' ▶ PAGE 10

outside India. "The compilation of these data, its mining and profiling by elements hostile to national security and defence of India, which ultimately impinges upon the sovereignty and integrity of India, is a matter of very deep and immediate concern which requires emergency measures," it stated.

Additionally, the Indian Cyber Crime Coordination Centre, Ministry of Home Affairs, has sent an exhaustive recommendation for blocking these "malicious apps" and similar bipartisan concerns have been flagged by various public representatives, both outside and inside Parliament.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

# Govt. bans PUBG, WeChat Work, 116 other mobile apps

Aim is to protect safety, sovereignty of Indian cyberspace'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The government on Wednesday banned 118 applications – a majority being Chinese, including popular ones such as PUBG, WeChat Work, Baidu, CamCard, Rise of Kingdoms: Lost Crusade and AliPay, stating that these were "prejudicial to sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India, security of State and public order".

This is in addition to the ban on 59 Chinese applications, including TikTok, Shareit, Mi Video Call, Club Factory and Cam Scanner, in June last.

Floor leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury urged the government to revisit its decision. Question Hour was an important instrument for both the Opposition and the treasury benches, he said.

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'RIGHT LOST' ▶ PAGE 10

# Dave 'snubbed' at Mishra send-off

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Bar Association (SCBA) president, senior advocate Dushyant Dave, wrote to Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde expressing his "strong disappointment and condemnation" at the way in which he was "prevented" from speaking at the virtual farewell ceremony for Justice Arun Mishra on Wednesday.

A source in the Supreme Court said it was a "technical glitch" and other participants, including judges, faced connectivity issues at the time. Mr. Dave refused to accept the explanation.

He said Registry officials call to enquire if there is a connectivity issue. He had received no such calls.

Mr. Dave said he would not participate in any function organised by the court till his term as SCBA president ends in December.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

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NEHA BHOSLE (IAS RANK 15)

PRATYUSH PANDEY (IAS RANK 21)

Hello! I am Neha Bhosle, IAS rank 15. I wrote 8 FLTs of Jamnagar IAS MGP 2019. I wrote tests of each 65 papers. The questions were good. The evaluations and the feedback were good. I feel the Model Answer was very useful, and apart from the FLTs, I also referred to the Model Answers of sectional tests on some selective areas like Geography, history and Ethics.

My best wishes to the entire Jamnagar IAS community!

John, IAS rank 15, UPSC CSE 2019

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My best wishes to the entire Jamnagar IAS community!

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# India-China talks at Chushul remain inconclusive

Large number of troops deployed on both sides; Indian soldier killed in accidental mine explosion

DINAKAR PERI

NEW DELHI

The third day of Brigadier-level talks on Wednesday between India and China at Chushul to de-escalate the situation on the South Bank of Pangong Tso remained inconclusive. An Army source confirmed that a soldier from the secretive Special Frontier Force (SFF) was killed in an accidental mine explosion while patrolling in the area on August 30.

"The talks remained inconclusive and will continue on Thursday," a defence source said.

**Tension running high**  
The talks are important as tensions are still running high in the Chushul sector, with a large number of troops deployed on both sides very close to each other along the disputed boundary.

Company Leader Nyima Tenzin from the commando unit SFF, also called Vikas



An Army convoy moving on the Srinagar-Ladakh highway on Wednesday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

Battalions, was killed in a blast when he stepped on a vintage 1962 minefield during patrolling, the Army source said. One soldier was injured in the accident. The same was not a result of Chinese action or the action in

the South Bank of Pangong Tso, the source added.

There have been reports of the SFF being used in the recent action to dominate the peaks on the Indian side of the LAC (Line of Actual Control) on September 29

and 30. However, there has been no comment on this from the Army.

The Army brought in additional troops following the developments on the night of August 29 and 30 on the South Bank, triggered by

an incident on September 29.

will not be opened in one go. The hours of operation will be gradually increased. We will keep a close watch and if any correction is required, we will do it."

"Trains will not stop at stations falling in containment zones. Some

## IN BRIEF

## Man held for theft at employer's house

NEW DELHI  
A 26-year-old man, Mantu Yadav, has been arrested for allegedly stealing jewellery from his 80-year-old employer Kamal Kumar's house in south Delhi's G.K., the police said on Wednesday. During investigation, it was revealed that Mantu was hired recently and he did not share his personal details. The complainant, who urgently needed a help, hired him pending police verification.

Air Quality of Delhi-NCR			
Delhi	66	Gurugram	89
Ghaziabad	55	Faridabad	78
Noida	000	Greater Noida	76
■ Good 0-50	■ Satisfactory 51-100	■ Moderate 101-200	
■ Poor 201-300	■ Very Poor 301-400	■ Severe >400	
Air Quality Index at 4 p.m. yesterday (Average of past 24 hours)   Source: CPCB			

## 60-year-old paralysed man run over by train

## STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI  
A 60-year-old man died after he was run over by a train at Sewa Nagar railway station on Wednesday, the police said, adding that he was paralysed.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Railways) Harendra Singh confirmed the incident and said that the deceased has been identified as Bhaiya Lal.

A senior police officer said that Hazrat Nizamuddin railway station received an information regarding a body at Sewa Nagar station. When the police reached the spot, they found Lal's body on the tracks. "Enquiry revealed that he was partially paralysed and used to go for morning walks every day near the tracks," the officer said.

The police said that he is survived by his wife, two sons and a daughter and the family has not suspected any foul play so far. "The body has been sent to Sabzi Mandi mortuary for post-mortem," the officer said, adding that inquest proceedings have been initiated.

## INTERVIEW | MANISH SISODIA

## 'Have to learn to live carefully rather than close everything'

Deputy CM attacks Centre for not paying GST dues, says Delhi's financial situation is very bad but schemes for free power and water will continue

NIKHIL M BABU  
NEW DELHI

*At a time when new COVID-19 cases in the city are increasing, Delhi Deputy Chief Minister and Finance Minister Manish Sisodia told The Hindu that more people will die of depression than the virus if the economy is not opened up. He also talked about the financial implications of the pandemic, Centre's GST dues to States, and continuation of welfare schemes.*

**The Delhi government is opening more sectors despite an increase in COVID-19 cases in the city. Don't you think this is dangerous for the people?**

- We have to learn to live carefully, rather than closing everything. If we close everything, then more people will die sitting at home than people who will die from corona. More people will die because of depression. We have to see the practical aspects and not theoretical. Theoretical is that there is a pandemic, so sit at home. Practical is that, if people sit at home for two-three months, people
- Now the metro is closed. Let us see after it opens.
- Excise is a good revenue source for the Delhi government. When will you allow bars to reopen?
- Currently, there is no restriction by the Centre for bar counters. For Delhi, we will have to decide how much we need to open up.

**Will the government go forward with its plan for free metro rides for women?**

- Since GST, there has been no growth in the economy. GST implementation has not happened properly, it is bad. ITC matching has not been sorted, HSN code is very far in the future. All these things were promised, but all these measures have not been done. The problem with VAT was that for something being produced in Rajasthan and being sold in Nagaland, the ITC returns would take years, there was no ITC matching. Rajasthan would be working in one software, Nagaland in another. GST was brought to fix these problems, but the

**What is the financial situation of Delhi?**

- The situation is very bad in Delhi. Tax revenue collection

is down by 57% compared to estimated collection. How can you pay the salaries with this income? We have to pay salaries to teachers, doctors, and other staff. We have never seen a situation like this. At this point, forget about future plans, we do not have enough money to spend for most essential expenses. But no major government scheme has been affected till now.

**What is the impact of GST on the current financial situation?**

- Since GST, there has been no growth in the economy. GST implementation has not happened properly, it is bad. ITC matching has not been sorted, HSN code is very far in the future. All these things were promised, but all these measures have not been done. The problem with VAT was that for something being produced in Rajasthan and being sold in Nagaland, the ITC returns would take years, there was no ITC matching. Rajasthan would be working in one software, Nagaland in another. GST was brought to fix these problems, but the
- They [Central government] are saying that the State governments should take loan. The Centre not compensating the States is illegal, unconstitutional and impractical. In the 10th GST Council meeting, the Secretary of the Finance Ministry said that the Centre could raise resources



Manish Sisodia, Delhi's Finance Minister, blamed the Centre for faulty implementation of the GST. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

whole GST system has been running for the past three years in ad hoc measures. The Centre has failed in implementing the GST system.

**What is happening with GST compensation to States?**

- They [Central government] are saying that the State governments should take loan. The Centre not compensating the States is illegal, unconstitutional and impractical. In the 10th GST Council meeting, the Secretary of the Finance Ministry said that the Centre could raise resources

**What will you do if the Central government does not accept the demands?**

■ I hope that all States will make sure that these unconstitutional proposals by the Centre are rejected. The Centre should borrow from the market and give it to the public account fund, which can then be transferred to the States.

money by fixing the issues.

**How are you planning to boost tax revenue collection?**

■ Fixing loopholes is the main way. We cannot raise taxes when the economy is at -23%. It would be a stupid idea to increase tax.

**During lockdown, financial assistance was given to vulnerable groups such as drivers and construction workers. Will such schemes continue?**

■ Right now I do not have money to pay salaries. But we are opening up markets by being careful of health concerns.

**Do you think VAT was better than GST?**

■ VAT system had a lot of problems due to inter-State trade. Goods and services tax is a better idea. But you have to make systems to implement it. The Central government did not make these systems and are now blaming "act of god" [the pandemic] for it.

## DDA holds MPD-2041 meet with stakeholders

Part of its public engagement strategy

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

At an online meeting held on Wednesday, around 120 people, including members of several resident welfare associations, interacted with officials of the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) over the preparation of the Master Plan for Delhi 2041.

Lack of access to basic facilities, congested roads and legality of properties were some of the issues put forth by the participants, officials said.

"Participants were requested to share their suggestions towards the registration process as well as give ideas toward area improvement and redevelopment in unauthorised colonies. The concerns highlighted were mainly about lack of access to basic services of water and sanitation and other facilities in their locality," DDA officials said.

The urban body added, "Other issues raised included legality of their properties, narrow access roads, congestion, conflicts between commercial and residential uses, quality of drinking water, waterlogging and so on. A common concern expressed by most participants was regarding vulnerability and risks related to disasters, such as fire, earthquake and so on."

As part of a public engagement strategy, the DDA had organised the online meeting to interact with stakeholders.

HC refuses to stay streaming of *Gunjan Saxena* movie

Court seeks ex-pilot's reply on allegations of distorted facts

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday declined a petition by the Centre and the Indian Air Force (IAF) to stay the streaming of Netflix movie *Gunjan Saxena - The Kargil Girl*. It, however, said it would hear directly from former Flight Lieutenant Gunjan Saxena on the allegations that the movie depicted the force in a bad light.

Justice Rajiv Shakdher made Ms. Saxena, based on whose life the movie is made, a party in the suit filed by the government and sought response from her on the issue. The court also sought the response of movie producer Dharma Productions Private Limited, director Karan Johar and Netflix. The court asked the government as to why it did not approach it before the release of the movie on the Over The Top (OTT) platform. It said a stay could not be granted now as the film was already streaming.

Additional Solicitor General Sanjay Jain said the movie was never shown to the preview panel, set up in accordance with the Ministry



of Defence's 2013 guidelines.

The Ministry of Defence and the IAF, in the suit filed through Central government standing counsel Gaurang Kanth, stated that the IAF "has always provided equal opportunities to the meritorious officers irrespective of their gender, caste, region, religion, etc."

## 'Image tarnished'

The Ministry stated that a historical film made on the IAF, based on the life story of a war hero, had to be based on true incidents or instances as the audience watching such a biopic film assumed so. "Such a movie cannot be fictionalised or dramatised to such an extent as in the present movie, wherein an entirely different perspective is created based on false

and misleading facts/events that leave an adverse impression in the minds of the viewers, thereby tarnishing the image of the true characters and the organisation," the Ministry argued.

"The facts have been completely distorted to give an impression to the public at large that the Indian Air Force practises gender bias and discrimination," it said.

The suit stated that the producers of the movie went ahead with its release on Netflix without obtaining a no objection certificate from the IAF.

Senior Advocate Harish Salve, representing Dharma Productions, said the movie was only 'inspired' from the life of Ms. Saxena. Mr. Salve, who claimed to have seen the movie, said the Air Force came out in glory. "There is no organisation which does not have gender issue. Anything said in criticism is not slander," he added.

Netflix's counsel argued that the script was shared with the IAF and that the movie was shown to the IAF in February 2020. The High Court will hear the case again on September 18.

## Indian Air Force has 110 female pilots

Our work culture is gender-neutral: IAF

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH  
NEW DELHI

Rebutting its depiction in Netflix movie *Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl*, the Indian Air Force (IAF) on Wednesday said it has 1,625 female officers (excluding medical and dental branches), out of which nine are fighter jet pilots, 50 helicopter pilots, and 51 transport pilots.

The IAF added that it has always encouraged and ensured a work culture which is gender-neutral.

In its plea before the High Court, the IAF highlighted many female officers who became part of important historical events by actively participating in combat and supporting roles.

In August 1966, Flight Lieutenant Kanta Handa, an IAF medical officer, became the first female IAF officer to receive a commendation for her service during the 1965 Indo-Pakistan war.

Flight Lieutenant Gunjan Saxena and Flight Lieutenant Sreevidya Rajan were among the first women to fly in a combat zone during Kargil War in 2012.

In 2015, the IAF opened new combat air force roles

for women as fighter pilots, adding to their role as helicopter pilots in the IAF.

"This establishes that the IAF is committed to provide a healthy work atmosphere to all its female members and has always been encouraging its officials and promoting them to serve the nation purely based on their merit, despite of their gender," the IAF said.

## 'Kept in the dark'

The IAF said that the filmmakers had approached it on the pretext that the film was based on the actual life of an IAF officer. However, the film-makers kept the IAF "in the dark about the real intent of the movie", which was to show the IAF "in negative light based on misleading, manipulative facts".

The IAF also stated that the film-makers "avoided entering into a formal agreement i.e. a Memorandum of Understanding with it. This, the IAF said was not only a pre-requisite under the 2013 guidelines but the 'in-principle' approval accorded to the film-makers was at all times subject to the execution of the said MoU."

Flight Lieutenant Gunjan Saxena and Flight Lieutenant Sreevidya Rajan were among the first women to fly in a combat zone during Kargil War in 2012.

In 2015, the IAF opened new combat air force roles

## AUD launches application process for PG admissions

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI  
Ambedkar University Delhi (AUD) on Wednesday launched the application process for admission to postgraduate programmes for academic session 2020-21.

The last date for registration of the varsity said will be September 30.

"All eligible applicants are informed that the registration process for the postgraduate programmes will be completely online for all categories. The details of registration process and subsequent procedures are provided in the 'Bulletin of Information', which is available online and can be downloaded," the university said.

The university offers 20 postgraduate programmes that offer 879 seats in total. Of these, 15 programmes are in Kashmere Gate Campus, three in Karampura Campus and two in Lodhi Road campus.

## SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that one girl namely **Karishma Gupta** D/o Lt Sh. Shankar Lal Gupta, R/o C-80, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Back Side, Pandav Nagar Complex, Delhi, has been missing since 13.08.2020. In this regard, a case vide DD No. 17-A, dt.14.08.2020 has been registered at P.S. Mandawali, Delhi. The description of the missing girl is as under.



**Age:** 23 Years, **Complexion:** Fair, **Height:** 5'2", **Built:** Thin, **Wearing:** Blue & Green colour check suit with blue colour jeans pant and sleeper in feet. Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out her but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone has any information about the missing lady then please inform P.S. Mandawali, Delhi at following Tel No. / e-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in and Website: http://cbi.nic.in

Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641  
Fax No. 011-24368639

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**ARUNACHAL PRADESH  
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ELECTORAL OFFICER  
ITANAGAR  
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Dated,Itanagar the 26<sup>th</sup>August,2020  
Sealed quotation / tenders are hereby invited for sale of the following condemned vehicles lying in the office premises of the CEO, Itanagar.

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1.	AR-01C/5444(Indigo Marina LMV)	Rs. 63,119/-
2.	AR-01C/2444(Scorpio LMV)	Rs. 189,318/-
3.	AR-01C/9444(Scorpio LMV)	Rs. 173,658/-
4.	AR-01E/7044(Scorpio LMV)	Rs. 247,662/-

The sale is on As is where basis and interested purchaser can inspect the vehicle at any time during the office working hours by obtaining permission from the undersigned.

Every quotations should clearly state that the amount offered in figure and words along with the demand draft of Rs. 5000/- (Rupees five thousand only) the name of Chief Electoral Officer, Arunachal Pradesh, Itanagar as earnest money. The cover of the quotation / tender should duly marked as "AUCTION FOR VEHICLE NO.\_\_\_\_\_". The quotation will be opened on 25<sup>th</sup> September, 2020 at 1000 hrs. Where interested tenderers may be present at CEO's Office, Itanagar.

The earnest money will be retained till finalization of the deal. The successful tenderers shall have to pay the entire amount within 10 (Ten) days from the date of acceptance. In case he / she fails to pay the amount and take delivery of the vehicle within the above stipulated period of time his / her earnest money will be forfeited and the vehicle may be disposed off in any

Timings

DELHI

THURSDAY, SEP. 03
RISE 06:01 SET 18:40
RISE 19:39 SET 06:44
FRIDAY, SEP. 04
RISE 06:01 SET 18:39
RISE 20:08 SET 07:38
SATURDAY, SEP. 05
RISE 06:02 SET 18:38
RISE 20:38 SET 08:29

**Delhi Weather** max min  
Delhi City 35 25  
Safdarjang 35 25  
Palam 34 26

**Delhi Palam Today**  
33°C Light to moderate rain and thundershower with cloudy sky likely. Comfortable morning.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
33°C One or two spell of light rain likely at some places with cloudy sky and light to moderate winds.

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**IN BRIEF**



**IIT-Delhi opens School of Artificial Intelligence**

**NEW DELHI**  
IIT-Delhi on Wednesday said that it has established School of Artificial Intelligence (ScAI) on its campus. ScAI will begin PhD programme from the next admission cycle, January 2021, and PG-level degree courses to be offered by the school are being planned. IIT-Delhi director V. Ramgopal Rao said "We are lagging behind when it comes to the number of AI researchers in India and the overall quality and quantity of AI research. To fill this gap, IIT-Delhi has established ScAI."

**Five held for robbing driver of car, belongings**

**NEW DELHI**  
Three youth and two minors have been held for allegedly robbing an OLA driver of his car and belongings in outer Delhi's Nangloi, the police said on Wednesday. DCP (Outer) A. Koan said that the youth have been identified as Pankaj (19), Sagar (20) and Abhijeet (19), all residents of Nangloi. The police said that on August 31, the driver reported the incident. "The customers allegedly thrashed him, robbed him of his mobile phones, wallet and threw him out of the car," Mr. Koan said.

**Extend metro to Jaitpur Extension, says BJP**

**NEW DELHI**  
Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri has demanded that the Delhi Metro be extended to Jaitpur Extension in the fourth phase. He called on CM Arvind Kejriwal and handed over a letter stating that a proposal sent by the people of the Badarpur Assembly constituency was pending before the Centre as well as Delhi government seeking extension of the metro from Badarpur metro station to Jaitpur Extension.

**Police quiz Umar Khalid over Delhi riots**

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
**NEW DELHI**  
The Delhi Police Crime Branch on Wednesday questioned former Jawaharlal Nehru University student leader Umar Khalid in connection with the north-east Delhi riots, a senior officer said.

He was questioned for a couple of hours at the Sunlight Colony police station, the officer said.

Earlier, Mr. Khalid was booked under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) in another case related to the riots. He was also questioned by the Special Cell of the Delhi Police earlier in connection with an alleged conspiracy behind the riots.

His mobile phone was also seized by the police.

Communal clashes had broken out in north-east Delhi on February 24 leaving at least 53 people dead and around 200 injured.

# New cases touch 2-month high

Govt. to train more personnel to collect samples to double daily COVID-19 tests

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Capital on Wednesday recorded the highest number of daily new COVID-19 cases in over two months with 2,509 cases being reported in the past 24 hours, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government. The total number of cases stood at 1,79,569.

The last time a higher number of cases were reported was on July 3, when 2,520 cases were reported.

**Highest number of tests**

Delhi also conducted the highest number of COVID-19 tests in 24 hours, 28,835, since the virus outbreak in the city, according to Wednesday's bulletin.

The Delhi government is planning to train more personnel, including assistants at mohalla clinics, to collect samples for COVID-19 testing



Health workers take blood samples for a serological survey, in north Delhi's Adarsh Nagar on Wednesday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

to double daily tests from 20,000 to 40,000, officials

4,481, as per the bulletin. Of the total cases, 1,58,586 people have recovered and there are 16,502 active cases.

"The government is also working on tweaking the testing strategy, following court orders, and a new order is likely to be issued on it later this week," a Delhi government official said.

Wednesday also witnessed an increase in multi-

ple other parameters – number of active cases, positive people under home isolation, and people admitted at hospitals.

**High active cases**

The number of active cases in the city on Wednesday was the highest in about 45 days, as per the bulletin. The active cases, which were 27,007 on July 1, had fallen to 9,897, below the 10,000 mark in months, on August 4, but since then it has remained above that mark.

The number of positive people under home isolation was 8,407 on Wednesday and is the highest in over 40 days. People in hospitals, 4,278, are also the highest in over 45 days.

The number of containment zones in the city has jumped to 894, which has been increasing for about 15 days.

# L-G for revamp of testing plan

He tells officials to ensure testing facilities at ISBTs, stations

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal on Wednesday issued directions to ensure testing facilities at transit points as well as construction sites in the Capital to combat COVID-19.

According to sources, the L-G also asked the officials concerned to prepare a standard operating procedure for a phone-based home COVID-19 testing programme for citizens.

Mr. Baijal issued the directions at a meeting with Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to discuss COVID-19 pandemic situation in Delhi, specifically regarding the testing strategy as well as to decide prohibited and permitted activities during Unlock 4.

In addition to Mr. Kejriwal, Deputy CM Manish Sisodia, Health Minister Satyendar Jain, the Chief



L-G Anil Baijal reviewing the COVID-19 situation with Arvind Kejriwal. ■ PTI

Secretary, V.K. Paul, NITI Aayog member, Randeep Guleria, director AIIMS, DG ICMR and other experts and senior officers were also present at the meeting.

**Testing at home**

According to sources, Mr. Baijal observed there was a need to re-strategise the current testing plan to maximise these to prevent the spread of COVID-19 of which the initiative to provide testing facilities at

home was a significant component.

A helpline would be started for booking appointments for such tests; these would first be limited to senior citizens before being made available for women and children.

The L-G, sources said, also directed the officials concerned to ensure testing facilities at all the interstate bus terminals, railway stations and larger construction sites in Delhi.

Mr. Baijal also directed that extensive publicity activities, strict compliance of social distancing and other protective and preventive measures be taken and it be ensured that there is adherence to all guidelines issued by the Centre to prevent the transmission of the virus since the city cannot afford to let its guard down till the situation normalises.

## Ensure automatic licence renewal of nursing homes' CM directs Health Dept. to pass order

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday directed the Health Department to immediately pass an order by which the licences of all nursing homes will automatically be renewed till March 31, 2021.

The nursing home owners of Delhi along with senior members of the Delhi Medical Council (DMC) and the Delhi Medical Association (DMA) on Wednesday met Mr. Kejriwal and flagged the renewal of licences as a very significant issue.

In the meeting, where Health Minister Satyendar Jain was also present, the owners of the nursing homes said that every year



Satyendar Jain

there is a need to renew the licence to run these nursing homes.

This year, due to the pandemic some of the nursing homes could not renew their licence after March which is creating issues in the operations of these nursing homes, they submitted following which the decision was taken.

## AIIMS suspends OPD admissions for

## 2 weeks owing to surge in virus cases

Routine OPD services for patients to continue: hospital

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

With Delhi registering a spike in COVID cases over the past few days All India Institute of Medical Sciences has on Wednesday suspended routine OPD admissions in general and private wards for two weeks.

A one-page notice issued by the hospital administration said that routine OPD services to enable patients seeking medical advice and counselling, which were recently resumed will continue.

**Situation review**

"In view of the need to optimise usage of available in-patient beds for hospitalisation of seriously ill emergency/se-

mi-emergency patients, it has been decided to temporarily stop routine OPD admissions to general wards as well as private wards in AIIMS hospital and all centres with immediate effect for a period of two weeks, which will be reviewed after that," stated a circular issued by the administration.

Emergency patients, who require in-patient hospitalisation in general wards or such patients who are advised private wards hospitalisation owing to emergency and semi-emergency conditions will continue to be admitted. "Notwithstanding the above, EHS [employees health scheme] patients will continue to be hospitalised as clinically warranted," the circular stated.

"The decision has been taken in view of increased admissions of non-COVID-19 serious patients through emergency, particularly trauma emergency as the Trauma Centre has been converted into a dedicated COVID-19 facility," a senior AIIMS official said.

## AAP govt. lied about increasing testing: Cong.

'CM has done nothing to achieve target'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Congress on Wednesday said that despite Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal saying a week ago that testing for COVID-19 will be doubled in the Capital from 20,000 to 40,000 tests a day, no steps have been taken to achieve this target.

"The Chief Minister lied to the people on August 27 when he announced that the Delhi government will double the COVID-19 testing from the present 20,000 to 40,000 per day, but he has not done anything to achieve this target, though a week has elapsed," Delhi Congress chief Anil Kumar said.

He said the people are

still in the dark about the intensity of the COVID-19 infection in the Capital, as testing has not gone beyond an average of 20,000 cases per day.

**Surge in cases**

Mr. Kumar said that with the total count going up to 1,77,060, the Capital is once again in the grip of a COVID-19 scare, but sadly the government has not put any proper mechanism in place to assess spread of the virus in Delhi.

The leader added that the Delhi Congress has also been insisting that the more reliable RT-PCR tests should be conducted, instead of the unreliable rapid antigen tests.

## 25% of Gurugram police on COVID duty

207 personnel have tested positive since outbreak, 182 of them have recovered



Over 1,068 FIRs have been registered for violations under different laws.

strength of 8,217, the Gurugram police have a strength of 5,993 personnel, including Home Guards and the Indian Reserve Battalion personnel. The deployment of police personnel for COVID-19 duties has come down from over 2,000 to 1,500.

"However, dedicated deployment for only COVID-19-related duties would be around 1,000-1,200, including 22 police personnel deployed at airport for Vande Bharat mission flights," said Ms. Gahlaut. For the virus-infected police personnel, separate arrangement has been made for isolation at Police Lines in Manesar.

**Challan amounts**  
Initiating penal action against those violating lockdown norms, the Gurugram police have so far issued

challans to 31,359 people for not wearing masks.

"The money generated from the challans has been given to the Health Department. We are also in the process of distributing 50,000 masks to those who cannot afford them," said Ms. Gahlaut.

Besides, 1,068 FIRs have been registered for violations under different laws. Of these, 506 cases have been registered under the IPC for disobedience to an order duly promulgated by a public servant and an act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life.

Similarly, 560 were registered under the Disaster Management Act and two under the Information Technology Act. The police have arrested 1,550 people for various violations and seized 429 vehicles.

A senior police officer confirmed that an ACP-rank officer was also tested positive. After the ACP complained of fever and cough, he got himself tested and was found COVID-19 positive. He has been recommended home isolation.

The officer added that 15 people of the three police families have been tested positive. As per the procedure, the Chanakyapuri police co-

## Three police families test positive for deadly virus

Chanakyapuri police staff quarters sealed

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Three police families, including police personnel, have tested COVID-19 positive in Chanakyapuri police staff quarters on Wednesday, days after the Police Commissioner S.N. Srivastava issued strict instructions to all officers over prevention from the virus.

A senior police officer confirmed that an ACP-rank officer was also tested positive. After the ACP complained of fever and cough, he got himself tested and was found COVID-19 positive. He has been recommended home isolation.

The officer added that 15 people of the three police families have been tested positive. As per the procedure, the Chanakyapuri police co-



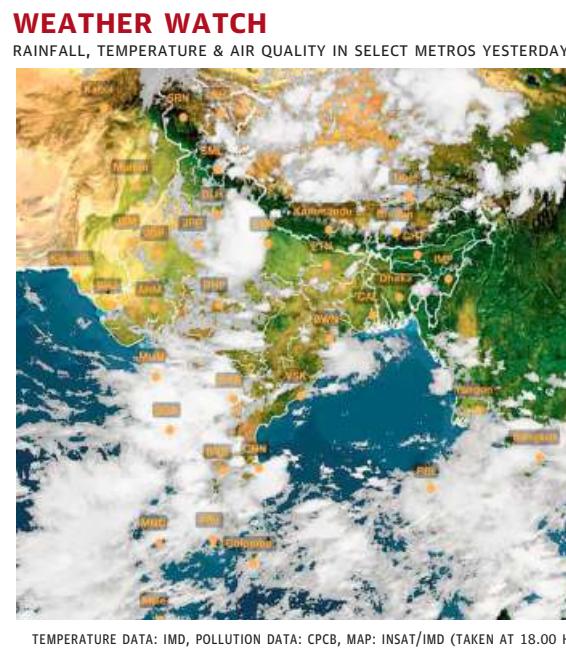
Delhi Police officers on duty in the city. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

lonly has been sealed and regular sanitisation has been ordered along with other safety measures.

**Police chief order**

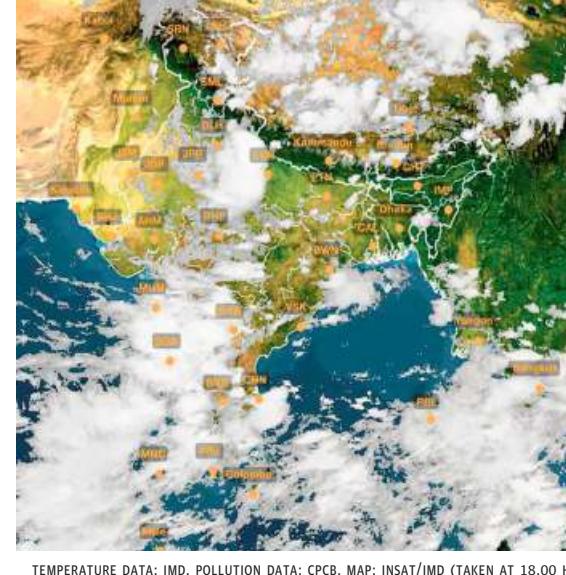
On August 24, in a videoconferencing, Mr. Srivastava had instructed all personnel to revisit the circular and implement it for their safety.





**WEATHER WATCH**

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

**Forecast for Thursday:** Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Jammu & Kashmir, Ladakh, Gilgit-Baltistan, Muzaffarabad, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Delhi, Madhya Pradesh, Rayalseema, south & north interior Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, Kerala and Lakshadweep

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	21.8	34.8	25.8	Kozhikode	2...	31.0...	25.2
Ahmedabad	5	32.9	24.6	Kurnool	3.6	32.1...	25.0
Aizawl	-	27.1	20.2	Lucknow	-	32.0...	25.0
Allahabad	-	30.6	25.3	Madurai	24.1	29.0	22.5
Bangalore	2.1	27.0	20.6	Mangaluru	4.6	30.6	24.0
Bhopal	-	33.6	21.0	Mumbai	10.5	32.0	24.8
Bhubaneswar	1.6	32.0	24.8	Mysuru	22	29.9	21.6
Chandigarh	-	34.9	27.4	New Delhi	-	35.0...	25.3
Chennai	-	33.5	26.7	Patna	22	30.3...	25.4
Coimbatore	13	30.8	22.4	Port Blair	-	30.6...	25.4
Dehradoon	-	33.7	25.1	Puducherry	4.6	32.9	25.6
Gangtok	35.5	19.9	18.9	Pune	0.2	32.2...	20.4
Goa	-	32.0	24.5	Raipur	1	33.6...	24.6
Guwahati	-	35.8	26.0	Ranchi	-	30.8...	22.0
Hubballi	-	29.0	22.0	Shillong	7.2	27.2...	18.0
Hyderabad	-	32.8	24.7	Shimla	0.3	25.5...	19.5
Imphal	0.4	31.6	21.2	Srinagar	-	30.6...	17.2
Jaipur	-	31.6	25.0	Thiruvananthapuram	-	31.7...	25.5
Kochi	0.2	30.2	25.2	Tiruchi	51.3	30.3...	23.0
Kohima	-	28.1	19.2	Vijayawada	-	33.8...	26.6
Kolkata	6.2	32.1	24.6	Visakhapatnam	5	32.1...	26.2

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

**Pollutants in the air you are breathing**

**CITIES** SO<sub>2</sub> NO<sub>x</sub> CO PM2.5 PM10 CODE

Ahmedabad	11	.35	31	.46	55	■
Bangalore	4	.8	42	.190	-	■
Chennai	8	.13	26	.128	-	■
Delhi	12	.6	15	.46	115	■
Hyderabad	.8	51	18	.62	102	■
Kolkata	.8	23	15	.53	62	■
Lucknow	.5	.6	45	.128	.109	■
Mumbai	20	.2	74	.23	.54	■
Pune	39	.16	64	.37	.38	■
Visakhapatnam	11	.30	20	.46	.63	■

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

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

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

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

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Agra, Uttar Pradesh recorded an average quality index (AQI) score of 123 indicating a moderate level of pollution. In contrast, Shillong, Meghalaya recorded a healthy AQI score of 13

# At 17,433, Maharashtra records highest surge

Total COVID-19 tally crosses 8.25 lakh; recovery rate at 72.48%

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE  
PUNE

In its highest single-day spike till date, Maharashtra reported 17,433 new COVID-19 cases on Wednesday, taking its total case tally to 8,25,739. As many as 292 more patients succumbed, pushing the death toll to 25,195.

The number of active cases in the State has crossed the two lakh mark to reach 2,01,703. As many as 13,959 patients were discharged on Wednesday to take the total recoveries till date to 5,98,496.

Of the 292 deaths recorded, 201 fatalities are from the last 48 hours while 55 deaths have occurred last week. The remaining 36 deaths have occurred in the period prior to last week, State Health Department officials said.

"Of a total 42,84,000 laboratory samples tested thus far, 8,25,739 (19.27%) have returned positive with over 73,000 samples across the State being tested in the last 24 hours. The State's recovery rate stands at 72.48%," State Surveillance Officer Dr. Pradeep Awate said, adding that the State's case fatality rate had marginally reduced to 3.05%.

Pune reported more than 3,500 cases to take its total cases to 1,82,212. The district reported 39 deaths to push its mortality toll to 4,160. As per the Pune district administration, the number of active cases in the district was below the 35,000 mark.

Mumbai reported 1,622 cases to take its total case tally to 1,48,569 of whom 20,810 are active. As many as 34 fatalities saw the city's death toll rise to 7,727.

Nagpur district in Vidarbha reported a record-high spike of 1,500 new cases along with 38 deaths. The district's total case tally has now reached 31,033 of whom 13,256 are active while the death toll has



A health worker speaks to a resident while using a pulse oximeter on her during COVID-19 screening in Mumbai. ■ FILE PHOTO

climbed to 790.

The upsurge of fresh cases continued in the three 'sugar belt' districts in western Maharashtra: Kolhapur reported 603 new cases, taking its total tally to 23,359 of whom 6,150 are active while 20 more deaths saw the district's fatality toll reach 682.

Sangli reported 753 cases taking the district's total case tally to 15,195 of whom 6,730 are active. As many as 15 fatalities saw the district's death toll climb to 460.

Satara district reported a spike of 683 cases to push its total case tally to 15,426 of whom 6,042 are active. Six more deaths took its mortality toll to 363.

## State extends bed reservation in private hospitals by three months

ALOK DESHPANDE  
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra government on Wednesday decided to give three months extension to the decision of reserving 80% beds in all private and trust-run hospitals in the State for COVID-19 and other patients, State Health Minister Rajesh Tope said.

The revised notification has included rates of oxygen cylinders as well to ensure no separate charge for the same is applied to patients. Hospitals cannot charge more than ₹600 for PPE kits used in general ward and ₹1,200 for that being used

ICUs or areas with ventilator. "Hospitals will have to submit an explanation for charging more money than the prescribed rates," Mr. Tope said.

While the notification specifies that any bill from the hospital will be approved by an appointed treasury officer, patients can submit their complaints to complaints.healthcharges@jeevandayee.gov.in.

Mr. Tope said the compulsion of keeping 80% beds reserved under the Disaster Management Act, Epidemic Control Act, Bombay Charitable Trust and Bombay Nurs-

ing Home Act will control the medical expenses and ensure beds to COVID-19 patients.

As per the notification, the district collector is authorised to reserve beds in areas other than the municipal corporations, while in those areas the municipal commissioner will be the authority.

At the State level, the chief executive officer of the State Health Assurance Society will be the authority. These officers have also been given the responsibility of handling the complaints against hospitals with inflated bills.

## HC grants Parsis permission to offer prayers at Doongerwadi

SONAM SAIGAL  
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Monday allowed Parsis to offer prayers for their departed ones at Doongerwadi, Tower of Silence on September 3 from 7 a.m. to 4.30 p.m., after being assured that all protocols related to COVID-19 will be followed.

A Division Bench of Justices R.D. Dhanuka and Madhav Jamdar was hearing petition filed by Viral Mehta, a Trustee of Bombay Parsi Panchayat, seeking direction from court to permit opening of Fire Temple, Doongerwadi, and other places of

worship and permit Parsis to visit the places of worship. The pleas wanted Doongerwadi temple to be open during annual prayer day and permit followers of the religion to perform rituals at the temple and issue guidelines in respect.

The plea stated, "As per the Shehenshahi Calendar, Shehenshahi 10 Muktad Days started on Sunday, August 7, from Ashtad Roj to Aneran Roj, Asfandarmad Mahino followed by 5 Gatha Days — Ahunavad, Ushtavad, Spentomad, Vohukhshathra and Vahishtoish, from 12th to 16th August."

## Woman held for trying to sell 'virgin' daughter

RAINA ASSAINAR  
NAVI MUMBAI

suggestion and objections," State's Environment Minister Aaditya Thackeray said. Once the notification is issued, all suggestions and objections will be called in next 45 days.

He said around 600 acres of open land will be declared as forest, ensuring all rights of tribal communities which reside within it, stand protected. "Rehabilitation of slums within the area would be expedited. This will be Phase 1, for which Forest Department will move a proposal," Mr. Garad said.

Phase 2 survey for additional open/forest land in Aarey will begin after this. "This would help the State protect the flora and fauna existent in SGNP and Aarey," Mr. Aaditya said.

On August 31, a meeting was fixed at Kohinoor Hotel in Shirawane, Nerul, where the lady was to bring her 18-year-old daughter. "We sus-

pect that probably the woman was herself into flesh trade. Her husband is paralysed and she claims to be a housewife. We are also investigating if they are the real parents of the girl who was being sold," Mr. Garad said.

The woman was arrested under Section 370 of the Indian Penal Code and sections of the Immoral Trafficking (Prevention) Act.

She was claiming that her daughter was a virgin and had been bargaining with people for the best rate. We arranged a fake customer and cracked the deal for ₹1.2 lakh," Mr. Garad said.

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## Rajasthan increases beds with oxygen facility

MOHAMMED IQBAL  
JAIPUR

Following a continuous surge in the COVID-19 cases, four times more beds in the Rajasthan University of Health Sciences (RUHS) Hospital here are being equipped with high-flow oxygen for facilitating prompt treatment of serious patients. The State has at present recorded over 14,500 active cases.

Medical & Health Minister Raghu Sharma said on Wednesday that a new care centre with 100 beds would also be set up at the RUHS Hospital for COVID-19 patients. A similar facility with 25 beds equipped with oxygen and 75 infection care beds is being developed at the private sector National Institute of Medical Sciences here.

With the top priority given to saving the lives of patients, the process for recruitment of community health officers (CHOs) has been initiated once again in the State to overcome the shortage of manpower during the pandemic. Mr. Sharma said a total of 6,310 CHOJs would be appointed.

Mr. Gehlot also reviewed the position of COVID-19 infection through videoconferencing here on Wednesday and gave instructions for strengthening the resources and ensuring the availability of medicines, testing facility and plasma therapy to the patients in all districts. Mr. Gehlot laid emphasis on encouraging the patients to donate plasma after their recovery.

Principal Secretary (Medical & Health) Akhil Arora has issued a circular laying down the guidelines for containing the spread of the infection in the villages and small towns. Separate out-patient departments are being created for the probable COVID-19 patients at the block-level community health centres with the facilities of testing, referral transport and oxygen supply.

At the State level, the chief executive



## Grim Sovereign Tangle

GST reforms should not fall victim to the trust deficit from the compensation stand-off

Three years after India's new indirect tax regime was introduced with a slogan of 'One Nation, One Tax', it faces an existential crisis. Despite its patchy structure with too many rates, complex compliance requirements and multiple mid-course changes, the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST), overseen together by the Centre and the States, had begun to almost serve as an exemplar of co-operative federalism. All of those gains have quickly unravelled as the slowdown in the economy, exacerbated by the COVID-19 lockdowns, has thrown all revenue calculations to the wind. The Centre is obliged to pay to the States, for a period of five years, compensation for revenue shortfalls in return for their having ceded the power to levy the multiple taxes that were subsumed into the GST. Last week, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman asserted, at what may have been the most tenuous GST Council meeting so far, that the Centre will not be able to meet the compensation shortfall. With GST collections sharply undershooting all targets this year, the Centre estimates compensation payable for the full year at ₹3-lakh crore. But just ₹65,000 crore is expected in the cess kitty used to pay out the compensation.

In July, the Centre paid out the last instalment of compensation for the last fiscal and is, so far, yet to pay anything for this year. States have now been given two options, both requiring them to borrow from the market. The Centre contends that only ₹97,000 crore of the revenue shortfall is from implementation of the GST, while ₹1.38-lakh crore is due to extraordinary circumstances posed by an 'Act of God' (the pandemic). States can either borrow ₹97,000 crore, without having it added to their debt and with the principal and interest paid out from future cess collections, or they can borrow the entire ₹2.35-lakh crore shortfall, but will have to provide for interest payments themselves. The Finance Ministry has argued that higher borrowing by the Centre will push up interest rates and dent India's fiscal parameters. At best, this is specious – total government debt, including States', is what rating agencies look at. Several States have rejected both options and some, including Tamil Nadu, have urged the Centre to rethink in view of their essential and urgent spending needs to curb the pandemic and spur growth. A staring match is in the offing. It is up to the Centre to resolve this impasse in a way that future GST reforms do not fall victim to the trust deficit engendered by this stand-off, the pandemic response is strengthened and all-round government capital spending to bolster sagging demand not derailed. For now, the only certainty is that the compensation cess levied on demerit goods will stay on beyond 2022, and may even be raised, affecting several businesses, including the jobs-intensive auto sector.

## Dissent and detention

Allahabad HC order quashing Dr. Kafeel Khan's detention exposes state persecution

Never any evidence was needed that Dr. Kafeel Khan, a government doctor from Gorakhpur, has been a victim of state persecution, the Allahabad High Court has provided that. Its 42-page order has laid bare the malefic manner in which the doctor was detained under the National Security Act (NSA) on February 13, 2020, shortly after he was granted bail in an earlier case. Dr. Khan, suspended in 2017 after a severe shortage of oxygen cylinders took a deadly toll among children admitted to the encephalitis ward in the Baba Raghav Das Medical College Hospital, Gorakhpur, was arrested on January 29, 2020, for an address to students of Aligarh Muslim University last December. His speech, which contained scathing criticism of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, and its discriminatory nature, was deemed inflammatory weeks after he had made it. The High Court has now found that far from inciting Muslims, the speech, taken in its entirety, does not disclose any effort to promote hatred or violence; and nowhere does it threaten peace in Aligarh. The DM, Aligarh, the court says, used selective reading of some phrases and ignored its true intent while passing the detention order. No reasonable man, it says, would have come to the conclusion about the speech that the DM did. The grounds for detention under NSA provided nothing that indicated any attempt by Dr. Khan to disturb peace and tranquillity between the speech in December and his detention in February. The inevitable inference is that the NSA was invoked only to avoid releasing him following the Chief Judicial Magistrate court's order granting him bail. The process to invoke the NSA itself began only after the bail order, the Bench comprising Chief Justice Govind Mathur and Saumitra Dayal Singh noted.

The use of stringent national security laws against political dissenters, in the absence of any appeal to violence, is something to be condemned in all cases. However, there is something perverse about the resort to preventive detention just to frustrate bail orders. In particular, the authorities have shown excessive zeal in dealing with Dr. Khan. In 2017, he was arrested on charges of negligence and corruption even though circumstances indicated his strenuous efforts to ensure continuous oxygen supply. He spent months in prison before an inquiry absolved him of the charges of negligence and corruption, but was found to have been engaging in private practice. The paediatrician's suspension is yet to be revoked. Even though the verdict gives him relief, it comes after he spent seven months in jail. And his case will some day go to trial. The case of Dr. Khan is poor advertisement for India's democratic credentials, for it brings to light its propensity to criminalise dissent, single out individuals for persecution and display a general disregard for basic rights.

# A guide to flattening the curve of economic chaos

Well-thought-out policies can reverse the results of incompetence; the onus is on the Centre to spend now



JAYATI GHOSH

**N**ow it is official: India has managed to become the global leader in the number of new daily cases of COVID-19 and the worst performing of all major economies during the pandemic so far. How did we manage this double feat? Not through 'acts of god', but because of the incompetence and apathy of our current leadership.

### Data on the decline

The estimated 24% GDP contraction in April-June 2020 compared to the previous year is the worst performance among G20 economies, and even compared to other South Asian countries. But these numbers are likely underestimates because they are based on information from the formal or organised sector, extrapolated to informal unorganised activities. The actual decline is probably worse. Physical indicators such as the index of industrial production (covering registered manufacturing) declined by more than 20%, but ground reports indicate that unorganised manufacturing declined by much more. Many micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in manufacturing and services are still closed or functioning at a small fraction of their capacity. Wage incomes are falling more sharply than GDP because of the combination of employment declines and falling wage rates.

There is other bad news in the GDP data: every sector other than agriculture declined sharply, especially the more employment-inten-

sive sectors. The good rabi harvest and very good monsoon provided some respite in agriculture, but with incomes down, farm prices are unlikely to revive and ensure sufficient returns for cultivators over the year. Government consumption expenditure increased by about 16% over the same period in the previous year, but since total investment fell drastically (by around half), it is likely that public investment also fell. And gross value added in public administration, defence and other services fell by more than 10%. Around 90% of this is salaries. Central government salaries have not fallen, so the squeeze must have fallen on State governments: many of them have probably frozen or delayed salary payments.

### Grave distress

Meanwhile, the pandemic continues apparently unabated: all talk of "flattening the curve" (as wishful as the "green shoots" in the economy that official spokespersons keep seeing) has vanished, replaced by the completely meaningless indicator of recovery rates which are bound to improve with more cases. The brutal national lockdown generated economic collapse even before the disease had spread much. Instead of testing, tracing, isolating and treating – which is costly but is still the only effective way to deal with this disease – the central government shut everything down across the country without warning. Then it provided no compensation and almost no social protection to those (around 80% of workers) who lost livelihood. Migrant workers were forced to return in terrible conditions to their homes, where they have unwittingly spread the disease in rural areas with poor health facilities. Working people have been impover-



ished and debilitated by lack of nutrition because they have been less able to afford food. Now they are being told to go back to work (mostly at lower wages) even as the risk of disease has grown exponentially.

What is more terrifying is that this is still just the beginning: there is little reason to believe that this awful trajectory will be halted unless there is a major change in government strategy on both health and the economy. The downturn is definitely extending into the current quarter, and probably the rest of the year, so we are staring at the biggest economic crisis in independent India.

### Blow against States

Lack of demand is a crucial reason for this. Both consumption and investment were declining well before the pandemic struck. Thereafter, despite the enormity of the economic collapse, the government's relief responses have been pathetically small, barely touching the hundreds of millions of people affected and with little impact on aggregate demand. The halting steps taken on increasing liquidity have been effectively useless: bank credit has declined overall, and (other than favoured large companies) all types of borrowers have received less bank credit.

The most disgraceful treatment

has been of State governments. Despite the centralising imposition of the national Disaster Management Act, there was almost no coordination. State governments have been forced to do all the heavy lifting of dealing with the health crisis and the economic effects of the pandemic on their own, even as the Centre has denied them resources to do this effectively. The Centre is even denying the States their legal dues of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) compensation cess. This reneging of a contractual promise could spell the end of what has been a poorly conceived, badly planned and worse implemented GST.

The consequences of this stinginess will be felt directly by citizens. Most State governments front-ended their expenditures for the entire year to deal with the crisis and are now running out of money. Unlike the Centre, they face hard budget constraints and gave up their revenue-raising powers to the GST. They are now being told to borrow money (that the Centre owes them!) when it is uncertain how they will repay. This is going to affect their spending for the rest of the year and people will feel the results in reduced basic services.

### Roll out a fiscal package

None of this was necessary or "god-given" and could have been averted with the right policies. Even now, this terrible trend can be reversed. The central government must immediately provide a large fiscal package (with actual money made available, not empty promises) including the following: pay the State governments their pending GST compensation dues and provide more resources in addition to deal with the pandemic and its effects; universalise the Public Distribution System (PDS) and provide free foodgrain (10 kg per

household per month) for at least the next six months to anyone who needs it; provide ₹7,000 per family for three months as compensation for the incomes lost during the draconian lockdown; double the number of days of employment per household under the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act to 200 per year (for this year at least) and start an urban employment guarantee programme; extend the debt moratorium and convert into a standstill (without requiring interest payments for that period) and make sure that fresh credit reaches MSMEs and farmers who are being deprived of it; provide much more dedicated resources for health: for all the pandemic-required spending, and to deal with other health concerns that have been ignored or postponed for the past five months.

This will cost money, for sure; but not doing this will be even more costly for the economy and the people. Not spending now will push the economy into a deeper hole, reducing incomes and, therefore, also taxes, and creating a bigger fiscal deficit even with lower spending. For now, these increased expenditures can be paid for by the Centre borrowing from the Reserve Bank of India (monetising the deficit, as governments across the world have been doing). This will not be inflationary as long as essential supplies are maintained, because demand is currently so low. Eventually, wealth taxes and taxes on multinational corporations (especially digital giants that manage to avoid taxes) must be thought of. Bold thinking and urgent action are the only way out.

Jayati Ghosh is a professor of economics at the Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), New Delhi

## Victory in a long battle for equal opportunities

With the grant of permanent commission, women officers of the Indian Army will have clarity on their career paths



JASMINE KAUR

**T**his year shall be remembered as a landmark in Indian military history for years to come. The Supreme Court of India, on February 17, delivered a much-anticipated ruling that allows women to serve as permanently commissioned (PC) officers in 10 combat support arms and services of the Indian Army. The Supreme Court also directed the central Government to rescind the embargo on command appointments for women officers.

This July, the government issued formal sanction offering PC to women officers of the Indian Army. This is the culmination of a struggle for equal opportunity that began almost 27 years ago when the Army inducted the first batches of women as officers in non-medical corps.

### Culmination of a struggle

I call the judgment iconic not only because it allowed women officers equal opportunities to serve in the Indian Army but also because the judgment addressed the issue of regressive mindsets. The onus of implementing this change rests with the leadership, but the direction has been shown.

The Indian armed forces began inducting women in the non-medical branches in the year 1992, as

short service commission (SSC) officers. The scheme initially allowed for a five-year service period, which was revised to 14 years. In the armed forces, both men and women opt for the Short Service Commission. However, upon completion of 14 years of service, male officers could get a permanent commission. Women officers who had put in the same number of years of service, were denied this privilege.

In a quest for equality, many officers of Indian Army and Indian Air Force (Lieutenant Colonel Seema Singh was one of the first from the Army) filed cases in the Delhi High Court seeking to remove discrimination between genders. I was one of the petitioners from the Indian Air Force, fighting for Permanent commission (*Jasmine Kaur vs. Union of India (C) 8492/2009*). In 2010, the case was adjudicated in favour of granting PC to women officers, thus paving the way forward.

The Indian Air Force was first among the three services to grant PC to SSC women officers. The Indian Army chose to appeal in the Supreme Court, citing reasons of peculiar service conditions and operational requirements. A notification by the Government of India in 2019, suggested PC to women officers with less than 14 years of service, practically leaving a sizeable set of senior women officers out of the ambit. Now with this judgment, women who don 'The Olives', have finally obtained parity with their male counterparts.

The Supreme Court also issued



a directive to ensure that women are not restricted to staff duties. Approximately 30% of women officers in the Indian Army are deployed in combat zones (Civil appeal Nos. 9367-9369 of 2011 *Secretary, Ministry of Defence vs Babita Puniya & Ors.*) performing similar duties like other officers. The policy issued by the government of India in 2019, was discriminatory to exclude them from command positions.

### Implications of judgment

With the grant of PC, women officers will now be entitled to serving till the age of retirement and not forced to look for alternative careers after 14 years. This will provide clarity on their career paths and place women officers on an equal footing with men for promotions, professional growth, and provide job security.

Despite forming a relatively minuscule 3.29% of the total strength of the Indian Army, women in all branches of the army have served shoulder to shoulder with male officers in operational field areas (The Indian Air Force has almost 13% women in the officer cadre). Selection for command appointments in the Indian Army eluded women officers earlier. Now, wo-

men officers can be considered for command roles, career postings and many other opportunities to distinguish themselves.

A grant of PC will accrue many other employee benefits, as, 'In service career courses' (such as the National Defence College, College of Defence Management, the Army War College, etc.), the Defence Services Staff College, options in higher studies (such as a Master of Business Administration or a Master of Technology), pension, ex-servicemen status and consequent benefits to name a few.

In addition, allowing a motivated set of experienced women officers in permanent cadre would be a small way to mitigate the shortage of officers (estimated at 18% of the authorised strength (Civil appeal Nos. 9367-9369 of 2011, Secretary, Ministry Of Defence vs Babita Puniya & Ors.) in the Indian Army.

### Warfare is changing

With women already in combat support arms and services, is the entry of women in combat arms the logical next step? Is the patriarchal mindset in India the only hurdle in allowing the entry of women into combat arms? Are there social issues in exposing our women to hazardous combat situations or capture by enemy forces? Given the evolving nature of warfare supported by technology, many of us do not consider this a question of gender ability but of performance, opportunity, and a fighting chance. However, each of these questions merits separate discussion.

men officers, determined by the maturity and mindset of the system.

Countries such as the United Kingdom and the United States have been conservative about women in their respective combat arms, while others like the Israeli Defense Forces have achieved widespread integration of women. I am sure we are on the correct path to further integration in future.

### Existing policy

Before we hail this step, another question needs to be addressed. Will women get the opportunity to directly join the services as permanently commissioned officers? I ask this with knowledge on the rationale behind the introduction of the SSC cadre. The terms of employment of short service commission are subject to change and conversions into PC are based on force requirements. It is possible that based on cadre forecast, an SSC officer may not ever get a chance of converting to PC if there are no vacancies. This policy fairly applies to all SSC officers irrespective of gender. However, it must be noted that for women, the SSC is the only inroad into the armed forces (except the Medical Corps). There is no provision for women to choose defence as a long-term career right at the outset as a PC officer. When parity of allowing entry of women as permanent cadre is attained, it would truly be a level-playing field in terms of equal opportunity and career advancement.

Jasmine Kaur is Wing Commander (retired), Indian Air Force

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

### Chinese provocations

The Line of Actual Control seems to have become a tinderbox with China keen to keep India on its toes. This could be a calibrated strategy by China, may be to deflect attention from its internal issues, but in these trying times, no nation can afford war. This jaw-jaw is likely to stay for a long time. To rein in a rogue neighbour, an economic strike more than a military move is the answer.

DEEPAK SINGHAL,  
Chennai

■ That China has again upped the ante betrays its expansionist designs at the cost of peace and tranquillity with its democratic neighbour, India. While

China wants India to isolate the border issue from broader bilateral relations, India does continue to see the border issue as an important component in its bilateral relationship with China. The potential negative fallout in terms of widening distrust between them does not augur well for peace and stability in Asia.

M. JAYARAM,  
Sholavandan, Tamil Nadu

**The Bhushan case**  
The role of the Attorney General of India, K.K. Venugopal, in opposing the sentencing of lawyer-activist Prashant Bhushan cannot be minimised. As a constitutional functionary and as a leader of the Bar, Mr. Venugopal stood out for

larger institutional values of democracy, free speech and the rest of it. In my opinion, initiation of contempt itself against Mr. Bhushan was patently wrong. Convicting him is to silence dissent which is the essence of democracy, in which case the question of convicting him and sentencing a fine man, be it ₹1 or ₹1 million does not arise. One hopes that Mr. Bhushan's case would see its logical end and the glory of the Supreme Court of India restored.

N.G.R. PRASAD,  
Chennai

**Burdens of NPAs**  
Urijit Patel, the former RBI Governor, has spoken through his heart on the various challenges (Inside

pages, 'Interview - Urijit Patel', "Current banking challenge most intractable one, even before COVID-19", August 31). Unless a permanent solution is found to do away with the mounting non-performing assets in the banking system, banks are not going to become healthy and cost productive. Even pumping in new capital will prove a waste. The best solution would be to float a new company, transfer the entire lot of NPAs of all public sector banks to this company and cleanse the balance sheets of all banks. Once there is a clean slate, banks can function freely with a strong capital base, lend judiciously and become competitive and profit-

making entities. They would

also be relieved of making provisions for NPAs and wasting their time in the day-to-day follow-up and initiation of legal measures for recovery. Selected officers from every bank from where the NPAs are transferred should be posted and entrusted with recovery, initiating legal actions against defaulters and taking action to sell all realisable assets. An incentive-based recovery mechanism would give impetus to officers to speed up their work. Their performance should be monitored by the management of the new company which should comprise bankers of impeccable record.

THARCIUS S. FERNANDO,  
Chennai

### CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

A front-page story titled "GST revenue falls 12% in August at ₹86,449 crore" (Sept. 2, 2020) erroneously said *Rajasthan saw a marginal decrease* in GST collection. Actually, Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan had posted a *marginal increase* in collections, while *Haryana and Gujarat saw a marginal decrease*. It is the policy of The Hindu to correct significant errors as soon as possible. Please specify the edition (place of publication), date and page. The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-284

# A replay of Shanghai in Hong Kong

The parallels between the protests in Shanghai in the 1940s and those in Hong Kong today are striking



JEFFREY WASSERSTROM



Former Chinese President Jiang Zemin, like Hong Kong activist Agnes Chow and others, spent his late teens and early twenties alternating between attending classes and going to pro-democracy demonstrations. File photo of Agnes Chow. •AFP

Former President of China Jiang Zemin is often rumoured to be dead, so the nonagenarian can make news simply by appearing. By contrast, young veterans of Hong Kong's 2014 Umbrella Movement such as Agnes Chow, Nathan Law, and Joshua Wong are more likely to make news now by disappearing. On August 7, an October 2019 shot of Mr. Jiang standing with another past head of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), Hu Jintao, and current leader Xi Jinping topped an article in the *Nikkei Asian Review* on the declining role of retired elders in meetings presided over by Mr. Xi, a go-it-alone strongman. A shot of Ms. Chow appeared in the same publication in an August 10 article on her arrest the same day, as one of the first high-profile targets of the harsh new National Security Law that Beijing has imposed on Hong Kong. As a 94-year-old man who used to head a venerable party that is still in power, Mr. Jiang currently has little in common with Ms. Chow, a 23-year-old woman who helped found an opposition party that recently disbanded. But things are different when we place his youthful experiences in Shanghai in the mid-to-late 1940s beside hers in Hong Kong in the 2010s. He, too, spent his late teens and early twenties alternating between attending classes and going to pro-democracy demonstrations.

#### A tale of two protests

What makes this parallel between Shanghai then and Hong Kong now interesting is that the CCP has long rooted its legitimacy, as organisations that rise to power via revolutions do, in the idea that it has nothing in common with the government it toppled. There are, however, not just similarities between what Mr. Jiang did three-quarters of a century ago and what Ms. Chow has done in the last few years, but also similarities between the causes and course of protests in Shanghai then, when it was under autocratic Nationalist Party rule, and in Hong Kong now. And

the strategies that the authorities used to try to discredit and suppress dissent in Hong Kong during the anti-patriotic education drive of 2012 (which Ms. Chow, then in her mid-teens, helped lead), the 2014 Umbrella Movement, and last year's anti-extradition bill and anti-police brutality struggle often echoed those that the Nationalist Party used to try to discredit and suppress dissent when Mr. Jiang was a young member of a Communist Party that was an opposition group rather than a ruling one.

I've never found a detailed account of Mr. Jiang's college days, but while working on a book about Shanghai student movements decades ago, I read many memoirs by people who moved in the same circles that he did. And last year, I kept coming across things that brought those memoirs to mind. Student activists in Shanghai then, as in Hong Kong now, spearheaded protest drives that brought members of many social groups to the streets, while the authorities ginned up much smaller pro-stability "protests" to try to show that the people were on their side. In Shanghai then, as in Hong Kong now, protesters criticised the police for working with thugs and scoffed at the official media for dismissing widely supported protests as the work of small bands of trouble-making malcontents manipulated by foreign hidden hands.

Of course, not everything lines up, as each city has a distinctive political history and the Nationalist Party's position decades ago was different from the Communist Party's position

now. Issues of local identity have been more central in the movements Ms. Chow has helped lead than they were in the ones that Mr. Jiang joined. And Shanghai protests then took place in a Republic of China over which Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist Party had only tenuous control, while Hong Kong protests now unfold in a People's Republic of China (PRC) over which the CCP has a firm grip.

#### Problems in the fairy tale

Still, the parallels are striking – and create problems for a legitimating fairy tale that generations of CCP propagandists have trotted out. This fairy tale holds that the bad old days of the pre-1949 era were nothing like the glorious era that began when the Nationalists were defeated. Events in many parts of the PRC contradict this story, including Hong Kong. Many of the same issues that made people chafe at Nationalist rule in the Shanghai of Mr. Jiang's youth, from limits on freedom of speech to anger at how tightly linked the government was to the richest families in the city, have triggered protests in Hong Kong recently. And in responding to the Hong Kong protests, the CCP and its local proxies have been using a mix of new methods and old techniques that were part of the Nationalist playbook.

The parallels between the periods are even more notable if we bring in events of the 1940s in other places. Consider, for example, one thing that protesters at a Kunming campus did during that decade: created a space

called a *Minzhuqiang* or Democracy Wall on which they put up posters expressing their grievances and aspirations. That term has since been used for many spaces on many campuses, with different generations of activists making creative use of them. On recent trips to Hong Kong, one place I went to periodically to get a sense of what was on the minds of current students was the Democracy Wall at Baptist University, Ms. Chow's alma mater.

It is also worth bringing in what happened in Taiwan during the years that Mr. Jiang was studying and protesting in Shanghai. The Nationalists in the 1940s, like the Communists once in power, were fond of presenting themselves as liberators. They claimed that they should be credited with having freed both parts of the Chinese mainland that been incorporated into the Japanese empire during World War II and also Taiwan, which had been under the control of Japan for a much longer time, from oppressive foreign domination. After Nationalist forces gunned down and arrested protesters in 1947, however, during a wave of 'White Terror' repressive actions that was followed by a decades-long martial law period, local activists insisted that Taiwan's people had gone from being under one form of colonial control to being under another form of it.

Some Hong Kong residents now similarly claim that they are still waiting for – and fighting for – a true liberation. The 1997 Handover, which took place when Mr. Jiang was in power and Ms. Chow was an infant, ended a period of British colonial rule. But in light of how local officials have been dependent on and deferential to CCP leaders hundreds of miles to the north, it can seem that all that the Handover really did was change Hong Kong from being part of an empire whose capital was London to being part of an empire whose capital is Beijing. And some find it fitting now to use an old term, 'White Terror', to describe actions such as the massive use of tear gas by local police last year and this year's political persecution of figures such as Agnes Chow.

*Jeffrey Wasserstrom is Chancellor's Professor of History at the University of California, Irvine, and author of Vigil: Hong Kong on the Brink* (2020)

# A missed opportunity

The Gopalakrishnan Committee report does not adequately address governance frameworks around government data sets



RISHAB BAILEY &amp; RENUKA SANE

The National Data Sharing and Accessibility Policy (NDSAP), 2012 requires all non-sensitive information held by public authorities to be made publicly accessible in machine readable formats (subject to conditions). The government has also set up an Open Government Data Platform to provide open access to data sets held by ministries and other agencies of the government. Various States have also either created their own data portals or have provided data sets to the Open Government Data Platform.

#### Failure to create an open data society

In practice, the quality and quantity of data sets published by the government are still well short of ideal. In addition, the government's general reticence to make valuable information sets available to the public is well known. There are two reasons for our failure to create an open data-based society. The first is lack of clarity in some of the provisions of the NDSAP or the relevant implementation guidelines. The second is the inability to enforce guidelines appropriately, which has meant that data sets released by governments are often inconsistent, incomplete, outdated, published in non-machine readable or inconsistent formats, include duplicates, and lack quality (or any) metadata, thereby reducing re-usability. The Gopalakrishnan Committee could have evaluated what is going wrong with existing policies and practice pertaining to government data, and deliberated on how these can be addressed. Instead, the report largely focuses on the dangers posed by data collection by private sector entities.

Without going into the merits or demerits of taking an interventionist approach to the data ecosystem, many of the concerns that should be addressed in the report that are central to the governance of the data ecosystem have sadly remained in the background. For instance, India's cybersecurity framework continues to be woefully inadequate, while even the Justice B.N. Srikrishna Committee report of 2018 highlighted the need to restrict the growing power of the state to carry out surveillance.

Since data governance is a relatively new concept in India, the government would be better served in taking an incremental approach to any perceived problems. This should begin with reforming how the government itself deals with citizens' data. This would engender greater trust in data governance practices and, importantly, allow the development of state capacity to govern the data ecosystem.

Rishab Bailey and Renuka Sane are researchers at the National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, Delhi

## One error rectified, many to go

Legislative errors disentitling daughters need to be examined the way the property law was examined

#### JYOTIKA KALRA

In 2005, Parliament amended the Hindu Succession Act of 1956 to bring daughters of coparceners on a par with sons in a joint Hindu family. The law bestowed upon daughters the same rights and liabilities as that of sons. In *Vineeta Sharma v. Rakesh Sharma* (2020), the Supreme Court held that a coparcener's daughter would become a coparcener in her own right by birth, thereby setting aside the *Prakash v. Phulavati* (2015) judgment that created a condition for a daughter to avail her right of being coparcener only if her father was alive on the date of this amendment.

There is a difference between rights conferred by the Hindu Succession Act of 1956 and the amendment of 2005. In 1956, equal right of succession at par with a son was given to a daughter, but only after the demise of the father or mother. The 2005 amendment, however, gave the right to property to a daughter in a joint Hindu family during the lifetime of the father. As a matter of fact, right of succession is not a confirmed right and can easily be negated by the father or mother by creating a will. The 2005 amendment changed that; the right could no longer be negated.

#### Correcting an error

*Vineeta Sharma v. Rakesh Sharma* is a progressive pronouncement that rectified an error committed by the Supreme Court. In *Prakash v. Phulavati*, the Supreme Court delved into the prospectiveity or retrospectiveity of the law creating coparcenary rights in favour of daughters. It applied the basic premise that the law is always prospective unless it is retrospective either expressly or by necessary intent. The court held that as there was no express provision for giving this law a retrospective effect, it cannot be applied retrospectively. It created a condition that the rights under the amendment are applicable only to living daughters of living coparceners as on September 9, 2005; however, it gave no reason as to why this was chosen as a condition. The condition seems to have overstretched the scope of interpretation. The status of a daughter to be subject to her father being alive is apparently

a mistake. The death of an individual should not determine the rights of their heirs. If any right had accrued in the daughter's favour by a legislation, the same can't be disturbed by death of her father.

Coming to the 2005 amendment, if the legislature had any doubt about the prospective or retrospective applicability of the right created in favour of the daughter, then it would not have specifically added a proviso to Section 6 subsection (1). The proviso mentions that all those property rights, which have already been settled before December 20, 2004, by way of any transfer, partition, will, etc., shall not get affected by this right. Similarly, the explanation to subsection (5) of Section 6 mentions that this law shall not affect any registered partition deed effected before December 20, 2004. Both the proviso and explanation clearly indicate that this law created rights and entitlements in favour of daughters and an exception was carved out to protect the disturbance, the retrospective application of law could have created.

#### Amending laws

In the present judgment, *Vineeta Sharma v. Rakesh Sharma*, the court rightly held that as laid down in Section 6 (1) (a), daughter is to be a coparcener by birth; so there is no question of being prospective or retrospective. It is the physical status that matters and should not be linked to a date. Even in the case of unregistered partition deeds executed before December 20, 2004, the court has opened a new window for daughters. Daughters can claim a right even in an unregistered partition deed which has not been proved conclusively.

Legislative errors disentitling daughters still exist as seen in the U.P. Zamindari Abolition and Land Reforms Act, 1950. Such discrimination is based purely on gender. There is a need to examine all the existing laws and wherever discriminatory practices exist, they need to be amended appropriately.

*Jyotika Kalra is Member, National Human Rights Commission. Views expressed are personal*



#### DATA POINT

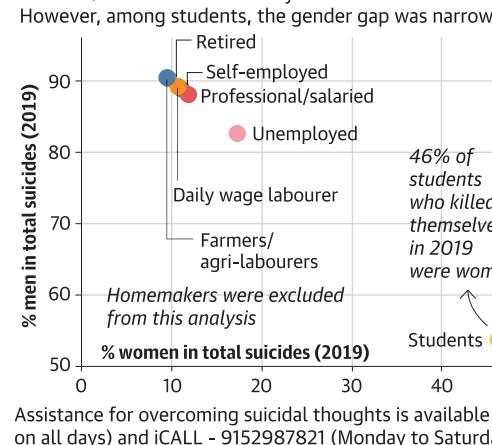
### Suicides on the rise

Deaths by suicide in India increased in 2019 compared to the year before. While more men died by suicide, fewer women did compared to 2018. Most of those who killed themselves were male daily wage workers. More farmers who owned land died by suicide than those who were landless. By *The Hindu Data Team*

**Rise in suicides** | Suicides grew y-o-y by 3.4% in 2019. Suicides among women decreased by 2.1%. Among men, suicides grew by 6%, the highest in the last five years

Suicides among women have fallen in four of the last five years	Year	Men	Women	Total
2015	2.7%	-1.0%	1.5%	
2016	-2.8%	-0.2%	-2.0%	
2017	0.0%	-2.7%	-0.9%	
2018	3.5%	3.8%	3.6%	
2019	6.0%	-2.1%	3.4%	

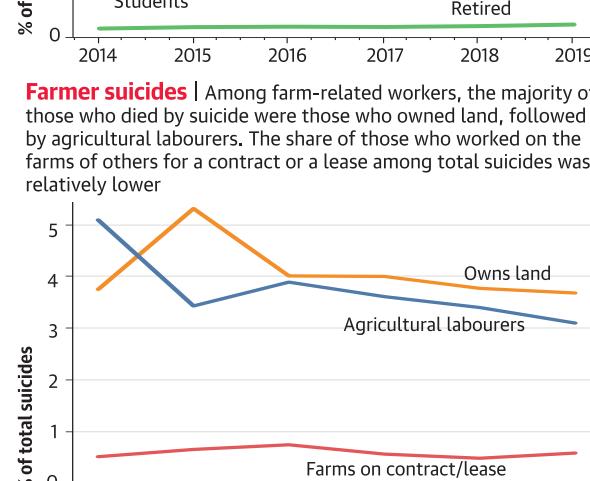
**Mostly men** | Among all professions, in 2019, more than 80% of those who died by suicide were men. However, among students, the gender gap was narrow



**Mostly labourers** | About 23% of those who killed themselves in 2019 were daily wage labourers. Since 2014, when NCRB started counting the labourers separately, their share has risen consistently. Homemakers form the next biggest share. The share of farmers/agricultural labourers dropped marginally



**Farmer suicides** | Among farm-related workers, the majority of those who died by suicide were those who owned land, followed by agricultural labourers. The share of those who worked on the farms of others for a contract or a lease among total suicides was relatively lower



Assistance for overcoming suicidal thoughts is available on Sneha's suicide prevention helpline 044-24640050 (10 a.m. to 4 p.m. on all days) and iCALL - 9152987821 (Monday to Saturday, 8 a.m. to 10 p.m.)

#### FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO SEPTEMBER 3, 1970

Bill adopted to abolish privy purses

The Constitution Amendment Bill for the abolition of the privy purses and privileges of the princes was passed by the Lok Sabha today [September 2, New Delhi] by 339 votes to 154, with the requisite two-thirds majority by a narrow margin of only eight votes – with a record attendance of 493 out of the total membership of 523 which includes the Speaker and the four existing vacancies in the House. The Government thus managed to scrape through with this controversial piece of legislation – with the help of the two Communist parties, the D.M.K., P.S.P., S.S.P., and nearly two-thirds of the Independents and other unattached members – amidst boisterous scenes with all the agonising suspense and drama of life and death struggle. The Congress(O), Jan Sangh, Swantantra, B.K.D., the remaining Independents and the rebel princes from the Ruling Congress Party missed the bus by only nine votes in their grim determination to defeat the Bill and give a good drubbing to the Government even if they were not able to topple it.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO SEPT. 3, 1920

After-care of the adolescent (From the Editorial)

It is a matter of great satisfaction that the Government of Madras have of late begun to take interest in the after-care of the adolescents released from the jail control. The report of Mr. S. Davis, Superintendent of the Borstal Institution, Tanjore, in connection with the after-care of the adolescents convicts released from the institution during the year 1919 is an interesting record of humane work, remedial, educational and constructive, done by the authorities during the year under report. As many as 417 adolescents were released during the year, the grant of special remissions in connection with the peace celebration being responsible for such a large increase in the number of boys discharged in one year. The appointment of honorary probation officers for the after-care of discharged prisoners continues to receive careful attention and 123 officers were appointed, of whom 65 were non-officials, in connection with 417 boys passported. The reasons assigned for not appointing a larger number of probation officers are either that the whereabouts of discharged boys were not available or that some of them had gone back to their homes under parental control or to the criminal settlement whence they came, or that the prisoners had migrated to remote places after release.

## FROM PAGE ONE

## Question Hour dropped in monsoon session

The two-hour break between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. would be used to disinfect both the chambers, said an official.

Earlier, as reported by *The Hindu*, two four-hour slots (10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and 4 p.m.-8 p.m.) were under discussion for staggered timings for the two Houses to meet instead of simultaneous proceedings.

The session will have 18

sittings, which includes two working Saturdays and Sundays each, and will end on October 1.

Deputy Leader of the Lok Sabha and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had reached out to senior Opposition leaders, including Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad, Mr. Chowdhury and Trinamool's Derek O'Brien before finalising the plans.

## PUBG, WeChat Work and other mobile apps banned

"There has been a strong chorus in the public space to take strict action against apps that harm India's sovereignty as well as the privacy of our citizens," the Ministry said.

"In the interest of sovereignty and integrity of India, defence of India and security of the State. And using the sovereign powers, the Government of India has decided to block the usage of certain Apps, used in both mobile and non-mobile Internet enabled devices," it added.

## Not allowed to speak at Mishra send-off, says Dave

He had defended advocate Prashant Bhushan in a *suo motu* contempt action recently.

"I must confess, the Supreme Court has come to such levels where the judges are afraid of the Bar. Please do remember, judges come and go, but we the Bar remain constant. We are the real strength of this great institution because we are permanent," Mr. Dave wrote in the letter shared with the media. He copied his short address wishing Justice Mishra well, in the letter to the CJI. He indicated that he may have been prevented for fear that "I might say something unpleasant".

Recounting the series of events, Mr. Dave wrote that the court Registry had sent him a video link, inviting him to participate. He had accepted the invitation.

In his letter, he said he was repeatedly disconnected for "some unknown reasons".

"But I persisted and rejoined each time," he wrote. Supreme Court Advocates-on-Record Association president Shivaji Jadhav

even acknowledged his presence in his address, he said.

"I saw and heard Shri Jadhav fully and at the end of his address again, I was not requested to speak though Shri Jadhav has acknowledged my presence in his address. After that Your Lordship (the CJI) spoke, which I saw and heard, and then invited Justice Mishra to speak. At that stage realising the game plan I exited in the larger interests of the dignity of the Bar and myself," he wrote.

Mediapersons saw the CJI repeatedly asking if anyone wanted to speak soon after Mr. Jadhav finished his address. Mr. Dave's window box was not visible on the TV screen.

The entire episode leaves much to be desired on the part of this great institution. The whole attempt was to prevent me from addressing on behalf of the SCBA and its EC, after having invited and invitation having been accepted. This was clearly an affront to the Bar and to me personally," Mr. Dave wrote.

## Odisha seeks time to conduct univ. exams

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Bhubaneswar  
The Odisha government on Wednesday requested the University Grants Commission to extend the deadline of the final year university exams for all undergraduate and postgraduate courses from September 30 to October 10.

On behalf of the Chief Minister and Chairman of the State Disaster Management Authority Naveen Patnaik, Higher Education Department secretary Saswat Mishra wrote a letter to the UGC

mentioning that the extension will ensure scheduling of the exams with at least one day gap so that the test centres can be sanitised properly. "Preparedness to conduct the examinations was discussed with the Vice-Chancellors and principals of autonomous colleges. All of them are of the view that since they had earlier not planned to conduct final semester/year UG and PG examinations, about 25 days' time would be required," the letter to the UGC secretary mentioned.

## SP shuts Lucknow office due to COVID-19 cases

LUCKNOW  
The Samajwadi Party on Wednesday said it has shut its State unit office here for six days after "some people" working there tested positive for COVID-19.

In a tweet in Hindi, the party said the office will remain shut till Monday as a precautionary measure.

"Some people working at the Samajwadi Party office were tested for coronavirus after they showed initial

symptoms. Their test reports returned positive. As a precautionary measure, the party office in Lucknow will remain closed till Monday. All will recover at the earliest," the party said. Sources in the party said some senior office-bearers are among those who tested positive for the virus, but the party officially did not give details such as the number of people infected or their position in the SP.

Lucknow reported 720 infections on Wednesday.

## Record cases in Karnataka, no respite in A.P.

Bengaluru contributes heavily to State's 9,860 cases; 2,892 test positive in Telangana; 94% of Kerala cases from local spread

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD

Karnataka on Wednesday reported its highest single-day increase of 9,860 new COVID-19 cases, while Andhra Pradesh's 10,392 new infections showed a steady high-case trend in the State.

There were 113 new deaths and 94,459 active cases, 751 of them in ICUs in Karnataka. Bengaluru Urban also saw its biggest single-day increase with 3,420 cases and reported 32 more deaths.

## COVID-19

Andhra Pradesh added 10,392 infections on Wednesday and there were 72 deaths.

With 1,03,076 active cases,

the State was in second position after Maharashtra; infections reported in the past eight days stood at 83,892.

The overall test positivity

rate increased to 11.85%. In the past day, 60,804 samples were tested.

Nellore and Chittoor saw a large number of deaths.

Cases in Telangana crossed 1.3 lakh as 2,892 samples tested positive on Tuesday, as per data released on Wednesday. While 59,421 samples were tested on September 1, results of 2,255 samples were awaited.

There were 477 new cases from Greater Hyderabad, 234 from Rangareddy, 192 from Medchal-Malkajgiri, 174 from Nalgonda, 152 from Khammam, 116 from Warangal Urban, 110 from Nizamabad, 108 each from Siddipet and Suryapet, and 102 from Jagtial.

Kerala reported 1,547 new cases on Wednesday.

The official death toll

touched 305, with the Health department adding seven more deaths to its provision-

Rigorous checks  
Though the lockdown norms have been relaxed, the government has intensified testing for COVID-19. The graph shows the spread of the pandemic in the southern States

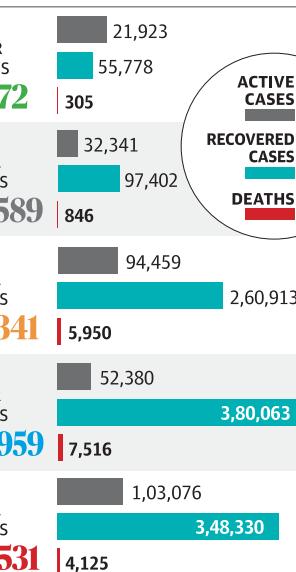
\*Kerala has a mismatch of 66 cases due to unaccounted deaths, missing persons \*\*\*Telangana numbers are as of 8 p.m. on Tuesday \*\*\*Karnataka has 19 non-COVID deaths

al list of COVID-19 deaths.

Three deaths each at Thiruvananthapuram and Ernakulam and one at Kasaragod were reported. The final official COVID-19 toll would

be revealed after the State death audit committee scrutinised the cause.

The dip in the daily case burden for the third consecutive day, by over a thousand



cases, was attributed to the lesser number of samples tested than normally done. In the last 24 hours it was 23,850, much less than the 40,000 normal target of the

State. Community transmission was linked to 94% of new cases - 1,461 of 1,547 and 36 more healthcare workers got infected.

Another 5,990 persons tested positive for COVID-19 in Tamil Nadu on Wednesday, taking the State's overall count to 4,39,959.

Chennai accounted for 1,025 of the fresh cases, while Coimbatore's daily count stood at 579 and Cuddalore and Salem had 400-plus cases each.

While 5,891 persons were discharged following treatment, another 98 persons succumbed to the infection in the State.

Of the fatalities, Chennai recorded 19 deaths, while nine persons died in Kanyakumari and eight in Chengalpattu.

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

## Bineesh has links with drug racket accused

MYL leader demands comprehensive inquiry, Kodiyeri's son denies charge

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOZHIKODE

Muslim Youth League (MYL) State general secretary P.K. Firoz has alleged that Bineesh Kodiyeri, son of CPI (M) State secretary Kodiyeri Balakrishnan, has close ties with Anoop Mohammed of Kochi, one of the gang members taken into custody in connection with a Bengaluru-based celebrity drug racket.

At a press conference here on Wednesday, Mr. Firoz alleged that Anoop had started two restaurants in Bengaluru with financial assistance from Mr. Bineesh Kodiyeri in 2013. Both had taken part in

night parties during the COVID-19-induced lockdown period, he alleged.

## Examine call details'

Mr. Firoz said a comprehensive inquiry should be launched into the alleged links of Mr. Bineesh Kodiyeri with the Bengaluru drug racket and his call list details, especially on July 10, should be examined to ascertain the facts. It was on this day that Swapna Suresh, accused in the diplomatic baggage gold smuggling case, was arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in Bengaluru, he said.

## Drugs seizure

Anoop was apprehended from a service apartment at Kalyan Nagar, east of Bengaluru. About 145 Ecstasy tablets and ₹2.25 lakh were re-

Last week, officials of the Narcotics Control Bureau had busted the racket that had been catering to many in the Kannada film industry.

Ecstasy pills such as 3,4-methylenedioxymethamphetamine, nicknamed Molly, and LSD (Lysergic acid diethylamide, a hallucinogenic drug), were seized from a woman, Anikha, who was allegedly heading the racket from her flat at Doddagubbi.

## Lent ₹6 lakh'

Responding to the allegations, Mr. Bineesh Kodiyeri told TV channels that he had maintained a good relationship with Anoop since 2013.

He had lent around ₹6 lakh for starting his hotel business.

He said he did not know that Anoop had links with the drug racket. He also denied attending parties hosted by Anoop during the lockdown period.

## Covered from his flat.

He also had connections with K.T. Rameez, a Malappuram-based businessman who was arrested in connection with the gold smuggling case, Mr. Firoz alleged.

Rajulapudi Srinivas  
POLAVARAM

The Godavari is in spate for the third time in 15 days.

At Bhadrachalam, a flood level of 41.6 feet was recorded at 7 p.m. on Wednesday. The Central Water Commission indicated that the flood was rising as there were huge inflows into the river from upstream, and asked officials of both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to be alert.

The water level was rising at Kunavaram, Kukkunoor, Coffe dam, Polavaram, V.R. Puram, Chintur and other mandals in the Agency areas in West and East Godavari districts.

The attacks commenced with the firebombing of a Congress office at Nadapuram on Tuesday.

The police said Congress symbols, cut-outs and flags placed on the roadside in Kannur and Kozhikode were also damaged.

The water level was rising at Kunavaram, Kukkunoor, Coffe dam, Polavaram, V.R. Puram, Chintur and other mandals in the Agency areas in West and East Godavari districts.

At the Sir Arthur Cotton Barrage at Dowleswaram near Rajamahendravaram, Irrigation officials discharged 7 lakh cusecs from the barrage by 6 p.m.

With the Pranhita, the Wainganga and other streams and rivulets in spate, the flood level in the Godavari might touch the first warning level (43 feet) by midnight, officials cautioned.

Irrigation and Revenue officials sounded an alert in affected habitations, and cautioned tribal people not to cross the river on small and country-made boats.

As a precautionary measure, many families were evacuated from the low-lying areas.

## Cong. to protest today against CPI(M) attacks on its offices

KPCC says CPI(M) workers damaged 142 premises



Mullappally Ramachandran

the KPCC has positioned the sit-in agitation as a propaganda to counter the 'black day' observed by the CPI(M) on Wednesday to protest against the murder of its party activists allegedly by Congress workers.

Mr. Ramachandran said

ised the house of G. Leena, former State secretary of the Youth Congress. Mr. Ramachandran and Leader of the Opposition Ramesh Chennithala visited the house.

Mr. Chennithala said the Congress did not believe in tit-for-tat violence. It would fight the CPI(M) electorally. Former Chief Minister Oommen Chandy condemned the attacks. In Kannur, G. Sudhakaran, MP, said the CPI(M) should not take the non-violence of the Congress as a sign of weakness.

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## Production disruption likely, says HAL

Company says the COVID-19 pandemic has affected the entire supply chain ecosystem and logistics

in the short term at HAL, said its Chairman and Managing Director R. Madhavan.

## Annual report

In the company's annual report, he said HAL was a highly technology-intensive company with product spectrum including both ToT (transfer of technology) as well as indigenous platforms that contained systems/ sub-systems/ raw materials etc., of foreign origin used on these platforms.

Since the pandemic has caused worldwide lockdown, suppliers in general are financially stressed due to cash flow and liquidity problems, possible production hold up in suppliers' facilities and restriction on movement of goods through international freights can lead to disruption of established supply chains.

Hence, there could be likely disruption of produc-

tion in the

# India is entirely responsible for tensions: China

Beijing exercised restraint to avoid escalation, says the country's Foreign Ministry, urging New Delhi to stop provocation

ANANTH KRISHNAN

China on Wednesday said "the responsibility lies entirely with the Indian side" for the continuing tensions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) and a new stand-off in the Chushul sector.

Beijing also said it had "kept maximum restraint to prevent potential escalation" and called on India "to immediately withdraw all personnel who illegally trespassed across the LAC, and stop taking any actions that may escalate tensions or complicate matters".

India's Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Tuesday the Chinese troops had engaged in "provocative action" on August 31, while discussions between ground commanders were on-going. This followed earlier moves on the night of August 29 which, the Army said, were "provocative" military movements to change the status quo. To pre-empt these moves, the Army said, India undertook measures "to strengthen our positions" near the south bank of Pan-

gong Lake in Ladakh.

On Wednesday, China's Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said, "The Indian side claims it 'pre-empted' some activities. Like the Chinese saying 'There are no 300 taels of silver buried here', which means one accidentally gives away the hidden truth in an explanation, India's statements reveal the fact that the Indian troops were the first to have illegally crossed the LAC, made provocations, changed the status quo in the border areas and violated bilateral agreements and important consensus."

#### Discipline troops'

Ms. Hua said, "Since the beginning of year, India has breached bilateral agreements and important consensus many times in the western sector of the China-India boundary, attempted to unilaterally change the status quo by force, undermined peace and stability in the border region and caused tensions. The responsibility lies entirely with the Indian side. China has kept



**Choppy waters:** An Army convoy in Gagangeer moving towards Leh on Wednesday. ■ GETTY IMAGES

maximum restraint to prevent potential escalation."

"We urge India to strictly discipline its border troops, stop all provocations at once, immediately withdraw all personnel who illegally trespassed across the LAC, and stop taking any actions that may escalate tensions or complicate matters. We hope India will work with China to implement bilateral agreements and important consensus reached by leaders of the two sides, and make concrete efforts to uphold peace and tranquillity in the border areas."

India has said the latest tensions on the south bank of the Pangong Lake followed China's similar moves along the border since early May, where it has sought to redraw the LAC in the Galwan Valley, Depsang Plains, north bank of Pangong Lake and in the Gogra-Hot Springs area, in addition to mobilising large numbers of troops.

A clash in Galwan Valley on June 15 killed 20 Indian soldiers and an unknown number of Chinese soldiers.

Asked on Wednesday by Reuters to comment about

reports that a Tibetan officer part of India's Special Frontier Force had died in a landmine blast near the site of recent border tensions and on the presence of Tibetan officers in India's Special Frontier Force, and the role of the American Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in setting up the force going back to the 1960s, Ms. Hua said: "I'm not aware of what you said about these 'Tibetans in exile' in the Indian armed forces. You may ask the Indian side for this. But I noted some words you mentioned, including 'the 1960s', 'CIA', and 'Tibetans in exile'. These words prompt us to ponder over the ins and outs of the Tibet-related issues and the role the U.S. has played in this process. China's position is very clear. We firmly oppose any country providing convenience in any form for the 'Tibet independence' forces' separatist activities. I am also wondering what is the connection between so-called 'Tibetans in exile' and the Indian border troops. I hope you can do some in-depth investigation..."

On Wednesday, the Communist Party-run *Global Times*, in an editorial published in its English and Chinese editions, said "the system that has managed the border situation for decades is now crumbling" and "regular border frictions will exhaust both countries."

#### Damaging nationalism'

"India's actions have seriously increased the strategic mistrust between China and India, and heightened the damage border frictions are creating on relations between the two countries. India has cancelled much cooperation with China since Galwan Valley clash. Its nationalism is inflicting damage to itself," it said.

"Neither China nor India is willing to keep their relations at the cost of losing territory. But the same disputes have been there for decades, and they shouldn't have been allowed to resurface. Chinese public opinion hasn't focused on the China-India border issues, but India has always been fanatical," the editorial added.



Jahanzaib Sami

rashtra police as she planned to exit the country to join the Islamic State (IS) in Syria. She was allegedly radicalised on the Internet by a Sri Lankan handler who promised her medical education in Syria.

The NIA said the accused, including two women, instigated Muslims by "coining seditious slogans and making graffiti at public places and highlighting the same on social and international media".

# NIA chargesheets 5 for links to IS group

They tried to exploit CAA unrest, it says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The National investigation Agency (NIA) has filed a chargesheet against five accused who owed allegiance to the Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP) for allegedly "conspiring to utilise the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) protests to instigate Muslims against the Indian Government".

The NIA said the accused, including two women, instigated Muslims by "coining seditious slogans and making graffiti at public places and highlighting the same on social and international media".

#### Plan for arson'

"They were also provoking some gullible youth to participate in anti-CAA protests actively. In case these protests failed to provoke the Muslims, they were planning for arson of Government buildings and public property so that riots could happen and they could exploit the sentiments of Muslims," the agency said in a chargesheet filed in a Delhi court on Wednesday.

The five accused have been identified as Jahanzaib Sami, 36, Hina Bashir Beigh, 39, Abdullah Basith, 26, Sadiya Arwan Shaikh, 20, and Nabeel Siddick Khatri, 27.

Sami and Beigh are from Srinagar and were arrested by the Delhi police from Jamia Nagar in southeast Delhi in March for allegedly running social media handles active during the anti-CAA protests. The case was transferred to the NIA.

The NIA claimed that Beigh studied in Pune and got radicalised in 2014-15 by reading ISIS-related content on social media. It said that Sami and Beigh married in July 2019 in a drone strike in Afghanistan..." NIA said.

Investigation also revealed that Sami, Beigh, Basith and Khatri tried to make an improvised explosive device and were planning to carry out mass killings in crowded places to further the activities of ISIS/ISKP in India.

# JCO killed in Pak. firing in Rajouri

Shelling damages five houses and a government school in Gurez sector

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR

A Junior Commissioned Officer (JCO) was killed in "an unprovoked ceasefire violation" by the Pakistani Army in Rajouri district of Pir Panjal on Wednesday. The Pakistani side also opened a new front by shelling in north Kashmir's Gurez sector, close to the Drass sector of Ladakh.

Drass is the only road link connecting the Kashmir Valley with Ladakh and it was very volatile during the 1999 Kargil war.

An official said the officer of the rank of Naib Subedar, a resident of Punjab, was hit by sniper fire from across the Line of Control (LoC) in Keri Sector of Rajouri during the intervening night of September 1-2.



**Paying homage:** Security personnel paying tribute to JCO Rajwinder Singh, who was killed in firing on August 30. ■ PTI

"The Indian Army gave a befitting response," an official said.

#### Second casualty

This is the second such casualty in the past four days in Rajouri. Pakistan's sniper fire from across the LoC killed a JCO in the Nowshera Sector on August 30.

In cross-LoC shelling and small arms firing, the Pakistani Army opened a new front in the Gurez sector, first time since February 3 this year. An official said it started shelling Bagtore and Tarabal areas around 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday and continued shelling till 10:30 p.m.

"A total of seven struc-

tures, which included five houses and a building of a government school, were partially damaged. A shell damaged the ceiling of the school too", a senior official said.

Deputy Commissioner of Bandipora, Owais Ahmad, told *The Hindu*, "The local officers have been directed to keep concrete bunkers ready for any evacuation in case of further shelling. Blankets have also been stocked up. Relief is being provided to the damaged private house through the Red Cross."

An Army spokesman said the Pakistan also violated the ceasefire agreement along the LoC in Poonch's Kirni and Qasba Sectors around 6:45 p.m. and fired from small arms and mortars.

# UNSC blocks Pak. bid to name Indians in terror list

It was earlier asked to provide evidence

SUHASINI HAIDAR  
NEW DELHI

The UN Security Council, led by France, UK and the U.S., has rejected attempts by Pakistan to designate Indians as terrorists under its 1267 Committee for Counterterrorism Sanctions.

The UNSC committee decided to block the designations of Angara Appaji and Gobinda Patnaik on Wednesday, part of a group of four Indians that Pakistan alleged formed an Afghanistan-based "Indian terror syndicate" that was organising the banned terror groups Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and Jamaat-Ul-Ahrar to carry out attacks in Pakistan. Two other Indian names proffered by Pakistan were also blocked: Ve-

numadhan Dongara was blocked by the US on June 19, and Ajoy Mistry had been blocked by US, UK, France, Germany and Belgium on July 16, respectively.

The same five countries had also placed a "hold" on Mr. Appaji and Mr. Patnaik's names, asking Pakistan to furnish evidence of their involvement. Since the evidence was not provided, officials said the committee decided to "block" or reject all the names.

According to sources, all five countries placing the hold also blocked it, although U.S., UK and France were prime movers, indicating that the other permanent members, China and Russia, did not try to block the move by Pakistan.

Some are upset over party's response

SANDEEP PHUKAN  
NEW DELHI

A section of the Congress 'G23', or the group of 23 dissenting leaders, who had questioned the party's functioning in a letter to interim president Sonia Gandhi, may meet over the weekend to plan their future strategy, a senior leader from the group said on Wednesday.

There seems to be a divide within the group, with one section keen on ending the public debate, while the other determined to "take the issues raised in the letter to their logical end".

**Fresh push**  
This could mean giving a fresh push to have elections to the top party post and the Congress Working Committee (CWC).

"There is no divide among the 23 of us and we have been speaking among ourselves. In fact, we hope to meet over the weekend as more people have called us and extended support. The letter was never about any person but about an issue," said the leader from the G23.

After an explosive meeting of the CWC on August 24, the Congress had called upon everyone to treat it as a "closed chapter". Some of the signatories, including Shashi Tharoor, Akhilesh Prasad Singh and Jitin Prasada, endorsed the stand, asking everyone to put the controversy behind them. Former Haryana Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda even got a resolution



Ghulam Nabi Azad

passed among the State MLAs endorsing Ms. Gandhi's leadership.

However, another section is not happy that the party doesn't seem interested in dealing with the issues raised in the letter. Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Ghulam Nabi Azad, reiterated in an interview his views of having elected members to the CWC. Senior leader Kapil Sibal also expressed disappointment over the party's response. Lok Sabha MP Manish Tewari, without mentioning the Congress, wrote an opinion piece in which he underlined the importance of dissent in ancient Indian philosophy and how even the 'tallest King' had to face questioning.

"These divergent views and calls for reforms are coming up as we are not in power. Had we been in power, you wouldn't have found any dissenting voices," said Congress leader in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury. "Some of the signatories are beneficiaries of 'the system' they now want to change," he said.

# Lt. Governor Sinha tours Pulwama

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR

J&K Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday toured the most volatile and militancy-affected Pulwama district and said his administration was "committed to adding value to the lives of people in J&K".

The Lt. Governor met public delegations and inaugurated 20 developmental projects worth ₹40.86 crore.

He also chaired a meeting to review the developmental scenario in the district.

# GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION & PUBLIC RELATIONS-HYDERABAD

Notification No. 12512/Adv/2015, Date : 01.09.2020

## Notification for Empangement INS Advertising Agencies 2020

It is proposed to empanel the INS Accredited Advertising Agencies in Information and Public Relations Department for the year 2020 to 2023.

Empanelment will be in the following (2) Categories:

- A. Empanelment of agencies for carrying out large-scale and multi-media publicity campaigns, Display, Land Acquisition, Classifieds Advertisements.
- B. Empanelment of agencies for tactical campaigns and one-off occasion-based advertisements, Display, Land Acquisition, Classified Advertisements.

The applicant should obtain the tender schedule from advertisement section on or before 25-09-2020 upto 5-00 PM by paying Rs.2,000/- in shape of DD from a Nationalised Bank in favour of Asst. Accounts Officer, I&PR Dept., Hyderabad, Telangana. The completed application form along with necessary documents as prescribed in Tender schedule are to be submitted to Superintendent (Advt.), I&PR Dept, Hyderabad, Telangana on or before 28-09-2020 upto 3:00 PM and same would be opened at 4:00 PM on 28-09-2020. Applications in sealed cover superscribed as "Application for Empangement of INS Advertising Agencies DIPR-2020". For further details contact Mr. A. Satyanarayana Reddy, Assistant Director (Advt.), Cell : 9949351533 / Mr. D. Jitender Superintendent (Advt.) Cell No. 9949351544.

Sd/- Arvind Kumar  
COMMISSIONER

# DELHI TRANSCO LIMITED

## NOTICE INVITING e-tenders

Delhi Transco Ltd, a Government of NCT of Delhi Undertaking, invites online tenders for the following works:-

- 1)Tender No.T20R20264: Power Transformer Package for Supply, Erection, Testing and Commissioning of 08 Nos. 160 MVA, 220/66/11 KV Power Transformer at various locations of DTL in Delhi.
- (2)Tender No.T20R220263: Power Transformer Package for Supply, Erection, Testing and Commissioning of 05 Nos. 160 MVA, 220/66/11 KV Power Transformer at various locations of DTL in Delhi. Last date for bid submission: (28.09.2020 for Sl. No.1) & (25.09.2020 for Sl. No. 2) at 01.30 PM. For further details please logon Delhi Govt website <https://govtprocurement.delhi.gov.in>. (Tender ID No. 2020\_DTL\_193988\_1 & 2020\_DTL\_193985\_1 respectively and DTL website: <http://www.dtl.gov.in> (Unique No. DTL-7767-010920 & DTL-7766-010920 respectively.

PR/20-21/18

All Corrigendum/Addendum/Amendments/Date of Extension/Clarifications, if any, to the above e-tender would appear only on the above mentioned websites.

# GREATER CHENNAI CORPORATION Special Project Department

S.P.D.C.No.B1/01545/2019

## e - TENDER NOTICE

e-tenders are invited for the following work in

Two Cover System as per details furnished below:

Name of the work

1 S.P.D.C.No.B1/01545/2019 :-

Operation and Maintenance of Multi-Level Parking (MLP) at junction of Thyagaraja Road, Thanikachalam Road for a period of 5 years, in Dn. 136, Unit.29, Zone X - E.M.D. Rs.5,00,00/-

Pre-Bid meeting Date and Time: 17.09.2020 at 3.00 p.m.

Tender Last Date and Time of submission: 05.10.2020 upto 3.00 p.m.

Bid document will be available in website <https://tntenders.gov.in>

Tender opening Date and Time: 06.10.2020 at 3.30 p.m.

Superintending Engineer (Special Project)

# Manjhi's HAM(S) joins hands with NDA

Announcement was earlier scheduled for Thursday; Bihar Assembly election is due in Oct.-Nov.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
PATNA

In a sudden move, former Bihar Chief Minister and president of the Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular) (HAM-S) Jitan Ram Manjhi on Wednesday announced that his party has become a part of the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

Mr. Manjhi was to make the announcement on Thursday.

"From today, my party has become a part of the NDA in Bihar... Earlier, I was to announce it on Thursday but I thought there should not be any delay in good work," he said in a press meet at his official residence in Patna.

Mr. Manjhi made it clear that his party would not "merge" with the Janata Dal (U) (JD-U) as speculated, but would be a part of the NDA as an ally. "I've also not demanded any number of seats



**Ties forged:** Jitan Ram Manjhi made it clear his party would not "merge" with the JD(U), but would be a part of the NDA.

for the forthcoming Assembly election in the State... When a mutual understanding between us has reached then, I think, there should not be any talk of any demand... My party workers and I will put in all strength to make Nitish Kumar the Chief Minister again," he said.

Mr. Manjhi slammed the

fourth alliance partner of the NDA in Bihar.

Sources in the party told *The Hindu* that Mr. Manjhi had to rush to Patna on Wednesday from his native Mahakar in Gaya district on some "express message" from the Chief Minister's house. However, others said, "Since the inauspicious period of 'pitripaksha' begins tomorrow, Mr. Manjhi made this announcement today itself".

"Yes, we'll be joining the NDA tomorrow [Thursday] in Patna and our party president Jitan Ram Manjhi will announce it formally," HAM(S) leader and spokesperson Danish Rizwan had told *The Hindu* over the phone. On August 27, Mr. Manjhi met Mr. Kumar and since then the talk of his joining the ruling NDA had been doing the rounds in the State's political circle.

Mr. Manjhi is the lone member of his party in the

State Assembly. He was made the Chief Minister in May 2014 after the JD(U)

faced a crushing defeat in the Lok Sabha polls and Mr. Kumar had resigned on moral grounds. However, Mr. Manjhi had to step down from the post of Chief Minister in 2015 to make way for the return of Mr. Kumar. He later formed the Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular) and contested the 2015 Bihar Assembly election as an NDA constituent, but with the return of Mr. Kumar to the NDA in July 2017, Mr. Manjhi parted ways to join hands with the *Mahagathbandhan*.

Party sources told *The Hindu* that the HAM(S) may get seven to nine seats from the JD(U) quota in the poll that is due in October-November. The seats the party is likely to get are Barachatti, Imamganj, Kutumba, Makhdumpur, Rajauli, Atari, Tekri, Sursand and Purnea.

## Mission Karmayogi to train govt. officials

Focus is on a future-ready civil service

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday gave its approval for Mission Karmayogi, a new national capacity-building and performance evaluation programme for civil servants.



Prakash Javadekar

encies" as well, and also includes a monitoring framework for performance evaluations. Eventually, service matters such as confirmation after probation period, deployment, work assignments and notification of vacancies will all be integrated into the proposed framework.

Announcing the Cabinet decision, Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar said the scheme was meant to be a comprehensive post-recruitment reform of the Centre's human resource (HR) development, in much the same way as the National Recruitment Agency approved last week is pre-recruitment reform.

### 'Roles-based'

The programme will support a transition from "rules-based to roles-based" HR management, so that work allocations can be done by matching an official's competencies to the requirements of the post,

Department of Personnel and Training Secretary C. Chandramouli told presspersons after the Cabinet meeting.

Apart from domain knowledge training, the scheme will focus on "functional and behavioural com-

Kafeel Khan to stay away from U.P.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
LUCKNOW

"I will not bend," said Kafeel Khan soon after he stepped out of the Mathura jail late on Tuesday following the revocation of the charges under the National Security Act (NSA) against him by the Allahabad High Court.

Talking to *The Hindu* over the phone, Dr. Khan said the Uttar Pradesh government had targeted him and planned to keep him inside jail indefinitely for asking questions about the 2017 oxygen tragedy in the BRD Hospital in Gorakhpur.

### 'Paying the price'

He said he was paying the price for "raising voice of 70 kids who died in the oxygen tragedy". "All I asked is if Dr. Kafeel is not the murderer, then who is?" said Dr. Kafeel.

Soon after his release, Dr. Khan was driven by his family to Rajasthan where he is expected to spend the next few weeks. His family says they want him to avoid U.P. for the time being due to safety reasons and the fear of being falsely implicated. "When I was arrested in Mumbai, I had said even then I would be killed in an encounter. For this reason, we will spend some days outside U.P.", he said.

The Allahabad High Court on Tuesday set aside the NSA charges against Dr. Khan, terming it illegal, and directed the Uttar Pradesh government to forthwith release him from jail.

## Govt. issues SOP for holding exams

'Vital to conduct examinations with preventive measures to contain COVID-19'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Only asymptomatic staff and students shall be allowed inside the examination hall and only those examination centres which are outside the containment zone shall be allowed to function, noted the Union Health Ministry on Wednesday while issuing SOP (standard operating procedure) on preventive measures to be followed while conducting examinations to contain the spread of COVID-19.

The Ministry said that these centres are frequented by a large number of students and staff for the entire duration of the exam and it is therefore vital to plan and conduct these examinations while following specific preventive measures.

Universities, educational institutions, examination conducting authorities and examination centres have been advised to plan out the examination schedule in a staggered manner.

"Examinees from containment zones, who were unable to take the scheduled exams, shall be given an opportunity to undertake the examination through other means or the Universities/Educational Institution shall arrange for taking the exam at a later date for such students," the Ministry added.

The Ministry added that in case of PwD (Persons with Disabilities) candidates available a scribe, both the candidate and scribe must wear masks and be made to sit with adequate physical distance.

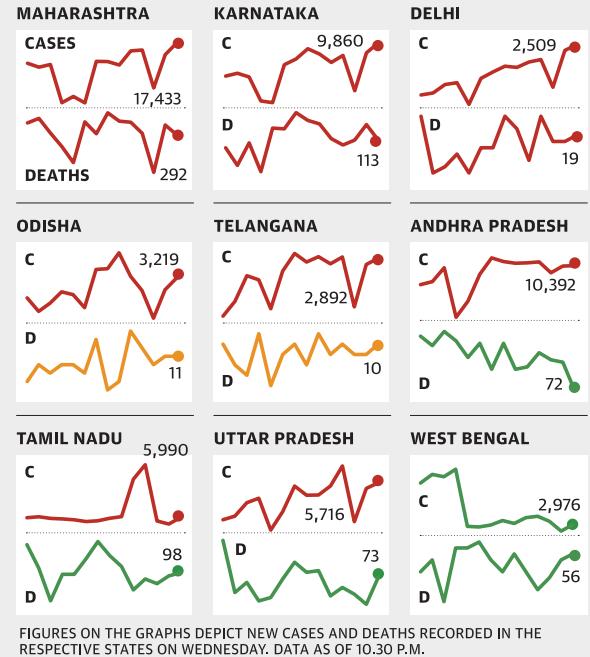
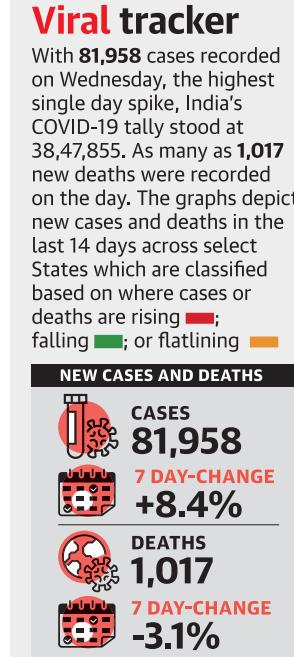
"Adequate arrangements for safe drinking water (preferably with disposable cups/glasses) should be made in the examination hall and seating arrangement in the examination hall to be made in such a way that adequate social distancing is maintained. For pen and paper based tests, the invigilator will sanitise his hands prior to distribution of question papers/answer sheets. The examinees will also sanitise their hands before receiving such papers and handing them back to invigilators... The answer sheets will preferably be opened up after 72 hours have elapsed post collection of papers," states the SOP.

**'Death rate is lowest'**

Data released by the Health Ministry on Wednesday said 54% of COVID-19 cases in India are in the 18-44 age group but 51% deaths are reported in the 60 and above age group, said. It added that currently India has 1,578 dedicated COVID hospitals.

"The deaths per million population in India is one of the lowest in the world. While the global average is 110 deaths per million population, India is reporting 48 deaths per million population," said a release.

It further elaborated that if a student is found to be symptomatic and insists on giving the examination, he may be allowed to take ex-



FIGURES ON THE GRAPHS DEPICT NEW CASES AND DEATHS RECORDED IN THE RESPECTIVE STATES ON WEDNESDAY. DATA AS OF 10.30 P.M.

## Extraordinary measures for extraordinary times, says BJP

Party dismisses objection to suspension of Question Hour

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Wednesday termed the Opposition's uproar over the suspension of Question Hour in the upcoming Lok Sabha session "masterclass in hypocrisy".

"It is amusing to see Opposition MPs who don't have the power to question even their party president create a fake narrative on this issue," said BJP Rajya Sabha MP and party media cell head Anil Baluni.

He added that Parliament would be convening only for four hours daily due to the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to the cancelling of Question Hour, but unstarred questions would be allowed.

"It is far-fetched and too dramatic to say that this is being done by the government to evade questions. This is simply a case of extraordinary measures for extraordinary times. The government has always answered each question with sincerity," he said.



**Back in the day:** Even in normal times, the Question Hour was routinely disrupted by the Opposition, it said. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

State Assemblies have functioned in various States after March 2020 and there has been no Question Hour in the Assemblies of Andhra Pradesh, Kerala, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra. BJP is in Opposition in most of these States and it did not raise a hue and cry there," he said. "Parliamentary Affairs Minister and Defence Minister spoke to parties where they all supported this move. But now suddenly they have changed their stand," he said.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi had earlier said that an abbreviated Zero Hour of 30 minutes would be allowed for members to take up particular issues of interest.

## Right to question govt. will be lost: Opposition

Parties see ploy to evade accountability

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Opposition parties have objected to the decision to suspend Question Hour in the upcoming session of Parliament, seeing in it a ploy to do away with any form of accountability.

Trinamool Congress Parliamentary Party leader (Rajya Sabha) Derek O'Brien said the Opposition would lose the right to question the government. "The government says they have allowed Zero Hour in which matters of urgent importance can be raised, but one has to remember that Ministers are not liable to reply to the issues raised during the Zero Hour," he said.

He pointed out that there had only been four special sessions when there was no Question Hour. "During the 33rd (1961), 93rd (1975), 98th (1976) and 99th (1977) sessions there was no Question Hour as these sessions were summoned for special purposes – [passing of State budget of] Orissa, Proclamation of Emergency, 44th Amendment, President's

note that Question Hour was routinely disrupted by the Opposition. "The extent of disturbance is visible from the fact that in the last eight sessions, out of the 162 hours allotted for Question Hour, only 59 hours were used and more than 102 hours were lost due to disruptions and adjournment," he said.

Even in normal times, he said, it was important to note that Question Hour was disrupted by the Opposition. "The extent of disturbance is visible from the fact that in the last eight sessions, out of the 162 hours allotted for Question Hour, only 59 hours were used and more than 102 hours were lost due to disruptions and adjournment," he said.

Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad has convened a meeting of Parliamentary Strategy Group of the Congress on Thursday to discuss the upcoming session.

Rule Tamil Nadu and Nagaland. The upcoming Monsoon Session is a regular session," he added.

CPI's Rajya Sabha member Binoy Viswam, in a letter to Chairman Venkaiah Naidu, said Question Hour and other instruments like the calling attention motion were integral to the democratic functioning of Parliament and had never been done away with in the history of Independent India.

Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad has convened a meeting of Parliamentary Strategy Group of the Congress on Thursday to discuss the upcoming session.

SD/-, Executive Engineer, Padmanabhanagar Division, BBMP.

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No: EE(PN)/TEND/09/2020-21

Date: 01-09-2020

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The Executive Engineer, Padmanabhanagar Division, BBMP Bengaluru invites tenders from eligible contractors registered in Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike or equivalent registration with CPWD/KPWD/Railways/MES or any State Govt. Organisations for the constructions of work detailed in the table below.

Sl. No.	Name of the Work	Amount put to tender (Rs. in Lakhs)	EMD (in Rs.)	Category
1.	Providing asphaltation to 8th Main balance portion and 18th 'A' Cross from 2nd Main to dead end of 2nd Stage BSK in Ward No.166. (2nd Call).	9.00	11,250/-	ST
2.	Construction of Community hall to Sri Angalaparameshwari Temple at 9th Main, Kaverinagar in Ward No.166. (2nd Call).	15.85	39,625/-	Others
3.	Providing Drinking water facilities and Pipeline to Existing Borewell in Ward No.161, Hosakerehalli.	17.00	42,500/-	Others
4.	Improvements to Road side drain to 4th Cross at N/s of 50 feet Main Road in T. G. Layout in Ward No.161.	15.00	37,500/-	Others
5.	Maintenance of Special Gangmen and depot collection in Ward No.161.	8.00	10,000/-	SC
6.	Ward area Maintenance in Hosakerehalli in Ward No.161.	15.00	37,500/-	Others
7.	Construction of Community Hall to Ganapathi Temple, 13th Cross, 7th Block, Jayanagar in Ward No.166.	25.00	25,000/-	SC
8.	Filling of pot holes in Ward No.166, Karisandra.	12.00	30,000/-	Others
9.	Development works to Indira Canteen premises at Dr. Vishnuvardhan Road, Opposite to Eswarinagara in Ward No.180.	11.60	29,000/-	Others
10.	Maintenance of Crematorium Burial Ground and Office maintenance in Ward No.180.	5.00	12,500/-	Others
11.	Community property maintenance including parks in Ward No.180.	5.00	12,500/-	Others
12.	Providing Drinking water facilities in Ward No.180.	7.50	18,750	Others
13.	General Public and Septage Maintenance of Ward No.180.	5.00	12,500/-	Others
14.	Improvements to Roads and Footpath maintenance in Ward No.180.	15.00	18,750/-	SC
15.	Construction of Culverts improvements to Roads and drains to Main Roads and Cross Roads of Anjaneyanagar, Thimmarayagowda Layout and Hosakerehalli surrounding areas in Ward No.161. Hosakerehalli.	99.00	1,98,000/-	Others
16.	Improvements to Roads and drains to 50 feet Main Road and surrounding area of T.G. Layout in Ward No.161.	95.00	1,90,000/-	Others
17.	Improvements to Roads and drains to Balance Roads of Anjaneyanagar and Manjunathanagar 2nd Main in Ward No.161.	95.00	1,90,000/-	Others
18.	Improvements to Roads and drains to Cross Roads behind Bhavani Shankarawamy Temple of T.G. Layout in Ward No.161.	60.00	1,20	

# Mundra terminal deal under scanner

MHA and MEA studying agreement between Adani Group's French JV partner and Chinese firm

SUHASINI HAIDAR  
MAHESH LANGA  
NEW DELHI/AHMEDABAD

A proposal to transfer partial ownership of a terminal at India's busiest Mundra port in Gujarat to a Chinese company is now under the scanner of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), after an agreement between the Adani Group's French joint venture partner CMA Terminals and the China Merchants Group (CMG), a Chinese state-owned enterprise. While the Adani Group has clarified that it has not filed the application itself, the proposal could see red flags from the government's security agencies that have already put other Chinese acquisitions on hold for the past few months.

## 50% stake

According to the application submitted by CMA Terminals of France on May 21 this year, the company that is a joint venture partner of Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Limited (APSEZ), en-



**Bustling centre:** The Mundra Port, which handles large container traffic, is among India's busiest ports. ■ PTI

gaged in "developing, operating, maintaining terminal CT-4 at Mundra Port", wants to turn over its 50% stake to the CMA-CGM group, under a joint venture between the French company and the China Merchants Group (CMG). Effectively, the transaction would result in a China Merchants Group subsidiary taking an indirect, minority stake of 24.9% in the Adani-CMA Mundra Terminal.

Senior government officials who confirmed receiv-

CMA-CGM for the terminal in Mundra Port. We are the operator of the terminal as well as the port at Mundra port," a senior official of the Adani group told *The Hindu*.

"CMA-CGM is the third largest shipping company in the world and they are our partner in Mundra," he said, adding that the permissions would have been sought in accordance with the requirements of Indian law.

APSEZ, which is India's largest private port operator, entered into the Indo-French joint venture with CMA Terminals for the Mundra port in 2014, and the container terminal at Mundra was commissioned in 2017.

## Worldwide move

On December 20, 2019 CMA-CGM announced it was going to sell stakes in 10 terminals worldwide to its venture with China Merchants Group for \$968 million. The list included the Mundra port in India, and others in China, Vietnam, Thailand, Singapore, Netherlands and other countries.

Last week, the *Nikkei Asian Review* journal reported that two of the 10 terminals, including the ones in India and Vietnam, had held up the deal, quoting a CMG official who said that "because of the influence of the epidemic, as the examination and approval process of the local governments was delayed".

The MHA and the MHA de-

clined to comment officially

on the matter, and officials at the Shipping Ministry, which oversees ports, did not respond to calls. Despite the Adani Group's considerable importance in the infrastructure business, it is unlikely the proposal for a Chinese stake in the Mundra port would be given swift clearance, said officials who did not wish to be named, citing the heightened tensions between Delhi and Beijing.

About 200 investment proposals from China are awaiting security clearance from the MHA after new rules were notified in April.

(With inputs from  
Vijaita Singh)

# Bhushan penalty will remain a matter of debate, says A-G

He calls Justice Mishra 'iron judge' on latter's retirement day

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL  
NEW DELHI

Attorney-General K.K. Venugopal called Justice Arun Mishra an "iron judge", but referred to the punishment of civil rights lawyer Prashant Bhushan for criminal contempt, saying it would be a point of discussion for long.

"Personally, I would have been happy if no punishment had been levied, but the judgment laid down the law on the principle of contempt elaborately. It will be a matter of debate. It will be discussed for a long time," Mr. Venugopal addressed Justice Mishra, who retired on Wednesday.

A Bench led by Justice Mishra had punished Mr. Bhushan with a fine for his tweets "scandalising the court".

Mr. Venugopal, the top law officer, was speaking at a short farewell session held as soon as the virtual hearing in the Chief Justice of In-



Justice Arun Mishra

Justice Mishra replied to Mr. Venugopal that what the latter said about punishment was something "we discussed till the last moment."

"System has been upright," he said. He had been faithful to his convictions and conscience. His efforts on the Bench had always been to "unearth the truth", he observed. He thanked the Bar for being the power behind him.

"I have been harsh... I have used harsh words... Nobody should feel hurt," Justice Mishra said.

Chief Justice Bobde described Justice Mishra as a "beacon of courage".

"You have been a beacon of light, a beacon of courage, beacon of fortitude in the face of all adversity, which you faced bravely in the discharge of duty," he said.

Supreme Court Bar Association president Dushyant Dave, who was seen on the screen, could not speak.

## Researchers detect virus using mass spectrometer

'It takes less than three minutes'

R. PRASAD  
CHENNAI



The new approach can directly detect the presence of the virus from nasopharyngeal swabs. ■ AP

Using mass spectrometer, researchers at the Delhi-based Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB) and the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) have been able to detect COVID-19 with 95% sensitivity and 100% specificity with respect to RT-PCR (reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction). Detection of the virus takes less than three minutes; time from sample preparation to detection takes less than 30 minutes.

The new method can directly detect the virus without amplifying the RNA for detection, as is the case with RT-PCR. The new method relies on detecting the presence of two peptides unique to SARS-CoV-2 and not seen in any other coronavirus or other viruses.

## Quick detection

Though seven peptides were found to be unique to SARS-CoV-2, only two peptides are used for quick virus detection. One of the peptides is the spike protein and the other is a replicase protein.

The unique peptides were seen in over 54,000 genomic sequences of SARS-CoV-2 deposited in a public database (GISAID) as on July 1.

"The sensitivity is 90.4%

when compared to RT-PCR

if we have very high strin-

## 'Banks must not profit from the pandemic'

Lawyer representing borrowers tells SC that interest on interest is 'worse than taking a pound of flesh'

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Circulars issued by the RBI on August 6 and hailed by the government in the Supreme Court came under intense criticism from individual borrowers and commercial sectors across the spectrum who called it "old wine in a new bottle".

The circulars allow individual banks discretion to resolve COVID-19-related stress and customise relief to individual borrowers facing the reality of payment of accrued loan interest post the moratorium period.

Appearing before a Bench led by Justice Ashok Bhush-

wanathan, for the power and real estate sectors, said the government and the RBI were going in circles without addressing proportionality and waiver of interests required in an "extraordinary force majeure situation" like the pandemic.

"[Borrowers] did not default on the loans. Moratorium on EMI was meant as a respite when cash flow is strapped. How can the banks say it is a loss for them? When the country is down under, the banks want to make a profit? This is worse than taking a pound of flesh. Profit of COVID? Give me time to restore my finances, stand up on my legs," Mr.



Dutta appearing for the borrowers community contended.

Mr. Dutta said the RBI is "not an agent of the banks, only a regulator".

Senior advocate K.V. Vish-

wanathan, for the power and real estate sectors, said the government and the RBI were going in circles without addressing proportionality and waiver of interests required in an "extraordinary force majeure situation" like the pandemic.

## Nerve centre

He said the sectors he represents form the nerve centre of the economy. The moratorium has only postponed the burden.

Senior advocate Ranjit Kumar, for the Shopping Centres Association of India, asked whether the computer-managed banking system

has already rendered the loan accounts NPAs with the moratorium having expired on August 31.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, for the construction sector, sought a complete waiver of interest for the moratorium period.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, for both the Centre and the RBI, said a variety of banks are dealing with a variety of loans and borrowers. The thrust is to revive the economy and sectors. He said the majority of the economy runs on small businesses.

The court will continue the hearing on Thursday.

## Probe into another case led to drug case suspect

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on Wednesday said investigation into a separate case led it to one Basit Parihar with suspected links to those under the scanner in connection with actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death.

Based on inputs from the Enforcement Directorate (ED), pertaining to mobile chats about procurement, transportation and consumption of drugs by some suspects in Sushant's case, the NCB registered an FIR under the Narcotic Drugs

and Psychotropic Substances Act.

On the intervening night of August 27 and 28, the NCB conducted a raid in Mumbai and arrested Abbas Lakhani and Karn Arora after the seizure of bud (cured marijuana) from them.

The follow-up investigation uncovered the linkages of Lakhani with one Zaid Vila-

tra, said the NCB. It picked up Zaid and during searches, over ₹9.55 lakh in cash and foreign currency (\$2,081, £180 and 15 Dirham) were seized. He said that they were proceeds of alleged drug peddling.

The Facebook team was summoned by the panel on the subject, "Safeguarding

## Facebook caught in BJP-Opposition war

Company officials appear before House panel

SOBHANA K. NAIR  
NEW DELHI

At a more than three-hour meeting of the Standing Committee on Information and Technology on Wednesday, Facebook India officials were caught in the middle of a shouting match between the Opposition and BJP members as each side blamed the social media giant for showing bias towards the other.

The Facebook team was summoned by the panel on the subject, "Safeguarding

citizens' rights and prevention of misuse of social/online news media platforms including special emphasis on women security in the digital space."

Over 100 questions were raised by 17 members (11 BJP and 6 Opposition) who attended the meeting, for which Facebook has assured written replies later on.

According to sources, the meeting began with the BJP members raking up the political affiliation of Facebook India's Managing Director Ajit Mohan. They accused him of having worked in the past with the Congress government both at the Centre and in Kerala.

The Opposition members, meanwhile, pointed out that Ankhi Das, head of Facebook's public policy in India, was an ABVP member. They also raised the recent articles published in *The Wall Street Journal* and the *Time Magazine*.

## Company's record

Facebook officials defended the company's record, claiming that globally it had taken down 22.5 million pages in just the second quarter of this year alone.

The firm also told the panel that it had instituted an oversight board to do a second round of checks. The Facebook officials said this

board followed the global community standards. "We asked Facebook to clarify on how global community standards are applicable to India considering the wide range of religions and castes here," another member said.

Chairman of the committee Shashi Tharoor suggested that the Facebook officials should be called for a second round on September 10, a day before the current standing committee's tenure ends.

However, the sources said the BJP members did not relent and said the new committee, whenever it was reconstituted, could take the issue forward.

## FAITH

### The way of great men

The significance of purana stories lies in the many deep Vedanta truths they convey to the common man. For instance, all of us are aware of the human tendency to err very easily and naturally. This is because the senses in human beings are outward bound and it requires great penance, self control and determination to overpower the senses, pointed out Sri Krishnamurthy Sastrigal in a discourse. The Bhagavata Purana quotes the incident of how Brahma, who is guided by the Supreme Lord to create the world and its beings, gets trapped in his desire for Vak, a being of his own creation. He then feels ashamed for this unethical intention. At this point, his own sons, the sages Marichi, Angiras, Atri and others, advise him that his dishonourable desire does not become one who has been endowed with extraordinary powers to create by the Lord.

It is a fact that at times even Indra and other celestial beings yield to passions and commit sins. There is much danger in such acts of theirs as these can send wrong signals to the common man. But by virtue of their severe penance, they make amends for their sins. In the case of Brahma, he sheds his present body as prayaschitta and then gains another one to continue creation. Similarly, during the instance of Daksha Yagna, Dakshayani too gives up her body through severe penance when she feels remorse at the turn of events and she regrets her act of not heeding Siva's words. Such rigorous penance and prayaschitta are not possible for all. That is why in the Gita, Krishna states that much depends on the character and behaviour of great men whose example has a strong and guiding effect on common people. "Whatever a great man does, the same is done by others as well. Whatever standard he sets, the world follows."

**TH CROSSWORD + 13031**

(set by Vulcan)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28				

**ACROSS**

- A nice fable – an exotic book (1,4,7)
- Least terrible Russian automobile (7)
- A murder suspect hiding body part (7)
- American city without a park (6)
- Under pressure, sweets sent back (8)
- Athletic contest surprisingly not held outside Central America (9)

**DOWN**

- Remain a saint or a monster! (5)
- Walk around large venue (5)
- Nice wishes for a journey! (3,6)
- Understood vase to be reserved (8)
- Admirer of a party with rightwing extremist radical leaders (6)
- Divorced after settler got caught in an affair – it's conspicuous (7)
- Unyielding one crazy about getting fake tan (7)
- Old relatives settled in North-Eastern heartlands (12)
- A North American daily covering one cold militant (7)
- Little story with new and better content (9)
- Awful new boring group (4)
- Officer in a unit, leanest, not as corrupt (10)
- Beetle-neck (5)
- From US area, I travelled to another land mass (7)
- Pleased with day after morning exercise (6)
- In the middle of a film starting to dig in (6)
- True, extremely adorable – it's designed as detailed (10)
- Massacre after family got to English city (9)
- Footwear's design not right (6)
- Union movement to stop sale (7)
- Postal service in trouble after excellent run – the end of them (7)
- Time to admit informer's mistakes (6)
- Articles about the leader's letter (5)
- Impartial show (4)

SCAN TO PLAY

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## SUDOKU

8	6	4	9					
			9	3	4			

messy as it is, people are finding control and relief in building alternative worlds in virtual simulation games such as Second Life, The Sims and Animal Crossing

SWETA AKUNDI

Reality could have been kinder to Bella Marcu. After staying home to take care of her late husband, who passed away in December last year, she was once more home-bound in Frankfurt, Germany, due to the pandemic.

Yet, throughout this period of social distancing – at age 79, she is at greater risk from the novel Coronavirus – she has not been alone. "Second Life has been and still is, a wonderful company for me," says Bella, of the virtual world simulation game that encourages role-play and socialising.

With the year on hold in real life, her virtual social life has been dynamic. On Second Life, sweet Mrs Marcu is a fashionable model, Anabelle Mayo.

"I have met interesting people, made friends and gotten to understand different cultures from all over the world, which is built to the original real life version," she says. As Anabelle, she has also developed new hobbies, including taking up modelling courses, participating in fashion shows and learning Spanish at an institute in Second Life. The latter has come in handy in real life where she broadcasts Spanish and English songs as a DJ.

During the past five months, virtual life simulation games such as Second Life have been seeing a lot of play. The game, launched in 2003, saw 1,500 times more hours on mobile during the lockdown (March 2020 till July 2020) globally.

And it makes sense. Forced to socially distance, entertainment avenues in the real world may be few, but virtually, you can still visit hotels in different outfits, lounge around resort pools and solve puzzles, as in a game like Hotel Hideaway. Or roleplay, meet, flirt and date other players as in the more explicit multiverse, IMVU.

It is perhaps even more fun now to channel what could have been your life, if not for the pandemic, on The Sims 4's realistic virtual world.



# In another LIFE

You may not be able to go out, but the Sims you create can live in new homes, go on vacation, and start families.

## Finding communities

If it's Second Life that occupies Bella for two to four hours every day, Mumbai-based Gagan Gupta and his 11-year-old daughter's current passion is Animal Crossing: New Horizons (ACNH).

Here on a virtual island, his daughter goes to the lake to fish, while he finishes chopping wood. Deciding he does not like one part of the town enough, he relocates his neighbours – with their consent – to another location while he destroys the area to build it up from scratch.

The game, which puts you in charge of designing your virtual island and all its AI anthropomorphic animal residents, was released on Nintendo Switch in March this year, and has seen downloads by the millions. "I started playing on March 24 and I have clocked well over 350 hours in this game," says Gagan.

"I hate to put it like this..." he explains the appeal of Animal Crossing, "but it's like a dollhouse," he laughs. The 42-year-old runs a gaming consultancy DTR and has been observing gaming in India for a couple of decades now.

While he agrees that it is action games such as PUBG that rule favour, the charm of virtual world building games lies in the creativity they require.

"Once you create things, you just keep wanting to go one step further in making it better. Some kind of an OCD



**Here, I am free** (Clockwise from top) A screenshot from Animal Crossing: New Horizons; The Sims 4; Gagan Gupta and his daughter playing together; and a screenshot from Second Life

■ NINTENDO, ELECTRONIC ARTS, LINDEN LAB

## WHAT THE NUMBERS SAY

### Animal Crossing: New Horizons

10.6 million sales of Animal Crossing: New Horizons, according to Nintendo Co's 'Consolidated Financial Highlights' report, on August 6, 2020

More than 22 million sales since March 20, 2020 release

### Second Life

Saw 1500x more hours on mobile during the lockdown (March 2020 till July 2020) globally

### Grand Theft Auto, via Twitch Tracker

18,378,733 hours on average are played every seven days

- Compiled by Divya Kala Bhavani

takes over!" Gagan says.

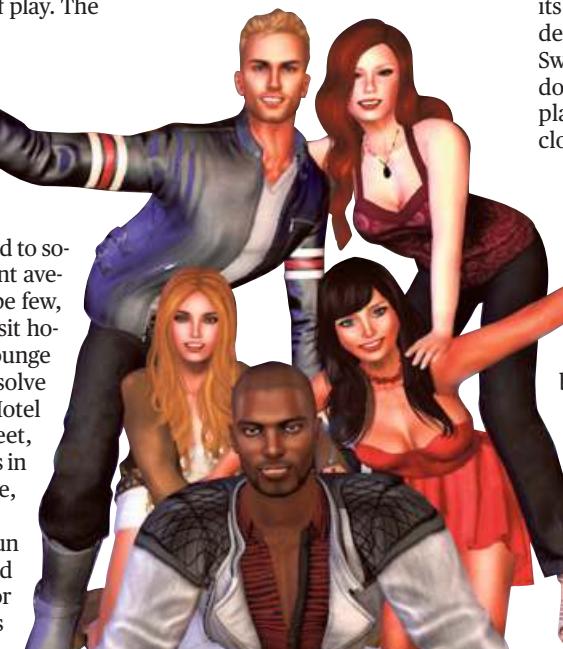
His own island on Animal Crossing is rated five star and features elaborate flower arrangements, a camping site and a wedding area. Gagan's Zen garden with its pebbled paths and peaceful running water ponds has a mostly chilled out but occasionally fire-breathing Godzilla statue.

You can trade furniture and pop culture décor items like these on various groups on community platform Discord. There are currently over five lakh people on one such group Nookazon, where you can sell and buy ACNH items through Nookmiles tickets, which can later be used to visit other AI-generated islands on the game.

The players' personal details are kept anonymous, as many may well be in their teens. But for 17-year-old A Sahiti, the draw into virtual worlds over this summer, was not socialising with friends away from school, it was building new worlds at home.

## A whole new world

"I miss my house," Sahiti half-whines, sitting in her house in Dehradun. With her laptop given away for servicing



PRADEEP KUMAR

In the space of four months, Tamil cinema has had markedly different responses to two separate instances of films opting for a digital première. Jyotika's *Ponmagal Vandhal*, which was released on Amazon Prime Video on May 29, kicked off the trend and also caused much consternation in the theatre-distributor chain. Amid backlash, industry veterans came forward and spoke in favour of actor Suriya (who is also *Ponmagal Vandhal*'s producer), reassuring key stakeholders that films featuring big stars would not be sold to over-the-top (OTT) streaming service providers. Suriya himself said as much when interacting with his fans online in June, insisting he was eager to watch *Soorarai Pottru* on the big screen.

## Landmark decision

If you did not know already, *Soorarai Pottru* will also have a digital première (October 30) via Amazon Prime Video. However, there was no backlash. Suriya's decision (which he announced via Twitter on August 22) has been grudgingly taken on the chin. Perhaps, optimism is slowly making way for realism in Tamil cinema, though the burning question is: will more big star films follow suit?

One need not read between the lines to gather that the only word this question is bound to raise on everyone's lips is *Master*. Industry observers speculate that the Vijay-starrer cost its co-producer (SS Lalit Kumar of Seven Screen Studio) around ₹200 crore to purchase from Xavier Britto of XB Film Creators, which, on face value, makes *Master*'s production budget at least four or five times dearer than *Soorarai Pottru*. There are other films headlined by heroes with a defined market value like Dhanush's *Jagame Thandhiram* or Jayam Ravi's *Bhoomi* that are also pending release.

Filmmaker Lakshman, director of *Bhoomi*, is of the opinion that *Soorarai Pottru* going the digital way would not necessarily influence or compel other producers to push their content to OTT platforms. "But the fact remains that there is no other way [to release a film] now. With more days gone, the producer's mindset may change," he says, when



# Uncharted territory

With the digital première of Suriya's *Soorarai Pottru* and the evolution of the OTT-Tamil cinema dynamic, will more films with big stars follow suit?

quizzed about *Bhoomi*'s prospects of an OTT release.

It is a recurring theme at the moment: producers insisting that their high value films are not up for OTT release. S Sashikanth of Y NOT Studios, the producer of *Jagame Thandhiram*, wrote this tongue-in-cheek response on Twitter to speculations that Netflix was courting his film: *Jagam* (world) is still healing and not

back to normal. Until then, be patient for the theatres to open and don't believe in rumours."

## Time factor

Producer G Dhananjayan adds that "a lot of films are negotiating" with OTT platforms at the moment, but the problem seems to be the money these platforms are willing to front. Tamil cinema, unlike

## INDISPENSABLE EXPERIENCE

In his statement, Suriya insisted his decision was one he made as a producer and not the star. "If the long wait continues, anticipation on the film may get drastically diluted. This will not only affect me but also the people associated with my ongoing productions and their families," he reasoned. Filmmaker Lakshman insists that without a COVID-19 vaccine, people will not return to theatres due to fear. But he is optimistic. Should theatres have no choice but operate at 35-50% occupancy for a period of time, Lakshman believes simultaneous OTT and theatre premières could emerge as a business model. "We have always had that 30-40% of the audience who wouldn't go to theatres even in normal circumstances. Such a model could then be beneficial for customers as well as the producer," he adds.

Bollywood films, has a limited audience reach (which reflects on the number of subscriptions an OTT service may project to gain). "I hear the difference in figures is as big as 50%," he says. For instance, trade circles speculate that Akshay Kumar's *Laxmmi Bomb* was sold to Disney+ Hotstar for ₹125 crore. "That was satellite and digital rights put together. Will Lalit sell if he is offered the same ₹125 crore as *Laxmmi Bomb*? Of course not," says Dhananjayan, adding, "The issue is no OTT player (with a TV channel link) is willing to front the fee for

satellite and digital rights of *Master*. Also, assuming around 10% of Tamil population subscribes to OTTs to watch films, it is still only about 50-60 lakh people. Comparatively, 10% of the Hindi speaking population would mean around eight crore people. Bollywood has a significant numbers advantage."

What of the financial strain placed on a producer due to long delays, considering how nearly every Tamil film, as Ravinder Chandrasekaran of Libra Productions remarks, is funded by private financiers? "Do you think Sashi can hold

**Winds of change** (Clockwise from extreme left) Suriya and Aparna Balamurali in a still from *Soorarai Pottru*; Vijay in a still from *Master*; Siju Prabhakaran • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

onto *Jagame Thandhiram* for long? I doubt it. Maybe, now is not the right time to discuss, but it (OTT release) will happen," says Ravinder, adding that the muted response to Suriya's decision to go digital could be because producers are waiting to see how *Soorarai Pottru*'s release impacts Amazon Prime's business.

Working in Suriya's favour is the release model his production firm 2D Entertainment adopts: they distribute their own films. Meaning, there was no need for complicated negotiations with third parties before deciding on a digital release, something

Lalit Kumar cannot avoid since he has already sold his content to distributors/theatres across the globe. "Master" is that one movie, which, when theatres re-open, can single-handedly bring audiences back. Lalit may be mindful of the time he can hold onto the film.

At the same time, Vijay, too, can say that he would do another film for Lalit in case he incurs a loss on *Master*, if it releases on OTT," Ravinder remarks.

## Alternative route?

If not OTT, can network televisions with their wider reach step up and bring back satellite TV premières? Lack of advertising revenue (a knock-on effect of COVID-19) is a deterrent, says Siju Prabhakaran, executive vice president and cluster head - South business, ZEEL. He estimates that most TV networks suffered a 70-75% revenue drop during lockdown. "Advertising is still a large part of how the TV ecosystem survives. Maybe, smaller films could have satellite premières. Even so, for a TV première to be profitable, we will need a pay-per-view model backed by advertising. It is the same as how OTT's put their premium content behind a paywall. A blended model could emerge eventually," he adds.

IN OUR BACKYARD

# In blue chip company

The Blue Pansy butterfly is just as magnificent as the flower

ABHISHEK GULSHAN

The word pansy has changed in meaning as I've gone through life: As a child, it meant a vibrantly coloured flower. Then in my teens, it meant femme phobia. Today, as a naturalist, I associate the word with a butterfly: the Blue Pansy (*Junonia orithya*) that has a colouration as vibrant as the hybrid flower found most often in ornamental gardens.

*The Book of Indian Butterflies* by Isaac Kehimkar, an eminent butterfly expert, tells us that this butterfly has a wingspan of about 45-60 mm and belongs to the largest butterfly family called Nymphalidae that has over 6,000 species worldwide. "The forelegs or the front pair of legs in this family (mostly) are much reduced in size and are covered with

hair, thus tend to look like brushes, thereby also being regarded as the Brush-footed butterflies," it says.

The butterfly has electric blue on the upperwing and an earthy brown on the under. The male and the female look similar though the male is slightly more vibrant. As a behavioural trait, I have observed that the males are extremely territorial, trying to wade off other males from their territory.

Butterflies do not have an attack-based defence system, they mostly adopt ecological adaptions as a strategy to survive. A few have a 'toxic approach' by choosing host plants that contain toxins, but Pansies have a disguising approach. Their wings have wavy patterns, leading to strategically placed yellow, black, and / or red eyespot-like markings

## Happy butterflying

The Bombay Natural History Society (BNHS), in collaboration with NINOX - Owl about Nature and other partners are celebrating the Big Butterfly Month India in September 2020. There will be a formal backyard butterfly count between September 14 to 20 across India. To participate, contact us at ninox.edu@gmail.com.

of varied sizes that are more pronounced and colourful on the upperwing, and dull on the under.

The eyespots closer to the wing area near the abdomen are bigger and more reddish-orange, often resembling eyes of a predator, so other predators are frightened and fooled away. The

duller eyespots are an attempt at diverting the predator's attack away from the vital organs of their body - head, thorax and abdomen, as the butterflies can still fly with chipped wings.

Considering it is cold-blooded, you may often see this butterfly conspicuously basking (on the ground or on a plant) in the sun, with its wings wide open. When threatened, it closes its wings to reveal its underside with brown shades in order to camouflage with its surroundings. On our butterfly trails across Delhi-NCR, we see them quite commonly, but quite late into the trail telling us that these butterflies usually prefer warmer times in comparison to certain other butterflies.

You don't have to go to an urban forest to discover them though. You'll see them in gardens, on the lookout for nectar-rich plants like on the abundant periwinkle (*sadabahar*). The host plants, where they lay their eggs, belong to the family Acanthaceae like Peela Vajradanti (*Barleria prionitis*) and the Philippine Violet or Bluebell Barleria (*Barleria cristata*). These too are easily visible in our backyards. The Blue Pansy lays a single egg on the underside of the leaves to protect it from predators.

*The writer is the founder of NINOX - Owl About Nature, a nature-awareness initiative. He is the Delhi-NCR reviewer for Ebird, a Cornell University initiative, monitoring rare sightings of birds. He formerly led a programme of WWF India.*

How an engineering student Pavan O conceptualised a touchless *vibhuti* dispenser



## A touch of faith

SRINIVASA RAMANUJAM

Conversations with your father can be taxing at times. At other times, they can be richly rewarding. As it has been for 20-year-old Pavan O, a third year ECE student at Chennai Institute of Technology. During the second lockdown, on a day when he had little else to do, Pavan had a casual chat with his father, Hari Krishna, about the world during COVID-19. Their discussion veered towards temples.

"Our neighbourhood, Kolathur, has quite a few temples and we won-

dered how the new normal there would be once places of worship reopened," recalls Pavan. One thing led to another and soon, Pavan, who is passionate about mechanical engineering, worked on a prototype that he believed would change the way places of worship would function in the future: a touchless *vibhuti* and *kungumam* dispenser.

Anybody who goes to a temple comes back with *kungumam* for the family. This offering is usually given by the *archakars* at the temple or kept at a common area for devotees to take from, thus increasing the risk of contracting COVID-19.

"My invention is to help devotees have a peaceful time at the temple and be free from concerns about their health during the *darshan*," says Pavan. His eco-friendly dispenser is enclosed in a 3D printed container and uses a small microcon-

troller and the Auger mechanism to dispense the *vibhuti* or *kungumam*. Place your hand at a distance from the sensor; it is similar to the experience you have with touchless water taps at luxury hotels and malls.

"Like wearing a mask, this could probably be the new normal in temples," says Pavan. "It helped that we have a 3D printer at home."

Pavan plans to soon patent the design of his current model, made of a 3D printed plastic material called PLA+. He estimates that one unit will cost about ₹1,500, and is ready to assemble more if temple authorities reach out to him.

"If they are interested, this unit could be made in sheet metal, which is generally used in making the *hundi*s that we see in temples. That would be ideal for long-term use," says Pavan.

## POOCH CAFE



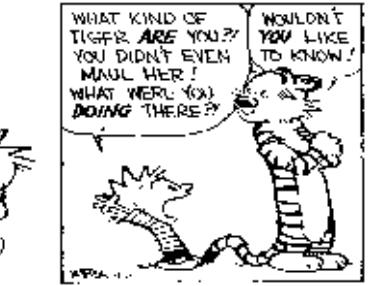
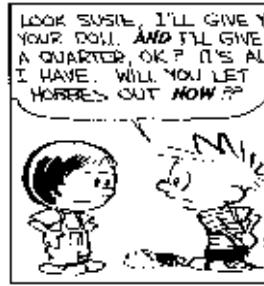
## PEANUTS



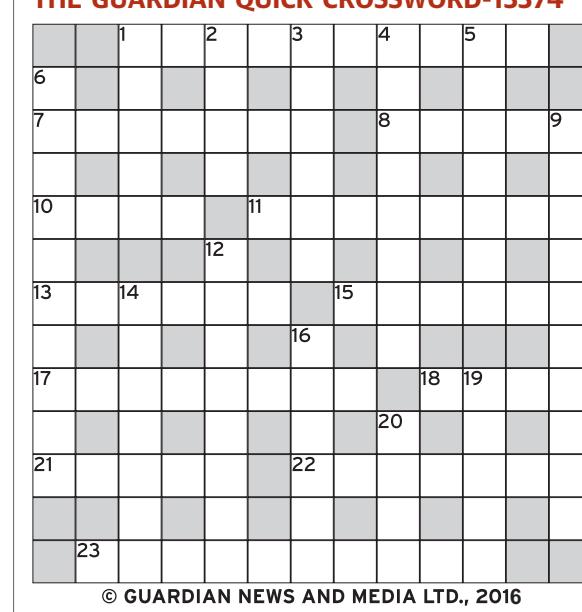
## HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



## CALVIN AND HOBBES



## TIGER



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

young man (4,3,3)

9 Very rarely (6,4)

12 Enter, sir (anag) – put in again (8)

14 Yield (4,3)

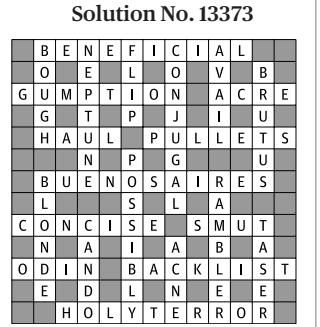
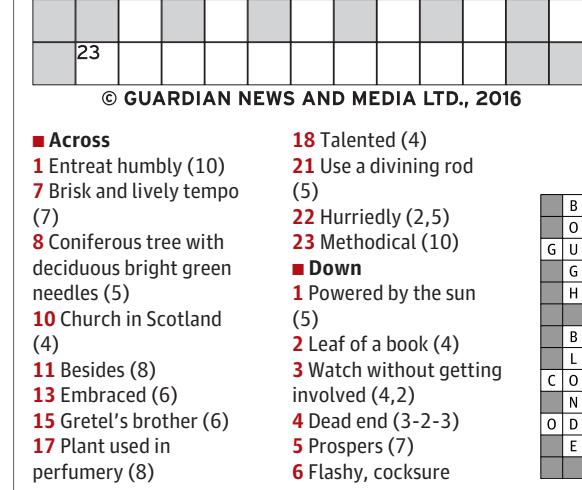
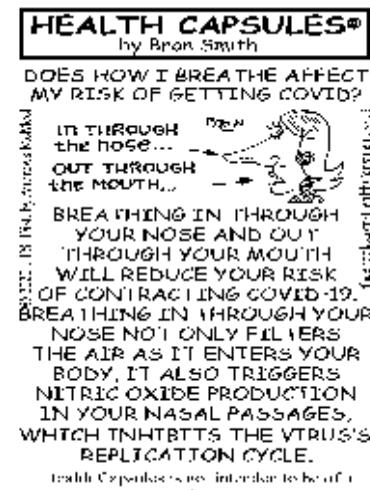
16 Boredom (6)

19 Fundamental (5)

20 Informal conversation (4)

The solution will appear on September 10, 2020.  
Solution No. 13373

## WUMO



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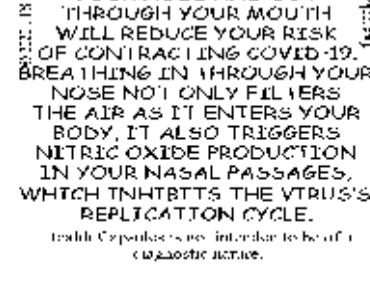
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## PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



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## HOMING IN

Indie musicians of India, DJs of England and a stand-up comedian feature in this week's list of online **Live Gigs**

MEGHNA MAJUMDAR



## Streaming From Isolation

Boiler Room, a London-based independent music platform, has been hosting live streams and posting old sets on YouTube and Facebook. Its 'Streaming From Isolation' series goes live frequently, but not on any set day of the week. DJ sets and audio-visual shows are part of the mix. If you want an understanding of the EDM scene in London, this is your channel.

## None Of This Matters

Stand-up comic Rabhinder Kannan's brand of humour is familiar to those who have been following Evar Standup Tamasha. Kannan is all set to do a solo special over Zoom this weekend, with wisecracks about school life, college days, growing old, and existential humour like how in the end... none of it matters. The show starts at 7.45 pm on September 5. Passes are at insider.in.

## Anjan Dutt and The Band

Singer, songwriter, filmmaker and actor – Anjan Dutt is a man of many talents. The baritone singer and his bandmates Neel Dutt, Amy Datta, Debopratim and Proshanto will be going live in October as part of a string of music events ushering in Durga Puja. The link to passes is already live. For details, visit insider.in.

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

# Trump calls protests 'domestic terror'

He visited areas damaged in anti-racism demonstrations in Kenosha over police shooting of black man

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
KENOSHA

President Donald Trump on Tuesday took his tough law-and-order message to Kenosha, the latest U.S. city roiled by the police shooting of a black man, as he branded recent anti-racism protests as acts of "domestic terror" by violent mobs.

Mr. Trump has been hoping for months to shift the election battle against Democrat Joe Biden from a referendum on his widely panned pandemic response, to what he sees as far more comfortable territory of law and order.

And in the Wisconsin city of Kenosha, in upheaval since a white police officer shot 29-year-old African American Jacob Blake in front of his three children, the Republican found his mark. "These are not acts of peaceful protest but really domestic terror," Mr. Trump said after touring damaged areas of the city, describing multiple nights of angry demonstrations last week that left two people dead.

Crowds lined the barricaded streets where the President's motorcade passed, with Mr. Trump's supporters on one side and Black Lives



**Mounting tensions:** President Donald Trump touring an area on Tuesday that was damaged during demonstrations in Kenosha, Wisconsin. •AP

Matter protesters on the other, yelling at one another from a distance and in sometimes tense face-to-face encounters.

"Thank you for saving our town," read the sign of one supporter along the road. "Not my President," read another.

Under heavy security that blocked off the road, Mr. Trump visited a burnt-out store where he told the owners "we'll help you rebuild."

"These gentlemen did a fantastic job," he said, in reference to law enforcement

units that quelled the violent protests.

#### Commits funds

"This is a great area, a great state," Mr. Trump said, adding later that his administration was committing at least \$47 million to Wisconsin law enforcement, small businesses and public safety programmes.

"We'll get Kenosha back in shape," he said.

Mr. Trump had suggested in Washington that a meeting with the Blake family was possible during his high-pro-

nosh as a symbol of institutional racism.

They see Rittenhouse, a Trump supporter, as emblematic of right-wing militias that are increasingly brazen about brandishing weaponry in political settings.

Mr. Trump has refused to condemn the growing presence of armed vigilantes on the streets, calling the alleged killings by Rittenhouse "an interesting situation".

"We have to condemn the dangerous anti-police rhetoric," he said at a command center set up in a Kenosha high school.

In an interview on Monday, Mr. Trump likened police officers who err when making split-second decisions to golfers who "choke" under pressure.

"Shooting the guy in the back many times. I mean, couldn't you have done something different?" he said. "But they choke. Just like in a golf tournament, they miss a three-foot putt."

Wisconsin's Governor and Kenosha's Mayor, both Democrats, had urged Mr. Trump not to visit but he ignored their pleas – and Mr. Biden has accused him of deliberately fomenting violence for political gain.

# China engaged in a pattern of bullying: Pompeo

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said China was engaged in a pattern of bullying and that the U.S. hoped the situation between India and China at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) would be resolved peacefully. The comments come days after the Indian Army said Chinese troops had carried out "provocative" moves to change the status quo and the Indian Army had moved to strengthen its position.

"We're hoping for a peaceful resolution of the sit-

uation on the India-China border. From the Taiwan Strait to the Himalayas and beyond, the Chinese Communist Party is engaged in a clear and intensifying pattern of bullying its neighbours," Mr. Pompeo said on Wednesday at a State Department briefing.

"We also remained concerned... about more than 300 Chinese vessels near the Galapagos which are almost certainly engaged in illegal fishing. In light of this maritime lawlessness, it's no surprise that Beijing's candidate in the International Tribunal



Mike Pompeo

for the Law of the Sea election last week received more abstentions than any other candidate." The Chinese can-

didate judge was elected to the Tribunal last week despite American opposition.

**'Engage with Dalai Lama'** Mr. Pompeo also said the U.S. continued to call upon Beijing to "enter dialogue with the Dalai Lama or his representatives without preconditions to reach a settlement that resolves their differences".

Also at the briefing, Mr. Pompeo announced that the U.S. would be putting in place restrictions on Chinese diplomats in response to restrictions American diplo-

mats faced in China. Chinese diplomats in the U.S. will now require approval to visit American university campuses, meet with local government officials or host cultural events of more than 50 people outside their mission properties. Following Mr. Pompeo's remarks, Assistant Secretary for East Asia David Stillwell said the U.S. advised China to return to dialogue and resolve things peacefully without coercion and the use of force in the context of "the many conflicts that are going on in China's periphery right now."

# Navalny poisoned by nerve agent Novichok, says Germany

The chemical was used in a 2018 attack on an ex-Russian spy

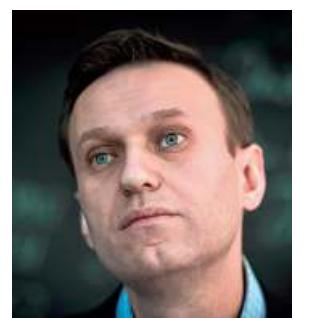
AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
BERLIN

Tests carried out on Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny showed that he was poisoned by a Novichok chemical nerve agent, the German government said on Wednesday, demanding explanations from Moscow.

"It is a shocking event that Alexei Navalny has become the victim of an attack with a chemical nerve agent in Russia," said government spokesman Steffen Seibert in a statement.

"The government condemns this attack in the strongest terms. The Russian government is urgently requested to provide clarifications over the incident."

Tests carried out by the



German Army in consultation with the Charite hospital in Berlin, where Navalny is being treated, had found "unequivocal evidence of a chemical nerve agent from the Novichok family," Mr. Seibert said.

Mr. Navalny, 44, fell ill af-

ter boarding a plane in Siberia last month. He was initially treated in a local hospital before being flown to Berlin for treatment.

The Charite hospital has reported "some improvement" in Mr. Navalny's condition but he nevertheless remains in a medically induced coma and on a ventilator.

In 2018, the Kremlin was accused of being behind the attempted murder of ex-double agent Sergei Skripal in Salisbury, southwest England, using a Novichok nerve agent.

The German government said it would inform NATO and EU partners over its findings and seek a joint reaction on the case.

Mr. Navalny, 44, fell ill af-

# UAE flights to 'all nations' can fly over Saudi Arabia

Riyadh accepts request by Abu Dhabi

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
RIYADH

Saudi Arabia has agreed to allow UAE flights to "all countries" to overfly the kingdom, state media reported on Wednesday, days after allowing an Israeli aircraft to pass over en route to Abu Dhabi.

Saudi Arabia has accepted an Emirati request to allow "crossing the kingdom's airspace for flights heading to the UAE and departing from it to all countries", the official Saudi Press Agency said, citing a source from the civil aviation authority.

Meanwhile, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced that Monday's historic first commercial flight of an Israeli aircraft direct to the UAE across Saudi Arabia would

not be the last.

"Israeli planes and those from all countries will be able to fly directly from Israel to Abu Dhabi and Dubai, and back," Mr. Netanyahu said, without giving any timeline.

The announcements come after a U.S.-Israeli delegation visited Abu Dhabi on Monday, on the first direct commercial flight from Tel Aviv.

Saudi Arabia has said it will not follow the UAE in establishing diplomatic ties with Israel until the Jewish state has signed a peace accord with the Palestinians.

But the kingdom has cultivated clandestine relations with Israel in recent years, in a shift spearheaded by de facto leader Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman.

# Experts puzzled as virus cases drop in Pak.

Hypotheses credit young population, hot and humid climate, natural immunity

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LAHORE

Six months after the novel coronavirus arrived in Pakistan, the country appears to have dodged the worst of the pandemic, baffling health experts and dampening fears its crowded urban areas and ramshackle hospitals will be overrun.

Following an initial surge, the number of infections has plummeted in recent weeks, with COVID-19 deaths hovering in the single digits each day.

Pakistan has a long history of failing to contain myriad infectious diseases such as polio, tuberculosis and hepatitis, while successive governments have underfunded its healthcare sector.



Added to that, many Pakistanis live in crowded, multi-generational homes or packed apartment buildings that favour rampant virus transmission.

"No one has been able to explain this decline... We don't have any concrete explanation," said Salman Ha-

seeb, a doctor at Services Hospital in Lahore.

Pakistanis have proposed numerous hypotheses for their country's seeming ability to weather the pandemic, crediting everything from the young population and the hot and humid climate to unproven claims of natural immunity.

Its median age is only 22 and the COVID-19 is known to disproportionately impact older people with prior health complications.

In comparison, Italy, with a median age of 46.5, has recorded more than 35,000 deaths, while Pakistan's official toll is about 6,300.

To date, the South Asian nation has confirmed more than 2,95,000 infections.

Observers say that with only limited testing the true number of infections is likely considerably higher. One testing exercise in Lahore suggested as many as 7% of the city's population had been exposed to the virus.

But anecdotal evidence from hospitals across Pakistan supports the downward trend. While healthcare facilities were initially swamped, doctors across Pakistan told AFP they are now no longer seeing a coronavirus-related rush.

A flattening curve is all the more curious considering how COVID-19 has hit India, which with a median age of 26 and crowded cities has a somewhat similar demographic.

# 'China using non-military tactics to expand influence'

Pentagon report says it is trying to build overseas bases

SIRIRAM LAKSHMAN

An annual report from the U.S. Department of Defense to Congress describes Chinese leaders' use of tactics short of armed conflict to further the country's objectives.

The report also says China is trying to establish stronger bases outside the country so the People's Liberation Army (PLA) can project military power at greater distances.

Other key conclusions the U.S. presents include the notion that China's military is at least as advanced as the U.S. in several military modernisation areas such as shipbuilding, land-based conventional ballistic and cruise missiles and integrated air defence systems. China also uses multilateral organisations to limit criticism of its initiatives, as per the report.

The report describes Non-War Military Activities (NWMA) as one of two kinds of military operations (the other is war) used by the PLA.

"NWMA can be conducted internationally or domestically and encompass activities in multiple domains. NWMA can notably include operations in which the PLA uses coercive threats and/or violence below the level of armed conflict against states and other actors to safeguard the PRC's sovereignty and national interests," the report says.

"China calibrates its coercive activities to fall below the threshold of provoking armed conflict with the United States, its allies and partners, or others in the Indo-Pacific region," the DOD China Military Power Report for 2020 says.

"These tactics are particularly evident in China's pursuit of its territorial and maritime claims in the South and East China Seas as well as along its border with India and Bhutan... China also employs non-military tools coercively, including economic tools during periods of political tensions with countries that China accuses of harming its national inter-



**Flexing muscles:** PLA soldiers taking part in a training session at the Pamir mountains in Kashgar, in this file photo. •AFP

support it on a range of other issues, the report says.

Since the report is retrospective and looks at 2019, this year's clashes and tension along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) are not discussed.

Instead, the report says: "Chinese and Indian forces both continued construction and patrols in contested regions along the disputed border, but generally kept tensions from escalating in 2019." It describes the October meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping in Chennai and the August 2019 "early harvest" border proposals that China submitted to India.

"Although India was not pleased with the proposals, the 22nd meeting of the Special Representatives of India and China occurred in December 2019 and reinforced both sides' shared intent to manage tensions in the border region," the report says.

**Limiting criticism**

On multilateral forums and international organisations,

the report says China uses these "to generate new opportunities to expand its influence, strengthen its political influence, promotes strategic messaging that portrays it as a responsible global actor, advance its development interests, and limit outside interference in and criticism of its initiatives."

The Brazil-Russia-India-China-South Africa (BRICS) grouping and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization are among those cited as examples of this alleged phenomenon.

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Macron lands in Baghdad on first Iraq visit

BAGHDAD French President Emmanuel Macron landed in Baghdad on Wednesday on his first official trip to Iraq, where he hopes to help the country reassert its "sovereignty" after years of conflict. AFP

Japan hunts for cargo ship after distress call

TOKYO Japan's coast guard said on Wednesday that it was searching for a cargo ship with 43 people on board after receiving a distress call from the East China Sea during a typhoon. Four vessels and several planes were involved in the search operation. AFP

CM  
YK

**MARKET WATCH**

	PRICE	CHANGE
Sensex	39,086	0.48
US Dollar	73.03	-0.22
Gold	52,314	-1.23
Brent oil	45.29	-1.76

**NIFTY 50**

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	359.90	11.10
Asian Paints	1943.95	-35.35
Axist Bank	484.40	-1.30
Bajaj Auto	2880.55	-77.85
Bajaj Finserv	6365.05	5.45
Bajaj Finance	3668.65	24.80
Bharti Airtel	550.55	4.30
BPCL	413.95	6.70
Britannia Ind	3799.20	28.20
Cipla	738.25	1.70
Coal India	136.30	2.85
Dr Reddys Lab	4352.75	0.80
Eicher Motors	2169.85	38.75
GAIL (India)	97.30	0.90
Grasim Ind	678.45	-6.10
HCL Tech.	701.95	12.35
HDFC	1827.20	-24.00
HDFC Bank	1134.15	6.85
HDFC Life	580.85	1.55
Hero MotoCorp	2943.55	-52.05
Hindustan	196.20	2.15
Hind Unilever	2141.65	-20.00
ICICI Bank	392.40	1.45
IndusInd Bank	640.55	13.10
Bharti Infratel	196.05	7.25
Infosys	924.00	9.85
Indian Oil Corp	85.30	0.65
ITC	191.35	1.15
JSW Steel	293.00	6.20
Kotak Bank	1423.50	-7.15
L&T	955.55	0.35
M&M	642.75	35.20
Maruti Suzuki	6920.75	15.10
Nestle India Ltd.	15992.55	-204.35
NTPC	98.95	-0.85
ONGC	80.30	0.95
PowerGrid Corp	181.20	0.80
Reliance Ind	2128.20	40.95
State Bank	216.25	-1.85
Shree Cement	20563.60	97.00
Sun Pharma	514.50	-6.95
Tata Motors	150.30	6.50
Tata Steel	438.65	10.00
TCS	2265.15	18.80
Tech Mahindra	735.20	7.35
Titan	1121.30	1.25
UltraTech Cement	3941.70	29.05
UPL	500.85	-4.20
Wipro	273.70	2.10
Zee Entertainment	218.15	16.35

**EXCHANGE RATES**

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	72.83	73.15
Euro	86.46	86.85
British Pound	97.34	97.77
Japanese Yen (100)	68.63	68.94
Chinese Yuan	10.67	10.72
Swiss Franc	79.93	80.33
Singapore Dollar	53.52	53.76
Canadian Dollar	55.77	56.02
Malaysian Ringgit	17.57	17.65
Australian Dollar	53.51	53.75

Source: Indian Bank

**IN BRIEF**



**IL&FS gets NCLT nod for sale of education assets**

The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has approved the sale of the education assets of debt-ridden infrastructure firm IL&FS to Lexington Equity Holdings Ltd. A two-member Mumbai bench of the NCLT approved the sale of IL&FS' 73.69% stake in Schoolnet India, formerly known as IL&FS Education & Technology Services, to Falafal Technology Pvt. Ltd. PTI

**Tata Motors unveils Nexus SUV variant**

MUMBAI Tata Motors has announced the introduction of the XM(S) variant of Tata Nexus from ₹8.36 lakh onwards. It is available in petrol and diesel variants. Vivek Srivatsa, head, marketing, passenger vehicle business unit, Tata Motors, said, "With this addition to our Nexus range, we will provide customers with premium driving pleasure and state-of-the-art features at attractive prices."

**LIC Housing plans to raise up to ₹50,500 cr.**

NEW DELHI LIC Housing Finance on Wednesday said it would seek shareholders' approval in the upcoming annual general meeting this month to raise up to ₹50,500 crore by issuing debt securities or other hybrid instruments on a private placement basis. LIC Housing Finance said its overall borrowing power is ₹3 lakh crore and the proposed fund-raise plan is within the limit. PTI

**Hyundai Motor inducts two directors on board**

CHENNAI South Korean carmaker Hyundai Motor India Ltd. has announced the induction of two directors on its board, who will hold office as whole-time directors for a period of three years with effect from August 24. S. Ganesh Mani, director, Production, and Tarun Garg, director, Sales, Marketing & Service, have been designated as whole-time directors, the company said.

# Economic growth will turn positive by Q1 of next year'

Reforms will help turn crisis into opportunity, says EAC PM member Nilesh Shah

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

MUMBAI

Economic growth will come into positive territory only by March or June quarter 2021, but India will have to turn the crisis into an opportunity by introducing reforms, Nilesh Shah, a part-time member of the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister, said on Wednesday.

**'Future drives equities'**

Mr. Shah, MD, Kotak Mahindra Asset Management Company, attributed the surge in equity markets to the optimism they get by looking at the future and not at the data of the past.

India's GDP contracted



**Cast it wide:** India must roll out the red carpet for companies moving out of China, says Mr. Shah. ■ K.K. MUSTAFAH

23.9% year-on-year (y-o-y) in the June 2020 quarter, which saw COVID-19 lockdowns, making the country one of the worst performers across the world during the pandemic. At the current level,

## TII to invest ₹100 cr. more in CG Power

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI

Tube Investments of India Ltd. (TII), a Murugappa Group firm, has decided to invest an additional ₹100 crore in CG Power and Industrial Solutions Ltd. to meet the latter's additional funding requirements.

The fresh infusion is in addition to the investment of ₹700 crore in equity shares and warrants announced on August 7 to bail out the cash-strapped firm, TII said.

TII will subscribe to 6.87 lakh equity shares of CG Power at ₹14.55 per share on a preferential basis.

After the subscription, TII's stake would rise to 58.58%. TII's board had approved the proposal.

port and the Navi Mumbai International Airport to our existing portfolio of six airports provides us a transformational platform that will help shape and create strategic adjacencies for our other B2B businesses," he added. Adani Airports last year won the mandate to modernise and operate six airports.

"The addition of the Mumbai International Air-

## Amrutanjan to expand into SE Asia, Africa

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
CHENNAI

Amrutanjan Health Care Ltd., a leading manufacturer of pain relief balms, plans to strengthen its foothold in overseas markets by expanding presence in southeast Asia and in African countries, besides focussing on the North and West zones of India. Export revenue of the home-grown company, despite challenging macro conditions, breached the ₹4 crore-mark for the second consecutive year.

Africa continues to be the largest contributing region at 69.3% of total exports and it witnessed an increase of 13.2% in FY20 over the previous year.

Efforts are on to enter the Philippines, Laos and Kenya, S. Shambu Prasad, CMD, said in a note to shareholders.

"The supply chain and the inland logistics are expected to significantly improve the reliability and reduce transit time going forward with the implementation of Western Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC)," the company said.

This will improve overall cargo volume for imports and exports. About 40% of the total investments in the entire 1,535 km of the DFC is likely to be in Gujarat.

"With this investment,

we aim to strengthen our network and continue to provide best in-class services to all our stakeholders," Jakob Friis Sorensen, MD, APM Terminals Pipavav, said.

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