

on Sunday

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OCTOBER 25, 2020

on Sunday



PM Modi inaugurates three projects in home State Gujarat
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Nirmala accuses Cong. of 'selective outrage' on crimes against women
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Biden woos Indian Americans with running mate Kamala's story
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Jordan and co. help KXIP pull off a stunning win over SRH
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NEARBY



DU's third cut-off offers little hope to students

NEW DELHI
Delhi University on Saturday released its third cut-off list for its various undergraduate programmes and asked the eligible candidates to complete admission formalities via online mode. For students pegging their hopes on a drastic decrease in the cut-off, the list offered little hope with most colleges closing admission to their more popular courses.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

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CLASSIFIEDS ▶ PAGE 4



THE HINDU

There will be no issue of THE HINDU on October 26, 2020 as Ayudha Pooja is a holiday.

Readers can access the online edition at www.thehindu.com

Farooq to lead Gupkar alliance

Not anti-national, stresses 7-party amalgam

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA Srinagar

Seven mainstream parties of Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday gave formal shape to their recently cobbled alliance for the restoration of Article 370, electing National Conference's Farooq Abdullah as its chairman and PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti as vice-chairperson. They asserted theirs was "not an anti-national" grouping.

Veteran CPM leader M.Y. Tarigami was elected the



Standing united: Farooq Abdullah, centre, with Mehbooba Mufti and other leaders in Srinagar on Saturday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

convener while Lok Sabha member from South Kashmir Hasnain Masoodi will be the coordinator of the conglomerate, known as the Pe-

ople's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD). Sajjad Gani Lone of People's Conference would be the spokesman for the amalgam.

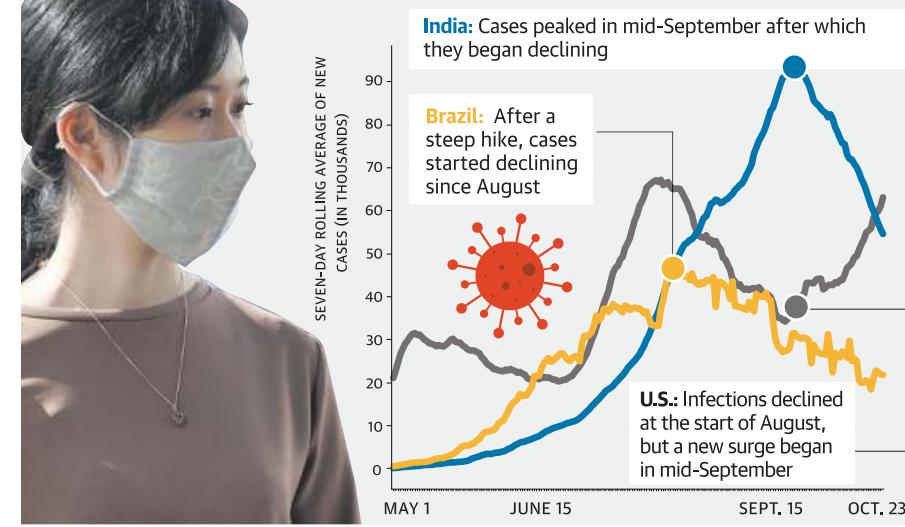
After a meeting held at Ms. Mufti's house, Mr. Abdullah, who turned 84 earlier this week, said the alliance was fighting for the restoration of special status to Jammu and Kashmir and is an "anti-BJP platform" and not an anti-national amalgam.

'BJP's propaganda'

"I want to tell you that this is false propaganda by the BJP that the PAGD is anti-national. I want to tell them that this is not true. There is no doubt that it is anti-BJP, but it is not anti-national," he told reporters here.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 7

Resurgence in the U.S. | India, Brazil and the U.S. account for over 51% of the world's COVID-19 cases. While cases in India are declining significantly, the rate of decrease in Brazil is relatively gradual. However, the U.S. is experiencing a new surge. The seven-day rolling average of cases in the U.S. grew 48% since the start of October, rising from around 43,000 to 63,000 as of Friday



Extra interest charged to be credited by Nov. 5

Scheme will be implemented even for borrowers who did not take moratorium

Festive respite

Banks will credit compound interest levied on loans up to ₹2 crore between March 1 and August 31 back to borrowers by November 5

LOANS COVERED:

- Home
- Education
- Consumer durables
- Automobiles
- Credit card dues
- Loans to micro, small and medium enterprises

CONDITION: Aggregate of all outstanding loans must not exceed ₹2 crore

- Eligible borrowers will get benefit irrespective of whether they availed the moratorium or not
- Lenders have been asked to set up grievance redressal system for the scheme within a week
- The government will reimburse banks and NBFCs after they credit loan accounts and submit claims

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Three weeks after informing the Supreme Court that the Centre would bear the additional compound interest on loans of up to ₹2 crore taken by retail borrowers as well as micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), the government formally communicated the modalities of the scheme to lenders on Friday.

Banks and other lenders, including cooperative banks and non-banking finance companies, have been asked to credit the difference bet-

ween the compound interest and simple interest for the six month period between March 1 and August 31 into these loan accounts by November 5. This would be implemented even for borrowers who had not availed themselves of the moratorium on loan repayments allowed by the Reserve Bank of India up to August 31.

At its last hearing on October 14, the Supreme Court had turned down the Centre's request for a month to implement the scheme.

For taxpayers who need to get accounts audited or furnish reports on specific domestic or international transactions, the deadline is now January 31, 2021.

For the rest, it has been extended to December 31, 2020, from the earlier deadline of November 30.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 7

Deadline for I-T returns extended

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

The government has further extended the date for filing income tax returns for the financial year 2019-20.

For taxpayers who need to get accounts audited or furnish reports on specific domestic or international transactions, the deadline is now January 31, 2021.

He answered a range of questions from *The Hindu* on policing in the Capital, women's safety and Delhi Police's role during the communal riots in February.

'Others cannot usurp the role of police'

SAURABH TRIVEDI
HEMAMI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI



Twenty-two Delhi Police personnel have lost their lives to COVID-19 and a total of 5,341 personnel were afflicted by the pandemic, Delhi Police Commissioner S.N. Shrivastava said in an exclusive interview.

ary. Mr. Shrivastava said the case relating to violence on JNU campus in January will be finalised soon.

SEE INTERVIEW ON ▶ PAGE 2

Slaying the other demon



All set for D-Day: A municipal worker fogging near the effigies of Ravan, Kumbhakarna and Meghnad at CBD Ground, Shahdara, on the eve of Dussehra celebrations, in Delhi on Saturday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

Rajasthan Assembly session on new farm Bills from Oct. 31

State set to follow Punjab's lead, reject Central Acts

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT JAIPUR

A special session of the Rajasthan Assembly to bring amendment Bills against the Centre's recent agriculture sector laws will begin here on October 31.

Assembly Speaker C.P. Joshi on Saturday convened the session, which was earlier adjourned on August 24 after the Congress government won the confidence vote on the floor of the House.

The notification for convening the Assembly session was issued after the State government made a recommendation for carrying out an "urgent legislative work".

Official sources said the Governor's permission for reconvening the sitting was not required because the Assembly was earlier only ad-

journed without the formal orders for prorogation.

The Ashok Gehlot government is set to introduce the Bills, on the lines of those in Punjab, formally rejecting the new Central farm Acts and nullifying their applicability to the State.

The Assembly may also adopt a resolution against the Centre's "rigid stand" on the issue despite strong opposition by large sections of farmers across the country.

Cabinet approval
The State Council of Ministers had earlier this week approved the proposal to bring the Bills in the Assembly, while laying emphasis on a mandatory provision for procurement of agricultural produce at minimum support prices. There may be penal provi-

sions for those paying less than minimum support prices as in the Punjab Bills.

As many as seven crops – wheat, gram, mustard, moong, urad, soybean and groundnut – are covered under MSP in Rajasthan. The State's proposed farm laws may also restore the powers for settlement of disputes in crop procurement to the civil courts.

The Chief Minister had recently indicated that Rajasthan would follow suit after the passage of Bills against the Central statutes in the Punjab Assembly.

The Congress, which stood resolutely with the farmers, would continue to oppose the laws harming the agriculturists passed by the BJP-led government at the Centre, Mr. Gehlot had stated.

RJD manifesto promises 10 lakh jobs

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA PATNA

The Rashtriya Janata Dal, which heads the Opposition Grand Alliance (*Mahagathbandhan*) in the Bihar election, released its poll manifesto on Saturday, in which it reiterated its promise of 10 lakh jobs and loan waiver for farmers.

The manifesto was released by Tejashwi Yadav at a press conference at the party office here.

The cover page of the manifesto displays photographs of Mahatma Gandhi, B.R. Ambedkar, Abul Kalam Azad, Ram Manohar Lohia, Karpoori Thakur and Loknayak Jayaprakash Narayan, among others, but it does not have a photo of the party's founder Lalu Prasad. Mr. Tejashwi Yadav's photo finds a prominent space on the cover page.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 8

NRIS quota in NLUs an affront to meritorious candidates: Orissa HC

Court calls upon stakeholders to revisit admission process

PRADIP DAS CUTTACK

Observing that Non-Resident Indian Sponsored (NRIS) category reservation is an affront to meritorious candidates, the Orissa High Court has called upon the Bar Council of India and other stakeholders to revisit the process of admission to National Law Universities (NLUs).

"Worthy students toil day and night to secure a seat in NLUs by cracking Common Law Admission Test (CLAT). But NRIS students, by paying hefty donations, grab the seats of meritorious students," the court observed.

A Division Bench of Justice

Sanju Panda and Justice S.K. Panigrahi said the NRIS Sponsored candidates who are very low ranked in the merit list often get seats in NLUs, whereas the general candidates having secured better marks and placed higher in the merit list are denied admission. "This is like reservation for the elite class and this dubious category of reservation is unconstitutional," the High Court said.

'Unregulated selection'
The court further observed that the eligibility and selection under the NRIS category are "unregulated, illegal and arbitrary". It also cited a recent Supreme Court judg-

ment in a case relating to private medical colleges in Rajasthan in which it held that private institutions that offer professional and technical courses have complete discretion to do away with their quota of seats after giving reasonable prior notice.

"The consortium of NLUs, the BCI and all stakeholders involved in the process (of admission) should revisit the so-called NRIS quota and prepare a proper regulation and system. Several studies reveal that the selection process under the NRIS is quite vague, undefined and based on inconsistent parameters," the High Court said while disposing of a petition.

Kejriwal pitches for free COVID-19 vaccine for everyone

It is the whole country's right, says CM; schools to stay closed in the city; 4,116 new cases reported

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister and Aam Aadmi Party chief Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday said that a vaccine against COVID-19, once approved, should be given to everyone in the country for free.

"The whole country should get the vaccine for free. It is the whole country's right, everyone is worried because of the [novel] coronavirus," Mr. Kejriwal told reporters.

He also said that schools in the Capital "are not opening now". On September 30, the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in its guidelines gave powers to the States to decide if they wanted to open schools from October 15, but the Delhi government has not allowed

schools to function in the city because of high number of virus cases.

Delhi on Saturday witnessed over 4,000 fresh COVID-19 cases for a second consecutive day with 4,116 persons testing positive in the past 24 hours, according to a health bulletin released

by the city government. Also, 36 more deaths were reported, pushing the toll to 6,225. Of the total 3,52,520 cases, 3,19,828 have recovered and there are 26,467 active cases, the highest in the Capital in 23 days.

The number of people in hospitals and under home

isolation also increased on Saturday. Out of the total 15,737 beds available for COVID-19 treatment in Delhi, 66.1% were vacant, stated the government data.

The positivity rate (percentage of people testing positive every 100 tests done) was 7.4% – the highest in over a month.

Hunger strike
Five resident doctors of North Delhi Municipal Corporation-run Hindu Rao Hospital continued their indefinite hunger strike for the second day on Saturday against non-payment of salaries of over 220 resident doctors of the hospital for three months.

The five doctors started their hunger strike on the



hospital premises at 4 p.m. on Friday and had spent the night at the hospital, which used to be a COVID-19 treatment facility.

The resident doctors of the hospital have been on strike since October 5 over the salary issue.

Attacking the BJP on the issue, the ruling AAP said that the North civic body should be handed over to it for one year and promised to run it better within the same budget and revenue.

"It is unfortunate that at a time when organisations and institutions are giving bonuses to their workers for the festive season, the municipal corporation is not even paying the salaries to its employees," AAP leader Durgesh Pathak said.

M ND-NDE

INTERVIEW | S.N. SHRIVASTAVA

'Others cannot usurp role of police and create a false narrative'

Delhi Police Commissioner says his personnel will do their job if investigation into riots cases, which is 'based on scientific evidence', points at a set of accused persons

SAURABH TRIVEDI
HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police Commissioner S.N. Srivastava answered a range of questions from The Hindu on policing in the Capital, the impact of COVID-19 on the force and its role during the February communal riots in the city. Excerpts from written responses to questions sent to Mr. Srivastava:

How many Delhi Police personnel have been afflicted by COVID-19? What steps have been taken to help the affected families?

■ Since the onset of COVID-19, 5,341 police personnel have been afflicted by the disease, of which 4,638 have recovered. We have unfortunately lost 22 brave men to COVID-19 in discharge of their duties. One of the hallmarks has been the manner in which the fallout of the pandemic was handled by the force. The officers and men continue to work hard, sincerely and relentlessly, in handling law and order, knowing well that it may expose them to the virus. We are encouraging them to build immunity against the novel coronavirus through Ayurvedic immunity drugs and yoga exercises. The Ministry of Ayush has provided us Ayurvedic medicines. The health status of each affected police person is monitored at a senior level. Protective gear, including mask, is provided to all police personnel. Financial assistance and compensation is being provided to those who laid down their lives in the line of duty.

As Police Commissioner of Delhi, what are the major challenges on the law and order front during COVID-19 times?

■ Around 3 crore people reside in Delhi, including the floating pop-

ulation. Once the unlocking process began in June, one of the primary functions has been to ensure observance of COVID-19 protocols – of wearing mask, maintaining social distancing and hand sanitisation – without affecting the resumption of normal life. It is being achieved through meaningful prosecution and general awareness campaigns across the city. Resumption of religious, political and social activities without adversely impacting the observance of COVID-19 norms has remained a major challenge. Crime has been successfully checked despite its tendency to grow during adverse socio-economic conditions.

What are the new technologies Delhi Police has begun using to make it a modern, cutting-edge force?

■ During the COVID-19 period, we have been working at the back end to adapt to new technologies to make the functioning easy, efficient and transparent. Among the first is the introduction of the e-Beat Book. It enables a police officer in the field to access the various databases regarding crime, criminals, fingerprints, photographs, stolen vehicles, etc. Such an access while in the field facilitates instant decision-making that helps investigation and verification exercises. It has helped in

curbing crime, arresting criminals and connecting with the residents.

Women's safety continues to be a major concern in the city...

■ Women safety continues to be one of the top priorities for Delhi Police. One cannot deny the concerns every resident of Delhi has for women's safety. Any crime against women is a threat to the very dignity of society. In the past nine months of the current year, crime against women has come down by approximately 30% compared to the same period last year. However, that leaves no room for complacency. A series of crime prevention measures, which include increased deployment in areas frequented by women, deployment of women police personnel as beat officers and in PCR vans, introduction of a number of women safety projects/apps such as Himmat Plus, Sashakti, Shishchar, anti-stalking helpline 1096, finalisation of cases involving crime against women in 60 days, investigation of cases by women police officers, improving lighting in dark spots, installation of CCTV cameras, etc.

Crime has been successfully checked despite its tendency to grow during adverse socio-economic conditions.

■ An FIR has already been registered in the matter. The video shows some police personnel assaulting and coaxing a few persons later identified as Faizan and four others. From the CCTV camera installed nearby and video clippings, some headway has been made. The police personnel on duty near the location

You took over as Police Commissioner in the middle of the Delhi riots, in which more than 50 people were killed. National Security Adviser Ajit Doval himself had to go to northeast Delhi as a confidence-building measure. The rioting continued in Delhi for four days.

Did Delhi Police fail in performing its duties?

■ Delhi Police has a very good record in handling law and order, crime prevention and other areas requiring police attention. I am sure all possible measures were taken to maintain law and order in the city. It is not fair for me to comment on this issue for want of first-hand knowledge about the factors that were taken into consideration.

There are several videos allegedly showing police complicity during the riots, including that of policemen beating and asking a Muslim to sing the National Anthem. The man died. It's been over seven months, what action has been taken against the policemen involved?

■ I am not sure how it [the DMC] has come to this conclusion with the limited information and details it has. A chargesheet has already been filed in the court on the conspiracy leading to the communal riots. The police are mandated to investigate into the complaint recorded in the FIR and submit a final report (chargesheet) in the concerned court of law. It is in the court where every evidence produced by the police is evaluated and where it may be contested. Others cannot usurp the role of the police and create a false narrative. The court of law is the correct forum for this purpose. Investigation is judged on the basis of evidence and not perception. However, it has already been clarified that

have been examined. Delhi Police will not spare anyone who exceeded his brief.

The Delhi Minorities Commission in its report on the riots linked Kapil Mishra's February 23 speech to the outbreak of violence. Why has no FIR been registered against the BJP leader for inciting violence?

■ I am not sure how it [the DMC] has come to this conclusion with the limited information and details it has. A chargesheet has already been filed in the court on the conspiracy leading to the communal riots. The police are mandated to investigate into the complaint recorded in the FIR and submit a final report (chargesheet) in the concerned court of law. It is in the court where every evidence produced by the police is evaluated and where it may be contested. Others cannot usurp the role of the police and create a false narrative. The court of law is the correct forum for this purpose. Investigation is judged on the basis of evidence and not perception. However, it has already been clarified that

have been examined. Delhi Police will not spare anyone who exceeded his brief.

the investigation has concluded that riots and stone throwing took place at Chand Bagh on February 23 at 11 a.m. and the first injured reached the hospital at 12.15 p.m. as a medico-legal case. The video that shows Kapil Mishra talking to the media was taken around 3.30 p.m. on February 23. Therefore, on this count itself it is very clear that the riots had started much before Kapil Mishra was video-graphed making the statement.

Has any explanation been sought from DCP (North East) Ved Prakash Surya as to why he was seen in the frame when Mr. Mishra spoke of removing protesters from Jafraabada area?

■ DCP (North East) Ved Prakash Surya was handling the law and order situation arising from the communal riots that took place on February 23 around 11 a.m. It is for this reason that he had already put on anti-riot gear and was in the affected area when Kapil Mishra arrived at Maupur. Since stone throwing had taken place before the video was shot, they [stones] can be seen lying on the road in the videos.

Civil society groups, many retired police officers and intellectuals have condemned what they describe as a crackdown against young activists who came to the fore in the protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the proposed National Register of Citizens...

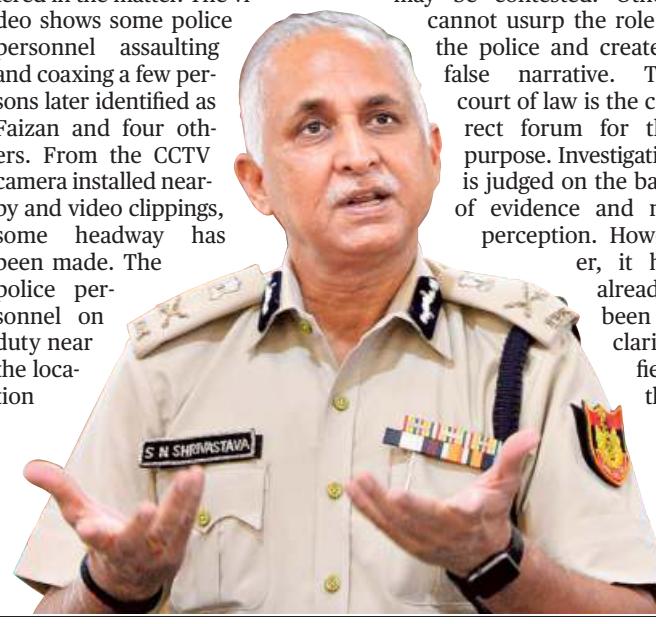
■ I have already replied once before on this issue. Like in all cases we commenced the investigation with an open mind and relied

heavily on scientific evidence, such as CCTV footage, WhatsApp chats, cellular connectivity, recovered deleted mobile phone data, geo-location, DNA analysis, Vanhan database, facial reconstruction, fund flow analysis, etc. If the investigation based on scientific evidence points at a set of accused persons, the police will do their job. Besides scientific evidence, Delhi Police has examined a large majority of persons who either have a role in the northeast Delhi riots or have information that helped to arrive at the truth. It has questioned persons without regard to their religion and party affiliation. It has arrested 1,616 persons irrespective of their caste, religion, occupation or affiliation. Those arrested are almost equally distributed among both communities. I am sure the other community/group does not fit into the category of "young activists". You should be equally concerned about them as well.

On January 5, masked persons carrying rods and sticks entered Jawaharlal Nehru University campus and thrashed students and teachers. There has been no arrest in the case so far...

■ Delhi Police is investigating three cases related to the JNU incidents that occurred in January. The FIRs disclose names of students belonging to both [contending] factions in JNU. They have been examined in the cases. The case will be finalised soon. However, no person has been arrested in the cases.

READ THE FULL INTERVIEW ONLINE:
<http://bit.ly/DelhiPoliceComm>



NCR's annual battle for clear skies begins

Whether measures enforced this time round will help cities rein in air pollution, given the ongoing pandemic, is a moot point

CITY TEAM
NEW DELHI/GURUGRAM

Winter is almost here and the perennial battle of the National Capital Region (NCR) against air pollution, arising out of both local factors and the burning of agricultural stubble, has begun once again.

Air pollution control measures under the "very poor" and "severe" categories of the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) have been enforced in the NCR cities from October 15, and enforcement of anti-pollution norms by various agencies is currently under way. Whether these are able to rein in air pollution, especially with the added risk presented by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic this year, remains to be seen.

The GRAP is a set of emergency measures to be taken to reduce air pollution, including odd-even vehicle rationing policy, depending on the level of pollution. Currently, a ban is in place on the use of diesel generators in NCR cities, except for emergency purposes.

GRAP measures
The Supreme Court-appointed Environment Pollution (Prevention & Control) Authority (EP-CA) had written to various States earlier this month to implement the GRAP measures.

If the pollution of Delhi further increases, then GRAP measures under "severe+" or "emergency" category will kick in.

These measures, include stopping entry of trucks into Delhi, stopping construction activities and implementing the odd-even scheme. The severe+ measures are implemented when the PM2.5 level crosses 300 microgram per cubic metre or PM10 level crosses 500 microgram per cubic metre and persists for 48 hours or more.

The Delhi government has been carrying out an anti-dust campaign and has imposed fines as high as ₹50 lakh on a single violator.

The New Delhi Municipal Corporation was fined ₹1 crore for inaction against open garbage burning in its limits.

According to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, the Delhi government has also delineated 13 pollution hotspots across the Capital for which specific plans

GRADED RESPONSE

The Environment Pollution (Prevention & Control) Authority recommends measures according to level of Particulate Matter

MODERATE TO POOR

- Stringently enforce/stop garbage burning; impose heavy fines
- Stringently enforce all pollution control regulations in brick kilns and industries
- Stringently enforce pollution control in thermal power plants through PCB monitoring
- Do periodic mechanised sweeping on roads with heavy traffic and water sprinkling on unpaved roads every two days



MODERATE TO POOR

Moderate when PM2.5 is between 61-90 µg/m³ or PM10 is between 101-250 µg/m³. Poor when PM2.5 level is between 91-120 µg/m³ or PM10 level is between 251-350 µg/m³

VERY POOR

- Stop use of diesel generator sets
- Enhance parking fee by 3-4 times
- Increase bus and metro services
- Stop use of coal/ firewood in hotels and open eateries
- Residential Welfare Associations and individual house owners to provide electric heaters during winter to security staff to avoid open burning
- Alert in newspapers/TV/radio to advise people with respiratory and cardiac illnesses to avoid polluted areas and restrict outdoor movement



Kites are barely visible in the haze on Saturday ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

SEVERE

- Close brick kilns, hot-mix plants, stone crushers
- Intensify public transport services. Introduce differential rates to encourage off-peak travel
- Increase frequency of mechanised cleaning of road and sprinkling of water on roads



VERY POOR

When PM2.5 level is between 121-250 µg/m³ or PM10 level is between 351-430 µg/m³



SEVERE

When PM2.5 level is above 250 µg/m³ or PM10 level is above 430 µg/m³



SEVERE + OR EMERGENCY

- Shut down Badarpur power plant and maximise generation of power from existing natural gas based plants to reduce operation of coal-based power plants in the NCR
- Task force to take decision on any additional steps including shutting of schools



SEVERE + OR EMERGENCY

When PM2.5 level crosses 300 µg/m³ or PM10 level crosses 500 µg/m³ (five times above the standard) and persist for 48 hours or more



AIR QUALITY OF DELHI-NCR

Delhi 345

Gurugram 325

Ghaziabad 356

Faridabad 367

Noida 347

Greater Noida 358

Good 50-51-100

Moderate 101-200

Poor 201-300

Very poor 301-400

Severe 401-400

AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M.
YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) | SOURCE: CPCB

These machines, said Mr. Singh, could sprinkle water within a distance of 30 metre and help bring down the PM2.5 levels. Similarly, 22 similar guns were now positioned in Gurugram (North). Mr. Singh said there were 136 construction sites in Gurugram.

With the pollution levels fluctuating, the district administration has put into place the measures to deal with the severe category of pollution that includes ban on diesel generator sets, monitoring of open burning of the waste and mechanised sweeping of the roads.

Unlike previous years, an air monitoring cell has been set up at HSIIDC Office Complex in Maujpur to redress any complaint related to GRAP violation with a toll free no. 1-800-180-1817.

The team at the cell also responds to complaints received on social media accounts of the department.

Besides, 45 devices are installed for monitoring of air emission in 'red category' industrial units and the real time data provided on the HSPCB and Central Pollution Control Board server for monitoring. Mr. Singh claimed that around 80% industrialists and builders had given undertakings to adhere to the GRAP.

Also, notice has been served to Farrukhnagar municipal corporation to ensure door-to-door collection of the solid municipal waste and curtail open burning of waste. However, as many as 22 residential societies, including two in the DLF area, depend partially or wholly, on the diesel generator sets for electricity supply.

Besides, 40 commercial buildings also don't have regular power connections from the grid. Dakshin Haryana Bijli Vitran Nigam, Chief Engineer, Virender Singh, said that though the power department was prepared to impart regular electricity connections to these areas, the deficiency in terms of infrastructure and incomplete formalities was on the part of the developers. The EPCA had asked the Haryana government to submit a detailed programme to ensure supply to these areas before it considers exemption for them.

The Air Quality Index of Delhi on Saturday was 345, and the values for Gurugram and Noida were 325 and 347, respectively, as per CPCB's 4 p.m. bulletin, which is an average of the past 24 hours. All three values are in the "red" category, and this level of pollution can cause "respiratory illness on prolonged exposure".

Stubble burning fire counts in Haryana, Punjab and border regions of Delhi increased from 1,213 on Thursday to 1,292 on Friday, as per SAFAR.

The contribution of stubble burning to PM2.5 levels in Delhi was estimated to be around 9% on Saturday.

'Air pollution dampening joy of festive season, CM must act'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Assembly, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, on Saturday expressed concern over increasing air pollution in the Capital and said that it was dampening the enthusiasm of the people during the festive season.

He demanded Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal immediately meet his promises made earlier to control pollution in the city and that allegations and counter-allegations will not solve the problem.

The Badarpur MLA said he had, in a letter, sought to remind Mr. Kejriwal that he had promised cleaning of roads with road-sweeper machines, installing smog towers and air purifiers in Delhi, and spraying water with helicopters, etc. to curb pollution.

"The time has come when the Delhi government should implement all these measures immediately," he said, adding: "The Delhi government should ensure that roads are repaired, public transport system is strengthened, the fourth phase of the metro is quickly completed and flyovers are built to rid the city of traffic jams."

Delhi's AQI

Timings DELHI		
SUNDAY, OCT. 25		
RISE 06:28	SET 17:42	
14:36	SET 00:42	
MONDAY, OCT. 26		
RISE 06:29	SET 17:41	
15:12	SET 01:39	
TUESDAY, OCT. 27		
RISE 06:30	SET 17:41	
15:44	SET 02:34	

Delhi Weather max min
Delhi City 33 14
Safdarjung 33 14
Palam 32 17

Delhi Pali Today
34°C Morning would remain pleasant with smog and warm day. Mainly clear sky and light winds likely.

Delhi Pali Tomorrow
33°C Light cool winds expected. Marginal improve in smoke layer. Warm and mainly sunny day.

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IN BRIEF

Kejriwal, Sisodia laud NEET, JEE top achievers

NEW DELHI
Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his Deputy Manish Sisodia on Saturday congratulated the top achievers of NEET, JEE qualifying exams at a virtual event and said that their service to the nation must continue throughout their lives. Twenty students have made it to Mr. Kejriwal's guest list, the Delhi government said.

BIMTECH holds virtual colloquium

NOIDA
The Birla Institute of Management Technology in Greater Noida organised its 4th BIMTECH Insurance Colloquium on October 23 with the theme 'Insurance 4.0 - Resilience in Risk Society'. The virtual event saw distinguished insurance professionals from India, Bangladesh and Nepal discuss ongoing issues and how companies can build resilience for future pandemics.

CM inaugurates two flyovers in east Delhi

'Economical' facility to provide seamless travel for commuters from ISBT to U.P. border, says Kejriwal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday inaugurated the newly constructed Seelampur, Shastri Park flyovers, which will provide relief to people travelling between Welcome in north-east Delhi, Kashmere Gate, and the Delhi-Uttar Pradesh border.

Congratulating the people of Delhi and the PWD officials and engineers for the completion of the projects, Mr. Kejriwal said that the residents were proud of living in the national capital due to all the facilities and amenities provided by the Delhi government.

The Shastri Park flyover comprises six lanes and measures 700 metres, whereas the Seelampur flyover



Traffic on the newly constructed Shastri Park flyover after inauguration on Saturday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

measures 1,200 metres and eases commute over the Dharmpura crossing towards Shahdara.

The construction of the new flyovers will bring relief

to around 1.5 lakh vehicles, which seem to travel through the route daily.

"First of all, I want to congratulate the residents of east Delhi for these two

flyovers. The people of east Delhi used to face long traffic jams for longer hours. But now, travel from ISBT to U.P. border can be completed within a span of 10 minutes without any traffic jams and with a smooth ride," Mr. Kejriwal said.

"The flyovers constructed are of good quality. The tender sanctioned for this project was ₹303 crore, but, such is the honesty with which the AAP government functions that our engineers saved ₹53 crore. With great construction quality, built under ₹250 crore, this piece of magnificence is both economical and effective. Since the inception of AAP government in Delhi, we are saving money on all projects. The AAP government has been

saving money in every project," he also said.

Delay in completion

The foundation stone for the newly constructed flyover was laid by Mr. Kejriwal on February 10, 2019. Due to the rising levels of pollution and the implementation of GRAP guidelines in 2019, construction projects were banned during the night which brought the construction of the flyovers to a standstill, the government said.

However, the flyovers were 70% done until October 2019, and despite the implementation of anti-construction guidelines and a six-month halt due to the COVID-19 lockdown, the projects were completed in 19 months, it said.

Four of family held for duping banks of ₹20 cr.

Accused mortgaged DMRC property

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Four members of a family have been arrested for allegedly cheating at least five banks of ₹20 crore by forging papers and availing loan by mortgaging property, which was acquired by Delhi Metro Rail Corporation, the police said on Saturday.

These accused persons also created multiple identities by changing their names and parentage. They also created multiple identity papers in order to evade the scrutiny process adopted by these banks. During investigation it is found that accused persons not only multi-mortgaged the properties but also availed loan on the property which was already acquired by DMRC," Mr Mishra said.

chain of property papers and on the basis of these forged documents, they succeeded in registering the property fraudulently before the Registrar Office either in their name or in the name of persons known to them.

Joint Commissioner of Police (Economic Offences Wing) O.P. Mishra said that the accused have been identified as Ashwani Arora, Vijay Arora and their wives.

The police said that the accused duped Bank of Baroda, Punjab National Bank, Syndicate Bank, Karnataka Bank and OBC Bank.

The police said that the accused prepared forged

DU's third cut-off list offers little hope to students

Most university colleges close admission to their more popular courses

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI



Students during the ongoing DU admission process.
■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Delhi University on Saturday released its third cut-off list for its various merit-based undergraduate programmes and asked the eligible candidates to complete admission formalities via online mode.

For students pegging their hopes on a drastic decrease in the cut-off required, the list offered little hope with most colleges closing admission to their more popular courses.

Minimal dip
Those colleges that still had general category seats to offer, reduced their required marks mostly by a few decimal points.

At Lady Shri Ram College for Women, applications were closed for BA (Hons) in

mission into three courses.

At Miranda House College, courses like BA (Hons), political science, sociology, philosophy, geography and Sanskrit were closed leaving students with an opportunity to seek admission in courses like English, history among others.

At Shri Ram College for Commerce, students needed 98.75% for BA (Hons) economics and 98.12% for BCom (Hons).

At Kamala Nehru College, most of the seats had been taken with only seats for BA (Hons) Hindi, Sanskrit among those open.

At Hindu College, majority of the courses were closed for admission with courses in sociology, BCom (Hons) and economics, requiring a cut off of 98%.

Admission under the third cut-off list will take place between October 26 and October 28. The last date for payment of fee under the list is October 30.

More lists

The university had earlier announced that it would be releasing five cut-off lists for the new session commences on November 18.

After that, it would release special cut-off lists according to the seats left vacant.

The admission under the fourth and fifth cut-off lists are scheduled to commence on November 2 and November 9, respectively.

Under the second cut-off list, DU officials said that 22,147 applicants had paid the fees and completed the process.

THE HINDU

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This joint public notice is hereby issued in relation to the execution of a share subscription and share purchase agreement ("Agreement") by and between the Company, GIL, GIDL, GISL and ADP in compliance with the RBI Approval. The Agreement contemplated transfer of existing equity shares of the Company by GIL and its associates to ADP (directly and indirectly) and allotment of fresh equity shares by the Company to ADP.

Pursuant to the Agreement, ADP has the right to appoint five directors to the board of directors of the Company and the appointment of such directors by ADP would result in changing the composition of board of directors by more than 30% of the directors (excluding independent directors). The RBI Approval states that the RBI has approved the change in management of the Company, including the appointment of Mr. Augustin de Romanet, Mr. Philippe Pascal and Mr. Xavier Hurstel (nominated by ADP) to the board of directors of the Company and has also taken on record the appointment of Mr. Gratién Maire and Mr. Olivier Pierre Guichard as directors of the Company.

The change in management of the Company as contemplated above does not result in a change in control of the affairs of the Company and GIL will continue to retain control over the affairs of the Company.

This public notice is being issued by the Company, GIL, GIDL, GISL and ADP to provide to the public a notice of the proposed change in management of the Company.

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PERSONAL

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MATRIMONIAL

INDEX OF MATRIMONIAL

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BRIDES WANTED

BRIDES & GROOMS WANTED

Classification common for Brides, Bridegrooms, Brides & Grooms

Assamese

Awdhadi

Bengali

Bhojpuri

Bihari

Chhattisgarhi

English

Gujarati

Haryanvi

Hindi

Kannada

Kashmiri

Konkani

Malayalam

Manipuri

Marathi

Marwari

Nepali

Oriya

Parsi

Punjabi

Saurashtra

Sindhi

Tamil

Telugu

Tulu

Urdu

Advocate

Business

Defence

Doctor

Engineer

Finance/ Banking

Government/ Quasi-Govt.

IAS/ Allied Services

Information Technology

MBA/ CA/ ICWA

NRI

Cosmopolitan

Divorcee

Physically Challenged

MARRIAGE BUREAUS

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SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

Forecast for Sunday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over central Maharashtra and south interior Karnataka. Thunderstorm with lightning likely at isolated places over Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Konkan & Goa, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal and Andaman & Nicobar Islands

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	31.6	29.6	23.8	Kozhikode	—	33.0	23.8
Ahmedabad	—	35.5	19.1	Kurnool	—	33.2	23.7
Aizawl	28	25.1	15.9	Lucknow	—	33.8	17.5
Allahabad	—	34.5	19.4	Madurai	—	37.4	23.6
Bangalore	17.2	27.0	17.0	Mangaluru	0.2	30.7	22.6
Bhopal	—	33.4	17.2	Mumbai	—	32.6	26.5
Bhubaneswar	—	31.6	22.7	Mysuru	—	30.0	19.2
Chandigarh	—	33.6	14.6	New Delhi	—	33.2	14.3
Chennai	—	34.1	25.8	Patna	—	33.0	23.8
Coimbatore	—	33.7	22.6	Port Blair	2.6	29.8	25.2
Dehradun	—	31.1	13.4	Puducherry	—	30.5	23.7
Gangtok	—	21.9	14.5	Pune	—	32.5	20.6
Goa	—	31.5	24.1	Raipur	—	34.0	21.5
Guwahati	51.8	26.4	22.4	Ranchi	—	29.4	20.8
Hubballi	—	28.0	21.0	Shillong	171.2	21.7	15.9
Hyderabad	—	33.2	20.3	Shimla	—	24.5	13.4
Imphal	30.1	22.7	18.7	Srinagar	—	23.1	3.8
Jaipur	—	34.0	24.0	Thiruvananthapuram	—	32.1	23.9
Kochi	—	32.6	23.4	Tiruchi	—	34.5	24.6
Kohima	—	23.3	—	Vijayawada	—	33.7	24.0
Kolkata	0.7	31.1	24.0	Visakhapatnam	—	33.1	26.8

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	CODE
Ahmedabad	20	75	56	150	—	—
Bangalore	.8	.46	.53	28	.52	—
Chennai	13	.14	.58	70	—	—
Delhi	14	128	86	403	394	—
Hyderabad	.5	70	12	168	141	—
Kolkata	10	21	.79	38	—	—
Lucknow	33	.79	.59	.314	.303	—
Mumbai	.2	.31	.52	.121	.124	—
Pune	—	.48	—	—	—	—
Visakhapatnam	.6	.75	.30	.342	.242	—

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m. Dharuhera, Haryana records an average air quality index (AQI) score of 380 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Shillong, Meghalaya recorded a healthy AQI score of 9

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.

NO_x: 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

Maharashtra adds 6,417 new cases, 137 fatalities

10,004 patients discharged; active COVID-19 cases are 1,40,194

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

Maharashtra's COVID-19 tally on Saturday increased to 16,38,961 with 6,417 new cases, a State health official said. The State also reported 137 deaths, taking the toll to 43,152, he said.

A total of 10,004 patients were discharged, taking the tally of recovered people to 14,55,107. With this, the number of active patients in the State stands at 1,40,194.

Mumbai city reported 1,257 positive cases, which pushed its overall case count to 2,50,059, while its death toll rose to 10,059 of which 50 were reported on Saturday.

The State has so far conducted 85,48,036 tests.

The Mumbai division, which consists of Mumbai city and satellite towns, reported 2,457 new cases, raising its total count to 5,69,156. As many as 17,657 people have died so far in the region, the official said.

The number of cases in the Pune division stood at 4,17,997 and deaths at 9,383, the official said.

Nashik division's cumulative case tally stood at 2,19,327 and the death toll at 4,176.

Kolhapur division has reported 1,07,119 cases and 3,603 deaths till now, while Aurangabad division's case tally stood at 61,248 and the death count at 1,539.

Latur division has reported 67,377 cases until now and 1,998 fatalities.

Akola division has recorded 51,257 cases while 1,219 people have succumbed to the disease until now.

Nagpur division has recorded 1,43,406 infections and 3,434 fatalities, the offi-



A health worker takes swab sample from a worker for COVID-19 test, at a Metro construction site in Mumbai. ■ FILE PHOTO

BJP's free vaccine Bihar sop injustice to others: minister

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

AURANGABAD

Maharashtra minister and senior NCP leader Nawab Malik on Saturday hit out at the BJP for promising free COVID-19 vaccine to the people of poll-bound Bihar, adding that such an announcement during a nationwide outbreak was injustice to other citizens.

The number of cases in the Pune division stood at 4,17,997 and deaths at 9,383, the official said.

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cial said. Maharashtra's COVID-19 figures are as follows: positive cases: 16,38,961, new cases: 6,417, death toll:

43,152, discharged: 14,55,107, active cases: 1,40,194, people tested so far: 85,48,036.

down which led to loss of lives and jobs could have been avoided if the Centre had immediately "sealed borders after the WHO alerted about the virus on December 31 (2019)".

He said the working of the Waqf Board would be made online and a tendering process for this would be completed in the next six months.

He also said the head office of the Maharashtra Waqf Board would be shifted to Mumbai from Aurangabad and a regional office would function here with jurisdiction over eight nearby districts.

Sena to hold Dussehra rally in auditorium, not at Shivaji Park

Only 50 people, including ministers and leaders, can attend

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

The Shiv Sena has decided to organise its annual Dussehra rally on Sunday at an auditorium in Mumbai and not on the Shivaji Park ground, where the event is traditionally held.

This decision was taken in view of the COVID-19 safety protocols, as per which the Sena-led Maharashtra government has prohibited political, social and religious gatherings, party sources said.

The decision was taken in view of the COVID-19 safety protocols, as per which the Sena-led Maharashtra government has prohibited political, social and religious gatherings, party sources said.

This is for the first time the rally will not be held at Shivaji Park, where party workers gather in large numbers to hear the Sena chief address them on Dussehra evening.



Uddhav Thackeray

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, who is president of the Sena, will address the party workers from Swatantryaveer Savarkar auditorium opposite Savarkar auditorium at Dadar in central Mumbai at 7 p.m., the sources said.

This is the first Dussehra rally of 60-year-old Mr. Thackeray after becoming Chief Minister last year. He will complete a year in office on November 27.

The Dussehra rally is an important event in the calendar of the Sena, which was launched in 1966.

Mr. Thackeray is likely to speak on the Sena's political journey and its transformation over the years.

As cases dip, eight COVID centres in Navi Mumbai stop admissions

RAINA ASSAINAR

NAVI MUMBAI

In view of the decreasing number of new COVID-19 cases, eight Covid Care Centres in Navi Mumbai have stopped taking fresh admissions.

"There were hardly two-three patients in these centres. Hence, we shifted them to other centres and have stopped new admissions there. The centres have not been shut. The admissions will be started again as and when the need arises," Sanjay Kakade, assistant municipal commissioner, Navi Mumbai Municipal Corporation, said.

The centres are Warkari Bhavan in Belapur, Samaj Mandir in Airoli, Samaj Mandir in Koparkhairane, Multi-purpose Hall in Sector 14, Vashi, ETC Centre in Vashi, Agri Koli Bhavan in Nerul, Ahilyabai Holkar Bhavan in Nerul, and Levapatiadar Hall in Airoli. Of these, Levapatiadar will be changed from only male centre to only female centre after a few days.

Navi Mumbai on Saturday reported 168 new COVID-19 cases, taking its total case tally to 43,445. Of them, 40,161 have been discharged and the number of active patients stands at 2,409. Three more patients succumbed to the virus, pushing the death toll to 875 with a fatality rate of 2.01%.

The active patients under the NMMC are admitted at CIDCO Exhibition Centre in

Vashi, Radha Swami Satsang NYAS in Turbhe, Export House in Turbhe, MGM Hospital in Sanpada, and DY Patil Hospital in Nerul.

The doubling rate of COVID-19 cases in Navi Mumbai, which was 79 days in September, has increased to 127 days. The recovery rate which was 88% has also gone up to 92%.

Till September 30, a total of 36,673 cases had been reported, of whom 32,325 had recovered with a recovery rate of 88.14% while there had been 750 deaths with a fatality rate of 2.04%.

A total of 2.64 lakh people have undergone COVID-19 test till now, of whom 95,270 took RT-PCR test while 1,69 lakh took rapid antigen test.

+ Mumbai mall blaze: firefighting continues even after 36 hours

18 fire engines, 10 jumbo tankers have been pressed into service

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

Amarinder, Sukhbir engage in war of words over farm laws

Punjab Assembly had on Tuesday rejected the Centre's laws, passed four Bills

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh and Shiromani Akali Dal president Sukhbir Singh Badal once again on Saturday attacked each other over the Centre's farm laws.

While Capt. Amarinder said the SAD chief has "lost political narrative" over the issue, Mr. Badal alleged that the State Bills passed against the farm laws aimed at sabotaging the farmers' stir.

According to a statement, Capt. Amarinder said Mr. Badal seemed to have been jolted into desperation by the entire farm laws saga, which had exposed the double standards of the Akalis.

Reacting to Mr. Badal's statement, accusing the CM of colluding with the Centre to get the rail blockade by farmers lifted, Capt. Amarinder



Amarinder Singh. ■



Sukhbir Singh Badal. ■

said that strange and senseless remarks showed the Akali leader had completely lost the political narrative, causing him to fumble for words and desperate to find a way out.

On the Akali chief's suggestion that the State government should have taken the SAD's advice before bringing the Bills in the Assembly, the CM said, "It seems the NDA government at the Centre has taken the advice of their

then allies, the Akalis, in the matter of the anti-farmer, anti-federal and anti-Constitutional farm laws."

"That would explain why they messed it up so badly and took the unilateral decision to impose laws that are clearly designed to ruin farmers," he added.

"Does Sukhbir really believe that I would lead my party to a political suicide with such an act?" asked Capt. Amarinder.

Meanwhile, Mr. Badal accused the Chief Minister of not taking his party's suggestion and said he instead chose to enter into a deal with the Centre and get 'wifsy-washy' Bills passed with the sole intention of sabotaging the farmers' agitation. He said the only solution was declaring the entire State as a principal market yard which would have negated the implementation of the Central farm laws in Punjab. He asked the CM if he had annulled the Central agriculture marketing laws and when the new Bills passed in the Vidhan Sabha would come into being.

The Punjab Assembly on Tuesday had adopted a resolution rejecting the Centre's new farm laws and passed four bills to counter the Centre's farm laws.

Science in AMU, said people know the reality of the Jinnah episode. "The current dispensation is facing the anger of migrant labour. To divert attention, Mr. Usmani is being made a scapegoat to target Congress."

The AMU connection to Bihar polls

Maskoor Usmani is the latest among alumni making a foray into State's politics

ANUJ KUMAR
GHAZIABAD

It is said when there is an election in Bihar, it causes ripples at Aligarh Muslim University. Despite COVID-19, this October, the impact has been palpable as former AMU Students' Union president Maskoor Ahmad Usmani is in the fray from Jale Assembly seat in Darbhanga district on a Congress ticket.

The highlight of Mr. Usmani's tenure in AMU was when he took on the BJP and a section of the media when the Jinnah portrait controversy erupted in May 2018 and it is hard to believe that the Congress would not have measured the consequences before giving him the green signal.

Jinnah's portrait issue

The right-wing groups led by BJP MP Satish Gautam wanted AMUSU to remove the portrait of Mohammed Ali Jinnah from the Union Hall. Mr. Usmani argued that Jinnah was a founder-member of the university and was conferred life membership in 1938 and the presence of his portrait in the Union Hall only indicated preserving the historical legacy of the university.

But the djinns of Jinnah refused to disappear. As soon as Mr. Usmani got the ticket, Mr. Gautam said giving the ticket reflected the mindset of the Congress. "Hindus know what to do with the well-wisher of Jinnah in the election," he told reporters.

While acknowledging that AMUSU's presidentship got Mr. Usmani the ticket to electoral politics as the post carries a value across the country, Mohammad Mohibul Haque, professor of Political



Maskoor Ahmad Usmani campaigning in Bihar's Jale constituency. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Science in AMU, said people

know the reality of the Jinnah episode. "The current dispensation is facing the anger of migrant labour. To divert attention, Mr. Usmani is being made a scapegoat to target Congress."

Prof. Haque, whose ancestors hail from Bihar, said, "Jinnah matters only for the spokespersons of the BJP and the party's spokespersons in the media houses."

Coming from a professional course like Bachelor of Dental Studies, Mr. Usmani believed the image of the traditional student politician who stayed on in the campus to fulfil his political aspirations.

Ansab Aamir, a student of engineering who watched the 2017 elections closely, said Mr. Usmani was broadly accepted.

Irrespective of his desperation to find a political niche, his approach is being appreciated. "For the last few months, Mr. Usmani has been running an intense library movement in rural Darbhanga and Madhubani wherein he proposes to establish libraries in villages as centres of educational, cultural, and sports activities,"

said Mohammad Sajjad, professor of History at AMU.

"It is a good sign that he is making education central to his politics. He was beaten up by the police and suffered a fracture during the Jinnah controversy but he didn't compromise. He rather confronted the national media. He is seen as a credible voice," said Prof. Sajjad.

'Not an easy fight'

Prof. Haque maintained it would not be an easy fight for Mr. Usmani but as caste remains a significant factor in Bihar politics, Muslim candidates have an advantage.

"As the Hindu vote gets divided, the party's support base plus Muslim vote become an important factor in constituencies where there is a significant Muslim presence. The caste factor exists among Muslims as well but the internal stratification only manifests when the saffron threat is not there. In the assertion of New Hindutva, the internal stratification of the Muslims stands diluted," said Prof. Haque.

Hailing from Muzaffarpur, Prof. Sajjad has written extensively on the politics of Bi-

har. "From Syed Mahmud, a Minister in Nehru's Cabinet, to Abdul Ghafoor, who was Bihar's Chief Minister from 1973 to 1975, AMU has been intermittently providing leaders to Bihar politics."

In recent years, said Prof. Haque, Ali Ashraf Fatmi, the four-time Rashtriya Janata Dal MP from Darbhanga, has been carrying forward the legacy. Mr. Fatmi shifted to the JD(U) last year.

"You will find Aligs (as AMU alumni are called) in all political parties," said Prof. Haque citing Mohammed Ali Kaiser, who is in the Lok Janashakti Party. He said, it's a "good sign" that the "public-funded university like AMU" continues to provide the "secular Muslim leadership" and that it is "not coming from Deoband and Nadwa".

Analysing the influence of AMU alumni back home, Prof. Sajjad said unlike many other universities that were "catering largely to the elite", AMU had been providing "upward mobility" to "a large number of deprived sections". "AMU provides them the tools to express themselves and they use their voice back home. And they carry the connection with the alma mater because they feel they would not have been able to cross socio-economic barriers without the time spent at the institution at an affordable cost."

That's why, added Prof. Haque, students go to campaign for the Aligs. "It is beyond religion or party affiliations. I remember the special attention former Delhi CM Sahib Singh Verma, an AMU alumnus, used to give us whenever we visited the Capital."

Baroda bypoll: Cong., BJP trade charges

BJP has no achievements to show: Hooda; Cong. rule akin to darkness: Abhimanyu

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GURUGRAM

Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party leaders on Saturday traded charges over lack of development in a bid to woo the Baroda Assembly constituency voters with just over a week to go for the bypoll.

Launching a full frontal attack on the BJP on his third day of campaign, former two-time Chief Minister and Leader of the Opposition Bhupinder Singh Hooda said the coalition government in

Haryana had no achievements to show after six years in office and was seeking votes through political rhetoric and creating social division.

Addressing gatherings at more than half-a-dozen villages, including Baroda, Mr. Hooda said the BJP's situation was so pitiable that instead of showcasing its work, the party was demanding answers from the Opposition. "Our list of works is long, whereas BJP does not

have a single achievement to show," he said.

"People of Baroda and Haryana know the difference between the two parties as our government worked to empower farmers. The rate of almost every crop was increased 2 to 3 times during the Congress rule. At that time, the Central government had waived debt of ₹2,000 crore of the farmers, while in Haryana, loans of ₹2,200 crore and interest payments of ₹850 crore were

waived off," said Mr. Hooda.

Counter charges

However, former State Finance Minister and senior BJP leader Capt. Abhimanyu said the situation of Baroda during the 10-year Congress rule was similar to the darkness reigning under the foot of the lighthouse. He said Baroda remained untouched by development. He added that Mr. Hooda was directly responsible for it since he never paid attention to this region.

MAHARASHTRA STATE COUNCIL OF EXAMINATIONS				
17, Dr. Ambedkar Road, Pune - 411001.				
Web site: www.mscepune.in E-mail - mscepune@gmail.com Telephone No. 020 - 26123066 / 67				
Out Word NO./MSCE / Store / 20202862 Date: 22/10/2020				
E-tender Notice				
The Following E-Tenders for the year 2020-2022 are being invited registered organization.				
Sr. No.	Description of Work	Approximate Cost of Work	EMD Amount	Tender Form Fee
1	E-tender for Computer Typing Exam Services and work GCC-TBC	Rs.20.00 crores	Rs.20.00 Lakh	Rs.40.00 Thousand
Tender Related Process -				
Sr. No.	Description	Date	Time	
1	Preparation and submission of E-tender	26/10/2020 to 17/11/2020	26/10/2020 From 11.00 am to 17/11/2020 5.00 pm.	
2	Pre Bid Of Meeting	06/11/2020	11.00 am.	
3	Opening of Technical tender	24/11/2020	11.00 am or as per convenience of MSCE	
Note: 1. All Vendors are hereby informed that all the required information should be filled / submitted online & have to deposit EMD amount and Tender Fees through online payment on the website : https://mahatenders.gov.in 2. The MSCE Pune reserve the rights for the partial / complete acceptance or rejection of the tender response. 3. When uploading the require documents in the tender context should be readable.				
Sd/- (Tukaram Supe) Commissioner, Maharashtra State Council Of Examination, Pune - 411001.				

DGIPR - 2020/2021/1014

Government of Jammu & Kashmir						
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINE (R&B) DIVISION KULGAM						
NOTICE INVITING TENDERS						
TWO COVER SYSTEM						
Fresh NIT No.- 92 of R&B Kulgam/2020-21 E-tendering/5550-80 Dated:- 19-10-2020						
For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor, J&K e-tenders are invited on item rate basis/%age basis(as the case may be) from approved and eligible Contractors registered with J&K State Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for each of the following works:-						
S. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (Rs.In lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (Rs. In Lacs)	Earnest Money Bid Security (Rs. In Lacs)	Time of completion	Class of Contractor
1	Upgradation of Oudura Gopalpora road via Begam by way of Earth work cutting/Kucha Drain/Agg. Length 1.00km),felling of trees/Providing / Laying of Nallal muck (RBm) agg.Length 4.50Km,Providing / laying of RCC pipes (309.75 RM), Construction of 1x10mtr span bridge, Construction of (06 No) 1x2 Mtr span culverts and Providing/Laying of WBMG-II (Agg.Length 4.50KM)	218.06 lacs	0.055 Lacs	4.3612 Lacs	90 Days 11-11-2020 at 11.00 AM	"Super AAY class / Aay class and Aay class with HMPO"
Major Head of Account Position of AAA/Funds = NABARD-RIDF-XXVI Accorded/Project Approved/Sanctioned.						
1.	Date of Issue of Tender Notice	19-10-2020				
2.	Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 21-10-2020,11.00 A.M 23-09-2020, 4.00 P.M				
3.	Date, Time and place of pre-bid meeting	27-10-2020 at 11.00 A.M in the Office of the Superintending Engineer (R&B) Circle Ang/Kulgam.				
4.	Bid submission Start Date	28-10-2020 from 10.00 Am				
5.	Bid Submission End Date	09-11-2020 upto 4.00 PM				
6.	Date & time of opening of Technical Bids (Online)	11-11-2020 at 11.00 A.M in the office of the Superintending Engineer (R&B) Circle Ang / Kulgam.				
7.	Date & time of opening of Financial Bids (Online)	To be notified after technical bid evaluation is completed				
Note:- Cost of Bidding Document to be fixed by the tender inviting authority. 1. Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of Treasury Receipt/Challan in favour of Executive Engineer & R&B Division Kulgam,Earnest money /Bid security in shape of CDR/FR/BG pledged to Superintending Engineer (R&B) Circle Anantnag/Kulgam HQ Khanabat Payable at Anantnag.The Bank Guarantee shall be valid for 45 days beyond bid validity. 2. Bidders can resubmit/withdraw the bids as specified. 3. The date and time of opening of Financial-Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.jktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail address. The Financial-bids of Responsive Bidders shall be opened online in the Office of Superintending Engineer (R&B) Circle Anantnag/Kulgam HQ Khanabat .The date for same shall be intimated separately. 4. The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of Technical bids. 5. All key construction material (i.e. cement, steel, bitumen, pipes etc) shall have to be arranged by the contractor strictly as per specifications with the approval of Engineer-in-charge. 6. Qualification criteria for the work and other terms and conditions are contained in the bidding document available on website No.: 5581-83, Dated: 19-11-2020 DIPK-7897/20						

NOTICE FOR APPOINTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE CONSULTANT

Online applications in the prescribed format are invited from eligible Indian Nationals for the post of:-

- 1. Senior Scientific / Technical Officer
- 2. Senior SAS Officer
- 3. SAS Officer
- 4. Scientific / Technical officer
- 5. Assistant Librarian
- 6. Executive Engineer (Civil)
- 7. Technical Assistant
- 8. Junior Engineer (Civil & Electrical)
- 9. Pharmacist
- 10. SAS Assistant
- 11. Junior Assistant
- 12. Stenographer.

Details of Posts, Qualification, Experience ,Pay, Application form etc, are available on the Institute Website: www.nitsri.ac.in. The link for online submission of application forms will be available on 27/10/2020 & the last date for submission of online application shall be 30/11/2020.

Sd/-
Registrar
No. NIT/R/20/432 (I-V)
Dated: 23.10.2020

REQUIRES

Indian Council of World Affairs (ICWA) inviting tender for selection of agency to provide **Virtual Meeting / Conference / Seminar platform to organize the Council's online events such as webinars / meeting.**

For details login <https://www.icwa.in/>

Participate into Bid log on <https://eprocure.gov.in/eprocure/app>

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

OBITUARY



Shri C.H. Ragothaman

89 years, Former A.H.M.,

Suburban High School, Coimbatore.

Beloved Father, Grandfather and

Teacher reached Hari Paada

on 24-10-2020.

Fondly remembered by

Srinivas, Jayabal, Padmavathi and

Satyabama and Families.

Contact: +919790191680,

+919003830804.

DEATH

FROM PAGE ONE

Farooq Abdullah to lead Gupkar alliance

Mr. Abdullah alleged that the BJP has tried to break the federal structure through acts like the abrogation of Article 370 and dividing Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories. "They have tried to destroy the Constitution of the country, they have tried to divide the nation, to break the federal structure which we saw what they did on August 5 last year," he said.

'Divisive tactic'
Stating that the BJP was doing propaganda against the constituents of the PAGD in Jammu and elsewhere in the country, the NC leader said, "They are trying to divide us (people of Jammu Kashmir and Ladakh) in the name of religion. This attempt will not succeed. This is not a religious battle; this is a fight for our identity, and for that identity, we are standing together," he said.

The amalgam, which met for the first time after its formation, will come out with a white paper within one month on governance in Jammu and Kashmir over the past one year, Mr. Lone told reporters after the

meeting. The amalgam decided to hold its next meeting after a fortnight in Jammu, followed by a convention in Srinagar on November 17.

As a mark of defiance to the constitutional changes made by the Centre with respect to Jammu and Kashmir last year, the alliance adopted the flag of the erstwhile State as its symbol.

While the Communist Party of India's Kashmir head A.R. Trukroo joined the PAGD, Jammu and Kashmir Pradesh Congress Committee has quietly distanced itself from the alliance.

JKPCC chief Ghulam Ahmad Mir, who was part of the meetings that took place before the formalisation of PAGD earlier this month, has skipped the last two meetings. The JKPCC had said after the previous meeting that Mir could not attend due to the advice of doctors.

Reacting to the announcements, J&K BJP chief Ravinder Raina said, "Conspiracies of the Gupkar Gang" would not be tolerated and anyone challenging the unity and integrity of the country would be jailed.

Deadline for filing I-T returns extended

Several chartered accountants bodies had been urging the government to extend the returns filing timelines this year in view of the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic that led to a national lockdown starting March 24. The government had earlier extended the deadline from July 31 to November 30.

The deadline for businesses to file annual Goods and Services Tax returns and reconciliation statements for the financial year 2018-19, has also been extended from October 31 to December 31, 2020.

The government said it had received a number of pleas for the extension in view of the pandemic and lockdown, and the GST Council had also recommended that taxpayers be given more time to comply.

"Further, in order to provide relief to small and middle class taxpayers...the due date for payment of self-assessment tax for the tax-

payers whose self-assessment tax liability is up to ₹1 lakh had been extended to November 30, 2020," the Central Board of Direct Taxes said in a statement on Saturday, adding that these deadlines had been extended again "to provide relief for the second time to small and middle class taxpayers". The due date for payment of self-assessment tax for these taxpayers has now been extended to January 31, 2021 for those who need to furnish audited accounts or report specified transactions.

For the rest, the deadline has been extended to December 31, 2020.

Consequently, the date for furnishing of various audit reports under the Income Tax Act, including tax audit report and report in respect of international/specified domestic transaction, has also been extended to December 31, 2020 from the earlier extended deadline of October 31, 2020.

Loan interest waiver to be credited by Nov. 5

The scheme would have ensured that borrowers with loans of up to ₹2 crore won't have to bear compound interest on the interest dues accruing on their loans during the moratorium period.

The top court, which had been hearing petitions seeking an extension of the six-month moratorium granted by the RBI on loan repayments, had given the Centre time till November 2 and said "the common man's Divali is now in the government's hands".

In view of the unprecedented and extreme COVID-19 situation, the object of the scheme is to provide ex-gratia payment of difference between compound interest and simple interest by ways of relief for the period from March 1, 2020 to August 31, 2020, to borrowers in specified loan accounts," the Finance Ministry said in its communiqué laying out the scheme's contours. The scheme shall be applicable for loans availed by MSMEs as well as loans to retail customers for education, housing, consumer durables, automobiles, provided an individual borrower has an aggregate outstanding loan of ₹2 crore or less, from all such loans. Credit card dues have also been included in the scheme's ambit.

The ex-gratia payment

shall be admissible, irrespective of whether the borrower had availed the moratorium partly, fully, or not at all, the Ministry said.

However, this would only be permitted for loan accounts that had not been reported as non-performing assets as on February 29. A loan is recorded as a non-performing asset or NPA, 90 days after repayments become overdue.

A mechanism has been put in place for banks to claim the amount back from the government, as per the missive sent on Friday to the RBI, the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and all other financing institutions. Lenders have to submit claims for reimbursement by December 15 through a special cell set up in the State Bank of India (SBI).

Lenders have been asked to set up a grievance redressal mechanism for eligible borrowers under the scheme within a week, keeping in mind the guidance issued by the Indian Banks' Association regarding the resolution framework for COVID-19 related stress. For resolving grievances of the lenders while implementing the scheme, the dedicated cell for the scheme in the SBI will work in tandem with the Finance Ministry.

Kerala's move to bar CBI draws flak

It is an attempt to cover up recent crimes and protect CPI(M) leaders, say BJP and Congress

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala government wanted to fend off the CBI to cover up high-level corruption and save top leaders of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) from being investigated for recurrent political murders in north Kerala

V. MURALIDHARAN,
UNION MINISTER OF STATE FOR EXTERNAL AFFAIRS



Front (LDF) would oppose the move to ban the CBI. The LDF wanted to conceal its corruption and other crimes, including "playing second fiddle to gold smugglers treasonously", he said.

'Centre using CBI'

Communist Party of India State secretary Kanam Rajendran said Mr. Muralidharan seemed to imply that the BJP owned the CBI. He said the Central government had without compunction used the CBI to destabilise non-BJP ruled States, and Kerala was no exception.

The Left Democratic Front (LDF) was aware of the plot to use the central law enforcement agency to discredit the government in the election year. The CPI had on October 23 requested the LDF to recommend to the govern-

ment to withdraw the free rein accorded to the CBI under the provisions of the Delhi Special Police Establishment (DSPE) Act. The law clearly states that law and order and crime investigation are State subjects.

The CPI(M) on Friday formally requested the government to explore legal options to curb the CBI from acting on its own volition in Kerala. The CBI could probe local cases or chargesheet suspects only with the permission of the State administration.

The agency cannot act on its own accord even in cases involving scheduled offences. The CBI does not require the consent of the State government only in investigations ordered by the Supreme Court or the High Court, the party felt.

IN BRIEF



Navaratri Brahmotsavams at Tirumala concludes

TRIRUMALA
The nine-day Navaratri Brahmotsavams of Lord Venkateswara here came to an end with Chakrasnanam on Saturday. The idol of Lord Chakrathalwar was dipped in a makeshift water tank near Ayina Mahal inside the main temple amid chanting of hymns by Vedic scholars. The final ceremony was observed in strict adherence with COVID-19 protocols. TTD Executive Officer K.S. Jawahar Reddy expressed satisfaction over the successful conduct of the annual fete.

Jagan orders release of dearness allowance

VIJAYAWADA
Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has sanctioned the release of pending Dearness Allowance (DA) and Dearness Relief (DR) to government employees and pensioners. Over 4 lakh staff and 3.5 lakh pensioners will benefit. The first pending DA/DR due from July 2018 will be paid along with January 2021 salaries/pensions. The second pending DA/DR due from January 2019 will be paid with July 2021 wage/pensions.

Railways to introduce rent-a-bike in Kerala

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
The Railways will introduce the 'rent-a-bike' facility in 15 key railway stations under the Thiruvananthapuram railway division to ensure last mile connectivity and seamless travel to train commuters. The commuters, especially office-goers and students, can submit digital copies of their driving licence and address to hire the bikes from these designated railway stations. A helmet will be supplied along with the motorcycle.

GITAM varsity campus in A.P. partially demolished

The institution occupied about 40 acres of government land

SUMIT BHATTACHARJEE
VISAKHAPATNAM



Razed down: A compound wall of GITAM University being demolished in Visakhapatnam on Saturday. ■K.R. DEEPAK

Speaking to the media at the demolished site, RDO Kishore Kumar said the land was occupied both by GITAM Institute of Medical Sciences and Research and GITAM deemed to be Univer-

sity. He pointed out that about 18 acres had been occupied under various survey numbers of Yendada and 20 acres under Rushikonda.

The spokesperson of the private university claimed no notices were served.

GITAM president M. Sribharat said the demolition was in gross violation of basic rules as it was done in the early hours and on a holiday.

Central team to study flood damage in A.P.

It will submit report in a week

STAFF REPORTER
VIJAYAWADA

The Disaster Management Division of the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) is immediately dispatching an Inter-Ministerial Central Team to assess the damage caused by the recent floods and relief operations conducted in Andhra Pradesh.

A communication to this effect was sent to the State Commissioner for Disaster Management K. Kanna Babu.

The Central team will be led by MHA Joint Secretary Rakesh Kumar Singh and

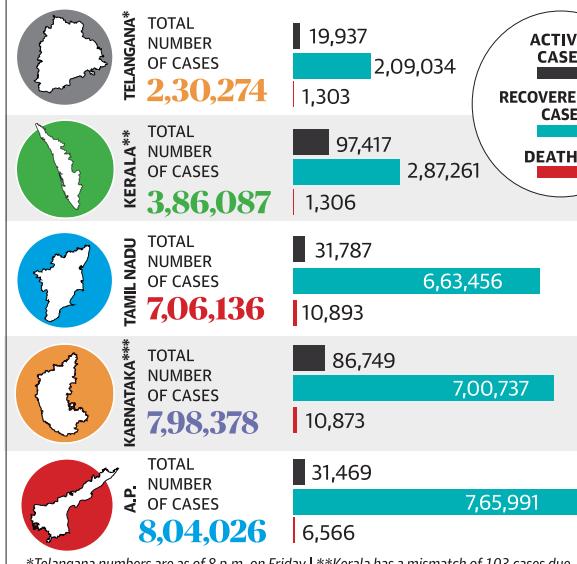
consists of representatives of Ministries/Departments of Agriculture, Finance, Jal Shakti, Power, Road Transport & Highways and Rural Development.

Additional funds
The team will make an on-the-spot detailed assessment of the situation that arose from floods, and make recommendations for allocation of additional funds in the wake of the floods. The MHA instructed the team to submit its report within a week of its return and after making a final assessment.

Kerala leads in south with 8,253 cases

Test positivity rate down, but contrasts with declines reported by Karnataka, A.P.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM



cases, returning to early August levels. The test positivity rate for the day was 3.97%. There were 52 fresh deaths.

Bengaluru Urban reported 2,251 cases and 26 deaths.

As many as 1,12,545 tests were conducted in the State including 90,564 rapid antigen tests over a 24-hour period.

Exactly after four months, the daily COVID-19 count dropped below 3,000 in Tamil Nadu on Saturday. A total of 2,886 persons tested positive for the infection, pushing the State's tally of cases to 7,06,136.

Of the 35 fatalities in the State, three died in Chennai. As many as 4,024 persons were discharged after treatment in the State. Till date, a total of 6,63,456 persons were discharged. With this, a total of 31,787 persons were under treatment across the State.

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

Norms for last glimpse of the dead

Kin cannot gather to see the body

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala Health department has issued guidelines which will allow the family members of a person who has died of COVID-19 to have a last look at the person's face, while following all protocols for handling the body.

Accordingly, while observing all safety protocols, the healthcare personnel handling the body will untie the body bag just enough so that family members can have a last look at the face of the deceased.

The standard operating procedures and guidelines for handling the bodies of COVID-19 patients have been issued by the local self-government bodies. The family members can

not gather to see the body or for conducting funeral as there are safety issues involved, the Health department said.

All family members will have to keep distance when religious rites are performed, and none should be allowed to hug or kiss the body.

Burial process

The officials of the Health department will direct the burial process.

Hospital employees have been trained to handle the bodies safely without the risk of contamination, while taking all safety precautions themselves.

Those who participate in the last rites should remain under observation at home as per the directives of the department.

Mysuru policeman earns praise for helping orphaned sisters

FB video moves ASI of H.D. Kote taluk to support them

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MYSURU

An assistant sub-inspector of Police (ASI) has earned the admiration of residents of Shiramahalli village in H.D. Kote taluk after he turned guardian angel to two orphaned sisters.

The mechanism has been put in place for banks to claim the amount back from the government, as per the missive sent on Friday to the RBI, the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) and all other financing institutions. Lenders have to submit claims for reimbursement by December 15 through a special cell set up in the State Bank of India (SBI).

Lenders have been asked to set up a grievance redressal mechanism for eligible borrowers under the scheme within a week, keeping in mind the guidance issued by the Indian Banks' Association regarding the resolution framework for COVID-19 related stress. For resolving grievances of the lenders while implementing the scheme, the dedicated cell for the scheme in the SBI will work in tandem with the Finance Ministry.

He immediately arranged for rations and groceries. His wife Chandrika joined him in taking the girls to H.D. Kote town in his car to purchase clothes and other utensils for them.

College admission

He has also facilitated the elder girl's admission to the PUC College in H.D. Kote town while the younger one will continue with her high school education in the same village.

Mr. Doreswamy also got their dilapidated house reconstructed with a new compound wall and concrete reinforcements. He spent ₹3 lakh from his own pocket.

Their survival depended

KTU cancels examination, to probe question paper leak

Students banked on COVID-19 keeping invigilators away

STAFF REPORTER
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Students of five engineering colleges in Kerala were found to have smuggled in mobile phones into the exam hall and shared the question papers of an engineering examination on Friday.

The question papers of the third semester supplementary examination on 'Linear Algebra and Complex Analysis' were circulated by the students. As photos of the papers found their way to WhatsApp groups, answers were soon posted in response.

The APJ Abdul Kalam Technological University (KTU) has decided to cancel the examination and order

an enquiry into the malpractice.

According to official sources, the students caught indulging in the malpractice apparently sought to capitalise on the fear of novel coronavirus infection and banked on invigilators not coming close enough to detect the use of mobile phones.

However, the vigilant teachers sensed something amiss and seized the mobile phones and other evidence from the students.

Bihar result crucial to Congress revival

Leadership issue hinges on poll tally

SANDEEP PHUKAN
NEW DELHI

The Congress may be the junior partner in the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD)-led alliance in Bihar but its performance in the Hindi heartland State could play an important role in the party's revival plan.

Amid a renewed call for Rahul Gandhi to take over as the Congress chief once again, the election could well be a litmus test for Mr. Gandhi, the principal campaigner for his party.

It could also set the tone for the party's campaign for the next round of Assembly elections, expected around April-May next year, in crucial States such as West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Assam and the Union Territory of Puducherry.

"These elections come at a time of churn within the Congress. The party plans to have a full-time president next year and if it does well and improves on its previous tally, Mr. Gandhi may become the natural unanimous choice. But if that's not the case, then there will be challenge as senior leaders had recently written about the leadership question," said Professor Sri Prakash Singh, Department of Politics, Delhi University.

Good show in 2015
In the 2015 Assembly election, the Congress had its best performance in nearly two decades. Of the 41 seats



Rahul Gandhi

Choudhury, switched sides when JD(U) leader Nitish Kumar joined the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) by parting ways with the RJD and the Congress.

Dependent on alliance
"The party at the State level as well as the central level only relies on alliances. Congress workers mostly carry on with routine political activity and become visible only during the elections," said K.K. Jha, a member of the All India Congress Committee (AICC) from Bihar.

"There were so many issues. From 15 years of anti-incumbency to the collapse of the health and education systems, the Congress should have emerged as the main voice of the people. Nearly 200 children died from encephalitis in Muzaffarpur but we could not hold the government accountable. Since it has become a habit of sorts to depend on alliances, our State leaders failed to raise issues strongly," Mr. Jha added.

No voter base
In this election, of the 243 Assembly seats, the Congress has fielded candidates in 70 constituencies. But the party can hardly boast of a strong organisation on the ground or winnable candidates. "While the RJD has its Yadav and Muslim voter base intact, the Congress does not have a voter base or an organisation on the ground. And they have also not been able to reach out to any particular group such as the Brahmins and the Dalits, who used to be their traditional voters," Professor Singh said.

But far from it, the then Bihar Congress chief, Ashok Singh said.

NEWS ANALYSIS

it contested as part of the grand alliance between the RJD and Nitish Kumar's Janata Dal (United) [JD-U], the party won 27 seats.

The unexpected results were meant to be a trigger to revive the party in the Hindi heartland where it had lost out to leaders such as Lalu Yadav, Nitish Kumar and Ram Vilas Paswan – all products of JP [Jayaprakash Narayan] movement – and their brand of politics aimed at social re-engineering.

In the 2015 Assembly election, the Congress had its best performance in nearly two decades. Of the 41 seats

IN BRIEF



Fadnavis tests positive for COVID-19

MUMBAI Leader of Opposition in the Maharashtra Assembly Devendra Fadnavis said on Saturday that he had tested positive for COVID-19. The BJP leader was admitted to a government-run hospital in the city and his condition was stable, a party source said. Mr. Fadnavis himself took to Twitter earlier in the day to announce the diagnosis. After returning to Mumbai on Friday evening, Mr. Fadnavis got himself tested as some of the BJP leaders, who had travelled with him during the Bihar poll campaign, had tested positive for coronavirus, a party source said. PTI

Baghel links farm laws to rise in onion prices

NEW DELHI Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Saturday said that the newly passed farm laws not only against farmers but also against consumers, and linked them to the spurt in onion prices. Addressing a press conference in Patna while campaigning for the Congress candidates, he said that by amending the Essential Commodities Act, the Centre had now allowed hoarding by traders. A State government could act only in the event of a war, drought or a 100% increase in prices. "This is a law for capitalists... It's not even two months since the law was passed but the consumer can already see its impact. Onions that were selling at ₹30-40 a kg is now selling for ₹70-80," Mr. Baghel said.

RJD manifesto reiterates promise of 10 lakh jobs

Party says it will give priority to agriculture, industry and education

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PATNA

The Rashtriya Janata Dal, which heads the Opposition Grand Alliance (*Mahagathbandhan*) in the Bihar election, released its poll manifesto on Saturday, in which it reiterated its promise of 10 lakh jobs and loan waiver for farmers.

The manifesto was released by Tejashwi Yadav at a press conference at the party office here.

The cover page of the manifesto displays photographs of Mahatma Gandhi, B.R. Ambedkar, Abul Kalam Azad, Ram Manohar Lohia, Karpoori Thakur and Lokayak Jayaprakash Narayan,

among others, but it does not have a photo of the party's founder and its charismatic leader, Lalu Prasad.

Mr. Tejashwi Yadav's photo finds a prominent space on the cover page.

There is a message from Mr. Prasad in the document, in which he highlights how his party's government fought a battle in the past to ensure social justice for the downtrodden and brought Bihar back on the path of development.

Mr. Prasad, who is in jail in Ranchi after his conviction in four multi-crore rupees fodder scam cases, has also made a scathing attack on the NDA government in the



Poll assurance: RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav with party MP Manoj Jha releasing the manifesto 'Prann Hamara' in Patna. ■ PTI

State. "There are no jobs, atrocities against women have increased and happiness is missing from the face of farmers," the message

says.

While emphasising on its future plans for the State if voted to power, the RJD vision document also hit out at

the BJP for trying to "fool the people" by announcing 19 lakh jobs in the State. "Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has been raising doubts about our promise of providing 10 lakh jobs, so how will his future government fulfil ally BJP's declaration of 19 lakh jobs?" Mr. Yadav said.

The RJD announced that it would give priority to agriculture, industry and education if voted to power.

Source of finance

Replying to Mr. Kumar's queries about the source of finance for the 10 lakh jobs, Mr. Yadav said the State's annual budget is of ₹2.5 lakh crore "out of which his [Mr. Kumar's] government is able to spend only 60%. The remaining of around ₹80,000

crore can be utilised by a competent government for people's welfare".

The manifesto stressed on increasing income of farmers and waiving KCC (Kisan Credit Card) loan taken by cultivators till 2020. It also vowed to purchase grains from the farmers at an enhanced Minimum Support Price that would include bonus.

In the field of education, it promised to fill vacancies of teachers in schools on a war footing. It declared that the party-headed future government would increase budget on education to 22% of the total budget.

Mr. Yadav said they would promote investment in the State for setting up industries so that people were not forced to migrate outside.

INTERVIEW | ASHWANI KUMAR

'Millennial politicians are determined to take over the reins'

The 2020 Assembly poll will be the last for the older generation of socialist leaders in Bihar, says TISS political scientist

NISTULA HEBBAR

Professor Ashwani Kumar, political scientist at the Tata Institute of Social Sciences, speaks on why the upcoming Assembly poll in Bihar is different from those in the past 45 years and heralds a new epoch in State politics:

The Bihar polls were considered a slam dunk but a spirited campaign and clever positioning by Tejashwi Yadav and Chirag Paswan seem to have made the contest interesting. Your take?

■ The Bihar Assembly election promises to be historic in many ways. Whatever be the outcome of the election, the ageing political patriarchs from the days of Total Revolution (*Sampurna Kranti*) are set to fade into history; it is the last election with regard to those who came up during the Emergency and Mandal.

If the 2005 election was about Rashtriya Janata Dal's (RJD) misrule, 2010 was a victory of Nitish Kumar's 'vikas', and 2015 resonated with the return of Mandal titans, Lalu Yadav and Nitish Kumar, in 'Naya Bihar'. The Assembly election of 2020 will be the last poll of the ol-

der generation of socialist leaders in Bihar.

With Lalu Yadav in absentia, Ram Vilas Paswan deceased and the ageing Nitish Kumar facing the toughest political challenge of his life, Bihar is on the cusp of an improbable youth insurgency. Refusing to play the secondary role in the making of a new Bihar, the starry-eyed upwardly mobile millennial politicians Tejashwi Yadav, 30; Chirag Paswan, 37; Mukesh Sahani, 35; Shreyasi Singh, 29; Garib Das, 26; Pushpam Priya Choudhary, 28; Sandeep Saurabh, 32, and many others, including fire-brand student leader Kanhaiya Kumar, are determined to take over the reins in a post-clientelistic Bihar.

Also, there is something novel here – these millennial young politicos or their cohorts belonging to subaltern groups point to further democratisation of politics, as a new youth elite has emerged

through the resilient post-Mandal politics in Bihar.

Many of whom you have named are political dynasts and inheiritors, so what is new in this youthful politics?

■ Unlike their famous fathers, who inherited the legacies of caste, rural and feudal experiences, these neo-dynasts are savvy with social media, electoral rhetoric and also conjure up an image of aspirational India. Demographically speaking, Bihar is a State with 80 million (65%) youth population, and it is home to a large proportion (58%) of youth below the age of 25. This demographic reality is reflected in the electorate, as there are as many as 56% voters in Bihar in the 18-40 age group among the 7.6 crore voters in Bihar.

In other words, Bihar's politics stands transformed by millennials and their generational cohorts. The four north Indian States of Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh have seen median ages fall, while the south is greying; this will

have an impact and is having one within the established political parties too.

How is the leadership within parties changing in Bihar?

■ This unexpected youth insurgency has impacted all political parties and has initiated what is termed as a "demographic electoral shift in leadership". Older-generation BJP leaders such as Sushil Modi, Ravi Shankar Prasad, Ashwini Kumar Choubey, Nand Kishore Yadav, Giriraj Singh are pitted against the rising new-generation stars such as Nitayananand

Rai. Likewise, veteran Congress party leaders such as Sadananda Singh, Madan Mohan Jha, Aditya Singh have handed over their pocket borough to the next generation sons and daughters.

Schooled in the old grammar of patronage and caste, Upendra Kushwaha of Rashtriya Samata Party (RSP) and Pappu Yadav of Jan Adhikar Party (JAP) are also facing the heat of gravitational force of rising youth. Interestingly, the older generation of *babubali* politicians such as Anant Singh, Sunil Pandey, Surendra Yadav continue to be in the electoral fray, but Anand Mohan Singh's 29-year-old son Chetan Anand is contesting Shivihar seat on RJD ticket, signalling a generational shift even in the mafioso politics in Bihar.

That sounds like a regular generational shift that's happened in the past, how is it different from others?

■ Strauss and Howe, the demographers who coined the term 'millennial', have identified some core traits of them. Millennials, including

BJP questions 'silence' of Cong. leaders over Punjab rape

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman accuses the party of showing 'selective outrage' in cases of crimes against women

IN BRIEF



Fadnavis tests positive for COVID-19

MUMBAI Leader of Opposition in the Maharashtra Assembly Devendra Fadnavis said on Saturday that he had tested positive for COVID-19. The BJP leader was admitted to a government-run hospital in the city and his condition was stable, a party source said. Mr. Fadnavis himself took to Twitter earlier in the day to announce the diagnosis. After returning to Mumbai on Friday evening, Mr. Fadnavis got himself tested as some of the BJP leaders, who had travelled with him during the Bihar poll campaign, had tested positive for coronavirus, a party source said. PTI

Baghel links farm laws to rise in onion prices

NEW DELHI Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Saturday said that the newly passed farm laws not only against farmers but also against consumers, and linked them to the spurt in onion prices. Addressing a press conference in Patna while campaigning for the Congress candidates, he said that by amending the Essential Commodities Act, the Centre had now allowed hoarding by traders. A State government could act only in the event of a war, drought or a 100% increase in prices. "This is a law for capitalists... It's not even two months since the law was passed but the consumer can already see its impact. Onions that were selling at ₹30-40 a kg is now selling for ₹70-80," Mr. Baghel said.

Amarinder dismisses BJP's criticism as 'political puffery'

Our police promptly arrested the accused, says Punjab CM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Saturday dismissed the attack by BJP leaders on his government over the Hoshiarpur rape and murder case, terming the remarks of Union Ministers Nirmala Sitharaman and Prakash Javadekar as "political puffery".

"Contrary to what these leaders were claiming, there is no comparison between the Hoshiarpur and Hathras cases," Capt. Amarinder said, pointing out that in the latter instance, the Uttar Pradesh government and the police had not only failed to initiate stern action but also allegedly tried to cover up the matter to benefit the upper-caste accused. This, he said, was in sharp contrast to the prompt action taken

against the RJD brothers", a reference to him and his elder brother Tej Pratap.

"It [the Punjab incident] may not hurt the RJD because that is how things were when they were in power," Ms. Sitharaman said adding that the RJD presided over "Jungle Raj" during its rule between 1990-2005.

Hitting out at the Congress, she said, "The pretentious Congress has not said a word. The tweet-friendly Ra-

hul Gandhi has not tweeted on the Hoshiarpur incident. There has been no outrage. And no picnic either."

Her "picnic" jibe was in reference to Mr. Gandhi and Ms. Gandhi's visit to Hathras in BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh following the alleged gang-rape of a Dalit girl, who died in a Delhi hospital subsequently.

The Congress party should stand up and answer.

Does this kind of selective

outrage suit the stature of their party? Why is the brother-sister pair not going and voicing horror in Hoshiarpur?

Why not in Rajasthan? The selective cry of outrage that the Congress wants to show when it is elsewhere but not in States governed by it is completely exposed," Ms. Sitharaman said.

Stating that crimes like rape should not be politicised, Ms. Sitharaman said certain political parties are selective in voicing horror. The six-year-old girl was allegedly raped, killed and then set on fire, with her half-burnt body found at a home in Tanda's Jalalpur village, the police said on Thursday.

The accused – Gurpreet Singh and his grandfather Surjit Singh – have been arrested on the charges of murder, rape and under other Sections of the IPC and POCSO Act.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Former Congress President Rahul Gandhi on Saturday hit back at the BJP over its "selective outrage" charge related to the rape of a minor at Hoshiarpur in Congress-ruled Punjab, and asserted that, unlike the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh, the Congress government has not denied the incident or threatened the family of the victim.

Mr. Gandhi, in a tweet, said he would go to "fight for justice" in these States as well, if they blocked justice.

"Unlike in UP, the governments of Punjab and Rajasthan are NOT denying that the girl was raped, threatening her family and blocking the course of justice. If they do, I will go there to fight for justice," Mr. Gandhi said on

At a press conference, Ma-

hila Congress president Sushmita Dev accused the BJP of "playing politics" over the Hoshiarpur incident because of the Bihar poll and targeted Ms. Sitharaman and her colleagues Prakash Javadekar and Harsh Vardhan for questioning the Hathras visit of the Congress leaders.

"I hope that Nirmala Sitharamanji will stop displaying insensitivity to such a sensitive issue," said Ms. Sitharaman.

Twitter with the hashtag #Hathras.

Earlier, in the day, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had targeted Mr. Gandhi, and his sister and Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, for "selective outrage" over rape, and their silence over the gruesome incident in Punjab. Ms. Sitharaman had also accused the Congress leaders of visiting the Hathras rape and murder victim's family as if they were going to a "picnic".

At a press conference, Ma-

hila Congress president Sushmita Dev accused the BJP of "playing politics" over the Hoshiarpur incident because of the Bihar poll and targeted Ms. Sitharaman and her colleagues Prakash Javadekar and Harsh Vardhan for questioning the Hathras visit of the

PM inaugurates three Gujarat projects

Scheme for electricity to farmers for irrigation, Girnar ropeway and paediatric heart hospital launched

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

AHMEDABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday inaugurated three projects in his home State of Gujarat – one each related to farmers' welfare, healthcare, and tourism development – via video-conferencing from New Delhi.

Mr. Modi launched the 'Kisan Suryodaya Yojana' aimed at providing day-time electricity to farmers in the State for irrigation and farming. The second project he inaugurated was a paediatric heart hospital at the U.N. Mehta Institute of Cardiology and Research Centre in Ahmedabad, developed with an investment of ₹470 crore by the State's Health Department.

The third project launched was a 2.3-km-long ropeway project on Mount



Ease of travel: The Girnar ropeway in Gujarat spans 2.3 km and has 25 cabins. ■ ANI

Girnar in Junagadh city, a major pilgrimage site. The ropeway project is being touted as the longest temple ropeway in Asia. The ropeway has been developed by Usha Breco Limited at an investment of ₹130 crore.

In his address on the occasion, Mr. Modi said, "The world-class ropeway will make it convenient for more people to visit Girnar. Earlier, it used to take five-seven hours to climb Girnar, but now it will take only seven-

eight minutes. More devotees and tourists will visit Girnar. It will give a boost to adventure activities. I am also happy that the project will create more employment opportunities for local youth."

The Girnar ropeway is a

state-of-the-art passenger ropeway comprising 25 cabins, including one glass-floored cabin, each having the capacity to carry eight passengers at a time. It can ferry 800 people in an hour, and 8,000 in a day.

In his online inaugural address, Mr. Modi slammed the Opposition over the delay in completion of the ropeway project. "Had they not created hurdles in [the building of the] Girnar ropeway, it would not have been delayed for so many years. People and tourists should have got the benefit of it a long time back," he said.

On the Kisan Suryodaya scheme, Mr. Modi said, "Farmers should save water and adopt the mantra 'per drop, more crop'." He also stressed on using technology to boost production.

'Carbine deal a benchmark for UAE firms to invest in India'

Arms manufacturer Caracal keen to set up facilities

DINAKAR PERI

NEW DELHI

The deal for 93,895 Close Quarter Carbines (CQBs) for the Indian Army, for which United Arab Emirates (UAE)'s government-owned small arms manufacturer Caracal was shortlisted, is like a "benchmark" for UAE industry and they are watching closely on further investments in the Indian market, said Hamad Salem Alameri, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Caracal in an interview to *The Hindu*.

"Once this first contract moves, a lot of sister companies within the group will see this as a success story and people will have the confidence to come and invest in India," Mr. Alameri



A close quarter carbine

said. However, while Caracal was shortlisted two years back, the final deal has been delayed and recently an in-principle decision was taken in the Defence Ministry to cancel the deal and take the domestic route for procurement. But no formal announcement has been made so far.

"Nothing came to us officially on the cancellation or on the intent of cancellation," Mr. Alameri said.

He said in the last two

years Caracal had developed a lot of suppliers and technology partners and the starting point of indigenisation will be 60%.

Stating that Caracal has already identified four locations to set up the facility and also identified local partners to be able to commence production immediately, Mr. Alameri said India is already part of their global supply chain and over 20% of the components fitted on the CAR 816 are already made in India.

The deals for 72,400 assault rifles and 93,895 carbines were approved by the Defence Acquisition Council in January 2018 to be processed through the fast track route.

Fewer people on Kolkata streets this Durga Puja

Strict safety norms put in place

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court order making Durga Puja pandals "no entry zones", and the awareness generated by the administration in asking people to stay indoors to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, seemed to have worked as there were fewer people on the streets in Kolkata during the peak of Durga Puja festivities.

On October 23, when the State celebrated Saptami, the Kolkata Metro, which is considered the lifeline of transport in the city, ferried about 34,000 passengers. On a usual weekday before the Puja, the North South line of Kolkata Metro typically ferries more than twice the number of passengers. For instance, on October 21, 84,801 commuters had availed the services of the Kolkata Metro.

On Saturday, October 24, the day when Astami is observed till 7 p.m. in the evening, only 24,300 passengers took the metro ride.

Kolkata Metro officials said that there was hardly any crowd in the trains and



The Maidan Metro Station in Kolkata wore a deserted look on Saturday.

on the platforms today. Unlike previous years, the Kolkata Metro has decided not to run special overnight trains to manage the Durga Puja crowd. The last trains are leaving the terminal station at 9 p.m.

There are a number of other factors that led to fewer crowds this Durga Puja, officials said. While people have become aware that crowding could lead to a spike in infections, suburban and local trains are also not plying, which makes it difficult for people from the districts to soak in the festivities in the city.

Recovery rate goes up to 89.78%

The national COVID-19 case tally crosses 78 lakh; 1.18 lakh deaths recorded

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

At least 61% of the total recovered cases from COVID-19 are from six States and Union Territories – Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi, the Union Health Ministry said on Saturday. Around 70,16,046 people have so far recuperated, pushing the national recovery rate to 89.78% on Saturday, it said.

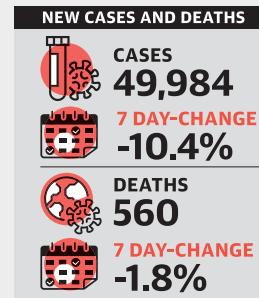
While Maharashtra recorded 20.6% of the total recoveries, 10.9% recovered cases were from Andhra Pradesh, 9.9% from Karnataka, 9.4% from Tamil Nadu, 6.1% from Uttar Pradesh and 4.1% from Delhi, it said.

In a statement, the Health Ministry said the latest recoveries have exceeded the fresh cases in recent days, with 67,549 COVID-19 patients having recovered and been discharged in the last 24 hours.

"A total of 53,370 new confirmed cases were recorded in the last 24 hours. 80% of the new cases are from 10 States and UTs. Kerala is reporting the maximum addition with more than

Viral tracker

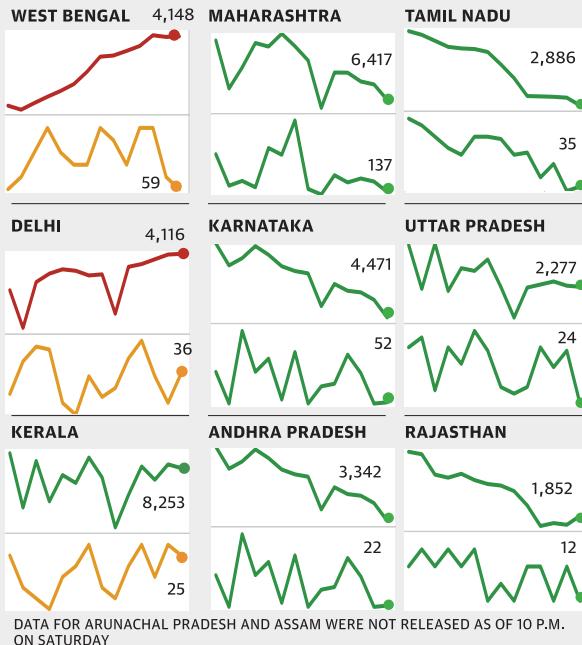
With 49,984 COVID-19 cases recorded on Saturday, India's tally stood at 78,03,602. As many as 560 new deaths were registered, taking the toll to 1,18,584. The graphs depict new cases and deaths in the last 14 days in select States. The States are classified based on where cases/deaths are rising (red), falling (green) or showing a mixed trend (orange).



8,000 cases followed by Maharashtra with more than 7,000 cases," it said.

Death toll

India's COVID-19 tally has climbed to over 78 lakh. The death toll due to the infection is around 1.18 lakh, with the novel coronavirus virus claiming about 600 lives in a



span of 24 hours in the country.

The COVID-19 case fatality rate has further declined to 1.51%. There are 6,80,680 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country which comprise 8.71% of the total caseload, the Ministry added.

The Health Ministry said

more than 70% of the deaths occurred due to comorbidities.

"Our figures are being reconciled with the Indian Council of Medical Research," the Ministry said on its website, adding that State-wise distribution of figures was subject to further verification and reconciliation.

Akhilesh slams Yogi govt.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Saturday slammed the Uttar Pradesh government over the law and order situation, saying injustice, corruption and atrocities have become an identity of the BJP rule.

Mr. Yadav in a statement said rape and crime against women have left families shocked and scared. "Is this the Ram rajya of the BJP?" he asked, alleging a rise in atrocities against Dalits.

sailants barged in. Given the circumstances, all aspects of the case are being minutely investigated, said the officer.

"There are contradictions in the statements given by the family," he said.

The accused, identified as Manish Chaudhary Yadav, Shivpal Yadav and Gaurav Chak, live in the same neighbourhood as the victim, the police said.

Animals spared of sacrifice in pandemic-hit Odisha

13 police platoons deployed in Kalahandi, prohibitory orders imposed to avoid assembling of devotees for Chatar festival

SATYASUNDAR BARIK

BHUBANESWAR

Chatar festival in the Bhawaniptata town of Odisha's Kalahandi district, which is usually marked by the sacrifice of thousands of animals and birds, passed off without much bloodshed on Friday.

Thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Kalahandi



People in their traditional attire dancing at Chhatar Yatra. ■ BISWARANJAN ROUT

ket that did not let devotees kill animals and birds in propitiating Goddess Manikeswari.

Every year, the idol of Goddess Manikeswari is taken to Jena Khal on the outskirts of the town, and after some secret rituals, the deity returns to her abode. The return journey is known as Chhatar Yatra.

Lakhs of devotees from Odisha, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and West Bengal participate in the festival. A three kilometre main thoroughfare, and nearby lanes and by-lanes, turn red with animal blood. On this occasion, almost every family has an animal or bird to sacrifice.

This year, the Orissa High Court had ordered ban on

animal sacrifice. "No person including the State shall be allowed to sacrifice any animal or bird during 'Chatar Yatra' festival on the public road or in and around the precincts of the temple," the Orissa HC had ordered while acting on a public interest litigation.

"God is the creator of the universe. He has created the

human beings, animals, birds and all the species on this earth. The animals and birds breathe like us. They have also a right to live in harmony with human beings and the nature. Like the parents cannot tolerate to see the blood of their children, deity cannot be pleased by sacrificing the animals," it observed.

Outlook bleak for Himalayan brown bears

Study predicts massive habitat decline by year 2050 due to climate change



Rare species: Himalayan brown bears live in remote parts of the western Himalayas. ■ AFP/SNOW LEOPARD FOUNDATION

them will become completely uninhabitable by the year 2050, followed by loss of connectivity in the majority of PAs. Furthermore, simulation suggests a significant qualitative decline in remaining habitats of the species within the protected areas of the landscape in the Himalayan region for the long-term viability of the species".

the lead author of the study. Dr. Sharma said that in such a situation when the protected areas in the majority of PAs, effectively and representativeness, there is a need to adopt "preemptive spatial planning of PAs in the Himalayan region for the long-term viability of the species".

"The suitable habitats were mapped outside the PAs and are closely placed to PAs; such areas may be prioritised to bring them into the PA network or enhanced protection," the paper recommended.

"We have taken the Himalayan brown bear as an example because it is a top carnivore of the high-altitude Himalayan region. The elevation gradient in which the brown bear is distributed is most vulnerable to global warming as this elevation belt is getting warmer faster than other elevation zones of Himalayas," he added.

"Such studies are very crucial as the habitat of such species is highly vulnerable to climate and unless we plan in advance, we cannot sustain its population in future," Kailash Chandra, director of ZSI, said.

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TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS : TIRUPATI TENDER NOTIFICATION

1. NOMENCLATURES OF TENDER: AMC of Digital X-Ray Machines (02 Nos.) Existing in the BIRR Trust Hospital, TTD, Tirupati for the period 2020-21 from the date of entering into contract.

2. TENDER NUMBER: TTD-104021(31)/89/2019-BIRR

3. TYPE OF TENDER: Open Tender

4. TYPE OF CONTRACT: AMC Service

5. E.M.D. AMOUNT: Rs.50,000/- (security deposit for 02 x-ray Machines)

6. TENDER DOCUMENT START DATE: 26-10-2020 - 11.00 a.m.

7. TENDER DOCUMENT END DATE: 17-11-2020 - 11.00 a.m.

8. BID SUBMISSION IN THE TENDER BOX: 17-11-2020 11.00 a.m. to 3.00 p.m. (No bid acceptance after 3.00 p.m. at any cost)

9. TECHNICAL BID OPENING: 17-11-2020 - 03.30 p.m.

10. FINANCIAL BID OPENING: 17-11-2020 soon after evaluation of technical bid i.e. likely to be 4.00 p.m.

11. COST OF THE TENDER DOCUMENT: Rs.500/- in the form of D.D. drawn in favour of the Director, BIRR along with their company authorization letter (Non - refundable).

12. VENUE: Director, BIRR Trust Hospital, TTD, Tirupati (Old Building).

For further details log on to www.tirumala.org/birrtrust.aspx.

Rec.No.PR4/13923/Adv.No.189/PRO/2020; Dated:24-10-2020

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Office of the Principal & Controller, DR. S.N.MEDICAL COLLEGE & ASSOCIATED GROUP OF HOSPITALS, JODHPUR

Shastri Nagar, Residency Road, Jodhpur (Raj). Tel: 0291-2434374
E-mail: principal.drsnmc.jod@rajasthan.gov.in, pmmedg-jod@nic.in
No. F.6/ Store/SMNC/JU/2020-21/2840-45
Dated: 20.10.2020

NOTICE INVITING EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

The Director, JIPMER, Pondicherry invites Expression of Interest on Two-Bid system for Integrated Security surveillance Systems at JIPMER, Pondicherry and Karaikal. Interested agencies are advised to submit the Sealed Expression of Interest (EoI) (i.e. separate technical bid & financial bids) duly completed in all respect on or before 16-11-2020 upto 1300 hrs.

For downloading full text of the EoI and other terms and conditions, please visit www.jipmer.edu.in/tender. DEPUTY DIRECTOR (ADMN.), JIPMER

OFFICE OF THE PRINCIPAL & CONTROLLER, DR. S.N.MEDICAL COLLEGE & ASSOCIATED GROUP OF HOSPITALS, JODHPUR

Shastri Nagar, Residency Road, Jodhpur (Raj). Tel: 0291-2434374
E-mail: principal.drsnmc.jod@rajasthan.gov.in, pmmedg-jod@nic.in
No. F.6/ Store/SMNC/JU/2020-21/D-816
Dated: 24/10/2020

NIT No. 10/2020-21

On behalf of Hon'ble Governor of Rajasthan, Public Works Department, Rajasthan (India) invites Request for Expression of Interest (REoI) in specified format from interested Consultants for Authority Engineer's Services for development and up-gradation of Khod- Dataramgarh-Renwal Highway (SH-08A) Length 51.04 Km, Manglana- Makrana- Borawad Highway (SH-2B) Length 15.50 Km including Makrana - Bidayad- Patbarsat Highway (SH-2D) Length 22.50 Km and Hurda- Banera Highway (SH- 39A) Length 53.0 Km (Package No. WB/RSHDP-II/EPC/04) under RSHDP-II proposed to be financed by the World Bank on Engineering, Procurement and Construction (EPC) Contract mode, for short listing of eligible Consultants. The REoI documents can be viewed or / and downloaded from website: <http://pproj.rajasthan.gov.in> and <http://pproj.rajasthan.gov.in> from 26.10.2020. Any further amendments to the REoI documents shall only be made available on above websites as such prospective Consultants are expected to visit the above websites for the same.

This procurement for Authority Engineer's Services shall be done through National Competitive Bidding (NCB) process as per the World Bank Guidelines from short listed Consultants.

UBN No. - PWD

Pandemic will end soon, claims Trump

President accuses Joe Biden of overstating the health crisis to scare Americans into voting for him

REUTERS
PENSACOLA

President Donald Trump promised supporters in Florida on Friday that the coronavirus pandemic would end soon and accused Democratic rival Joe Biden of overstating the health crisis to scare Americans into voting for him.

The pandemic, which has killed more than 224,000 people in the United States and cost millions more their jobs, has become the dominant issue of the campaign, with Mr. Trump on the defensive over his administration's handling of the crisis.

Comprehensive Bill
Mr. Biden earlier in the day said Mr. Trump had given up on containing the virus and promised if he wins the November 3 election, he will ask Congress to pass a comprehensive COVID-19 Bill



Campaign heat: Donald Trump waving to the crowd at a campaign rally in Pensacola on Friday. • AFP

that he would sign within the first 10 days of taking office.

"He's quit on America. He just wants us to grow numb," Mr. Biden said during a speech in his home city of Wilmington. "I'm not going to shut down the economy. I'm not going to shut down the country. I'm going to shut down the virus."

He said the former Vice-President and his Democratic allies were trying to scare people by overstating the vi-

rus threat. "We're going to quickly end this pandemic," Mr. Trump, who has played down the threat since it started, said in The Villages, a sprawling retirement community in central Florida.

Later, Mr. Trump told a crowd in Pensacola that the election was a choice "between a boom and a lockdown."

Researchers at the University of Washington's Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation warned on Friday that the virus could kill more than half a million people in the U.S. by the end of February 2021. Roughly 1,30,000 lives could be saved if everybody wore masks, according to the study.

Trump casts his ballot

On Saturday, Mr. Trump voted at a library in West Palm Beach, near his Mar-a-Lago estate, after switching his

permanent residence and voter registration last year from New York to Florida, a must-win battleground for his re-election bid.

"I voted for a guy named Trump," he told reporters after casting his ballot.

With 11 days left until the election, more than 54 million Americans have already voted, according to the University of Florida's Elections Project. Michael McDonald, who administers the project, has said the election could set a record, surpassing the 60% participation rate of recent presidential elections.

Mr. Trump, who has regularly condemned mail-in voting without evidence as prone to fraud, even though experts say it is as safe, voted by mail in two elections since he switched his address to Florida, a presidential primary in March and a State election in August.

U.S. reported 80,000 cases in a day; France extends curfew

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

Grim data highlighted the struggle for authorities around the world to bring the coronavirus pandemic under control on Saturday, as the U.S. reported 80,000 infections in a single day, France extended a curfew to two-thirds of citizens and Germany's death toll passed 10,000.

The World Health Organization had earlier warned of an "exponential" rise in infections threatening health systems' ability to cope.

ly stable since the beginning of autumn at between 700 and 800.

Overall, more than 2,23,000 people have died from COVID-19 in the U.S.

France on Friday followed Spain past the milestone of one million cases, while the government extended an overnight curfew designed to slow the spread to affect between Italian police and hundreds of protesters.

And after Germany recorded its 10,000th death from the novel coronavirus, Chancellor Angela Merkel told citizens that "the order of the day is to reduce contacts, to meet as few people as possible" in a weekly vi-

deo podcast.

In Poland, President Andrzej Duda tested positive for COVID-19.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has warned that "too many countries are seeing an exponential increase in COVID-19 cases and that is now leading to hospitals and intensive care units running close to or above capacity – and we're still only in October." Across the world, COVID-19 has claimed the lives of 1.1 million people and infected close to 42 million, with the WHO warning the northern hemisphere was at a critical juncture.

Grim reality: Police face-off with protesters, angry over new restrictions to check the spread of the virus, in Warsaw. • AP



In Op-ed, Biden woos Indian Americans

I know the pride you feel about Kamala's nomination because her story is your story'

SIRRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON



Joe Biden

With just days to go for the U.S. election, both major parties have been wooing Indian Americans, whose numbers in some battleground States have exceeded the victory margin there in 2016. Democratic nominee Joe Biden's outreach to the community included a recent op-ed that talked about his main campaign issues – the botched pandemic response and rebuilding the economy – but also included diaspora specific messages, including his running mate Kamala Harris's Indian origins.

Diwali celebration

"Four years ago in November, one of the last events I hosted at the Vice-President's residence was a Diwali reception. Here I was, an Irish Catholic Vice-President opening my home for a holiday traditionally observed

by Hindus, Buddhists, Sikhs, and Jains, and that night joined by Muslims, Christians, and Indian Americans of various backgrounds representing the diversity of the diaspora," he wrote.

On Ms. Harris, he wrote: "Kamala is smart, tested, and prepared. But another thing that makes Kamala so inspiring is her mother, Shyamala Gopalan. We feel Kamala's pride when she talks about her. She was from Chennai..."

"I know the pride you feel about her nomination be-

cause her story is your story, too. It's an American story. And it's why I'm asking Kamala to be what Barack Obama asked of me to be: the last person in the room and, together, to represent the belief in possibilities," Mr. Biden said.

The Kamala factor

The recent Indian American Attitudes Survey found that the Ms. Harris running-mate pick had a significant turnout effect – 49% of Indian Americans surveyed said the choice of Ms. Harris made them more enthusiastic about Mr. Biden's candidacy, while 15% said it made them less enthusiastic about him.

In the op-ed, Mr. Biden talked about the Trump administration trying to have the Affordable Care Act overturned in the U.S. Supreme Court during the pandemic and connects Mr. Trump with Wall Street (a recurring theme in the Biden cam-

paign), saying a handful of billionaires have done well in the pandemic.

Mr. Biden also addressed Mr. Trump's race-related rhetoric and recent policies tightening legal immigration (such as the temporary suspension of the H-1B programme and new immigrant visas) in the op-ed.

"We also believe America is a land of opportunity. But it's likely you and your family have been caught in the middle of President Trump's crackdown of legal immigration and pathways to permanent residency and citizenship and his decisions on the H-1B visa programme. And his dangerous rhetoric about immigrants has empowered White supremacists and even fuelled hate crimes against Indian Americans," he said.

Millions of Americans have already cast their vote early or by mail before Election Day on November 3.

Sudan is the third Arab govt. to reset ties in last two months

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
CAIRO

Sudan and Israel agreed on Friday to normalise relations, in a U.S.-brokered deal to end decades of hostility that was widely welcomed but stirred Palestinian anger.

The announcement makes Sudan, technically at war with Israel since its 1948 foundation, the third Arab country to forge diplomatic relations with the Jewish state in the last two months.

"HUGE win today for the United States and for peace in the world," U.S. President Donald Trump tweeted.

Other U.S. allies, including Germany, Egypt, the United Arab Emirates, Bahrain, welcomed the deal as a boost to stability in the West Asia.

Meanwhile, Palestinian leaders strongly condemned the deal, echoing their rejection of Israel's normalisation accords with the UAE and Bahrain signed in Washington last month.

"Pay enough ransom, close your eyes on the crimes against Palestinians, then you'll be taken off the so-called 'terrorism' blacklist. Obviously the list is as phony as the U.S. fight against terrorism. Shameful!" its Foreign Ministry said.

U.S. allies welcome Israel-Sudan deal but Iran, Palestine cry foul

'Once U.S. leaves, Pakistan will gain more space in Afghanistan'

Former Balkh Governor warns of the developing security situation in country

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

A debt he had to repay. That's what senior Afghan leader and former Governor of Balkh province Ata Mohammad Noor says he thought when he first heard the news that terrorists had attacked the Indian Consulate in his capital of Mazar-e-Sharif in January 2016. Within minutes, the Governor had picked up his M-4 carbine (rifle) himself and rushed to the scene with his guards to defend the Indian diplomats trapped inside the Consulate from the gunmen shooting at them from a building nearby.

"We never forgot what India did for us. When many other countries were supporting the terrorists and the Taliban, India supported the Northern Alliance," he said, recounting the attack during his visit to Delhi this week. "As Governor, I might have had 10,000 soldiers, but I felt it was my personal responsibility to repay India for the hospitality we had received then," he said, referring to how India had given Northern Alliance fighters shelter, medical aid and logistical support during the 1990s, when he fought as part of the Mujahideen alongside Northern Alliance leader Ahmed Shah Masood to overthrow the Taliban in 2001.

Operations lasted for more than 24 hours, during which Mr. Noor led his forces, firing at the building that housed the three terrorists to stop them from escaping. All three terrorists, believed



Governor of Balkh province Ata Mohammad Noor. • R.V. MOORTHY

to be militants from the 'Afzal brigade' of the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM), were killed.

The siege that had begun at the same time as the JeM attack on the Pathankot air base in India, came just a week after Prime Minister Narendra Modi travelled to Kabul and Lahore. "A dangerous and deadly group was sent by Pakistan, and we dispatched them," Mr. Noor said in Farsi, using the word "Khatarnak" to describe the attackers.

Diplomatic mission
Four years later, Mr. Noor is in Delhi on a diplomatic mission: calling for India to take a keener interest in the Afghan situation, that he fears will deteriorate if U.S. forces pull out completely, as they have announced they will, and Doha talks with the Taliban fail to make headway. Mr. Noor, whose son Khalid is the youngest member of the Afghan negotiating team in talks with the Taliban, is himself not sanguine about the success of the talks.

"The situation is compli-

tating to the Taliban directly, in an effort to "broaden India's interests" and to "dilute the influence of others", pointing to the fact that regional countries, including China, Iran, Pakistan and Russia, had increased their leverage in Afghanistan through engagement with the Taliban.

Non-Pushtun leaders
Mr. Noor's visit to Delhi follows invitations from the government to two other non-Pushtun Afghan leaders who were key commanders during the war against the Taliban: Rashid Dostum and the National Reconciliation Council chief Abdullah Abdullah. In a signal that India is re-engaging with players it has not been in contact with more recently, especially as each had differences with President Ashraf Ghani.

While Mr. Abdullah had visited India previously as the Chief Executive of Afghanistan, ties with New Delhi were strained after he contested President Ashraf Ghani's re-election in January this year. However, Mr. Noor said the former 'Resistance' leaders are now united with the Ghani government in their defence of Afghanistan. A leader of the Jamiat party, and an influential power figure in Kabul today, Mr. Noor became a fighter at 18, battling the Soviet Army, and then the Taliban.

"If needed, we will all come together to fight again," he says. "It won't be the Northern Alliance... but the resistance will be there."

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A SPECIAL PUBLICATION FROM THE HINDU GROUP

IL&FS debt resolution misses target

Firm rolls over ₹7,300-cr. shortfall to coming quarters, says COVID-19 added to logistical complexities

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services (IL&FS) Ltd. on Saturday reported a ₹7,300 crore shortfall in meeting the target for debt resolution by the September quarter citing COVID-19 related issues.

This shortfall is being rolled over for resolution in the subsequent quarters, the company said in a statement.

During the quarter, it could address group debt of only ₹1,460 crore.

"The delay has been mainly caused on account of significant impact of COVID-19, which has added time and logistical complexities in the process of completing discussions with stakeholders and in obtaining approvals from lenders, regulators and judicial authorities," IL&FS



Eye of a storm: The total debt of IL&FS stood at more than ₹99,000 crore as of October 2018. ■ REUTERS

said in the statement.

Stating that as per the update shared in July, the overall debt addressed based on cash balances stood at ₹17,640 crore, it added, "by

September, an additional debt of ₹1,460 crore has been addressed by way of sale of education business, recovery from non-IL&FS group entities, increase in cash ba-

lances and debt repayment in green entities, increasing the overall debt addressed based on cash balances to ₹19,100 crore."

The number of entities resolved as of September 2020 stands at 173, or half the original number of 347 entities of the IL&FS Group.

Target for December

As per revised estimates, ₹13,200 crore of additional debt is projected to be addressed by December.

This includes the ₹8,150 crore resolved through the proposed InvIT for which an 'in-principle' approval from SEBI had been received.

Further, the time period for resolution of ₹4,200 crore being achieved through debt restructuring has moved from September to December, IL&FS said.

Resolution of ₹10,000 crore, earlier communicated for achievement in Q3 FY21, is being moved, to be achieved in subsequent periods the beleaguered company said.

Estimate unchanged

The management and the new board of IL&FS, however, maintained the earlier estimate of addressing more than 50% of the overall debt, which exceeded ₹99,000 crore as of October 2018.

"The aggregate value of debt being addressed is pegged at ₹56,300 crore – with over ₹50,000 crore likely to be addressed by March 2021," it said.

The new board of IL&FS has developed a 'group resolution framework' that received approval from the NCLAT on March 12.

'Urban Company's revenue may double'

'Demand higher than pre-COVID level'

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA

NEW DELHI

Home services aggregator Urban Company, which has onboarded 6,000 service partners over the past two months, is expecting to double its revenue in the current financial year, driven by higher demand for services such as men's grooming, home cleaning and home painting, than before the pandemic.

"We've been fortunate and the business has come back very strongly after the lockdown," Varun Khatan, co-founder, Urban Company, said in an interview.

"We are optimistic about the trajectory here onwards as more consumption happens. Consumers will come

back to us in even larger numbers, and by the end of the financial year, we hope to be twice of what we were in March, in terms of revenue," he added. The firm had posted a revenue of ₹216 crore for FY20, a growth of 103% over FY19.

With the onboarding of service providers over the last two months, the total number now stands at about 30,000 in 18 cities.

"This [6,000 service providers], I think, is sizeable and most of these people are those who had lost their previous jobs because their workplace had to shut down. From what we understand, 30-40% offline salons and spas have shut down and may not open," he said.

Jana SFB plans to open 200 branches

N. ANAND

CHENNAI

Jana Small Finance Bank (SFB) is planning to open 200 branches over 18 months, said a top official.

"Recently, we opened our 500th branch in Bengaluru. We will be opening about 100 to 110 branches by March 2021," said Ajay Kanwal, MD and CEO.

"The next year will see the opening of another 100 branches. While we have already planned for about 110 branches for the current fiscal and another 30-40 branches for the next fiscal, the balance is yet to be finalised," he said.

Mr. Kanwal also said the bank was planning to go for an initial public offering (IPO) by March 2021.

FT cannot close schemes sans unitholders' consent, says HC

Court stays verdict to enable company to approach SC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka on Saturday said Franklin Templeton Trustees Services (FT Trustees) Pvt. Ltd. cannot implement its decision to prematurely wind up six open-ended debt-oriented mutual fund schemes without obtaining the consent of unitholders via a simple majority.

The consent is mandatory, as per 18(15)(a) of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Mutual Funds) Regulations, 1996, when the majority of trustees decide to wind up or prematurely redeem units, the court said while declining to interfere

C The High Court also clarified there could not be any redemption during the period of stay

with the FT Trustees' April 20 decision to prematurely wind up the schemes.

A Division Bench comprising Chief Justice Abhay Shreenivas Oka and Justice Ashok S. Kinagi delivered the verdict while disposing the petitions filed by unitholders, who had challenged Franklin Templeton's decision to close the schemes.

However, the Bench stayed the operation of its verdict for six weeks to enable the trustees and the

Franklin Templeton Asset Management India Pvt. Ltd. to approach the Supreme Court. It also clarified that there could not be any redemption by unitholders during this period of stay.

It directed the trustees and the FT AMC not to indulge in any borrowing or claim liabilities in relation to these schemes.

The petitions, filed by Amruta Garg in the Delhi High Court and 83-year-old investor Areez Phirozha Khambatta and his wife in the High Court of Gujarat, were transferred to the High Court of Karnataka in June following a direction from the Supreme Court.



Michael Dell

'COVID-19 spurring digital adoption'

Technology is now central, says Dell

MINI TEJASWI

BENGALURU

The ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has compelled companies to embrace technologies and systems that have accelerated the pace of digital transformation worldwide.

The Monetary Board of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka had granted approval to close down business operations of the bank in Sri Lanka and cancel the licence issued to it, ICICI Bank said in a filing. "The Director of Bank Supervision being satisfied with the bank complying with the terms and conditions imposed by the Monetary Board, the licence issued to the bank to carry on banking business in Sri Lanka is cancelled with effect from October 23, 2020," the private sector lender said.

"Ten months ago, few of us had ever heard of coronavirus. Now, just about every aspect of our lives has been upended. There is a heartbreaking story of lives lost, shuttered businesses, and rising unemployment. In that moment, the global economy has pivoted and the stories of passion and resilience have been inspiring," said Mr. Dell, founder of the eponymous IT company. "Technology has never been more central than it is right now."

In three months'
The pandemic had spurred firms to re-imagine their businesses. "For many enterprises, digital three-year plans got done in three months... The digital transformation will only accelerate from here, with the combination of massive computing power, 5G, and AI. It's like a machine. The fuel for that is data; with everything becoming intelligent and connected, the relevance of data will explode."

"This can also be a launchpad to address social disparities. A highly distributed workforce broadens the reach of opportunity. Advances in telemedicine and long-distance learning are breakthrough opportunities to broaden access to care and education. It's not one size fits all. But overall, we've just jumped ahead to a more digital future, and we're not going back."

More sustainable'
"People have asked for years, what happens if everyone works from home? Well, now we're finding out. The more we can virtualise travel, interaction, collaboration, communication, the greener, more sustainable, and more productive we become," Mr. Dell said.

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Asserting that the data era had arrived, he said organisations needed to accelerate their digital transformation. "5G is the digital fabric that allows us to extend the cloud to the mobile edge," he said.

Dell was now focussed on offering its products and solutions 'as a service', the



THE HINDU GROUP

+ INTERVIEW | MADHU S. NAIR

'Aircraft carrier trials to begin soon'

Despite pandemic, Cochin Shipyard has returned to 75% capacity: CMD

S. ANANDAN

October marks a watershed month for Cochin Shipyard Ltd. (CSL), a Mini Ratna PSU, as India's maiden indigenous aircraft carrier (IAc-I) being built by the company is starting basin trials in preparation for the sea trials and subsequent induction into the Navy.

The shipyard has plans to augment shipbuilding and repair capabilities and to foray into emerging segments such as urban mobility, CMD Madhu S. Nair said in an interview. Excerpts:

What is the status on the aircraft carrier?

■ Basin trials of the carrier [that displaces 40,000 tonnes] are set to begin this month. This is when its propellers are being turned for the first time using the vessel's own power. In fact, along with this is the activation of a gamut of allied systems and controls.

For a ship of its size and complexity, it'll be a major milestone that also signals that the sea trials are not far away. But that depends on a number of factors including the opening up of international travel as commissioning engineers are to arrive from various overseas locations.

How has the firm fared during the pandemic?

■ Working in two shifts since April, we have been able to return to about 75% of capacity. We have orders worth ₹14,000 crore. Last year, we bagged an order from the Jindal group for four mini bulk carriers and another from the Union Home Ministry for nine floating border outposts for the BSF. Then the pandemic

struck, but we were able to get this order for autonomous vessels from Norway.

From a value point of view, it's just about ₹125 crore, but this contract, signed amidst the pandemic in July, is significant for us because of its technology and because it offers us a strong learning curve. We think there's a market in India for boats and vessels that aren't very large but where technology will stand out.

The order from Norway for autonomous vessels offers us a strong learning curve

With appropriate partnerships, we can build for the world too. This autonomous vessel, for instance, was developed by Kongsberg Maritime in Norway. It has a 1,800 KWh battery system and it is not easy to integrate and prove such systems in a marine environment. We are already building hybrid electric ferries for the Kochi Water Metro.

Have your off-campus ventures begun to look up?

■ The ship repair facility in Mumbai, in the dock leased from the port trust, had done well last year doing business worth ₹55 crore. We

were bolstering the infrastructure when the pandemic hit the city hard, which hit our work too. It's just a matter of time before it gets into a stable phase, though.

In Kolkata, unlike Mumbai, there was no developed ship repair ecosystem. But it was better than what we expected. We are handling the fifth project there now, a dredger of the DCI. In Port Blair, there are people on ground, but the COVID-19 situation remains bad which will further delay the maiden project by a few months.

These apart, we have taken over Tebma Shipyard in Karnataka and are going to build some fishing vessels there. We want to begin operations in January, 2021, and are in the process of recruiting hands. The Hooghly Cochin Shipyard in Kolkata where we intend to build inland vessels should be ready for commissioning by the end of this year or early next.

What does the shipyard's strategic plan for 2030 comprise?

■ It's an ongoing evolutionary vision plan called CRUISE 2030 prepared in collaboration with the Boston Consulting Group. It's multi-pronged and is intended to strengthen our core areas of shipbuilding and repair and to venture into adjacent industries and emerge-

ing spheres targeting manifold growth. Construction of smaller, hi-tech platforms to contribute to sustainable, modern urban mobility, to cite an instance. And the orders are in large numbers.

Also part of the long-term strategy are systems to improve internal efficiencies, to unlock value. It's some time since we have introduced full digital movement of files.

Now we are creating a digital centre of excellence in which various things are looked at: maybe a chat bot to assist, a handheld app to guide contractors and people's entry into the shipyard etc.

Sensor-based tracking of material movement, digital access control and the like are all being looked at. The processes are being digitally realigned. Concurrently, we have just replaced a 25-year-old life cycle management platform, a benchmark then, with a new manufacturing system developed by Dassault Systems, which will also interlink all processes.

As part of your infrastructure expansion, there's this large dry dock being built in Kochi and an international ship repair facility (ISRF) on land owned by the Cochin Port Trust. Are these projects on schedule?

■ Both were moving fast.

We had a predominantly migrant labour force and the pandemic slowed down the work, as social distancing protocols and the ban on working at night kicked in. But we are hopeful of completing the ISRF by the end of 2021 and the dry dock in the latter part of 2022.



ICICI Bank shuts Sri Lanka operations

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

ICICI Bank on Saturday said it had shut down operations in Sri Lanka after getting approval from the Sri Lankan monetary authority.

The Monetary Board of the Central Bank of Sri Lanka had granted approval to close down business operations of the bank in Sri Lanka and cancel the licence issued to it, ICICI Bank said in a filing.

"The aggregate value of debt being addressed is pegged at ₹56,300 crore – with over ₹50,000 crore likely to be addressed by March 2021," it said.

The new board of IL&FS has developed a 'group resolution framework' that received approval from the NCLAT on March 12.

'COVID-19 spurring digital adoption'

Technology is now central, says Dell

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SNAPSHOTS



Literates at birth
Comparing fMRI scans of 40 newborns' brains with adults, researchers found that the human brain is wired to read and write even at birth. The study published in *Scientific Reports* found the visual word form area was connected to the language network.



Precious sample
Two days after touching down on asteroid Bennu, NASA's OSIRIS-REx collected about 60 grams of material from the asteroid's surface, the mission team reported. This will be kept in the sample return capsule till the spacecraft returns to the Earth.

How an asymptomatic player turned super-spreader

A single index player in a baseball game spread the virus to 20 other players of his team, but probably not on the field

R. PRASAD

The importance of testing asymptomatic persons for novel coronavirus and the import of mitigation strategies to decrease the spread of the virus have been highlighted in a super-spreading event involving team A that participated in the Major League Baseball matches in Philadelphia in end-June. A single index player spread the virus to 20 other players of his team and to one employee of team B. The results were published in the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)*.

Health protocols

The Major League Baseball developed new health and safety protocols before the July 24 start of the 2020 season based on CDC's COVID-19 mitigation recommendations related to events and gatherings. These include non-pharmaceutical interventions such as mask

wearing and social distancing, frequent (every other day) testing for rapid identification of people infected with the virus before they exhibited symptoms and isolation of the infected and quarantining of close contacts. In addition, the games were played without spectators.

Despite multiple mitigation strategies, including that testing of each player every alternate day was in place, the spread of the virus to other players could not be prevented. This was primarily because the virus spread during the asymptomatic phase of infection. To prevent further spread by asymptomatic players, the Major League Baseball initiated daily testing instead of alternate day testing for all players belonging to team A and B for the duration of the outbreak. Frequent testing helped identify players infected with virus days before they started showing symptoms. "Among the 19 of 21



Tricky situation: Among 19 of 21 persons infected, symptoms developed an average of 2.3 days after collection of the test-positive sample. ■ GETTY IMAGES

persons with COVID-19 who were symptomatic, symptoms developed an average of 2.3 days after collection of the test-positive sample," says the team led by Dr.

Meghan Murray from the Epidemic Intelligence Service, CDC which investigated the super-spreading event, in the paper in *MMWR*. The index case, who was

still asymptomatic, received a positive test result on day four of the games before a three-game series with team B. The result was based on a sample collected on day two.

The index case was immediately isolated and all players of team A and staff members who were in close contact with the index cases were tested.

On day five, after the second game with team B, three more players of team A tested positive. The following day, an additional eight team A players and staff member of team B tested positive. In the following days, eight more players of team A tested positive.

Genome sequencing revealed that 17 of the 18 samples that were sequenced had a single nucleotide variant, revealing that the super-spreading event was from a single index case.

Outside the field

Despite team A playing five games in all, spending a cumulative 11 hours on the field, no player from team B or team C, coaches or umpires became infected. According to the study, the virus spread

had occurred outside the field. "Interactions outside of on-field play were likely the source of spread, and SARS-CoV-2 transmission risk between baseball teams while on the playing field appeared low," the authors write. The employee of team B who was infected had apparently closely interacted indoors with team A tier 1 employees who subsequently tested positive.

Additional support
"Social distancing measures have been effective in a variety of settings, and this outbreak provides additional support for their use during sporting events, such as baseball games," the authors note. Universal mask-wearing policies provided additional protection for team mates. "Consistent adherence to these policies off-field also might have contributed to protecting the communities hosting the games," they note.

Evidence of dairy production in the Indus Valley Civilisation

Traces indicate that milk may have been boiled before consumption

ASWATHI PACHA

The year 2020 marks 100 years of discovery of Indus Valley Civilisation, and a new study has shown that dairy products were being produced by the Harappans as far back as 2500 BCE.

By analysing residues on ancient pots, researchers show the earliest direct evidence of dairy product processing, thus throwing fresh light on the rural economy of the civilisation. The studies were carried out on 59 shards of pottery from Kotada Bhadli, a small archeological site in present-day Gujarat.

"When we talk about Harappans, we always refer to the metropolitan cities and the big towns. But we have no idea of the parallel economy – agro-pastoral or rural. We know they had great urban planning, trading systems, jewellery making. But we don't have any idea how the common masters were living during the Harappan times, their lifestyle and how they were contributing in the larger context," explains Prabodh Shirvalkar, from the Department of Ancient Indian History, Culture and Archaeology at the De-



Age-old story: Analysis of residues on ancient pots shows the earliest evidence of dairy processing. ■ PRABODH SHIRVALKAR

can College Postgraduate and Research Institute, Pune. He is one of the authors of the papers published in *Scientific Reports*.

Carbon isotope studies

The team used molecular analysis techniques to study the residues from ancient pottery. "Pots are porous. So as soon as we put any liquid form of food, it will absorb it. The pot preserves the molecules of food such as fats and proteins. Using techniques like C13 and C18 analysis we can identify the source of lipids," adds Kalyan Sekhar Chakraborty, the first author of the paper, from the Department of Anthropology, University of Toronto, Canada.

When asked if this proves

that the Harappans made curd and cheese, Dr. Chakraborty adds: "It is very difficult to pinpoint. Traces were seen in cooking vessels indicating that milk may have been boiled and consumed. We also found residues in a bowl showing that either heated milk or curd could have been served. There are also remains of a perforated vessel, and similar vessels were used in Europe to make cheese. So it is possible that they were further processing milk into different forms."

Animal husbandry
The team was also able to show which type of animals were being used for dairy production. They studied the tooth enamel from fos-

sils of cattle, water buffalo, goat and sheep found in the area. Cows and water buffalo were found to consume millets, while sheep and goats ate nearby grass and leaves. A preliminary study suggested that most of the cattle and water-buffalo died at an older age, suggesting they could have been raised for milk, whereas the majority of goat/sheep died when they were young, indicating they could have been used for meat.

"The Harappans did not just use dairy for their household. The large herd indicates that milk was produced in surplus so that it could be exchanged and there could have been some kind of trade between settlements. This could have given rise to an industrial level of dairy exploitation," adds Dr. Chakraborty.

He concludes: "The most fascinating thing about the Indus Valley Civilisation is that it is faceless – there is no king, no bureaucratic organisations, but there are these very close regional interactions between settlements, a symbiotic relationship of give and take that helped the civilisation survive for so long."

Problems with the Indian supermodel for COVID-19

Basing public health policy on flawed models can be dangerous

GAUTAM I. MENON

We predict the future by extrapolating from the present, based on what we've learnt from the past. To estimate how many cases of COVID-19 will be seen in India two months from now, we must have an idea of the number of people who are currently infected. For this, we must know the trajectory of the disease in the past as well as understand how infected people spread the disease to those as yet uninfected. Mathematical models describe this understanding in terms of equations, using input from epidemiologists. These can be used to make predictions for the future.

Recently, the Indian government's Department of Science and Technology (DST), decided that it would support the development of a single "supermodel" for COVID-19 in India. This would combine the best features of models from India and worldwide. A high-level committee was set up to do this, composed of eminent scientists, including several epidemiologists. The report of the committee, in the form of a presentation of the National Supermodel Commit-



Puzzling fact: It makes little sense to have 24 parameters, all changing, in a model. ■ GETTY IMAGES

tee and a paper that was fast-tracked in the *Indian Journal of Medical Research*, are available.

Let's divide the report into two parts. The first contains general recommendations for India. The eminence of the panel adds weight. It warns that the gains of the past several months can be dissipated if distancing measures are reduced in the upcoming festival season. It stresses that continued attention to masking is critical. It suggests that, provided we pay attention to these, India may hope to enter the new year without seeing any further sustained increase in the number of cases. All these points are almost certainly valid. All the members of the supermodel committee have signed on to this part of the report.

The second is the work described in the published paper about the supermodel. Only three members of the committee are authors of this paper. The authors are an eminent computer scientist, an applied mathematician famous for work in control theory and a distinguished ex-army officer with a medical background. All are well known. None are epidemiol-

ogists, even though the committee as a whole possessed this expertise.

First, the supermodel assumes something unusual. All generally accepted models for COVID-19 so far assume that everyone is equally susceptible to it. Nothing we know suggests that this should not be the case. However, an unusual feature of COVID-19 is that some fraction of people infected with the virus do not display symptoms, while being able to infect others. About 30-60% of those infected, perhaps more, are such asymptomatic carriers of infection. Why this is so is still unknown. The supermodel takes a new route. It assumes that the population prior to infection can be divided into two separate parts. One part will always be either asym-

ptomatically infected while the other will always exhibit symptoms. The supermodel assumes that "immunity levels, genetic disposition and co-morbidities" might determine this assignment. The truth is, we just don't know this.

Testable consequence
This choice has one specific testable consequence. If we took a random sub-set of people, say healthcare workers drawn from the general population, we should then expect to see the same proportion of asymptomatic versus symptomatic patients in them as in the general population.

This is not what is seen.

Around the world, health care workers are at more risk of severe infection and death than members of the general

population. This suggests that it is the amount of exposure to the virus that may be important in determining whether an individual will exhibit symptoms.

More parameters

A second point is the following: A model should have as few numbers as possible that must be provided by the modeller to describe the data (parameters). For virtually all such models, such parameters must be estimated. The more the number of parameters, the larger the significance of uncertainties in these numbers, even as more parameters provide more flexibility.

The supermodel ostensibly has just four parameters. It fits the count of new cases well, reproducing the recent peak in Indian cases as well as the two peaks that Delhi saw.

Let's dig a little deeper. The model divides the period between the start of the pandemic and the date at which the results were obtained into six parts. These four parameters all take different values in each of these parts. This gives 24 parameters in all, all separately varied to fit the case count. These parameters are not constrained in any way by an understanding of COVID-19 epidemiology.

This is not what is seen.

Around the world, health care workers are at more risk of severe infection and death than members of the general

parameters are then varied across a large range, from 67 to 4,75,000 in one case. There is no justification provided for this. It makes little sense to have so many parameters, all changing, in a model. Indeed, a quote from the mathematician John von Neumann applies here: "With four parameters I can fit an elephant, and with five I can make him wiggle his trunk".

Lives at stake

There are many more problems with both the model and the conclusions it arrives at. However, just this discussion should indicate that the government's supermodel is ill-suited to address questions of COVID-19 spread in India. Basing public health policies on models that are flawed is dangerous, since the lives of people are at stake and false optimism carries risks with it. Science should not serve political ends.

There are better models. Choosing this one to be India's 'supermodel' presents a misleading picture of India's capabilities in both epidemiology and modelling.

(Gautam I. Menon is a Professor of Physics and Biology at Ashoka University, Sonipat, and at the Institute of Mathematical Sciences, Chennai.)



Smell a fish

Why is fish smell unpleasant for some people?

Researchers have found that some people carry a mutation in a particular gene that makes fish smell less intense. An olfactory receptor gene called trace amine-associated receptor 5 (TAAR5) was pinpointed as the reason for this smell variation.

The study conducted in Iceland involved examining the olfactory genes in humans. A sniff test was conducted for over 9,000 people. Participants were asked to smell odours from pen-like devices. After sniffing each pen, the researchers asked what the smell was, the intensity, and the pleasantness of that smell. They sniffed key ingredients found in licorice, cinnamon, fish etc. The TAAR5 variant affects perception of fish smell containing trimethylamine, a compound found in

rotten and fermented fish. In the smell tests, those participants who have the gene variant were more likely to not smell anything when presented with the fish odour or could only smell it with less intensity and often named the odour incorrectly.

The results were published in *Current Biology*. A note from *Cell Press* adds that while humans have fewer olfactory genes



compared to other species, some of the genetic variations that people do carry make them more sensitive to particular smells such as licorice or cinnamon, not less. The researchers say they will continue to collect data on odour perception and have also planned to investigate the smell deficits in COVID-19 patients.

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



Forecasting COVID-19

How are mathematical models being used to predict the dynamics of the SARS-CoV-2 virus?

JACOB KOSHY

The story so far: The India National Supermodel Committee, constituted by the Department of Science and Technology (DST) and consisting of mathematicians, computer scientists and medical professionals, recently announced that India had passed its 'COVID-19 peak' in September and that active infections by the SARS-CoV-2 virus would fall to a 'minimal' level by February. The conclusions were arrived at with the help of a mathematical model.

What is the 'National Supermodel'?

When the DST said in May that it had convened a group to track the evolution of the pandemic, it viewed the 'supermodel' as one that would aggregate the 'best' existing mathematical models, and hence the name. From February to March, when the relative numbers of infections were low everywhere in the world except China, scientists began estimating the beginning and the course of the pandemic in their countries through mathematical modelling. Using differential equations, that show how multiple variables, such as infections and deaths vary with respect to one another on different parameters, modellers try to estimate the fraction of the population which is infected at a particular point in time.

How are the predictions arrived at?

One of the models used is the susceptible-infected-recovered (SIR) model, which divides a given population into three groups: 'susceptible', 'infectious', and 'recovered'. Over time, the number of people in each group change. The number of 'susceptible' people is highest at the beginning of the pandemic, for example, since everyone who is not infected is considered susceptible in most cases. At this point, the number of infectious individuals is at its lowest.

As time passes, the number of susceptible people decreases, the number of infectious people increases. This model assumes that at any given point of time, an individual in a defined population will be a part of one of these groups.

The model's output is dependent on what is fed into it. In the early months, little was known about the incubation period of the virus, the reproduction number (how many people an individual could infect), how lethal it was, etc. These led to oversimplified projections.

With time, data accumulated and improved the models. In the absence of cold numbers, modellers are forced to draw assumptions – on how quickly the disease spreads, the varying susceptibility of adults as opposed to children, for instance – which are a mix of judgment and luck. A key differentiator in the 'supermodel' was that it purported to account for asymptomatics.

What are the major findings?

While the modelling committee was a seven-member group, a scientific paper describing the group's work and published in the *Indian Journal of Medical Research* has only three authors – a physician, a mathematician and a computer scientist. The modelling exercise also attempted to hypothesise on what India's caseload would have been in the absence of a lockdown, or if it were delayed by a few weeks or a month after March 23. The first lockdown came into effect on March 25. If there were no lockdown, the number of active infections would have peaked at 14+ million and the peak would have arrived by mid-May. "There was little qualitative difference between two lockdown timings of April 1 and May 1, 2020. This would have resulted in a peak between 0 and 5 million active infections by mid-June. If there was no lockdown, it would have resulted in more than 2 million deaths. The two lockdowns (April 1 and May 1, 2020) would have resulted in 0.5-1 million deaths. The number of deaths with current trends is projected to be less than 0.2 million," the authors say in the paper.

Is it credible?

The model's declaration of India having passed its peak comes nearly a month after the reported date – September 17 – from when the national caseload started to decline. From adding nearly 90,000 cases every day in early September, India is now adding around 55,000 cases daily. It is not clear whether, or how often, the mathematical curve that shows the modelled rise and peak of the number of cases has been adjusted to fit the actual number of cases.

The authors say the model expects a decline and virtual extinguishing of the pandemic by February, on the assumption that existing guidelines on restricting public gatherings, wearing masks, etc., continue and no major mutations making the virus more infectious take place. The authors have relied on data from a popular, crowd-sourced database, 'covid19india.org', and acknowledge that "...the major limitation in their model was the non-availability of accurate data". Officials from the Health Ministry have been non-committal about India passing the peak, but admit that mathematical models have their utility in terms of planning.

The chronic battle with malnourishment

What explains India's poor rank under the Global Hunger Index and what are the solutions?

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ

The story so far: India has been ranked 94 on the 2020 Global Hunger Index (GHI), lower than neighbours like Bangladesh and Pakistan. The GHI showed that nearly 690 million people in the world are undernourished; 144 million children suffer from stunting, a sign of chronic undernutrition; 47 million children suffer from wasting, also a sign of acute undernutrition. The number of young children in India who are very short and thin, reflecting severe undernutrition, puts it alongside the poorest African nations, with some indicators showing actual declines over the last five years.

What is the Global Hunger Index and what determines its ranking?

The GHI is an annual peer-reviewed publication by Concern Worldwide and Welthungerhilfe. It aims to track hunger at global, regional and national levels. It uses four parameters to calculate its scores.

One third of the score comes from the level of undernourishment in a country, which is the share of the population with insufficient caloric intake, and uses Food and Agriculture Organization data. The other three parameters are based on children under the age of five years. A third of the score comes from child mortality rate, which often reflects the fatal mix of inadequate nutrition and unhealthy environments. The remaining third of the score is based on child wasting, which is the share of children who have low weight for their height, reflecting acute undernutrition, and child stunting, which is the share of children who have low height for their age, reflecting chronic undernutrition.

These parameters use information from the World Health Organization, the World Bank and the United Nations, although all these international organisations draw from national data, which, in India's case, includes the National Family Health Surveys (NFHS). There is always a time lag in such data, so the 2020 scores are based on data from 2015-19.

This results in a 100-point scale, with zero meaning no hunger at all. Countries scoring 9.9 and less are classified as having a low severity. A score between 10 and 19.9 is considered moderate, that from 20 to 34.9 is serious, and a score of 35 or more is alarming. These classifications are comparable over time, but the rankings themselves are not comparable, as the number of countries included in each particular year varies.

How does India fare on the different parameters in comparison to other countries?

In 2020, India falls in the 'serious' category on the Index, with a total score of 27.2. This is a definite improvement from the situation two decades ago, when it scored 38.9 and fell into the 'alarming' category. However, its scores are abysmal when compared to its peers in the BRICS countries. China and Brazil both scored under five, and are considered to have very low levels of hunger. South Africa is ranked 60 with a score of 13.5, indicating moderate levels of hunger. In the serious category, India stands with some of the poorest African nations, as well as its own South Asian neighbours, all of whom have better scores except Afghanistan. India is tied at the 94th rank out of 107 countries, sharing the rank with Sudan.

In terms of overall undernourishment, 14% of India's population does not get enough calories, an improvement from almost 20% in 2005-07. The child mortality rate is 3.7%, a significant drop from 9.2% in 2000. Many countries fare worse than India on these two parameters.

India's poor score comes almost entirely from the child stunting and wasting parameters. Almost 35% of Indian children are stunted, and although this is much better than the 54.2% rate of 2000, it is still among the world's worst. Also, 17.3% of Indian children under five are wasted, which is the highest prevalence of child wasting in the world. There is no change from two decades ago.



Broad approach: To tackle child malnutrition effectively, all aspects of household deprivation need to be addressed to improve maternal health. ■ K.K. MUSTAFAH

Experts point out that food insecurity, poor sanitation, inadequate housing, limited access to healthcare – all result in maternal distress, that leads to the kind of slow, chronic wasting seen in Indian children

periods based on the sowing and harvesting cycle. There are seasonality differences between NFHS's third and fourth rounds, meaning that higher levels of wasting may have been seen in the fourth round, on which the latest scores are based, because field data was collected after a lean period. However, even the Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (2016-18) shows the same 17.3% rate of wasting.

What is the main cause for such high levels of child stunting and wasting in India?

There is an interesting difference observed between child wasting in South Asia and the poorer nations of Africa, according to researchers. African babies are usually healthy at birth, but as they grow up into their toddler years, undernourishment starts to kick in. South Asian babies, on the other hand, show very high levels of wasting very early in their lives, within the first six months. "This reflects the poor state of maternal health, more than anything else," says Purnima Menon, a senior nutrition researcher at the International Food Policy Research Institute. "To talk about solutions, we must recognise that this is the root cause. Mothers are too young, too short, too thin and too undernourished themselves, before they get pregnant, during pregnancy, and then after giving birth, during breast-feeding. It is more than a health issue, there are social factors like early marriage ... If so many young women are starting their pregnancies so badly, then everything else you may do to help child nutrition later is like simply putting a band-aid on a serious wound."

Almost 42% of adolescent girls aged 15 to 19 have a low body mass index (BMI), while 54% have anaemia. Almost 27% of girls are married before they reach the legal age of 18 years, and 8% of adolescents have begun child bearing in their teens. Almost half of all women have no access to any sort of contraception. These poor indicators of maternal health have dire consequences for the child's health as well.

Poor sanitation, leading to diarrhoea, is another major cause of child wasting and stunting. At the time of the last NFHS, almost 40% of households were still practising open defecation. Only 36% of households disposed of children's stools in a safe manner. One in ten children under the age of five suffer from diarrhoea.

How do different Indian States compare?

The Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey shows wide variability across States. Almost one in three children in Jharkhand show acute undernourishment, with a 29% rate of wasting. Although this is the worst State by far, other large States such as Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Karnataka also have one in five children who are wasted. Interestingly, other States that usually fare poorly on development indices, such as Bihar, Rajasthan and Odisha, actually do better than the national average, with 13-14% rates of wasting. Uttarakhand and Punjab, along with several north-eastern States, have levels of child wasting below 10%.

In terms of stunting, Bihar performs the worst, with 42% of children too short for their age. Other populous States like Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh also have stunting rates just below 40%, and so does Gujarat. At the other end of the scale, Jammu and Kashmir has only 15% stunted children, while Tamil Nadu and Kerala are around the 20% mark.

What needs to be done?

Experts caution that there is no magic bullet. Food insecurity, poor sanitation, inadequate housing, limited access to healthcare – all result in maternal distress that leads to the kind of slow, chronic wasting seen in Indian children.

Although India has overall food security with record levels of foodgrain production in recent years, access to healthy food is still difficult for poor households. A recent study showed that three out of four rural Indians cannot afford the cheapest possible diet that meets the requirements set by the government's premier nutrition body. Over the last five years, the Swachh Bharat Mission's push for toilets for all and ending open defecation may have resulted in better sanitation outcomes which could reflect in better maternal and child health in the NFHS round five, which started collecting field data in 2018-19. The Integrated Child Development Services programme aims to provide food, primary healthcare and immunisation services to young children and mothers.

"There is no single solution. Every kind of household deprivation that makes life difficult for women needs to be dealt with. The focus needs to be on healthy mothers," says Dr. Menon.

Understanding potential U.S. election outcomes

How does America vote for its President and why is winning the popular vote not enough?

NARAYAN LAKSHMAN

The story so far: Voting day in the U.S. presidential election is November 3, 2020. However, millions of votes have been cast already, primarily through absentee and mail-in ballots, made available on a scale that is unprecedented in recent times, owing to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, the pandemic, and the trail of economic destruction that it has left in its wake, have become arguably the top election issues in 2020, with the Republican incumbent, President Donald Trump, defending his approach as the one best suited to a quick recovery, and his Democratic challenger, former Vice-President Joe Biden, attacking the administration's pandemic response as unscientific, inconsistent and responsible for the deaths of nearly 222,000 Americans to date. While Mr. Biden is leading in most federal and regional opinion polls, analysts have been cautious about making bold election predictions given the outcome of the 2016 election. In that election, Mr. Trump defied the odds with his win, even more so because his Democratic rival, former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, won the popular vote by a margin of around three million votes.

Given that the U.S. has, to date, had one of the worst COVID-19 numbers of any nation, why is Mr. Trump still in the reckoning?

Mr. Trump enjoys an approval rating of a little more than 42.5%, considered to be low relative to recent U.S. Presidents at a similar phase of their term in office. Nevertheless, his ratings have been somewhat stable over the course of nearly four years in the White House, the principal reason for which is the intensifying polarisation of the U.S. electorate along party lines. This means that on average, a far greater percentage of registered Republicans support Mr. Trump (around 87%), relative to Democrats, whose approval of his performance is at 6%. This partisan split in support has bestowed the Trump campaign with an inherent electoral advantage, because it translates into a disproportionate share of electoral college votes when compared to the popular vote.

Why does the electoral college matter to Mr. Trump's campaign?

The electoral college refers to a process, wherein, based



People filling out their ballots during early voting at a polling station in Florida on October 21. ■ AFP

mostly on a winner-takes-all rule, each U.S. State chooses its electors, who then go on to pick the President and the Vice-President. The college also encompasses counting of the electoral votes by the U.S. Congress. For example, if more than 50% of the voters in the State of New York vote for the Democratic Party, then all the potential electors allocated to that State will be Democratic. Each State has the same number of electors as it does members in its Congressional delegation, namely one for each member in the House of Representatives, and two Senators. Nationwide, there are 538 electors, and to win the presidency, a candidate would be required to secure 270 votes in the electoral college.

A caveat is that Maine and Nebraska appoint individual electors based on the winner of the popular vote for each Congressional district, and then two electors based on the winner of the overall State-wide popular vote. Even though it is rare for either State to have a split vote, Nebraska had one in 2008 and Maine in 2016. The result of this system of representation is that surprisingly few voters truly matter in an election. The reason is that except for a handful of 'swing States', which have the potential to flip from one party to the other, all the others have historically only voted one way and are likely to do so this time too. The States that are traditionally considered to swing include Florida (29 votes), Iowa (6

votes), Michigan (16 votes), Nevada (6 votes), New Hampshire (4 votes), North Carolina (15 votes), Ohio (18 votes), Pennsylvania (20 votes) and Wisconsin (10 votes). However, if opinion polls are to be trusted – and that is a questionable assumption – Arizona (11 votes), Georgia (16 votes), Minnesota (10 votes) and even Republican-leaning Texas (38 votes) might be played.

What happens if there is a tie in the electoral college?

This scenario – of both candidates winning 269 electoral college votes – is not inconceivable. For example, if Pennsylvania, Michigan, Minnesota, Nevada, Virginia, Maine (except for its Second District), Colorado, and Nebraska's Second District went to the Democrats along with the firmly 'blue States', the Democrats would have 269 electoral college votes. This would require Trump to win, in addition to all the traditionally 'red States', Arizona and Wisconsin (10 votes) – which he did carry in 2016. But polls show that Mr. Biden is ahead considerably in both the States. Mr. Trump would also have to carry Florida, Iowa, North Carolina, Georgia and Ohio.

In such a case of an electoral college deadlock, a 'contingent election' will be held, wherein the election of the President will pass on to the House of Representatives. Here, the election of President will be decided by each State delegation casting one vote for its preferred candidate. The Congressional record shows that only two Presidential elections, in 1800 and 1824, have been decided in the House.

When will the election result be known?

In 'normal' years, most ballots are counted by the end of the voting day, with the result being known late in the night. This despite a small number of mail-in and absentee ballots coming in later, small enough in number that they would not change the overall result.

However, given the need for social distancing and concerns over in-person voting due to the COVID-19 pandemic, up to 80 million Americans will likely vote via mail, and in nearly a third of States, votes only need to be postmarked, not received, by the election day. With the U.S. Postal Service facing slowdowns through the pandemic, the likelihood of a decisive number of ballots being counted by November 3 is low.



ILLUSTRATION: R. RAJESH

PAKISTAN DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENT

Taking on the Generals and their Prime Minister

Rival opposition parties have come together on a single platform, challenging the government of Imran Khan and the powerful military

AMIT BARUAH

Pakistan has been there before. Political parties coming together in alliance to take on a military dictator or an authoritarian civilian government. This time, it is in the form and shape of the Pakistan Democratic Movement (PDM), which has both the Pakistan Muslim League (N) and the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) as leading lights.

The old warhorse Maulana Fazlur Rehman, head of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F), is

the president of the PDM.

In 73 years of existence, Pakistan has been under military rule on four occasions. Time and again, the Army has demonstrated that it wants civilian Prime Ministers to be brought to heel. Usually, the coup has been the preferred *khai* style but with Imran Khan as Prime Minister it's been held out as a "hybrid" model of governance.

Two recent rallies in Gujranwala, Punjab, and in Karachi, Sindh, have galvanised the Opposition and brought

what were once two opposing poles of Pakistani politics – the PML (N) and the PPP – out in the open to attack both Prime Minister Imran Khan and his Army props.

As many as 11 political parties, many of them regional entities, came together to form the PDM on September 20 in Islamabad.

Demanding the Prime Minister's resignation, they decided to put in place an alliance structure, which will "lead and guide nationwide protests against the anti-public and anti-nation govern-

ment in a disciplined and integrated manner".

Arguing that Mr. Khan's government had been accorded "fake stability" by the establishment, the PDM expressed "extreme concern" at the increasing interference of the establishment in Pakistabulstering attack

Blistering attack

Such statements are pretty standard in Pakistani politics. But former Prime Minister and PML(N) leader Nawaz Sharif departed from the standard when he launched a blistering attack on the serving Army chief Qamar Javed Bajwa, whom he had appointed to the job back in November 2016, superseding two generals senior to Gen. Bajwa.

Mr. Sharif also took on the serving Inter-Service Intelligence (ISI) chief Faiz Haemeed, a close associate of General Bajwa, in his video address from London to the first PDM rally in Gujranwala on October 17.

"You are responsible for the exit of my smooth-running government," Mr. Sharif thundered at Gen. Bajwa.

"You got judges to write the judgments you wanted," Mr. Sharif, who is convicted for corruption, said. The three-time Prime Minister also laid the blame for rising prices and unemployment at Gen. Bajwa's door. About the serving ISI chief, Mr. Sharif claimed, "all this had been

The PDM, a multi-party movement led by Maulana Rehman, has expressed "extreme concern" at the increasing interference of the military in Pakistan's internal affairs

done" at Gen. Hameed's insistence.

His comments are nothing short of blasphemous in Pakistani politics. You can talk of the "establishment", a euphemism for the Army, but you can't name names. Mr. Sharif has broken that tradition and his public comments blaming Gen. Bajwa

have created ripples in the country's politics.

Mr. Sharif is also likely to have created problems for his alliance partner, the PPP, and other more moderate and risk-averse politicians like his own brother and senior PML (N) politician Shehzad Sharif. But then he's sitting in London and is unlikely to return.

The leader on the ground for him is his daughter Maryam Nawaz, someone to watch out for in Pakistan.

On the defensive

"The Army has been put on the defensive by the PDM rallies. Their spokespersons have to come out to defend them," a Karachi-based analyst, who preferred anonymity, told *The Hindu*. "It's good that Mr. Sharif is naming names. These things should be out in the open. Everyone knows who is backing Imran Khan's government."

If Mr. Sharif ruffled feathers with his comments on Gen. Bajwa, the arrest of Captain Saifdar, Maryam Nawaz's husband, from their hotel room, in the early hours of October 19 after a successful PDM rally in Karachi, was nothing short of inexplicable.

"Police broke my room door at the hotel I was staying at in Karachi and arrested Capt. Saifdar," Ms. Maryam tweeted after the incident. There is CCTV footage of Capt. Saifdar being taken away by armed men as well as these personnel standing outside Maryam Nawaz's room.

This story is unlikely to die down in a hurry and will be used by the PDM to hit out at both Mr. Khan and the Army leadership.

But what happened before the arrest was equally bizarre.

Mushtaq Ahmed Maher, Inspector-General of Police in Sindh, was reportedly abducted by personnel of the Pakistani Rangers, a central force, on Sunday-Monday night, and forced to sign on the dotted line so that Capt. Saifdar could be arrested.

Later, IGP Maher and 14 other senior Sindh police officers decided to take earned leave, only to withdraw their applications after top PPP leader Bilawal Bhutto Zardari called up Army chief Gen.

Bajwa, who then ordered an "inquiry" into the incident.

"The unfortunate incident that occurred on the night of 18/19 October caused great heartache and resentment within all ranks of Sindh Police... IG Sindh has decided to defer his own leave and ordered his officers to set aside their leave applications for 10 days in the larger national interest, pending the conclusion of the inquiry [ordered by Gen. Bajwa]," the Sindh police said on Twitter.

All this stuff is unprecedented. If the Pakistan Rangers and Army personnel can kidnap an IGP of a province, then it raises questions on the country's political system. The fact that Mr. Bhutto spoke to the Army chief and not the serving Prime Minister shows his lack of confidence in the leadership of Mr. Khan.

The Prime Minister has himself played his *dharma* politics while in Opposition so he should be cognizant that events such as this bizarre kidnapping and arrest can sometimes have a long-lasting impact on people's perceptions.

Great partnership

Mr. Khan and General Bajwa have had a great partnership going. "For the first time, the Prime Minister and the Army chief are on the same page. There are no differences of opinion even on foreign policy issues like India and Afghanistan. Make no mistake, Mr. Khan will complete his term in office," an Islamabad-based analyst said. Pakistan is due for elections only in 2023.

Whether it is Mr. Nawaz Sharif or the PPP leadership, the Army as an institution has never been totally convinced that the "civilians" are sufficiently attuned to furthering *khaki* interests. So, Mr. Khan and his Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) were built up to "partner" so that the Army doesn't have to be seen taking power directly yet again.

Economic strains can upset this Khan-Bajwa partnership. So can ham-handed actions of the kind on display in Karachi. Mr. Khan can probably ride out this storm with Gen Bajwa's backing. Bluster, however, can't be a substitute for governance.

In Focus

■ Two recent rallies in Gujranwala, Punjab, and in Karachi, Sindh, have galvanised the Opposition and brought together the PML (N) and the PPP

■ As many as 11 political parties, many of them regional entities, came together to form the PDM in Islamabad on September 20

■ Demanding Imran Khan's resignation, they decided to put in place an alliance structure, which will "lead and guide" nationwide protests against the "anti-public and anti-nation" government

LUIS ARCE

The socialist successor

Bolivians vote for an aide of Evo Morales in defiance of the military-backed govt.

GARIMELLA SUBRAMANIAM



Last Sunday's landslide victory for Luis Alberto (Lucho) Arce in the Bolivian presidential election is, arguably, a repudiation of the policies of the military-installed right-wing government that was formed after the disputed October 2019 election. Mr. Arce, a socialist and the long-time former Finance Minister, polled more than the combined vote share of his two nearest contenders, and thus eliminated a runoff. His Movement for Socialism (MAS) party obtained a comfortable parliamentary majority. The emphatic victory ends the political instability of nearly 11 months, after an unelected and little known evangelical senator Jeanine Añez assumed charge as the transitional leader last November. The elections were postponed twice, citing the COVID-19 emergency, causing fury among MAS supporters.

The recent verdict is simultaneously a resounding endorsement of Economics – the economic policies pursued under the former President of 14 years and the first indigenous occupant of the office, Evo Morales. They entailed the partial nationalisation of Bolivia's extractive industries and revenue generation during the commodities boom, enabling the social redistribution programmes that lifted millions out of poverty.

The latest results have

sparked media speculation that the man behind the throne in La Paz would be Mr. Morales, Mr. Arce's mentor and former boss, who is to return from exile in Argentina. But there are enough indications already that while the 57-year-old protégé intends to build on the Bolivian model to revive the sputtering economy, Mr. Morales would play no direct role in the government.

Mr. Arce's plans include the substitution of the country's import dependency with industrialisation on one hand, and securing international debt relief and levying a wealth tax on the other to raise revenues to continue MAS's poverty alleviation initiatives.

Low-profile moderate
The President-elect, given his reputation as a low-profile moderate within the party, is perhaps best-placed to navigate the country's recent tumultuous political divisions. Since the November

2019 ouster of Mr. Morales, the country has been rocked by violent confrontations between the security forces and MAS loyalists. The Inter-American Commission on Human Rights has dubbed the killings of protesters as a massacre and called for an international investigation.

Born in La Paz on September 28, 1963, Mr. Arce grew up in a middle class family. He graduated from the University of Warwick, England, in 1997 with a masters in economics. Mr. Arce spent a large part of his career as a public official at the Central Bank of Bolivia.

In 2006, Mr. Morales, who came to power riding the pink wave that was sweeping through South America, appointed Mr. Arce as the Minister of Economics and Public Finance. Ever since, he remained a close aide of Mr. Morales. He oversaw the rapid expansion of the economy as well as the public spending programmes, which helped

MAS build a strong connect with the country's poor.

Syncretic traditions
Interim President Añez had rolled back many of Mr. Morales's policies. Her display of the Bible at public appearances, in a demonstration of her Catholic identity, downplayed Bolivia's syncretic traditions of respect for diverse racial symbols at a time when social relations have been strained.

Underscoring the overall direction of his government and the urgent need for national reconciliation, the President-elect promised in a speech following his victory to establish a unity government, to effect change without hate and to learn from MAS's past mistakes.

The latter remark was possibly an oblique reference, among others, to the controversial and blatantly undemocratic judicial reversal of the 2016 referendum verdict, wherein the people opposed changes to the Constitution that would have authorised Mr. Morales to run for a fourth presidential term.

The fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic, which has placed the country as the third highest in terms of per capita rate of deaths, is the other big challenge facing the next government. Mr. Arce has earned a mandate for the policies he crafted in the past. Now the challenge is to live up to the expectations of the voters in the midst of the unprecedented public health emergency.

On October 14, protesters, mainly school and col-

lege students, tried to disrupt a royal motorcade in Bangkok that was carrying Queen Suthida and flashed the three-finger salute, a symbol of resistance and solidarity which they borrowed from *The Hunger Games* books and movies. It was an unprecedented show of dissent to the monarchy by protesters in a country where public criticism of the institution could land one in jail for up to 15 years. A day after, the government declared a state of emergency, banning public gatherings and censoring the media coverage of the protests.

Not backing off
But the protesters did not back off. They termed the emergency yet another move by the government to take away their freedoms. A week later, as it was clear that the students were determined to press ahead with their agitation, the government cancelled the emergency and called for calm. Protests in Thailand began after the pro-democracy Future Forward Party was banned by the country's top court in February. But public resentment against the ruling elite was building up since the 2014 military coup that brought Mr. Prayuth to power. Since then, the military rewrote the Constitution, awarding itself and the monarchy more powers and privileges, and held an election last year, which made sure that Mr. Prayuth continued as the Prime Minister.

The new King, Maha Vajiralongkorn (the 10th monarch of the Chakri dynasty, also called Rama X), who ascended the throne in 2016 after the death of his father Bhumibol Adulyadej (Rama IX), blessed the coup masters, while the Generals spent millions to promote the monarchy. The King was earlier required to appoint a regent while travelling abroad. The new Constitution did away with this clause. The junta gave the monarch full control of the Crown Property Bureau, which manages the palace's roughly \$30 billion worth of assets. King Vajiralongkorn also brought two Army units under his direct control. He has steadily expanded the powers of the palace, while the military has used the monarch's backing to gain legitimacy for its actions.

For the protesters, if the Prime Minister represented a repressive regime, the King, who is mostly in southern Germany, is a symbol of extravagance at a time when the country was wrecked by the pandemic.

In August, Anon Nampa, a 35-year-old human rights lawyer, called for reforms to the monarchy. The protesters have since submitted 10 demands to the government, asking for a separation of the King's assets and the Crown Property Bureau, reducing the Palace's share in the national budget, a ban on the King from expressing his political views and endorsing future coups.

The protesters say they were not against the institution of monarchy. What they want are reforms – a democratic Thailand with the King being a ceremonial head of the state – not abolition. For now, the government has ignored such demands, and warned against "insulting" the monarchy. But the fact that even a state of emergency did not stop the protests poses a serious challenge to both the government and the King.

MONARCHY

The Ramas of Thailand

The royals, traditionally revered in the country, face pressure as protests mount

STANLY JOHNY



In Thailand, the King traditionally enjoyed a god-like status. The monarchs from the reigning Chakri dynasty that was founded in 1782 are called the Rama Kings, after the Hindu God Rama, the avatar of Lord Vishnu. The institution of the Thai monarchy, which is roughly 800 years old, has its roots in Hinduism and Buddhism. While the warrior Kings, under different dynasties, adopted Hindu Gods' names as their official titles, the Theravada Buddhist concept of 'Dhammaraja' (kingship under *dharma*) has been the proclaimed goal of the monarchy. Even after it lost absolute powers in the 1932 Siamese revolution, the monarchy continued to enjoy an outsized influence in the government and society. Thailand's strict *lèse majesté* rules shielded the King from public criticism, irrespective of the political changes. But the winds are now changing.

Thailand, which has seen 12 successful coups since 1932, is no stranger to mass uprisings. In the past, protests were largely focussed on the government or the powerful military. What makes the ongoing agitation, started earlier this year against the military-backed government of Prime Minister Prayuth Chan-Ocha, different is that the protesters are increasingly targeting the monarchy.

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KXIP snatches win from under SRH's nose

Defending 126, Jordan and Arshdeep do the star turn as Rahul's men continue their ascent

IPL 2020

SPORTS BUREAU

Chris Jordan's three for 17 helped Kings XI Punjab defend the lowest total – 126 – this edition and edge past Sunrisers Hyderabad by 12 runs at the Dubai International Stadium on Saturday.

With SRH needing 17 off the last two overs, KXIP captain K.L. Rahul took a gamble and bowled Jordan in the penultimate over.

The Englishman vindicated the decision, conceding just three and picking up the wickets of Jason Holder and Rashid Khan off successive deliveries.

The slide

Arshdeep Singh (three for 23) then defended 14 off the final over as SRH slipped to 114 all out after being 56 for no loss at one stage.

It was Arshdeep's dismissal of Vijay Shankar in the 18th over that opened the floodgates after SRH had remained in the chase for most part. Jonny Bairstow (19, 20b, 4x4) and David Warner (35, 20b, 3x4, 2x6) infused energy, adding 56.

Warner was out caught-behind off Ravi Bishnoi (one for 13) after a referral. Bairstow and Abdul Samad fell soon after.

Manish Pandey and Shantanu arrested the slide with a 33-run fourth-wicket stand. But once they fell, the KXIP bowlers took over and delivered the team's fourth consecutive victory.

Slow start

Earlier, Rashid (4-0-14-2) spearheaded an incisive bowling performance for SRH after it asked KXIP to bat. Rahul (27, 27b, 2x4, 1x6) and Mandeep Singh – open-



Turning points: Jordan's spell and Suchith's catch to dismiss Pandey did it for KXIP. ■ BCCI/IPL



■ BCCI/IPL

The day in numbers

- Second lowest total defended by KXIP in the IPL after the 119 against MI in 2009
- This is the lowest target SRH has failed to achieve in the tournament. It had faltered while chasing 137 versus MI in 2019
- SRH lost its last seven wickets for just 14 runs to slump from 100/3 to 114 all out)

Points table

Team	M	W	L	PTS	NRR
Mumbai Indians	10	7	3	14	1.448
Delhi Capitals	11	7	4	14	0.434
Royal Challengers	10	7	3	14	0.182
Kolkata Knight Riders	11	6	5	12	-0.476
Kings XI Punjab	11	5	6	10	-0.103
Sunrisers Hyderabad	11	4	7	8	0.029
Rajasthan Royals	11	4	7	8	-0.620
Chennai Super Kings	11	3	8	6	-0.733

After the KXIP-SRH match on Oct. 24

Innings scan

KXIP	Dots	SRH
48	58	
7	12	
2	2	
47/1	52/0	
6.30	5.74	

Next assignment

KKR: Oct. 26 vs. **KXIP**
Sharjah, 7.30 p.m. IST

DC: Oct. 27 vs. **SRH**
Dubai, 7.30 p.m. IST

SCOREBOARD

KINGS XI PUNJAB

K.L. Rahul b Rashid 27 (27b, 2x4, 1x6), Mandeep Singh c Rashid b Sandeep 17 (14b, 1x4), Chris Gayle c Warner b Holder 20 (20b, 2x4, 1x6), Nicholas Pooran (not out) 32 (28b, 2x4), Glenn Maxwell c Warner b San-deep 12 (13b), Deepak Hooda st. Bairstow b Rashid 0 (2b), Chris Jordan c Khaleel b Holder 7 (2b), M. Ashwin run out 4 (4b), Ravi Bishnoi (not out) 0 (0b); Extras (b-1, lb-1, w-5); Total (for seven wkts. in 20 overs): 126.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-37 (Mandeep, 4.6 overs), 2-66 (Gayle, 9.6), 3-66 (Rahul, 10.1), 4-85 (Maxwell, 13.4), 5-88 (Hooda, 14.2), 6-105 (Jordan, 17.3), 7-110 (Ashwin, 18.2).

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD

Sandeep 4-0-29-2, Khaleel 4-0-31-0, Holder 4-0-27-2, Rashid 4-0-14-2, Natarajan 4-0-23-0.

SUNRISERS HYDERABAD

David Warner c Rahul b Bishnoi 35 (20b, 3x4, 2x6), Jonny Bairstow b M. Ashwin 19 (20b, 4x4), Manish Pandey c (sub) Suhit b Khaleel 15 (29b), Abdul Samad c Jordan b Shami 7 (5b, 1x4), Vijay Shankar c Rahul b Arshdeep 26 (27b, 4x4), Jason Holder c Mandeep b Jordan 5 (8b), Priyam Garg c Jordan b Arshdeep 3 (5b), Rashid Khan c Pooran b Jordan 0 (1b), Sandeep Sharma c M. Ashwin b Arshdeep 0 (2b), T. Natarajan (not out) 0 (0b), Khaleel Ahmed run out 0 (2b); Extras (w-4); Total (in 19.5 overs): 114.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-56 (Warner, 6.2 overs), 2-58 (Bairstow, 7.2), 3-67 (Samad, 8.5), 4-100 (Pandey, 16.1), 5-110 (Vijay Shankar, 17.5), 6-112 (Holder, 18.3), 7-112 (Rashid, 18.4), 8-114 (Sandeep, 19.2), 9-114 (Garg, 19.3).

KINGS XI BOWLING

Shami 4-0-34-1, Arshdeep 3.5-0-23-3, M. Ashwin 4-0-27-1, Bishnoi 4-0-13-1, Jordan 4-0-17-3.

Toss: SRH; **MoM:** Jordan.

KXIP won by 12 runs.

The win helped KKR stay in the race for the playoffs.

DC benched an under-performing Prithvi Shaw and paired Ajinkya Rahane with Shikhar Dhawan. But that move did not yield the desired result as Pat Cummins sent both packing early.

Varun bamboozles Capitals

His five for 20 keeps Knight Riders in playoff race

SPORTS BUREAU



Leader of the pack: Varun, second from right, took the first five-for of this edition. ■ BCCI/IPL

SCOREBOARD

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS

Shubman Gill c Axar b Nortje 9 (8b, 2x4), Nitish Rana c Deshpande b Stoinsky 81 (53b, 13x4, 1x6), Rahil Tripathi b Nortje 13 (12b, 1x4), Dinesh Karthik c Pant b Rabada 3 (6b), Sunil Narine c Rahane b Rabada 64 (32b, 6x4, 4x6), Eoin Morgan c Rabada b Stoinsky 17 (9b, 2x4, 1x6), Pat Cummins (not out) 0 (0b); Extras (lb-1, w-3, nb-2); Total (for nine wkts. in 20 overs): 135.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-0 (Rahane, 0.1), 2-13 (Dhawan, 2.3), 3-76 (Pant, 11.2), 4-95 (Hettmyer, 13.2), 5-95 (Shreyas, 13.3), 6-110 (Stoinsky, 15.1), 7-112 (Axar, 15.5), 8-132 (Rabada, 18.5), 9-135 (Deshpande, 19.5).

KNIGHT RIDERS BOWLING

Cummins 4-0-17-3, Prasidh 2-0-19-0, Nagarkoti 2-0-11-0, Ferguson 4-0-30-1, Narine 4-0-37-0, Varun 4-0-20-5.

Toss: Capitals; **MoM:** Varun.

KKR won by 59 runs.

CAPITALS BOWLING

Deshpande 4-0-40-0, Nortje 4-0-27-2, Rabada 4-0-33-2, Axar 1-0-7-0, Stoinsky 4-0-41-2, Ashwin 3-0-45-0.

DELHI CAPITALS

Ajinkya Rahane lbw c Cummins 0 (1b), Shikhar Dhawan b Cummins 6 (6b, 1x4), Shreyas Iyer c Nagarkoti b Varun 47 (38b, 5x4), Rishabh Pant c Gill b Varun 27 (33b, 2x4, 1x6), Shimron Hetmyer c Tripathi b Varun 10 (5b, 1x6), Marcus Stoinsky c Tripathi b Varun 6 (6b), Axar Patel b Varun 9 (7b, 1x6), Kagiso Rabada c Tripathi b Cummins 9 (10b, 1x4), R. Ashwin (not out) 14 (13b, 2x4).

INNINGS SCAN

Deshpande 4-0-40-0, Nortje 4-0-27-2, Rabada 4-0-33-2, Axar 1-0-7-0, Stoinsky 4-0-41-2, Ashwin 3-0-45-0.

SHREYAS HYDERABAD

Ajinkya Rahane lbw c Cummins 0 (1b), Shikhar Dhawan b Cummins 6 (6b, 1x4), Shreyas Iyer c Nagarkoti b Varun 47 (38b, 5x4), Rishabh Pant c Gill b Varun 27 (33b, 2x4, 1x6), Shimron Hetmyer c Tripathi b Varun 10 (5b, 1x6), Marcus Stoinsky c Tripathi b Varun 6 (6b), Axar Patel b Varun 9 (7b, 1x6), Kagiso Rabada c Tripathi b Cummins 9 (10b, 1x4), R. Ashwin (not out) 14 (13b, 2x4).

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Tokyo opens Olympics Aquatics Centre

Swimming star Rikako Ikee participates in inauguration of the 15,000-seater facility

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TOKYO

Tokyo opened a 15,000-seat swimming venue for the Olympic Games next year on Saturday, with a swimming star diagnosed with leukaemia last year demonstrating freestyle at the ceremony.

The \$542 million Aquatics Centre for swimming, diving and artistic swimming was completed in February, but its opening ceremony sche-

duled for March was postponed due to coronavirus.

"I hope top athletes in the world will compete at this venue... I'm already excited," Tokyo Governor Yuriko Koike told newscasters.

Koike said the city hoped to welcome more athletes, promising to host a "successful" Olympics through implementing anti-virus safety measures.

At the ceremony, Japanese



Awaiting the Olympians! The Tokyo Aquatics Centre after the opening ceremony on Saturday. ■ AP

NBA could start in Dec.: reports

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
NEW YORK

The NBA is looking at starting a 72-game 2020-21 season in December and finishing in time for players to compete at the Tokyo Olympics, according to multiple reports on Friday.

The Athletic and ESPN said the league told team owners in a Friday conference call about the plans, which would require approval by the players union by the end of October.

The move would move games compared to a January restart and allow the league to crown a champion and leave a window for NBA talent to play for homelands in the Olympics.

We will play exciting football and win games: Fowler

ISL

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PANAJI

The new East Bengal head coach Robbie Fowler on Saturday said his team will play an exciting brand of football, relying on ball possession and short intricate passes,

during the Indian Super League which begins on November 20.

"The best way is putting the opposition in the back-foot," he added.

The upcoming season of the ISL will take place behind closed doors in empty stadiums.

"We can't do anything but there will be time in the near future when we will be playing with lots of passionate fans. I would like nothing more than to travel to Kolkata and play with a successful team next year," said the Liverpool legend.

"We won't be playing long balls, we want to hold on to possession. Possession on the right side of pitch, not just knocking it around in the back. We want to play in the opposite half, exciting football and win games."

"That day will come but right now we need to do what we need to do. It's not easy but it's something we have to adapt and accept."

"With a late inclusion to ISL, East Bengal appointed the 45-year-old with less than two months left for the

scheduled start of the tournament and Fowler feels the team will have to play catch up.

"It's a new challenge for us, we will go into this season and we will be competitive. What we have to keep in mind is that we have been many weeks behind the other teams.

"We were late getting together because of the new club. We will catch them up pretty soon. It might be a few weeks before you see the best East Bengal," he added.

Fowler has signed six foreign players with another addition expected soon.

"The players we have brought in are exceptional. We have got plans to bring one more. It is about getting the spine of the team right."

"I think I have made enough cricketing memo-



Robbie Fowler.
■ FILE PHOTO

All is well



On recovery path: Kapil Dev recuperating after an angioplasty on Friday. ■ PTI

Tanmay Srivastava announces retirement

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Batsman Tanmay Srivastava, who was part of India's Under-19 World Cup winning team in 2008, announced retirement from all forms of cricket on Saturday, saying he has found new dreams and bigger aspirations to work towards.



Tanmay Srivastava.
■ FILE PHOTO: GETTY IMAGES

The 30-year-old left-hander took to social media to make the announcement but did not specify his new plans. "It's time to bid adieu to my cricketing playing career! We've built memories, made friends, achieved the best I could in these playing Junior Cricket, Ranji Trophy and most importantly being a good performer in U-19 World Cup, 2008 and bringing the cup home with the team!!," the Kanpur-born cricketer tweeted.

Srivastava thanked his coaches, Uttar Pradesh cricket administrators, parents and wife for being a constant source of support.

"The players we have brought in are exceptional. We have got plans to bring one more. It is about getting the spine of the team right."

"I think I have made enough cricketing memo-

Bach not for protests at Olympics

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

Olympic chief Thomas Bach warned against allowing the Games to "descend into a marketplace of demonstrations" on Saturday after criticism of a rule banning protests by athletes. The IOC president has come under fire for the ruling, announced in a year which has seen widespread support by athletes for the Black Lives Matter movement.

"The athletes personify the values of excellence, solidarity and peace. They express this inclusiveness and mutual respect also by being politically neutral on the field of play and during the ceremonies," Bach wrote in *The Guardian*.

"The unifying power of the Games can only unfold if everyone shows respect for and solidarity to one another. Otherwise, the Games will descend into a marketplace of demonstrations of all kinds, dividing and not uniting the world."

MARUTI SUZUKI

NEXA

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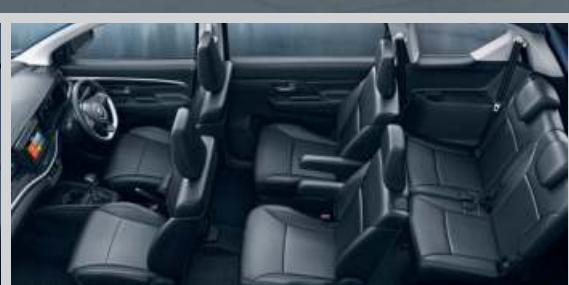
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