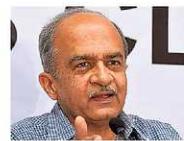




Amit Shah recovers from COVID-19, will be discharged soon

page 8



Supreme Court verdict in Prashant Bhushan case tomorrow

page 8



Xi to strengthen border defence to ensure Tibet's stability

page 9



'Black Panther' star Chadwick Boseman passes away at 43

page 14

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NEARBY



Madhya Pradesh calls in Army for flood relief

Bhopal As many as 6,577 persons from nine districts of M.P. were rescued within 36 hours of heavy rain that lashed the State's southern areas. Two columns of Army had been requisitioned to help with moving people to safer spots.

NORTH & EAST ▶ PAGE 4

Rajasthan govt. to go ahead with State exams

JAIPIUR While demanding postponement of JEE and NEET exams, the Rajasthan government plans to hold several State-level exams in the next three months, in which lakhs of candidates will appear. The bodies organising the exams have said they will take precautions.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 8

Man beaten to death over suspicion of theft

NEW DELHI A 23-year-old man was beaten to death allegedly by four men on suspicion of theft in west Delhi's Nareena, the police said on Saturday. DCP (West) Deepak Purohit said all four accused have been arrested. The victim has been identified as Rahul.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

MAGAZINE ▶ 8 PAGES

CLASSIFIEDS ▶ PAGE 4

Metro services to resume next week, small meetings allowed

Passenger trains still restricted; senior students can meet teachers in school

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Metro rail services may resume from September 7 and congregations with a ceiling of 100 persons will be allowed from September 21 under the fresh set of Unlock 4 guidelines announced by the Union Home Ministry on Saturday.

However, movement of passenger trains will continue to be regulated as per existing standard operating procedure.

As per the new guidelines, there will be no prohibition on the consumption of alcohol and tobacco products in public places, implying that bars are allowed to function. However, lockdown measures will be implemented strictly in containment zones till September 30.

The guidelines state that outside the containment zones, States will not be allowed to impose localised lockdowns at State, district, subdivision or city levels without the prior permission of the Union Home Ministry.

Research labs

While schools, colleges and educational institutions will remain shut till September 30, research scholars and students of technical or pro-

Looking ahead

A look at the Unlock 4.0 guidelines issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs



Metro rail services to operate in a graded manner from September 7

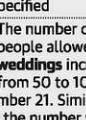
With a cap of 100 persons, congregations and political rallies are permitted from September 21



Students of Class 9-12 can seek guidance with the written consent of their parents. 50% teaching and non-teaching staff in schools allowed outside containment zones from September 21

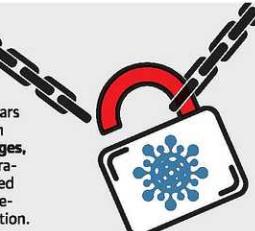


Research scholars and students in technical colleges, who have laboratory work, will be permitted in consultation with the Department of Higher Education. Dates not specified



The number of people allowed at weddings increased from 50 to 100 from September 21. Similarly, for funerals the number will be increased from 20 to 100

Open air theatres can open from September 21



Cinema halls, swimming pools, and entertainment parks will continue to remain shut. International air travel will remain suspended except those allowed as special flights

essional institutions that require laboratory work will be allowed to visit the premises.

Students of Class 9-12 may be permitted to visit their schools, in areas outside the containment zones, on voluntary basis for taking guidance from their teachers, subject to written consent of their parents and guardians, the Ministry said. The States and Union Territories may permit up to 50% of teaching and non-teaching staff in schools for online teaching or tele-counselling and related work.

Metro rail will be allowed to operate from September 7 in a graded manner and a detailed standard operating procedure will be issued by the Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs (MOHUA).

"Social, academic, sports, entertainment, religious, political functions and other congregations will be permitted with a ceiling of 100 persons with effect from 21 September. However, such limited gatherings can be held with mandatory wearing of face masks, social distancing, provision for thermal

scanning and hand wash or sanitiser," the Ministry said. Open air theatres can open from September 21.

The guidelines were issued by the Home Ministry under the Disaster Management Act, 2005, after it was invoked for the first time in March.

Meanwhile, the total number of COVID-19 cases has surged past 35 lakh and more than 63,000 deaths have been reported.

PROTOCOLS FOR PARLIAMENT, ASSEMBLY SESSIONS ▶ PAGE 8

Anti-national forces spreading hatred and violence, says Sonia

Democracy facing threat, freedom of expression is in danger'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Reliance Industries Ltd.'s retail unit is set to add significant muscle to its business after it announced an agreement to acquire the retail and wholesale and logistics and warehousing businesses of the Future Group for ₹24,713 crore.

The transaction will bring into Reliance Retail's fold the Future Group's brands across segments, including apparel and general merchandise.

The Future Group will benefit by using the sale proceeds to pare its debt burden and will focus instead on the manufacturing and distribution of FMCG goods and integrated fashion sourcing. The group will also retain its insurance ventures with Generali, it said.

FULL REPORT ▶ PAGE 10



Congress chief Sonia Gandhi

critic institutions are being destroyed. The influence of *tanashahi* is increasing on *lokshahi*," she said.

Voice suppressed

Without naming anyone, Ms. Gandhi further said,

they want to suppress the voice of the people of the country.

"What do they want? They want people of the country, our youth, our tribal people, our women,

our farmers, shopkeepers and small traders, jawans to keep their mouths shut. They want to keep the nation's mouth shut," she said.

Stating that in two years, the country will complete 75 years of Independence, Ms. Gandhi said, "The Father of the nation Mahatma Gandhi, former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, G.V. Mavalankar (Speaker of Constituent Assembly of India), Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and our other ancestors would have never imagined that even 75 years after Independence, the country will face such a difficult situation, when our Constitution and democracy are in danger."

Ms. Gandhi called on Congress leaders to "take a pledge that till the time we are in power, all our decisions are keeping in mind the last man in the line".

Speaking in Hindi, Ms.

Gandhi said, "There are new challenges in front of our country. Anti-national, anti-poor and divisive forces that are ruling us are spreading venom of hatred and violence, freedom of expression is in danger and demo-

cratic institutions are being destroyed. The influence of *tanashahi* is increasing on *lokshahi*," she said.

"Voice suppressed"

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In deep waters



Nowhere to go: People seen leaving their homes after an overflowing Bhargavi river, a branch of Mahanadi river, flooded the Balakati area on the outskirts of Bhubaneswar on Saturday. ■ BISWARANJAN ROUT

Capital sees highest new cases in 50 days

Active cases cross 14,000 mark; containment zones jump 43% in 10 days

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Delhi on Saturday witnessed the highest daily new COVID-19 cases in about 50 days with 1,954 fresh cases being reported in the past 24 hours, according to a health bulletin released by the State government. The total number of cases stood at 1,71,366.

The number of active cases, positivity rate, COVID-positive people in home isolation also increased on Saturday. The last time the number of cases was more than this was on July 10 when 2,089 cases were reported.

15 more deaths

Fifteen more deaths have been reported, taking the total number of deaths to 4,404. Of the total cases,



A health worker collecting sample for COVID-19 test at Gandhi Market in New Delhi on Saturday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

1,52,922 people have recovered and there are 14,040 active cases.

But earlier this week, the daily new cases hit a 30-day high and then breached the 1,500 mark after remaining below the level for 39 consecutive days.

The number of active cases in the city on Saturday was the highest in over a month.

The last time the number of active cases was more than this was on July 23 when the active cases were 14,554.

The active cases, which were 27,007 on July 1, had fallen to 9,897 on August 4, but since then have remained above the 10,000 mark.

The number of containment zones in the city has seen a sharp jump in the last 10 days from 560 on August 19 to 803 on Saturday. The number of such zones, especially the smaller ones, is likely to go up further, said officials.

Though Delhi has a capacity to do around 11,000 RT-PCR tests in a day, only 6,597 such tests were done in the past 24 hours. The positivity was 8.8% on Saturday, which is higher than the levels earlier this month.

The matter was broached at a meeting of the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) on August 19, following which a file related to it was moved by the Delhi government to the DDMA.

L-G overturns CM, gives nod for NEET, JEE tests in Delhi

Kejriwal had decided to postpone them due to pandemic

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal has overturned Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's decision to postpone the NEET, JEE tests in Delhi, government sources said.

According to the sources, Mr. Baijal's decision to allow the exams to be conducted in the city as per the schedule in September was conveyed to the Delhi government on Saturday.

The matter was broached at a meeting of the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) on August 19, following which a file related to it was moved by the Delhi government to the DDMA.

Sisodia letter
Delhi Education Minister Manish Sisodia had written to Union Education Minister

Department.

The file, said the sources, contained the Revenue Department's suggestion that the exams be postponed in the interest of the students. It was signed by Mr. Kejriwal who decided against holding the two examinations in view of the conditions related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

This was, however, overturned by the L-G who gave the go-ahead for the exams to be held according to the schedule, said the sources.

Sisodia letter
Delhi Education Minister Manish Sisodia had written to Union Education Minister

Order on J&K domiciles' land rights soon

VIJAYA SINGH

NEW DELHI
The Union government is all set to come out with an executive order to

Preserving the essence of Delhi

Constant dialogue between stakeholders and agencies has ensured delicate balance between conservation of heritage and sustenance of existing commercial activity during the Chandni Chowk Redevelopment Project

SIDHARTH RAVI
JATIN ANAND
NEW DELHI

Ek roz apni rooh se pooha,
Dilli kya hai?, to yun jawab
mein keh gaye: yeh duniya
maano jism hui aur Dilli uski jaan
(One day I asked my soul, What
is Delhi?, it replied: suppose this
world is a body, then Delhi is its
essence).

The famous couplet by Urdu and Persian poet Asadullah Khan, better known as Mirza Ghalib, enshrines his love for what now the Walled City – at the heart of which lies Chandni Chowk, one of the largest and oldest markets in India.

Built in the 17th Century, the market has undergone countless changes to accommodate more shops and people – all while retaining its historical character.

The latest iteration of modifications – proposals for which were floated nearly two decades ago but implemented only in 2018 – is being carried out under the Chandni Chowk Redevelopment Project. A 1.3-km stretch between Red Fort and Fatehpuri Masjid is being turned into a car-free zone, and beautified keeping the Mughal-era architectural style in mind.

The project is part of a larger redevelopment plan for the Walled City, which involves fixing up the Jama Masjid area; Daryaganj area, from Delhi Gate to Nukkad Faiz Bazar; Lothian Road, from Lothian Bridge to Kashmere Gate; and improvement of various connecting roads in the area such as Esplanade road, reads a detailed project report made in 2017.

The pedestrianisation project has been especially tough given the multitude of stakeholders and agencies involved.

Sanjay Bhargava, president of Chandni Chowk Sarv Vyapar Mandal (the local traders' association), who has been closely involved with the project over the years, said: "It has been due to our efforts that this [project] has finally happened."

He stressed that the new face of the locality is not the consequence of any political intervention. Instead, it has been the culmination of years of petitioning and directions of the High Court. In particular, he highlighted the role played by Justices Ravindra Bhatt and S. Muralidhar, in monitoring the project and having brought it this far.

How it all started

In 1998, a festival to revive the cultural grandeur of Chandni Chowk (Moonlit Square) sparked enthusiasm to restore the area, said Mr. Bhargava.

As per details on the Delhi government website, proposals were floated to make streets pedestrian friendly and revive Chandni Chowk not just as a market street but a space for public gatherings and a centre for festivities.

A special purpose vehicle, Shahjahanabad Redevelopment Corporation (SRDC), was set up by former Delhi Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit in 2007. Though various politicians connected with the area such as BJP's Vijay Goel and Congress's Kapil Sibal attempted to kick-start the project (Mr. Sibal inaugurated a phase of the project in 2011), the work started only in December 2018 under the Arvind Kejriwal-led Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) government.

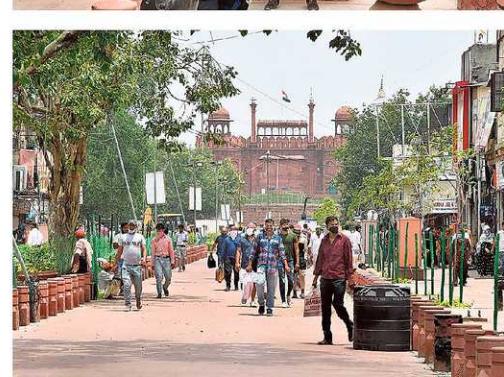
At least 12 agencies are involved in the project apart from the traders' body.

"The problem with heritage areas in the city is two-fold: there is extreme neglect of historical significance and civic amenities," said Abhinandita Mathur, who grew up in Old Delhi and is an adviser to the Delhi government.

She added that in a city with many markets and a burgeoning population of migrant residents, the project has provided an opportunity to bridge the gap between the old and new residents of the Capital.

A template

"We live in a city where every second building has heritage. There are layers of history that need to be taken care of and cherished but not many are aware of how to go about doing so. Given these circumstances, the project has opened up a possibility in the face of things



(Clockwise from above) A view of the redeveloped stretch in Chandni Chowk; the area used to be congested with vehicles (Red Fort seen in background); people enjoy a stroll in the vehicle-free zone; benches have been set up in the area for visitors.
■ SUSHIL KUMAR
VERMA, FILE PHOTO

which may seem irreversible. It may be a small road but it has opened up large possibilities. It has also re-established Chandni Chowk as an important part of Delhi," she said.

"We have brainstormed about similar heritage locations in the city such as Mehrauli and some villages. This project will not only set an example for such sites in Delhi but across the subcontinent which hosts much heritage that needs to be preserved," she added.

Brief history

Built by Mughal emperor Shah Jahan when he shifted his capital here from Agra, the Walled City was built around two key features: Red Fort and Jama Masjid, according to the Detailed Project Report (DPR). Chandni Chowk

was an important road that connected the fort's Lahori Gate to the city gates. It also hosted a system of canals that drew water from the Yamuna. It is said that the clear water in a canal running through the middle of Chandni Chowk reflected the moonlight, which gave the market its name.

The canals still line the area, and part of the redevelopment work reportedly involves desilting and relining them.

The Walled City was a centre of arts and craft, especially in ivory and miniatures, for a very long time. But after the 1857 war, the city went into a decline. Following the Partition, several refugee settlements mushroomed in the area and today is one of the most underdeveloped and densely populated parts of Delhi. Its mesh of overhead electric wires nearly block out the sky, the traffic jams are legendary, and the walls of heritage buildings crumble as the number of people continue to swell.

Despite this, Chandni Chowk continues to thrive, especially as a wholesale market and a tourist destination. The redevelopment is an effort to "help conserve its heritage and improve the quality of life of the people living there," said Mr. Bhargava.

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INTERVIEW | SATYENDAR JAIN

'We have tried to replicate Lal Qila infrastructure'

The project will be completed by the end of this year

JATIN ANAND

NEW DELHI
Delhi Public Works Department
Minister Satyendar Jain talks to *The Hindu* about the challenges faced during the implementation of the Chandni Chowk Redevelopment Project.

Chandni Chowk is among the most popular heritage locations in the Capital, how did the idea to redevelop it come about?

■ The idea to redevelop Chandni Chowk was proposed a long time ago but no government had done anything to take the proposal forward. I

held many review meetings with departments concerned and assigned new architects on the project. I personally monitored and resolved many issues such as shifting of transformers, which could have cost ₹15 crore in annual rent. We had to work on the construction and infrastructure for the public toilets. We have tried to replicate Lal Qila infrastructure for the project. There used to be a canal that later got converted into a lane. We have maintained a similar pattern by expanding the width of the lane and constructing broad 8-10 metre footpaths on

either side, where vehicular traffic is allowed only at night. There was huge resistance from various stakeholders on several proposals, but I held meetings with many of them and took steps to ensure the area was well-developed.

There are multiple agencies involved in the redevelopment project, how challenging was it to bring all of them on the same page?

■ There were many complexities and challenges while we were carrying out the redevelopment plan. For instance, all the electric cables had to be untangled and arranged

properly. The electric substations and transformers had to be shifted and I had to personally monitor the locations and readjustment. I remember overseeing the readjustment of a transformer installed on the road between Lal Mandir towards Jama Masjid. It was challenging to ensure ample coordination between the agencies working on the project.

Has the COVID-19 outbreak impacted the project? Will it be able to meet its deadline by October-end this year?

■ It is true that novel coronavirus has impacted various projects. There is also scarcity of labour. The project might take a little more time but it will be completed by the end of this year.

Will the project also involve facelift of structures, including facade of shops on the arterial stretch?

■ This is not part of the current phase of the redevelopment project, but we will surely include this in a future redevelopment phase.

Will the redevelopment be restricted only to the arterial road and its immediate vicinity or will the bylanes connected to it also be redeveloped?

■ The current phase of the redevelopment plan involves the stretch from Lal Qila to Fatehpuri Masjid. Extension of the project will be discussed at a later stage and we will see which other areas can be redeveloped.

Chowk, were moved to ensure aesthetic integrity.

The height of a multilevel parking facility being built by the North Corporation at Gandhi Maidan was also kept in check for similar reasons. Following intervention, the number of transformers in the area were reduced from 18 to single digit, said Mr. Menon.

The petition filed by heritage conservationists had thrown a spanner in the construction, with complaints flooding in about the project being delayed further. Mr. Menon, however, argued that experts should have been consulted earlier to avoid such a situation, especially in a place like Chandni Chowk, which was demarcated as a heritage zone according to the master plan.

Residents upbeat

Seventy-year-old Ajit Yadav, whose family has been based in Haider Kuli Haveli area near Fatehpuri Masjid for 150 years after migrating from Alwar in Rajasthan, said this was the first time "any major work" had been taken up in the area.

Mr. Yadav hopes the revamp will bring more business, visitors and tourists. He is also hoping that old neighbours and friends, who had left the area, return.

"There is no place in the city more significant than Chandni Chowk, whether in terms of heritage or commercial activity. Once this project is complete, people will come to see the area in all its glory. As and when things in the area improve, who knows, maybe all those people who had left the area long ago due to civic issues, will decide to come back too," said Mr. Yadav, pradhan of the Sarvodaya Samiti RWA, Haveli Haider Kuli.

"Just half of the work has been done so far, but wherever it has been done there was no waterlogging. This is not only the first time that any work, especially of this scale, has been taken up in Chandni Chowk but also the first time that there was no waterlogging in the area during monsoon as far as I can remember," he said.

Mohammad Nafees (57), a resident of Lal Kuan, said the project is more than welcome as it has opened up the possibility of families going out on morning and evening strolls in the area – something unimaginable since his childhood.

Religious harmony

The stretch has the distinction of hosting places of worship of four major religions practised in the country.

"This is the first time that such work has been taken up since I was born. It will not only give locals an opportunity to experience the area's historic glory; but visitors can also visit a mandir, mosque, gurdwara and church – all walking distance from each other," he said.

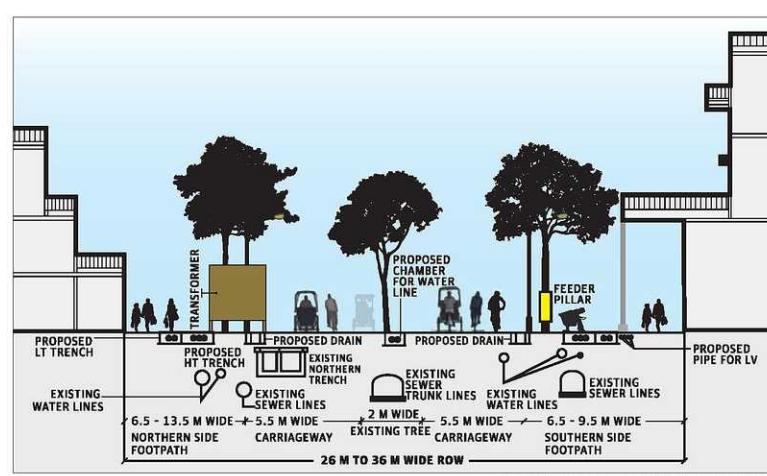
"What we are also looking forward to is the construction of a mall as part of the project. We will no longer need to visit malls far from home. All this is subject to maintenance of the new infrastructure and facilities. Everyone, especially the residents, will have to understand that they are equal stakeholders and need to work on maintenance together," he added.

Mukesh Kumar, a rickshaw puller, said he was looking forward to more on the redeveloped stretch.

"I have been here for 50 years and never thought that anything could improve, especially at this scale. I know the area enough to say that this will bring in more tourists and business, which will help us all. That is certainly something to look forward to after how badly everything was affected due to COVID-19," he said.

Dheeraj Dubey, a resident of Novelty Cinema area who operates a computer store, however, said the pedestrianisation of the area would eventually lead to problems.

"What about the mobility of senior citizens and movement of schoolchildren? There should be provisions for them. After the redevelopment is complete, there will be a need to ensure that there is proper maintenance of what has been created, not only for our sakes but also that of future generations," he said.



SOURCE: CHANDNI CHOWK SARV VYAPAR MANDAL



Timings
DELHI

SUNDAY, AUG. 30	
RISE 05:59	SET 18:45
RISE 17:13	SET 02:57
MONDAY, AUG. 31	
RISE 05:59	SET 18:44
RISE 17:56	SET 03:56
TUESDAY, SEP. 01	
RISE 06:00	SET 18:43
RISE 18:33	SET 04:53

Delhi Weather max min

Delhi City 35 25

Safdarjung 35 25

Palam 34 26

Delhi Palam Today

33°C One or two spell of rain likely at some places with cloudy sky and moderate winds.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow

34°C Moderate to light winds would prevail. Day would be warm and humid with chances of passing rain.

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THE HINDU

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Man beaten to death over suspicion of theft

Four men have been arrested, say police

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A 23-year-old man was beaten to death allegedly by four men on suspicion of theft in west Delhi's Naraina, the police said on Saturday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (West) Deepak Purohit said the accused – Iftihar (30), Mustaq Ahmed (32), Shiraj (28) and Anish (24) – all from Naraina Industrial Area, have been arrested. The victim has been identified as Rahul from Kirti Nagar Jawahar Camp.

Rope found on spot

The police said they received a call regarding an incident in a municipal park in Loha Mandi. Following this, when a team reached the spot, they found a body lying under a tree with injury marks all over. A rope and a muffler were also found at the spot, an officer said.

An eyewitness told the police that on Friday at 5.30 a.m., he saw that his neighbour

bours – Mustaq, his brother Shiraj and two others – thrashing a man and taking him to a park.

"They tied the man with the tree using a rope and beat him up with sticks, pipe and iron rods. When he tried to intervene, they did not pay any heed to him," Mr. Purohit said.

The neighbours told the witness that the victim and his accomplice had stolen Shiraj's mobile phone. "The neighbours fled when they saw his condition deteriorate," the DCP said.

Rahul's mother Guddi said he was released from jail on August 18 after being arrested for theft. Sources said Rahul has cases of theft registered against him.

His family also said on Thursday evening, he had a fight with his wife Pooja over earning money after which he packed his bags and told her that he won't return home and instead will stay with his brother in Manesar.

Delhi Metro to resume services from Sept. 7

An SOP for metros will be released by the Centre in a few days

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) is set to resume operations from September 7 after over five months, following Unlock 4.0 guidelines issued by the Central government on Saturday.

Metro services in the city have remained suspended since March 22, following the imposition of a nationwide lockdown due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

"As per the latest guidelines issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs under Unlock 4.0, the Delhi Metro will be resuming its services for the public from September 7 onwards in a calibrated manner," it said in a statement.

Further, the statement added, "Details on the Metro functioning and its usage by the general public will be shared once the detailed SOP on metros is issued by the Mi-

Back on track

Safety protocols proposed by DMRC:

- Passengers to sit on alternate seats or stand at a distance of one metre
- Trains will not stop at stations falling in containment zones
- Thermal screening of all passengers at frisking points
- Use of Aarogya Setu necessary before entering stations
- Action being taken to provide maximum fresh air inside trains to reduce transmission of virus
- Tokens will not be permitted and recharge of smart cards to be cashless
- Parking and feeder services to remain suspended



*SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT SOURCE: DMRC

nistry of Housing and Urban Affairs in the next few days."

Longer halting time for trains at stations, limiting the number of people in lifts, discontinuation of tokens, alternate seating inside coaches and a distance of one metre between commuters standing were some of the tentative protocols drawn up by the government.

the public transporter.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal tweeted: "I am glad that metro has been permitted to start its operation from September 7 in a phased manner." The DMRC had last week said that it shall be prepared to resume operations whenever directed by the go-

DCW rescues girl from prostitution

Sex racket busted, claims commission

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) on Saturday said they along with the police rescued a 20-year-old woman, who was allegedly forced into prostitution, from Rohini.

DCW officials said action was taken after the woman reached out to the commission for help. "She informed that one of her old acquaintances had lured her with a high-paying job but instead pushed her into prostitution. He had told her that he could help her earn easy money. She went with him and on reaching the house in Rohini, she was asked to engage in prostitution," the DCW said.

The woman also said she was threatened and beaten up when she refused to engage in prostitution.

"When the DCW team reached Rohini, they found that there were three girls and some men in the house



apart from the main perpetrator – Jitesh. He was found inside a room in objectionable circumstances. They accepted that there was a sex racket operational from the house," the women's panel said.

DCW Chairperson Swati Maliwal said: "Young girls are pushed into prostitution on the pretext of jobs and easy money. While we were able to rescue the girl, DCW also busted the sex racket. There are several sex rackets operating in many houses in Delhi which need to be immediately shut down."

Bids invited to upgrade railway station

The ₹6,500-crore redevelopment project is targeted for completion in four years

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Putting into motion the ₹6,500-crore project to upgrade the New Delhi railway station, the Rail Land Development Authority (RLDA) has invited online bids from private players to redevelop the station into an integrated commercial, retail and hospitality hub.

The project, which is targeted to be completed in four years, will include infrastructure upgrades such as multi-level car parking, refurbished platforms and passenger amenities including lounges and food court, besides office complexes and five-star hotels in the vicinity.

"New Delhi railway station will be transformed into a world-class, one-stop destination for retail, commercial and hospitality business. The development will boost the tourism potential and accentuate real estate as well as investment prospects in New



The New Delhi railway station will be redeveloped into an integrated commercial, retail and hospitality hub. ■ FILE

Delhi and surrounding regions," Ved Parkash Dudeja, Vice Chairman at RLDA, said.

The New Delhi railway station is the largest and the second busiest in the country.

It handles approximately 4.5 lakh passengers and about 400 trains per day.

The project will be developed on a Design-Build Finance Operate Transfer (DBFT) model for a concession period of 60 years.

The project will include station redevelopment, development of associated in-

frastructure, upgrade of social infrastructure as well as refurbishment of railway offices and railway quarters.

Some of the planned development include an elevated concourse with segregation of arriving and departing passengers; refurbished platforms with easy access from concourse level; mezzanine level exclusively for passenger facilities such as lounges, food courts and restrooms; an elevated road network with multiple entry and exit points; a multi-level

parking facility and Green Building provisions such as optimum use of natural ventilation and lighting," it said.

Commercial component

The project will also include a significant commercial component, incorporating a mix of retail, office, and hospitality developments such as 5-star hotels, budget hotels and serviced apartments on approximately 30 acres of land. It also envisages a business district to be located on the outer circle of Connaught Place and near Bhavabhi Marg, close to Civic Centre.

The station will be integrated with DMRC Yellow Line, Airport Express line and with the Connaught Place outer circle through a pedestrian boulevard.

The concessionaire will earn revenues from several components such as passenger handling fees, and revenue from retail areas, lounges, parking etc.

BBA student, minor held for selling snatched mobiles

Teenager helped in unlocking stolen phones and wiping data

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A 19-year-old BBA student was arrested for selling snatched mobile phones, the police said on Saturday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Atul Thakur said that the accused has been identified as Nitesh Sharma, a resident of Faridabad. A minor has also been apprehended, he added.

The police said that on March 16, a mobile phone was reported to be snatched by two bike-borne men in Malviya Nagar. During investigation, the mobile phone was put on surveillance and recently, it was found that a

number was active on that phone, after which subscriber details were obtained and the person, who was using it in Rajasthan, was contacted.

The man said that he had purchased the phone from a mobile shop in Mewat, after which proprietor of the shop was contacted, who stated that he had purchased the phone on Cashify, a mobile selling application, adding that their office is in Gurugram.

The firm's representative told police that they had purchased the phone from one Nitesh, the accused, and shared his details.

When the team appre-

Unchanged tariffs could put electricity supply at risk

"Tariffs in city among highest in India"

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Tata Power-DDL on Saturday alleged that unchanged electricity tariffs could put reliable supply at grave risk.

The sharp drop in sales to commercial and industrial customers had deeply impacted discoms' finances in the last five months, a spokesperson said.

Owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the DERC has maintained the tariff at the existing level. However, for discoms, this tariff order will substantially increase the financial challenges and hence the ability to ensure 24x7 power supply," the spokesperson said.

Every year, Delhi BPL president Adesh Gupta said, a public hearing was conducted before the implementation of new power tariffs, but this time, the DERC, "in collusion with Delhi government", increased the pension charge without a public hearing.

"Delhi BPL demands that the Delhi government waive

off fixed charges and give credit of subsidy on electricity bills for domestic consumers for electricity consumption during lockdown," Mr. Gupta said.

Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, said that electricity rates in Delhi were among the highest in the country. Consumers of all categories, domestic, industrial and commercial were not only paying hefty electricity bills, but huge amounts of fixed charges also.

"The Chief Minister must waive off the fixed charge for the last five months of industrial and commercial electricity consumers in Delhi considering the lockdown," Mr. Bidhuri said.

Six arrested for violating lockdown

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Six people were arrested across Noida and Greater Noida on Saturday for alleged violation of curbs imposed due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Owners of over 1,900 vehicles were also issued challans for similar violations in Gautam Buddha Nagar district, which has so far recorded over 7,700 COVID-19 cases, including 45 deaths, according to official figures.

Meanwhile, the number of active cases climbed to 1,002 on Saturday. The district remains at the 14th position in the State in terms of active cases, the data showed. The maximum active cases are in Lucknow (6,764), followed by Kanpur Nagar (3,079), and Aligarh (2,915).

Section 144, which bars assembly of more than four people, is in force in the district in view of the pandemic even as security checks intensified in view of the lockdown-like curbs over the weekend that continue till 5 a.m. in Monday, said officials.

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Deo to keep probing riots

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Deputy Commissioner of Police Rajesh Deo, who was given full-fledged charge of Delhi Police's Legal Cell and shifted from Crime Branch as per an order on Friday, will continue to probe communal riots that broke out in the Capital in February, said another order on Saturday.

According to the latest order, Mr. Deo will continue to supervise the investigation being conducted by Special Investigation Teams II and III, in addition to his other duties.

AAP accuses BJP-led civic bodies of making Delhi 'the dirtiest city'

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party on Saturday held protests against the BJP-ruled municipal corporations at different parts of the city after Delhi ranked poorly in the latest Central government's cleanliness survey.

Around 150 large banners were installed in 36 Assemblies of Delhi, on major flyovers, foot-over bridges and underpasses, the party said.

"Delhi is the dirtiest city", "Shame on BJP", read the banners installed at different areas of the city. Many AAP

councillors and MLAs organised protests at their respective areas, the party added.

"It is very unfortunate that Delhi, the capital of the country, has found to be the dirtiest city due to BJP. Tourists from different countries of the world come to Delhi, the Prime Minister of this country – Narendra Modi – lives in Delhi, all the Cabinet Ministers of the Centre and all the MPs live in Delhi. But the reluctance and the corruption of the BJP-led civic bodies, Delhi is now the dirtiest city," said AAP leader Durgesh Pathak.</

Compensate farmers for cotton crop loss: Hooda

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

After reports of white fly pest attacking cotton crop in several villages of Haryana's Hisar, Jind, Fatehabad and Bhiwani districts, Leader of the Opposition and former Chief Minister Bhupinder Singh Hooda on Saturday demanded compensation of at least ₹30,000 per acre to the affected farmers.

"White fly has destroyed everything, before the cotton crop was ready. It is now the responsibility of the ruling BJP-JJP government to give compensation to the farmers," he said.

Mr. Hooda said earlier the

rabi (winter) crop was hit in many districts due to untimely hailstorm, but the farmers have not yet received compensation. "The government should take stern action against the officials responsible," he said.

Mr. Hooda threatened that the Congress will take to the streets and agitate if the government does not wake up.

Separately on a decision to close markets for two days, Haryana Congress president Kumari Selja said the 'confused government' was working to harass traders and businessmen by issuing illogical decisions.

"Rain is unprecedented like the previous year, but it didn't rain this much in 24 hours last year," Mr. Rastogi said. He added in 36 hours, most of the southern districts witnessed very heavy rain, such as Narsinghpur which received around 30 cm rain. "In Chhindwara and Sehore districts, we had to undertake air-lifting," he said.

Rescuers were trying to reach two villages in Hoshangabad and Raisen districts which had become islands. "The Chief Minister is reviewing rescue efforts village-wise. District administration and State officers from Home, Revenue and

Water Resource Departments are coordinating with the Army and the National Disaster Response Force," said Mr. Rastogi.

"Through dense clouds and rain, we tried to conduct

an aerial survey along the Narmada," CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan said on Saturday. "We reached the river but couldn't see anything, and had to return."

Owing to heavy rain, flood-like situation had developed in parts of Jabalpur, Bhopal and Hoshangabad divisions where heavy rain was expected to continue for the next 48 hours, he added. "By 10 a.m. the Narmada had breached the danger level in Hoshangabad," he said.

Almost all dams across rivers were full to the brim, the CMO said. All 13 gates of the Tawa dam, 22 of the Indira Sagar dam, 21 of 23 gates of

the Omkareshwar Dam and 17 of the 21 gates of the Bargi Dam have been opened.

At present, the well marked low pressure area is located around the central-north Madhya Pradesh and the associated cyclonic circulation is active with a southwest tilt up to an altitude of 7.6 km above the sea level, said Ved Prakash Singh, Scientist and Head (DWR / Seismology) at the India Meteorological Department, Bhopal.

IMD Bhopal's senior meteorologist G.D. Mishra said only one district, Mandsaur, had received below normal rain from June to August 29.

M.P. calls in Army, IAF for flood relief work

Heavy rain is likely in Jabalpur, Bhopal and Hoshangabad divisions for the next 48 hours: Chouhan

SIDDHARTH YADAV
BHOJAL

As many as 6,577 persons from 394 villages of nine districts in Madhya Pradesh were rescued within 36 hours of heavy rain that lashed southern areas on Friday and Saturday. Seven deaths had been reported, the State government said.

Two columns of Army had been requisitioned to help with moving people to safer spots in Raisen and Hoshangabad districts, Manish Rastogi, Revenue Commissioner, told *The Hindu*. The Air Force had also been roped in.

"Rain is unprecedented

like the previous year, but it didn't rain this much in 24 hours last year," Mr. Rastogi said. He added in 36 hours, most of the southern districts witnessed very heavy rain, such as Narsinghpur which received around 30 cm rain. "In Chhindwara and Sehore districts, we had to undertake air-lifting," he said.

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"Through dense clouds and rain, we tried to conduct



Shivraj Singh Chouhan during an aerial survey of flood-hit areas on Saturday.

► SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

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Six held for raping minor

SATYASUNDAR BARIK
BHUBANESWAR

Six persons were arrested in Odisha's Rayagada district on charges of raping a minor tribal girl for eight months.

The victim (14) was found to be six months pregnant as result of the assault. Five accused are from her own village and one is from a neighbouring village.

"Six accused have been arrested. The victim is now in police protection. Her statements will be recorded," Rayagada Superintendent of Police Sarvana Vivek M. told over phone on Saturday.

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GENERAL PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is for notice of the general public that a political party is proposed to be registered by the name of "SWATANTRA INDIAN PEOPLE PARTIES". The office of the party is located in KHASRA NO.16 AT VILLAGE DHILAWAL GARHIA, POST-BHOPAL PATTI, P.S. MAU DANERIA, M.P. BHOPAL, MADHYA PRADESH, INDIA. This party has submitted application to the Election Commission of India. New Delhi under Section 29(1) of the Representation of People Act, 1951. Name / address of the office bearers of the party are as follows:- President : Vikrant Singh, S/o Sh. Rajendra Singh, R/o H. No.450, Kha, Dera, Dhar, Dist. Dhar, Madhya Pradesh, Dist. Farukhabad, Uttar Pradesh. General Secretary : Madhu Balu W/o Vikrant Singh, R/o H. No.450 Kha, Dhera, Dhar, Dist. Dhar, Madhya Pradesh, Dist. Farukhabad, Uttar Pradesh. Treasurer : Bhanu Priya W/o Sh. Anshul Sharma, R/o 14-A, Bhagwanpura, Tehsil Farukhabad, Dist. Farukhabad, Uttar Pradesh. If anyone has any objection to the registration of "SWATANTRA INDIAN LABOUR PARTY" they may send their objection to the Election Commission of India, Election Commission of India, Nirvanachand, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001 within 30 days of the publication of this notice.

MATRIMONIAL

BRIDEGRoOMS WANTED

INDEX OF MATRIMONIAL

BRIDEGRoOMS WANTED

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Bhojpuri

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Chhattisgarhi

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Gujarati

Haryanvi

Hindi

Kannada

Kashmiri

Konkani

Malayalam

Manipuri

Marathi

Marwari

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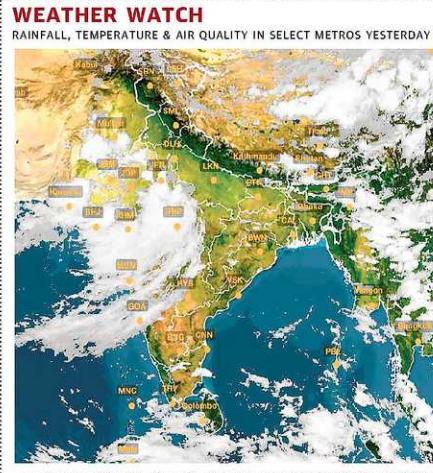
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TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 16.00 HRS)

Forecast for Sunday: Heavy to very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Rajasthan, sub-Himalayan West Bengal, Sikkim, Gujarat, west Madhya Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, ghat areas of central Maharashtra, Goa, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal.

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	1.3	35.5	26.0	Kozhikode	...33.0	25.0	...
Ahmedabad	0.8	33.0	25.8	Kurnool	...33.6	25.6	...
Aizawl	3	28.0	20.3	Lucknow	14.2	33.7	26.3
Allahabad	1.4	32.0	27.0	Madurai	26.2	37.0	22.6
Bengaluru	...31.0	20.8	...	Mangaluru	5.6	32.0	23.6
Bhopal	8.9	26.0	23.2	Mumbai	85.4	28.0	24.2
Bhubaneswar	...34.0	26.6	...	Myuru	...31.0	23.0	...
Chandigarh	0.8	32.0	25.7	New Delhi	23.2	35.0	24.8
Chennai	...36.0	27.4	...	Patna	...34.0	25.0	...
Coimbatore	...34.0	23.0	...	Port Blair	...32.0	26.0	...
Dehradun	11.6	31.0	23.5	Puducherry	...34.0	26.8	...
Gangtok	0.2	21.6	17.7	Pune	6.8	25.0	22.1
Goa	14.6	30.4	24.9	Raipur	4.8	26.0	23.6
Guwahati	...34.9	25.6	...	Ranchi	...30.7	22.4	...
Hubballi	...27.0	21.0	...	Shillong	21.2	23.2	18.0
Hyderabad	...30.0	23.0	...	Shimla	0.2	24.0	19.0
Imphal	...28.9	22.4	...	Srinagar	...32.8	25.0	...
Jaipur	1.3	33.0	25.0	Thiruvananthapuram	...32.9	24.9	...
Kochi	...31.0	25.0	...	Tiruchi	...36.9	25.6	...
Kohima	...24.5	18.0	...	Vijayawada	...35.4	26.5	...
Kolkata	2.7	35.0	27.2	Visakhapatnam	...32.0	27.2	...

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Jorapokhar, Jharkhand recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 170. It is considered moderate level of pollution. In contrast, Kalaburgi, Karnataka recorded a healthy AQI score of 16.

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)
SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

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

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

PM_{2.5} & 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

Migrant workers want to stay put in Maharashtra: CITU to HC

Trade union body withdraws PIL seeking relief measures for stranded workers

SONAM SAIGAL
MUMBAI

The Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU) informed the Bombay High Court on Friday that migrant workers want to stay back in Maharashtra and not return to their home towns as economic activity is resuming with the gradual lifting of lockdown measures.

The CITU had filed a public interest litigation (PIL) seeking relief measures to alleviate the plight of migrant workers stranded in the State amid the COVID-19-induced lockdown. Senior advocate Gayatri Singh told a Division Bench of Justices A.A. Sayed and Nitin Borkar on Friday the CITU now wishes to withdraw its PIL.

Ms. Singh said many migrants opted to return to their native places after the lockdown was imposed in the State, but the remaining workers do want to return home owing to the lifting of lockdown measures.

The court allowed the CITU to withdraw its PIL and



Back to work: Migrant workers board a bus to Mumbai after returning to Maharashtra. ■ FILE PHOTO

granted it liberty to approach the Labour Commission if any difficulty arises with regard to online registration of migrant workers.

On August 5, Maharashtra Advocate General Ashutosh Kumbhakoni told the High Court that the Maharashtra government incurred a loss

of ₹42 lakh as not enough migrant workers boarded the special trains that were operated to transport them to their home towns. He said 4,969 migrant workers did not board the trains. He said six trains were arranged between July 16 and 31 for 8,520 migrants and the State had

paid ₹69 lakh to the Railways. However, only 3,551 people boarded the trains.

He said now the workers want to stay put and those who left are planning to come back. He said over 12 lakh migrant workers have returned to the State through 842 trains so far.

HC refuses permission to hold rituals for Muharram

'Prohibition is owing to COVID-19'

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

gued that the orders were "discriminatory in nature" as they provided for a complete ban in taking out the processions and target only one community. Their counsels also submitted that the Supreme Court had allowed the devotees access to the places of worship and permitted the annual chariot procession at the Jagannath Temple in Puri besides recently permitting the offer of Paryushan prayers in three Jain temples in Mumbai.

The court dismissed PILs challenging the government orders dated August 10 and August 25.

"...it is with a heavy heart that we hold that in these testing times, it is not possible to lift the prohibition by providing any guidelines for regulating the mourning rituals/practice connected with the 10th day of Muharram," the court said.

"We must hope and trust that God would perceive our restraint, not as a slight, but as an act of compassion for our brothers and sisters and give us the opportunity to celebrate all festivals in future," a Division Bench of Justices Shashi Kant Gupta and Shamim Ahmed noted.

The petitioners had ar-

gued that the orders were "discriminatory in nature" as they provided for a complete ban in taking out the processions and target only one community. Their counsels also submitted that the Supreme Court had allowed the devotees access to the places of worship and permitted the annual chariot procession at the Jagannath Temple in Puri besides recently permitting the offer of Paryushan prayers in three Jain temples in Mumbai.

The petitioners had also argued that the proposed rituals could be regulated by prescribing reasonable restrictions like limiting the number of people to carry out the taziyas till Karbala for burial.

Additional Chief Standing Counsel opposed the contention and said the orders were in no way discriminatory. Restrictions have also been imposed upon the Hindu community and they have been prohibited from raising any pooja pandals or installing statues or idols or even taking out processions during Ganesh Chaturthi, the government said.

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED



RUKHSANA

General public is hereby informed that one lady namely **Rukhsana W/o Seikh Tasawar**, R/o No. 274, Noor Bai Dhobi Ki Cha, Ahmedabad, Gujarat has been missing from H.No. 231, Chatta Lai Miyan, Chandni Mahal, Delhi since 18.08.2020. In this regard, a case vide DD No. 60A, dt. 19.08.2020 has been registered at P.S. Chandni Mahal, Delhi. The description of the missing lady is as under.

Age: 40 Years, **Complexion:** Fair, **Height:** 5' Face: Round, **Built:** Medium, **Wearing:** Pink colour printed suit and salwar, Blue colour 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. Chandni Mahal, Delhi at following Tel No. / e-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in and Website: http://cbc.nic.in Ph: 011-24368638, 24368641 Fax No. 011-24368639

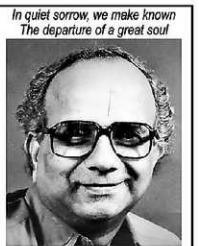
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DEATH



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DEATH



GOMATHI (96)
D/o Late K.V.NARAYANAN (Former Advocate – Thiruvananthapuram) & W/o Late T.K. Sivaraman (Tenkasi) passed away peacefully at Chennai on 27.08.2020, leaving behind a huge family of Sons, Daughters, Grandchildren, Great Grand Children & host of Relatives.

DEATH



T.R. SIVARAMAN
(Retd. GM (CWMS/MC) NLC Ltd, Neyveli) attained mokshapradhan on 27th June, 2020 peacefully in sleep at home surrounded by his family in San Diego, USA.
Mourned by Padmaja, Ganesh, Bala, Gowri and seven grandchildren.
condolences.trs@gmail.com/
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Transmission Line Maintenance Division-VI,
Bemina, Srinagar-J&K. Tel: 0194-2492429
Email: tlcdistppd@gmail.com, psdflkpdtdc1@gmail.com

EXTENSION NOTICE-3
NIT No. TLMD-VII 01 of 2020-21 (RE-TENDER) DL23-04-2020

(Extension Of Dates)

NAME OF THE WORK: Supply, Installation, Testing and Commissioning of 3x53.33 MVA Transformer Bank for Augmentation of Deling Grid Station.

Due to poor response, the date of bid submission for above NIT is extended as:

A	E-Bid Submission (end) date & Time	05.09.2020 upto 02.00 PM
B	Online Commercial and Technical e-Bid opening date & Time	08.09.2020 at 02.00 PM
C	Online Financial e-Bid opening date & time (Only of the technically qualified bidders)	Will be communicated to the Technically Qualified Bidders

All other terms and conditions shall remain same as per attached SBD, BOQ and other documents uploaded on site.

DIPK-NB-2072

Executive Engineer
TLMD-VI, JKPTCL, Bemina Sgr.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
SKIMS MEDICAL COLLEGE-HOSPITAL
Bemina, Srinagar Kashmir - 190017
Department of Materials Management
0194-2493226, mmoskimsch@gmail.com

Sub:- Extension in eNIT No: SKIMS-MCH 07 of 2020 dated: 17/08/2020 for Urgent Supply of Drugs at SKIMS MCH Bemina, Srinagar COVID-19 Designated Hospital.

NIT No. SKIMS-MCH 07 of 2020 dated 17/08/2020 for Urgent Supply of Drugs at SKIMS MCH Bemina, Srinagar COVID-19 Designated Hospital is hereby extended for a further period of 07 days as per following revised schedule.

Last date for submission of online bids 05/09/2020 upto 03:30 P.M.

Opening of Technical bids 08/09/2020 at 02:30 P.M.

Other terms & conditions of the E-NIT shall remain unchanged.

No: SKIMS/MCH/MMD/tenders/108/20/3163-69

Dated: 29/08/2020

DIPK-NB-2048

Materials Management Officer
(SKIMS MCH Bemina)

Subject:- Strengthening/partly widening of NH-501 Khanabal-Phalgam from Km. 0+000 to Km. 49+500 (approx. 49.50 km) in the UT of Jammu & Kashmir (Job No. NH-444-J&K-2019-20) Dated: 31st March, 2020. "Extension of Dates"

Reference:- 1) This office NIT No NIT NO PCD-RnB-23 of 2020-21 Dated: 29/06/2020 issued Vide endorsement No. PCD- 1st/NIT/1470-81 Dtd: 29-06-2020.

2) This office Corrigendum No.NIT/Corr/2429-36 dated: 11/8/2020

As per the instruction conveyed by the Ministry of Road Transport & Highways (MoRTH) the Critical Dates of above mentioned NIT

FROM PAGE ONE

Centre must borrow to pay GST dues of States: Kerala

Already, talks had been held with Finance Ministers of other States and the response was encouraging, Dr. Isaac added.

"A video conference will be held with other State Finance Ministers on Monday afternoon. A separate memorandum will be submitted by the States. But, we are trying to reach a common ground and ask the Centre to avail loan to provide GST compensation. It is not clear if the BJP ruled States will stick to their stance. A unified stand will be aired in the GST Council," he said.

As per the Constitution, a State needs permission from the Centre to take a loan and the interest will be 1-2% more if the State avails the loan. Only 3% of the State's income can be availed as loan even if permission is granted. Even if

the fiscal limit ceiling is enhanced by 0.5%, as suggested by the Centre, it will not be adequate for Kerala as it will not be enough to cover the GST compensation.

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan also indicated that Kerala would cobble together an alliance of States unhappy over the Centre's suggestion that States raise loans to make up for the GST dues owed to them.

Finance Ministers of States disinclined to accept the options proposed by the Centre would meet via video conference on Monday.

The Centre had imposed the GST regime in 2016. At the time, it had promised the States a 14% increase in tax revenue. It had also pledged to make up for the shortfall in tax revenue caused due to the transition to the GST system.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

There were 86,446 active COVID-19 cases in Karnataka, with 8,324 more people testing positive on Saturday, while total cases stood at 32,076.

In fresh mortality, 115 deaths were reported, taking total fatalities to 5,483.

Bengaluru Urban had the highest number of new cases at 2,993 on Saturday, as well as 25 new deaths and Ballari

COVID-19

had 468 new cases.

Deaths were also reported from Bagalkote, Ballari, Belagavi, Chikmagalur, Dakshina Kannada, Davangere, Dharwad, Gadag, Hassan, Haveri, Kalaburagi, Kodagu, Kolar, Koppal, Mandya, Mysuru, Raichur, Ramanagara, Shavigg, Tumakuru, Uttara Kannada, Vijayapura and

Yadgir. Testing on Saturday - including Rapid Antigen Detection Test and RT-PCR - covered 72,684 samples.

For the fourth day in a row, Andhra Pradesh reported over 10,000 infections. It also recorded 82 more deaths on Saturday. The Health Department said 10,548 new cases were reported, taking the tally to 4,14,164 and the death toll to 3,796. There were 97,681 active cases.

Also, 62,024 samples were tested in the past day. Chittoor reported 15 deaths and its tally, already the highest among districts, was close to 400.

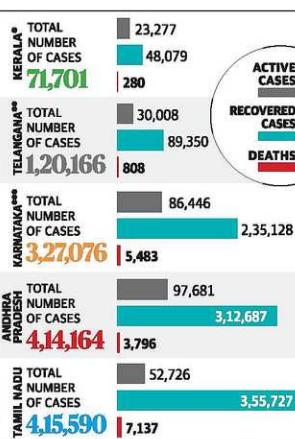
Telangana's tally was 1,20,166 as 2,751 more tested positive on Friday. Nine more patients died, taking the toll to 808. The new cases included 432 from Greater Hyderabad, 192 from Karimnagar, 185 from Rangareddy, 147 from Nalgonda, 132 from

Gritty fighter

Thanks to the efforts of her medical team, a 110-year-old woman from Kerala created a record of sorts by becoming the oldest person to recover from COVID-19. The graph shows the spread of the pandemic in the southern States



Back to normal:
Varyath Pathu, alias Fatima, after being discharged from the Government Medical College Hospital at Manjeri in Kerala on Saturday.



*Kerala has a mismatch of 65 cases due to unaccounted deaths, missing persons | **Telangana numbers are as of 8 p.m. on Friday

***Karnataka has 19 non-COVID deaths

Khammam, 128 from Medchal-Malkajgiri, 113 from Nizamabad, 111 from Suryapet and 101 from Warangal Urban. On Friday, 62,300 tests were conducted.

Kerala reported 2,397 cases and 2,225 recoveries on Saturday. The case burden rose to 71,701. The State's COVID-19 toll rose to 280, with the Health department con-

jaying told the media that the epidemic was moving along predicted lines. The patient numbers were yet to show any unusual spike, because of care and vigil.

Exactly 30 days after Tamil Nadu's daily COVID-19 count stayed below the 6,000-mark, Tamil Nadu recorded 6,352 fresh novel coronavirus disease cases on Saturday, taking its overall tally to 41,559.

The number of persons discharged crossed 3.55 lakh with the recovery of another 6,045 persons, while the State's toll climbed to 7,137 with 87 more fatalities.

The State's daily case count crossed 6,000-mark as a record 80,988 samples were tested in the last 24 hours. This took the total number of samples tested till date in the State to 46,54,797.

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

Karnataka police summon film director Indrajit Lankesh

He claims to have details about drug abuse in film industry

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BENGALURU

The Anti Narcotics Wing of the Central Crime Branch (CCB) on Saturday issued a notice to film director Indrajit Lankesh after he told the media that he was aware of substance abuse in the film industry and was willing to share information with the police.

This comes days after a drug bust by the Narcotics Control Bureau, which in a series of raids seized MDMA pills and LSD blots.

At the time, the NCB had issued a statement saying that preliminary investigations had revealed



that the arrested dealers were supplying synthetic drugs to prominent musicians and actors.

Mr. Lankesh alleged that everyone, including the police, was aware of the racket where drugs were

supplied at rave parties. He further claimed that ₹4 crore worth of drugs were sold down the city was locked down.

Following his allegations, the CCB issued a notice summoning him for questioning. "We will investigate every bit of information that he shares with us," said Sandeep Patil, Joint Commissioner of Police (crime).

Citizens who have information to share can do so on the toll free number 1908. NCB officials are questioning the people arrested during the raids to probe the extent of the network. "We have gathered a lot of details, which we are investigating," said an NCB official.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (East division) S.D. Sharannappa said that the

prime accused, Mohammed Zain, is a resident of Shivajinagar. He was a regular visitor at a readymade garment showroom in Bharatnagar, which is owned by the victim's father. "Based on what he saw, Zain concluded that it was a successful business, and decided to kidnap the owner's youngest son for ransom," he said.

Lured with kite
He roped in his associates and, for one month, the gang kept tabs on the businessman's house and shop. They mapped out the routine of all family members.

The boy was reunited with his family in the presence of Police Commissioner Kamal Pant, who commended the police on their success.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (East division) S.D. Sharannappa said that the

boy was fascinated with kite flying. He readily agreed to accompany Zain," DCP Sharannappa added.

The accused took the boy to his car, and gave him a cold drink laced with sleeping pills. With the boy sedated, he drove to the outskirts of the city to a house in Shampura and called the father to inform that he had kidnapped his son. He demanded ₹2 crore for his safe release. He then instructed his associates to take the boy to Tumakuru in the same car.

The businessman approached the police for help. By evening, a special team led by Assistant Commissioner of Police Tabarak Fathima was formed to track down the boy and the kidnapper. Another team led by

Inspector Sirajuddin tracked down the accused using call record details and traced the car to the outskirts of Tumakuru.

15-km chase

The accused were travelling with the boy in the car. Sensing trouble, they tried to flee. They evaded the police for 15 km before the driver lost control of the vehicle. The car overturned and rolled into a field. The police rescued the boy, who was fortunately unharmed.

Based on information given by the arrested men, the police tracked down Zain to the house in Shampura. "He attacked the police team in an attempt to escape. We had to open fire and shot him on the leg," said a senior police officer.

BJP objects to appeal on Varavara Rao

Take action against MLA, it says

STAFF REPORTER

VIZHAWADA

BJP Andhra Pradesh affairs in-charge Sunil Deodhar has demanded that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy initiate action against MLA Bhuma Karunakar Reddy for appealing to Vice-President M. Venkaiah Naidu for the release of Viplava Rayachaital Sangham member Varavara Rao.

In a tweet on Saturday, Mr. Deodhar said the MLA had written a letter to Mr. Naidu seeking his intervention for the release of Mr. Varavara Rao.



about the issue.

Mr. Varavara Rao, along with some human right activists, was arrested by the Maharashtra police for his alleged involvement in the Elgar Parishad Bhima Koregaon case.

Filmmaker's wife among 7 held for assault on Dalit youth in A.P.

Police collect CCTV footage, other evidence from his house

STAFF REPORTER

VISAKHAPATNAM

The police on Saturday arrested seven persons, including 28-year-old Priya Madhuri, the wife of filmmaker and Big Boss (Telugu) participant Nutan Naidu, on charges of assaulting and tonsuring a 20-year-old Dalit youth at her house in Visakhapatnam on Friday.

The police have collected CCTV footage from Mr. Naidu's house, which reportedly revealed that the accused thrashed and tonsured K. Srikanth, a resident of Pendurthi.

The others arrested include T. Indira Rani, 26, housekeeping supervisor; Ch. Varahal, 35, supervisor; I. Rav Kumar, 26, barber, S. Balagangadhara, 29; M. Jhansi, 19; and M. Sowjanya, 29, a staff member at the Naidu household.

Commissioner of Police Manish Kumar Sinha said the youth, Mr. Srikanth had worked at Mr. Naidu's house from February to August 1. He then left to take up another job. However, he was called to Mr. Naidu's house on August 27 by Varahal and accused by Ms. Priya Madhuri of stealing her iPhone. Denying it, Mr. Srikanth left the house.

On Friday, Varahal again asked him to come to the house around 1 p.m. When he arrived, he was allegedly thrashed by some of the inmates and staff with sticks and steel rods for several hours.

He was also allegedly verbally abused, said Mr. Sinha. Later, one of the accused Ravi Kumar tonsured him. He was also threatened not to reveal the incident to anyone, the police said.

After the victim approached Pendurthi police, a team rushed to the house and collected evidence, including the CCTV footage, tonsured hair and the sticks used to beat the youth.

The police have booked cases under Sections of attempt to murder (307), voluntarily causing hurt by dangerous weapons (324) among others. "All the accused were arrested and sent to judicial remand. Further we would take them into police custody and ascertain more facts in the case," Mr. Sinha said.

STAFF REPORTER

HYDERABAD

Telangana police stepped up security for the State's lone BJP MLA T. Raja Singh and he was cautioned not to move on two-wheelers as it poses a 'grave' threat to his life.

In a 'confidential' letter issued to the Goshamal legislator, Hyderabad Commissioner of Police Anjani Kumar stated, "It has been noticed that sometimes you are moving on a motorcycle. This poses a grave security threat to you.

Therefore, you may kindly avoid moving on motorcycles and travel by the bullet-proof car allotted."

Due to the threat perception, security has been enhanced for the MLA.

Mr. Singh said that he would write to Union Home

T. Raja Singh

Minister Amit Shah and Telangana Home Minister Mohammad Ali to know more details. "In the last few days, some terrorists were nabbed. I want to know the threat perception and whom the local police are suspecting. Are they terrorist groups, local groups and is there any personal enmity?" the MLA added.

TELANGANA

The dispute over the installation of Sangolli Rayanna statue at Peeranwadi village in Belagavi district of Karnataka was resolved after it was decided that the statue would remain at the disputed place, while the Y-junction would be named "Shivaji Circle." Tension had prevailed in the region after unidentified people put up a statue of Sangolli Rayanna before daybreak on Friday without authorisation. Another group had tried to install a statue of Shivaji at the same place, which was thwarted by the police.

Butterflies are migrating early in southern India this year

Change in rainfall pattern and a considerable increase in the number of sunny days could be among the reasons

E.M. MANOJ
WILSON THOMAS
KALPETTA/COIMBATORE

In a departure from the past, the annual migration of butterflies from the hill ranges of the Eastern Ghats towards the Western Ghats is an early phenomenon this year.

Usually, butterfly migration in south India begins in October-November, with the onset of the northeast monsoon, from the plains to the Ghats, and in April-June, just before the advent of the southwest monsoon, from the Ghats to the plains.

But this year, the first migratory sighting was recorded in the



Welcome visitors: Butterflies sighted at Appapara in the North Wayanad forest division. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Parambikulam Tiger Reserve in Palakkad district by forest watchers on July 14. Later, butterfly enthusiasts in Salem, Erode, Tirupur, Coimbatore and the Nilgiris observed their movement in

early after a gap of eight years. The Eastern Ghats complex of the Yercaud hills (Shevaroy hills), Pachamalai, Kollis, Kalvarayan hills are the major originating places for the migrating species," said A. Pavendhan of The Nature and Butterfly Society (TNBS).

A recent study revealed that four species of milkweed butterflies belonging to the Danainae subfamily are mainly involved in the migration - the Dark Blue Tiger, Blue Tiger, Common Crow and the Double-branded (commonly known as tigers and crows). Species like Lime Swallowtail, Lemon Pansy, Common Leopard,

Blue Pansy, Common Emigrant and Lemon Emigrants are also involved in the migration but their numbers are very low. However, the number of Lime Swallowtail butterflies had increased considerably this year, P.A. Vinay, president, Ferns Nature Conservation Society (FNCS), Wayanad, told *The Hindu*.

Observers noted that Blue Tiger and Dark Blue Tiger accounted for 90% of the butterflies involved in the early migration. "The change in rainfall pattern and a considerable increase in the number of sunny days may be the major reasons for the earlier migration,"

Mr. Vinay added. Mr. Pavendhan said peak migration was observed over Coimbatore district on August 25. The starting rate of movement was 180 individuals per hour, when the counting was done over a band of about 10 metres in the morning, and the movement reached a peak of 1,060 individuals per hour around noon.

Observers also found that thousands of butterflies had died of vehicle hits along the migratory path. D. Sadees Kumar, an observer from Erode, said that he counted 57 dead butterflies while travelling for merely 15 minutes on the Avinashi-Chengalpattu road.

COVID-19: Centre seeks details of AYUSH drugs

This follows claims on virus treatment

STAFF REPORTER

KOZHIKODE

The Union Ministry of AYUSH has sought details of licensing applications for Ayurvedic, Siddha, and Unani drugs and the results of clinical trials and research studies in these systems of medicine from States and Union Territories in the wake of their claims on COVID-19 treatment.

According to Rule 158-B of the Drugs and Cosmetics Rules, 1945, proof of effectiveness for new indication or use is required for granting licence or approval to manufacture and sell Ayurvedic, Siddha and Unani medicines.

'Spurious claims'

It had, however, come to the notice of the government that "approvals are being given for the medicinal products selected or registered for clinical trials or research studies" and "spurious claims and misleading advertisements are placed in the media" about the COVID-

INTERVIEW | RICHARD VERMA

'Biden is strongest advocate for U.S.-India ties'

The Obama administration valued India as a defence partner, says former U.S. Ambassador to India

SUHASINI HAIDAR

Richard Verma, former U.S. Ambassador to India (2014 - 2017) and currently the Vice-Chair of strategy advisory firm The Asia Group, recalls that Barack Obama and Joe Biden wanted to carve out a separate designation for India as a major defence partner. In an interview, Mr. Verma vouches for Mr. Biden's ability to help stabilise risks to peace in South Asia. Edited excerpts:

With both the Democratic National Convention and the Republican National Convention now over, what do you think are the issues that will dominate the campaign ahead of November elections?

I'm really just speaking for myself in an individual capacity. Look, [the U.S.] is in the middle of a pandemic crisis that has devastated the country. There's no question that's the overriding issue for the next President. Second would be the economic recovery. Job number three

is really an international repair job to rebuild American alliances, go back and talk to our friends and partners about the U.S. reclaiming and playing a leadership role again in the world as opposed to playing a disruption role.

Given events, however, how concerned are you that that race issues are going to take over other issues?

I am exceptionally concerned about the direction the [U.S.] has taken on race and on our treatment of immigrants and minority communities. I am an immigrant, I come from an immigrant family.

The thought that my dad could show up here in the United States with \$14, and a bus ticket, and his son could go back one generation later to represent the United States [as Ambassador]: That vision that dream, that ability to do what I did, I think is seriously at risk.

In India there has been no response officially to the nomination of Kamala Harris



on the ticket, and some scepticism in the commentary over whether Ms. Harris really owns her Indian origins.

I don't expect any foreign government, Indian government, or any government to opine on the internal politics of the United States and that would be appropriate. Again, I just think you have to look at her overall qualifications as a legislator as a lawyer as what she did in the state of California, how she's built her office, incredibly diverse staff and her chief of staff is Indian-American.

I am so confident about how she would not only do in the job but how she would do in managing really critical foreign policy relationships, including the U.S. and India.

Could the Biden-Harris team match the Modi-Trump chemistry? And how do you address concerns that a Democratic administration will be much more intrusive on issues like human rights?

Look, we broke every record on defence sales and trade record under the Obama-Biden administration. It was Joe Biden and Barack Obama who wanted to carve out a separate designation for India as a major defence partner and broke every record on the issuance of visas and welcomed tech workers. Now, if the chief complaint is that sometimes democrats raise human rights, I would just say, that's what close friends and partners do. Indian leaders could call me and the President and the Secretary of State and others and raise sensitive issues. We can do the same. People should welcome that conversation.

What do you think will be the relationship when it comes to China?

I think it's important that the U.S.-India relationship be

about U.S., India relations and not about any third country. Look, we are in competition with China, obviously, militarily, economically, from a technology point of view. And yes, it is a concern. I don't think either the United States or India aspire to contain or control China, or we certainly don't aspire for conflict with China, but we have to be prepared.

What would be Mr. Biden in South Asia policy in terms of the India-Pakistan equation? He has received Pakistan's highest civilian honour, has been a votary of a larger role for Pakistan in the Afghanistan discussion....

With regard to Pakistan, you've heard [Mr. Biden] say directly, that cross border terrorism is not something that anyone could ever tolerate. I'm quite confident about his security credentials, and his ability to help stabilise a difficult set of situations that pose a threat to peace loving people in South Asia.

(For the full version, please log on to bit.ly/RichardVermaInterview)

Almost 8% of residents in Indore have antibodies, finds serological survey

Higher prevalence in hotspots points to successful containment strategy'

SIDHARTH YADAV

BHOPAL The seroprevalence of 7.75% in Indore indicates more than 2 lakh individuals have had SARS-CoV-2 infection in the recent past – at least 15 days prior to sample collection, said the city's first such survey.

The community-based cross-sectional study, conducted from August 11 to 23 on 7,103 individuals residing since March 1 in Indore, noted 2,03,160 individuals had the infection. Indore's seroprevalence is much lower than that of Delhi, Ahmedabad, Kolkata and Mumbai.

Prevalence in hotspot areas is almost five times that in low risk areas. Further, the prevalence is the highest in 45-60 years age group followed by 30-39 years age group, said the survey coordinated by the Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Medical College, Indore.

and the National Centre for Disease Control, New Delhi. The study aimed at estimating the presence of anti-SARS-CoV-2 antibodies assayed from blood samples of the residents.

The Bambai Bazaar ward recorded the highest seroprevalence at more than 30, followed by another four wards where a prevalence of 20-25% was recorded. "Prevalence in hotspot areas is more and matches with surveillance data," the study said, while noting the presence of antibodies are not a marker of total or partial immunity.

Both males and females recorded a near identical seroprevalence. Samples were picked using the stratified random sampling method where 33% males aged 18 and above, 33% females aged 18 and above and children between a year-old and 18 years of age were picked. Only one sample from one household or family was collected.

The results show the containment strategy has worked dramatically," believes Saile Sakalle, Professor, Community Medicine Department at the college.

Rozgar Do campaign launched

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Indian Youth Congress (IYC) on Saturday launched a nationwide "Rozgar Do" campaign highlighting the spike in unemployment rate, which was already spiralling before coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic hit the country.

Speaking at the launch event Indian Youth Congress in-charge Krishna Allavaru told reporters that it is wrong on part of the government to blame the COVID-19 pandemic for the current state of economy which was in a shambles even before the pandemic hit. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman called the pandemic an "Act of God".

Mr. Allavaru asked, "Was it 'Act of God' on 8 November 2016 when Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced demonetisation that wrecked our economy? Was the faulty implementation of GST an 'Act of God'? When coronavirus pandemic was at our door, PM Modi organised Namaste Trump event putting lakhs of people in danger, was that also 'act of God'?" He added, "Do not blame God for your faulty policies."

Probe Facebook ties with BJP, says Cong.

WhatsApp also compromised

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday reiterated its demand that the government constitute a joint parliamentary committee to investigate what it called an "unholy intimacy" between Facebook's India operation and the BJP.

The Congress flagged a *Time* magazine story which, it said, not only confirmed a piece by *The Wall Street Journal* but also pointed out that WhatsApp, which is owned by Facebook, also had similar connections with BJP. WhatsApp, which was used by 40 crore Indians had been "compromised and controlled indirectly" by the BJP, the Congress alleged.

Payment platform

The *Time* piece claimed that current Public Policy director of WhatsApp Shivnath Thukral, in 2013, used to operate websites and Facebook pages for the BJP. It alleged that WhatsApp was going slow on hate speeches on its platform because it wanted to soon launch its own payment platform.

"There needs to be an exhaustive and unbiased investigation by a joint parliamentary committee between the unending links of Facebook employees and the ruling establishment. The investigation must include how Facebook manipulated voter opinion, allowed hate speech and was oblivious to fake news, even when they were in clear violation of their regulations," Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera said.

The party demanded that WhatsApp must not be granted approvals for its payment operations until an inquiry is complete.

"We also demand that Facebook should make the investigation ordered into conduct of Facebook India public," Mr. Khera said.

Pawan Khera

vestigation by a joint parliamentary committee between the unending links of Facebook employees and the ruling establishment. The investigation must include how Facebook manipulated voter opinion, allowed hate speech and was oblivious to fake news, even when they were in clear violation of their regulations," Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera said.

The party demanded that WhatsApp must not be granted approvals for its payment operations until an inquiry is complete.

"We also demand that Facebook should make the investigation ordered into conduct of Facebook India public," Mr. Khera said.

Sushant case: Congress raises more questions

'BJP shielding producer Sandip Singh'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

The Maharashtra Congress on Saturday demanded an inquiry into the relationship between Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and producer Sandip Singh, who is alleged to be a part of a drug cartel involved in the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput.

The party claimed that Mr. Singh's Legend Global Studio was the only film company which signed an MoU of ₹177 crore in the Vibrant Gujarat summit, 2019.

A day after revealing photos of Mr. Singh with former chief minister Devendra Fadnavis, State Congress spokesperson Sachin Sawant claimed that during September 1 to December 23, 2019, Mr. Singh had called the BJP State office 53 times. "Who is his handler in BJP? Whom was he talking to?" Mr. Sawant asked.

Releasing documents, he said Mr. Singh was also accused of sexually assaulting a minor in Mauritius during his Indian embassy-backed visit in 2018. "What is the status of that case? Was he encountered a police team in Ballia, said Sanjay Kumar Yadav, Additional SP, Ballia. An illegal .32 bore pistol, a live cartridge and a "misfired" cartridge were recovered from him, said the officer.



Sushant Singh Rajput

BJP leaves the door open for Manjhi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Bihar BJP president Sanjay Jaiswal on Saturday said whoever wanted to join the NDA under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi was welcome. He was answering a question on the possible re-entry of Hindustan Awami Morcha (HAM) Jitan Ram Manjhi in the alliance. "Whoever accepts the leadership of Shri Narendra Modi is welcome in the NDA," he said.

With the Bihar Assembly polls expected by October-November, there has been much speculation about former Chief Minister Manjhi, who had left the NDA after fighting polls within the alliance in 2015.

Mr. Jaiswal spoke after a meeting of party MPs from the State with national president J.P. Nadda on Saturday. The MPs asked Mr. Nadda to ensure an equitable distribution of seats between the BJP and the alliance partner Janata Dal (U) since both parties had fought on an equal number of seats in the Lok Sabha.

OFFICE OF ADDITIONAL CHIEF ENGINEER, WATER RESOURCES ZONE, UDAIPUR

Near Akashvani, Chetak Circle, Udaipur (Rajasthan)313001

Phone No.: 0294-2528265
No.-ACE/Act/DRIP/2020/12342

Dated : 24/08/2020

CORR/GENDUM-3rd NIT No. 03/2020-21

The dates for downloading and uploading bids for Rehabilitation and Improvement works of Matirkunda Dam District Chittorgarh / Bhilwara under Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project (DRIP) Phase-II is hereby extended upto 05.10.2020, 04:00 PM. Updated particulars of the bid may be visited on the procurement portal (<http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>, www.waterrources.rajasthan.gov.in) website.

(UBN No.WRD2021WLOB00433)
DIPR No. 3695 Dt. 26/05/2020
DIPR/C/6778

(Bhuvan Bhasker)
Additional Chief Engineer
Water Resources Zone Udaipur

Director General of Police and Director General

Karnataka State Fire and Emergency Services,

No.1, Annaswamy Mudaliar Road, Bengaluru-560 042

Tender Abstract Notification

No.STS/SDRF/95/E/2020-21

Dated: 27.08.2020

Tenders are invited through e-procurement for supply of 04 Nos. Rescue (Jumping) Cushion (Medium & Big) as per department specifications for the Karnataka State Fire and Emergency Services department, Bengaluru.

Eligible suppliers are requested to participate through e-procurement only. Website: <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>

Help Desk: 080-25501216/227

Last date & time of tender queries : Dtd: 02.09.2020 up to 16:00 hrs.

Last date & time of submission tender : Dtd: 11.09.2020 up to 15:00 hrs

Date & time of opening of technical bid : Dtd: 14.09.2020 at 16:00 hrs.

Date & time of opening of financial bid : Will be intimated.

Sd/- Deputy Inspector General of Police and Tender Inviting Officer,

DIPR/DDU/SSC/949/2020-21 Karnataka State Fire & Emergency Services

DIPR/DDU/SSC/94

IN BRIEF



COVID-19 positive cases cross 1 lakh in Assam

GUWAHATI
Assam crossed 1 lakh COVID-19 positive cases on Friday. Assam's Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said 2,560 positive cases were added to the State's tally by 10 p.m. on Friday. Of the total of 1,01,367 positive cases in Assam, 79,307 people have recovered so far, while 21,771 are undergoing treatment.

Railway official's wife, son shot dead in Lucknow

LUCKNOW
The wife and minor son of a senior railway official were found shot dead in their residence in Lucknow on Saturday with the police claiming they were killed allegedly by the official's minor daughter. A senior police officer said the girl, a national-level shooter, has confessed to the crime.

Amarinder orders probe into scholarship 'scam'

CHANDIGARH
Punjab CM Amarinder Singh on Saturday said he has asked the Chief Secretary to conduct a thorough probe into an alleged scholarship scam. "Anyone found involved would be penalised and punished," he said. He added he would not succumb to the Opposition pressure.

MNF trumps Congress in village council elections

GUWAHATI
The Mizo National Front (MNF) has wrested from the Congress a majority of the 558 village councils across nine districts, where elections were held on August 27. The MNF, a constituent of the anti-Congress North East Democratic Alliance fronted by the BJP, had swept the Aizawl Municipal Council seats. The results of the urban local councils were declared on Friday evening.

SC verdict in Prashant Bhushan case tomorrow

The lawyer had refused to apologise

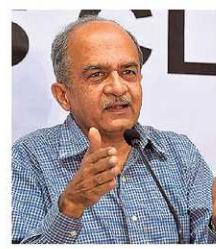
LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A three-judge Supreme Court Bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra will on Monday pronounce its sentence on civil rights lawyer Prashant Bhushan, found guilty of criminal contempt for two tweets.

Mr. Bhushan has refused to apologise in his two statements to the court. He was convicted of scandalising the court with his tweets of a picture of Chief Justice of India S.A. Bobde astride a heavy bike and the role of the court in the past six years. The lawyer said the tweets were his bona fide opinions.

In the last hearing, the court wondered about the resolve shown by Mr. Bhushan. He said this was an opportunity for the court to enhance its greatness through its compassion.

Senior advocate Rajeev Dhavan, Mr. Bhushan's lawyer, had advised the court to not make his client a "martyr" by punishing him.



Prashant Bhushan

lection of guilt? 'Apology' is a magical word which can heal. You will all go to the category of Mahatma Gandhi if you can apologise," Justice Mishra had said.

Attorney General K.K. Venugopal had urged the court not to punish Mr. Bhushan. He said this was an opportunity for the court to enhance its greatness through its compassion.

Senior advocate Rajeev Dhavan, Mr. Bhushan's lawyer, had advised the court to not make his client a "martyr" by punishing him.

"What is wrong in seeking an apology? Is it a sin to apologise? Will that be a re-

Viral tracker

With 74,290 cases recorded on Saturday, India's COVID-19 tally crossed the 35 lakh mark and stood at 35,35,485. As many as 920 new deaths were registered on the day, taking the toll to 63,655. Graphs depict new cases and deaths in the last 14 days across select States which are classified based on where cases or deaths are rising (red), falling (green) or flattening (orange).



KARNATAKA

CASES
8,324
DEATHS
115

UTTAR PRADESH

CASES
5,633
DEATHS
62

DELHI

CASES
1,954
DEATHS
15

TELANGANA

CASES
2,751
DEATHS
9

MAHARASHTRA

CASES
16,286
DEATHS
328

ANDHRA PRADESH

CASES
10,548
DEATHS
82

TAMIL NADU

CASES
6,352
DEATHS
87

WEST BENGAL

CASES
3,012
DEATHS
53

KERALA

CASES
2,397
DEATHS
6

FIGURES ON THE GRAPHS DEPICT NEW CASES AND DEATHS RECORDED IN THE RESPECTIVE STATES ON SATURDAY. DATA AS OF 10:45 P.M.

Rajasthan to hold State exams

But Congress-led govt. demands postponement of JEE, NEET

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

While demanding postponement of the Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) and the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET), the Congress government in Rajasthan plans to hold several State-level examinations during the next three months, in which lakhs of candidates will appear. The government bodies organising the exams have said they would take precautions.

Examinations such as pre-diploma in elementary education, supplementary exams of the State Secondary Education Board, pre-teacher eligibility test and the police constable recruitment exam will be held in the

State during the next three months.

The Congress leaders and party workers staged demonstrations across the State over the weekend for the postponement of JEE and NEET in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Online campaign

It also launched an online campaign, "Speak Up For Students' Safety", in which the members uploaded videos of their protests. Congress leader Sachin Pilot, chief whip Mahesh Joshi and Transport Minister Pratap Singh Khachariyawas took part in the agitation outside the Malviya National Institute of Technology in Jaipur. Mr. Pilot said there could

be no justification for the Centre's "adamant attitude" on holding the exams when the pandemic was serious.

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said in a video message that lakhs of students were concerned about their health when there were difficulties of transportation and stay in the cities where the exam centres were situated.

The Opposition BJP, questioning the stand of the State government, said that the Congress was oblivious to the risks involved in organising the State-level exams. Party MLA Vasudev Devnani said the Congress' attitude was "hypocrisy at its best", as the party was unconcerned about the academic loss for students.

For starters, said officials, the CSIR, which has 38 subsidiary labs across the country, has collected blood samples from around 2,000

CSIR to track employees' health for 30 years

Project aims at gauging long-term health parameters of 10,000 staff members

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

For the next 30 years, about 10,000 employees of the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) will likely be tracked for most of their working lives as part of an initiative to track an array of health-vitals and genes.

The over-arching aim is to be able to build a medical cohort to give long-term perspective on the malaises that affect Indians and determine if such a databank can be used to help with predicting, say, the onset of diabetes or cardiovascular disease.

For starters, said officials, the CSIR, which has 38 subsidiary labs across the country, has collected blood samples from around 2,000

employees to check for COVID-19 antibodies.

COVID-19 pandemic

"We've been thinking about this for a year and then COVID-19 struck. So we thought this would be good time to begin by checking for antibodies and along with that other health parameters," said Director-General, CSIR Shekhar Mande. "A long-term cohort can be invaluable in answering several public-health questions and many of our 10,000-odd employees are expected to be with us for a long time and so can be reliably followed and monitored. This will, of course, be optional and with their full ethical consent."

Long-term cohorts, while

few, aren't entirely new in India. The Vadu Rural Health Programme, run by the KEM Hospital Research Centre in Pune, in nearby Vadu village has been tracking a cohort of patients since 2002 and monitoring births, deaths, causes of death and migrations. GARBH-ini is also a cohort in Gurugram, Haryana, that started in 2015 and tracks epidemiological, genomic and microbial parameters of pregnant women to, among other things, ascertain the causes of pre-term birth.

However, a great challenge of long-term cohorts is sustaining the programme and keeping participants and managers incentivised and motivated. The CSIR's

India pulls out of Kavkaz due to China

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

India has withdrawn its participation in Kavkaz 2020 multinational exercise in Russia in September due to the participation of Chinese troops.

"Russia and India are close and privileged strategic partners. At Russia's invitation, India has been participating in many international events. However, in view of the pandemic and consequent difficulties in exercise, including arrangements of logistics, India has decided not to send the contingent to Kavkaz 2020. The same has been informed to the Russian side," a Defence Ministry official said late on Saturday. Other reasons include participation of Chinese troops and the Georgian breakaway regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia which have been recognised only by Russia and a few other countries, sources said.

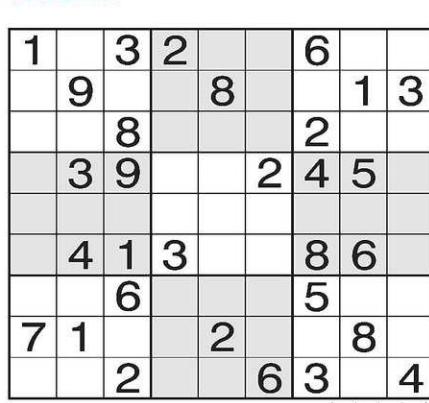
The invitees to Kavkaz 2020 strategic command-post exercise, also referred to as Caucasus-2020, to be held in Astrakhan in Southern Russia from September 15 to 26 include Pakistan, Turkey and other member-states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

As reported by *The Hindu* on August 7, India had confirmed its participation and a tri-service contingent consisting of 150 Army personnel and a small number of Navy and Air Force personnel had been identified. "All planning has been completed, funds were allocated and the personnel started practising for the exercise," the source said.

In June, India and Chinese military contingents marched at the Victory Day Parade at the Red Square in Moscow to mark the 75th anniversary of the World War II.

AN D-ND

SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★



CM YK

SC verdict in Prashant Bhushan case tomorrow

The lawyer had refused to apologise

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

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"What is wrong in seeking an apology? Is it a sin to apologise? Will that be a re-

Protocols for Parliament soon

Health Ministry is developing SOPs for Parliament, Assembly sessions: Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Health Ministry is developing SOPs (standard operating protocol) for Parliament and the Legislative Assembly sessions comprising COVID-19 protocols and preventive measures, Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan said while chairing the 20th meeting of the high-level Group of Ministers (GoM) on COVID-19, here on Saturday.

The GoM also expressed concern about the forthcoming festival seasons and advised everyone to adopt safe and COVID-19 appropriate behaviour.

Vaccine preparations

Participating in the meeting, Vinod K. Paul, chairperson of the Empowered Group-I on medical emergency management plan apprised the GoM of the process of COVID-19 vaccine development in India and around the world.

He said the 29 candidates,



In session: Dr. Harsh Vardhan and other Ministers during a Group of Ministers meeting in New Delhi. ■ ANI

including two Indian ones, are in clinical trials, of which six are in Phase III.

According to a release issued by the Ministry, Dr. Paul said in India, Bharat Biotech's vaccine candidate based on inactivated virus procured by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) is in Phase II trial along with Zydus Cadila's candidate which is based on viral DNA. The Oxford vaccine candidate developed by

country's case fatality rate is at its lowest 1.81% and consecutively the recovery rate has increased to 76.47%. Also, only 0.29% of cases are on ventilators, 1.93% on ICU and only 2.88% of cases are on oxygen. A total of 1,576 labs at present have led to an upsurge in testing and the goal of 10 lakh tests per day has been fulfilled. More than 9 lakh samples were tested in the last 24 hours and this has led to the cumulative total number of tests crossing the 4 crore mark," said Dr. Vardhan.

The GoM was informed that more than 338 lakhs of N-95 masks, nearly 135 lakh of PPE and about 27,000 ventilators have been provided by the Centre to the States/UTs. The GoM was also informed that within the country, eight States (Maharashtra, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Odisha and Telangana) contribute to around 73% of the active caseload currently.

Shah likely to be discharged soon: AIIMS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

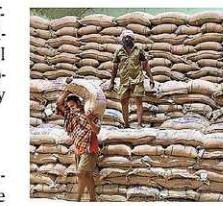
Union Home Minister Amit Shah is likely to be discharged in a short time, officials of the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) in Delhi said on Saturday. He was admitted for post COVID-19 care on August 18.

"Amit Shah is admitted at AIIMS, New Delhi for post-COVID Care. He has recovered and is likely to be discharged in a short time," officials said.

The Minister tested positive for COVID-19 on August 2 and later tested negative on August 14.

In the August 22 letter, the Department of Food and Public Distribution reiterated that "disability is one of the criteria for the inclusion of beneficiaries" under the NFSAs. The Department said PwD not already covered should be identified and given fresh ration cards.

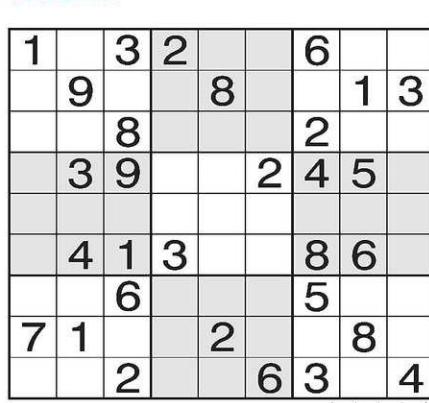
"Atmanirbhar Bharat package of the Government of India is for persons who are not covered under either NFSAs or any State Scheme PDS cards. Hence, disabled persons without ration cards are also eligible..." the letter said.



The Centre wrote to all Chief Secretaries on August 26.

added that the Delhi High Court was monitoring the matter in connection with a petition filed by the National Federation of the Blind seeking free ration for PwDs.

SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★



CM YK

Environmentalists petition PM on Char Dham project

40 experts demand a halt to the road construction work

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A group of 40 scientists, environmentalists and ecologists have written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi demanding a halt to the Char Dham road construction work and that the recommendation of environmentalist Ravi Chopra, who heads a Supreme Court-appointed committee to advise on the sustainable execution of the project, be heeded.

The Char Dham Project (CP) is an ambitious attempt by the Modi government to widen nearly 900 km of hill road to improve access to pilgrimage spots in Uttarakhand. The High Powered Committee (HPC), as it is called, was chaired by Mr. Chopra, former director of the People's Science Institute and the court directed it to submit a report by December 30, 2019, which was

GST: States can borrow without hurting economy

Additional borrowing by Centre influences yields on G-secs, has other macro-economic repercussions, writes Pandey

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Centre on Saturday wrote to States suggesting options of borrowing money to make up the ₹2.35 lakh crore shortfall in GST revenues expected in the ongoing fiscal.

Two days after first suggesting to States to borrow money to make up for the shortfall, at the GST Council meeting, the Finance Ministry wrote to State Governments saying they could borrow either via a special window it would facilitate through the RBI, or raise debt from the market.

While the Centre has reasoned that it is already saddled with a large borrowing requirement, given the slowdown in revenue collections due to a slump in the economy, non-BJP ruled States



Shifting burden: 'Spirit of GST law is that States are to be compensated for loss from implementation.' ■ RAJEEV BHATT

such as Punjab, Kerala, Delhi and West Bengal have already stated that raising debt is not an option for the already stretched State finances.

In a letter to Finance Secretaries of all States and Union Territories, Union Finance Secretary Ajay Bhushan Pandey said while

additional borrowing by the Centre influenced yields on Central Government securities (G-secs) and has other macro-economic repercussions, yields on State securities do not directly influence other yields and do not have the same repercussions.

Interest of the nation'

Hence, it is in the collective interest of Centre and States and in the interest of the nation and of all economic entities including the private sector, not to do any avoidable borrowing at the Central level when it could be done at the State level," Mr. Pandey wrote.

Compensation payment has been an issue since August 2019 with GST collections faltering. In the current fiscal, the compensation requirement of States has been

estimated at ₹3 lakh crore, of which ₹65,000 crore would be funded from the revenues garnered by levy of cess.

In the GST Council meeting on August 27, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had said that COVID-19 was an "Act of God" and it was necessary to differentiate between GST shortfall and pandemic-related shortfall.

States have said that such a distinction is not constitutionally valid.

Detailing the borrowing options to meet the shortfall, Mr. Pandey wrote that under the first option, if the States choose to borrow ₹97,000 crore, which is the shortfall arising out of GST implementation, under a special window, the Centre will endeavour to keep the cost at or close to the G-sec yield.

"The interest on the bor-

rowing under the special window will be paid from the cess as and when it arises until the end of the transition period... The State will not be required to service the debt or to repay it from any other source," he added.

"The borrowing under the special window will not be treated as debt of the State for any norms which may be prescribed by the Finance Commission etc."

Under the second option, the entire shortfall of ₹2.35 lakh crore will be borrowed by States through issue of market debt.

"The wording of the Constitution and statutory preamble make it clear that the spirit of the law is not to compensate States for all types of revenue losses, but rather for that loss arising from GST implementation."

'Ensure COVID-related trade curbs are temporary'

East Asian nations review supply chain

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Economic and trade ministers of 18 countries, including India, the U.S., and China, agreed at the East Asia Summit that trade restrictive measures taken to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic must be transparent and temporary, according to a statement.

The ministers also emphasised that trade measures in view of COVID-19 should not create unnecessary barriers or disruptions in the global and regional supply chains, said the statement released after the eighth East Asia Summit Economic Ministers' Meeting (EAS-EMM), held virtual-

ly on August 28. Economic ministers from 10 ASEAN-member countries, Australia, China, India, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Russia and the U.S. took part in the meeting.

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal participated in the deliberations.

According to the joint statement, the ministers recognised the importance of facilitating essential movement of people across borders, without undermining each country's efforts to prevent the spread of the virus, to stabilise the trade and investment. They also discussed the importance of harnessing the opportunities of digital economy.

'Gold prices less reactive to geo-political tensions'

With EVs, oil no longer holds monopoly, says ex-IMF official

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Gold prices are less reactive to factors such as geo-political tensions when compared with oil, according to a former IMF official.

"With the emergence of electric vehicles (EVs), oil no longer has a monopoly. Whereas, there is no substitute for gold," said Sitharam Gurumurthy, former staff member of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and founder-chairman, Sri Saradar Vallabhbhai Patel School for Monetary Economics.

"Gold prices have continued to move upwards," Dr. Gurumurthy said speaking

on the topic 'The Role of Gold in Currency Markets,' organised by MSE Financial Services Ltd.

West Asia situation

Citing an example, Dr. Gurumurthy pointed out in case

of a war-like situation in West Asia, both oil and gold prices move upwards.

"Gold prices might go up to \$500 from \$400. But, it never again corrects to \$400 levels and will remain at \$475 or so," he said.

Dr. Gurumurthy, a former bureaucrat, also reiterated his call to move back to the Bretton Woods-fixed exchange rate system (based on dollar and gold) and removing the current system of Special Drawing Rights, or SDR, which comprise a basket of currencies. He pointed out that SDRs had not been an effective alternative for the earlier system.

Sundaram Finance Ltd. pares FD rates

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Sundaram Finance Ltd. has reduced interest rates on fresh deposits and renewals by up to one percentage point with effect from September 1.

The non-banking financial company said in a statement that the interest rate on fresh deposits and renewals stand revised to 5.75% (6.75%) per annum for 12months, 6% (7%) per annum for 24 months and 6.25% (7%) for 36 months.

For senior citizens, the interest rate has been revised to 6.25% (7%) per annum for 12 months, 6.5% (7.25%) per annum for 24 months and 6.75% (7.25%) for 36 months.

RIL to buy Future Group's retail, related units for ₹24,713 crore

Big Bazaar, Nilgiris among acquisitions

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd. (RRVL), a subsidiary of Reliance Industries Ltd., has announced the acquisition of the retail and wholesale, and logistics and warehousing businesses of the Future Group, on a lump sale basis, for a lump sum of ₹24,713 crore.



Isha Ambani

Saturday. Analysts said the deal had happened at a time when Future Group was facing cash flow and debt servicing issues. While lenders will get back their money, vendors and employees will breathe easy in these uncertain times, they added.

The retail and wholesale undertaking of Future Group is being transferred to Reliance Retail and Fashion Lifestyle Ltd. (RRFL), a wholly owned subsidiary of RRVL, while the logistics and warehousing undertaking is being transferred to RRVL.

Preferential issue

Besides, RRFL will also invest ₹1,200 crore in the preferential issue of equity shares of FEL to acquire 6.09% of post-merger equity, and ₹400 crore in a preferential issue of equity warrants which, upon conversion and payment of balance 75% of the issue price, will result in RRFL acquiring a further 7.05% of FEL.

"We are pleased to provide a home to the renowned formats and brands of Future Group as well as preserve its business ecosystem, which have played an important role in the evolution of modern retail in India," Isha Ambani, director, RRVL, said in a statement on

RRFL and RRVL will take over certain borrowings and current liabilities related to the logistics and warehousing business and discharge the balance consideration by way of cash.

After this transaction, FEL will retain the manufacturing and distribution of FMCG goods and integrated fashion sourcing and manufacturing business and its insurance JVs with Generali and JVs with NTC Mills.

Remove anti-dumping duty on viscose staple fibre: SIMA

'Move will make textile mills, fabric makers competitive'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
COIMBATORE

Textile mills and fabric manufacturers have sought the removal of anti-dumping duty on viscose staple fibre to make the textile industry internationally competitive.

Southern India Mills Association (SIMA) chairman Ashwin Chandran said textile manufacturers, who use viscose staple fibre supply products to niche markets where there is a huge demand for viscose fabric.

Align with global prices
"Removal of anti-dumping duty on the viscose fibre will make the domestic prices align with the global prices," added Mr. Chandran. While viscose fibre attracts 5% import duty besides anti-dumping duty, viscose yarn

attracts only import duty.

Hence, powerloom weavers are dependent on imported viscose spun yarn to compete in the international market. While 2,022 tonnes of viscose spun yarn was imported in 2016-2017, the import in 2019-2020 was 56,262 tonnes. Almost four lakh spindles in India, with a production capacity worth ₹1,000 crore, lost the opportunity to tap the potential.

This is because of the high cost of viscose fibre available in the domestic market which is ₹20-₹25 more per kg in the domestic market compared with the international prices, the Association said. Import of viscose staple fibre attracts ₹0.103 to ₹0.512 of anti-dumping duty per kg for imports from countries such as Indonesia

too.

According to M. Senthil Kumar, former chairman of Powerloom Development and Export Promotion Council, viscose fabric was highly in demand in the fashion segment. For the last four-five years, leading brands had sought more viscose products in the women and children apparel segment.

According to Indian Textpreneurs Federation (ITF), countries such as Vietnam are looking to source more fabrics from India, especially man-made fibre and blended fabrics.

While polyester fibre is available in India at international prices, viscose fibre does not receive irrigation.

Rain pushes summer crop planting to record

Farmland acreage growth at 7%

REUTERS
NEW DELHI

Plentiful monsoon rain spurred Indian farmers to plant summer crops across a record swathe of farmland 7% bigger than last year, promising a bumper harvest in Asia's third-biggest economy, despite the rapid spread of COVID-19.

Farm Ministry data shows growers sowed 108.2 million hectares (267.4 million acres) with crops such as rice, corn, cotton, soybeans and sugarcane.

Planting began on June 1, when the monsoon rain typically hit India, where nearly half of farmland does not receive irrigation.

"We're confident that food production will cross the target of 298.32 million

tonnes in the 2020-21 crop year," said Farm Minister Narendra Singh Tomar, praising farmers for the record acreage. Such a harvest would outstrip the previous year's record output of 295.67 million tonnes.

Between Friday and June 1, farmers planted a greater acreage of every single summer crop than last year, the data showed.

Beer market may see acquisitions'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

United Breweries Ltd (UBL), which owns the Kingfisher brand of beer, is expecting further acquisitions and entry of new players in the Indian beer market, despite disruptions due to COVID-19 and higher taxes by some States, the company said in its annual report.

Besides, UBL, a market

leader in the segment, also expects the export of beer to grow with support from the government. "The maturing beer market, combined with the support of government incentives on exports, will positively open up higher export potentials for Indian beer brands," it said in its FY20 annual report.

Wockhardt reports Q1 net of ₹760 crore

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Drug firm Wockhardt reported a consolidated net profit of ₹759.8 crore for June quarter mainly on account of exceptional items in connection with the transfer of a business comprising 62 products and Baddi facility to Dr. Reddy's Laboratories.

The company had posted a net loss of ₹36.88 crore for April-June 2019-20, Wockhardt said.

Total income stood at ₹606.22 crore. It was ₹733.66 crore in the year-ago period.

It said that divestment of business undertaken to Dr. Reddy's Laboratories was accomplished during the quarter and ₹1,483 crore has been received towards the same.

Mid to low-rated corporates call for level-playing field in bank interest rates

High cost of debt erodes competitiveness, fuels inflation: Essar Ports' Agarwal

LALATENDU MISHRA
MUMBAI

The practice by commercial banks of charging differentiated interest rates from borrowers based on their credit ratings has made corporates with moderate to low investment-grade ratings to call for rationalisation of rates that are now 5% to 6% higher than those offered to top-rated companies.

"In principle, this may appear logical, but in practice, the difference is so huge that no company can make money and will continue to be in a high-cost debt trap," said a corporate borrower.

According to borrowers, if in case of retail loans and investment-grade U.S. dollar bonds, the differential is 0.5% to 1% and in some cases 2%, then, then the same yardstick could be applied to corporate loans. "High interest rates have consistently eroded the competitiveness of Indian products; it fuels

inflation," said Essar Ports MD and CEO Rajiv Agarwal. "It increases risk and reduces the leverage, thus making default imminent and debt servicing difficult."

"Infrastructure funding cannot sustain double-digit interest and capital-intensive projects can never get high rating due to high debt service and are thus prone to failure. It's a vicious cycle, therefore interest rates need to be capped for industry."

Bankers end up complying with guidelines using credit rating as an academic assessment measure for creditworthiness but start-ups do not have a track record, leading to low credit ratings," said Mohish Wadhwa, founder, Wadhwa & Shah. He said with lack of

debt exposure due to inadequate credit rating, start-ups dilute equity at a cheaper valuation with private equity. Vishal Rathi, partner, S.K. Patodia and Associates said "a corporate that has a good credit score should get the benefit and in case a company improves on the rating later, they can seek revision in the rates."

Backing the banks, Krishnam Sitaraman, senior director, Crisil Ratings, said the world over, this had been an accepted practice. "It is a classic example of linking risk with returns. A borrower whose credit profile is weaker is more risky from a default perspective, and to compensate for that, the lender charges a higher interest rate," said Mr. Sitaraman.

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SNAPSHOTS



Tree of life

The African baobab, known as the tree of life, can live for over a thousand years. It yields fodder, medicinal compounds and many such products. A recent study in *Scientific Reports* finally finds that the tree has 168 chromosomes. This study will be useful in genetic conservation efforts.



Colliding haloes

Using Hubble space telescope, scientists studying the halo of our nearest neighbouring galaxy, Andromeda, find that, at 1.3 million light years spread, the halo is stretching almost halfway up to the Milky Way. The galaxy's halo appears to be already bumping into that of the Milky Way.

Memory T cells may only reduce COVID-19 severity

The immune cells may mount a faster and stronger response upon exposure to the SARS-CoV-2 virus, but not totally prevent infection

R. PRASAD

At least six papers published in reputable journals – *Cell*, *Nature*, *Science*, and *Science Immunology* – have found that 20–50% of people who have not been infected with novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2) harbour memory T cells derived from previous exposures to common cold coronaviruses. The memory T cells were found to cross-react with SARS-CoV-2.

With Mumbai, Delhi, London and New York witnessing a peak weeks after the coronavirus blazed through the cities, people have wrongly assumed that the pre-existing memory T cells have been providing the much-needed protection from SARS-CoV-2 virus infection, leading to a mistaken assumption that herd immunity can be achieved when just 20–30% of the population is infected.

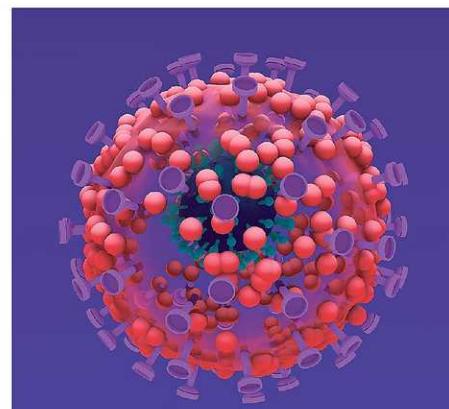
Reduce disease severity

"Pre-existing T cell immunity to SARS-CoV-2 could be relevant because it could influence COVID-19 disease

severity. It is plausible that people with a high level of pre-existing memory CD4+ T cells that recognise novel coronavirus could mount a faster and stronger immune response upon exposure to the virus and thereby limit disease severity," Alessandro Sette and Shane Crotty from La Jolla Institute for Immunology, La Jolla, California say in a Comment published in *Nature Reviews Immunology*.

Unlikely to prevent

"The memory T cells are extremely unlikely to prevent SARS-CoV-2 infections. That is just not what T cells generally do. We (Prof. Sette and I) speculate that they may reduce COVID-19 disease severity and prevent deaths," Prof. Crotty says in an email to *The Hindu*. But in a paper published in *Cell*, a team led by Dr. Marcus Buggert from Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden found robust memory T cell responses even in healthy people. Based on this, they noted that memory T cells indicate



Innate resistance: Among people not infected with novel coronavirus, 20–50% harbour memory T cells derived from previous exposures to common cold coronaviruses.

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a "previously unanticipated degree of population-level immunity against COVID-19", which contradicts the observation by others. In an email to *The Hindu*, he clarifies: "I completely agree with Prof. Crotty and Prof. Sette that T cells are not go-

lore, echoed the views expressed by Prof. Sette and Prof. Crotty. "Memory T cells generated by seasonal coronaviruses alone are very unlikely to prevent [SARS-CoV-2] infection. It is plausible that they play a role in reducing [COVID-19 disease] severity," Prof. Kang says.

In a series of tweets, Prof. Crotty further clarified the misconstrued role of memory T cells in achieving herd immunity. "Even if our most optimistic speculations about cross-reactive T cell memory were found to be correct, it would mean that just as many people would get infected with SARS-CoV-2, but fewer would become severely ill and die from COVID-19," Prof. Crotty says.

Killer T cells

Explaining how the memory T cells may help reduce the severity of the disease, virologist Dr. Shahid Jameel, CEO of DBT-Wellcome Trust India Alliance, says: "The cross-reactive memory T cells on activation would help in the

development of plasma cells and thus antibody production, and in the development of killer T cells that would kill virus infected cells. The latter reduces the reservoirs of infection. This would most likely reduce disease severity," Prof. Kang says.

A few researchers have also been mistaking pre-existing cross-reactive memory T cells to be playing a part in achieving herd immunity even when only a small percentage of the population is infected.

In a bid to clear the misconception regarding cross-reactive memory T cells and herd immunity, Prof. Crotty commented that "there are various tweets misinterpreting COVID-19 'pre-existing immunity' and making dangerous claims about herd immunity". He says cross-reactive immune memory, which avoids the word immunity, may sometimes get misinterpreted as "protective immunity".

Dismissing the possibility

of cross-reactive memory T cells producing herd immunity when only a small percentage of the population is infected, Dr. Jameel says: "The cross-reactive memory T cells would not provide protective immunity from infection but may mitigate or reduce severity of disease. In fact, most vaccines also don't prevent infection. They reduce or eliminate disease. How successful this is would depend upon the cross-reactivity at the T cell level."

"Herd immunity is complicated, and most models have used calculations only for antibodies (and only stable antibodies at that). Hard to predict how much of a difference T cells would make," Prof. Kang adds.

"T cell immunity will not generate herd immunity, but I truly believe that there could be an 'unanticipated' degree of immunity against more severe forms of COVID-19 in the population... and maybe T cells play a role here, but so far this is based on associations," Dr. Buggert says.

Second case of confirmed coronavirus reinfection reported

The second infection led to severe symptoms, including hypoxia, breathlessness

R. PRASAD

About five days after the first case of confirmed reinfection by novel coronavirus (SARS-CoV-2), 142 days after the first symptomatic episode in a 33-year-old adult was first reported, a second such case has now been reported in the U.S. Like the first reported case of reinfection in Hong Kong, the second case of reinfection by SARS-CoV-2 virus in Nevada, U.S. was confirmed through genetic sequencing.

"It is likely that there are many re-infections that happen which are asymptomatic but are not identified, such as the Hong Kong case, who was identified based on routine screening at entry," Gagandeep Kang from the Division of Gastrointestinal Sciences at CMC Vellore says in an email to *The Hindu*.

The results of the confirmed reinfection case in Reno in Nevada have been posted on a preprint server. Preprints are yet to be peer-reviewed and published in scientific journals.

While the Hong Kong adult exhibited overt symptoms when infected for the first time in March but was

Does the finding of symptomatic reinfection in one case mean that vaccines will not work? No, it does not.

GAGANDEEP KANG
CMC Vellore

only asymptomatic during the second infection in mid-August, the adult in Nevada had overt symptoms during both infections. In fact, the second infection caused severe symptoms, including hypoxia (lack of oxygen in the body) and breathlessness.

Symptoms recurring

The Nevada adult first tested positive for the virus on March 25 and needed hospitalisation. Symptoms included sore throat, cough, headache, nausea, diarrhoea. The symptoms resolved on April 27 and the patient twice tested negative for the virus by RT-PCR on May 9 and May 26.

But one month after recovering, the patient once again exhibited symptoms and sought care on May 31 and was hospitalised on June

5 when found to be hypoxic. The patient tested positive for SARS-CoV-2.

Genome samples

Researchers at the Reno School of Medicine, University of Nevada sequenced the genome of the samples collected during the first and second infections and found them distinctly different.

Though the genome sequences from both infections belong to the same clade (20C), there are distinct differences in mutations between the two.

The authors rule out the possibility of the virus experiencing mutations to become the virus that caused the second infection within the patient's body. They conclude that the "odds of this occurring are vanishingly remote and virtually assure that these are two distinct viral infection events".

"The [case of] U.S. person who was re-infected is likely to be a rare event; this is apparently a young person who was symptomatic twice, with more severe symptoms the second time. For young people to be symptomatic is not unusual,

but for a second symptomatic infection in a short time frame means that this person was not protected by the first infection," Prof. Kang says. The fact that the first infection did not reduce disease severity on reinfection is surprising.

"This is unusual and I do not expect it to be the norm for everyone who is infected with SARS-CoV-2 on a second exposure. The response is dependent on the host, and there is heterogeneity. Some people are better able to handle certain kinds of pathogens than others," says Prof. Kang.

On vaccines

Explaining what the implications of symptomatic reinfection in the U.S. adult would mean for protection from vaccines, she says: "This variation is likely to be seen with SARS-CoV-2 vaccines, as it is with other vaccines as well. Some people will respond well, others not so well and a subset may not respond and be protected at all. Does the finding of symptomatic reinfection in one case mean that vaccines will not work? No, it does not."

The use and re-use of N95 masks

SHUBASHREE DESIKAN

In the case of infectious diseases like COVID-19, hospitals have to make sure that their patient-facing employees are safe by using Personal Protective Equipment, in particular, N95 masks. N95 masks can stop up to 95% of particles that are as small as 0.3 microns. Yet, not only are N95 masks expensive, they also cannot easily be reused immediately.

A collaboration between Mumbai-based institutions, Tata Institute of Fundamental Research (TIFR) and Tata Memorial Hospital, has spawned a workable solution to the problem of expense and decontamination.

Moist heat

Chance and a shared interest in optimising the use of N95 masks brought together Arna Bhattacharya, a TIFR professor, and C.S. Pramesh, the director of Tata Memorial Hospital. After discussing various routes for decontamination of the masks, such as the use of UV radiation, hydrogen peroxide and so on, they concluded that using moist heat was a good bet.

They realised that heat treatment at temperatures beyond 65–70 degrees C for about 60 minutes in dry air or for just about 30 minutes in moist air with humidity

over 50% was sufficient to decontaminate the masks, even with SARS-CoV-2 virus. In this method of decontamination, the pathogen is reduced by 99.9%. "We play safe and use 70 degrees C for more than 60 minutes, with some humidity anyway," says Prof. Bhattacharya. "We have checked that the filtration efficiency of various masks is not impacted over five such one-hour decontamination cycles."

Time, a decontaminant
If the used N95 mask is left alone and exposed to air for 96 hours, it will get decontaminated. If a person had five masks to use, and used a different one each day, then by the sixth day, the mask used on day one will be de-

contaminated. As Prof. Pramesh explains, in TMH, they use a combination of the two approaches for best results.

"To date over 6,500 N95 masks have been decontaminated using this method at our hospital. Not only has this resulted in a huge saving, the integrity and reliability of the masks are not compromised," says Prof. Pramesh.

Before using the masks, the group ascertained that the right temperature and right duration of heating eliminated the viral load, and the mask was decontaminated and its integrity intact.

The TIFR group also tests the masks beforehand to make sure that they indeed qualify to be called N95. As Prof. Pramesh explains,

"This is because as the pandemic grew in impact, we needed many more masks than our usual suppliers could provide. We had to purchase them from new manufacturers and needed to check the quality." This has two aspects - checking the filtration capacity and also the fit, and the TIFR team obliged.

Low-cost solution

In fact, Prof. Bhattacharya and coworkers have developed, in collaboration with Manu Prakash's team from Stanford, a low-cost method of decontamination of the masks that simply uses two vessels, one of which fits into the other, and a cotton cover that insulates the outer vessel. Water is placed in the outer vessel, heated and then the smaller vessel with the mask in it is placed within and the moist air works its magic. "The outer vessel a 5 l capacity aluminium one, and the inner one an approximately 2 l capacity stainless steel one. A Venus 4400 N95 respirator, one of the most common brands used in India, was chosen for the experiments," says Prof. Bhattacharya. "COVID-19 has brought people together in amazing ways to try to tackle problems in a constrained environment."

Acronyms and abbreviations in scientific publications

When writing papers, using multiple acronyms can hinder understanding



SPEAKING OF SCIENCE

D. BALASUBRAMANIAN

Whenever I turn to the business page of the newspaper, I notice acronyms which I do not know the meaning of, such as NCLT or MCLR, and need to go on the Web to understand what they are (NCLT stands for National Company Law Tribunal, and MCLR for Marginal Cost of Funds-based Lending Rate), though they are obvious to the professional businessman. They are the business lingo while mine. Likewise, how many of us citizens can expand 'PMCAres Fund' or 'ATAL', or 'AYUSH', which are used by the government? Please go and look for them. In fact, ATAL is an acronym of an acronym.

Incidentally, an abbreviation or contraction is typically a shortened form of a word used to represent the whole (e.g. Prof. for Professor, or Dr. for Doctor) while an acronym is a set of the initial letters from a phrase that usually form another

word, such as DNA for Deoxyribo Nucleic Acid, CBI for the Central Bureau of Investigation, or NDTV for New Delhi Television Ltd.

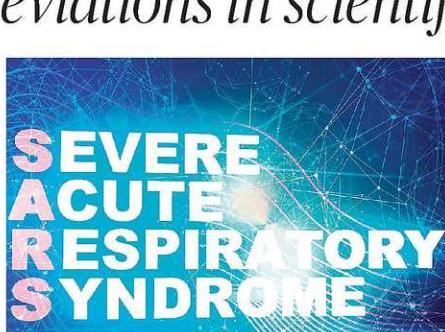
Spate of acronyms

Sadly, such acronyms have become commonplace, indeed increasing, in scientific papers and presentations.

One may understand if acronyms used by astrophysicists are not understood by scientists, but this happens to be true even within the life science and medical community!

Adrian Barnett and Zoe Doubleday have recently published a paper titled, "Meta-Research: The growth of acronyms in the scientific literature" in the journal *eLife* which caters to biologists and medical scientists, and is well worth reading. Access it at DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7554/eLife.60080>.

A meta-research is the



Short form: Widespread use of acronyms makes scientific papers difficult to read or understand their message.

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good use does not! Writing scientific papers that are clear to read could help in closing this gap and increase the usefulness of scientific research".

Widespread use of acronyms makes scientific papers difficult to read and understand their message.

The authors have concentrated on the titles of papers in biological and medical journals between 1950 and 2019 (a total of 24 million during these almost 70 years), and 18.25 million abstracts among these.

These papers were extracted from the source *PubMed*. They found 1.1 million of these had unique acronyms. An acronym here

was defined as a word in which half or more of the characters are in capital or upper case letters. mRNA and BRCA1 are acronyms but N95 (the mask we wear) is not. Overuse of acronyms leads to ambiguities, misunderstandings and inefficiencies they cause. For example, the acronym UA seems to have 18 different meanings in medicine. (Here are a few: Uracil-Adenine, umbilical activity, urinalysis, universal anaesthesia).

The authors also quote several such papers with multiple acronyms that hinder understanding; one such is an example, which states: "Applying PROBAST showed that ADO, B-AE-D, B-AE-D-C, extended ADO, updated BODE, and a model developed by Bertens et al were derived in studies assessed as being at low risk of bias".

An exercise
Since, try as I might, I could not understand its meaning, I wanted to challenge my biological science colleagues to teach me what this sentence means. (On an aside, I sent it to 8 young colleagues across the country, and offered the one who came out first with the answer a glass of wine or a cup of cappuccino coffee, and my thanks in



Flying high against all odds

How do birds migrate in unfavourable winds?

Bird migration has always fascinated scientists, and the behaviour of billions of migratory birds has been studied for decades. One important question was how these migratory birds coped with adverse wind conditions when flying over deserts, large lakes, seas and oceans.

Recent studies have shown that migrants can choose when to fly in order to avoid adverse conditions and also increase their travel speeds. Birds can also avoid drifting off-course by migrating in favourable tailwind conditions; however, it costs extra time and energy when these tailwinds are infrequent.

Researchers from the University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, U.S. examined the flight strategies of nocturnally migrating birds (February 2016, *Scientific Reports*). During the autumn of 2013 and 2014, they used radars to collect data about bird behaviour every five to ten minutes for 55 nights.

They found that migratory birds in flight often drifted sideways when facing cross-winds or wind blowing across their direction of travel. These birds also actively

assessed the degree to which they need to compensate for wind.

They noted that when facing cross-winds, birds at inland sites preferred drifting, while those flying near the Atlantic coast oriented and tracked away from the coast. These behaviours suggest that birds migrate in an adaptive way to conserve energy.

Readers may send their questions / answers to questioncorner@thehindu.co.in



U.S. vote amid COVID

What is the debate around the mail-in postal ballot system in the upcoming American presidential election in November?

VARGHESE K. GEORGE

The story so far: Last week, the Democratic-led U.S. House of Representatives voted to provide the cash-starved United States Postal Service (USPS) with \$25 billion ahead of the November 3 presidential election. The legislation also aims to block policy cuts and curbs that critics said would thwart the mail-in voting system. The vote attracted a sharp response from U.S. President Donald Trump who was critical of the infusion plan.

What is the controversy?

There are two aspects to the ongoing controversy. Mr. Trump and his supporters allege that the expansion of postal voting in the November elections will lead to malpractices. Democrats and a section of the Republicans disagree. Parallel to this, the Democrats allege that a set of measures announced (and now suspended) by the 75th Postmaster General of the United States and the Chief Executive Officer of the world's largest postal organisation, Louis DeJoy, is a deliberate effort to disrupt postal voting at the President's behest. Allies of Mr. DeJoy argue these measures were pending for long, and he had just fast-tracked them.

How expansive could the mail-in voting be this time?

Several States have relaxed postal voting rules in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, to enable and even encourage people to not visit the polling booth. All States allowed some form of postal, absentee voting earlier too but this time it is historic. According to an analysis by *The New York Times*, around 80 million votes might arrive by mail. In 2016, the total number of votes cast was 136.8 million. The same analysis found that 21% of voters will receive ballots by mail even if they do not ask for it; 57% will get if they ask for them; and the balance 22% will get if they ask for them citing a reason. The pandemic is a valid reason in many States. Some States have allowed ballots arriving after the polling day also to be counted, which could delay results there. On July 30,

Mr. Trump said on Twitter: "With Universal Mail-In Voting ... 2020 will be the most INACCURATE & FRAUDULENT Election in history. It will be a great embarrassment to the USA." He also suggested the polls could be delayed until "people can properly, securely and safely vote". The Trump campaign has vowed to fight relaxation in mail-in voting at every step, as they view these changes as unconstitutional.

What changes were announced by the USPS and what were the reactions?

Mr. DeJoy took charge in June, and announced changes in operational practices that soon became controversial. These changes related to retail hours of post office operation, scaling down of mail processing facilities, collection boxes and overtime for workers. The changes snarled up mail movement, and the Democrats alleged the disruption could effectively disenfranchise people. At least 20 States have challenged the measures in court. Mr. DeJoy was summoned by the House of Representatives and the Senate for hearings. Following the upheaval, the USPS suspended all changes until after the elections are over. But questions remain regarding measures that were already effected, such as removal of sorting machines and mail boxes.

What verification is done of ballots arriving by mail?

According to an AP fact check on the possibility of malpractices in postal voting, only people with current voter registrations can receive a ballot by mail. "Voters must fill out the ballot, sign the envelope, then mail it or drop it off at a designated location by a certain deadline." States have various methods of verification. Some States verify the signature on the envelope with that on the file, some do not verify the signature. Some States require a witness signature or a notarised signature of the voter.

What has been a perennial issue with the U.S. voting procedure?

The voting procedure is diverse across the U.S., which has no central authority as the Election Commission of India that lays down the rule for the whole country. A total of 36 states have laws requesting or requiring voters to show some form of identification at the polls, 35 of which are in force in 2020; of them, only 18 ask for a photo-ID (although North Carolina's is on hold based on a preliminary injunction from a federal judge). In 16 States and in the capital Washington DC, voters are not asked for an ID, according to the National Conference of State Legislatures. Republicans, and most vocally Mr. Trump, have been making claims of voter fraud. They want stricter identity checks for voting. More than 10 million residents are unauthorised in the U.S., and of its 35.2 million legal immigrants only 20.7 million are naturalised citizens and hence eligible to vote. Democrats on the other hand argue that stricter rules could disenfranchise minority populations and the less educated and further suppress voting. The U.S. has one of the lowest voting rates among Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) countries – 55.7% in 2016.

What is the new idea on supply chains?

Why has Japan mooted the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative? How will it impact India?

K. BHARAT KUMAR

The story so far: With COVID-19 and trade tensions between China and the United States threatening supply chains or actually causing bottlenecks, Japan has mooted the Supply Chain Resilience Initiative (SCRI) as a trilateral approach to trade, with India and Australia as the other two partners. The initiative is at the strategy stage and has some way to go before participants can realise trade benefits.

What does supply chain resilience mean?

In the context of international trade, supply chain resilience is an approach that helps a country to ensure that it has diversified its supply risk across a clutch of supplying nations instead of being dependent on just one or a few. Unanticipated events – whether natural, such as volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, earthquakes or even a pandemic; or manmade, such as an armed conflict in a region – that disrupt supplies from a particular country or even intentional halts to trade, could adversely impact economic activity in the destination country.

What is Japan proposing?

It is significant that Japan has taken the initiative to include India and Australia, and potentially other Asian and Pacific Rim nations later, in a strategic dialogue, despite India having pulled out of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership that Japan helped stitch together. What has changed now is that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought into sharp focus what was already known – that when assembly lines are heavily dependent on supplies from one country, the impact on importing nations could be crippling if that source stops production for involuntary reasons, or even as a conscious measure of economic coercion. While Japan exported \$135 billion worth of goods to China in 2019, it also imported \$169 billion worth from the world's second-largest economy, accounting for 24% of its total imports, according to data from tradingeconomics.com. Electrical and electronic gear, and machinery, nuclear reactors and boilers were sectors that clocked up

significant imports into Japan. So, any halt to supplies (as it happened when China had to shut down factories in regions hit by the SARS-CoV-2 virus that has caused the COVID-19 pandemic) could potentially impair economic activity in Japan. A Bloomberg report said that Japan's imports from China fell by half in February, a period when the latter was battling the peak of the virus impact.

In addition, the U.S.-China trade tensions have caused alarm in Japanese trade circles for a while now. If the world's two largest economies do not resolve their differences, it could threaten globalisation as a whole and have a major impact on Japan, which is heavily reliant on international trade both for markets for its exports and for supplies of a range of primary goods from oil to iron ore. A Reuters poll of 32 economists published in August showed a majority 80% expect Japan's growth and Japanese companies' productivity growth to be affected if Washington and Beijing move towards creating their own economic zones. As part of the country's economic stimulus package, the Japanese government recently earmarked \$2.2 billion to incentivise its companies to move their manufacturing out of China. This was not a protectionist move – the manufacturing could, but did not have to, return to Japan. This was a nudge to diversification of risk – where those manufacturing lines could be relocated out of China to other third countries.

What is likely to have spurred Japan to eye India as a partner for the SCRI?

Japan is the fourth-largest investor in India with cumulative foreign direct investments touching \$33.5 billion in the 2000-2020 period accounting for 7.2% of inflows in that period, according to quasi government agency India Invest.

Imports from Japan into India more than doubled over 12 years to \$12.8 billion in FY19. Exports from India to the world's third-largest economy stood at \$4.9 billion that year, data from the agency showed.

The corporate stand-offs between the Tatas and Japan's DoCoMo or the Ranbaxy-Daiichi Sankyo case notwithstanding, trade experts point out to the almost 1,400 Japanese companies operating in India as a clear reflection that the two countries are unlikely to allow individual cases to cloud an otherwise long-standing and deepening trade relationship.

Where does Australia stand?

Australia, Japan and India are already part of another informal grouping, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, or the Quad, which includes the U.S.

Media reports indicate that China has been Australia's largest trading partner and that it counts for 32.6% of Australia's exports, with iron ore, coal and gas dominating the products shipped to Asia's largest economy. But relations including trade ties between the two have been deteriorating for a while now. China banned beef imports from four Australian firms in May, and levied import tariffs on Australian barley. In June, China's education Ministry warned its students aspiring to study or already studying in Australia, of 'rising racism' in that country, urging them to reassess their aspirations. China's chagrin stems from Australia's push for an enquiry into the origins of the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

What does India stand to gain, or lose?

Following the border tensions between the two highly populous Asian neighbours, partners such as Japan have sensed that India may be ready for dialogue on alternative supply chains. Earlier, India would have done little to overtly antagonise China.

But an internal push to suddenly cut links with China would be impractical. China's share of imports into India in 2018 (considering the top 20 items supplied by China) stood at 14.5%, according to an impact analysis by the Confederation of Indian Industry in February 2020. In areas such as Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients for medicines such as paracetamol, India is fully dependent on China. In electronics, China accounts for 45% of India's imports, the analysis showed.

Chinese supplies dominate segments of the Indian economy. Sectors that have been impacted by supply chain issues arising out of the pandemic include pharmaceuticals, automotive parts, electronics, shipping, chemicals and textiles.

Over time, if India enhances self-reliance or works with exporting nations other than China, it could build resilience into the economy's supply networks.

While India appears an attractive option for potential investors both as a market and as a manufacturing base, trade experts point to the need for India to accelerate progress in ease of doing business and in skill building. Tax incentives, as the one recently announced to compete with the likes of Vietnam and the Philippines for investments in manufacturing, alone may not suffice.



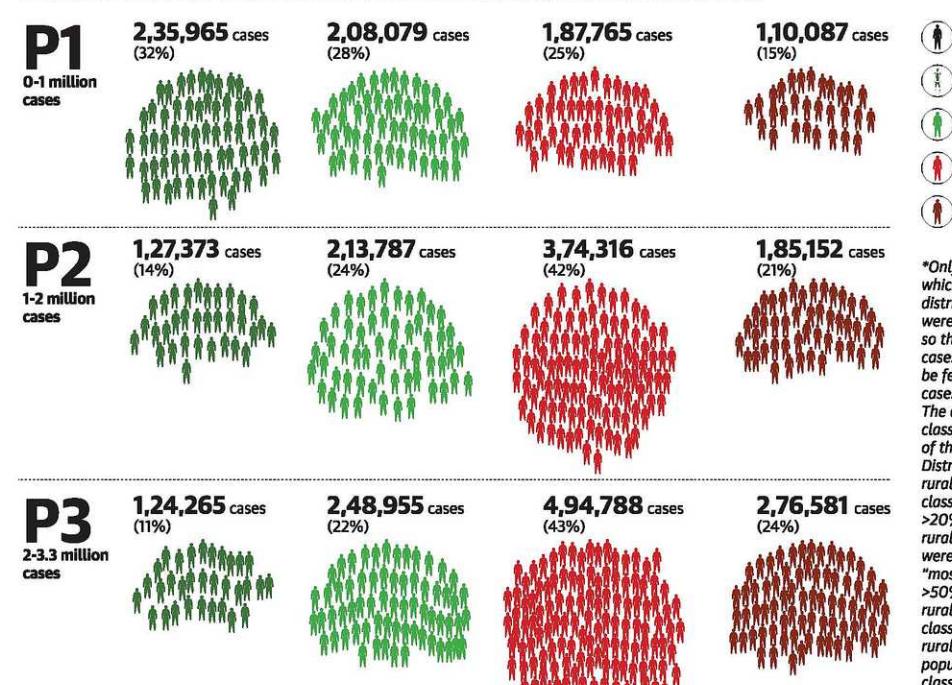
Is COVID-19 intensifying in rural India?

Most of India's COVID-19 cases in the early stages, when infections were growing at a relatively slower pace, were confined to urban districts. In subsequent stages, not only have the cases grown at a relatively quicker pace but the locus too has shifted to rural areas where the health infrastructure is fragile.

How have the cases in rural districts grown?

DATA COMPILED BY VIGNESH RADHAKRISHNAN, NARESH SINGARAVELU AND SUMANT SEN
GRAPHIC: KANNAN SUNDAR

The infographic depicts the total number and % share of India's new cases recorded during three stages: between 0 and 1 million cases (P1), between 1 million and 2 million cases (P2) and between 2 million and 3.3 million cases (P3) across urban, mostly urban, mostly rural and rural districts*. The % share of cases in rural districts increased from 15% of total cases in P1 to 24% in P3; in mostly rural districts from 25% to 43%. Whereas, the % share of cases in urban districts decreased from 32% of total cases in P1 to 11% in P3; in mostly urban areas from 28% to 22%.



Where is the rural spread most intense?

The tables depict new cases recorded in rural districts as a % share of all cases in the State, in P1, P2 and P3. For instance, in Assam, 41% of the State's cases in P1 were recorded in rural districts; 71% in P2; 70% in P3.

States	P1	P2	P3
Assam	41	71	70
West Bengal	15	17	29
Odisha	44	42	56
U.P.	34	45	46
M.P.	16	26	27
Maharashtra	6	11	16

States	P1	P2	P3
T.N.	6	10	11
A.P.	9	9	12
Gujarat	5	8	8
Haryana	6	4	8
Karnataka	6	6	8
Bihar	82	79	83

States	P1	P2	P3
Punjab	5	2	3
Kerala	12	11	7
Rajasthan	40	40	32
Chhattisgarh	50	31	37
Uttarakhand	33	17	20
Jharkhand	56	49	41

*Only 18 States which had consistent district-wise data were considered, so the number of cases depicted will be fewer than India's cases in all periods. The districts were classified on the basis of the 2011 Census. Districts with <20% rural population were classified urban; >20% but <50% rural population were classified "mostly urban"; >50% but <80% rural population were classified "mostly rural"; >80% rural population were classified as "rural" districts

85.9%

What is the impact of the spread?

The health infrastructure is not equally spread between rural and urban India. While more than 65% of India's population resides in the rural areas (World Bank estimate), about 65% of all government hospital beds are in urban India. The clear rural-urban divide is visible in many such indicators



20%

of all doctors in India are serving in the rural parts



37%

of government hospital beds in India are in rural areas

Sources: State Health Ministries, KPMG, World Bank, NSS Report No. 586 (Health in India)

Raina pulls out of IPL 2020

Super Kings' batting mainstay withdraws due to 'personal reasons'

S. DINAKAR
CHENNAI

One jolt after another. The Chennai Super Kings is going through a challenging phase ahead of the upcoming IPL in the UAE.

After being hit by COVID-19 – two of its players, swing bowler Deepak Chahar and young batsman Ruturaj Gaikwad, have tested positive – CSK lost its batting mainstay Suresh Raina on Saturday. The southpaw has pulled out of the tournament for "personal reasons". There, reportedly, has been a bereavement in his family.

CSK CEO K.S. Viswanathan said in an official release, "Suresh Raina has returned to India for personal reasons and will be unavailable for the remainder of the IPL season. Chennai Super Kings offers complete support to Suresh and his family during this time."

Replacement sought

According to IPL rules, if the reason for a player withdrawing from a team is genuine, a replacement will be provided. CSK has already sought one. But then, Raina's will be big shoes to fill. The left-hander has been



Big blow: Super Kings will feel the absence of Suresh Raina who has played an influential role for the side. ■ FILE PHOTO

hugely influential over the years. With 5,368 runs, he is the second highest scorer in IPL history. He figured in 158 successive games for CSK before missing a match owing to an injury.

Simply put, the 33-year-old Raina has been a game-changer for the popular and successful franchise.

Meanwhile, the BCCI, in a release, said, "13 personnel have tested positive, of which two are players. All

the affected personnel as well as their close contacts are asymptomatic and have been isolated from the other team members."

1,988 tests conducted

A total of 1,988 RT-PCR tests were carried out between August 20 and 28. And tests will continue at regular intervals throughout the tournament.

A majority of those who have tested positive are from CSK. Apart from the

two cricketers, some members of the support staff, social media team and possibly net bowlers have also failed the COVID-19 test. They will be quarantined away from the side for two weeks and then will have to clear two tests before they can join the secure 'bubble' of the team.

The competition begins on September 19 and the CSK cricketers will be able to begin their practise sessions only from September 1, after spending more days under quarantine in the hotel where they are not allowed to mingle with one another.

Meanwhile, CSK's experienced off-spinner Harbhajan Singh will join the team only on September 1 due to 'personal' reasons. He will be quarantined away from the rest of the team for seven days, and, apart from clearing two COVID-19 tests in India, will have to pass three of them in the UAE, on arrival in Dubai and on days three and six, before he can join the team.

The last few days have tested CSK's resolve. Mahendra Singh Dhoni's men have a fight on their hands.

(With inputs from Amol Karhadkar)

Teams start training in earnest

MI, Royals, Capitals and Kings XI begin practising

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DUBAI

Mumbai Indians players hit the nets for the first time in five months as the defending champion and other franchises began their preparations in earnest for the upcoming Indian Premier League.

The 13th edition is scheduled to be played at Dubai, Abu Dhabi and Sharjah from September 19 to November 10. The teams are assembling for their first training session after seven days of quarantine.

Rohit Sharma's squad and Rajasthan Royals had their first session in Abu Dhabi and Dubai respectively. Delhi Capitals also hit the ground running on Saturday



Holding court: Kings XI skipper K.L. Rahul and Mohd. Shami are all ears as Jonty Rhodes makes a point. ■ XXP WEBSITE

evening.

Rohit led his team into the ground and even as he bat, pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah ran in to bowl some quick deliveries and get back his rhythm.

Royals had its net session

at the ICC Academy. The Kings XI Punjab team had its third day of practice on Friday here under the watchful eyes of Anil Kumble, Wasim Jaffer and fielding coach Jonty Rhodes among others.

Banton shines in washed out first T20I

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MANCHESTER

England rising star Tom Banton made a fine 71 before Pakistan fought back in the first T20I at Old Trafford on Friday only for rain to reduce the match to a no-result washout.

England had threatened a huge total while the 21-year-old Banton was compiling his maiden fifty in four T20s at this level. But his exit left England on 109 for three and sparked a collapse that saw the 50-over World champion lose four wickets for 14 runs – all to spin – off 19 balls.

Rain fell with England 131 for six in 16.1 overs. The umpires held a lengthy inspection but decided that the outfield was too wet for the match to continue.

"It was good fun," said Banton. "I struggled to begin with, they bowled quite well and then I backed myself when the spinners came on. There was a small boundary on one side."

The scores: England 161 for six in 16.1 overs (Tom Banton 71) vs Pakistan. Match abandoned.

Second T20I: Aug. 30 (Sunday), 6.45 p.m. (IST).

Unacademy is new IPL partner

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has announced edutech platform Unacademy as the official partner for the Indian Premier League's (IPL's) 2020 edition, scheduled to be played in United Arab Emirates from September 19 to November 10.

Unacademy had last week lost the battle to be the title sponsor.

However, on Saturday, the BCCI announced that the e-learning platform will be one of the two official partners.

The slot was vacant after Future Group's retail arm, fbb, decided to pull out of the sponsorship deal.

While the BCCI statement didn't specify the sponsorship amount, it is estimated to be approximately ₹40 crore for the forthcoming edition.

Olympiad: Humpy seals India's place in final

P.K. AJITH KUMAR
KOZHIKODE

It all boiled down to Koneru Humpy. For India to reach the final of the online Chess Olympiad, she had to draw. But Humpy did better, she won. The World No. 2 from Vijayawada made it a memorable finish for India with a 73-move win over Monika Socko in the Armageddon game (tie-breaker).

After Poland won the first match 4-2, the Indians had to win the second. They did it in style, with a 4.5-1.5 scoreline.

Viswanathan Anand, skipper Vidit Gujrathi, Humpy and Dronavalli Harika won their games, more than making up for R. Praggnanandhaa's loss and Vantika Agarwal's draw.

In the Armageddon game – the player with white pieces gets five minutes, one more than the rival, but White has to win and Black needs only a draw – Humpy won the toss and chose black. She made it an unfor-



Humpy. ■ FILE PHOTO

gettable National Sports Day for India, checkmating Socko with her second queen after having promoted the queen-side pawn.

Showing her class

Humpy held her nerve and showed her class in the Catalan game, defending stoutly to begin with and making use of the opportunities that came her way towards the end.

"It was a gratifying win for me and a great comeback by the entire team," Humpy told *The Hindu* after the game.

Azarenka triumphs as injured Osaka pulls out

Djokovic survives health and Agut scare, meets Raonic in summit clash

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
NEW YORK

Japan's Naomi Osaka withdrew from Western & Southern Open final, due to a left hamstring injury, to give Victoria Azarenka the title by a walkover on Saturday.

"I'm sorry to have to withdraw today with an injury," said Osaka.

In the men's section, World No. 1 Novak Djokovic battled into the final on Friday despite a neck problem.

Djokovic was treated twice by a trainer for neck issues but rallied to defeat Spanish eighth seed Roberto Bautista Agut 4-6, 6-4, 7-6 (0) in the New York COVID-19 quarantine bubble where the US Open begins on Monday.

He will face Milos Raonic in the final after the Canadian, 0-10 all-time against Djokovic, eliminated Greek fourth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas.



Victoria Azarenka with her reward.

pas 7-6(5), 6-3.

The results:
Women: Final: Victoria Azarenka w/o Naomi Osaka.

Seminifinals: Osaka bt Elise Mertens 6-2, 7-(5); Azarenka bt Johanna Konta 4-6, 6-4, 6-1.

Men: Semifinals: Milos Raonic bt Stefanos Tsitsipas 7-6(5), 6-3; Novak Djokovic bt Roberto Bautista Agut 4-6, 6-4, 7-6 (0).

Bindra all praise for the Odisha Model

Y.B. SARANGI
KOLKATA

ing an environment and culture of sport.

"We will be able to increase our medal tally in the Olympic Games or world level (events) when we just have more people participating in sport for the sheer joy of it...that's when high performance will be a by-product," said Bindra.

Top badminton coach P. Gopi Chand agreed. "The use of technology has come in more quickly because of the pandemic. Otherwise, it would have taken five to 10 years."

Gopi, nevertheless, said the biggest impact would be on gaining back the confidence of kids and their parents to return to tournaments.

Olympian Dilip Tirkey, chairman of Odisha Hockey Promotion Council (OHPC), said the pandemic had taken a toll on the athletes and hoped for an early start to training at the academy.

Odisha Sports Minister Tusharkanti Behera sounded confident about hosting the women's under-17 football World Cup in February next. "The infrastructure work will be finished by September last," said Behera.

Praising the 'Odisha Model' for its quick decision-making and using sport as a power to influence people's lives, Bindra said, "High performance is not just about getting 50 people together and expecting them to get gold. The core lies in creat-

Hamilton drives to another pole

BELGIAN GP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
SPA-FRANCORCHAMPS

World champion Lewis Hamilton powered to the Belgian Grand Prix pole with a flawless demonstration of speed as teammate Valtteri Bottas posted the second quickest time to ensure another front row lock-out for Mercedes.

Hamilton clocked a best lap in one minute and 41.252 seconds in the final seconds of a session that he dominated in a personal tribute to the Hollywood film actor Chadwick Boseman. "This is a really important pole for

to go out there and drive to perfection because of what he has done for our people and how he has shown young kids what is possible."

Starting grid: 1. Hamilton (Mercedes), 2. Bottas (Mercedes), 3. Verstappen (Red Bull), 4. Ricciardo (Renault), 5. Albon (Red Bull), 6. Ocon (Renault), 7. Sainz Jr. (McLaren), 8. Perez (Racing Point), 9. Stroll (Racing Point).

me because I woke up to the saddest news of Chadwick passing away... It has been such a heavy year for all of us so it rocked me. I wanted



Wakanda forever: Hamilton pays tribute to Boseman. ■ REUTERS

Chadwick Boseman passes away

The African-American actor achieved fame for playing the Black Panther



Chadwick Boseman as 'Black Panther'. ■ AP

vie featuring a predominantly African-American cast.

The film went on to become one of the highest-grossing films of the year and was nominated for six Oscars, including best picture. It won Academy Awards for original score, costume design and production design.

Boseman originated the Black Panther film role two years earlier in *Captain America: Civil War* and reprised the part *Avengers: Infinity War* and *Avengers: Endgame*. The statement on his social media accounts said Boseman was diagnosed with stage 3 colon cancer in 2016, and that the disease progressed ultimately to stage 4.

Keshav to get Hockey Bengal's lifetime award

Y.B. SARANGI

Two-time Olympic gold medallist Keshav Dutt will get Hockey Bengal's Major Dhyan Chand lifetime achievement award for 2020, the association announced on Saturday.

JIS Group (Leslie Claudio award) for contribution development to sports in Bengal, former coach international Divnain Singh (Joginder Singh award) and former umpire Sudhin Chatterjee (Jaswant Singh Rajput award) were the other award winners named by Hockey Bengal on the occasion of the National Sports Day celebrations, presided over by Sports Minister Aroop Biswas, here.

Hockey Bengal decided to deliver the awards at the awardees' homes due to the pandemic.

The Hockey Bengal website www.hockeybengal.org was launched on the occasion.

... and the Tour is on



Action begins: Norway's Alexander Kristoff won the opening stage of the Tour de France on Saturday after a mass bunch sprint along the iconic Promenade des Anglais in Nice. ■ AFP

Varied roles

During his screen career, Boseman played a number of real-life characters famed for breaking America's racial barriers, including soul singer James Brown in *Get on Up*, Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall in *Marshall* and baseball pioneer Jackie Robinson in *42*.

But the actor's most memorable role was his 2018 performance as T'Challa, king of the fictional African kingdom of Wakanda and the crime fighter known as Black Panther, in the first major studio superhero mo-

CMYK