



Indira Gandhi Peace
Prize 2019 conferred on
Sir David Attenborough
page 11



At virtual rally, Nitish
sets Bihar election
campaign rolling
page 9



Djokovic disqualified from
US Open for accidentally
striking a line judge
page 14

NEARBY



Delhi reports 2,077 cases
as testing dips by 38%

NEW DELHI

With the number of tests falling by 38%, the national capital recorded 2,077 fresh COVID-19 cases in the past 24 hours, said a government health bulletin. The total cases now stand at 1,93,526. As many as 36,046 tests were conducted on Sunday, which fell to 22,954 on Monday.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

DERC reduces fixed rates for non-domestic users

NEW DELHI

In a relief to non-domestic consumers, the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission has dropped the fixed charges for unutilised capacity by 50% for April and May, the government said on Monday. The charges have been reduced from ₹250/kVA/month to ₹125/kVA/month.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

Panchayat elections in Rajasthan from Sept. 28

JAIPUR

The Rajasthan State Election Commission on Monday announced elections to 3,848 village panchayats in four phases beginning September 28. A separate announcement will be made later for election of zila parishad and panchayat samiti members.

NORTH & EAST ▶ PAGE 4

Govt. intervention in education policy should be minimal: PM

People's doubts must be addressed before NEP implementation, Modi says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The government's intervention in the education policy should be "minimal", Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Monday, emphasising that the policy belonged to the whole country, rather than to any particular government in power.

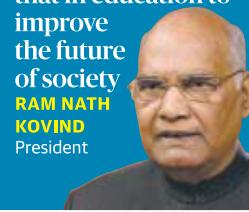
Mr. Modi was addressing the inaugural session of the Governors' conference on the National Education Policy (NEP), which is being attended by State Education Ministers and Vice-Chancellors. The focus of the conference is on the implementation of NEP.

"The education policy and the education system are important means of fulfilling the aspirations of the country. The Centre and the State governments, as well as local bodies, all have responsibility for the education system. But it is also true that the government's interference or intervention in education policy should be minimal," he said.

"Just as the foreign policy or defence policy are the policies of the country, not of the government, so is the education policy. It belongs to the whole country," he noted, urging a "collective responsibility" in implementing the policy.

"It's important to discuss all the provisions and the nitty-gritty of this document. It can only be implemented

NARENDRA MODI
Prime Minister


RAM NATH KOVIND
President


The Prime Minister urged the States to hold consultations with stakeholders on the implementation of the policy by September 25.

"When we move towards change, it's natural for doubts and questions to arise in people's minds," he said.

'Hold discussions'

Parents may have questions about subject stream flexibility, teachers may want to know about the curriculum design and other stakeholders may have doubts about the availability of resources needed to implement the NEP.

Further consultations would be held with the central universities on September 19.

Mr. Modi said the NEP 2020 provided a vision for a new India of the 21st century, in line with its aspirations to be a self-reliant power.

The Prime Minister felt it would help transform the country into a "knowledge economy" and tackle brain drain by paving the way to open local campuses of glo-

once all the doubts and questions in people's minds are addressed," Mr. Modi said.

With Governors being the Chancellors of the 400-plus universities – which have more than 40,000 affiliated colleges – they have a crucial role to play in the implementation of the NEP.

Further consultations would be held with the central universities on September 19.

Mr. Modi said the NEP 2020 provided a vision for a new India of the 21st century, in line with its aspirations to be a self-reliant power.

The Prime Minister felt it would help transform the country into a "knowledge economy" and tackle brain drain by paving the way to open local campuses of glo-

bal educational institutions.

The policy would also prepare the country's youth for the jobs of the future, in a world where the nature of work was undergoing change.

The focus on critical thinking, instead of mere curricular studying, as well as the emphasis on vocational education, would equip Indian students with the skills needed for the global workforce, he pointed out.

President's call

Addressing the conference, President Ram Nath Kovind urged the Central and State governments to increase their percentage of investment in research and innovation.

Mr. Kovind noted that such investment was only 0.7% of the GDP in India, in comparison to 2.8% in the U.S., 4.2% in South Korea and 4.3% in Israel.

"Education is the most effective means of social justice and personal advancement. There is no better investment than that in education to improve the future of society," he said.

The goal of investing 6% of the GDP in public education had remained unreachable since it was originally made in the 1968 Education Policy, the President added.

Hypersonic cruise vehicle test puts India in elite club

DRDO says it will help develop hypersonic cruise missiles

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The hypersonic air-breathing scramjet technology was successfully demonstrated by the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) on Monday with a flight test of the hypersonic technology demonstrator vehicle (HSTDV), which will lead to the development of hypersonic cruise missiles and vehicles in future.

"It's a major technological breakthrough in the country. This testing paves the way for development of more critical technologies, materials and hypersonic vehicles. This puts India in a select club of nations that have demonstrated this technology," DRDO chairman G. Satheesh Reddy said.

A test of the technology demonstrator was conducted in June 2019. "With this success, all critical technologies are now established to progress to the next phase," Defence Minister Rajnath Singh tweeted.

The HSTDV took off at 11.03 a.m. from the Dr. APJ Abdul Kalam launch complex on Wheeler Island off the Odisha coast. "The hypersonic cruise vehicle was launched using a proven solid rocket motor, which took it to an altitude of 30 km, where the aerodynamic heat shields were separated at supersonic speed," the source noted.

The vehicle reaches a certain altitude, then cruises

Need for speed

A few features of the hypersonic technology demonstrator vehicle

- It attained a speed of Mach 6 or six times the speed of sound
- Reached altitude of 30 km where heat shields separated at hypersonic speed
- It will help in development of hypersonic cruise missiles
- Most missiles use the ramjet engine, which operates at supersonic speeds of up to Mach 3



and also reaches very high temperatures, up to 1,000° to 2,000° Celsius, during re-entry.

"After the Anti-Satellite Test, this is the biggest achievement recently," the source pointed out.

Critical events such as fuel injection and auto ignition of the scramjet demonstrated technological maturity, the DRDO said. "The scramjet engine performed in a textbook manner. It worked at high dynamic pressure and at very high temperature."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated the DRDO on Twitter. "The scramjet engine developed by our scientists helped the flight achieve a speed six times the speed of sound! Very few countries have such capability today."

Delhi metro chugs off to cautious start

Around 15,500 passengers availed of the service in eight hours of operation



A commuter being scanned with a thermal device at the Jahangirpuri metro station on Monday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. and from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. The timings will increase to 12 hours per day – six hours in the morning, six in the evening – from September 11.

On its first day of resumption since March 22, when services were suspended following the 'Janata Curfew' and lockdown owing to the COVID-19 outbreak, several commuters availed the rapid

A total of 1,115 smart cards were sold on the first day of operations, said the officials.

Under the first stage of graded resumption of services, metro trains are available

from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m. and from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. The timings will increase to 12 hours per day – six hours in the morning, six in the evening – from September 11.

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A slow start: The Delhi Metro (Yellow Line) and the Rapid Metro began restricted operations from Monday; commuters in mask maintain social distance inside a Delhi Metro train. ■ MANOJ KUMAR, SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR



Social distancing easy as metros run nearly empty

Commuters in Delhi and Gurugram say they are satisfied with safety precautions in place at stations and on trains

ASHOK KUMAR
SHINJINI GHOSH
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Metro opened to a lukewarm response from commuters on Monday – five months after it came to a halt due to a lockdown following COVID-19 outbreak.

As part of its graded resumption with staggered timings, the first lines to resume services were the 49 km Samaypur Badli-Huda City Centre corridor (Yellow Line) and the 12 km Rapid Metro in Gurugram – operational from 7 a.m. to 11 a.m., and from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m.

The Rapid Metro network, mostly catering to Cyber City and Golf Course Road, witnessed almost nil ridership. Most commuters welcomed resumption of metro services saying they would save time and money, and added that they were satisfied with the safety measures in place to contain the

spread of the deadly virus. Pooja Soni, an art consultant, said: "Initially, I was apprehensive and had thought that the temperature checks would not be done properly. But then I saw that every rule is being followed quite strictly. As long as one does not step into crowded coaches and so on, it should be fine."

The Hauz Khas station, a major interchange between the Yellow and Magenta lines remained nearly deserted.

Shrishti Sharma (28), travelling from the station to Central Secretariat, said: "I am a regular metro commuter and I have never seen this station empty. For the first day, all arrangements and precautions look fine. We can only hope this will continue and everyone will follow the rules."

Motur Rahman, another passenger travelling from the Hauz Khas station to Gurugram, said: "Even though the



A commuter at Rajiv Chowk metro station in New Delhi on Monday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

number of COVID-19 cases are increasing, ultimately we need to take care of ourselves. Additionally, with the state of the economy, it was imperative that metro services resume so that some revenue can be generated."

With a drastic reduction in the number of commuters, social distancing on the first day was not an issue. Carrying capacity of trains have also been reduced to 20% of pre-lockdown period.

Ashu Panwar (22), a resident of Shahdara, said she had to shift to Gurugram a few weeks back as it was not feasible for her to make the daily commute to work.

A special needs children educator, Ms. Panwar said she could now return to Delhi and stay with her family.

"As soon as I entered the station, the staff checked my temperature, sanitised my hand bag and asked me to sanitise my hands. Only four

people were travelling in my coach so social distancing was not an issue," she added.

At the HUDA City Centre metro station in Gurugram – one of the busiest stations with a footfall of around 1.5 lakh daily prior to lockdown – metro employees and media persons outnumbered commuters.

Many unaware

While there was heavy deployment of Delhi Metro staff and volunteers, many reaching the stations were not aware of the scaled-down operations and restricted timings. At the entry gates, passengers were also asked to show their status on the Aarogya Setu app.

With tokens being discontinued and recharge facilities of smart cards made completely cashless, many commuters returned dejected.

Saty Narain (65), was left stranded at HUDA City

Centre metro station after staff refused to accept cash in return for a Smart Card.

Not all were on board with resuming services.

Heman (31), an IT engineer, said that opening the metro was not a good idea with cases on the rise.

He said he would avoid travelling by buses or metro trains till the time the corona scare lasted.

"I have taken the metro because my motorcycle broke down today," said Mr. Hemant, on his way to work in Delhi from Gurugram's IFCCO Chowk metro station.

Meanwhile, the Noida-Greater Noida Aqua Line, which also resumed services on Monday, saw a ridership of just around 600 passengers till 8 p.m.

The 389-km Delhi Metro network, including Rapid Metro and Noida-Greater Aqua Line, will become fully operational by September 12.

Boy steals ₹2 lakh from grandfather for PUBG

No FIR registered as case is withdrawn

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

ledge. The money was the part of his pension fund.

"The money was transferred from his account into a Paytm wallet, which was in the name of the complainant's neighbour. The neighbour disclosed that the said Paytm account was operated by the complainant's grandson," said a police officer.

The grandson was questioned and he said he spent all the money to buy features for the online game. However, after the game was banned in India, all his investment went in vain.

"The boy had been regularly withdrawing money in small denominations. He used to delete SMS alerts from his grandfather's phone," added the officer. No FIR was registered into the matter as the grandfather withdrew the complaint.

The man alleged that he had received a message from the bank alerting him of a deduction of ₹2,500 from his pension account. He claimed he had not made any withdrawal. The complaint was transferred to the district cybercell.

During investigation, the police found a sum of ₹2.34 lakh was withdrawn from his account over the period of time without his knowledge.

Court extends ED custody of Tahir Hussain by 3 days

NEW DELHI
A Delhi court on Monday extended by three days the Enforcement Directorate custody of suspended AAP councillor Tahir Hussain in a money laundering case related to the north-east Delhi riots in February. The ED was probing the allegation that Mr. Hussain and his linked persons laundered about ₹1.10 crore, by using purported shell or dummy companies, to fuel the anti-CAA protests and the riots.

+ Two terror suspects held following exchange of fire

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Two suspected members of banned terrorist group Babbar Khalsa International have been arrested following a brief exchange of fire in north-west Delhi, the police said on Monday.

The accused have been identified as Bhupender alias Dilawar Singh (41) and Kulwant Singh (39), both residents of Ludhiana, the police said. They were also wanted

in some cases in Punjab. They are supporters of Khalistan movement and were planning to execute targeted killings in various States in northern India on the directions of Pakistani ISI sponsored Khalistani leaders, DCP (Special Cell) Sanjeev Kumar Yadav said. Bhupender is part of two pro-Pakistan-related public groups - 'Pakistan Zindabad Khalistan Zindabad' and 'Defenders of Pakistan'.

Lawyers representing riot-accused wary after FIR against advocate +

Probe ordered against Pracha on charges of forgery

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

After an FIR was registered against advocate Mehmoond Pracha, a group of lawyers representing accused in communal riots cases – especially from minority community – have been feeling wary of their professional conduct and suspect it will impact their cases.

An advocate who represents several accused in connection with riots cases said that the matter was discussed with officials and as of now, it was decided that we'll remain calm and there will be no action taken.

Restrict themselves

Another advocate said that it's "human nature" to restrict themselves in such a situation.

"One will restrict themselves mentally, naturally. One will think twice before

being bold in the court and being aggressive to prove faults in the investigation. One will obviously present facts but one would prefer to remain unnoticed," he said.

However, another advocate Shamim Akhter is of a different opinion and stated that he is not scared as he doesn't do anything wrong. "I see my client's interest but I don't have to cross my limit. If I cross that limit then I am taking a risk which I shouldn't. For in-

stance, if my client is bailed on merit, good. If he isn't, I wouldn't tell him ways on how he could get one," he said.

A Delhi court on August 22 ordered probe into the allegations levelled against Mr. Pracha – who is fighting multiple riot cases – after which an FIR was registered into the matter on charges of cheating and forgery.

• False deposition

The case is being probed by Delhi Police's Special Cell

unit. The allegation against the lawyer was that he tutored a complainant to give false deposition to make his case stronger.

Another problem
An advocate said that this is another "problem" which lawyers are facing.

"Complaints approach us and we take their word and later, when it's all out there, they disappear. A woman had alleged sexual assault during the riots but now she is untraceable," he said.

Ad blooper: IIT-Delhi issues clarification

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

IIT-Delhi has clarified that the job advertisement for a "dog handler" posted on August 26 with the eligibility criteria "B.A/B.Sc/B.Com/B.Tech or any equivalent undergraduate degree" was an error and that the qualification intended in the advertisement was Bachelor of Veterinary Science," the institute said.

It added that it has cancelled the current recruitment process after this mistake was brought to the notice of higher authorities and that a fresh process will be initiated to hire a Consultant with suitable minimum qualification.

JNU to organise virtual convocation in Nov.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Jawaharlal Nehru University on Monday said its Executive Council (EC) has decided that the university's fourth convocation will be conducted online in November.

JNU Vice-Chancellor M. Jagadesh Kumar said that the university revived the convocation by holding its second convocation in 2018.

The first convocation was held in 1972.

Commenting on the conduct of the Executive Coun-

like to clarify that the minimum qualification as mentioned in the advertisement got inadvertently copied from another job advertisement. The qualification intended in the advertisement was 'Bachelor of Veterinary Science,' the institute said.

It added that it has cancelled the current recruitment process after this mistake was brought to the notice of higher authorities and that a fresh process will be initiated to hire a Consultant with suitable minimum qualification.

virtual meeting, the JNU Teachers' Association (JNTA) said that disparaging remarks about the JNU faculty were made throughout the meeting and the interventions of their elected representatives were repeatedly sought to be cut short by "muting" them.

The teachers said that the agenda items included irregularities and violation of norms and reservation policy in appointments, which the Executive Council was expected to ratify.

HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT e-Procurement Notice INVITATION FOR BIDS(IFB)

1. The Executive Engineer, Shimla, Division No.1, HPPWD, Shimla-3, H.P on behalf of Governor of H.P invites the online bids on item rate, in electronic tendering system, in 2 Cover System for the under mentioned work from the eligible and approved contractors/firms registered with HPPWD Department.

Sr. No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	EMD	Cost of Tender	Time Allowed
1	Improvement & Upgradation of DublooLaKhoti road km, 0/00 to 5760 (SH- Retaining wall and Breast wall, C.D. Works, M/T works providing and laying V-Shape drain and essential parapets km, 0/00 to 5/760)(Under NABARD RIDF-XXV)	11540208/-	148000/-	5000/-	365days

2. Availability of Bid Document and mode of submission: The Bid document is available online and bid should be submitted in online mode on website <https://htpnders.gov.in>. Bidder would be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities (CA). Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-tendering in HPPWD may obtain the same from the website: <https://htpnders.gov.in>. Digital signature is mandatory to participate in the e-tendering. Bidders already possessing the digital signature issued from authorized CAs can use the same in this tender.

3. Key Dates:

1. Date of Online Publication	25-09-2020 18.00 HRS
2. Document Download Start and End Date	25-09-2020 18.00 HRS upto 12-10-2020 16.00 HRS
3. Bid Submission Start and End Date	25-09-2020 18.00 HRS upto 12-10-2020 16.00HRS
4. Physical Submission of EMD and Cost of Tender Document	13-10-2020 upto 10.30HRS
5. Date of opening of Technical Bid	13-10-2020 11:00 HRS
6. Date of opening of Financial Bid	

4. TENDER DETAILS:
The Tender Documents shall be uploaded online in 2 Cover.
i). Cover 1: Shall contain scanned copies of all " Technical documents/ Eligibility information."
ii). Cover 2: Shall contain " BOQ / Financial Bid", where contractor will quote his offer for each item.

5. SUBMISSION OF ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS: The bidders are required to submit (a) original demand draft towards the cost of bid document and (b) original bid security/Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) and other Technical Documents in the O/o Executive Engineer Shimla Division No-IHPPWD, Shimla-3as specified in Key dates Sr. No. 4 on Tender Opening Date, failing which the bids will be declared non-responsive.

6. BID OPENING DETAILS: The Technical bids shall be opened on 13-10-2020 at 11:00 HRS in the office of Executive Engineer, Shimla HPPWD Shimla, H.P. by the authorised officer. In their interest the tenderer are advised to be present along with original documents at the time of opening of tenders. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

7. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period not less than 120 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

8. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents. The officer inviting tender shall not be held liable for any delays due to system failure beyond its control. Even though the system will attempt to notify the bidders of any bid updates, the Employer shall not be liable for any information not received by the bidder. It is the bidders' responsibility to verify the website for the latest information related to the tender.

Eligibility criteria:-
(i) The bidders must have successfully completed similar nature of one work not less than 40 % of estimated cost during the last five years under Govt. Department State or Central PSU's (without Liquidated damages or compensation).
(ii) The executive Engineer reserves the right to accept/reject any tender/application or all tenders without assigning any reason.

Executive Engineer, Shimla Division No. 1 HPPWD Shimla-3 H.P. on behalf of Governor of Himachal Pradesh

HP / 2766/20-21

Uttarakhand Police Headquarters 12 Subhash Marg Dehradun RE-E-Tender Notice

For more information of E-tender Please Login <http://uktenders.gov.in>
DIPR/UK/12988

Government of Jammu & Kashmir OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL HOSPITAL AND CENTRAL HEATING DIVISION SRINAGAR Telefax:- 0194-2496089, Email ID:- xenmhchdk@yahoo.in Gist of e-tender

NIT No: MHCHD/TS /2020-21/75/e-tendering, Dated:-04.09.2020

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of Jammu and Kashmir UT, e-tenders, valid for 180 days, are invited from the Registered, reputed & experienced firms as detailed in the NIT for below mentioned works:-

Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees)	Earnest Money (Lacs of Rs)	Time of completion (in months)	Position of AAA/funds
Supply, installation, testing and commissioning of Medical Gases Pipe system at District Hospital, Ganderbal along with operation for 06 Months and Maintenance for 3 years	46.66	2000	0.94	20	Available

1. **Downloading of Bids:-** The NIT Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in from 05.09.2020 (18.00 hrs) and can be downloaded from 05.09.2020 (18.00 hrs).

2. **Uploading:** The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site from 05.09.2020 (10.00 hrs) to 16.09.2020 (15:00 hrs) in two (02) covers.

3. **Opening of Bids:-** The bids received upto due date and time shall be opened on at 17.09.2020 15.00 hrs or any date convenient to the department in the office of Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar. Sd/-Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar

DIPK-5197/20

Timings
DELHI

TUESDAY, SEP. 08
RISE 06:03 SET 18:34
RISE 22:14 SET 11:07
WEDNESDAY, SEP. 09
RISE 06:04 SET 18:33
RISE 22:52 SET 12:01
THURSDAY, SEP. 10
RISE 06:04 SET 18:32
RISE 23:36 SET 12:57

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	34	26
Safdarjung	34	26
Palam	33	27

Delhi Palam Today
36°C Dry weather with warm afternoon and partly cloudy sky likely.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
37°C A comfortable morning turns very warm day with partly cloudy sky likely.

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THE HINDU

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IN BRIEF

Former Chief Secretary dies of COVID-19

NEW DELHI
Deepak Mohan Spolia, an IAS officer of 1979-AGMUT cadre who served in various capacities in Delhi government schools, including Chief Secretary, passed away after contracting COVID-19 here on Sunday. Spolia, 55, was admitted at Max Hospital in Saket. Having served in several capacities in the Delhi government during his career, Spolia was credited with having played a significant role in the regularisation of unauthorised colonies during the Sheila Dikshit government.

BJP protest against govt. for withholding funds

NEW DELHI
BJP Delhi president Adesh Gupta on Monday led a foot march along with party councilors of all the three Municipal Corporations from the Civic Center to the Delhi Secretariat in protest against the Delhi government for withholding corporation funds. Mr. Gupta termed "very sad" that the employees of the corporations who worked at the risk of losing their lives during the pandemic now had to protest for their salary.

'Brutally removed by police during protest'

Give salary to civic body workers: AAP

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI
The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Monday said party leaders protesting outside the Civic Centre against non-payment of salaries to municipal corporation workers were "brutally" removed by the police and later detained.

'Taken into custody'

The party said the BJP won't be able to suppress AAP's voice with "dictatorship". Addressing a press conference, AAP leader

DERC reduces fixed rates for non-domestic users

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI
In a relief to non-domestic (commercial and industrial) consumers, the Delhi Electricity Regulatory Commission (DERC) has dropped the fixed charges for unutilised capacity by 50% for April and May, the Delhi government said on Monday.

The total unutilised capacity during this period was 80%, out of which 84% pertains to non-domestic consumers and 75% for industrial consumers. The charges

Fewer cases as testing dips 38%

City reports 2,077 new infections; third sero survey sample collection completed

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

With the number of tests falling by 38%, the city on Monday recorded 2,077 fresh COVID-19 cases in the past 24 hours, according to a health bulletin released by the government. The total cases now stand at 1,93,526.

On Sunday, 3,256 new cases were reported and 36,046 tests were conducted, which fell to 22,954 as per Monday's bulletin.

32 more deaths

The average number of tests done in the past three days is 37,053. Also, 32 more fatali-



A woman gets tested for the virus in north Delhi on Monday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

ties have been reported, taking the death toll to 4,599.

Of the total cases, 1,68,384 people have recovered and there are 20,543 active cases. Monday also witnessed an increase in the number of

active cases and people admitted in hospitals.

Though the number of new cases has been seeing a spike, the new cases is less compared to June.

On June 23, daily new cases touched almost 4,000 – highest so far. Also in June, the average daily tests were around 20,000 or lesser, which has gone up in September.

The number of active cases in the city on Monday was high compared to August.

The number of positive people under home isolation was 11,613 on Monday and is the highest in over 55 days.

People in hospitals – 5,218

– are also the highest in more than two months. The number of containment zones in the city has jumped to 1,114, which has been increasing for about 20 days.

The government on Monday also completed collecting blood samples for the third serological survey to find the percentage of the population with antibodies against the virus.

The first survey had shown that 22.8% of people surveyed had developed antibodies and the second survey had shown 29.1% had antibodies.

Delhi govt. sets up testing camp inside Parliament

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government on Monday said it has set up a COVID-19 testing camp inside Parliament and is awaiting venue options from the administrative departments of many Central government buildings across Lutyens' Delhi for the same.

"Recommendations regarding the venue and size of the camps are expected to be received over the coming few days," said a government official, adding that the government is inching closer to its target of 40,000 daily tests. The government has already ramped up testing

for COVID-19 at transit points and court complexes.

The rationale behind setting up camps at such buildings is to allow more testing as people return to their "normal" work routine, a source said.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had on August 26 announced that the number of daily tests would be doubled from 20,000 to 40,000.

Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal at a meeting of the Delhi Disaster Management Authority on Wednesday had directed that testing facilities be ramped up at transit points and larger construction sites in the city.

1-day special House session on Sept. 14

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Cabinet on Monday approved a one-day special session of the Delhi Legislative Assembly on September 14.

Sources termed the session a routine and procedural affair in accordance with the provisions of the Transaction of Business Rules. The sitting will be held with arrangements similar to the five-day Budget Session of the Delhi Assembly, which was truncated to one-day due to the pandemic. "The agenda is yet to be determined," an official said.

National Education Policy lacks action plan, says Sisodia

It must be implemented carefully

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Education Minister Manish Sisodia on Monday said that the new National Education Policy lacks the action plan to implement it and that the execution of the policy should be carefully planned so that it is not limited to just a "wonderful idea".

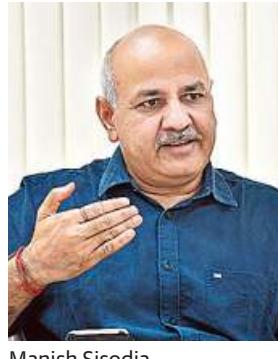
Mr. Sisodia was speaking at a videoconference organised by the Ministry of Education on the role of the National Education Policy 2020, and was attended by the President, Prime Minister, Governors, Lt. Governors and Education Ministers of various States.

Not employable

Mr. Sisodia said that at present, over 80% of the youth having a degree are not considered employable and that the policy needs to address whose fault it is.

Speaking about vocational degree courses that the NEP talks about, Mr. Sisodia said it was inappropriate to treat vocational degree differently from undergraduate degree in any other subject and that these courses should be given equal importance.

"It is necessary to put national education policy into practice rather than restricting it to only wishful



Manish Sisodia

thinking. This policy talks about spending 6% of GDP on education. It had been said in the 1968 policy as well but was never implemented. Thus, a law should be made so that successive governments are bound by it and necessary resources needed for effective implementation of the policy can be guaranteed," he said.

Role learning

Mr. Sisodia also stressed on the importance to do away with rote learning and examination-oriented education which causes immense pressure and stress among students. Welcoming the inclusion of early childhood education, he said that its success would depend on training teachers to provide the foundation for children instead of assigning the role to anganwadi workers.

Brahmins, Dalits tortured in U.P. under Adityanath'

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI
Attacking the BJP, AAP on Monday alleged that Dalits and Brahmins were being "tortured" in Uttar Pradesh.

"Since Yogi Adityanath became the Chief Minister of U.P., there has been oppression against brahmins and dalits. In U.P., being a Brahmin has become the biggest crime. A man dying every other day is a Mishra, Dubey, Pandey, Sharma or Bajpai," said AAP chief spokesperson Saurabh Bharadwaj at a press meet.

"It was very evident that a certain section of the Hindu community get preference in everything. Mr. Adityanath whose real name is Ajay Mohan Singh Bisht comes from the Thakur community. In the government jobs and for that in the top posts, the Thakur community is getting the preference," said Mr. Bharadwaj.

He alleged that a three-

Issue digital degrees to DU students within 7 days'

HC says students need papers for admission in universities abroad and for jobs

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The High Court on Monday directed Delhi University (DU) to issue digital degree certificates to students, who have already graduated and urgently require the document for taking admission in a foreign university or for employment, within seven working days.

Justice Prathiba M. Singh expressed displeasure that despite its earlier order, the

university was not issuing digital degrees to pass out students and was demanding physical copy of proofs attached in the email requesting issuance of the document. The court directed the university to place before it separately, the timeline by when digital degrees will be issued on urgent and non-urgent requests.

The court was informed that till now 30,000 students have given requests on the

varsity's portal for digital degree certificates.

Earlier on August 7, the court had passed an order on a bunch of petitions, putting in place a proper procedure for issuance of degree certificates through an online mechanism to ensure that delay in printing of degree certificates does not become an impediment to students who need it.

It had directed that DU shall ensure that students'

digital degree certificates are issued within a period of one week from registration.

On Monday, the court was informed that data of 28,000 students which constitute half of the students who graduated in 2017 have been uploaded on 'DigiLocker', an initiative by the IT Ministry. However, to access it, students' date of birth is required and DU is yet to obtain it from respective colleges, the court noted.

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THE HINDU

India's National Newspaper

BHARAT MAA

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In your good days everybody seems to be fair, supportive, respectful and what not, towards you.

But in the slightest adverse circumstances of yours, many people turn unfair, unnecessarily oppose you, get disrespectful, publicise wrong things through media, and even go to courts with PIL etc.

A small negative point is so blown out of proportion that all the positive and rightful aspects are callously overlooked.

This is today's world. It is sad but we cannot change it. We have to live with it.

Today, only one small negative point of ours is that we are making delayed payments to our esteemed investors, though we are paying full interest of the delayed period.

THE REASON OF DELAYED PAYMENT

Owing to the embargo imposed for last 7 years by the Hon'ble Supreme Court, any money generated through selling or mortgaging our assets of the entire group (including Cooperatives) or from joint ventures will be deposited in the Sahara-SEBI account, as per the directives of Hon'ble Supreme Court. Out of this, we cannot use even a single rupee for organizational work not even for repayment to the esteemed investors.

On the other hand, till date, approximately ₹22,000 crore including interest has been deposited in the Sahara-SEBI account, whereas, despite giving four rounds of advertisements in 154 newspapers by SEBI in last 7 years across the country, SEBI has repaid only ₹106.10 crore to the esteemed investors. In its last advertisement that was published around a year ago, SEBI made it clear that it would not entertain any further claim thereafter. It means there is no claim left. The only reason that SEBI didn't receive any further claim was that Sahara Group had already repaid to its esteemed investors. As per the directives of the Hon'ble Supreme Court, this amount of ₹22,000 crore will eventually come back to Sahara after due verification.

However, we have a very solid footing. Not a single rupee of our esteemed investors or for that matter, of any creditor of SAHARA is at the slightest risk. Nobody should think apprehensively as their every penny is absolutely safe.

THE LATEST AND THE MOST FAIR VALUE OF OUR ASSETS IS WORTH ₹2,59,900 CRORE.

WE ARE COMMITTED TO OUR VALUES AND FUNDAMENTALS THAT ARE VERY STRONG AND DEEPLY ROOTED IN OUR PUBLIC FUNCTIONING

WE THE FAMILY OF 12 LAKH WORKERS OF SAHARA INDIA PARIWAR

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD; POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 11.00 HRS)

Forecast for Tuesday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Sikkim, sub-Himalayan West Bengal, east Uttar Pradesh, central Maharashtra, Rayalseema, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, Kerala, Mahe and Lakshadweep

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	35.4	27.2	Kozhikode	108.2	30.6	23.4
Ahmedabad	—	35.1	27.2	Kurnool	—	37.0	25.7
Aizawl	—	28.6	19.9	Lucknow	—	37.2	27.0
Allahabad	—	36.7	27.8	Madurai	1.3	36.4	23.6
Bengaluru	—	29.8	20.5	Mangaluru	5.9	30.4	23.5
Bhopal	—	34.2	23.5	Mumbai	10.6	32.5	25.4
Dhubaneswar	—	35.2	26.4	Mysuru	10	—	21.9
Chandigarh	—	35.9	25.3	New Delhi	—	34.0	25.8
Chennai	—	34.7	27.4	Patna	3.9	30.8	25.6
Coimbatore	6.9	30.5	22.2	Pond Blair	—	—	27.0
Dehradoon	—	33.7	22.1	Puducherry	—	34.6	25.2
Gangtok	54	19.2	17.1	Pune	37.7	32.5	22.5
Goa	24.8	31.4	23.6	Raipur	—	34.6	26.2
Guwahati	1.4	32.0	24.6	Ranchi	23	32.8	—
Hubballi	—	30.0	22.0	Shillong	13.5	22.8	17.6
Hyderabad	—	34.1	25.0	Shimla	6.5	24.3	16.5
Imphal	0.4	30.2	21.6	Srinagar	2.4	28.3	14.8
Jaipur	37.4	32.6	26.7	Tiruchirappalli	115.2	31.8	22.9
Kochi	145.8	30.2	23.0	Vijayawada	—	33.8	24.2
Kohima	1.6	28.2	18.0	Visakhapatnam	—	35.6	25.8
Kolkata	—	34.8	28.1		—	33.8	27.6

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES SO₂ NO₂ CO PM2.5 PM10 CODE

Ahmedabad..... 13 .38 36 50 59 2

Bengaluru..... 11 .32 73 84 2

Chennai..... — 52 22 91 20 2

Delhi..... 22 46 49 149 124 2

Hyderabad..... 5.5 52 11 41 61 2

Kolkata..... 14 .13 58 14 22 2

Lucknow..... 6 .37 29 112 98 2

Mumbai..... 14 .20 52 89 2

Pune..... 34 .15 57 31 29 2

Visakhapatnam..... 12 .29 23 28 49 2

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Greater Noida, Uttar Pradesh recorded the overall air quality index (AQI) score of 174 indicating a moderate level of pollution. In contrast, Elor, Kerala recorded a healthy AQI score of 15

Air Quality Code: ■ Poor ■ Moderate ■ Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

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

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

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

Pune district officials come hard on those flouting COVID-19 rules

More than ₹1 crore in fines collected from 40,000 violators in a week, says ZP CEO

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE

PUNE

To curb the alarming spread of novel coronavirus in Pune's rural areas, the district administration and the police are cracking down on citizens flouting COVID-19 regulations by not wearing masks or adhering to other precautionary measures. The administration has so far collected more than ₹1.13 crore in fines from nearly 40,000 violators in a week's time, Pune Zilla Parishad chief executive officer (CEO) Arush Prasad said.

The Pune Municipal Corporation (PMC), too, has started taking offenders to task with the Pune City police collecting ₹25 lakh in fines from more than 5,000 people in just three days.

"At a time when cases are surging drastically, it is vital that people behave in a more responsible manner. We have penalised around 40,000 people from more than 1,400 gram panchayats, who were found moving about without wearing protective gear like face masks, or were caught spitting and not following social distancing norms," Mr. Prasad said.

The fines were collected by the police and gram panchayat officials with Haveli and Indapur leading the offenders' list among the 13 talukas in the district.

"Fines totalling ₹22 lakh from nearly 8,000 residents of Haveli and around ₹15 lakh from more than 8,500 people from Indapur were collected," Mr. Prasad said.

The district has been witnessing more than 4,000 cases each day in the last fortnight, clocking a record jump of nearly 5,000 fresh



Good samaritan: Christian volunteer Sagai Nair (right) and volunteers from a Muslim group carry the coffin of a COVID-19 victim at a cemetery in Pune on Monday. ■ AFP

cases for the last two days consecutively.

While acknowledging the steep rise in cases, Mr. Prasad pointed out that the mortality rate had gone down.

"About 80% of the cases are to be found in just 69 gram panchayats, which constitute just 5% of the total gram panchayats in Pune district. So, we are working on reducing cases and fatalities in these areas," the CEO said.

He said that a massive increase in the rural medical infrastructure had been effected in the last two weeks.

"During this period, we have opened seven additional COVID-19 care centres (CCCs) and four new district Covid health centres (DCHCs), and made one district Covid hospital (DCH)

total 1,098 oxygen beds and 1,019 ICU beds of whom 191 have ventilators, officials said. The 'penalising' drive of Pune district officials comes in the wake of recent review meetings held by Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar, Union Minister Prakash Javadekar, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, and State Health Minister Rajesh Tope – all of whom expressed concern over the case surge.

The district currently has more than two lakh reported COVID-19 cases, making it the worst-hit in the country. Of them, more than 35,000 are active cases (around 10,000 of these are from the rural parts of Pune) while nearly 4,700 people have succumbed to the virus thus far.

Spraying disinfectants on people to fight virus not recommended: govt.

Why tunnels not banned yet, asks SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Spraying of disinfectants on humans causes both physical and psychological harm, the Union Ministry of Health informed the Supreme Court on Monday.

"Spraying of disinfectants on humans is not recommended under any circumstances," it said.

The Ministry was responding to a petition filed by Gurjimran Singh Narula questioning the efficacy of disinfection tunnels, spraying of disinfectants and fogging as means to prevent coronavirus infection.

The Ministry said it had "nowhere issued any advisory/guidelines/SOPs for usage, installation, production, advertisement of disinfection tunnels to spray/fumigate chemical or organic disinfectants in workspace, public spaces, etc".

In indoor spaces, routine application of disinfectants to environmental surfaces by spraying or fogging is not recommended for COVID-19 as the disinfectant may not be effective in removing organic material and may miss surfaces shielded by objects, folded fabrics or surfaces with intricate designs", a 44-page affidavit filed by the Ministry said.



Contentious technology: A man passes through a disinfectant tunnel in Thane in this July photo. ■ PTI

Centre launches 24/7 toll-free mental health rehab helpline

It will provide support to people facing anxiety, stress

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

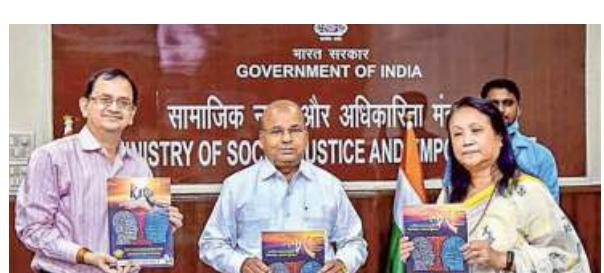
The Union Social Justice and Empowerment Ministry on Monday launched a 24/7 toll-free helpline to provide support to people facing anxiety, stress, depression, suicidal thoughts and other mental health concerns.

The mental health rehabilitation helpline, KIRAN, can be called from landline and mobile phones across the country at the number 1800-599-0019, the Ministry announced.

In a statement, the Ministry said the helpline had been launched "in view of the growing incidence of mental illness, particularly in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic."

Lack of professionals

Speaking during the online launch event, Joint Secretary Prabodh Seth said there was a shortage of qualified mental health professionals while 10.6% of adults and 7.3% of adolescents faced mental illness, according to a NIMHANS survey in 2015-2016. He said the helpline operators had been sensitised not to ask the caller for



Help a call away: Minister Thaawarchand Gehlot launches the mental health rehabilitation helpline in New Delhi. ■ PTI

name or any identification details.

The helpline would function as the first step for callers to get advice, counselling and referral to psychologists and psychiatrists, the statement said. The helpline will be available in 13 languages and has 660 clinical/rehabilitation psychologists and 668 psychiatrists as volunteers.

While the helpline was formally launched by Social Justice and Empowerment Minister Thaawarchand Gehlot on Monday, testing has been on since last month.

Speaking during the virtual launch, Dr. Amita Sahay of the National Institute for the Empowerment of

Persons with Intellectual Disabilities (NIEPED) said the helpline was already receiving calls from school and college students anxious due to the COVID-19 pandemic. She said some of the students were showing symptoms of depression and reported not being able to sleep.

Dr. Mita Singhal of the Pt. Deendayal Upadhyaya National Institute for Persons with Physical Disabilities said persons with disabilities had reached out to the helpline due to anxiety linked to the pandemic situation. She said the helpline was connecting them with psychologists as well as advising them to do breathing exercises, among other tips.

Police book 19 MNS workers for forcibly opening temple

RAINA ASSAINAR

NAVI MUMBAI

The police on Monday booked 19 Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) workers for allegedly breaking the lock of a temple in Panvel.

The party claimed that even after various warnings, the State government did not allow the opening of the temples and hence, they decided to take things into their hands.

"The State is undergoing unlock phases. Malls and alcohol shops have been

opened, and buses are plying. Temple is the most needed place for people right now for emotional support. Yet, the government is not opening them," Yogesh Chirle, MNS workers union secretary, said.

He added that MNS chief Raj Thackeray had written to the State government urging it to open the temples or else party workers would open them. "Hence, we did that at Virupaksha temple in Panvel," Mr. Chirle said.

A week ago, BJP workers,

Chaos ahead of monsoon session over COVID-19 test reports

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

Chaotic scenes were witnessed on the Maharashtra Vidhan Bhavan premises on Monday before the commencement of the two-day monsoon session of the legislature as several MLAs were not allowed inside since their COVID-19 test reports were not available.

Former speaker Haribhau

Bagade and other legislators, who were not able to enter the Vidhan Bhavan, complained to Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar when he arrived there.

Mr. Pawar called legislature secretary Rajendra Bhagwat and asked him to ensure that all legislators whose test reports were negative be allowed inside at the earliest.

"Check the badges of members and their test reports first. Many members have got their tests done privately, allow them in if their reports are negative," Mr. Pawar told the legisla-

ture staff.

According to Vidhan Bhavan sources, 2,115 samples for COVID-19 tests were collected from legislators, ministers, bureaucrats, legislature staff members, and journalists over the weekend. So far, 58 samples have tested positive, the sources said.



Test by choice

India needs a more nuanced approach to COVID-19 testing

On September 4, India crossed four million novel coronavirus cases, 13 days after crossing three million on August 22. On Saturday, the fresh cases reported surpassed China's total recorded cases (90,070) so far. On Sunday, India surpassed Brazil to record the second highest number of cases in the world. Since August, India has been reporting the highest number of cases each day, which has been steadily increasing – from over 50,000 in the last week of July to over 60,000 in the first week of August, over 70,000 in the fourth week, before jumping to over 80,000 cases in September. Though the number of tests done each day has been over one million for the past week, the test positivity rate nationally is still high at 7.7%, indicating that testing has to be ramped up. Though the testing done each day by many States has been growing, nearly 50% of them are rapid antigen, of only about 50-60% sensitivity. Unfortunately, with no repeat testing of negative cases and only a small percentage of people with symptoms but negative results being validated with a RT-PCR, many of the infected are not being diagnosed.

The ICMR's latest advisory provides for testing on demand to "ensure higher levels of testing". While ramping up testing is needed, testing on demand by anyone might not be the correct approach to adopt. The ICMR is theoretically making India's 1.3 billion people eligible for a test, even when there is no capacity to undertake this. While it is a welcome measure, especially in the private sector, the general fear about infection might result in diverting some of the government's stretched health resources if it has to test those who do not, on the face of it, require a test. With States not validating the negative results from rapid antigen tests with RT-PCR, non-directed tests on demand might help more in increasing the number of tests done each day and hence in reducing the test positivity rate than in early detection and containment. The focus must remain on diagnosing the most probable cases listed out by the ICMR – those with symptoms or at high risk. Since many of those infected have mild or no symptoms, tests on demand might be particularly helpful in detecting cases that might otherwise have been missed. But such a strategy should be restricted to clusters, hotspots, and containment zones, besides dense urban areas with anticipated high transmission in the unlock phase. Else, States might be forced to use their discretionary power to deny tests for people not exhibiting symptoms or in low-risk categories, or selectively charge for testing to pay for procurement of testing kits and to avoid more pressure on the testing infrastructure. There is also the possibility of an over-reliance on antigen testing to cope with the growing demand for testing. A more nuanced approach to testing guidelines is therefore necessary.

Deal in danger

A no-deal Brexit has economic costs and puts at risk the hard-won peace in Northern Ireland

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson's move to set an October 15 deadline for reaching a post-Brexit U.K.-EU trade deal has raised fears of a no-deal scenario. While his threat hangs like the sword of Damocles above the negotiating teams, the British government is reportedly planning a piece of legislation that would overrule parts of the withdrawal agreement – the divorce deal signed between the U.K. and the EU last year. The agreement had sought to avoid a hard border coming up between Northern Ireland, which is part of the U.K., and the Irish Republic, an EU member. According to the Northern Ireland protocol, signed alongside the agreement, the region is expected to follow some EU rules in trade with the Irish Republic. The hard Brexiteers in Mr. Johnson's Conservative Party were critical of this clause, claiming that it endangers the U.K.'s sovereignty. Now, the planned domestic legislation, the Internal Market and Finances Bill, will allow U.K. courts to follow new U.K. laws rather than the divorce agreement. Northern Ireland leaders have already called it a "betrayal". The real risk of cutting the region off the EU customs code is that physical checks could emerge between the two Irelands, threatening the Good Friday agreement that brought peace.

Though the U.K. formally exited the union, it continues to abide by the EU rules during the transition period, which ends in December. The challenge is to reach a trade deal in the absence of which WTO trade rules will kick in, starting January. With weeks to go before the deadline, there is still no consensus on issues such as workers' rights, environmental regulations, state aid to businesses and the Irish border. While the EU wants the U.K. to adopt rules that are close to its own to ensure a "level playing field" in trade, the British government argues that the whole point of the EU divorce was to break free from common rules. Regarding Northern Ireland, the hard Brexiteers are opposed to any special treatment to the region. The new legislation suggests that the government is hardening its position on Ireland as well. Driven by English nationalist fervour, the British leadership appears to be blind to the economic and political consequences of its hard line. The Brexiteers have already pushed the U.K. into an untenable position in Europe. A no-deal exit will inflict severe economic costs on the British, at a time when the economy is in dire straits due to COVID-19. Besides, it risks disrupting peace in the island of Ireland. Mr. Johnson and his cabinet should ask themselves whether the no-deal risk is worth taking. They should instead respect the withdrawal agreement, and be flexible in the talks as well as on deadlines. Both sides should focus on reaching a consensus on trade and other future relations, and not on ending the relationship at any cost.

China's LAC aggression, India's obfuscation

There are important reasons for the government's confusing claims, political grandstanding and blurring of facts



HAPPYMON JACOB

For a political party that never misses out on even a remote opportunity to indulge in aggressive military talk, the Bharatiya Janata Party and the government led by it seem to be sending out confusing signals about the ongoing India-China stand-off on the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Media reports about the Chinese aggression started trickling in from April this year, and yet there continues to be little clarity even today either in the country's strategic community or the general public on the exact nature of developments on the China-India border. Did the Chinese soldiers indeed cross the LAC and capture Indian territory? Is the People's Liberation Army (PLA) currently in possession of Indian territory? What exactly are the two sides talking about in their discussions pertaining to 'disengagement'? How does New Delhi plan to retake lost territory?

Unanswered questions

While the Prime Minister had claimed on June 20 that "neither has anyone intruded into the Indian territory nor has anyone captured any military posts", the Ministry of External Affairs' press note of June 17 had said that "the Chinese side sought to erect a structure in Galwan valley on our side of the LAC". Adding to this confusion, India's Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla said as recently as in early September that it "cannot be business as usual" with China until the status quo is restored on the disputed border. One thing that emerges from these and other contradictory statements is that something is not adding up vis-à-vis the government's claims

about the LAC. Basic questions continue to remain unanswered.

Soft steps, domestic politics

What is also becoming clear is that the government is seeking soft measures in stitching together a response to China. The government's approach, as the External Affairs Minister stated the other day, is that "a solution to the situation has to be found in the domain of diplomacy". Put differently, the BJP government has, on the one hand, decided not to reveal the exact nature of the situation on the LAC and, on the other hand, is attempting to negotiate Chinese withdrawal from Indian territory rather than using kinetic means or tit-for-tat measures to reclaim its territory.

The BJP government's inability to take a factual and unambiguous position on the LAC flows directly from its domestic political calculations. Acknowledging Chinese possession of Indian territory is bad optics for a party whose hardcore supporters revel in the military bravado of the party. Objective facts about adverse territorial possession matter, but not to everyone. In BJP strongholds in the Hindi heartland, upbeat from the inauguration of the Ram temple and the Article 370 'victory', what essentially matters is 'feel good' optics and high-pitched rhetoric about a strong and unrelenting national leadership; not factual, actual positions on the ground regarding India's national interest.

Therefore, even if the BJP's critics, some 'pestering' quarters in the media, and the Opposition cry foul about the government's handling of Chinese aggression on the LAC, it would hardly make any political difference to the party. The BJP is simply not bothered about how it is perceived other than among its core support base. More so, its rather bold policies in Kashmir and towards Pakistan over the years have created sufficient political cushion to absorb a few misadventures or pushbacks, even



if they were to become public knowledge. Obfuscation of facts or confusing signals about the LAC stand-off, therefore, serve an important purpose.

Two-and-a-half front situation

Yet another reason why there is a deliberate attempt to refrain from disclosing full facts of the Chinese action on the LAC to the public is also the recognition within the establishment about the reality of a "two-and-a-half front situation". Not that the Indian military and political leadership have not spoken about it before; but it is far easier to talk about fighting a two-and-a-half front war than actually fighting, and winning, it.

Today, we are literally facing a "two-and-a-half front situation" – a restive Kashmir, an aggressive China and a Pakistan that never misses an opportunity to get at India – together forming a formidable national security challenge. While Pakistan's interference in Kashmir is too well-known to be mentioned here, China may have emerged as a third key player in the Kashmir conflict. This has diplomatically emboldened Pakistan, and it would be unwise for us to rule out more China-Pakistan military and diplomatic coordination against Indian interests in the years ahead. Not that the two had not collaborated before, but this might see an increase in the days ahead.

New Delhi's strategists may have read this situation correctly. If so, it makes perfect sense for the

political masters to underplay its gravity and seek a diplomatic solution to address the most dangerous piece in the "two-and-a-half front situation" – i.e. Chinese aggression on the LAC. In doing so, a confusing narrative is certainly helpful for domestic signalling.

West's support is limited

India's inability to clearly articulate, identify and address the Chinese threat is also a function of another sobering realisation within the establishment regarding the limited utility when it comes to Euro-American assistance in checking China in South Asia. In an international system that is preoccupied with the domestic political, economic and public health worries of COVID-19, there is little enthusiasm to resolutely stand by India in pushing back China. The unpredictability of U.S. President Donald Trump adds to Indian woes, and until a new President is sworn in in January 2021, Washington DC's ability to make up its mind and act on it vis-à-vis China-India affairs would be limited. New Delhi does recognise this lukewarm global mood, and so does Beijing. Picking a fight with China, therefore, is not the wisest strategy; obfuscating the exact nature of the China threat is indeed a much better strategy. In democracies, sometimes partisan political interests trump national interests, and a deeply divided political landscape accentuates such partisan considerations.

The BJP's diplomatic approach to deal with China's aggressive land grab also stems from a capacity deficit. While a bare counting of the Chinese and Indian military capabilities might lead us to believe that we are not militarily far inferior to China, what might offset this consideration is China's growing capabilities in domains such as cyber and space. While India's naval capabilities may be stronger in the Indian Ocean, growing Chinese naval capabilities and its increasing reach in the wide

region around India are also likely to dampen India's enthusiasm about the Euro-Atlantic focus on the Indo-Pacific and the Quad (or the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, which is an informal strategic dialogue between the U.S., India, Japan, and Australia) as tools to check China in the maritime space.

If India is serious about checking China's maritime influence in the region, it would need to invest in more resources to improve its naval capabilities. But where will the money come from? The combined effect of a pre-existing economic slowdown and the impact of COVID-19 on the economy means that the government would struggle to meet its basic expenditure needs for the foreseeable future. Defence expenditure is bound to take a back seat, and the China threat is unlikely to make a difference.

A dissonance

The BJP-led government's confusing claims, political grandstanding and obfuscation of facts have also led to a great deal of elite dissonance within the Indian strategic community on how to address and deal with the China threat. In times of major crises, nations normally stand together and speak in unison, but the LAC crisis does not seem to have brought the country's political and strategic elites together unlike say during the Kargil crisis or the Mumbai terror attacks. The BJP's confusing claims, intended to obfuscate the real nature of the threat, have in many ways led to this elite dissonance. This could have lasting implications for the country including for putting in place coordinated institutional responses to external challenges. No useful theory of victory can be born out of political denials about strategic challenges.

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The search for an end to the complex Naga conflict

The Centre must note that most armed insurrections find resolution in a grey zone called 'compromise'



MAHENDRA L. KUMAWAT &
VINAY KAURA

Despite having huge strategic significance, India's north-eastern frontier has largely remained marginal in the country's popular imagination as well as mainstream politics. The region has witnessed multiple crises including bloody insurrections, but still lacks the emotional resonance of the Kashmir conflict due to geographical, cultural, and ethnic factors.

Rooted in the politics of sub-nationalism, complexities of regional geopolitics and the evolving dynamics of counterinsurgency tactics, the Naga insurgency has defied a lasting solution; it is an extraordinarily complicated conflict whose management has involved a mix of violent response and bargaining.

The absence of R.N. Ravi, the Nagaland Governor and the Centre's interlocutor for Naga peace talks, in the recently-held meeting of the Naga peace process in New Delhi and the subsequent involvement of the Intelligence Bureau to carry the talks further only testifies the intractable nature of the conflict. But it is not negotiable table alone where various issues pertaining to the Naga problem are being discussed and addressed. The politics of its reso-

lution' is taking place at multiple sites.

'Ceasefires' and factions

The Naga insurgency has come a long way, and so has the politics to contain it. In the early phase, the Naga insurgents were provided with what has come to be known as 'safe haven' in Myanmar. India's adversaries (China and Pakistan) also provided them with vital external support at one point of time. A major accommodative tactic in the form of statehood to Nagaland in 1963 was not successful. Thereafter, the constant pressure from security forces coerced the Naga National Council (NNC) to sign the Shillong Accord of 1975, whose offspring was the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (NSCN). When the NSCN split into several factions, the Centre responded with entering into peace negotiations with almost each of them. But the undesirable outcome of these 'ceasefires' has been the creation and existence of unspoken 'spheres of influence'. It is these spheres that have come under increasing scrutiny and attack from the Centre through the Nagaland Governor.

The Modi government and the National Socialist Council of Nagaland (Isak-Muivah), or the NSCN-IM, the most powerful of the Naga insurgent groups which has been in peace talks with the Centre since the 1997 ceasefire, had signed a framework agreement in August 2015 which was claimed a historic achievement at that time. But a final accord has remained elusive since. When the Centre realised



that privileging one insurgent group could eventually distort the contours of the final peace accord, it subsequently enlarged the peace process by roping in seven other Naga insurgent groups under the umbrella of Naga National Political Groups (NNPG). But another important group, the NSCN-Khaplang, whose cadres are reported to be inside Myanmar, is still outside the formal process.

Culture of extortion

Given this complex backdrop, Mr. Ravi's recent letter to Nagaland's Chief Minister Neiphi Rio seems to have opened a Pandora's box. In his widely-circulated letter, Mr. Ravi had expressed his anguish over the culture of extortion and the collapse of general law and order situation in Nagaland, where organised armed gangs run their own parallel 'tax collection' regimes. Extortions in the name of taxes have been a thorny facet of the Naga issue. The 'taxes' levied by insurgent groups are so intricately intertwined in almost all developmental activities in Nagaland that any serious discussion of the issue has been conveniently avoided.

One of the major aims of the NSCN-IM has been to acquire formal recognition to this informal practice through negotiations.

As the Governor has crossed the proverbial Rubicon, the NSCN-IM cannot be happy for the simple reason that it is loath to being branded as an 'armed gang' and is vehemently opposed to the treatment of the Naga issue as a 'law and order' problem. Offended by military actions initiated against its cadres in recent months, the NSCN-IM is equally unnerved over a recent directive by the Nagaland government asking its employees to self-declare the membership of any of their close relatives with underground groups.

Unease over interpretations

There has already been much debate and controversy about the interpretation of 'sovereignty', as reflected in the latest 'Naga Independence Day' speech by NSCN-IM chief Thuingaleng Muivah. Demand for a separate flag and a 'constitution' has been a key hindrance in building trust among the parties. Some Indian States contiguous to Nagaland have been affected through the mobilisation of the Naga population in these States. That is why they are apprehensive of the demand for 'Greater Nagaland', which would imply a ceding of their Naga-inhabited territories. Another significant issue is how the weapons in the NSCN-IM camps are going to be managed. As a 'ceasefire' group, its cadres are supposed to retain their weapons inside the designated camps for self-defence only, but

more often than not, many influential cadres are seen moving with weapons in civilian localities, leading to many problems. It would be an uphill task for the Centre to ensure that all weapons are surrendered at the time of the final accord.

The last word

The NSCN-IM has demanded the removal of Mr. Ravi as the Centre's interlocutor in the peace process, asking for affirmation of the 2015 framework agreement as being "alive in its original form". What has further widened the trust deficit is the allegation by the NSCN-IM that the interlocutor has subtly manipulated the framework agreement. Was it a case of over-promise and under delivery on the part of Mr. Ravi? Nevertheless, the Centre must keep in mind that most of the armed insurrections across the world do not end in either total victory or comprehensive defeat, but in a grey zone called 'compromise'. It has become even more urgent in view of China's unusually aggressive behaviour in Ladakh. One need not forget that some high-profile NSCN-IM commanders are reported to have fled last year to China's Yunnan province to seek Beijing's support.

Mahendra L. Kumawat is former Chairman, Ceasefire Monitoring Group, Nagaland and former Special Secretary, Internal Security, Ministry of Home Affairs. Vinay Kaura is Assistant Professor, Sardar Patel University of Police, Security and Criminal Justice, Rajasthan



there is a possibility now of the virus coming back with vigour and the government being forced to reimpose the lockdown. Leave alone the common man, even Ministers do not follow their own government guidelines. A Minister has even gone to the extent of saying that he has started living with corona and hence not wearing a mask'. Our elected representatives should be exemplary models.

A. JAINALABDEEN,
Chennai

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

NGOs, groups and funds
The denial to clear the FCRA licences for four Christian organisations raises legitimate questions (Page 1, "Govt. suspends FCRA clearance of four Christian groups", September 7). Though the report does not list a specific cause, it is clear that 'religious conversion' may have been the main reason. Many westerners espouse the Hindu religion, finding it empathetic toward their personal proclivities and sentiments. Many Hindu organisations conduct satsangs and

theological expositions in non-Hindu countries. Even proponents of Hinduism engage in street proselytising and tract distribution in the western world. Are these to be indicted as attempts to religious conversion? If religious conversion is truly a post-modern bane then, as embryonic as it may sound, the Indian government must ban every non-Hindu from visiting temples and observing Hindu practices. As a society of the 21st century, the freedom to practise, promote and embrace 'any

religion should be viable. A true democracy operates with freedom as its flywheel and freedom of religion is definitely a major cog in it. Does not the Constitution of India embellish the right to practise and promote 'every' religion in this country?

IAN CHRISTIAN,
Villupuram, Tamil Nadu

I neither oppose nor support the actions of the government. It is its prerogative to decide policy. But would same scrutiny and strict measures apply equally to every other non-

governmental organisation pumping money into the country? We need an answer.

RAVI CHARLES,
Trichy, Tamil Nadu

Caution abandoned
The shocking manner in which COVID-19 management norms are being violated does not augur well for the country (Page 1, "COVID-19 norms violated on lockdown-free Sunday" September 7). Despite the Tamil Nadu Principal Secretary issuing guidelines and warning of fines in case there was a violation of safety protocols,

it is a shame that there was much disobedience on the first lockdown-free Sunday in Tamil Nadu – at temples, at Marina beach, fish markets and even of politicians conducting a membership drive. With India surpassing Brazil to have the second highest cases in the world, such callousness does not augur well for the country, where health systems are being stretched to the maximum.

D. THOMAS PALOCAREN,
Vellore, Tamil Nadu

■ What is wrong with our people! It is worrying that

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CM YK

Nitish Kumar won't have it easy

Unemployment, poor law and order, and challenges to his leadership could affect his re-election chances



ATUL K. THAKUR



"The frontier of 'hope' that for long was associated with Chief Minister Nitish Kumar might be crumbling." Mr. Kumar in Patna in February. ■ RANJEET KUMAR

Troubles within and outside

For critics, the election seems to be all about finding a new leader and a new movement that will help them overcome their existential challenges. The Nitish Kumar-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government has failed to negotiate well with the Central government and get Bihar its long-denied 'special status' as well as investments. Ground reports suggest that people have had enough of the old leadership. The NDA in Bihar is aware of this, which is why it has been undermining the deep uncertainties related to COVID-19, the migrants' issue, and the floods.

What makes its troubles worse is the unrest in the NDA camp. The Lok Janshakti Party (LJP), which is part of the NDA, has launched repeated attacks against Mr. Kumar, including for his government's "delayed and less than adequate response" in fighting COVID-19. LJP chief Ram Vilas Paswan, who was once termed by Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) president Lalu Prasad as a *mausam vaigyanik* (weatherman) for knowing in advance the political trends and making decisions accordingly, is now being seen as the man who can upset Mr. Kumar's plan to be Bihar's Chief Minister for the seventh time. MP Chirag Paswan's campaign, 'Bihar First, Bihari First', is possibly the most frank assertion of his party's stand against the apathy of the government towards matters concern-

ing the masses and its autocratic way of functioning. Though the NDA is still in the race for a comeback with its massive disposable resources, state machinery and caste equation, Mr. Kumar's leadership stands challenged.

There are other challenges for Mr. Kumar too. Even now, the RJD has an impressive cadre base in Bihar. The anti-incumbency factor, the growing sympathy for Mr. Prasad's deteriorating health, and stitching up a broader alliance can help the RJD. Former Union Minister Yashwant Sinha's re-entry into active politics is making an impact in Bihar. His campaign for a 'Behtar Bihar (Better Bihar)' is consolidating the old political ranks who for long were on the fringes in State politics. The success of this will depend on how he along with other parties can work on a comprehensive common minimum programme. Political strategist Prashant Kishor has not made his political preference public yet. Pappu Yadav's Jan Adhikar Party has been at the forefront helping the migrants of Bihar across India. His hold on Seemanchal has tightened. Political crossovers too will be crucial in this election.

The lack of industrial employment in the State has led to high outmigra-

tion from Bihar. And with the pandemic and the sudden lockdown imposed by the Central government, thousands found themselves suddenly stranded in other States without jobs or a source of income. Many began returning to Bihar. However, the State government has been unable to do anything for their welfare by announcing a substantial economic package or creating a blueprint for gainful employment.

The floods issue in Bihar cannot be overlooked. According to the State Disaster Management Department, this year's flood swamped 1,232 panchayats across 16 districts of the State. About 70 lakh people were affected, and 24 died. Sadly, in the last 15 years, water cooperation between India and Nepal has waned. Not much has been done to avert disasters and use water resources for productive purposes, including the generation of hydroelectricity, in the Terai region. The acute mishandling of the reverse migration crisis and the floods are two pressing factors this election. They add significantly to the anti-incumbency factor.

Following Prime Minister Narendra Modi's style of blaming India's first Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru's policies for the current mess in

his regime, Bihar's Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi blamed the Lalu Prasad-Rabri Devi regime for not building enough hospitals in the State. According to a report in *The Lancet*, Bihar is among the most vulnerable States during this pandemic as its public health infrastructure is extremely poor to handle a crisis like this.

Bihar's other development indicators are no better. According to the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), in June 2020, Bihar's unemployment rate was nearly double the national average in the year ending June 2019. Earlier, another CMIE report stated that Bihar's unemployment rate increased by 31.2 percentage points in April 2020, rising up to 46.6%. Unemployment had risen from 1.6% in April 2017 to the current rate. These figures question the myth surrounding Mr. Kumar's *sushashan* (good rule). Moreover, an extremely poor law and order situation makes the overall scenario worse in Bihar.

Crisis over numbers

At the height of the COVID-19 crisis, the State government replaced the Principal Secretary (Health), Sanjay Kumar, who was known for regularly updating the public on the number of COVID-19 cases and deaths in the State. Since then, confusion has prevailed over the numbers. On August 3, in the State Assembly, Bihar's Health Minister Mangal Pandey said that of the total of 6.12 lakh tests carried out for COVID-19 in the State till August 1, 3.24 lakh had been carried out through RT-PCR. However, contradicting this, the Chief Minister stated that less than 10% of the tests are being done through RT-PCR. Whom do we believe? Also, Bihar is relying on antigen tests. These tests have low credibility. Therefore, the actual number of cases cannot be ascertained through these tests.

With Bihar facing so many crises, it remains to be seen if Mr. Kumar will emerge from this poll unscathed. History will be kinder to Mr. Kumar and Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi if they acknowledge the problems of their administration and the opportunities foregone under their rule and work out a plan to tackle those in the poll agenda.

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Empower the youth first

A focus on India's youth is the first step towards self-reliance



C.R. KESAVAN & VIGNESH KARTHIK K.R.

soaring above 20%. An IYG initiative, with statutory backing, can function as a facilitatory framework for ensuring gainful and productive engagement of youth.

At a time of fiscal stress, one way to allocate budgetary resources would be to create a Youth Component Plan, earmarking a specific percentage of funds under a separate head on the lines of the Special Component Plan for the Scheduled Castes and the Tribal Sub-Plan. The Youth Component Plan would be formulated by States/Union Territories/Central Ministries to channelise flow of outlays and benefits proportional to the percentage of youth population based on sub-regional requirements.

IYG should not be just another budgetary scheme. Its strategic goal should be to ensure that within a fixed time frame, young people graduating from college or losing a job either find a good quality job suited to their education and experience or acquire skills required to find a job through an apprenticeship. An important aspect of IYG should be to rope in the district administration and local bodies for effective outcomes. Existing youth schemes and skilling infrastructure need to be dovetailed and streamlined while leveraging industry to enable an in situ empowerment of youth.

Learning from MGNREGA

The Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) has been very effective in providing rural livelihood security and social protection. Yet only about 4% of youth in the labour force have been impacted by it. While an urban youth employment programme will be a new intervention, we believe that rural youth employment should be instituted alongside MGNREGA. IYG needs to be implemented across the country to address youth unemployment particularly given the rapid structural changes in the economy.

How would such a guarantee identify the needs of the youth? The Youth Development Index (YDI) in India serves as an advisory and monitoring tool for youth development. It helps recognise priority areas, gaps and alternative approaches specific to each State. The index also packs a new dimension of social inclusion to assess the inclusiveness of societal progress due to prevalence of systemic inequalities. In short, YDI can be revisited and deployed to play a vital role in crafting a region-specific IYG. A focus on our youth is the first step towards self-reliance. It is time we summon the political will to guarantee our youth a viable future.

C.R. Kesavan is a former Vice President of the Rajiv Gandhi National Institute of Youth Development. K.R. Vignesh Karthik is a doctoral researcher at King's College, London

Reviving the economy

The first step is to acknowledge that an issue exists

GOURAV VALLABH

Such has been the great fall of the Indian economy that the issue is as lamentable on the surface as it is a few data points deeper. The analysis of the quarterly GDP number for Q1 2020-21 needs to be fair and balanced. Though no magic could have brought encouraging results, the performance has been way below anyone's expectations. The numbers for Q1 will be even lower in reality as they don't account for the informal sector, the hardest hit.

Four key indicators
For coming up with an approach to resolve an issue, the first step is to acknowledge that an issue exists. Living in denial might delay the realisation but not the outcome. I am afraid that is precisely what's happening right now. The signs of economic paralysis were evident for the last 18 months or more. The quarterly GDP growth numbers had been falling for the last nine quarters, barring Q4 of 2018-19. Out of many, four key indicators have had me worried for the last 18 months. First, the Gross Fixed Capital Formation (as % of GDP) had been on a constant decline (except in 2018) between 2014 and 2019, falling from 30.1% to 27.4%. Developing countries generally invest heavily in fixed assets to increase aggregate demand and prepare capacities to meet future demands. Second, consumer demand in urban India. Exactly a year ago, domestic car sales were on a steady decline for nine consecutive months with a 41.09% decline in sales in August 2019. Even commercial vehicle sales were down by 39% indicating a fall in industrial activity. Third, weak FMCG demand in the rural economy. Data from India Ratings indicated that average real rural wage growth dropped from 11.18% in FY13-FY15 to just 0.45% in FY16-FY18. No wonder consumer confidence was badly hit, leading to sluggish demand. Last, the eight core sectors registered a growth of -0.2% in August 2019, indicating that there was not only an issue with the demand but also with our preparedness for supply.

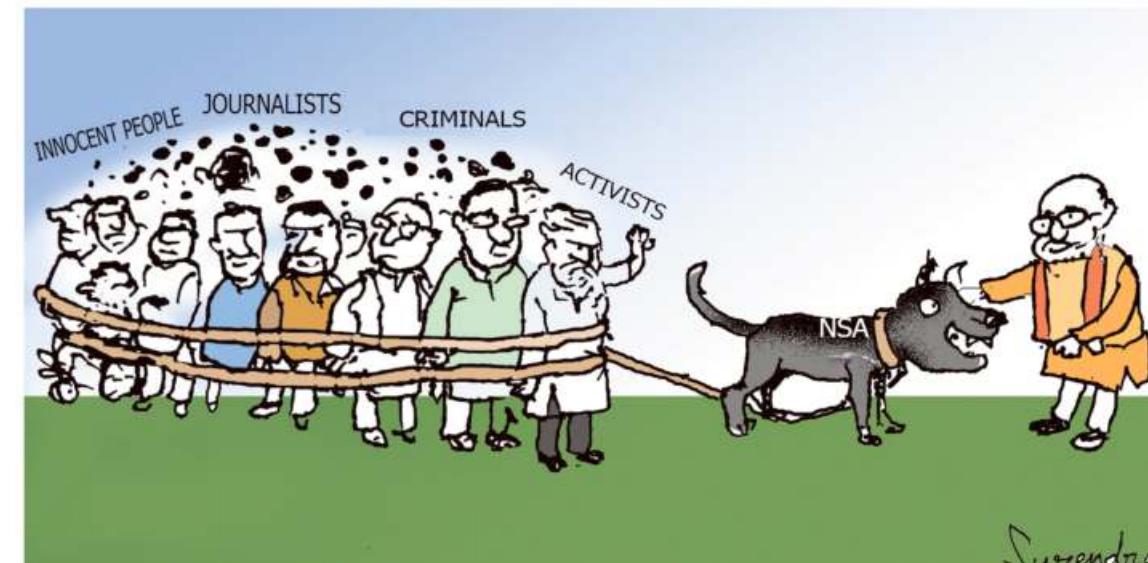
At a time when there should have been an acknowledgement of the problem at hand and a plan for resolution and revival, there was a game of musical chairs going on, except no

one wanted to take the chair of blame. Eventually, urban millennials were blamed for low passenger vehicle sales as they now prefer app-based taxis to owning cars. Good box-office collections were cited as a proof of a healthy economy. Earlier, Jawaharlal Nehru was to blame for the economy, now it is said to be an "act of God". No one admits that it was the botched-up policymaking and implementation of Modi 1.0 and Modi 2.0 that has led to all of this.

Before we even start with the recommendations, let's analyse where we stand at the moment. The investment appetite of urban households is low, urban consumption is low. There is contraction in the eight core sectors indicating that even if demand picks up, we are not well placed to meet those demands. The only saving grace is the rural economy. Rural demand has been better than urban demand thanks to a surplus monsoon and a higher disposable income through MGNREGA wages.

The way forward
Policymaking and implementation around three things need to be given a long, hard thought. First, the urban economy has to get running. Investments need to go up and this has to be driven by private and household investments since the contribution in capital formation by the government and the public sector is only 24%. So, government spending alone won't help. Creating more jobs is the need of the hour. Second, the rural growth model needs to be sustainable. Increasing disposable income may work in the short term but it would be more sustainable to increase job opportunities at the rural level and strengthen MGNREGA. Third, there needs to be a massive push on infrastructural spending to boost the core sector demand and generate jobs. Extending MGNREGA to cities and towns will also attract migrant workers to move to the cities again. Last, with a focus on demand generation, supply issues need to be sorted. The eight core sectors that have shown contraction would need structural reforms to bring them back on track.

Gourav Vallabh is Professor of Finance and national spokesperson, Congress party. Views are personal

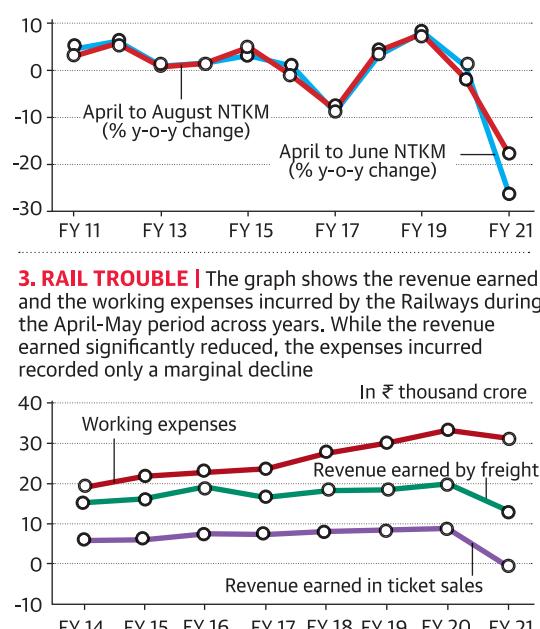


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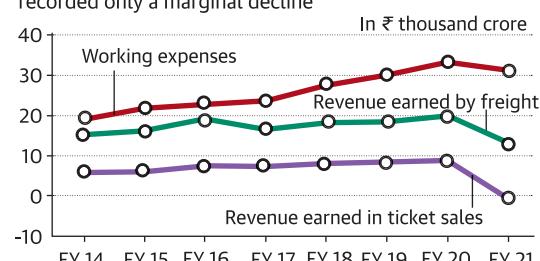
Off the tracks

The amount of rail freight transported can serve as an early indicator of India's economic health. Between April and June of FY2021, goods transported fell drastically due to the COVID-19-induced lockdown. Commodities such as coal and cement were the worst hit while the transport of foodgrains and fertilizers saw significant increases. This drop may further hit the already maligned Railways' balance sheets. By Suman Sen and Vignesh Radhakrishnan

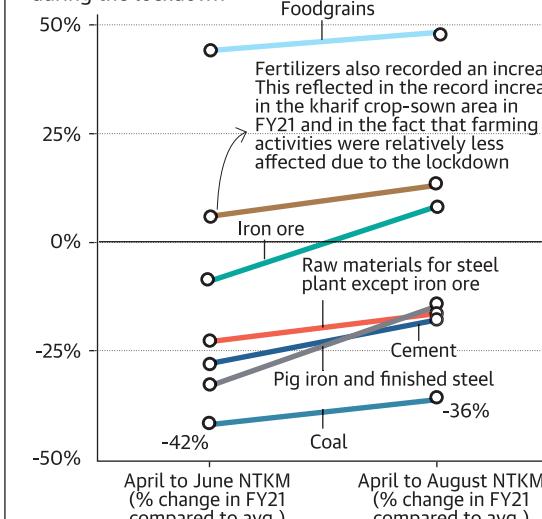
1. SHARP DROP IN GOODS CARRIED | The graph shows the % y-o-y change in Net Tonne Kilometre (NTKM) of freight carried in the April-June and April-August periods across years. One NTKM is the net weight of goods carried for a kilometre. The freight declined by 27% y-o-y in the April-June period in FY2021. The decline was arrested to an extent in July and August. The freight carried declined by 18% y-o-y in the April-August period, 9% points lower than April-June.



3. RAIL TROUBLE | The graph shows the revenue earned and the working expenses incurred by the Railways during the April-May period across years. While the revenue earned significantly reduced, the expenses incurred recorded only a marginal decline.



2. COMMODITY-WISE CHANGE IN FREIGHT | The graph shows the % change in NTKM of freight carried in FY2021 compared to the FY2011-2020 average. The comparison is done for two periods: April to June and April to August. For instance, in April to June, the amount of coal transported declined by 42% in FY2021 compared to the FY2011-2020 average. Whereas in April-August, it declined by 36% in FY21 compared to the FY11-20 average. This means that the decline was arrested to an extent in July and August. Compared to the average, the amount of foodgrains transported increased by over 40% in FY21 due to various food security measures introduced by the government during the lockdown.



The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO SEPTEMBER 8, 1970

De-recognition: Princes notified

The Finance Minister, Mr. Y.B. Chavan, announced in the Rajya Sabha to-day the President's decision to de-recognise all the Rulers and thereby terminate their privy purses and privileges with immediate effect. But he assured the de-recognised princes that the Government would honour its declared policy of making transitional payments to enable them to make the necessary adjustment to the changed circumstances. Even before Mr. Chavan made the announcement, the Home Secretary to the Government of India despatched letters individually to all the 278 princes – and other beneficiaries of the privy purses in Gujarat where the law of primogeniture does not apply in all cases – formally notifying them of the President's decision. Altogether about 320 former princes and their dependents will be affected by this decision abolishing the very concept of rulership and terminating the privy purses to them. The 278 former Rulers who are regular recipients of privy purses include Dr. Karan Singh, the Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir, whose privy purse was paid all these years not on the basis of any covenant signed by his father after the State's accession but on the strength of the letters patent exchanged with the Government of India at the time of the renunciation of his ruling powers.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO SEPTEMBER 8, 1920

India's Defence

(From an Editorial)

Soon after the war began and India was "bled white" in men and material and left with hardly 15,000 troops to defend the country and to keep in subjection 315 millions of loyal people, Lord Chelmsford succeeded Lord Hardinge as Viceroy and his military training and instincts prompted the formation of an Indian Defence Force. A local force in the shape of volunteers existed; but such a force was clearly unfit both by lack of training and good material for the double task of defending India against foreign aggression, and maintaining British power and prestige in case of local disorders. Hence the Indian Defence Force, composed mainly of Europeans and Anglo-Indians, was brought into being. Compulsion to join the force was used where necessary in the case of Europeans and Anglo-Indians, and Indians were permitted to volunteer for service.

IN BRIEF



Kerala CM, Ministers under observation

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan is under observation and due for an antigen test after Finance Minister T.M. Thomas Isaac tested positive for COVID-19 on Sunday. Health Minister K.K. Shylaja and Industries Minister E.P. Jayarajan are also under observation. They had attended a State secretariat meeting of the CPI(M) on Friday alongside Dr. Isaac.

Doctor held for running COVID centre without nod

ELURU Andhra Pradesh police arrested Murali Krishna Super Speciality Hospital managing director Murali Krishna for allegedly running COVID-19 care centre without the government permission. A team of officials raided the hospital on August 23 and found that the management was providing treatment to the patients without obtaining permission from the government.

Telangana likely to bring new Revenue Act

HYDERABAD The Business Advisory Committee of the Telangana Legislative Assembly has decided to conduct the monsoon session till September 28. The Telangana government is likely to introduce the new Revenue Act, a comprehensive legislation to ensure efficient and transparent functioning of the revenue administration, in the ensuing monsoon session of the Legislature.

Two Maoists killed in encounter in Telangana

BHADRADI-KOTHAGUDU The CPI (Maoist) suffered a jolt in the district as two of its armed cadres were killed in an "exchange of fire" with the police in the Vaddipeta-Pusuguppa forest area in Charla mandal on Monday afternoon. The identity of the duo could not be immediately known, sources said.

Testing level, fresh cases dip in Telangana, Kerala

Samples tested in Telangana down sharply on Sunday; Karnataka reports 141 deaths; Andhra Pradesh records lower incidence after 12 days

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD

Telangana's COVID-19 testing took a dive again on Sunday. While 60,000 samples were analysed on a daily basis over the past two weeks, leading to detection of over 2,500 cases a day, only 36,593 tests were conducted on September 6 and 1,802 tested positive.

COVID-19

Reduced testing on Sundays began from July 26. The new cases included 245 from Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation, 158 from Rangareddy, 136 from Karimnagar, 103 from Sangareddy and 106 from Siddipet. Nine more COVID-19 patients died.

There were 31,635 active cases, apart from 895 deaths. The State Health department said, of 1,42,771 total cases, 98,512 were asymptomatic.

Andhra Pradesh's case tally stood at 5,06,493 on Monday with 8,368 new infections. For the first time after 12 days, the day's cases were below 10,000.

It became the second State after Maharashtra to witness five lakh cases.

The State claims a higher testing ratio and lower death rate than Maharashtra.

Andhra Pradesh topped in the number of confirmed cases per million at 9,485 while Maharashtra had 7,264 and Tamil Nadu 6,019.

Seventy deaths were reported over the past day and the toll rose to 4,417.

Nearly six months after its first COVID-19 case, Karnataka breached the four lakh mark to touch 4,04,324, as 5,773 persons tested positive on Monday. Over 53% of this case load was reported in August. With 97,001 active cases, Karnataka was in third position among States. Fuelled by a spike in cases in

Bengaluru, the situation took a turn for the worse in July breaching the 2,000 mark per day initially and jumping to over 5,000 per day and later over 9,000 cases a day.

With 141 new deaths, the

toll touched 6,534 on Monday. From September 1 till date, the State added 61,901 cases. On August 31, while the total number of cases stood at 3,42,423, Bengaluru Urban recorded 1,29,125 cases.

On Monday, when COVID-19 testing seemed to have dipped in Kerala with just 20,215 samples, fresh cases reported too went down to 1,648.

The cumulative case burden of the State now stood at 89,489, with 22,066 patients currently being treated in various hospitals.

The COVID-19 toll in the State rose to 359 on Monday with the addition of 12 more deaths in the provisional list of the Health Department. Seven deaths were in Thiruvananthapuram, three in Kozhikode and one each in Thrissur and Ernakulam.

Even with lower case numbers, 94% - or 1,556 out of 1,648 new cases - were locally acquired infections.

Kannur reported the maximum number of new cases among districts on Monday with 260 cases, followed closely by Thiruvananthapuram with 253.

Malappuram had 187 cases, Kottayam 154, Kasaragod 134, Ernakulam 130, Thrissur 128, Palakkad 118, Kozhikode 103, Alappuzha 78, Kollam 71, Pathanamthitta 24 and Idukki and Wayanad recorded

four cases each.

Another 5,776 persons tested positive for COVID-19 in Tamil Nadu on Monday, taking the overall tally to 4,69,256.

As many as 5,930 persons were discharged after treatment, while 89 more persons, including two teenagers, succumbed to the infection in the State.

A total of 51,215 persons are presently under treatment for COVID-19 in the State, while a total of 4,10,116 persons were discharged after treatment. The State's toll climbed to 7,925.

A 90-year-old man, who had tested positive for COVID-19 and had co-morbidities, was discharged from the Rajiv Gandhi Government Hospital (RGGH) on Monday after 34 days of hospitalisation.

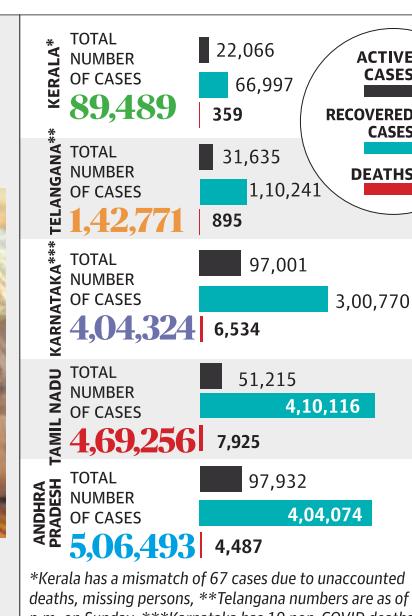
(With inputs from Vijayawada, Bengaluru, Thiruvananthapuram and Chennai bureaus)

Handy tool

Pulse oximeters help check oxygen saturation levels of mildly symptomatic COVID-19 patients amid shortage of hospital beds. The graph shows the spread of the pandemic in the southern States



Quick check: A political party worker checking the oxygen level of a person using a pulse oximeter at the Press Club in Vijayawada. ■ K.V.S. GIRI



HC's acquittal in Udumalpet case needs serious consideration: SC

Bench admits criminal appeal filed by Tamil Nadu govt.

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday said the Madras High Court's decision to acquit a man sentenced to death for the daylight murder of his daughter's Dalit husband in the sensational Udumalpet honour killing case in Tamil Nadu was a "matter requiring serious consideration".

A Bench led by Justice Sanjay Kishan Kaul admitted a criminal appeal filed by the State government immediately.

The High Court acquitted B. Chinnasamy on June 22. The trial court had awarded him the death penalty. The High Court also modified the death penalty of the hit men Chinnasamy had hired to life sentence. The verdict sent

shock waves across the State.

The crime dates back to March 2016. The hirelings waylaid the couple near a bus-stand and hacked them with sharp weapons. Kausalya, Chinnasamy's daughter, survived. But V. Shankar, her husband of only a few months, died. She became the prime prosecution witness against her family in the case.

The State government, represented by Additional Advocate General Balaji Srinivasan and State counsel M. Yogesh Kannan, said the case came under the "rarest of rare category" and deserved the death penalty.

"It is time to stamp out these barbaric feudal acts which are a slur on the na-

tion", it submitted in the court.

Mr. Srinivasan and Mr. Kannan urged the court to decide the case expeditiously.

In its appeal, the State objected to the conclusion of the High Court that there was no evidence of a conspiracy for murder.

"The case involves honour killing by the parents of the girl who loved and married Shankar, who belongs to a Scheduled Caste community by hatching a conspiracy and engaging hirelings to commit the gruesome murder", it said.

Kausalya herself had complained about her parents threatening the couple saying "she cannot live with a person belonging to lower caste", the State said.

Pradeep Kumar, who hails from Bharathapuzha near Pangode, was arrested on a complaint by the victim with the Vellara police.

NIA: accused erased data from consoles

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOCHI

The two accused – Sumit Kumar Singh of Bihar and Daya Ram of Rajasthan – in the case of computer parts theft from the Indigenous Aircraft Carrier (IAC) being built in the Cochin Shipyard had accessed and erased the sensitive data in one of the four Multi Function Consoles, according to the National Investigation Agency.

The agency dropped the charges of waging war against the nation and collecting arms with the intention of waging war against the nation (Section 121 and 122 of the IPC) against the accused while retaining the cyber terrorism charges under Section 66F(1)(B) of the Information Technology Act.

Junior health inspector held on rape charge in Kerala

The woman visited his house for COVID-19 negative certificate

STAFF REPORTER

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Pangode police on Monday arrested a junior health inspector for allegedly raping a woman who visited his house to collect a COVID-19 negative certificate after completion of her mandatory quarantine period.

Pradeep Kumar, who hails from Bharathapuzha near Pangode, was arrested on a complaint by the victim with the Vellara police.

The victim, who had undergone quarantine in a relative's house in Kulathupuzha, used to be monitored by health workers attached to the government-run hospital. On completion of the quarantine period, the accused allegedly insisted that she collect the COVID nega-

tive certificate from his house.

According to the police, he illegally confined the victim as soon as she reached his house on September 3, gagged her and tied her to his bed before repeatedly raping her. He also allegedly threatened her that he would recommend police action against her on the false charge of violating quarantine. She was purportedly confined until the next day. The accused was taken to his house by the police to collect evidence.

Kerala CM rallies MPs against leasing of airport

Members to put pressure on Centre

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

A meeting of MPs chaired by Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Monday decided to put pressure on the Centre to prevent the move to hand over the operations of the Thiruvananthapuram International Airport to the Adani Group.

Mr. Vijayan said the State government would not cooperate with the development of the airport if the Centre pushed ahead with the move to lease it to the private entity.

He also told the MPs to ask the Centre to hand over the management, development and operations of the airport to an entity in which the State government had a

controlling stake. Mr. Vijayan pointed to Kanpur and Kochi airports as examples. The government had successfully operated the airports under a public-private partnership.

BPCL issue

The MPs also agreed to oppose the move to privatise BPCL, the country's largest petroleum company, in Parliament. Kerala had invested heavily in the Kochi refinery and has now extended it a loan of ₹1,500 crore. It was essential to retain the BPCL refinery in Kochi in the public sector. The government had planned a retro-chemical park there at the cost of ₹25,000 crore, he said.

'Starting as consumer, BCA graduate turned drug dealer'

Gang used app-based services to courier drugs; police

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BENGALURU

Many of those arrested in a special drive against drug menace were young graduates or working professionals. The brain behind one of the bigger networks, where a gang of 11 allegedly sourced drugs from suppliers on the darknet, did his bachelors in computer applications (BCA) from a reputed college in the city.

The accused, Keval M. Lohith, moved from being a consumer to a drug dealer after attending a few rave parties in Goa and Bengaluru. He initially purchased synthetic drugs from his contacts, primarily dealers from Nigeria. He allegedly

expanded and started getting supply from dealers operating on the darknet. As his consumer base expanded, Keval hired a few of his friends and delivery partners offering ₹500 per delivery to clients," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (East) S.D. Sharanappa.

Another key accused, Mohamed Hafizulla, is a B.Com dropout who was formerly employed in a product promotion company owned by Vaibhav Jain, one of the accused in the high-profile drug case with links to the Kannada film industry that the Central Crime Branch is investigating, said a senior police offi-

cial. Hafizulla started his own event organising firm. He started organising parties and supplying drugs to guests. Clients included students of schools and colleges, Mr. Sharanappa said.

Meanwhile, the South East division police, as part of the drive, arrested 10 persons, including four students and the son of a KSRP head constable, for allegedly peddling drugs.

Both Lohith and Hafizulla used delivery partners working for app-based services like Dunzo and bike taxi aggregator Rapido to ferry consignments to their clients, said the police.

Inaugural ride



Wheels to the rescue: YSRCP MLA R.K. Roja riding a motorbike ambulance after inaugurating it at Nagari in Chittoor district of Andhra Pradesh on Monday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Who will lead the 'Jamboo Savari' this time?

Mysuru Dasara high-power committee to take a call today; Abhimanyu likely choice to replace Arjuna

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MYSURU

Will Abhimanyu, the 55-year-old tusker, get the nod for carrying the 750-kg golden howdah in this year's 'Jamboo Savari' of Mysuru Dasara as a 'successor' to the incumbent lead elephant Arjuna? This question has surfaced ahead of the crucial Dasara High Power Committee meeting which is scheduled in Bengaluru for Tuesday to decide on the nature of the annual festivities in October although the government had already announced that the celebrations would be a low-key affair in view of the pandemic.

The meeting is also ex-



pected to take a call on whether to keep the 'Jamboo

Ahead of the festivities amidst the pandemic, the authorities had been compelled to look for a successor to the lead elephant since Arjuna turned 60 and ageing jumbos are not used for any stressful work in view of guidelines. Prior to 'Jamboo Savari', the lead elephant undergoes weight carrying training with sand bags and a wooden replica of the howdah having the same mass as 'Ambari' on its back as a part of rehearsal for the big day.

No final decision has been taken on whether the stately jumbo, which has been a star attraction at the finale since the last eight years, would be retired from performing the big task over age factor. Balarama had carried the

howdah for 13 years in a row before attaining superannuation from the role of lead elephant. It is still part of the Dasara squad as an accompanying jumbo because of its commendable service.

The next jumbo in the elite list which has all the merits and is considered on par with Arjuna is Abhimanyu, best known for its astuteness in the operations for capturing errant elephants and aged and injured wild tigers straying out of forests.

The strong point on why

Abhimanyu

LJP keeps options open on Bihar poll

The NDA member will shortlist 143 candidates and may even contest against the JD(U)

SOBHANA K. NAIR

NEW DELHI

Continuing its tough stance against Janata Dal(U) president and Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar, the Lok Janshakti Party after a crucial meeting of its Bihar State parliamentary board, has decided to shortlist 143 candidates for the upcoming Assembly election. The NDA could field candidates against the JD(U).

However, for now, no concrete decision has been taken to walk out of the alliance in Bihar. As per the official statement, issued by the party, the State unit has left it to party president Chirag Paswan to take that call. A resolution to this effect was passed at the meeting. Walking out of the NDA in Bihar would also mean that Mr.



Tricky call: LJP president Chirag Paswan is yet to decide if his party will stay with the NDA. ■ FILE PHOTO

Paswan's father and party patriarch Ram Vilas Paswan would have to give up his post as Union Minister for Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution.

The NDA in Bihar consists of the JD(U), BJP, LJP and the Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM), led by former Chief

Minister Jitan Ram Manjhi. All the constituents of the alliance have maintained that so far no talks on seat sharing have taken place. The Bihar Assembly has 243 seats.

Sources said that at Monday's meeting, the members of the parliamentary board quoted public statements

made by JD(U) leaders that the party was in an alliance with the BJP and not the LJP.

"Now if the JD(U) themselves claim that we are not their partners then we should not shy away from fielding candidates against them in the upcoming election," one of the members said. The parliamentary board members also asserted that the LJP does not want to fight the Assembly election under the leadership of the JD(U), sources said.

During the meeting, the members also flagged the growing anti-incumbency against Mr. Kumar, who has been Chief Minister now for 15 years, having completed his third term.

While taking a belligerent position against Mr. Kumar, sources said Mr. Paswan

warned party cadres to refrain from making personal attacks on HAM president Manjhi.

The party had timed the meeting of the parliamentary board to coincide with Mr. Kumar's first virtual rally. Incidentally, in his speech of over an hour, the Bihar CM did not directly or indirectly refer to the LJP, blunting the party's efforts to make the polls a direct battle between Mr. Paswan and Mr. Kumar.

In 2015, the LJP contested 42 seats; however, that seat share is expected to be reduced since the JD(U) was not a member of the NDA then. JD(U) leaders meanwhile believe that Mr. Paswan has been flexing his muscles at the behest of the BJP to lower the JD(U)'s claim for seats.

At virtual rally, Nitish sets the election campaign rolling

Tejashwi terms online meeting 'a super-duper flop'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

PATNA

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Monday listed his government's achievements of the past 15 years and compared them with those of the 15-year regime of the previous "pati-pati" (Rashtriya Janata Dal chief Laloo Prasad and his wife, Rabri Devi) government.

In turn, RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav later challenged Mr. Kumar for a "logical debate any time, anywhere on facts and figures", and termed the virtual rally a "super-duper flop".

Mr. Kumar was addressing the JD(U)'s first mega digital virtual rally through its newly launched jdulive.com and other media platforms ahead of the Assembly election, from the party headquarters in Patna.

"Even now, we should be more vigilant and careful against the pandemic. Today, on an average, 1.5 lakh tests are being done in the State with 11,350 RT-PCR tests every day, which is going to be raised to 20,000 daily soon," he said.

Party sources told *The Hindu* that over 30 lakh people were connected with the live-streaming of Mr. Kumar's address. In JD(U) offices in Patna and other districts of the State, leaders and party workers were glued to TV sets to hear their leader who formally sounded the poll bugle with the virtual rally.

"While China is registering growth of 3.8 per cent of their economy, India's has contracted by 23.9 per cent. Modinomics has fallen flat. For the survival of economics Jingoism can not be a remedy," he tweeted.



Poll bugle: Supporters listening to Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar at a virtual rally of the JD(U) on Monday. ■ PTI

resolve) programme and the social sector, giving figures, data and dates. He kept appealing to people to "not to forget all this".

"People must remember what had happened earlier [during the 15-year RJD regime] and in the past 15 years [of the NDA rule led by him]," he said.

"But some people keep on criticising us because they are ignorant," he said.

Mr. Tejashwi said, "You cannot escape from the actual situation in the guise of your virtual rally... I challenge you for a logical debate with facts and figures anywhere, anytime on what you said in your virtual rally.

Mr. Kumar recounted the welfare measures offered by his government on employment generation, for flood victims, education, health, law and order, roads, agriculture, *saat nischay* (seven

India and Bangladesh will hold the Joint Consultative Commission's meeting very soon, he said. "Warm conversation with Foreign Minister Dr A. K. Abdu Men of Bangladesh. Agreed to hold our Joint Consultative Commission very soon. Will continue to work closely to reach the ambitious goals set by our leaders," he said in a social media post.

A fortnight ago, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla met Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in Dhaka.

Stop privatisation to save govt. jobs, says Rahul

Only a few friends special to Modi gain, he says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Monday asked the Narendra Modi government to stop privatisation of public sector undertakings (PSUs) and save government jobs.

"Today, the country is facing many Modi government



Rahul Gandhi

"News reports say that SBI plans to implement a VRS scheme as an 'economy mea-

sure'. In normal times the plan would be debatable. In these abnormal times, when the economy has collapsed and jobs are scarce, it is cruel," Mr. Chidambaram said on Twitter.

"If India's biggest lender has to shed jobs, imagine what other big employers and MSMEs are doing. The plan is ostensibly voluntary but we know that subtle pressure will be brought on the employees that the Bank wants to get rid of. If the current rules provide for ge-

nine voluntary retirement, why announce a new plan and give out an exact number like 30,190?" he asked.

Congress leader in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury also took a dig at the Centre on the economic situation.

"While China is registering growth of 3.8 per cent of their economy, India's has contracted by 23.9 per cent. Modinomics has fallen flat. For the survival of economics Jingoism can not be a remedy," he tweeted.

LAC situation 'very serious': Jaishankar

He calls for deep conversations between the two sides at the political level

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar on Monday said the situation at eastern Ladakh, where Indian and Chinese troops have been in an eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation since April, was "very serious" and called for "deep conversations between the two sides at the political level".

He was addressing the Express E-Adda event of *Indian Express* on Monday evening



S. Jaishankar

"If you look at the 30 years, because it was peace and tranquillity at the border, it allowed relation to progress," said Mr. Jaishankar.

kar when asked what he would tell the Chinese Foreign Minister if he met him on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation's Foreign Minister-level meeting in Moscow on September 10.

India and China need to find an "accommodation", he said.

Mr. Jaishankar praised the government's approach to the neighbourhood and highlighted the special relationship with Bangladesh in the east.

Tenzin was on duty along LAC last month

VIJAYA SINGH

NEW DELHI

Special Frontier Force (SFF) soldier Nyima Tenzin, killed in a 1962-vintage landmine blast at Chushul in Eastern Ladakh, had been patrolling the areas along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) for the past one month, one of the members of the Tibetan community said.

Tenzin (58), who is survived by his wife and three children, was born in India. The family lives at a Tibetan settlement camp in Sonamling, one of the largest camps in Ladakh.

After the Dalai Lama's flight to India from Tibet in 1959, India gave assistance to Tibetans for a temporary settlement.

The Company Leader was killed in the intervening night of August 29-30 when he accidentally stepped on a 1962 war landmine. He had completed 30 years in service.

Tseten Wangchuk, chief representative officer, Sonamling Tibetan Settlement, Leh, said Tenzin's funeral was held on Monday, six days after the death, as per the community's tradition.

"The body was kept at his house for the past few days and the funeral was organised as per his horoscope on Monday. He was determined to defend the territory," Mr. Wangchuk said.

"The Chinese are causing tensions at the border day by day. The Communist Party of China loves weapons but Tibetans are peace-loving people," Mr. Wangchuk said.



Last salute: Army officials pay tribute to Special Frontier Force Company Leader Nyima Tenzin at the funeral in Leh. ■ PTI

Tibetan soldier's funeral seen as Delhi's signal to Beijing

MEA sources say there is no shift in government policy



Last salute: Army officials pay tribute to Special Frontier Force Company Leader Nyima Tenzin at the funeral in Leh. ■ PTI

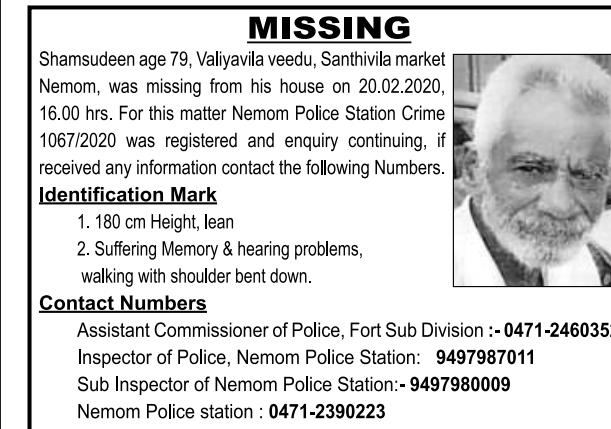
tute of Chinese Studies and former Ambassador to China.

'Charged atmosphere'
Former Foreign Secretary Niranjan Rao said, "While mourning the unfortunate death of the brave Company Leader Nyima Tenzin, it would have been wise to avoid unnecessary publicity about the SFF and their ostensible Tibet 'connection' in an atmosphere already charged along the LAC." This probably was the reason for the tweet being deleted later, she added.

Other officials said the government policy should not be changed frequently as this sent conflicting signals internationally as well as to the Tibetan community in India.

"This can be quite meaningless and even misleading if not backed by a firm commitment to a practical, robust and coordinated policy," said Amitabh Mathur, former adviser to the government on Tibetan affairs.

"This is part of larger signalling to China – tentative steps to convey we won't be overly concerned about their sensitivities if they continue to ignore ours", said Ashok Kantha, Director of the Insti-



Security operation under way in Budgam

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

SRINAGAR

Security forces started an operation against militants in the Kawoosa area of Budgam in central Kashmir on Monday evening. The police and security forces are on the job," said a police spokesman.

After the initial contact was made around 4.30

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Five States record 57% of recoveries

Maharashtra, A.P., Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and U.P. have contributed 60% of the total COVID-19 cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
In 24 hours, Andhra Pradesh recorded the highest COVID-19 recoveries with 11,915 recovered cases. Karnataka and Maharashtra followed with 9,575 and 7,826 recoveries, respectively, while Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh registered 5,820 and 4,779 recoveries, a press release from the Union Health Ministry said here on Monday.

These five States together contributed 57% of the recoveries in 24 hours.

69,564 discharged

"India's total recovered cases have crossed 32.5 lakh on Monday, with 69,564 patients being discharged in the last 24 hours," the Ministry said.

The release added that the Central government's coordination with local governments to ensure better ambulance services and seamless point-to-point management of patients has



Spraying clean: A worker disinfecting an area in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh. ■ K.V.S. GIRI

led to a high number of COVID-19 patients recovering and being discharged from hospitals.

"Supervised isolation in

homes and facility settings, following effective Standard of Care protocol, has hugely aided recovery of mild and moderate cases," the Union

Health Ministry said.

The same five States are also contributing 60% of the total cases – Maharashtra at the top with 21.6%, followed

by Andhra Pradesh (11.8%), Tamil Nadu (11%), Karnataka (9.5%) and Uttar Pradesh at 6.3% – according to data from the Ministry.

Active cases

Maharashtra also contributed 26.76% of the active cases, followed by Andhra Pradesh (11.30%), Karnataka (11.25%), Uttar Pradesh (6.98%) and Tamil Nadu (5.83%). These five States presently contribute 62% of total active cases.

India's current daily testing capacity has now crossed 11.7 lakh, according to the Ministry.

It added that the cumulative number of tests is edging towards five crore (4,95,51,507). As many as 7,20,362 tests were conducted in 24 hours.

"As a result of the ramped-up testing countrywide, 1,33,33,904 tests were conducted in the last two weeks alone," said the Union Minister.

PM must answer for failing to provide 'leadership': Cong.

Alarming rise in number of COVID-19 cases and deaths'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi must answer how his government planned to control the "alarming" rise in COVID-19 cases and deaths, and restore the "sinking economy", the Congress said on Monday after India surpassed Brazil in terms of the total number of infections.

The party called India the "corona capital", noting that the nation was now number one in terms of daily infections (90,802 cases), daily deaths (1,016 deaths) and doubling of cases (20 lakh case to 40 lakh cases in 29 days).

Though the country was witnessing a second wave of infection and the virus was spreading to smaller towns and villages, "the BJP government has disowned the people and left them to fend for themselves," it alleged.



Randeep Surjewala

days later, the whole country is fighting an epic battle of Mahabharata against the pandemic. People are dying of the disease but Modiji is busy with photo shoots and feeding peacocks. The battle against the pandemic rages, but the general is missing," Mr. Surjewala said.

"The Modi government is mocking people who are suffering from economic distress, closure of businesses, incapacity to pay EMIs and losing jobs and livelihoods by blaming God for their misery. Will Modiji answer for his failed leadership?" he asked.

The Congress chief spokesperson claimed that experts had predicted 1.4 crore cases by December-end and as many as 1,75,000 deaths.

"On March 24, Modiji said the battle of Mahabharata lasted for 18 days and the battle against COVID-19 shall be won in 21 days. And 166

Tripura MLA issues ultimatum on 'lapses'

He alleges lack of hospital equipment

A CORRESPONDENT

AGARTALA

Dissident BJP MLA and former Tripura Health Minister Sudip Roy Barman continued his tirade against alleged treatment lapses and lack of life-saving equipment in the GBP Hospital here, which is a dedicated COVID care hospital.

Barman, who switched over from the Congress, highlighted the COVID-19 situation at a press conference here on Friday. He spoke of alleged mismanagement in the health facilities and the absence of senior doctors at the COVID-19 wards of the GBP Hospital.

They gave a three-day ultimatum to the official to improve the situation. Mr. Barman, however, did not say what their action would be after the lapse of the deadline.

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'Detail steps for care of the elderly'

SC tells States to explain steps taken to handle the COVID-19 pandemic

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday asked the States to provide a more detailed version of the measures in place to provide care, support and priority medical treatment to senior citizens, especially those who live alone, during the COVID-19 pandemic.

A Bench led by Justice Ashok Bhushan gave the States four weeks to file comprehensive affidavits. The order was in response to a submission made by senior advocate Ashwani Kumar that the States have merely paid lip service to the court order of August 4 by filing reports.

Justice Bhushan, however, said the court cannot be expected to look into every individual case. "It is a big country," he remarked.

The Bench said the States should deal with the local problems in their respective jurisdictions.



referred to media reports showing continued instances of neglect shown to elderly people.

Justice Bhushan, however, said the court cannot be expected to look into every individual case. "It is a big country," he remarked.

The Bench said the States should deal with the local problems in their respective jurisdictions.

On August 4, the court ordered the States to respond promptly to the needs of senior citizens and ensure they do not suffer financially during COVID-19. It also directed that the elderly should get their pension on time.

All old age people who are eligible for pension should be regularly paid pension and those identified older people should be provided necessary medicines, masks, sanitizers and other essential goods by the respective States. Further, as and when any individual request is made, the same shall be attended to by the administration with all promptness," the court had ordered.

It had directed that senior

citizens, who were generally vulnerable to the virus, ought to be given priority in government hospital admissions. Government hospitals should take care to promptly remedy any grievances voiced by senior citizens during this health crisis.

The Bench had directed that caregivers in old age homes should wear personal protection equipment (PPE) and follow proper sanitation procedures.

In his petition, Mr. Kumar said many elderly persons were battling loneliness and depression. The lockdown of the past months and the social isolation imposed were telling on senior citizens, leaving many of them in the grip of anxiety.

FIR against Punjab MLA for video on pandemic

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHANDIGARH

The Punjab police on Monday registered an FIR against Lok Insaf Party (LIP) legislator Simarjeet Singh Bains for allegedly spreading false propaganda to mislead the people on the COVID-19 pandemic.

The FIR has been registered on the basis of a complaint by Civil Surgeon, Ludhiana, according to a police spokesperson.

In his complaint, the Civil Surgeon had sought legal action against the MLA from the Atam Nagar constituency in Ludhiana, for misguiding people through a video clip. He alleged that the video clip is being played on various social media platforms, thus leading to an atmosphere of confusion among the public. Mr. Bains was also inciting people not to wear masks, said the complaint.

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU ANIMAL HUSBANDRY DEPARTMENT
571, Anna Salai, Nandanam P.O. Chennai 600 035.
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
(STATE LEVEL TENDER UNDER TWO COVER SYSTEM)
Under the Scheme for Poultry Development 2020-21, sealed tenders are invited from eligible tenderers for the procurement of 38.5 lakhs , 4 weeks old (minimum 28 days) Aseel birds, over a period of 5 months.
TENDER ROC. No. 15100/PP/2020 Dated : 04.09.2020

Tender fee	Rs.10,000/- (Inclusive of GST) to be obtained in person
Earnest Money Deposit	Rs. 25.00 Lakhs (Rupees Twenty five lakhs only)
Date and Time of commencement of sale of tender document	From 08.09.2020, 11.00 A.M to 5.00 P.M on all working days
Last date for sale of tender document	08.10.2020 till 5.00 p.m
Date, time and venue of pre-bid meeting	23.09.2020, 11.00 am, at the Directorate of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Services, No. 571, Anna Salai, Nandanam, Chennai 600 035.
Due date, time for submission of filled tender documents	Up to 09.10.2020 till 11.00 A.M.
Date and time of opening of Technical Bid	09.10.2020 at 11.30 A.M.

Individual tender documents with full details can be downloaded from www.tenders.tn.gov.in at free of cost. Corrigendum to this publication if any would appear only on the above website.

Director of Animal Husbandry & Veterinary Services, Chennai
DIPR/3329/TENDER/2020

पिंपरी चिंचवड महानगरपालिका, पिंपरी पुणे-४११०१८.
सुरक्षा विभाग ई निविदा सुचना क्र. २/४/२०२०-२०२१

ई-मेल- security@pcmcindia.gov.in

ब्र.क्र.	कामाचा तपशील	अंदाजपत्रकी कामाची किंवत	वायाण रक्कम	वरामत ८,८	निविदा कांसी की(परत न मिळाणारी) जीसटी सह	कामाचा कालावधी
१	पिंपरी चिंचवड मनपाचा सुरक्षा विभागाकडील मिळकर्तीसाठी टेकेडारी पटजीने रखवालांदारांचे 'मदतनीम' पुरविणे एकूण संख्या :-३१५ (अ प्रभाग व ह प्रभाग)	८,९६,८७,११५/-	८,९६,८७,११५/-	४४,८४,३५६/-	३१३६०/-	१ वर्ष
२	पिंपरी चिंचवड मनपाचा सुरक्षा विभागाकडील मिळकर्तीसाठी टेकेडारी पटजीने रखवालांदारांचे 'मदतनीम' पुरविणे एकूण संख्या :-३२३ (अ प्रभाग व ह प्रभाग)	८,९६,८७,११५/-	८,९६,८७,११५/-	४४,८४,३५६/-	३१३६०/-	१ वर्ष
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उपरोक्त निविदेविल मुराबा अवध्ये संदर्भातील कामाचा तपशील निविदा आदी शर्ती, वायाण अनामत रक्कम, निविदा शेकऱ्यां, इत्यादीची माहिती

<https://mahatenders.gov.in> या मोकेतथातव उपलब्ध असून सदर निविदा संकेतस्थावर भरता येईल. ई-टेंडरिंग प्रक्रिया अंतर्गत निविदा प्रक्रियेकरिता दिनांक ०८/०९/२०२० ते २८/०९/२०२० अखेर दुपारी ३:०० बाजेपर्यंत भरणेत रेईल. निविदा पुर्व बैठक दि. १५/०९/२०२० रोजी स्थळ मा. अति.आयुक्त (३) यांचे दालानात घेणेत रेईल. सदरस्वी ई-निविदा प्रणाली वापराव

August rainfall highest since 1926: IMD

However, the season as a whole is likely to record a 'normal' rainfall as was forecast in June

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

August rainfall this year has been the highest since 1926 with 32.7 cm – or about 27% more than what is normal for the month, according to data from the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Monday. In August 1926, the rainfall recorded was 34.8 cm, exceeding the normal by 33%.

IMD officials said that though August rainfall was in excess, the figure for this year's monsoon as a whole were likely to be within the department's June forecast of a normal (96 to 104% of the long period average) rainfall.

"There has been a decrease in rainfall across India since the beginning of September. However we expect a revival again around September 17," Mrutunjay Mahapatra, Director-General, IMD, said at a press conference on Monday.

From June to September 6, India had registered 7% more rainfall than what is



Cut off by rain: A woman with two children rows a boat in a flooded field in Bhagalpur. ■ REUTERS

normal for this period.

In the normal course, the monsoon begins its retreat from September 15 and this can go on for nearly a month.

Low-pressure systems

The heavy rain in August was due to several long-lasting low-pressure systems, or rain-bearing winds, that formed in the Bay of Bengal and were vigorous enough to

travel all the way from the south-eastern coast up to north-west India. "In a typical monsoon season, there are 12-13 LPA. There were fewer this year, however, there were six of them in August and they lasted for several days. Together that led to several rainy days in August," he said.

The surplus rain was primarily in Rajasthan, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Karnataka,

Kerala, Telangana, Chhattisgarh and Odisha.

Climate change

Long periods of heavy rain followed by extended dry periods are a feature of climate change and is part of a general change in monsoon patterns over India, the IMD had previously stated.

In response to a question from *The Hindu*, Mr. Mahapatra admitted that the agen-

cy's monthly forecasts for July and August were widely off the mark, but said this was due to "intra-seasonal" variations and the IMD's shorter-term forecast models had anticipated spells of heavy rain and adequately warned authorities.

This year the IMD launched urban flood forecasting services for Mumbai and Chennai and it would extend it to Bengaluru and Kolkata. "We can provide these forecasts for other cities too but require detailed maps of the cities. The [four cities] that we provided services were extremely cooperative and forthcoming with such data," said Madhavan Rajeevan, Secretary, Earth Sciences Ministry. North-West India has seen 10% less rainfall than what is normal; Central India has seen a 17% surplus; South India a 20% surplus and Northeast India received exactly what it normally gets.

Cooler than normal conditions in the equatorial Central Pacific contributed to the increased rainfall.

Change our ways swiftly and globally: David Attenborough

Veteran broadcaster accepts Indira Gandhi Peace Prize

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh said on Monday that the UPA government was criticised as being "too restrictive" on giving environmental clearances, but it knew how to strike a balance between protecting the environment and meeting development needs.

It doesn't take an epidemic to tell us "we are not in good shape," Dr. Singh said. He made these remarks at a virtual ceremony where he conferred the Indira Gandhi Peace Prize for 2019 on British broadcaster Sir David Attenborough, whom he described as the "human voice of nature".

Living legend'

"Climate change, the assault on the oceans, the pollution of the atmosphere, the junk floating about in space, the reduction of forest cover, the



David Attenborough

The pandemic was a way of nature telling humans to be less exploitative.

In his acceptance speech, Sir David, 94, who is well known for his series *The Living Planet*, said the world was heading towards a crisis unlike any other in human history as "humans have overrun the planet."

"We must change our ways, and we must do so swiftly and globally. But success will only come if the nations of the world agree to act together and help one another. This will not be easy. We have to change from being nationalists and become internationalists," he said.

In her opening remarks, Congress president Sonia Gandhi recalled the contribution of former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and described her as "an unwavering champion of environment protection laws."

Chanda Kochhar's husband held

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday arrested Deepak Kochhar, the husband of former ICI-CI Bank CEO and MD Chanda Kochhar, in a money laundering case. The case pertains to alleged credit facilities extended to the Videocon Group of companies.

"The accused has been arrested under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act. He will be produced in court on Tuesday," said a senior ED official.

The ED is conducting the probe based on an FIR registered by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) in January 2019, alleging *quid pro quo* in sanctioning loans to the tune of ₹1,875 crore to the companies of Videocon Group head Venugopal Dhot.

In January this year, the agency had attached properties worth ₹78.15 crore of Ms. Kochhar, and those of her husband's companies.

These include a flat in Mumbai and some other assets held in the name of Mr. Kochhar's firm Nupower Renewables Private Ltd., earlier known as NuPower Renewables Ltd. (NRL), and its subsidiaries.

The agencies alleged that during Ms. Kochhar's tenure, between June 2009 and October 2011, ICICI Bank had sanctioned six high-value loans to various Videocon Group firms.

Rafale induction ceremony at Ambala on Thursday

Second batch of four jets likely to arrive in October

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The formal induction ceremony of the Rafale fighter jets will be held at the Ambala Air Force station on September 10, the Indian Air Force (IAF) said here on Monday.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and French Defence Minister Florence Parly will be present for the induction ceremony, an official source said.

The second batch of four Rafale jets are likely to arrive in October, another source said.

On July 29, five Rafale jets, three single-seat and two



At home: A Rafale jet at the Air Force Station in Ambala. ■ PTI

twin-seater trainers, landed at the Ambala air base, the home base of the No. 17 Golden Arrows squadron. These are part of the

Rhea files plea against Sushant's sister

NCB to question actor again today in connection with the death case

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) questioned actor Rhea Chakraborty for the second consecutive day on Monday in connection with the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput. She was quizzed for about eight hours.

On Sunday, it recorded her statement for close to six hours. She has been asked to join the investigation again on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, Ms. Chakraborty has filed a complaint with the Mumbai police against Sushant's sister Priyanka Singh and a doctor at the Ram Manohar Lohia Hospital in Delhi among others, alleging forgery and other violations under the NDPS



Under the lens: Actor Rhea Chakraborty leaving the NCB office in Mumbai on Monday. ■ PTI

NCB custody.

It is alleged that a bogus medical prescription showing Sushant as an outpatient was obtained when he was in Mumbai on June 8.

Her brother, Showik, was arrested last week along with Sushant's housekeeping manager, Samuel Miranda, for allegedly procuring drugs. They are currently in

Ms. Chakraborty's father, Indrajit Chakraborty, earlier issued a statement protesting the arrest of his son. "Congratulations India, you have arrested my son, I'm sure next on the line is my daughter and I don't know who is next thereafter. You have effectively demolished a middle-class family. But of course, for the sake of justice everything is justified. Jai hind," he said.

Mr. Chakraborty, a retired Lieutenant Colonel, is an accused in the case being probed by the CBI for abetting to suicide, criminal conspiracy, cheating, breach of trust, theft, wrongful restraint and confinement. Ms. Chakraborty has been provided security by the Mumbai Police.

Man who shot dead teacher lynched by mob in U.P.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

LUCKNOW

A man accused of shooting dead a schoolteacher was lynched by a mob in the presence of police personnel in a village in Kushinagar district on Monday, the police said.

The unidentified accused had driven to the house of Sudhir Singh early on Monday on a scooter. He was asked to sit and served tea by the family, while Sudhir Singh was in the bathroom, the police said.

Meanwhile, the Station House Officer of Tarhasujan was suspended after a fresh video emerged showing that the accused was lynched by the mob despite being already in the custody of police.

and lathis, were seen preventing the police from taking away the accused who lay motionless in a bloodied state.

The family raised an alarm and before the accused could escape people from the neighbourhood gathered and surrounded him, he said.

Meantime, the Station House Officer of Tarhasujan was suspended after a fresh video emerged showing that the accused was lynched by the mob despite being already in the custody of police.

Kangana acting on PM's agenda: Cong.

Ruling party trying to deflect attention from problems of people in Bihar, it says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Describing it as a "new low" in politics, the Congress on Monday accused the BJP of politicising the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput to deflect attention from the problems faced by the people in Bihar.

At a virtual press conference, Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala alleged that actor Kangana Ranaut was "carrying on" BJP and Prime Minis-

ter Narendra Modi's agenda of defaming the Shiv Sena-NCP-Congress alliance government in Maharashtra by referring to Mumbai as Pakistan Occupied Kashmir".

Right to dissent

He, however, defended Ms. Ranaut's right to dissent, and said the State government would provide her protection.

On reports that the BJP in Bihar had come up with posters with the late actor's photo-

to, Mr. Surjewala said, "This is a new low in the new India of BJP and Nitish Babu's rule. Consequently, they are attempting to divert attention and politicise the death of a film star," he said.

He pointed out that the debates on the electronic media are now focussed on Sushant Singh Rajput and Rhea Chakraborty instead of issues of important issues like the novel coronavirus, unemployment and the economy.

The entire government machinery lies decimated in Bihar under the BJP and Nitish Babu's rule. Consequently, they are attempting to divert attention and politicise the death of a film star," he said.

machinery lies decimated in Bihar under the BJP and Nitish Babu's rule. Consequently, they are attempting to divert attention and politicise the death of a film star," he said.

He also counted longevity as a boon. Good friends are hard to come by. Some are with us when we prosper but desert us when our fortunes are down.

Abhidana Chintamani also has interesting observations about blessings. Abhidana Chinatamani is an encyclopedia of Tamil literature, which was put together by Singaravelu Mudaliar, and published in the early 20th century. This encyclopedia lists 16 blessings or boons that are worth desiring. This list includes fame, education, courage, good health and good children. Abidami Bhattar considered education to be the most desirable of all things. He spoke of "kalayaada kalvi," that is education which stays with one till the end of one's life. He also counted longevity as a boon. Good friends

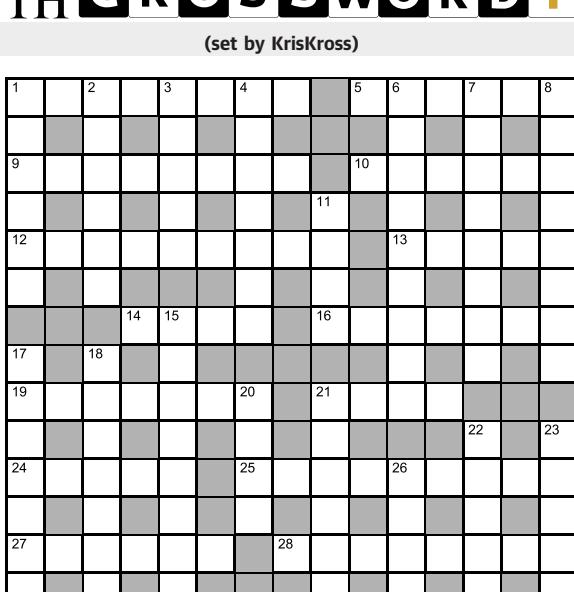
are hard to come by. Some are with us when we prosper but desert us when our fortunes are down.

Abidami Bhattar talks of friendship untainted by cunning and hypocrisy, and says that to have sincere friends is a great boon. Bhattar prays for a healthy body and a mind that never tires. A wife whose affection never wanes is also considered a blessing by Bhattar. A poet called Pisirandaiyar had not lost his youthful looks and there was not a single grey hair on his head. He explained that this was because he had an understanding wife, and children whose ideals matched his. Bhattar talks of konaada kol, which means a life lived ethically. Attachment to God's feet and association with His devotees are also described by Bhattar as boons.

TH CROSSWORD + 13035

(set by KrisKross)

Lockdown getting you down?
Come over to our Crossword site:
@ <https://qrqo.page.link/jjpTn>



■ ACROSS

- Doctor obtained drug, released today – finally, a possible treatment for COVID (8)
- Setter had worried after losing online Aadhar, say (2,4)
- Student somehow agrees to accept small gift (8)
- Killing/beheading scoundrel in concert (6)
- Paint can – it could cause damage to the environment (5,4)
- Foreigner is primarily all right (5)

- 14 Swallow in second branch, broken at the tip (4)
16 Say, I survive, repelling a harmful spell (4,3)
19 Relaxes in amazing Seoul, drinking nog (without egg) (7)
21 Raised money, reportedly (4)
24 Board making a late communication (5)
25 One to leak information and reveal all (9)
27 According to Spooner, hardworking person is idle (6)
28 Sugar in France, translated to 'sucre' (8)
29 Religious belief is dividing those people (6)
30 India flooded by plastic waste again, so to speak (2,2,4)
- DOWN
- Awkward Basil starting to deliver unrehearsed speeches (2-4)
 - Force queen to wear hat (6)
 - Request to cut corner tree (5)
 - Running smart (7)
 - What a fisherman may do to get in touch with a friend (4,1,4)
 - Transporters shot in Israel (8)
 - "Woman of action" describes KrisKross' boss (8)
 - Mediterranean food from Suez, emphatically rejected (4)
 - Specialists in duplicate locks? (9)
 - John and daughter enter new lift, illuminated brightly (8)
 - Power tending to make one draconian (8)
 - Very average (2-2)
 - Live near ruined south Indian city (7)
 - In hotel, going through a boring book (2,4)
 - Queen outside old building (6)
 - Authorised insurance firm's appeal (5)

SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★

Solution to puzzle 13034

H	I	T	T	H	E	J	A	C	K	P	O	T	S
S	N	A	X	N	I	V	E	L	E	I	N	T	S
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ADITYA SAROHA

Yes, the pandemic has disrupted the sporting – and pretty much every other – calendar for 2020. However, in July, international cricket resumed with the England and West Indies series, almost four months after COVID-19 halted all-live action. It was followed by another cricket series between England and Pakistan.

Notably, these two tournaments have something remarkable in common – other than England winning both test series. All matches were played in a 'bio-secure bubble' or its more popular portmanteau 'bio-bubble'. And now, the Indian Premier League (IPL) in UAE on September 19 and the Indian Super League (ISL) football championship in Goa from October 2020 till March 2021, will be played inside the bubble.

A safe and secure environment that is isolated from the outside world to minimise the risk of COVID-19 infection, a bio-bubble permits only authorised sports persons, support staff and match officials to enter the protected area after testing nega-

tive for COVID-19. Naturally, individuals must be regularly tested, temperature checked with respective health reports filed accordingly.

The bio-bubble does not just limit itself to the pitch or field; it is, of course, mandatory that all entities partake in this new form of quarantine. The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) will provide 'bio-secure bubbles' in hotels, training sessions, matches and transportation, as confirmed by Brazilian footballer Joao Victor of ISL's Hyderabad FC, in a previous interview with *The Hindu*.

IPL teams staying in different hotels are advised to order food to their individual rooms and avoid common areas. Physical distancing and masks are a must, even while interacting with others within their bubble. Teams are allowed to hold meetings outdoors to adhere to physical distancing norms. In fact, players will not be allowed to meet their families or friends until the tournament is over.

The IPL Governing Council has made it clear that wilful breach of bio-secure

bubble will invite strict action as it can put all players at risk. Should a player disobey the code in IPL, he will be isolated and be asked to test negative twice before entering the bubble again.

Into the tech

To maintain no transmission risks, a great deal of tech on a large scale is required. IPL's secure bio-bubble has been created by a UK-based safety and technology firm, Restrata. Its software is COVID-19 regulations compliant, comprising a trio of tech we have seen mentioned on a quotidian basis: testing, contact tracing and Artificial Intelligence.

During the England versus West Indies series, Restrata had installed Bluetooth technology in stadiums to accurately track and trace any suspected COVID-19 outbreaks in real time. The company's software helped organisers monitor people working in specific zones, and check whether they adhered to physical distancing and capacity li-

mits norms. A similar technology is reported to be deployed for the IPL.

Contact tracing is broken down into three stages: contact identification, contact listing and contact follow-up, and recent technologies leverage Bluetooth (with a six-foot detection range) and Artificial Intelligence to automate this continuous data collection and processing, so that monitoring is detailed, seamless and in real-time. Often, wearables or an accreditation card will carry a chip-enabled GPS device to provide Restrata, IPL authorities and franchises detailed and live capability to track and trace individuals at all times.

Player perspectives

Former India captain and current National Cricket Academy head, Rahul Dravid had questioned the concept of bio-bubble in May when ECB (England and Wales Cricket Board) proposed the idea of keeping players in isolation for the entire tour to keep cricket up and running amid the pandemic. At a webinar in May for non-profit organisation YUVA, Dravid called the plan "unrealistic". He raised questions on what will happen if a player tests positive during the test match.

It is worth noting that the ECB has been successful in managing the bio-bubble as no players tested positive during the two different series. But, even before the 80-day bio-bubble of IPL began, Rajasthani Royals fielding coach,

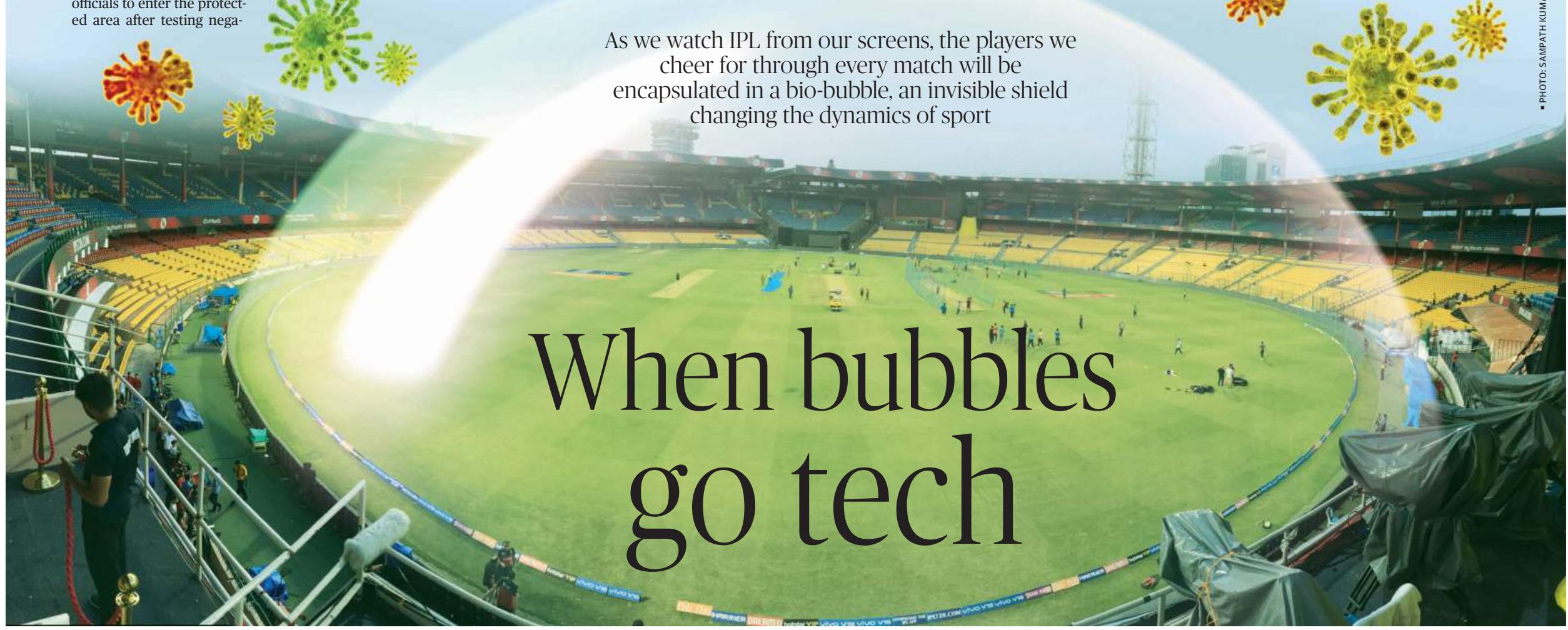
Dishant Yagnik tested positive for CO-

VID-19. And recently, 13 members of the Chennai Super Kings contingent, including two players, have tested positive. As a result, concerns about the safety and security of players arose, and has invited strict directions from owners, coaches and captains of other teams.

However India and Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) captain Virat Kohli, during an episode of 'Bold Diaries' on RCB's official YouTube channel, says the bio-bubble is there for a reason, explaining, "We are all here to play cricket...The bio-bubble needs to be respected at all times for the tournament to happen eventually. We are not here to have fun and roam around saying 'I want to hang out in Dubai'."

So, it is literally a case of 'getting with the programme' – from your TV room for fans. The idea here is that players stay safe and focussed on the game so the experience feels as close to pre-COVID times as possible.

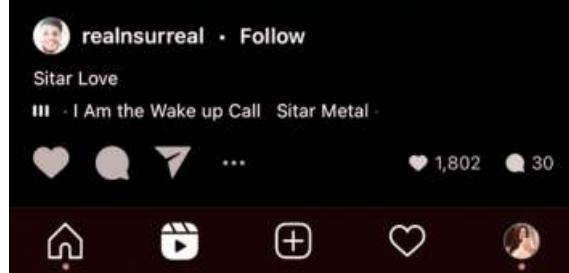
PHOTO: SAMPATH KUMAR/GP; IMAGING: M ARIVARASU



When bubbles go tech

As we watch IPL from our screens, the players we cheer for through every match will be encapsulated in a bio-bubble, an invisible shield changing the dynamics of sport

TECH-A-BYTE



A league of its own

Instagram has introduced a separate Reels tab on the home screen for Indian users, two months after it launched the short video format. Reels tab replaced the explore option, and will be made available across India in the coming days. The country is the first market where the feature has been introduced.

"Today we're launching a separate tab for Reels in India given the momentum we're seeing in the country," Adam Mosseri, head of Instagram said in a tweet.

The feature is available both for Android and iOS devices. The Reels tab is available at the bottom of the screen on the left with a play button like icon. The explore button has been shifted to the top right corner, next to the DM option.

The photo-sharing platform rolled out the Reels feature in July after the Indian Government banned video-sharing app, TikTok on June 30. Since then, Instagram's Reels has gained significant traction which prompted the company to launch a different tab altogether.



All eyes and ears

Twitter is working to add automated captions to audio and video by early next year, aimed at making the micro blogging site more accessible to the people with disabilities. "Testing voice Tweets earlier this summer made us realise how much work we still need to do as a company, and we made a commitment to make Twitter more inclusive for the disabled community," Twitter said. It is also creating dedicated teams to focus on greater accessibility, tooling, and advocacy across all of their products. The Experience Accessibility Team will work on the new and existing features and products, providing resources and tools that promote greater accessibility. The Accessibility Center for Excellence, will set goals, drive progress, consult and partner with groups across Twitter's core business functions to make the platform more accessible.

GAMESPOT



Ms Marvel to the rescue

With an excellent single-player campaign and a strong female lead, Avengers is that dose of Marvel we have long been demanding

JULIAN ALMEIDA

A few weeks ago, we played the Avengers beta – a worrying experience. Earth's mightiest heroes' first big game looked like it was going to be so flat, it should have been named Average-rs. Thankfully, the final game, which just released on September 4, successfully dispelled that with a campaign that is powerful enough to be its own Avengers movie.

The story of Marvel's Avengers follows the young and charismatic Kamala Khan, better

MARVEL'S AVENGERS

DEVELOPER: Crystal Dynamics, Eidos Montreal
PUBLISHER: Square Enix
PRICE: ₹3,999 on Playstation 4, Xbox One and ₹2,999 on PC



known as Ms Marvel, a Pakistani-American Muslim human, and an Avengers superfan who gets a chance to meet her heroes in the flesh. Disaster strikes and she is imbued with superpowers when the helicarrier Chimera is destroyed in a terrorist attack. The event splits the Avengers, sending them all into hiding. Five years later, it is up to a grown-up Kamala to find and reunite them to help her take on a new evil.

Made by Crystal Dynamics, the studio responsible for Tomb Raider, Avengers plays out like an Uncharted game initially with Kamala tracking down each Avenger. While this is her story, you also get to play as the Avengers. The campaign

hits all the right notes, too, lasting for a little more than 10 hours. You can explore a new world ruled by a dystopian corporation called AIM (Advanced Idea Mechanics).

Style and power

Gameplay-wise, Avengers veers from platforming to all out beat-em-up action, deftly handling with style. Where the game falters is the way it handles powered characters such as Thor and Hulk, particularly in one scene when they are destroying trucks and tanks. In another, they seem to have trouble with normal low-level enemies. Sure, the game has a rational explanation for that in the form of robots designed to take on the Avengers. It would be great if it would let us feel like we are playing as a superhero.

On the upside, fighting as Kamala features both grace and power in her stretchy moves as she pummels enemies. Of course, Iron Man is a lot of fun to fight as, as you can chain combos with funky aerial moves. Each character has

Packs a punch Screenshots from the game ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

many equitable special moves and a lot of loot, costumes and more to collect.

To give you more Avengers, there is a multi-player component, which is in the form of replayable missions after the main story is complete. These are largely rehashed and designed to let you grind along with three other friends, or AI companions, in very generic locations where you are so under-powered that you have to constantly keep playing a repetition of missions to get upgrades and level ups for your characters.

There are many characters on the way as downloadable content, too: Spider-Man for PlayStation 4 gamers in 2021, the upcoming Hawkeye, and Kate Bishop, as well as a rumoured Black Panther and She-Hulk. Suggestion from our end: they should make the post-game multi-player content even more exciting, with more balances and tweaks to make it less of a time drain. Getting the live game portions are always tricky, so let us hope Crystal Dynamics gets it right.

No matter which system you play it on, Avengers is ready for the next generation with amazing details in the environments and on the characters. Yes, the game does suffer from a few occasional glitches and long load times when you die... but at least the loading screens look pretty.

Marvel's Avengers lives up to the hype. It has got heart and is a blast to play. If you are feeling the void of a year without a Marvel movie, this is just what you need.

The writer is a tech and gaming enthusiast who hopes to one day finish his sci-fi novel

A flow towards inclusion

Parmesh Shahani, a change-maker from the LGBTQ community, discusses his business book that advocates for LGBTQ inclusion in the Indian workplace

SUNALINI MATHEW

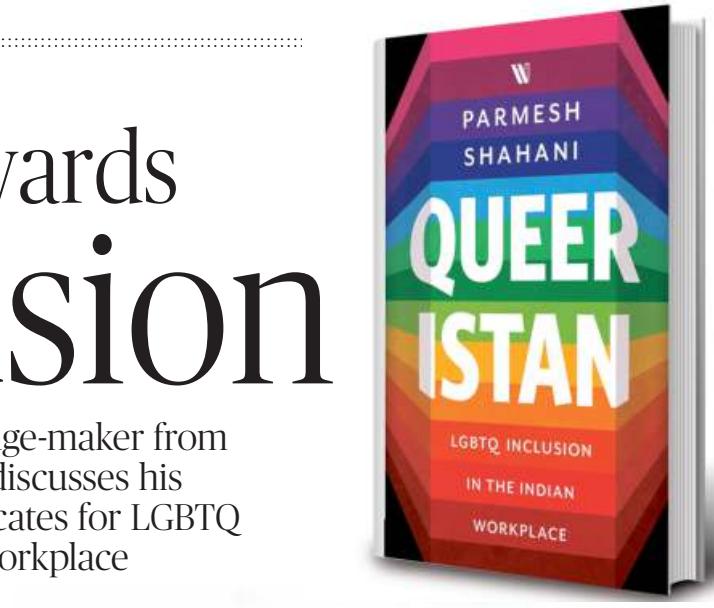
In his latest memoir-meets-manifesto titled *Queeristan: LGBTQ Inclusion in the Indian Workplace* (Westland Publications), Parmesh Shahani, who heads the Godrej Culture Lab in Mumbai, speaks about why it makes business and humanitarian sense for companies to employ and embrace the everyday realities of lesbians, gays, bisexuals, trans and queer/questioning people. Edited excerpts from an interview:

It has been 12 years since your last book, *Gay Bombay: Globalization, Love and (Be) longing in Contemporary India*. What has changed for society in this time?

• What has changed for society is that queerness is very much a part of people's consciousness. A bunch of things has led to that. First, the judgments. Whether it was the 2009 Delhi High Court verdict decriminalising homosexuality, the 2013 Supreme Court judgement that reversed that, or the 2018 judgement which decriminalised it again. The NALSA judgement of 2014 for transgender rights and the right to privacy judgement of 2017 kind of paved the way for the 2018 Supreme Court judgement. We right now have a problematic trans act, and one hopes it is modified over the next couple of years. All these and the conversation around them made people aware of LGBTQ rights and people.

How has society itself changed?

• Media representation has increased by leaps and bounds. Twelve years ago there were maybe a few books; today I was talking to Shobhana (S Kumar, who runs the Queer Inc bookstore) and she says that at least count there were more than 200 books. If you look at films like *Aligarh*, *Shubh Mangal Zyada Saavdhan*, *Ek Ladki Ko Dekha...;* or web



Studying change Shahni says his book has takeaways not only for queer people, but also for straight people ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

series, whether it's *Made in Heaven* or *Paatal Lok* or *Romil and Jugal* – what we're seeing is more queer people telling our own stories. It's very important that *Aligarh* was written by Apurva Asrani, or *Ek Ladki Ko Dekha...* was written by Gauhar Dhaliwal, both from the community.

The axle of a lot of this change has been parental acceptance. We have parents groups like Sweekar in Bombay, which comprises more than 200 parents of queer children – they meet, share thoughts and ideas.

In your journey, which are the families that are the most

accepting of their children?

• The only common trait that I have found is that they love their children more than they care about what society may or may not think. This fear of LKK – log kya kahenge (what will people say?) is not there. After Samyuktha Vijayan transitioned, her mother takes her to a wedding and says, 'This used to be my son; now this is my daughter, welcome her,' and the family members do.

How is your book feeding into the change?

• We're seeing a lot of workplaces talking about inclusion, and that has

made a huge difference – say your parents are not supportive, but your workplace is, you can talk about it at work. It's not just for queer people, it's also for straight people. So many straight people go home and tell their family members, 'You know, we have LGBT partner benefits,' and that's how you change people's hearts and minds. Whether you look at workplace, family, representation, the law, we're on our way to living in more empowered times.

Do you think the change in any company must begin at the top?

• Completely, and that's what I target, because we're still fundamentally hierarchical in India. Once people at the top put their mind, weight, money, intent behind it, it is communicated to everyone down the line.

To what extent is homophobia present within the LGBTQ community, because sometimes we internalise external voices?

• It's a struggle to assert who you are, what you feel, and your orientation as normal and valid. The work has to be done by society, because society is putting this pressure on queer people. Which is why this book is so important, because it's telling companies that the onus is on you to create safe, welcoming spaces for your queer employees. When you create spaces where people can be themselves, their productivity rises. It's also about overall wellbeing – anyone trying to suppress or hide causes a whole lot of stress.

In the 'new India' there's one arm that's progressive and one that's quite the opposite. How do you hope we'll navigate this?

• I don't see things as binary. I see at any given time in our past, present, and future, there is always change happening. I think of it as a flow towards inclusion. It's not that in the river there will not be obstacles. Even in states doing good work, it's not that violence is not happening or that patriarchy does not exist.

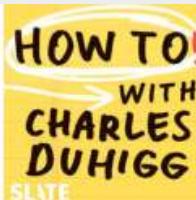
The point I want to make is that there is an understanding now. Whether it is Supriya Sule, or Kanimozhi, Shashi Tharoor or Gautam Gambhir, who inaugurated a trans festival, across the political spectrum, we're seeing voices coming up more. Apsara Reddy is the national general secretary of the Mahila Congress. She is trans. Inclusion is Indian; to be Indian is to be inclusive.

Queeristan: LGBTQ Inclusion in the Indian Workplace is available in bookstores, online, and on Audible.

HOMING IN

The United Nations (UN), in 1967, declared September 8 as International Literacy Day. This year, the UN is focussing on the role of educators and changing pedagogies. Formal education apart, there are platforms aplenty to learn about new things, which will widen our perspectives. Here are a few **Podcasts** that do that.

PRAVEEN SUDEVAN



How To! With Charles Duhigg

What if you had a chance to seek answers for your problems (ranging from a lack of sleep to voting for the next American President) from world-leading experts? That's How To! With Charles Duhigg in a nutshell. The show is hosted by Pulitzer-prize winning reporter and author of *The Power of Habit* and *Smarter Faster Better*, Charles Duhigg. The idea behind the podcast series, as the show's description states, is "What if Dear Abby was an investigative journalist?" Duhigg approaches the seemingly mundane issues earnestly but manages to keep the tone of the show casual.

Episode length: 30 minutes (on average)

Available on: Google Podcasts, Apple Podcasts, slate.com and more.



Talk To Me In Korean

K-Pop band BTS' new music video 'Dynamite' received 101.1 million hits within 24 hours, making it the music video with the biggest first-day debut. Korean dramas are also being watched by millions across the world. And, there is a fast growing interest in the language. Talk To Me In Korean, hosted by Hyunwoo and Kyeong-eun, offers bite-sized Korean lessons for learners.

Episode length: 20 minutes (on average)

Available on: talktomeinkorean.com, Spotify and more.

Philosophize This!

Stephen West's podcast discusses the thinkers and their ideas that shaped our world. A criticism of this podcast is that it does not delve deep enough on philosophical concepts. Fair enough. This podcast won't

be enough if you are looking to get a PhD on the works of Plato. West covers philosophers through the ages.

Episode length: 30+ minutes (on average)

Available on: philosophizethis.org, Spotify, Google Podcast and more.

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

The big red bus to London

Come summer of 2021, meet giant pandas and cross the Gobi desert, as Adventures Overland takes its clients from Delhi to the British capital

PRIYADARSHINI PAITANDY

Travel company Adventures Overland's next magnum opus of a plan includes taking its clients to the British capital in a big red customised bus. The one-way trip to London from Delhi, will take 70 days and will cover 18 countries and 20,000 kilometres.

Setting off from the Indian capital it will traverse the ancient Silk Route, Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Chengdu in China where one can

meet giant pandas, the Gobi desert, Great Wall of China, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Russia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Czech Republic, Germany, Belgium, and take a ferry from the port of Calais in France onto the port of Dover, UK.

The trip is scheduled for May 2021 and Tushar Agarwal and Sanjay Madan, the founders of Adventures Overland, plan to make it an annual trip much like their Road to London self-drive

road trips that started in 2017. "A lot of people approached us, expressing interest in a road trip to London, but they did not want to drive. That is how the idea of a hop on hop off bus tour came about," says Tushar.

With constant road trips, especially to far-flung South America and Africa, taking up most of their time, Tushar and Sanjay hardly found the time to put the plan into motion. "But now with the lockdown we were relatively

free and planned out the entire bus ride," he says.

The journey is broken into four legs: South-East Asia, China, Central Asia and Europe. The intrepid travellers have the option of doing the full tour from start to end point, or they can even join the team from designated cities in one of these countries. "Most people who come on these journeys are seasoned travellers, who now want bigger adventures in life," says Tushar.

While destinations like Paris and Hong Kong maybe the first that people think of when they want to go on a holiday abroad, Tushar says, the idea here is to take people to locations that they normally don't think of and are not on the mainstream tourist map. "That is why we have by-

passed Western Europe. The beauty of this journey is, you will get to see unexplored parts of the world," he says. Once the travellers reach London, they can either stay on longer or fly back. The bus will remain in the city for a month and then come back to India with a new set of people from London.

While the bus will provide all creature comforts, the only thing missing is a restroom, due to hygiene reasons.

"But this is a route we have travelled on multiple times and it has good infrastructure. We will stop for short breaks every two hours," says Tushar, adding, "Just bring along your positive attitude."

The journey is priced at ₹15 lakh per head. Log on to www.bustolondon.in

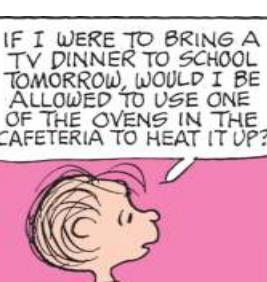


Hop In India Gate to London Bridge in 70 days ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

POOCH CAFE



PEANUTS



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



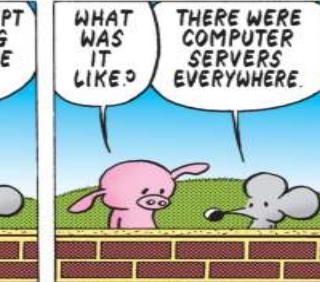
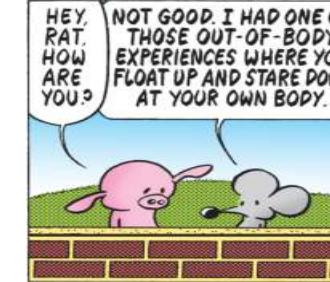
CALVIN AND HOBBES



TIGER



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



U.K. threatens to undercut Brexit pact

Govt. planning legislation to override parts of the Withdrawal Agreement; EU registers protest

REUTERS
LONDON

Britain's tortuous divorce from the EU veered into fresh crisis on Monday after London signalled it could undermine the exit agreement with Brussels unless free trade terms are agreed by next month.

In yet another twist to the four-year saga since Britain voted narrowly to quit the EU, Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government was reportedly planning new legislation to override parts of the Brexit Withdrawal Agreement it signed in January.

That could potentially jeopardise the whole treaty and create frictions in British-ruled Northern Ireland where special arrangements had been made to avoid a hard border with Ireland to the south that could be detrimental to a peace agreement.

Britain said it would honour the deal and was simply offering clarifications to avoid any future legal difficulties.

But the *Financial Times* newspaper cited three people as saying the proposed internal market Bill was expected to "eliminate the le-



Rough road: A file photo of a lorry passes by an anti-Brexit billboard on Dublin road in Newry, Northern Ireland. ■ AFP

gal force of parts of the withdrawal agreement" in areas including state aid and Northern Ireland customs.

Tumultuous exit

EU diplomats were aghast, cautioning that such a step – leaked on the eve of new talks in London – would tarnish Britain's global prestige and heighten chances of a tumultuous disentangling from the bloc on December 31.

Britain said it was committed to the divorce deal. "We are taking limited and reasonable steps to clarify specific elements of the Northern Ireland Protocol in domestic

London has set a deadline

of October 15 to strike a deal. "If we can't agree by then, then I do not see that there will be a free trade agreement between us, and we should both accept that and move on," Mr. Johnson said on Monday.

Game of chicken

European diplomats said Britain was playing a game of Brexit chicken by threatening to collapse the process and challenging Brussels to blink first. Some fear Johnson may view a no-deal exit as useful distraction from the coronavirus crisis.

Some Brexit-supporting members of the ruling Conservatives oppose the withdrawal agreement as threatening British independence even if the two sides secure future trade ties.

There was surprise and anger on both sides of the Irish border and in Brussels at the reported plan to undermine the withdrawal pact.

"I trust the British government to implement the Withdrawal Agreement, an obligation under international law and prerequisite for any future partnership," said Ursula von der Leyen, head of the EU executive.

Irish Foreign Minister Simon Coveney asked: "Is this political gamesmanship or is there really a piece of legislation that's going to emerge this week, which is contrary to the withdrawal agreement? We'll have to wait and see."

Without a deal, about \$900 billion annual trade between Britain and the EU could be thrown into uncertainty, including rules on everything from car parts and medicines to fruit and data.

EU chief negotiator Michel Barnier acknowledged anxiety but declined to comment on the *FT* report. "I remain... worried... the negotiations are difficult, because the British want the best of both worlds," he told France Inter radio.

If no deal is agreed, Britain would have a trading relationship with the bloc like Australia's, which would be "a good outcome", Mr. Johnson said.

Australia is negotiating a free trade deal with the EU to improve its market access, but for now largely handles commerce with the bloc on World Trade Organization terms.

Journalists for U.S. media face possible expulsion from China

It comes amid Washington's targeting of Chinese reporters

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BEIJING

China is delaying the renewal of press cards for at least five journalists working at four U.S. media outlets, an organisation of foreign correspondents said on Monday, making them vulnerable to expulsion in apparent retribution for Washington's targeting of Chinese reporters working in the United States.

China's Foreign Ministry responded by saying applications for renewal were being processed and those reporters involved would not have their lives in China "affected in any way."

"If the U.S. government truly cares about American journalists, it should extend visas for all Chinese journalists as soon as possible, instead of taking journalists from the two countries as hostages for the certain politicians' political interests," Mr. Zhao told reporters.

Atlanta-based CNN said its China correspondent was among those given a letter authorising him to continue reporting for the next two



Tit-for-tat: A file photo of foreign journalists lined up to attend a National People's Congress meet in Beijing. ■ AP

months instead of the usual one-year press card.

The Foreign Correspondents' Club of China, or FCCC, said *The Wall Street Journal* and Bloomberg have also been targeted. It did not name the fourth outlet, but said more foreign journalists are expected to receive similar treatment. While the targeted outlets are all American, the journalists involved are of various nationalities.

Mr. Zhao did not say what future actions China might take, but said "all options are on the table, and the U.S. side knows that very well."

"If the U.S. insists on going down the wrong path

and continuously making mistakes, China will have to make the necessary and legitimate responses to firmly safeguard its legitimate rights," he said.

90-day visas

China's move comes after the U.S. capped the number of Chinese citizens who could be employed by Chinese media outlets and placed them on 90-day visas.

China first responded in March by expelling reporters from *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal* and *The Washington Post*.

8 jailed for Khashoggi's murder

Saudi court overturns 5 death sentences; defendants not named

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
RIYADH

A Saudi court on Monday overturned five death sentences over journalist Jamal Khashoggi's murder in a final ruling that jailed eight defendants to between seven and 20 years, state media reported.

"Five of the convicts were given 20 years in prison and another three were jailed for

7-10 years," the official Saudi Press Agency said, citing a spokesman for the public prosecutor.

None of the defendants were named in what was described as the final court ruling on the killing which had sparked an international outcry.

The verdict came after Khashoggi's sons said in May they had "pardoned" the

+ Fresh blaze on stricken oil tanker off Sri Lanka

Squally conditions led to fresh flare-up

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
COLOMBO

A massive fire that crippled an oil tanker off Sri Lanka has reignited in strong winds, the island nation's Navy said on Monday, just a day after the blaze was extinguished.

The Panamanian-registered New Diamond, carrying over 270,000 tonnes of crude and diesel, was enroute from Kuwait to the Indian port of Paradip when it issued a distress call on Thursday after an engine room explosion that killed a Filipina crew member.

The ensuing fire was put out Sunday through the combined efforts of Sri Lanka's Navy and Air Force, the

Indian Navy and coastguard, as well as private operators.

Firefighters continued to douse the tanker with water and dry chemicals, but the squally conditions – where winds were blowing at up to 70 km per hour – led to a fresh flare-up.

"Due high winds... the fire which has already been doused, has re-ignited from the effects of extreme temperature and sparks onboard," the Navy said in a statement.

Sri Lanka Navy spokesman Captain Indika de Silva told AFP the blaze was at a "serious level, but we hope we will be able to contain it".

An all-powerful President and a 'rubber stamp' Parliament?

Recently gazetted draft 20th Amendment enhances Sri Lankan President's immunity; Opposition fears it will take the country back by a decade

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

When the Sri Lankan government recently gazetted the draft 20th Amendment (20 A) to the Constitution, it was merely keeping an election promise – to repeal the 19th Amendment of 2015 that clipped the Executive President's unfettered powers, in turn empowering Parliament. With the necessary two-third majority on their side, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's government is now closer to enacting it.

However, Opposition parties are strongly opposing the move that, they fear, will take the country back by a decade, to the days of the 18th Amendment. Brought in by former President and current Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa in 2010, it added wide-ranging powers and sweeping immunity to the President's office, while removing its term limit. Among the very few key features that the 20th Amendment Bill re-

tains from the 19th Amendment are the five-year terms for the President and Parliament, and the two-term limit to presidency.

Following its parliamentary group meeting on Monday, the main Opposition party Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB, or United People's Front) resolved to challenge the government's move. "The [proposed] 20th Amendment will lead to concentration of all power in the President's office, whereas Parliament will be a rubber stamp with no powers. The President is trying to do away with the legislature and judiciary," said Harsha de Silva, the party's Colombo MP.

'Virulent form'
In addition to reducing judicial review and curbing citizens' right to challenge Bills, the proposed amendment allows the President to dissolve Parliament after one year. Further, it discards the Constitutional Council that



Gotabaya Rajapaksa

voted appointments to the judiciary and independent commissions, instead opting for a Parliamentary Council whose approval the President will not require while making key appointments.

The prospect of significantly greater presidential powers without restraint has raised alarm within Sri Lankan civil society. The Colombo-based Centre for Policy Alternatives noted that denying the citizen the opportunity to challenge the Executive's actions through fundamental rights applica-

tions suggested that "the President is above the law". The amendment Bill underscores a "particularly virulent form of Presidentialism", said senior constitutional lawyer Kishali Pinto Jayawardene in the *Sunday Times* recently.

Ceremonial PM
While on the one hand, the Bill explicitly seeks to make

NEWS ANALYSIS
the President way more powerful, it also drastically reduces the authority and functions of the Prime Minister, sparking speculation over the power dynamic between the ruling Rajapaksa brothers in such a scenario. The PM "has been reduced to a mere functionary consulted in most cases only if necessary", the *Sunday Times* noted in its editorial.

Despite growing opposition from many quarters, the government, assured of the required numbers in the 225

member legislature, is likely to go ahead with its pledge. Asked how the SJB might oppose it, with only 54 members in the House, Mr. de Silva said the party would mobilise other parties and seek public support. "We will oppose the move inside and outside Parliament," he said.

Meanwhile, Jaffna legislator and Tamil National Alliance spokesman M.A. Sumanthiran cautioned against getting trapped in the technicalities of the 19th Amendment or its likely replacement, for it might take the focus away from the historic promise to abolish Executive Presidency.

Ever since the 1978 Constitution – under the United National Party (UNP) government – was enacted with a 5/6th majority in Parliament, there has been consistent opposition to Executive Presidency, from the then Opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and all other opposition parties. Even the

UNP, which initially brought in such a powerful presidency, in 1996 resolved to abolish it, paying heed to the growing public opinion against the system.

Since the 1990s, almost every presidential election – including when Mahinda Rajapaksa ran in 2005 – was won on the promise of abolishing Executive Presidency, except that none of the leaders kept their word. "The 2015 election too was fought on the same assurance by the Maithripala Sirisena-Ranil Wickremesinghe coalition.

The 19th Amendment that imposed substantial curbs on presidential powers was the first step in that direction," said Mr. Sumanthiran, a senior constitutional lawyer.

Ever since the 1978 Constitution – under the United National Party (UNP) government – was enacted with a 5/6th majority in Parliament, there has been consistent opposition to Executive Presidency, from the then Opposition Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and all other opposition parties. Even the

struggle between the President and the PM in the last government, which, they argue, led to the grave lapses in the intelligence apparatus, leading to the Easter terror blasts in April 2019.

The Rajapaksa made the abolition of the 19th Amendment a key poll pledge in the November 2019 presidential race, and the August general election this year, seeking a super majority for the same. "While it is true that the draft 20th Amendment seeks to enhance executive powers, just as the 18th Amendment did, we should not lose sight of the need to abolish the extremely problematic Executive Presidency system itself.

The Opposition to the draft Amendment should be centred on this," Mr. Sumanthiran said, adding: "By focussing on the technicalities of the 19th Amendment, the Rajapaksa are trying to quietly erase the historic pledge from public discourse."

ELSEWHERE



Assange extradition hearing resumes in U.K.

LONDON
WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange returned to court in London on Monday for a hearing to decide whether he should be extradited to the U.S. for leaking secrets about the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan. Supporters protested as the 49-year-old Australian was brought to the Old Bailey, brandishing placards reading "Stop this political trial". ■ AP

Nearly 300 Rohingya migrants reach Indonesia
LHOKSEUMAWE
Nearly 300 Rohingya migrants reached Indonesia on Monday claiming to have been at sea for seven months, the United Nations refugee agency said. The migrants, including more than a dozen children, were spotted on a wooden boat by locals, who helped them land near Lhokseumawe city. ■ AP

MARKET WATCH

	PRICE	% CHANGE
Sensex	38,417	0.16
US Dollar	73.35	-0.29
Gold	51,878	0.21
Brent oil	42.10	-2.68

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	% CHANGE
Adani Ports	352.05	-0.95
Asian Paints	1982.10	25.75
Axisc Bank	458.20	3.50
Bajaj Auto	2898.20	15.00
Bajaj Finserv	6263.65	-13.55
Bajaj Finance	3505.15	-91.65
Bharti Airtel	515.45	-7.70
BPCL	400.20	-3.15
Britannia Ind	3724.05	18.20
Cipla	716.75	-7.85
Coal India	131.95	-0.50
Dr Reddy's Lab	4419.85	97.35
Eicher Motors	2192.90	12.05
GAIL (India)	95.75	-2.30
Grafin Ind	700.15	-6.35
HCL Tech.	708.80	8.00
HDFC	1791.10	21.40
HDFC Bank	1110.50	-8.80
HDFC Life	591.85	17.20
Hero MotoCorp	2860.15	-55.05
Hindalco	187.50	-0.80
Hind Unilever	2162.60	37.95
ICICI Bank	373.40	0.85
IndusInd Bank	608.70	-7.45
Bharti Infratech	231.00	16.15
Infosys	925.05	5.90
Indian Oil Corp	83.80	-0.10
ITC	189.10	2.40
JSW Steel	286.50	-4.15
Kotak Bank	1368.75	-11.30
L&T	932.15	-10.35
M&M	610.45	-21.55
Maurit Suzuki	7209.15	19.05
Nestle India Ltd.	16403.50	170.90
NTPC	92.40	-2.30
ONGC	76.45	-1.45
PowerGrid Corp	176.15	1.10
Reliance Ind	2082.65	5.40
State Bank	207.90	1.30
Shree Cement	19782.95	-242.35
Sun Pharma	513.25	0.80
Tata Motors	149.40	1.60
Tata Steel	422.50	1.20
TCS	2327.05	38.25
Tech Mahindra	747.10	-1.10
Titan	1167.70	8.45
UltraTech Cement	3848.65	-67.45
UPL	494.45	-14.00
Wipro	278.75	2.75
Zee Entertainment	223.95	3.55

Measures needed to protect growth potential'

Govt's reluctance to do more now, conserve resources for possible future stimulus 'self-defeating': former RBI chief Rajan

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

decline of 12.4% in Italy and 9.5% in the U.S. – two of the most pandemic-affected advanced countries.

"Yet, India is even worse off than these comparisons suggest. The pandemic is still raging in India, so discretionary spending, especially on high-contact services like restaurants, and the associated employment, will stay low until the virus is contained," he wrote.

"Government-provided relief becomes all the more important. This has been meagre," Dr. Rajan added.

Economy as patient'
"If you think of the economy as a patient, relief is the sustenance the patient needs while on the sickbed and fighting the disease. Without relief, households skip meals, pull their children out of school and send them to work or beg, pledge their gold to borrow, let EMIs and



Timing key: 'Think of economic stimulus as a tonic. Given too late, it may have little effect,' says Dr. Rajan. ■ THULASI KAKKAT

rent arrears pile up," he wrote. "Similarly, without relief, small and medium firms – think of a small restaurant – stop paying workers, let debt pile up, or close permanently.

"Essentially, the patient atrophies, so by the time the disease is contained, the pa-

tient has become a shell of herself. Now think of economic stimulus as a tonic. When the disease is vanquished, it can help the patient get out of her sickbed faster. But if the patient has atrophied, stimulus will have little effect," he added.

Noting that Brazil, which

had spent 'tremendously' on relief, was seeing a much lower downgrade to medium-term growth than India, he wrote: "government officials who hold out the possibility of a stimulus when India finally contains the virus are underestimating the damage from a more shrunken and scarred economy at that point."

Stating that because of the pre-pandemic growth slowdown and the strained fiscal condition, officials were wary of spending on both relief and stimulus, he suggested the government would have to expand the resource envelope in every way possible, and spend cleverly.

India could also borrow more without scaring bond markets if it committed to return to fiscal viability over the medium term – by setting debt reduction targets through legislation, and committing to transparent

fiscal numbers with an independent fiscal council.

The government would need to prioritise its spending. "MNREGA is a tried and tested means of providing rural relief and should be replenished as needed. Given the length of the pandemic, more direct cash transfers to the poorest households, especially in urban areas that do not have access to MNREGA, is warranted," he wrote. Government and public sector firms should also clear their payables quickly so that liquidity moved to corporations, he added.

Also, small firms below a certain size could be rebated the corporate income and GST tax they paid last year, with the rebate tapering off with firm size.

"India needs strong growth, not just to satisfy the aspirations of our youth but to keep our unfriendly neighbours at bay," he wrote.

China exports rise most since March 2019

REUTERS
BEIJING

China's exports rose for the third consecutive month in August, eclipsing an extended fall in imports, as more of its trading partners relaxed lockdowns in a further boost to the recovery in the world's second-biggest economy.

Exports in August rose 9.5% from a year earlier, customs data showed on Monday, marking the strongest gain since March 2019. The figure also beat analysts' expectations for 7.1% growth and compared with a 7.2% increase in July.

Imports however slumped 2.1%, compared with market expectations for a 0.1% increase and extending a 1.4% fall in July.

"China's exports continue... to grow significantly faster than global trade," said Louis Kuijs of Oxford Economics.

RBI sets sectoral norms for resolution of COVID-19 related stressed assets

Key financial ratios prescribed by Kamath panel intended to be floors or ceilings



K.V. Kamath

cepted by the Reserve Bank," RBI said in a release.

The key financial ratios suggested by the committee are total outside liabilities/adjusted tangible networth;

total debt/EBITDA; current ratio, which is current assets divided by current liabilities; debt service coverage ratio; and average debt service coverage ratio.

Specified sectors

The 26 sectors specified by the RBI include automobiles, power, tourism, cement, chemicals, gems and jewellery, logistics, mining, manufacturing, real estate, and shipping among others.

The RBI said the ratios prescribed "are intended as floors or ceilings, as the case may be, but the resolution

plans shall take into account the pre-COVID-19 operating and financial performance of the borrower and impact of COVID-19 on its operating and financial performance at the time of finalising the resolution plan, to assess the cashflows in subsequent years, while stipulating appropriate ratios in each case."

It also said lending institutions may, at their discretion, adopt a graded approach depending on the severity of the impact on borrowers while implementing the resolution plan.



is not sustainable. There needs to be reasonable returns [on capital]," added Mr. Takkar.

"The prices need to go up and we are not shying away to say that. Every player is selling below the cost and it

Vodafone Idea hints at tariff hike, rebrands offering as 'Vi'

Every player is selling below cost, says MD and CEO Takkar

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Vodafone Idea Ltd. (VIL) signalled on Monday it was likely to raise tariffs to ensure sustainable operations.

"We believe the tariff has to go up," said MD and CEO Ravinder Takkar, after the telecom operator unveiled a new brand identity 'Vi' (pronounced 'we'). "This is very important to get the industry back on track. Since the merger [in August 2018], we have increased prices twice."

Commenting on the recent Supreme Court order directing telecom firms to pay the Adjusted Gross Revenue

due (AGR) dues over 10 years, he said, "We had requested for 20 years but the honourable SC asked us to repay in 10 years. This is a good outcome. Our first instalment is in March 2022".

The telco's AGR liability exceeds ₹50,000 crore.

"With our new brand Vi, we stand committed to partner the government to accelerate India's progression towards a digital economy," said chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla.

The ₹25,000 crore the firm planned to raise would be adequate to fund its business plan, Mr. Takkar said.

RBI to buy, sell G-secs worth ₹10,000 crore

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Emirates said it had returned \$1.4 billion in COVID-19-related travel refunds till date, making steady progress on its commitment to customers to complete pending refunds. More than 1.4 million refunds requests have been completed since March, representing 90% of the backlog. This includes all requests received from customers across the world until the end of June, it said.

LIC western zone to recruit 50,000 agents

The western zone of LIC of India has announced plans to recruit 50,000 agents through an intensive recruitment campaign and produce 10,000 MDRTs (million dollar round table) performing agents in FY21. The zone currently has 2.20 lakh agents out of which 3,302 are MDRTs. Besides the zone is aiming to take its first-year premium share from 20% to 25%.

SBI Mutual Fund unveils scheme for children

SBI Mutual Fund has unveiled Magnum Children's Benefit Fund - Investment Plan, an open-ended fund for parents to invest for their children. The scheme, open for subscription from September 8, is a part of SBI Magnum Children's Benefit Fund that currently has Savings Plan, a predominantly debt-oriented offering. The scheme will predominantly invest in equity and equity-related instruments, said SBI MF.

Ather unveils 125cc e-scooter 450X

Ather Energy, makers of electric two-wheelers, has unveiled their flagship scooter Ather 450X, claimed to be one of the fastest scooters in the 125cc category. The new scooter would be seen on roads across Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Mumbai, Pune, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Kochi, Kolkata and Coimbatore by the first quarter of 2021, Ather said in a statement.

Curbs on current account affecting MFIs: Sa-dhan

'Sector will face operational issues'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The revised guidelines from the RBI pertaining to current accounts will lead to numerous difficulties and operational issues for the microfinance sector, industry body Sa-Dhan, said in a letter to RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das.

Sa-dhan demanded that microfinance institutions be exempted from the restrictions on the opening and operation of current accounts. In the recent circular, RBI instructed banks not to open current accounts for customers who had availed credit facilities in the form of cash credit (CC)/overdraft (OD) from the banking system and said all transactions shall be routed through the CC/OD account.

"Since demonetisation, all loan disbursements of MFIs are being credited to the bank accounts of their borrowers. Many MFIs also have ECS mandates for loan collections. Such banks may or may not have CC/OD facilities extended to such MFIs," Sa-Dhan said.

The industry body reasoned that microfinance institutions (MFIs) have various current accounts with banks based on the location of their branches.

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The study was carried out to understand the public pulse with regard to the creation of a digital health ID for citizens.

Also, 48% of the citizens surveyed are against the use of this information for research and promotional activities.

Some 82% said they do not want to share sensitive data such as banking details.

The survey by LocalCircles, a community social media platform, received about 34,000 responses from 272 districts of India.



Asim Warsi

excess of 50% to be in the range of ₹250-300 (approximately ₹18,000-22,000).

The growth in the online business, he said, will be driven by the new smartphone M-51 which comes with a 6.7-inch display, a 7,000-mAh battery, Qualcomm Snapdragon 730 processor, 64MP quad rear camera setup and 32MP front camera and will be unveiled on September 10.

Uptake in ASPs'
He added that the company was seeing a "significant uptake" in the average selling prices (ASPs) of mobile phones in the online business, and these may grow in

About 57% of the people do not want their medical information stored at the state or the hospital levels, but only at the central level, over privacy concerns, a study has indicated.

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Novak Djokovic disqualified

Accidentally hits line judge with ball as he vents his frustration at losing serve

US OPEN

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

NEW YORK

Novak Djokovic was dramatically disqualified from the US Open on Sunday after accidentally striking a woman line judge with a ball during his last-16 match, sending shock waves through the tournament.

The World No. 1 hit the ball in frustration after losing his serve to go 5-6 down in the first set to Spain's 20th seed Pablo Carreno Busta at the Arthur Ashe Stadium.

Djokovic appeared to be looking the other way when he pulled the ball from his pocket and smacked it in the direction of the official, hitting her full on the throat.

Gasp for breath

The official cried out and began gasping for breath as she collapsed to the ground. Djokovic rushed over to check on her, placing his hand on her back as she struggled to breathe. After a few minutes she got up and walked off the court looking dazed.

Around 10 minutes of discussions ensued between Djokovic and tournament referee Soeren Friemel. The umpire then declared that Busta had won following a default for Djokovic. The Serb shook hands with his opponent before leaving the

FALLEN SEEDS

MEN: 1-Djokovic; 7-Goffin

WOMEN: 6-Kvitova; 8-Martic;

14-Kontaveit; 17-Kerber

TUESDAY'S PICKS

Quarterfinals:

MEN: 5-Zverev vs. 27-Coric

12-Shapovalov vs.

20-Carreno Busta

WOMEN: 4-Osaka vs. Rogers

23-Putintseva vs. 28-Brady

court. He later apologised for the incident by releasing a statement.

Djokovic's disqualification blows the men's draw wide open and means it will crown a first-time Grand Slam winner on Sunday.

"Now it gets interesting," said fifth seed Alexander Zverev, who described Djokovic as "very unlucky."

Meanwhile, fifth seed Zverev bulldozed past Spain's unseeded Alejandro Davydovich Fokina 6-2, 6-2, 6-1, while 12th seed Canadian Denis Shapovalov beat David Goffin for a maiden Grand Slam last-eight spot.

Rogers stuns Kvitova

In the women's draw, American Jennifer Brady, seeded 28th, stunned three-time Grand Slam winner Angelique Kerber while eighth seed Petra Martic was bundled out by Kazakhstan's 23rd seed Yulia Putintseva.

American Shelby Rogers upset sixth seed Petra Kvitova 7-6(5), 3-6, 7-6(6). She will next play two-time Slam winner Naomi Osaka, who defeated Estonia's Anett Kontaveit 6-3, 6-4.

THE RESULTS

Fourth round: Men: 20-Pablo Carreno Busta (Esp) bt 1-Novak Djokovic (Srb) 6-5, disq.; 12-Denis Shapovalov (Can) bt 7-David Goffin (Bel) 6-7(0), 6-3, 6-4, 6-3; 27-Borna Coric (Cro) bt Jordan Thompson (Aus) 7-5, 6-1, 6-3; 5-Alexander Zverev (Ger) bt Alejandro Davydovich Fokina (Esp) 6-2, 6-2, 6-1.

Women: 28-Jennifer Brady (USA) bt 17-Angelique Kerber (Ger) 6-1, 6-4; 23-Yulia Putintseva (Kaz) bt 8-Petra Martic (Cro) 6-3, 2-6, 6-4; 4-Naomi Osaka (Jpn) bt 14-Anett Kontaveit (Est) 6-3, 6-4; 28-Shelby Rogers (USA) bt 6-Petra Kvitova (Cze) 7-6(5), 3-6, 7-6(6).

DECONSTRUCTING THE DEFAULT

When did it happen?

■ In the first set, Djokovic had failed to convert three set points on the Carreno Busta serve at 4-5. He then fell on his shoulder at 5-5, 0-15, and called for a trainer. On resumption, he lost serve and in frustration, hit the ball that struck the line judge.

What does the rule say?

■ According to the Grand Slam rulebook, "Players shall not violently, dangerously or with anger hit, kick or throw a tennis ball ... except in the reasonable pursuit of a point during a match (including warm-up). If such violation occurs ... the player shall be penalised in accordance with the Point Penalty Schedule. For the purposes of this rule, abuse of balls is defined as intentionally hitting a ball out of the enclosure of the court, hitting a ball dangerously or recklessly within the court or hitting a ball with negligent disregard of the consequences."

What is the Point Penalty Schedule?

■ In this first offence will invite a warning, the second a point penalty and the third and each subsequent offence a game penalty. The referee in consultation with the Grand Slam Chief of Supervisors shall determine whether each subsequent offence shall constitute a default. The referee may also declare a default for a single code violation.

Djokovic checks on the line judge after a ball he struck in frustration hit her.

What did the USTA conclude?

■ It said: "In accordance with the Grand Slam rulebook, following his actions of intentionally hitting a ball dangerously or recklessly within the court or hitting a ball with negligent disregard of the consequences, the US Open tournament referee defaulted Novak Djokovic. Because he was defaulted, Djokovic will lose all ranking points earned at the US Open and will be fined the prize money won at the tournament in addition to any or all fines levied."

Novak's Close Shaves

1 In the 2016 French Open quarterfinal against Berdych, Djokovic attempted racket smash missed a line judge only because the latter took evasive action.

2 In the 2016 ATP World Tour Finals match against Thiem, the Serb smashed a ball in anger in the direction of his

entourage but luckily it didn't hit anybody.

3 In the 2020 Australian Open final against Thiem, Djokovic twice remonstrated with the chair umpire by touching him. According to the rulebook, "unauthorised touching" can be deemed physical abuse like ball and racquet abuse.

4 In the 2016 Rome Masters quarterfinal versus Nadal, Djokovic pushed the umpire's hand away while arguing over a ball mark.

Other Notable Defaults

■ John McEnroe at 1990 Australian Open following three code violations.

■ Tim Henman at 1995 Wimbledon (doubles) when a ball he hit towards the net after losing a point accidentally struck a ball girl in her head.

■ David Nalbandian in the 2012 Queen's Club final when his kick at an advertising board injured a line judge.

■ Denis Shapovalov in the 2017 Davis Cup tie versus Britain when a ball he hit in frustration caught the chair umpire in the eye.



COMPILED BY N. SUDARSHAN

No carrying past baggage, says Kohli

IPL 2020

ASHWIN ACHAL

BENGALURU

The past failures of Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) in the IPL will not affect the team, skipper Virat Kohli said. RCB is yet to win an IPL title – a burden that its players have long carried.

"I spoke to A.B. de Villiers about this. We've never felt so calm going into an IPL before. He is batting like it is 2011; he is fit as ever. We're disconnecting with the past. We're not carrying any baggage, something we've done too many times in the past," Kohli said, in a RCB Bold Diaries interview.

Kohli added that playing at only three venues, and staying at the same hotel through the duration of the IPL makes life easy for players. "All teams will know the three venues inside out. This makes a more level-playing field. It will boil down to skill," Kohli said.



Virat Kohli.

• TWITTER@RCBTWEETS

international experience; Josh Philippe is very exciting. We have a great balance of experience, T20 skill and eager youngsters. This is the most balanced squad since our memorable 2016 season," Kohli said.

TV PICKS

NBA: Sony Six (SD & HD), 6.30 a.m. & 4 a.m. (Wednesday)

Tour de France: Eurosport (SD & HD), 5 p.m.

US Open: SS Select 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 9.30 p.m.

UEFA Nations League: Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 9.30 p.m.; Sony Ten 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 12.10 a.m. (Wednesday).

England v Australia: 3rd T20I, Sony 3 & 6 (SD & HD), 10.30 p.m.

IN A NUTSHELL

Ben Stokes is likely to miss the first part of IPL 2020 as he is currently in New Zealand with his ailing father, according to Rajasthan Royals sources.

Lionel Messi arrived at Barcelona's training ground on Monday as he begins to reintegrate with the team following his failed attempt to leave the club this summer.

Spectators will be allowed at the French Open tennis tournament, starting on Sept. 27, despite the growing number of coronavirus cases in the country, organisers said on Monday.

Milwaukee Bucks pipped Miami Heat 118-115 in overtime at Miami on Sunday to stay alive in the NBA playoffs. Heat leads series 3-1. LA Lakers beat Houston Rockets 117-109 to make it 1-1.

Johannes Vetter's throw of 97.76m at the Continental Tour Gold-level event at Chorzow (Poland) on Sunday is the second-best javelin mark in history after Jan Zelezny's 98.48m in 1996.

Dustin Johnson, the World No. 1 golfer, carded a third-round 64 to move five shots clear of the field at the season-ending Tour Championship at Atlanta on Sunday.

IOC vice-president John Coates said on Monday that Tokyo's postponed Olympics will go ahead next year regardless of the coronavirus pandemic.

Manchester City players Riyad Mahrez and Aymeric Laporte have tested positive for coronavirus.

Sindhu to play Uber Cup

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM

HYDERABAD

World champion P.V. Sindhu will take part in the Thomas and Uber Cup badminton championships to be held in Denmark from Oct. 3 to 11.

On Monday Sindhu changed her original decision to pull out of the event after the Badminton Asso-

ciation of India top brass appealed to her to play in the tournament.

"I have requested Sindhu to join the team as we have a favourable draw and have the best chance to take a shot at the medal at the Cup," Himanta Biswa Sarma, BAI chief, tweeted in the evening.

Ansu Fati creates history

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

MADRID

The 17-year-old Ansu Fati became the youngest goalscorer in Spain's history when he scored in the 4-0 win over Ukraine in the UEFA Nations League on Sunday.

The results: **League A:** Group 4: Spain 4 bt Ukraine 0; Switzerland 1 drew with Germany 1.

League B: Group 3: Serbia 0 drew with Turkey 0; Hungary 2 lost to Russia 3; Group 4: Rep. of Ireland 0 lost to Finland 1; Wales 1 bt Bulgaria 0.

League C: Group 3: Kosovo 1 lost to Greece 2; Spain 1 bt Moldova 0.

League D: Group 1: Andorra 0 lost to Faroe Islands 1; Malta 1 drew with Latvia 1.



David Hussey

play a key role in the middle order, and Tom Banton, the 'better version of Kevin Pietersen,' as much as he

showed faith in the Indian pair of Shubman Gill and Nitish Rana.

He hoped old hand Andre

their skills under immense pressure," said Hussey during an interaction on Sunday, adding he would address the players individually.

Acclimatisation

The Australian said getting acclimated to the conditions would be important.

A privilege

Terming the opportunity to play cricket amid the pandemic 'privilege,' Hussey said he would support KKR's captain and coaches in making the players comfortable.

"It will be a hot weather tournament. It will be windy as well. The pitches will get used and tired as the tournament goes on.

"It's up to the teams to adapt quickly. It's the strength of the squad (that) will go a long way to win this tournament."

Hussey counted on the English duo of Eoin Morgan, who could assist captain Dinesh Karthik on the field and

play a key role in the middle order, and Tom Banton, the 'better version of Kevin Pietersen,' as much as he

showed faith in the Indian pair of Shubman Gill and Nitish Rana.

He hoped old hand Andre

Russell could make a double hundred at No. 3'

KKR mentor David Hussey hopes the West Indian will continue to do wonders

Y.B. SARANGI

KOLKATA

In the backdrop of the pandemic, Kolkata Knight Riders' chief mentor David Hussey feels he needs to keep the players in a relaxed frame of mind during the 53-day long Indian Premier League (IPL).

"Neeraj likes Nordic in training but he doesn't trust them in competitions. Nemeth (the javelin Neeraj uses in competitions) is, maybe, more forgiving but I think Nordic is better for great results," said Hohn.

"He is probably not confident with changing things and he used to throw the Nemeth javelin really good ... in Bydgoszcz (Poland) where he won the under-20 World gold with junior world record in 2016."

"Probably about 70% of the world's top 10 throwers use them," said the German.

But it looks like Neeraj,

their skills under immense pressure," said Hussey during an interaction on Sunday, adding he would address the players individually.

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