

Weekend curbs to stay till Sept. 30 in G.B. Nagar

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GHAZIABAD

Restrictions will continue on the movement of the general public from Friday evening to Monday morning in Gautam Buddha Nagar till September 30 during Unlock 4, an official release said on Monday.

The order passed by Additional DCP (Law and Order) Ashutosh Dwivedi said movement of people, except those providing essential services, will be prohibited from 10 p.m. on Friday to 5 a.m. on Monday. The order passed under Section 144 of IPC further said that academic, social, political, and religious functions could be held from September 20, with a restriction of 100 participants.

Cinema halls, theatres, and swimming pools will remain closed till September 30. However, open-air theatres can function from September 20. Restriction on the number of people in weddings and funerals will be increased to 100 from September 20. Schools and colleges, and coaching centres will remain closed till September 30.

There will be no relaxations in containment zones, read the order. The district reported 126 new cases on Monday, taking the total number of active cases to 1,055.

Facebook should be treated as co-accused in riots: govt. panel

Assembly Committee accuses the company of major lapses, to summon officials

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Assembly's committee on peace and harmony on Monday said that prima facie it seemed that Facebook had a role in the Delhi riots that broke out in February. The panel added that Facebook India officials will be issued notices to appear at its next meeting.

"Facebook should be treated as a co-accused in the Delhi riots. There should be an inquiry. If the investigating agency finds that there is truth in the charges against Facebook, then a supplementary chargesheet against it should be filed in the court," said AAP MLA and chairman of the panel; Raghav Chadha.

"On Facebook's role, the committee's prima facie view is that they should be treated

as co-accused in Delhi riots. This committee has taken the decision that Facebook India officials will be summoned in the next meeting. They will be issued notices to appear before the panel," he added.

Mr. Chadha also said the "prima facie view" is that Facebook and some rioters had a "premeditated conspiracy", which led to the deterioration of Delhi's communal harmony, in February. The committee recorded state-

Evidence submitted by witnesses showed there was an effort to incite a riot in Delhi before the Assembly election in February

RAGHAV CHADHA
Peace and harmony committee chairman

ments of various witnesses on Monday.

Hypocrisy is real'

"When Black Lives Matter movement started in America, Facebook implemented its community standards. Following their by-laws, they worked to strengthen brotherhood between communities. The content, which affected the brotherhood between different communities, was removed from the

platform. But when the Delhi riots happened, Facebook did not implement the same standards. Facebook's hypocrisy is clear from this," the AAP leader said.

The committee said the deposition and evidence tendered to the committee revealed that there have been "major lapses" by Facebook India in applying their community standards. "All the witnesses have strongly agreed that an independent probe must be carried out against the alleged role and complicity of Facebook in the orchestration of Delhi riots," the statement read.

Mr. Chadha also said evidence submitted by witnesses showed there was an effort to incite a riot in Delhi before the Assembly election in February.

AAP leader said the deposition and evidence tendered to the committee revealed that there have been "major lapses" by Facebook India in applying their community standards. "All the witnesses have strongly agreed that an independent probe must be carried out against the alleged role and complicity of Facebook in the orchestration of Delhi riots," the statement read.

The number of new cases is less as the number of tests conducted is 33.9% less compared to the average of last three days.

The number of tests in Monday's bulletin are less on most occasions as it reflects tests conducted on Sunday.

'Aggressive testing'

Health Minister Satyendar Jain said that the government was doing aggressive testing and not even a single case will remain untraced.

A comparatively high positivity of 9.4% has been registered, and there is also an in-

Virus spread

Total number of COVID-19 cases	Total deaths
1,74,748	4,444
New cases in the past 24 hours	
1,358	18

SOURCE: DELHI GOVERNMENT HEALTH BULLETIN

mark since then.

The number of containment zones in the city has increased to 833.

The number of people in home isolation now stands at 7,876 – the highest in over a month. The number of patients in hospitals is 4,146 – highest in over 45 days.

Meanwhile, the Delhi government is scheduled to begin the third serological survey in the city from Tuesday.

The survey helps find the seroprevalence – percentage of population that have developed antibodies against the virus. The first such survey, done in June-July, showed that 22.8% of people had developed antibodies.

A second survey in August showed a seroprevalence of 29.1%.

The third survey will see collection of 17,000 random blood samples, said officials.

Number of COVID-19 patients in hospitals highest in over 45 days

Delhi government to launch third serological survey today

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

As many as 1,358 new COVID-19 cases were reported in Delhi in the past 24 hours, taking the tally to 1,74,748, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Monday.

The number of new cases is less as the number of tests conducted is 33.9% less compared to the average of last three days.

The number of tests in Monday's bulletin are less on most occasions as it reflects tests conducted on Sunday.

Also, 18 more deaths have been reported, taking the toll to 4,444.

Of the total cases, 1,55,678 people have recovered and there are 14,626 active cases.

The number of active cases is now higher compared to August's average.

There were 27,007 active cases on July 1, which fell to 9,897 on August 4. It has remained above the 10,000

Permit gyms to open'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Assembly, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, on Monday asked Lieutenant-Governor Anil Baijal to permit opening of gyms in the Capital.

"Delhi markets have opened, restrictions on weekly markets have been lifted and permission has been given to operate the

Delhi Metro. So why not gyms?" asked Mr. Bidhuri.

"Gyms are helpful in increasing immunity. Gym owners have also ensured there is air conditioning and air ventilation in their gyms. Masks, sanitisers, gloves etc. have also been arranged. The government can determine the timings for gyms and the number of people allowed," he wrote.

Court seeks Jain's response on BJP leader's petition challenging his win

Bench asks Health Minister to furnish reply within four weeks

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday issued a notice to Health Minister Satyendar Jain on a plea by BJP leader S.C. Vats challenging the former's election to the Legislative Assembly for allegedly indulging in corrupt practices.

Justice Mukta Gupta also issued notices to Mr. Jain, Returning Officer, Chief Election Officer and three other candidates who had contested for the same constituency and asked them to file their responses within four weeks. Mr. Vats lost to Mr.

Jain in the 2020 Delhi Assembly elections from Shaikur Basti constituency here.

In his petition filed through advocate Sahil Ahuja, the BJP leader has sought that the AAP leader's election be declared as null and void and re-election be done on the seat.

It alleged that Mr. Jain after the election process set in motion, "unlawfully, unconstitutionally," offered, promised to deliver and or actually delivered gifts in the form of a large number of goods to various registered societies and DDA flat complexes. The plea alleged that

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Govt. told to start online registration of legal papers

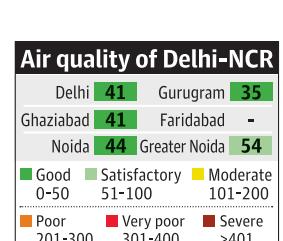
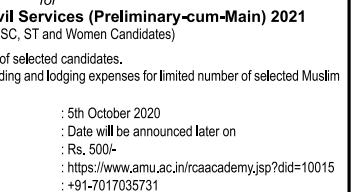
SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

The government counsel told the Bench that such a system was already in place. However, the counsel sought time to take instructions concerning the features of the system.

The court has listed the case for further hearing on September 23.

Wills of senior citizens

Advocate Gaurav Gambhir, in his petition, had claimed that sub-registrars in the Capital are refusing to register 'wills' and other documents of senior citizens, persons with co-morbidities and pregnant women by citing the risk of infection.



328 Selections in Civil Services Examination, 2019

74 Selections from CLASSROOM COURSES in CSE 2019

7 AIR Ganesh Baskar Essay Course	8 AIR Abhishek Saraf Essay Course & Answer writing	12 AIR Ajay Jain GS Foundation & Essay Course	23 AIR Nidhi Bansal Essay Course	29 AIR Mayank Mittal GS Foundation, Optional (EE) & Essay Course	34 AIR Apurv Chauhan Optional Course (Sociology)	52 AIR Om Kant Thakur Essay Course	63 AIR Patil Y. Ashokrao Essay Course	69 AIR Navneet Mittal GS Foundation & Essay Course	81 AIR Anil Kr. Rathore GS Advance Course, Essay Course & Answer writing	83 AIR Shivendu Bhushan Optional Course (EE)
73 AIR Abhishek Kumar Essay Course & Answer writing	84 AIR J. Kartik Nagibhai Optional Course (ME) Essay Course & CA	85 AIR Shubhang Mishra Essay Course	95 AIR Singa K. R. Reddy GS Foundation (EE) & Optional & Essay	98 AIR Y. Megha Swaroop Essay Course	145 AIR Rishi Anand GS Foundation	162 AIR Umesh Prasad G. Siddharth Dhapola Optional Course (EE)	163 AIR Ahinsa Jain Essay Course	164 AIR Vidhu Shekhar GS Foundation & Essay Course	191 AIR G Chandees Essay Course & Answer writing	198 AIR G Chandees GS Foundation & Essay Course
201 AIR Sohan Lal Essay Course	205 AIR Ankur Kr. Jain Optional Course (Sociology) & Essay Course	206 AIR Brijesh J. Upadhyay Essay Course	215 AIR Chirag Jain Essay Course	219 AIR Nitish Kumar Jain Essay Course	226 AIR Shinde A. Sanjeevan GS Foundation	229 AIR Arushi Mishra Optional Course (Sociology) & Essay Course	241 AIR Sofia Essay Course	245 AIR Abhinav Tyagi Essay Course	255 AIR Abhishek Bhal Essay Course	246 AIR Maninderjit Kaur Optional Course (Sociology)
260 AIR Mukul Jamloki Essay Course	264 AIR Anu Joshy Optional Course (Sociology)	277 AIR Gajraj Bachawat Essay Course	283 AIR Gorijala M. Krishna Essay Course	288 AIR Abhishek Kumar Essay Course	305 AIR Abhinav Gopal Optional Course (Sociology) & Essay Course	308 AIR Prashant Jadeja Optional Course (CE)	326 AIR M. Bharani Optional Course (Sociology)	356 AIR Pratik Jain Essay Course	360 AIR Shivam Tyagi Essay Course	375 AIR Ritesh Singh GS Foundation, Optional (ME) & Essay Course
398 AIR Kumar Ashish Essay Course & Current Affairs	415 AIR Ajay Kr. Gautam Essay Course	420 AIR Rahul Modi Essay Course	424 AIR Pankaj Kumawat Answer writing	434 AIR Yogesh Kr. Patel Answer writing	441 AIR Samir Kumar Jena Optional Course (CE)	486 AIR Abhimanyu Optional Course (CE)	521 AIR Kushal Chouksey GS Advance, CA & Essay Course	539 AIR Y V R Sashi Sekhar Optional Advance (Sociology)	544 AIR Manoj Kr. Rawat GS Advance & Essay Course	549 AIR Narendra Rawat Essay Course
546 AIR Sarvesh Panwar Optional Advance (Sociology)	549 AIR Abhijeet Kumar Essay Course	552 AIR Mohammad Aaqib Optional Advance (ME)	612 AIR Juvvapudi Mahesh Optional Advance (EE)	617 AIR Kumari Manisha Optional Advance (Sociology)	637 AIR D. Abhishek Dilip Essay Course	654 AIR Santanu Kr. Singh Essay Course	696 AIR Kumar Saumya GS Advance & Essay Course	707 AIR Harsh Bansal Optional Advance (Sociology) & Essay Course	77 AIR Katta Ravi Teja IGP	78 AIR Shashwat Tripari IGP
731 AIR Rajiv Kumar Essay Course	750 AIR Vineet Kumar GS Foundation (Sociology) & Optional	752 AIR Gaikwad N. Shrikant Optional Advance (Sociology)	764 AIR K. Shashikanth GS Foundation & Essay Course	779 AIR Hemant Singh GS Foundation, Essay Course & Answer writing	787 AIR Sarvesh Sonwani GS Foundation, Essay Course	796 AIR Nunavath Preaveen GS Foundation	810 AIR M. Sameer Vijay GS Advance & Essay Course	825 AIR Pragyagni GS Foundation & GS Advance	826 AIR Chandan Kumar GS Foundation, Essay Course & Answer writing	88 AIR Shubhangi S. IGP
796 AIR Anil Kumar GS Foundation (Sociology) & Optional	800 AIR Vaibhav Singh GS Foundation & Optional	804 AIR Akashdeep Singh GS Foundation & Optional	812 AIR Rakesh Kumar GS Foundation & Optional	816 AIR Rishabh Singh GS Foundation & Optional	820 AIR Arun Kumar GS Foundation & Optional	828 AIR Rishabh Singh GS Foundation & Optional	832 AIR Rishabh Singh GS Foundation & Optional	840 AIR Rishabh Singh GS Foundation & Optional	848 AIR Rishabh Singh GS Foundation & Optional	856 AIR Rishabh Singh GS Foundation & Optional

254 Selections from TEST SERIES, POSTAL AND IGP

List of Candidates Selected in Top 100 from Test Series, Postal and Interview Guidance Program



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28.92 Crore Policies | 12.09 Lakh Agents

2048 Branch Offices | 1526 Satellite Offices

75.90% Market Share (Policies) | 68.74% Market Share (FYPI)

31.96 Lakh Crore Assets

*all figures as on 31/03/2020



Har Pal Aapke Saath

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LIC - 64 years of service and trust

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Helping the nation for a better tomorrow

As the nation realises and reiterates the need for self-reliance during these uncertain times, who better than Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) of India to show the way! In an unusual period marked by anxiety and unease, the relevance and assurance of insurance and the warmth and security of an organisation like LIC, in particular, have been underscored greatly.

LIC has stayed on course during the crisis, all the while maintaining a compassionate and sensitive stance, like an empathetic chaperone that one looks for in times of crisis. Much of the Corporation's humane approach and response during the pandemic stems from the foundational values of an organisation that cares for its people and provides succour and support to them at all times.

As a caring Corporation that puts the welfare of people at the heart of its operations, LIC has played a pivotal role in nation building right through its 64-year-old journey, through huge investments in infrastructure and social sectors. And there is no doubt it will continue to be an integral part of India's growth story.

"In democracy, the well-being, individuality and happiness of every citizen is important for the overall prosperity, peace and happiness of the nation," said Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, the former President of India.

LIC truly understands and upholds this message with its commitment to enhance the quality of life of people through financial security. Its mission lies in providing products and services with aspirational attributes and competitive returns and resources for economic development. Hence, LIC's primary obligation to policyholders, whose money it holds in trust, is to deploy funds to the best advantage of its policyholders and the community as a whole.

In the line of the PM's vision

This is part of the Corporation's effort towards an Atmanirbhav Bharat.

LIC has always believed in the power of a self-reliant economy and has supported the five pillars of the Atmanirbhav policy: Economy, Infrastructure, System, Demography and Demand. It infuses funds into projects that spur national progress and development.

Bolstering the economy

Apart from its contribution to infrastructure projects, LIC is an iconic entity in the Indian insurance sector, contributing to the economic development of the country. Being a public sector undertaking, wholly owned by the Government of India, the country's domestic economy has immensely benefited from LIC's development. Only 5 per cent of its annual valuation surplus goes to the government (the owner), as specified in the charter, and the remaining 95 per cent is returned to policyholders in the form of bonuses and profits. Thus, LIC acts as a link between the savers and the investors.

While on one hand, LIC encourages the general public to develop the habit of saving, on the other hand, it also makes funds available to potential investors so that they are deployed profitably, thereby enhancing the productive capacity of the domestic economy.

This renders a bifocal benefit. Productive activity is enhanced indirectly, because when people save through insurance covers, they enjoy peace of mind as they have protection against risk associated with their activities. Productive activity is also enhanced directly because each dose of investment is an addition to the stock of productive assets, injecting vital capital formation into the domestic economy.

Massive social thrust

Providing a social thrust is the very foundation of LIC's existence, whether it is insurance cover to the vulnerable sections of society through group schemes or by investing the income in socially-oriented projects.

Infrastructure development is the top of its charter as LIC has been promoting development of road transport by providing financial assistance to

state road transport corporations for augmenting their fleet of buses. It has also been providing financial assistance to state electricity boards and power corporations for power generation projects by way of loans/subscriptions to their bonds.

On March 31, 2020, LIC had invested ₹11,90,288 crore in central government securities, ₹9,29,050 crore in state government and other government-guaranteed marketable securities, ₹58,474 crore in the housing sector, ₹1,11,082 crore in the power sector, ₹1,297 crore in the irrigation/water sup-

ply and sewerage sector, ₹76,679 crore in road, port and bridges, railways sectors, and ₹34,587 crore in other sectors including telecom. As on March 31, 2020, LIC had invested a total of ₹24,01,457 crore in the government and social sectors.

Total investments for the benefit of community at large, as on March 31, 2020, stood at ₹30,69,942 crore.

The investment of these funds is governed by Section 27A of the Insurance Act, 1938, and subsequent guidelines/instructions issued from time to time by the Government of India and the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (IRDAI) through regulations.

Reaching at your door step

A welfare-oriented organisation can also be a market leader, as demonstrated by LIC through its stellar business performance through the years. LIC has always had a stronghold in the Indian market, unsurpassed by any

other in all facets of its performance.

It is through its market share, customer base, agency network, new business premium, or branch office network, LIC has played a noteworthy role in spreading life insurance coverage throughout the country. As the country celebrates 73 years of its independence, it is standing at the cusp of great transformative growth, which calls for collective efforts from all stakeholders. LIC, which stands for progress, prosperity, and economic security, strives to partner the country in its progress, every step of the way.

The Life Insurance Corporation of India came into being on September 1, 1956, after the merger of over 245 insurance companies and provident societies, under an act of the Parliament (LIC Act, 1956), with a view to reach all insurable persons in the country, providing them adequate financial cover at a reasonable cost.

The Indian insurance giant started with an initial capital of ₹5 crore from the Government of India. In six decades, it has grown manifold; built up assets close to ₹32 lakh crore, and life fund of ₹31,146.

All these are monumental achievements, unsurpassed in the sector.

"A trans-nationally competitive financial conglomerate of significance to societies and pride of India"

Greetings on LIC Day to all our dear customers! I express my heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to our policyholders of around 29 crore policies for reposing their Trust in LIC and giving us an opportunity to be a valuable partner in their lives.

In the last 64 years, LIC has been serving the people with the noble motto of "Yogakshemam Vahayamah - Your Welfare is My Responsibility". The Corporation has been moving forward with the visionary purpose of spreading life insurance widely and reaching out to all insurable population of the country. We have been consistently working on it through our diversified product portfolio that caters to every life stage needs and fulfills the long term financial goals of the customers. History is not a mere record of events; it is instead a reflection of all the struggles, hard-work, passion and sincere dedication invested yesterday to achieve a triumphant today. LIC is committed to the people of the nation and policyholders as ever and will continue to play its role true to its objectives.

I wish you continued good health and safety, abundant prosperity and happy times with your near and dear ones.

Stay safe, stay insured. Stay healthy. Best Wishes,

T C SUREEL KUMAR
Managing Director

Spreading its wings far and wide

SUBSIDIARIES

LIC Housing Finance Limited

LIC Housing Finance Ltd. (LIC HFL), the second largest player in India in the housing finance space, has supported more than 2 million home owners in the country. Apart from individual borrowers, LIC HFL also supports commercial borrowers such as builders, developers or corporates for construction of housing complexes for their employees. The company has launched a unique product for retired borrowers with defined pension benefits with a term up to the attainment of age of 80 years.

Commitment: From 1989, when it was spun off by LIC, it has come a long way and is surging ahead towards its vision of becoming the best housing finance company, embedded with the values of fair and transparent business practices.

Performance: The total assets under

management have risen remarkably from ₹101 crore in FY 2009 to ₹1,21,027.68 crore at the close of FY 2019-20.

LIC Cards Services Limited

LIC Cards Services Ltd., a wholly owned subsidiary of LIC of India, provides co-branded credit cards, gift cards, meal cards and cash cards.

Commitment: To work towards being the top brand in cards and digital payments with a widespread reach.

Performance: In 2019-20, revenue was at ₹14.88 crore showing growth of 77.02 per cent and a net profit of ₹501.26 lakh with a growth of 187.61 per cent over last year.

LIC Pension Fund Limited

LIC Pension Fund Ltd. was incorporated in 2007 to manage the pension funds under the National Pension System.

The company manages five government pattern schemes of the National Pension System and since 2013 it was granted licence by PFRDA to manage private sector funds. As on date, it manages 12 in-force schemes.

Commitment: To offer optimum returns to pensioners and assure them of adequate safety.

Performance: The total assets under

management have risen remarkably from ₹101 crore in FY 2009 to ₹1,21,027.68 crore at the close of FY 2019-20.

discipline and uncompromising stand in financial ethics and corporate governance, IBDI Bank also offers products to meet the institutional banking related requirements of LIC subsidiaries and personal banking products for policyholders, agents and employees.

Commitment: To be a friend in need for stakeholders and work towards its vision for the most preferred and trusted bank, enhancing value for all stakeholders.

Performance: As on March 31, 2020, IDBI Bank had a standalone balance sheet size of ₹2.99 lakh crore and total business of ₹3.52 lakh crore. The latter comprised aggregate deposits and advances of ₹2.22 lakh crore and ₹1.30 lakh crore, respectively.

LIC Mutual Fund

LIC Mutual Fund, established in April 1989, has made a mark in the asset management space. Backed by its systematic investment

branches, 3,683 ATMs and 58 e-lounges. IDBI Bank also offers products to meet the institutional banking related requirements of LIC subsidiaries and personal banking products for policyholders, agents and employees.

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INTERNATIONAL OPERATIONS

LIC has also spread its wings overseas with operations in 14 countries through branch offices, joint venture companies, and a wholly-owned subsidiary.

Wholly owned subsidiary

LIC (Singapore) Pte Ltd

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POOCHE CAFE

LIC Fiji Branch is the market leader both in NOP (number of policies) and FPI (first premium income) in Fiji, with a market share of 63 per cent and 62 per cent respectively. LIC (Nepal) Ltd. ranked second both in terms of NOP (10.68 per cent) and FPI (17.94 per cent) in Nepal.

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HAGAR THE HORRIBLE

LIC acquired a majority stake in IDBI Bank in January 2019 and is now a first-of-its-kind financial conglomerate and a one-stop solution for a wide range of banking and insurance products.

Commitment: To work towards being the top brand in cards and digital payments with a widespread reach.

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PEARLS BEFORE SWINE

LIC (International) B.S.C (C) Bahrain: The company operates in the GCC countries of Bahrain, Qatar, Kuwait, U.A.E (Dubai & Abu Dhabi) and Oman.

LIC (Nepal) Ltd

LIC (Lanka) Ltd

Kenidina Assurance Co. Ltd

LIC (Bangladesh) Ltd

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LIC (Nepal) Ltd

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IN BRIEF

Will mend social division at Chand Bagh: Tiwari

NEW DELHI
BJP North East Delhi MP Manoj Tiwari has established a field office at Chand Bagh, one of the hotspots of violence during the February riots, pledging to repair the "social division" in the area. The former Delhi BJP chief said one incident does not make a place good or bad. "This is the same place which was maligned by the rioters. We pledge to make this place known as bringing people together," he said.

JNUSU seeks extension of registration dates

NEW DELHI
The JNUSU on Monday called for an extension of registration dates for the upcoming semester at the university as several queries put forth by the students have been left unanswered. The university had asked students to register for the semester online between August 21 and 31.

LIC launches Jeevan Akshay-VII

NEW DELHI
Life Insurance Corporation of India has introduced its new Jeevan Akshay-VII plan, which is a single premium, non-linked, non-participating, individual immediate annuity plan with effect from August 25, 2020. The policyholders have an option to choose a type of annuity from 10 available options on payment of a lump sum amount.

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PUBLIC NOTICE General public is hereby notified that I, Ravi Lal Khanal, SEBI Intermediary Category : Research Analyst with Registration No. INH100002243 and Trade Name - M/s Multiplier Wealth Creators (www.themultiplier.in) with address C 1/65 A Madhu Vihar, Uttam Nagar New Delhi, is surrendering my certificate of registration. Any aggrieved party may make any representation against the surrender before SEBI within 15 days of the date of this notice.

PUBLIC NOTICE General public is informed hereby that my clients Sh. Subhash Chander Jindal and Smt. Veena Jindal, R/o. L-26B, Shastri Nagar, Delhi -110052, have severed all their relations & ties with their son namely Yogesh Jindal and disowned/debarred him from all their movable and immovable properties as he is out of their savings and control. Any person(s) dealing with him shall be doing it so at his/her own risk, costs and consequences.

Chakit Singh-ADVOCATE
53C, Block AJ, Shalimar Bagh, Delhi -110088 Mob.: 9818613613

PUBLIC NOTICE NOTICE is given to public in large that My father Mr. Surjeet Singh Sto Late S. Amer Singh Barni R/o House No. A/833, 2nd floor Rana Pratap Bagh New Delhi. Has been terminally ill in suffering from depression and dementia since the last 5-6 years and has no judgement power regarding sale of his own Property of House No. A/833, 2nd and 3rd floor Rana Pratap Bagh New Delhi. Any person going to purchase his property mentioned in above notice shall be deemed an invalid agreement which will be deemed challengeable. If any one has any objection in this property he/she can contact with in 7 Days of publication of this notice.

Navtej Singh Barni
Manpreet Bansal

PUBLIC NOTICE I Smt. Suman Bala W/o Late Suresh Kumar R/o H.no-23, Baba Haridas Enclave, Jharkhand Kalan, Near Thirua, New Delhi-110072, Has Severed All Is Relationship from his Daughter Sapna Devi W/o Karambir Singh Has been Disbanded & Debarred them From All His Movables & Immovable Properties and Client Would not be Responsible for the acts, deeds, and things Done by them. Suman Bala

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Prima facie evidence against Narwal: HC

Court peruses case diary supplied by police in riots case

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday remarked that there was prima facie evidence against Pinjra Tod activist Natasha Narwal, arrested in connection with north-east Delhi riots, after perusing the case diary supplied by the Delhi police in a sealed cover.

Justice Vibhu Bakshu said that the Delhi police have "been able to get materials which are indicative of the allegation against you [Ms. Narwal]."

Justice Bakshu, who has gone through certain portions of the case diary, in a private hearing with the Delhi police's counsel, candidly said if he had come to the conclusion that there was some sort of fabricated evidence being created to keep Ms. Narwal unnecessarily, he would have intervened.

The court asked Ms. Narwal's counsel if she would consider going ahead with her bail application after two weeks when the chargesheet in the case is likely to be filed by the police before the trial court.

As of now, the details of the case diary cannot be re-



Pinjra Tod activist Natasha Narwal has been arrested in connection with the riots that broke out in north-east Delhi in February this year. ■ FILE PHOTO: SANDEEP SAXENA

vealed to Ms. Narwal's lawyer as the investigation is going on and the chargesheet is yet to be filed. "Prima facie view of the court is that there is material and you [Ms. Narwal] would have to comment on that material at appropriate stage," the High Court remarked.

The court was hearing Ms. Narwal's plea challenging a trial court's order, which had dismissed her bail plea. She was arrested on May 23, along with fellow JNU student Devangana Kalitha in connection with an FIR registered on February 24 over a sit-in protest at Ja-

frabad metro station against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

The Crime Branch has lodged a separate FIR against Ms. Narwal and Ms. Kalitha in connection with the Delhi riots, with charges ranging from IPC Section 147 (rioting), 353 (using criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty), 307 (attempt to murder), 302 (murder), among others.

The FIR also named relevant sections of the Arms Act and the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act.

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested suspended AAP councillor Tahir Hussain in connection with a money laundering probe into alleged funding of anti-CAA protests and riots in north-east Delhi in February this year.

The agency has secured

Hussain's six-day custody from a Karkardooma court for recording his statement under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA).

The case is based on multiple FIRs registered by the

Delhi police under various provisions of the Indian Penal Code.

"Investigations conducted under the PMLA have revealed that companies owned/controlled by Mr. Hussain and his relatives transferred huge amounts of money to dubious entities/entry operators that was returned by them in cash. The cash received by Mr. Hussain through entry operators was used to fuel the anti-CAA protests and Delhi riots," an ED statement said on Monday.

According to the agency,

Mr. Hussain and his companies laundered money in the past as well. The ED had earlier conducted searches on the residential and business premises of the accused, his relatives and associates in Delhi, Noida and Greater Noida on June 23.

"These search operations had led to the recovery of incriminating documents and evidence, including fake invoices, which were used for the fraudulent transfer of money," said the statement.

In the past few days, ED officials interrogated Mr. Hussain in Tihar Jail.

As per the plan, he visited Karol Bagh and identified two locations to place the bombs. His targets were crowded places.

During the arrest, the police recovered two SIM cards from him - one of which he used to contact his handler. Both SIM cards have been sent to the Forensic Science Laboratory.

The officer added that the police custody of Khan ended on Sunday.

He was produced before a Magistrate and the police demanded a six-day extension of his custody.

The Magistrate has granted police a custody till September 5.

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

In an alleged case of road rage, an 18-year-old youth was shot at by two persons when the victim asked them to park their car properly in south Delhi's Chhatarpur, the police said on Monday.

DCP (South) Atul Thakur said that one of the accused, identified as Chetan, a graduate pursuing a diploma in pharmacy, has been arrested while the other, identified as Manoj, is absconding.

The police said that around 10 p.m. on Sunday they received a call regarding an incident of firing.

When a police team reached the spot, they were told that the victim, Prabh Preet Singh, had been taken to AIIMS and that he had sustained two bullet injuries on his right leg.

The police said that Prabh and Mr. Chetan were acquaintances.

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STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Registrations for admissions to all courses at Delhi University ended on Monday with about 93,000 additional registrations this year compared to the last academic session.

While registrations, which began on June 20, were extended multiple times, the university administration made it clear that registrations would not be extended further. Registrations only for merit-based undergraduate courses was extended

for a final time on July 31, when the university decided to allow students to apply under the extra curricular activities (ECA) quota.

This year, a total of 3,51,974 paid applications had been made for UG courses at DU, a significant hike from the previous years. In 2019, about 2,58,388 applications had been made and 2,78,574 applications were made in 2018.

Apart from this, 1,46,996 applied for PG programmes and 21,699 for MPhil and PhD programmes.

Talking about cut-off dates, Dean of Admissions, Shobha Bagai, said that no decision has been taken on the matter yet, but added that dates are unlikely to be released before the first week of October.

Ms. Bagai said that the university was waiting for the UGC to release the academic calendar to decide on the cut-off dates, apart from which they also wanted to ensure that the CBSE's supplementary exams were completed before the release of the list.

DU registers 93,000 more admission applications than last academic year

Deadline for registrations for all courses ended on Monday

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STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Whereas complaint has been made before me that Amresh Mishra, S/o Sh. Ramji Mishra R/o H.No.4/18, East Patel Nagar, Delhi has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case FIR No. 255/19 u/s 406/420/120B IPC, P.S. Prasad Nagar, Delhi and it has been returned to a warrant of arrest therupon issued that the said accused Amresh Mishra cannot be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Amresh Mishra has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Amresh Mishra of FIR No. 255/19 u/s 406/420/120B IPC, P.S. Prasad Nagar, Delhi is required to appear before this Court to answer the said complaint on or before 12.10.2020.

By Order,
Ms. Gita

Metropolitan Magistrate-01, Central District, Delhi

DP/291/CD/2020 Room No.180, 1st Floor, Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

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DP/291/CD/2020 Room No.180, 1



Quantum not a solace

Supreme Court sentence on Bhushan diminishes its stature, exposes intolerant side

The penalty may be mild, but its import is quite grave. In imposing a nominal fine of one rupee on advocate Prashant Bhushan for criminal contempt of court, and, in the event of default, asking him to serve a three-month simple prison term and be debarred for three years from legal practice, the Supreme Court has bared its dark, intolerant side. That this was in response to tweets that contained criticism of the current CJI and some of his predecessors, diminishes the Court's stature much more than the upstanding lawyer's tweets that contained insinuations and opinions that the judiciary found unpalatable. During the hearing on sentencing, it appeared that the Bench had painted itself into a corner and was looking for a way out by seeking an apology so that a quietus could be given to the whole issue. However, Mr. Bhushan was in no mood to oblige, placing his bona fides and conscience above the need to give a face-saving option to the Court to close the case. It is unfortunate that the Court did not heed the Attorney General's wise counsel that it should display magnanimity by not imposing any sentence, and by considering the tweets as bona fide expression of criticism aimed at improving the institution's stature.

The 82-page sentencing verdict, much like the 108-page judgment finding Mr. Bhushan guilty, sets much store by the claim that it is not so much the reputation of individual judges that the Court is seeking to protect, but the standing of the institution in the eyes of the public, whose faith and trust are necessary for its sustenance. If the judiciary's majesty, dignity and trustworthiness were indeed the values at stake, it would have been far more advisable for the Court not to have taken up this matter on its own motion. For instance, the defence of truth taken by Mr. Bhushan has been characterised as something that aggravates the contempt. The reasoning is right. Past CJIs and retired judges whose conduct and opinions were sought to be marshalled in Mr. Bhushan's defence could not have been embroiled in the current proceedings. However, this was fairly obvious when the Court issued notice to him. Surely, someone cannot be found guilty of contempt without giving him an opportunity to explain his view that the CJIs of the last six years had contributed to the "destruction of democracy". This proceeding was fated to shine a light on the Court's conduct rather than on the actions of the contemnor. In the ultimate analysis, it is not a verdict that purges Mr. Bhushan of any contempt. Rather, it comes across as an unfair, but inevitable punishment for his refusal to apologise or express regret for his opinions on the conduct of the judiciary in recent times.

The right keys

Unlocking the economy further calls for vigilance and stronger health surveillance

The Unlock 4 guidelines of the Home Ministry allowing all but a few activities that attract large crowds, with supportive measures by States, reflect deep economic distress. India resorted to the world's most rigorous lockdown early on in the COVID-19 pandemic, when infection spread had just begun; there were just over 600 cases on March 25. It has now liberalised most activities, restricting only those that witness gatherings in excess of 100 people. This comes at a time when daily infections are scaling new highs – 78,512 on Monday – and growing at a rate faster than in the U.S. and Brazil, which have held the top spots globally. Resumption of economic activity, including Metro and other public transport services, will ease the pain for many, and prevent a further precipitous decline in earnings and spending, but if it is not accompanied by rigorous infection control, a major public health penalty could lie ahead. Successful unlocking requires enabling movement, including international travel, within a scientific regime of identification, testing and inexpensive quarantine where needed. When the pandemic was unfolding, a major concern was that of a wildfire spread overwhelming a lopsided health-care system, in which intensive care is meagre, urban-centric and expensive even for the middle class. This painful reality, of the virus retaining high transmissibility and unpredictable disease impacts, is as relevant today as it was then, as people resume their jobs and travel. Students, meanwhile, continue to be despondent, as there is no escape from high tuition fees, while online teaching remains experimental. Worryingly, many lockdown-weary people have begun to disregard safety norms, abandoning masks and distancing norms.

India is proceeding with its unlock strategy against the backdrop of scientific models that estimate that the actual infections could be 10 times the reported 3.6 million. The implication, which was voiced by the Harvard Global Health Institute, taking antibody test data into account, is that the tally for positive cases could be between 35 million and 70 million, given India's high population. Evidence also indicates that a deceleration in disease spread should reflect in a lower test positivity rate. If Indian States have 8% or higher positivity, compared to 1% in over-the-peak locations such as New York or South Korea, it indicates far more undetected infections in the population and significantly low testing. These insights point to the tenuous nature of the unlock programme, the need for constant vigil and the irrationality of exuberance. The pandemic cannot yet be viewed in the past tense, and there is a long wait for a possible vaccine. The impending scenarios underscore the need for wider testing and safe behaviour. The new normal requires governments to prioritise work-from-home and actively support green mobility such as walking and use of bicycles. It must, in parallel, identify infections and scale up health-care access.

GST reform needs a new grand bargain

The GST compensation issue strengthens the necessity for a new system between sovereign and sub-sovereign entities



Three years ago, the Centre and the States of the Union of India struck a grand bargain resulting in the launch of the unified Goods and Services Tax (GST) era. The States gave up their right to collect sales tax and sundry taxes, and the Centre gave up excise and services tax. The nationwide GST promised frictionless commerce across State borders, buoyant and leakproof tax compliance, and removal of inefficiencies like the cascade of "tax on tax". This historic grand bargain was the result of painstaking consensus building, which *inter alia* involved addressing the apprehension of States, of revenue loss due to the GST.

Abdication of responsibility
Their consent was secured by a promise of reimbursing any shortfall in tax revenues for a period of five years. This reimbursement was to be funded by a special cess called the GST compensation cess. The promised reimbursement was to fill the gap for an assured 14% year-on-year tax growth for five years, and it was generous to a fault. Neither the national aggregate nor any of the major States had this record for the previous five years.

But that was not the only fault with the design, which had also failed to learn from the successful design of harmonising Value Added Tax (VAT) rates across the nation, implemented just a decade ago. VAT was the precursor to GST and also needed a consensus. That design too had an inbuilt reimbur-

gement formula. But that tapered over the years, making room for incentives for tax effort from the States, sort of "skin in the game".

As the economy battles a pandemic and recession, the tax collection has dropped significantly, while expenditure needs are sharply higher, especially at the frontline of the battle, at the State level. But it seems that the States have been told that they are on their own to meet the shortfall in revenues. Using an equivalent of the *Force Majeure* clause in commercial contracts, the Centre is abdicating its responsibility of making up for the shortfall in 14% growth in GST revenues to the states.

The onus is on the Centre

This is wrong on many counts. First, the States do not have recourse to multiple options that the Centre has, such as issue of a sovereign bond (in dollars or rupees) or a loan against public sector unit shares from the Reserve Bank of India. Second, the Centre can anyway command much lower rates of borrowing from the markets as compared to the States. Third, in terms of aggregate public sector borrowing, it does not matter for the debt markets, nor the rating agencies, whether it is the States or the Centre that is increasing their indebtedness. Fourth, fighting this recession through increased fiscal stimulus is basically the job of macroeconomic stabilisation, which is the Centre's domain. Fifth, and most importantly, breaking this important promise, using the alibi of the COVID-19 pandemic causes a serious dent in the trust built up between the Centre and States.

Cooperative federalism is in the nature of a "repeated game" between the two entities, and every action must think of the future consequences, not just the immediate ones. Will it not weaken the foundation of trust?

Kautilya too would have advised the sovereign against renegeing on the promised bailout, as fulfilling the obligation helps build trust with sub-sovereigns.



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The Australian example

The issue of GST compensation to the States is just the latest in the bumpy three-year journey of the new tax design. It is clear that the design needs a radical overhaul. Just tinkering with the compensation mechanism, or frequently changing rate slabs, or pushing more goods in the "sin tax" cess category, to earn revenue that is not shareable with the States, is not the way forward. What we instead need is a Grand Bargain 2.0 between the sovereign and the sub-sovereign entities.

What would this be based upon? We have to go back to first principles. GST is a destination-based consumption tax, which must include all goods and services with very few exceptions, such as food and medicine. That widening of the tax base itself will allow us to go back to the original recommendation of a standard rate of 12%, to be fixed for at least a five-year period.

A comparison with Australia which also coincidentally shares its GST anniversary with India, is apt. For the past two decades their

GST rate has been constant at 10%. Of course India's single rate of 12% has to cover petrol, diesel, electricity, transport and real estate as well. Some extra elbow room for the States' revenue autonomy is obtained by allowing the States non VATABLE surcharges on a small list of "sin" goods such as liquor, tobacco, polluting goods such as sport utility vehicles, and industrial fuels such as diesel, aviation turbine fuel and coal. A low moderate single rate of 12% encourages better compliance, reduces the need to do arbitrary classification and discretion, reduces litigation and will lead to buoyancy in collection.

Incidentally this redesign will scrupulously avoid the bogey of a "revenue neutral rate" (RNR) which needlessly occupied the attention of lawmakers and officials. GST is a long-term structural reform, while RNR is a short term and basically an elusive concept. In the long term there are many changes in consumption patterns, production configurations and locations, which cannot be anticipated and hence a static concept of RNR cannot be reference. The commitment to a low and stable rate, à la Australia and many other federal democracies, is a must. Of course the compensation-cum-reimbursement incentive can remain, but more in the nature of what was done for VAT harmonisation.

Third tier of government

This new grand bargain must recognise the increasing importance of the third tier of government. Even after 28 years of the 73rd and 74th Amendments, the local governments do not have the promised transfer of funds, functions and functionaries. These local bodies face increased responsibility of providing government services especially in view of increased ur-

banisation and decentralisation. Of the 12% GST, 10% should be equally shared between the States and the Centre, and 2% must be earmarked exclusively for the urban and rural local bodies, which ensures some basic revenue autonomy to them. The actual distribution across panchayats, districts and cities would be given by respective State Finance Commissions. GST consumption tax paid by every citizen establishes a tighter link between the governed and the government. The quality of governance improves as also, the tax base is better aligned with responsibilities of various tiers of government.

Other changes

This fresh approach also calls for an overhaul of the interstate GST and the administration of the e-way bill. Research papers by Bhaskar and Kelkar ("Reforming Integrated GST: Towards accelerating exports Policy Brief" by Dr. V. Bhaskar and Dr. Vijay Kelkar and "National Agenda for 2019 - A proposal for the GST reform" by Dr. V. Bhaskar and Dr. Vijay Kelkar – <https://bit.ly/3jlXnp0> and <https://bit.ly/3jybj6B>) describe the simplified mechanism, which essentially reduces the transaction costs drastically. The current system is too complex and burdensome. We also need to zero rate exports. GST is a crucial and long-term structural reform which can address the fiscal needs of the future, strike the right and desired balance to achieve co-operative federalism and also lead to enhanced economic growth. The current design and implementation has failed to deliver on that promise. A new grand bargain is needed.

Vijay Kelkar and Ajit Ranade are, respectively, Vice-President and Member, Pune International Centre

The environment is a national issue

To view environment protection through an ideological or political lens will only spell its doom



JAYANTHI NATARAJAN

Environment issues are currently at the centre of a heated debate. Even the Congress President, Sonia Gandhi, felt impelled to write on the issue (*The Hindu*, Editorial page, "Stop the dismantling of environmental rules", August 13, 2020). As a former Environment Minister in the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) dispensation, I feel that environment issues should be above political dissonance, and to this end attempt to highlight critical facts which need to be flagged for public knowledge. To politically weaponise environmental issues is unproductive and unacceptable.

How India fares

It may be politically convenient – but not presenting the complete picture – to express shock at India being ranked at "177 out of 180 countries" in the Environmental Performance Index Report. Besides, in the June 2020 EPI Index, India's rank stands improved at 168, not 177 which is the 2018 rank.

The Environmental Performance Index has been deve-

loped by two U.S. universities (Yale and Columbia) in collaboration with the World Economic Forum and European Commission and available ranking shows India at 118 in 2006, 123 in 2010, 155 in 2014 and 177 in 2018, thereby giving a message opposite to that sought to be conveyed, regarding our standing at 177 in 2018.

Also, the experts in the two universities conclude: "... the 2008 ranking suggests that wealth is a major determinant of environmental success." Any balance between the environment and development needs to be struck within India and based on our priorities, and not some international index.

Further, the environment index cited by Ms. Gandhi, as explained above, shows a drop of 37 points (namely six points a year) in six years of UPA rule – and 22 points in 4 years (4.5 points a year) – under the present rule. The statistics are self-explanatory.

Political record

Pointed reference is made to the Narendra Modi government's alleged preoccupation with "crony capitalism" and implementing "ease of doing business" to the detriment of the environment.

This charge ignores the record of UPA governments, when important Group of Minister Committees were set up to implement



ease of doing business, as also a special Monitoring Cell in the Cabinet Secretariat. Regardless of affiliation, every government faces this balancing challenge.

Further, the link between the great winter smog and pollution in North India, and the present draft EIA draft is not reasonable, since winter pollution in North India did not begin in 2014, after Narendra Modi was elected. In point of fact, the winter smog and pollution in North India exemplify the anomalies of federalism, where the imperatives of the Centre and States differ. There are also problems of environmental laws which are effective in principle, against point sources like industries – but not against agriculture-related pollution such as stubble burning or public usage pollution relating to vehicular and household sources. Undoubtedly, big industry has erred grievously in polluting our environment, and the government needs to take stringent

steps against violators.

Ms. Gandhi writes about the problems of Adivasis. However, this problem did not arise in just the last few years. The UPA governments were unable to frame subordinate legislation and implement the Forest Rights Act effectively for eight long years, even in Congress-ruled States. In fact a major dilution of the Forest Rights Act was spearheaded by the Prime Minister's Office in the UPA dispensation, and office memorandums formalising the dilution were issued despite objections from some quarters. 'Forests' was a State subject until transferred to the Concurrent list by the 42nd Amendment Act.

However, *de facto*, the powers of the State governments continue, which is why, regardless of political affiliation, State governments hesitate to fully implement the Forest Rights Act.

Focus on deforestation

Deforestation ought to be a primary concern of any right-thinking government. Forest clearances for mining and industries, while major, are not the only causes of deforestation. Population pressure due to which the slash-and-burn (or *jhum* cycle) has reduced in forest areas from 17-20 years to two-three years giving no time for forest regeneration, and creeping conversion of forest to cultivated land are both major drivers of deforestation;

there is also the increasing use of timber for household and industry purposes. However, while diversion of forests for mining and industry is regulated by law and challenged in courts, the other major drivers are not even discussed.

'Nirmal Ganga' can be achieved by zero discharge of effluents and domestic sewerage, but 'Aviral Ganga' can only be achieved by constant balancing between irrigation needs of agriculture and potable water for cities on the one hand and the environmental flow of the river on the other.

Crucial dimensions

The balance of imperatives between the environment and poverty eradication, and the critical need to harmonise the working of the central, State, and local governments, as also intelligence, monitoring and compliance with law are vital dimensions of environment preservation.

To address environment protection from the standpoint of ideological or political mooring is to sound the death knell of our environment. The environment is a national issue which requires the unwavering participation of all governments, and all citizens, regardless of political affiliation.

Jayanthi Natarajan is a political activist and a former Union Environment Minister

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.

Pranab Mukherjee

The news that the former President of India, Pranab Mukherjee, is no more has pained millions. One of the most respected personalities among politicians, he was noted for his intelligence, wit and decision-making skills. More than being an intellect, he was one of the few politicians of his time who could not be questioned when it came to "integrity". India will miss an upright man who led a life by setting an example.

A.P. THIRUVADI,
Chennai

In the passing of the former President of India, the country has lost a veteran and gentle politician adored by all the sections of the political spectrum. He will be missed immensely for his

political acumen and sane advice.

V. PADMANABHAN,
Bengaluru

■ The passing of the former President is a huge loss. A many time MP as well as Union Minister, Mr. Mukherjee's contributions towards nation-building are something that will never be forgotten in Indian politics. He also contributed extensively towards his home State, West Bengal. His excellent knowledge of parliamentary matters is a trait that very few present-day politicians can match. India has truly lost a dozen of Indian politics.

ANISH ESTEVES,
Mumbai

Toy story
In the past, many Indian toys reflected Indian culture and

a certain practicality alongside creativity. Toys were simple and there was no competition with technology. It will certainly be a challenge to create something that attracts children as something of value beyond a tech gadget. Additionally, given the attention span of today's generation, keeping them engaged should be the objective. Now that the Prime Minister has focused on the subject, creators and toy manufacturers should strive to make a mark as far as India is concerned in the global toy market (Page 1, "India has potential to be a global toy hub: Mod'i", August 31).

ISHA KELASKAR,
Mumbai

■ It is hoped that with no less than the Prime Minister

drawing attention to the industry, the central and State governments will prop up the toy-making business.

In this connection, one recalls the report, "In toy city of Channapatna, artisans await govt. assistance", Aug. 31. The history of Channapatna toys can be traced to the time of Tipu Sultan, who encouraged artisans to be taught the art of making wooden toys.

However, later, it was Babas Miyan, known as the 'father of the Channapatna Toy', who adopted Japanese

technology in the making of toys and helped the local artisans improve their craft in a big way. In fact, Channapatna toys have a global connection also. It so happened that former First Lady of the United States Michelle Obama was astonished by these beautiful

toys and took a few back home as mementos.

R. SIVAKUMAR,
Chennai

■ The global toy market is growing exponentially and India must leverage its strengths from its well-established toy clusters – at Channapatna, Kondapalli, Thanjavur, Dhubri and Var

A party being pulled in different directions

The differences in the Congress are not primarily about personality traits but about ideology and strategy



G. SAMPATH

Another chapter in the Congress leadership saga has come to a predictable close. Sonia Gandhi will continue as interim president. While the dust may have settled on the latest eruption of intra-party discontent, it's time to unpack a problematic assumption that tends to muddy public discourse on this subject.

It can be summed up as follows: the Congress is facing a leadership crisis only because the Gandhi family blocks every non-dynastic talent. This sounds plausible, given the lack of internal democracy. But it also has the misleading effect of rendering every non-Gandhi politician, almost by default, more capable than Rahul Gandhi.

Search for a new president

For the record, though the immediate trigger for the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting of August 24 was a letter from 23 senior leaders seeking internal reform, the current crisis actually began in July last year when Mr. Gandhi resigned as Congress president, taking responsibility for the poor results in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

Now, this was a perfect occasion for a new, full-time president to take over. Mr. Gandhi said as much in his resignation letter: "The way forward would be to entrust a group of people with the task of beginning the search for a new President. I have empowered them to do so and committed my full support to this process and a smooth transition."

But the Congress would not or could not do so. None of the suave young geniuses frequently talked of as worthy alternatives to the Gandhi scions showed mettle, initiative or, for that matter, leadership. Either they were lacking in self-belief – an essential quality for a leader – or they knew they did not enjoy the support of the majority. At any rate, they remained passive, and Ms. Gandhi stepped in as interim president.

And yet, the inverse of this has become common sense: the party has



SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

plenty of talent, all sadly stymied by a feckless dynast. Never mind that if there was outstanding leadership talent waiting in the wings, it would have broken through by now. That it hasn't displaced the Gandhis suggests that it doesn't exist – at yet.

The merits of the letter

It is true that for more than 20 years there have been no elections to the CWC. The high command-cum-coterie culture still prevails. Regardless of their individual motives, the apprehensions expressed in the letter of the 'dissenting 23' are genuine. But that still does not mean that their interests and the party's interests coincide.

Most, if not all, of the leaders linked to the letter are at a crossroads with regard to their political career. They are Congressmen by instinct. But they are, first and foremost, pragmatists. They are concerned about their political investment in a party that looks increasingly incapable of offering tangible returns – returns of the kind that are only possible if the party is in power or looks like it's returning to power.

So yes, they do earnestly want the Congress to end its current drift and return to its winning ways. If that requires the party to take cognisance of changes in the political landscape and make ideological compromises, then so be it. Unfortunately, there is a stumbling block to such adjustments: Mr. Gandhi and his team of advisers, who share a different vision and often bypass party veterans on key decisions. For these and other reasons, the 'old guard' is more com-

fortable working with Ms. Gandhi, and allergic to Mr. Gandhi.

The root cause of the leadership crisis, as well as the reasons for Mr. Gandhi's refusal to officially take charge, is there in black and white in his resignation letter of 2019. "We didn't fight a political party in the 2019 election," said the letter. "Rather, we fought the entire machinery of the Indian state, every institution of which was marshalled against the opposition. It is now crystal clear that our once cherished institutional neutrality no longer exists in India."

The very starting point of Mr. Gandhi's politics was liable to be dismissed as 'too radical' by his party seniors. It got more interesting. "I personally fought the Prime Minister, the RSS and the institutions they have captured with all my being," he wrote. The way forward is for the Indian nation "to reclaim and resuscitate our institutions" and the "instrument of this resuscitation will be the Congress party." He added for good measure: "The stated objectives of the RSS, the capture of our country's institutional structure, is now complete... There is a real danger that from now on, elections will go from being a determinant of India's future to a mere ritual."

Is it any surprise that the old guard is alarmed at the prospect of being led by a man who not only says that his fight "has never been a simple battle for political power" but also believes that a) India's electoral apparatus is not neutral anymore; b) the RSS has captured India's institutions; and c) Congressmen should sacrifice the desire for power in order

to fight a "deeper ideological battle" against the RSS?

Is it not possible that some of the 23 signatories might share Mr. Gandhi's perspective? His resignation letter gives it away. "At times," he wrote in his letter, referring to the 2019 poll campaign, "I stood completely alone." Even now, with the exception of his small group of loyalists, Mr. Gandhi stands alone on the question of fighting the RSS ideologically, a project that today carries the risk as well as the political costs of being branded as 'anti-Hindu' and 'anti-national'. Not surprisingly, elements of the old guard have a different view on how the party should respond to the sashfronised reality of 'New India'. The contradictory pulls exerted by the two divergent approaches are partly responsible for the stasis plaguing the party.

Uncomfortable questions

Thus, the leadership crisis in the Congress is primarily not about personality traits. While they do matter, the real issues are the differences over ideology and strategy. Should the Congress bet on wooing back the upper caste vote that it has lost to the BJP or should it focus on OBCs, Dalits, Adivasis, and minorities? If the latter, then shouldn't the face of the party be an OBC or Dalit rather than a 'janew-dhari' like Mr. Gandhi? Should the party try to neutralise Hindutva politics by 'Hinduising' itself or should it wage an ideological war against the RSS? If the latter, then will its stance carry credibility without a proper reckoning of past dalliances with communal politics, not least the 1984 riots?

Another troubling question looms: Given the gigantic mismatch of power and resources between the Congress and the BJP, will a non-Gandhi Congress chief be more vulnerable to external pressures than a Gandhi scion? The burgeoning list of Congress leaders who've recently joined the BJP might suggest so.

Clearly, the path that Mr. Gandhi wants the party to walk is not an easy one. It will only be made tougher by a lack of clarity and internal divisions on these questions. What is beyond dispute is that the party could end up in two very different places depending on whether it follows Mr. Gandhi's political vision or a 'consensus'.

sampath.g@thehindu.co.in

Congress and its discontents

If the demands of the letter writers were seen as an affront, it only reveals the anti-democratic impulses of the Gandhis



ANAND KOCHUKUDY

tion win and the subsequent creation of Bangladesh. Rahul Gandhi's attempts to fashion himself as a modern Sanjay Gandhi, at least within his party, can only have disastrous consequences as he seems to want to wield power without responsibility.

Basic demands

Now, what was it that the ginger group had asked for? They had basic demands including having full-time and active leadership at all levels, elected democratically, to serve the party that was adrift, and an end to 'ad-hocism'. If that was seen as an affront, it only reveals the kind of anti-democratic impulses of the Gandhis. This non-democratic impulse seems to run in the family. Else, when the Allahabad High Court set aside the election of Indira Gandhi in 1975, why would she choose to impose Emergency to preserve her position rather than pass the baton on to the stalwarts within the party?

The less said about the coterie, the better. They seem to believe in preserving the hegemony of the Nehru-Gandhi family within the Congress rather than preserving the party itself. There are overt and covert insinuations about the motive of the letter writers and the need to put these issues in writing instead of resorting to the usual brush-it-under-the-carpet approach. That such a wide cross-section of leaders chose to undersign a document seeking revival of the party made it impossible to brush the letter under the carpet.

For the likes of Ghulam Nabi Azad, Anand Sharma and Mukul Wasnik, forever dubbed Gandhi loyalists, to seek accountability only reveals that their primary loyalty is to the party more than the Gandhis. In fact, the letter nowhere tries to cast the Gandhis in poor light. On the contrary, there are portions exalting the Nehru-Gandhi family as an integral part of the Congress. If it stung the Gandhis, it is only because the letter clearly stated the need for institutional leadership and how leaders had to be consultative, bear responsibility and be available – highlighting the lack of it under the present set-up.

Someone had to bell the cat. And if sources close to the ginger group are to be believed, more leaders within the fold, including the likes of P. Chidambaram, offered moral support although they didn't undersign fearing reprimand. Despite Ms. Gandhi's assurance at the end of the meeting that she won't bear any ill will, it is likely that the ginger group will be targeted. Whatever their fate, they have done a great service to the Congress party, which, in many ways, is a cross-section of the country rather than a regimented, cadre-based party.

Anand Kochukudy is a Kerala-based journalist and former editor, *The Kochi Post*

Taking a leaf out of the Air Force

Central Industrial Security Force personnel should have a working knowledge of English

M.P. NATHANAEL

Earlier this month, a Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) officer asked DMK MP Kanimozhi if she was an Indian after realising that she did not speak Hindi. Ms. Kanimozhi wisely chose to walk away and took to Twitter to air her annoyance. Though the CISF ordered an inquiry into the incident, the matter invited much media attention, leading to debates on television channels on Hindi imposition. The incident impelled former Union Home Minister P. Chidambaram to tweet that he had "experienced similar taunts from government officers and ordinary citizens who insisted that I speak in Hindi during telephone conversations and sometimes face to face". He added that all Central government employees must be made to speak in both English and Hindi.

At times, CISF personnel exceed their brief. Many of us who have travelled by air or metro rail would be aware of this. Despite their misdemeanour, not many passengers care to protest or lodge formal complaints as no one wants to be involved in such a time-consuming exercise and pursue the matter. As a result, many CISF personnel continue to be arrogant. At times, they can be seen chatting among themselves at airports while passengers await their scanned bags after security check.

Proficiency in English

Though reports state that CISF personnel are imparted training in basic proficiency in English, not much seems to have been done in this direction. A computer-based English language lab is reported to have been installed at the CISF's National Industrial Security Academy in Hyderabad where officers recruited to the CISF are imparted basic training. Such labs need to be set up at the recruit training centres too, where the constabulary can acquire working knowledge of English.



English should be made mandatory in basic training so that officers do not have to struggle with learning English after joining duty. Not only will this help personnel build confidence but it will also help them interact easily with people not just at airports and metro stations but also at government buildings. A leaf can be taken out of the Air Force Training Institutes where recruits with hardly any knowledge of the language graduate as smart English-speaking personnel after they complete basic training.

Language training

There was a proposal to impart language training in Spanish, German and French to some selected personnel to enable them to easily converse with foreign passengers but this seems to have been shelved. This proposal should be revived. Our country's image will be enhanced

when foreigners landing on our soil find themselves being assisted by CISF personnel speaking in their own native languages. Personnel who acquire fluency in these languages could also be used as interpreters when foreign delegations visit our country. As an incentive, they can be paid foreign language allowance.

Selection of personnel for airports should be done in a meticulous manner. Not only should they be sober, smart and mature in their behaviour but also well informed about important personalities of the State and the Centre. Needless to say, the visible presence of officers - Assistant Commandants or Deputy Commandants - round the clock at airports will avert ugly situations. Officers can guide and train personnel while on duty. Swift disciplinary action against those found misbehaving with passengers will go a long way in curbing unfortunate incidents. Personnel who are erratic in their behaviour need to be identified and removed from airport security duties.

M.P. Nathanael is Inspector General of Police (Retd), Central Reserve Police Force

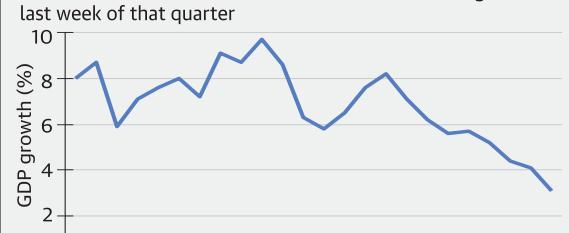


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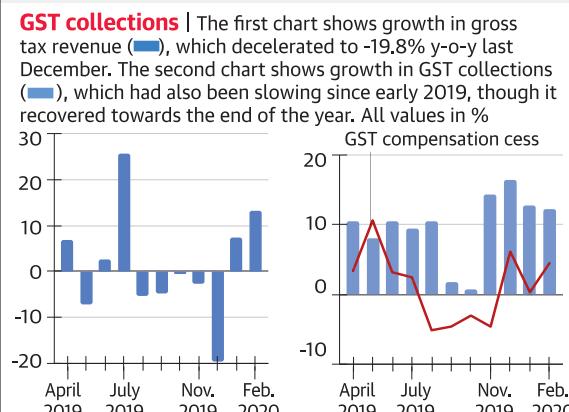
No calm before the COVID-19 storm

Even before the COVID-19 outbreak, which led to a shutdown of the economy and made way for the first-ever contraction of India's GDP in the April-June quarter, the economy was already witnessing a slowdown. Decelerating GDP growth, significant decrease in industrial output, fall in tax revenues and a massive reduction in power demand were all recorded well before the impact of the lockdown was recorded. By The Hindu Data Team

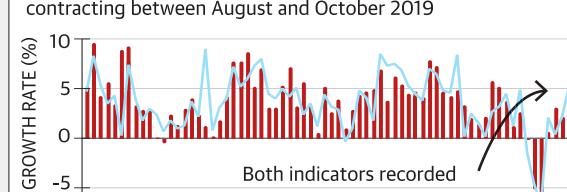
GDP growth | GDP growth has been on a constant downward slope since Q4 FY17, and slowed to a 11-year-low of 3.1% in Q4 FY20. The nationwide lockdown due to COVID-19 began in the last week of that quarter



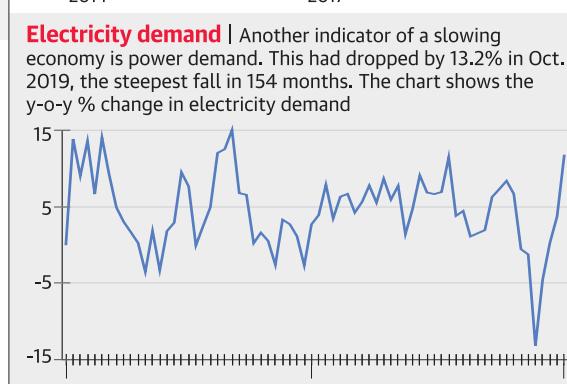
GST collections | The first chart shows growth in gross tax revenue (blue), which decelerated to -19.8% y-o-y last December. The second chart shows growth in GST collections (blue), which had also been slowing since early 2019, though it recovered towards the end of the year. All values in %



Industries affected | Industrial activity had also taken a hit well before the pandemic set in, with the output of the eight core sectors (red) and the index of industrial production (blue) contracting between August and October 2019



Electricity demand | Another indicator of a slowing economy is power demand. This had dropped by 13.2% in Oct. 2019, the steepest fall in 154 months. The chart shows the y-o-y % change in electricity demand



SOURCE: MOSPI, OFFICE OF ECONOMIC ADVISER

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO SEPTEMBER 1, 1970

Fiji prepares for independence

Prince Charles will represent Queen Elizabeth at Fiji's independence celebrations in October. Royal assent has been given to the Bill providing for Fiji's independence on October 10, the 96th anniversary of the cession of the islands to Queen Victoria. Warm feelings of goodwill to Fiji and its people were expressed during debates on the Bill in both Houses of the British Parliament. It has been decided that October 10 will be known as Independence Day and not Dominion Day. The Independence Celebration Committee has decided against a midnight ceremony of lowering the Union Jack and raising the new national flag. Instead, it has proposed that the Union Jack will be lowered at sunset on October 9 at a ceremony of Beating the Retreat by the Fiji military forces. The new flag will be ceremonially hoisted throughout Fiji on October 10 at 10 a.m. To mark Independence, every child in Fiji will receive a medallion. It will bear a replica of the Queen's head on one side and the Dominion Coat of Arms on the other. The Suva Indian Chamber of Commerce has initiated three projects to mark Independence. They are the setting up of a fund by the Indian business community to be known as the Prime Minister's Fund; erection of a monumental clock tower in the capital, Suva; and a gift of \$1 million to the first Fiji citizen born at the biggest hospital in Suva, after the raising of the new national flag on October 10.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO SEPT. 1, 1920

The Kheri murder

FROM PAGE ONE

PLA aggression blocked at Pangong Tso

A defence source said movement by PLA troops was noticed in the Chushul sector and Indian Army repositioned its troops as a precaution to foil any misadventure. "We occupied locations which were on our side and in that process pre-empted the Chinese," the source added.

There was no physical clash, a second defence source said. There is already massive build up of troops in the area by both sides. It is learnt that few hundred PLA troops climbed on top of two mountains near Chushul and had retreated later. It looks clear that PLA action is now moving to South Bank as North bank of Pangong has been secured, a source with knowledge of the matter said, adding it could also be a diversion from Depsang Plains where construction by PLA is on in full swing and their excavators continue to build roads.

The spokesperson of the PLA Western Theatre Command, Colonel Zhang Shuili said the moves by Indian Army had "undermined the consensus reached" at the diplomatic and military talks.

"This move by the Indian side seriously violated China's territorial sovereignty and severely undermined the peace and stability of the Sino-Indian border area," a statement said. It also

GDP falls 23.9% in first quarter

Manufacturing shrank more than 39%, while mining and quarrying dropped 23%.

On the expenditure side, private consumption fell 26.7%, while investments, as reflected by gross fixed capital formation plunged 47%, and exports contracted almost 20%. Government final consumption expenditure grew 16.4%.

"The major burden on the economy is the contraction you are seeing in private final consumption, which has a weight of almost 60% in the GDP. If 60% of demand is growing negatively, the task is formidable, because unless this is turned around, nothing will happen," said Dr. Srivastava, adding that the real situation may be somewhat worse as three-fourths of the economy is in the informal sector, which is largely not captured in GDP data.

"The investment outlook is very bleak and may fall further. Consumption indicators are improving sequentially, but continue not on a year-on-year basis,"

SC imposes ₹1 fine on Bhushan for contempt

He showed no remorse for causing harm to an institution which he belongs to, the order said.

"Lawyers are supposed to be fearlessly independent and robust but at the same time respectful to the institution," Justice Mishra, who authored the 82-page sentencing verdict, observed.

Mr. Bhushan was convicted on August 14 in a suo moto contempt action for his tweet of a picture of the Chief Justice of India astride a high-end bike while the court was in "lockdown" and another about the functioning of the court in the past six years.

He followed this up by filing an over 100-page reply in his defence, criticising the court's "surrendering to a majoritarian executive acting in tyranny".

When asked to apologise, he issued two statements, in one of which he said he neither asked for the magnanimity or mercy of the court but would "cheerfully" submit to any punishment.

so said China was "strongly opposed" to it and "solemnly requests the Indian side to immediately withdraw its illegally crossing troops strictly control and restrain the front-line troops, earnestly abide by its commitments, and avoid further escalation of the situation."

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said, "Chinese border troops always strictly abide by the LAC. They never cross the line. Border troops on the two sides have been in close communication regarding the issues on the ground."

The standoff in Ladakh has been ongoing since early May and several rounds of military and diplomatic talks have failed to end the impasse. China has undertaken massive mobilisation along the LAC and PLA troops have built structures inside Indian territory at several locations.

Accident near Karu
Capt. Dikshant Thapa passed away on August 30 in an accident near Karu after an infantry vehicle toppled from a trailer on to him, an Army source said.

While loading a BMP, the civil truck rammed the trailer due to which it toppled and the officer died on the spot, the source said adding that this was unrelated to the action in the South Bank of Pangong Tso.

A.P. cases continue to soar at over 10,000 a day

Kerala's active cases at 23,488 as 1,530 test positive; Karnataka case tally up by 6,495; Telangana weekend testing dips again

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

As testing dropped on Sunday, COVID-19 cases also showed a marked dip in Telangana. From August 25, over 60,000 tests a day were conducted and between 2,700 and 3,100 cases recorded daily. On Sunday, 37,791 samples were tested and 1,873 tested positive.

Over five weeks, comparatively fewer tests were con-

COVID-19

ducted on weekends (particularly on Sundays), barring on August 23.

The 1,873 new cases included 360 from Greater Hyderabad, 180 from Karimnagar, 129 from Rangareddy and 103 from Khammam. Nine more COVID-19 patients died, taking the toll to 827. Of the new cases, 1,293 were asymptomatic.

Of the 37,791 people tested on Sunday, 17,006 were primary contacts and 5,290 secondary contacts.

COVID-19 was detected in 1,530 more persons in Kerala on Monday, taking the cumulative cases to 75,385.

The number of people being treated in hospitals stood at 23,488. Seven more deaths which occurred earlier in the week were confirmed as having been caused by COVID-19 by the Health department, and the toll was put at 294.

Three of the deaths were reported in Thiruvananthapuram, two in Kozhikode and one in Kollam. One of those who passed away was from Kanniyakumari.

Of the 1,530 new cases, 1,396 cases, or 91%, were locally acquired infections, including 29 healthcare workers.

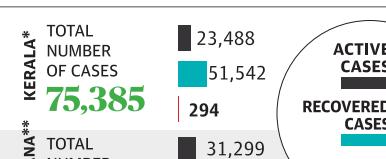
Andhra Pradesh, for the sixth consecutive day, reported over 10,000 infec-

Unending queues

While relaxing lockdown restrictions, governments have also increased testing to contain the spread of COVID-19. The graph shows the spread of the pandemic in the southern States



Mandatory task: People waiting for their turn to get tested at a mobile COVID testing unit in Visakhapatnam on Monday. ■ K.R. DEEPAK



*Kerala has a mismatch of 61 cases due to unaccounted deaths, missing persons; **Telangana numbers are as of 8 p.m. on Sunday; ***Karnataka has 19 non-COVID deaths

tions on Monday. The State had 1,00,276 active cases, the second highest after Maharashtra. During the past week, 73,132 infections and 601 deaths were reported

ed. During August, the State detected 2,93 lakh infections from 17.71 lakh samples. The positivity rate was 16.59% in August. The Health Department said, 10,004 infections

and 85 deaths were reported on Monday. Four districts reported over a thousand new cases. East Godavari continued to report the highest single-day tally at 1,383 cases

besides adding seven deaths.

A total of 6,495 new COVID-19 cases were reported in Karnataka on Monday. Positive cases stood at 3.42 lakh, while Bengaluru Urban added 1,862 cases. The Health and Family Welfare department recorded 113 COVID-19 deaths. The number of tests conducted on Monday dipped to 43,132, including 13,056 rapid antigen tests.

Another 5,956 persons tested positive for COVID-19 on Monday, taking Tamil Nadu's overall tally to 4,28,041. While there was a marginal dip in fresh coronavirus infections in Chennai, the cases surged in Coimbatore and Salem. The State's toll increased to 7,322, with the death of 91 persons across the state.

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

Kerala FM chairs meet of States on Centre's GST dues

The Finance Ministers resolve to take a united stance to secure the compensation that is owed to them

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Opposition-ruled States will take a united stance to secure the eligible Goods and Service Tax (GST) compensation from the Centre.

A meeting chaired by Kerala Finance Minister T.M. Thomas Issac and attended by the Finance Ministers of Punjab, Delhi, Chhattisgarh, West Bengal and Telangana on Monday also decided to reject the two options for Goods and Service Tax (GST) compensation mooted by the Centre in the GST Council meeting on August 27.

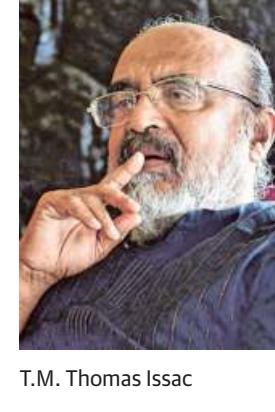
Dismissing Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's theory of an unforeseen "act of God", the Finance Ministers' meeting noted that the States are eligi-

ble for GST compensation, and a 14% increase annually in the GST from the base year has been assured.

Dr. Issac said the meeting was of the unanimous view that the Centre should take loan and provide GST compensation to the States. "The compensation should be provided to the States through the Cess Fund. The GST council should decide on collection of the cess till the repayment of loan to be availed by the Centre."

The Chief Ministers of the six States will convey the stance on GST compensation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. This will keep the issue outside the GST Council, Dr. Issac said.

The Finance Ministers' meeting, held through video



T.M. Thomas Issac

conference, also decided to launch a campaign in the State to check the stance of the Centre on the payment of GST compensation.

Dr. Issac said another meeting would be held in three-four days.

Kerala was the first State

to reject the two options and to press for the Centre availing loan to pay GST compensation to the States. Dr. Issac had said the proposals would lead to financial loss to the State. Moreover, the State could take only 3% of its income as loan.

The first option was a special window to the States, in consultation with the Reserve Bank of India, for borrowing ₹97,000 crore at a reasonable interest rate. The second option was to borrow the entire ₹2.35 lakh crore shortfall under the special window.

Addressing a press conference after the meeting, Telangana Finance Minister T. Harish Rao expressed unhappiness that the Centre was, with both options, try-

ing to pay to the States a compensation of only ₹1.65 lakh crore, while the due to them towards compensation was ₹2.35 lakh crore and ₹65,000 crore from levy of cess. The GST Act was clear that the compensation was to be met in full if the growth rate of States was below the threshold level of 14%. In the name of "Act of God and coronavirus", the Centre was denying them ₹1.35 lakh crore, Mr. Rao said.

There was no scope for denial of compensation due to natural calamities or COVID-19 in the legislation.

Mr. Rao warned the Centre that it had no option but to pay the compensation in full either on legal or moral grounds. He said that the Centre had "conveniently

deposited the surplus in cess distribution to the Consolidated Fund of India in the last three years of GST implementation, but now asked the State governments to bear the loss".

Double standards?
"Telangana government will not agree to the double standards at any cost," he remarked.

Telangana had suffered a revenue loss of 34%, amounting to ₹8,000 crore, in the last four months due to the pandemic. On the other hand, the State had contributed ₹18,032 to the national exchequer crore towards cess, but got back only ₹3,200 crore.

(With inputs from Hyderabad bureau)

Twin murders trigger CPI(M)-Cong. standoff

DYFI men were waylaid and hacked to death late on Sunday in Venjaramoodu

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The murder of two Democratic Youth Federation of India (DYFI) workers in Venjaramoodu on Onam eve has triggered a violent stand-off between the Congress and the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in the district.

A gang waylaid Mithilaj, 30, a member of the DYFI in Thevalakadu, and Muhammad Haq, 24, CPI (M) branch member, Kallinmukhan unit, at Thembanpadu late on Sunday and attacked them with sharp-edged weapons as they were returning home on a motorbike. A senior police officer said political vendetta is suspected to be the motive. However, there could also be personal reasons, he said.

The State police have de-

tained six persons in connection with the murders. But law enforcers have not revealed their identity or political allegiance.

The CPI(M) has accused the Congress leadership of having orchestrated the mafia-style hit-and-run street murders.

Police have been deployed in strength in the area to prevent tit-for-tat violence. They have also stepped up patrolling in Kannur, Thrissur and Kozhikode districts, which had witnessed political violence in the past.

The incident provoked CPI(M) workers to march to the office of the Public Service Commission, where two Congress legislators, Shafi Parambil and K. S. Sabarinathan, were on a sit-in

dharma to spotlight the Government's "apathy" towards jobless youth. The police broke up the ensuing scuffle and arrested and removed opposing party workers, including the MLAs, from the spot.

Police also prevented a belligerent DYFI march to the official residence of the Leader of the Opposition, Ramesh Chennithala, at the Cantonment House here.

Special probe team

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan condemned the twin murders and announced a special team to probe the case. He said the police would bring to light the plotters and the assassins. He posted pictures of the DYFI men on his Facebook account.

CPI(M) State secretary Ko-

diyeri Balakrishnan slammed the Congress, accusing the party of ushering in Onam by spilling the blood of CPI(M) workers.

The party will observe September 2 as "black day."

Cong. condemns killings

Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee president Mullaipally Ramachandran and Mr. Chennithala condemned the killings. They said Congress did not endorse politics of murder.

CPI(M) district secretary Anavoor Nagappan and Minister for Tourism and Cooperation, Kadakkalai Sundaran, visited Venjaramoodu and paid their respects to the DYFI members. They accused senior Congress leaders of having a conspiratorial role in the murders.

Sources said Mr. Lankesh had handed over details such as a video clip, photographs and other material to corroborate his claims about the involvement of many film industry members in an alleged drug racket. The police have video-recorded his statement and also taken a written statement.

Later, Mr. Lankesh told

the media that he stood by his earlier statements.

"Though many people have vented their ire on me for speaking about the drug menace in the industry, I have not sought police protection," he said, adding that he had requested a detailed probe.

Rare Renati Chola era inscription unearthed

It was found engraved on a dolomite slab and shale in a remote village in Kadapa district of A.P.



Rare find: The inscription unearthed at Chinnadudiyala village in Andhra Pradesh's Kadapa district. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

A.D. RANGARAJAN
KADAPA

A rare inscription dating back to the Renati Chola era has been unearthed in a remote village of Kadapa district that has kindled interest among the fraternity of archaeology and history.

Found engraved on a dolomite slab and shale, which are part of a fragmentary pillar recently excavated from the fields of B. Sivaramayya Reddy, a farmer of Chinnadudiyala village in Muddanur mandal, the inscription was first identified by Vasudeva Reddy, a student of M.A. History and Archaeology, Yogi Vemana University, who gave the details to his Assistant Professor Ramaiah Vellore.

Going by the language and characters, the inscription

was written in archaic Telugu, which was readable in 25 lines – the first side with 11 lines and the remaining on the other side. It was assigned to the 8th Century A.D., when the region was under the rule of the Chola Maharaja of Renadu.

"The inscription seems to throw light on the record of a gift of six *martus* (a measuring unit) of land gifted to a person Sidymaya, one of the Brahmins serving the temple at Pid

Learned so much from Pranab, says Sonia

Cong. leaders recall ex-President's 'phenomenal memory'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Monday condoled the passing away of former President Pranab Mukherjee.

In a letter to Mr. Mukherjee's daughter Sharmistha, Ms. Gandhi said while he had been ailing for some time, his death had come as a great "shock" to her. She described Mr. Mukherjee as an "integral and prominent part of public life, the Congress party, and the Central government for over five decades".

"His life over the past 50 years mirrored 50 years of the history of India for, he played a crucial role in both shaping the course of events and participating in them," Ms. Gandhi wrote, recalling her own memories of working with him, stating that she "learned so much from him".

The Congress party will be flying its flag at half mast at the party headquarters for the next seven days as a mark of respect to Mr. Mukherjee.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said, "With great sadness, the nation receives the news of the unfortunate demise of our former president Shri Pranab Mukherjee. I join the country in paying homage to him."

In a statement, the Congress said: "The Congress party condoles the passing



Go-to man: Pranab Mukherjee with former Prime Ministers Indira Gandhi and Manmohan Singh. ■ THE HINDU ARCHIVES

away of Shri Pranab Mukherjee, former President of India. A statesman, leader, parliamentarian and visionary, Shri Mukherjee served in many capacities in the party and in the government ministries in his long career over nearly 50 years."

"This loss is irreparable. The nation is going to miss him. The Congress party is going to miss him," the party said.

Condolence messages

poured in from senior Congress leaders reminiscing about their times with Mr. Mukherjee with many remembering his "phenomenal memory," calling him an "encyclopedia" in politics and constitutional affairs.

Senior Congress leader P. Chidambaram said: "With his passing away, not only the Congress, but the entire political spectrum of this country has lost a lifelong and a valiant soldier..."

For the crisis man, the end of a long walk

Having traversed the maze that New Delhi is since 1969, Pranab knew where power flowed from

VARGHESE K. GEORGE

"I like long walks," Pranab Mukherjee said in 2012 as Union Finance Minister, noting that the Rashtrapati Bhavan had huge lawns. That was a public alert to his own party, the Congress, that he had set his eyes on the prime real estate in the national capital.

As the chief troubleshooter for the UPA-1 and the UPA-2 until then – at one point, he was heading more than 50 Groups of Ministers – he was the "other PM". The real chair of power, the prime ministerial, eluded him, though it had come tantalisingly close more than once.

Having traversed the deceitful maze that New Delhi is since 1969, Mr. Mukherjee knew where power flowed from. He became the 13th President of India in 2012. And the long walks continued even after he left office in 2017, until August 9, when he walked 8 km – four in the morning, four in the evening. He also wrote his diary as he had done every day for decades.

If his memoirs, a series of books, are anything to go by, they talk a lot without revealing much – a lot of secrets have perished with him. Unless his diaries have preserved them for posterity. His ability to keep secrets was one reason that endeared him to Indira Gandhi, who nominated him to the Rajya Sabha in 1969, when he was only 34. "Of all the things that goes into his



PRANAB MUKHERJEE: 1935-2020

head, only the smoke comes out," she had told about Mr. Mukherjee, then a pipe smoker. He gave up smoking along the way but by then he had collected 500 pipes. Rajiv Gandhi cut him out of his inner circle in 1984 – somewhat similar to the manner in which Rahul Gandhi has now cut out advisers of his mother Sonia Gandhi. "Most things said about him weren't true," Rajiv said later about how he was wrongly advised on Mr. Mukherjee.

A raconteur who could tell not only about British parliamentary precedents but also pick up random newspaper reports such as about competitive eater Rappai of Kerala who could clean off copious amounts of food, Mr. Mukherjee had everything at his fingertips. When he was not talking, he was reading – either files or books. Recounting precedents perhaps cost him the trust of Rajiv. When they

were airborne from Kolkata to Delhi on October 31, 1984 after Indira Gandhi's assassination, he told Rajiv that the most senior Minister was sworn in as the Prime Minister when Prime Ministers died in office twice earlier. Mr. Mukherjee said he never demanded the post for himself – an account corroborated by P.C. Alexander, a confidant of both Rajiv and Indira. He wrote that his conventional ways were one reason Rajiv did not develop a liking for him. Rajiv was for market economy and computers.

Nuclear deal with U.S.

Mr. Mukherjee was the Finance Minister in the early 1980s, and the grip over economic actors that he gained would remain handy for the rest of his life. He held three of the four big portfolios – Defence, Finance and External Affairs. He signed the nuclear agreement with the

U.S. in 2008. As the key interlocutor of the UPA with its allies on the issue, he carried the Left along until the last milestone. After the Left withdrew support to the government, the Samajwadi Party came to its rescue.

His knowledge and short temper intimidated all his interlocutors. He managed the two critical relationships, with Ms. Gandhi and Manmohan Singh, with sagacity and sensitivity. As Finance Minister, he signed the appointment of Dr. Singh as RBI Governor in 1982. But unlike Natwar Singh, who could never achieve a working relationship with the 'accidental Prime Minister' and burned his own career in the process, Mr. Mukherjee put on the act of being the constant number two until he seized the title of the First Citizen. But he completely messed up one relationship – with Cabinet colleague P. Chidambaram. By then he was a prisoner of his own advisers.

A Bangla cultural aficionado, the former President was extremely popular in Bangladesh also. He maintained close personal ties with Sheikh Hasina.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee did not like him for his affinity to the State's Left leaders and for other reasons, and she opposed his nomination as presidential candidate until the last moment. The Left supported him in the contest. Mr. Mukherjee's ability and willingness to offer counsel to others extended to non-

Congress leaders, including Narendra Modi when the latter was the Gujarat Chief Minister and after he became the Prime Minister too. Congress leaders have not been treated kindly by Mr. Modi but "Pranab da" was an exception. Mr. Modi remained a regular visitor of Mr. Mukherjee; Ms. Gandhi too occasionally dropped in, the last time in January.

Bharat Ratna

In 2018, the Government of India announced the Bharat Ratna, the highest civilian award of the country, for him. Around the same time, he addressed a gathering of the RSS in Nagpur, in a stunning reincarnation of a man who had never let his intense religiosity impede his secular vision. RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat had pleaded with him to address the organisation's conclave as President, but Mr. Mukherjee waited until after he left the office. He made a speech to RSS volunteers on nationalism that had a Rashomon effect on listeners – it was an endorsement of Hindutva nationalism and a critique of it at once. One could take what one wants.

His daughter Sharmistha Mukherjee, a Congress politician, had warned him: "The speech will be forgotten, visuals will remain and those will be circulated with fake statements." His picture on the RSS stage, flanked by its leaders in uniform, will remain part of his legacy and the history of India's evolution. He had walked far.

Nation mourns 'scholar par excellence and statesman'

President Kovind says it is the 'passing of an era'

State mourning for 7 days

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Centre on Monday announced a seven-day state mourning on the demise of former President Pranab Mukherjee.

"As a mark of respect to the departed dignitary, seven days' state mourning will be observed throughout

India from August 31 to September 6," a statement by the Union Home Ministry said.

"During the period, the national flag will fly at half mast and there will be no official entertainment. The date, time and venue of the state funeral will be intimated later," it said.

er to the people. He opened its gates for public visits. His decision to discontinue the honorific 'His Excellency' was historic," said President Kovind.

Mr. Mukherjee's son and former Lok Sabha MP, Abhijit Mukherjee, announced his father's death on Twitter stating that despite the best efforts of doctors and prayers of ordinary Indians throughout the country, this had come to pass.

The hospital said in a medical bulletin in the morning that Mr. Mukherjee had gone into septic shock due to the lung infection.

Mr. Mukherjee, born in 1935 in Mirati in West Bengal, first became an MP in the Rajya Sabha in 1969 on a Congress nomination.

Close to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, Mr. Mukherjee held many ministerial positions, including Defence, Finance, and External Affairs before he was elected President in 2012.

The hospital said in a

World leaders pay glowing tributes

'He was our guardian,' says Hasina

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Bangladesh will always remember the contribution of Pranab Mukherjee to the Liberation War of 1971, Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina said in a message on Monday.

She was joined by the President of Nepal, K.P. Sharma Oli, and the President of the Maldives, Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, among others who remembered the former President of India for his contribution in strengthening India's diplomatic ties.

"During my years in exile spent in India during the aftermath of the assassination of Father of the Nation Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, Pranab Mukherjee always helped us. He looked after me and my younger sister Rehana in those difficult days and stood by us. He continued to encourage me and assisted me after I returned to Bangladesh," said Ms. Hasina.

"He was our guardian



Sheikh Hasina

and a family friend," Ms. Hasina added.

The leadership of Nepal also paid rich tributes to Mr. Mukherjee, with Prime Minister Oli remembering his contributions to "strengthening Nepal-India relations in different capacities of his public life".

"In his demise, Nepal has lost a great friend," Mr. Oli said.

Ambassador of China Sun Weidong expressed condolences and said, "He has made contributions to the development of China-India relations which we will always cherish."

'A father figure and mentor'

Modi, Pranab formed a special relationship over the years

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

An outpouring of mourning from across the aisle at the passing of a political leader is a testament to statesman-like qualities, but with former President Pranab Mukherjee, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's very personal expressions of grief pointed to a special relationship that the two had forged over the years. A relationship that was encapsulated in Prime Minister Modi's letter at the time when President Mukherjee demitted office.

Mr. Modi wrote: "... three years ago, I came to New Delhi as an outsider. The task before me was huge and challenging. In these times you have always been a father figure and a mentor to me. Your wisdom, guidance and personal warmth have given me greater confidence and strength."

Mr. Mukherjee had later commented that the letter had "touched his heart".

This letter was just one of the several that Mr. Modi had written about Mr. Mukherjee's role as a "mentor



Forging a bond: A file photo of former President Pranab Mukherjee with Prime Minister Narendra Modi. ■ ANI

and guide" to him. Aides who wish to remain anonymous said that even after Mr. Mukherjee retired from office, Mr. Modi would call on him periodically; sometimes the two would meet without anyone present.

Mr. Mukherjee, never one to mince words when pushed, came to show, was not always amenable to everything that the government did but his views never led to friction between the Prime Minister and the Rashtrapati Bhavan, as had sometimes happened in the past. Whether it was the railroad of legislation via the ordinance route in 2015 with 10 ordinances being cleared or his calls for the "preservation of space for legitimate criticism and dissent" in several of his addresses as President, Mr. Mukherjee made sure his voice was heard.

Will pay ₹1 fine, but reserve the right to seek review: Bhushan

Always had the greatest respect for SC, he says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Civil rights lawyer and activist Prashant Bhushan on Monday said he would "respectfully pay the fine" of ₹1 imposed on him by the Supreme Court for committing criminal contempt, but would "reserve the right to seek review of the conviction and sentencing, by way of an appropriate legal remedy".

Addressing a press conference after the sentencing, Mr. Bhushan said he had already said in his statement to the court that he was there to "cheerfully submit to any penalty that can lawfully be inflicted upon me for what the court has determined to be an offence, and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen".

"Therefore, while I reserve the right to seek a review of the conviction and sentencing, by way of an appropriate legal remedy, I propose to submit myself to this order and will respectfully pay the fine, just as I would have submitted to any other lawful punishment," he said at the

Justice Mishra refers to 2018 press meet held by SC judges

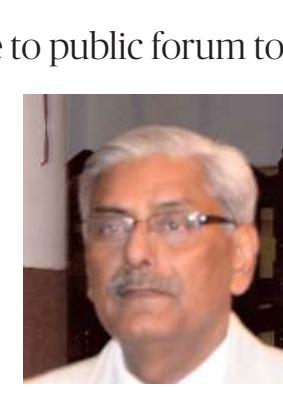
Judges cannot take to public forum to answer allegations

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday re-kindled the ghosts of past, invoking the memory of an unprecedented press conference held jointly by four of its senior most judges in January 2018 to complain of practices in the court which, according to them, threatened judicial independence and the future of democracy.

"We hope it was the first and the last occasion that judges have gone to the Press," a three-judge Bench, led Justice Arun Mishra, observed in its judgment punishing civil rights lawyer Prashant Bhushan for contempt.

Mr. Bhushan had referred to the January 12, 2018, presser held by Justices J. Chelameswar, Ranjan Gogoi,



Arun Mishra

Madan B. Lokur and Kurian Joseph (all of whom have since retired). Justice Gogoi, who was judge number three at the time, went on to become the Chief Justice of India when the incumbent, Justice Dipak Misra, demitted office.

The judges had indicated then that the allocation of the Judge Loya death case to a Bench led by Justice Mishra was the immediate trigger for the press meet. The Justice Mishra Bench later recused itself from the case. The ripples of the "extraordinary" press conference had lasted for months. The judgment on Monday, authored by Justice Mishra, pointed to an internal mechanism to deal with grievances against judges. This mechanism is intended to protect the dignity of "suffering judges".

Judges cannot take to the public forum to answer allegations made against them. This handicap, imposed by their code of conduct, however, causes them "suffering till eternity", the judgment said. "Truth can be the defence to the judges also, but they are bound by their judicial norms, ethics and code of conduct," the judgment said.

2G case: CBI, ED move HC

STAFF REPORTER

The Central Bureau of Investigation and the Enforcement Directorate moved the Delhi High Court on Monday seeking early hearing of their appeals challenging the acquittal of former Union Telecom Minister A. Raja and others in the 2G spectrum allocation cases.

They have sought early hearing of the appeals which are listed for October 12.



NATIONAL BOARD OF EXAMINATIONS
(Autonomous body of the Mo. Health & Family Welfare, Govt. of India)
NAMS Building, Medical Enclave, Ansari Nagar, New Delhi – 110029

FELLOWSHIP ENTRANCE TEST (FET) - 2020

NOTICE

National Board of Examinations (NBE) shall conduct the Fellowship Entrance Test on the 11th October 2020 for admission to Fellowship Courses of NBE. The courses shall also be offered to International Students under **FPIS (Fellowship Programme for International Students)** scheme for FNB seats ear-marked for FPIS.

Please refer to the Information Bulletin at NBE website <https://nbe.edu.in> for details pertaining to eligibility criteria, fee structure, scheme of examination etc.

Important Dates for FET 2020

Availability of Information Bulletin	1st September onwards

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7 injured in grenade attack in Baramulla

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

Seven civilians were injured as suspected militants launched two grenade attacks in two separate locations in north Kashmir's Baramulla district on Monday.

A police spokesperson said militants lobbed a grenade around 1.15 p.m. at an Army convoy near the Azad Gunj bridge area of Baramulla. "The grenade exploded on the road and resulted in injuries to seven civilians," the police said. All the injured were shifted to a hospital.

In a separate incident, suspected militants attacked a police post with a grenade in Baramulla's Sopore. An official said another grenade attack took place near a bus stand in Sopore town. "It seems the grenade was fired from a grenade launcher," officials said.

The outfit also said the agreement was based on shared sovereignty between India and the Naga domain.

Amit Shah discharged from AIIMS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah was on Monday discharged from the All India Institute of Medical Science (AIIMS), Delhi. The Minister was admitted there on August 18 for post-COVID care.

Earlier on Saturday, AIIMS said the Union Minister had recovered and was likely to be discharged soon.

"Amit Shah, Union Home Minister, is admitted at AIIMS, New Delhi for post-COVID care. He has recovered and is likely to be discharged in a short time," the AIIMS said in a statement.

On August 2, Mr. Shah, 55, announced on Twitter that he had tested positive for COVID-19 and was under medical care at Medanta Hospital. He was discharged after he tested negative.

Report soon

"Nearly 75% of the stocks had been inspected and we will get a report within a day or two. The inspection is being

undertaken across all depots and stocks have been withheld," he said, at a time when thousands are increasingly dependent on fair price shops for nutrition in view of the lockdown-induced joblessness.

When asked if the government had acted against officials responsible in Balaghat and Mandla districts, where 32 samples were found to be substandard, Mr. Kidwai said it would be decided after the report came in.

"It has been six-seven days since the stocks were withheld," said Tarun Kumar Pithode, the Department Director. "It is being inspected whether storing the paddy in the open caused the situation, the miller supplied sub-standard stocks, and so on."

Deputy Commissioner (Storage and Research Division), Union Ministry of Con-



Nagaland Governor R.N. Ravi. ■ FILE PHOTO

In a statement on August 30, the NNPGs said the FA had erased a "greater part of Naga history and struggle" by stating that the "Indo-Naga political conflict" had started around 1955-56.

Seeking to know whose political conflict the FA was about, the NNPGs said the six decades mentioned accounted for a fraction of the conflict and was tantamount to dismissing a "people's political journey" in

an "abject manner".

The conglomerate said that "after five years and much secrecy", the FA "reflects lack of Naga people's consultation and participation prior to signing".

Why Nagaland?

The NNPGs also wondered why the FA referred to 'Nagaland' instead of 'Nagaland', the greater sovereign Naga homeland envisaged by the NSCN (I-M).

Nagaland includes all Naga-inhabited areas around Nagaland, including in Myanmar.

If the FA was signed under Nagaland, no response would have been necessary due to the fact that the usage of Nagaland is confined to NSCN (I-M) members alone and their interpretation would have been irrelevant. To them, Nagaland denotes the present geographical area of the Indian State of Nagaland," the statement said.

"They discarded Nagaland and coined Nagaland in their political vocabulary to propagate a different narrative. However, suddenly on the eve of signing the FA in 2015, they found the beautiful, blissful God-given Nagaland more profound and document-worthy in place of the discomfiting Nagaland," it added.

The NNPGs also alleged that the NSCN (I-M) was seeking from the Centre the permission to make the Intangki Reserve Forest near Nagaland's commercial hub Dimapur as their resettlement and rehabilitation area as part of the solution to the Naga peace process.

"Any consideration of any part of the reserve forest as a bargaining chip for rehabilitation shall not be acceptable at any cost," the NNPGs said, adding that they were on the same page as all other Naga civil society groups on this issue.

Traffic from Kashmir to Leh halted

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

Civilian traffic from Kashmir valley towards the Union Territory (UT) of Ladakh's Leh was restricted on Monday, in the wake of fresh military confrontation between India and China in the region.

Several Leh-bound vehicles, including trucks carrying essentials, were stopped on Monday morning at Manigam and Sumbal areas in Ganberal district, both access routes to Sonamarg which connects the Kashmir valley with Ladakh, according to the drivers.

A Ganderbal district officer told *The Hindu* that the road was also closed due to the inclement weather. However, sources said Army convoys were allowed to head for Leh, which is fast emerging as a flashpoint between the two countries.

India, China must reach equilibrium'

Jaishankar was speaking to think tank



S. Jaishankar

closeness with the U.S., as well as the signing of more defence agreements, foundational agreements between the militaries and more engagement with the Quadrilateral (Quad) when Indian and U.S. Defence and Foreign Ministers meet for the "2+2" dialogue in October this year. Mr. Jaishankar said bilateral ties were not related to any "one country".

"We see [India-U.S. ties] not tailored to one situation or focused on one country. This is not a short-term issue. This is about India and the U.S. coming together, saying we think alike in so many ways and our interests are so similar in so many domains, and asking what can we do to secure the world and make it a better place," he told Mr. Roemer.

Mr. Jaishankar said India-U.S. defence ties could be increased if U.S. businesses choose to invest in Indian manufacturing where the government has announced an import ban on 101 items including weapons, platforms, and equipment.

Pointing to more flexible investment rules, he said the Indian defence market constituted a "great opportunity".

He also told USISPF members that India and the U.S. now enjoy a level of political trust that didn't exist "in the past".

Naga groups seek accord review

Framework Agreement inked with Centre ignores history, say NSCN(I-M) rivals

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The Working Committee of the Naga National Political Groups (NNPGs) has sought a review of the Framework Agreement (FA) the Centre had signed with the rival Isak-Muivah faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland, or NSCN (I-M), in August 2015.

The NNPGs comprise seven rival factions of the NSCN (I-M) and older armed groups.

Content tweaked'

The NSCN (I-M) had in the second week of August released the FA after accusing Nagaland Governor R.N. Ravi of tweaking its content to put the Naga political issue "under the purview of the Indian Constitution.

The outfit also said the agreement was based on shared sovereignty between India and the Naga domain.

Rice stocks withheld by M.P. due to 'substandard' samples

Grain suitable for livestock, cattle and poultry: Centre

SIDHARTH YADAV
BHOPAL

The Madhya Pradesh government is inspecting rice stocked across its depots after the Centre requested it to withhold them until further investigation and re-categorisation after it found samples from two districts "unfit for human consumption" and recommended action against those responsible.

The State Department of Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection was now inspecting stocks State-wide along with teams of Food Corporation of India, the department's Principal Secretary Faiz Ahmed Kidwai told *The Hindu*.

Report soon
"Nearly 75% of the stocks had been inspected and we will get a report within a day or two. The inspection is being

undertaken across all depots and stocks have been withheld," he said, at a time when thousands are increasingly dependent on fair price shops for nutrition in view of the lockdown-induced joblessness.

When asked if the government had acted against officials responsible in Balaghat and Mandla districts, where 32 samples were found to be substandard, Mr. Kidwai said it would be decided after the report came in.

"It has been six-seven days since the stocks were withheld," said Tarun Kumar Pithode, the Department Director.

"It is being inspected whether storing the paddy in the open caused the situation, the miller supplied sub-standard stocks, and so on."

Deputy Commissioner (Storage and Research Division), Union Ministry of Con-

Resume physical courts or face stir, says Bar Council of N-E States

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The Bar Council of Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh." It held a meeting with the Bar Council and other stakeholders on August 17.

"After suggestions from different stakeholders for resumption of physical courts at the earliest, the committee said it would communicate its decision by August 22. As instructed by this panel, the Bar Council had on August 21 submitted some modalities for reopening the courts," said Hafiz Rashid Ahmed Choudhury, chairman of the Bar Council of five Northeastern States.

"But without communicating its decision to the stakeholders, the committee unilaterally issued a notification on August 21 and extended the virtual court system till September 5," he told *The Hindu*.

The committee was formed "for taking decisions for opening the courts or imposing restrictions on court functioning of the Gauhati High Court as well as the

outlying Benches and subordinate courts of Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh." The Bar Council of Assam, Nagaland, Mizoram and Arunachal Pradesh." It held a meeting with the Bar Council and other stakeholders on August 17.

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Estimates not surprising as govt. did nothing to stop slide'

It should be a matter of shame to govt., says Chidambaram

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram on Monday said the provisional estimates for the first quarter of April to June didn't come as a surprise as the Narendra Modi government "did nothing" to stop the slide.

Most parts of the first quarter had seen a freeze in economic activity under the lockdown beginning March 25 because of the pandemic.

"The GDP reduces by 24%. The worst in independent India's history. Unfortunately, the govt. ignored the warnings," former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi said in a separate tweet and tagged his own video of March 17 in which he predicted "an economic tsunami and large-scale devastation".

"The estimates do not come as a surprise to us. They should be a matter of surprise to the government



P. Chidambaram

that was seeing 'green shoots' on several days during the first quarter. They should also be a matter of shame to the government that did nothing – literally nothing – to cushion the fall by taking suitable fiscal and welfare measures. But we know that the Modi government has no shame and will not acknowledge its mistakes," Mr. Chidambaram said at a virtual press conference.

He started the press conference by observing a minute's silence in the memory of former President Pranab

BJP attacking the informal sector: Rahul

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Narendra Modi government had launched a planned attack on India's informal economy, and the nationwide lockdown during the COVID-19 pandemic was an example, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi said on Monday in his latest video series.

The BJP's attack on the informal sector was a conspiracy to turn people engaged in this sector into slaves, Mr. Gandhi said. He said Prime Minister Modi wanted to take out the money in the informal sector and cited demonetisation and the flawed Goods and Services Tax (GST) as other examples of the assault on the informal sector.

"The economy is facing a recession. But *asatyagrahi* [believers of untruth] are blaming it on God," Mr. Gandhi said in a tweet, alluding to Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's "Act of God" reference during a GST council meeting.

ONGC Petro additions Limited

Reg. Office: 4th Floor, 35, Nutan Bharat Co-operative Housing Society Limited, R.C. Dutt Road, Alkapuri, Vadodara - 390007, Gujarat. Ph.: 0265 6192600 CIN No.: U23209GJ2006PLC060262

TENDER NOTICE

OPaL invites tender under open tender Two Bid System for: ■ Tender Number: 2004C00515; Description: Procurement of services for 14 MT /15 MT New Generation Hydra and 25 MT Mobile crane on stationed basis and 150MT Mobile Crane and 30 MT trailer on need basis for OPaL complex, Dahej; Sale Period: 01.09.2020, 09:00 Hrs to 22.09.2020, 14:00 Hrs; Closing date and time for Bid Submission: 22.09.2020, 14:00 Hrs; ■ Tender Number: 2016C00528; Description: 02 Years Rate Contract for the procurement of Gaskets at OPaL, Dahej; Sale Period: 01.09.2020, 09:00 Hrs to 13.10.2020, 14:00 Hrs; Closing date and time for Bid Submission: 13.10.2020, 14:00 Hrs; ■ E-Tender Number: 2016C00520; Description: Comprehensive Contract for Material Supply and Services for cooling tower internal replacement at OPaL Dahej site; Sale Period: 01.09.2020, 09:00 Hrs to 16.10.2020, 14:00 Hrs; Closing date and time for Bid Submission: 16.10.2020, 14:00 Hrs;

The tender document can be downloaded from OPaL website (www.opalindia.in). For other details of this tender including corrigendum, latest information, if any, Bidders should regularly visit OPaL website (www.opalindia.in). In case of exigencies OPaL at its option may decide to extend tender sale/ bid closing/ opening date/ time in future, which will be posted on the above referred website for information.

With reference to the below tender, please note the extension of dates in tender sale period, submission etc.

Tender Reference No: BARC/SMF/CFMF/EPC/2020/1

Name of work Expression of Interest Cum pre qualification for setting up of Polymerization, Utility, HVAC, ETP and other associated systems of Process Facility at SMF project site, Challakere, Chitradurga Dt, Karnataka

Tender Sale Period Tender sale period is extended up to 14-09-2020 (15:00 Hrs), on website www.tenderwizard.com/DAE.

For other changes in dates of pre bid clarifications, Last date and time of closing of online submission of tenders, Last date for submission of original documents towards Receipt of e-payment towards Tender Processing Fee and EMD, Date and time of online opening of EoI tender etc, please download the corrigendum documents in website www.tenderwizard.com/DAE under this tender.

Sd/- Chief Engineer

For & on behalf of President of India

Government of India

Department of Atomic Energy

BHABHA ATOMIC RESEARCH CENTRE, MYSORE

CORRIGENDUM - 1

With reference to the below tender, please note the extension of dates in tender sale period, submission etc.

Tender Reference No: BARC/SMF/CFMF/EPC/2020/1

Name of work Expression of Interest Cum pre qualification for setting up of Polymerization, Utility, HVAC, ETP and other associated systems of Process Facility at SMF project site, Challakere, Chitradurga Dt, Karnataka

Tender Sale Period Tender sale period is extended up to 14-09-2020 (15:00 Hrs), on website www.tenderwizard.com/DAE.

For other changes in dates of pre bid clarifications, Last date and time of closing of online submission of tenders, Last date for submission of original documents towards Receipt of e-payment towards Tender Processing Fee and EMD, Date and time of online opening of EoI tender etc, please download the corrigendum documents in website www.tenderwizard.com/DAE under this tender.

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REVIEW

With a host of upgrades, the iPad Pro offers great mileage for long live-at-work routines. But is it a PC replacement?

■ DIVYA KALA BHAVANI

For those who find buying a laptop too much of an investment and relying on a smartphone unacceptable, the happy medium between work-from-home or live-at-work routines, comes in the form of a tablet. In this case, the iPad Pro 2020 breaks into the global market at an apt time.

I had the 11-inch iPad Pro in Space Grey, an easily handled size and weight at 473 grams (for the WiFi + Cellular model). I love the matte finish on the back, offering that slate-like feel and tactile grip, which many earlier iPads missed out on.

The back, are three small magnetic connectors on the lower edge, where the iPad Pro locks against the Magic Keyboard. There is another magnet along one edge where the 2nd Generation Apple Pencil snaps into place and charges through the iPad Pro, rather than the plug-in charging the older Pencils have through the Lightning connector of the tablet.

The Liquid Retina display for the iPad Pro is vivid with none of the dizzying contrast I have seen much of this year in a lot of devices.

The overwhelming screen time is already a lot to handle, so the iPad Pro's 600-nit brightness with 1.8% reflectivity offers minimal strain for these long live-at-work hours. The adjusting refresh rate of up to 120Hz, thanks to the ProMotion technology, makes the system more smoother and more intuitively, depending on what you are doing.

Powered by A12Z Bionic
Right off the bat, I found myself relying on the iPad Pro for its PC-like experience. The device is able to handle high volumes of diverse work thanks to the improved battery and the new-to-device A12Z Bionic chip,



The 'i' of the tiger

SPECIFICATIONS (REVIEW UNIT)

DIMENSIONS & WEIGHT: 247.6 x 178.5 x 5.9 mm ; 473 g

DISPLAY: Liquid Retina display, 11-inch (diagonal) LED-backlit Multi-Touch display with IPS technology, 2388x1668-pixel resolution at 264 pixels per inch (ppi), ProMotion technology, Wide colour display (P3), True Tone display, Fingerprint-resistant oleophobic coating, Fully laminated display, Anti-reflective coating, 1.8% reflectivity, 600 nits brightness

SENSORS: Face ID, LiDAR Scanner, Three-axis gyro, Accelerometer, Barometer, Ambient light sensor

CHIP: A12Z Bionic chip with 64-bit architecture, Neural Engine, Embedded M12 coprocessor

POWER & BATTERY: Built-in 28.65-watt-hour rechargeable lithium-polymer battery, Up to 10 hours of surfing the web on Wi-Fi or watching video, Charging via power adapter or USB-C to computer system

the third in the A12 series of chips.

There is an eight-core graphics processing unit in the A12Z Bionic, with an enhanced thermal architecture and tuned performance controllers, which collectively uphold the system quite well for long hours.

It is important to note that the A12Z is not merely a processor but a system on its own, so much of iPad Pro's USP leans on the powerhouse of the A12Z Bionic. That said, I got a solid 12 hours of strong battery life before it hit Low Power Mode; during this time I was averaging at four hours of video-editing, five hours of productivity and two hours of social media, and there was still plenty of battery life to spare. The Neural Engine in the chip enables redistribution of power, through Machine Learning, to whatever predominant activity is happening on the device.

Charging the iPad from Low Battery Mode to 100% takes about an hour via USB-C; I was able to use this port to share heavy files directly through a

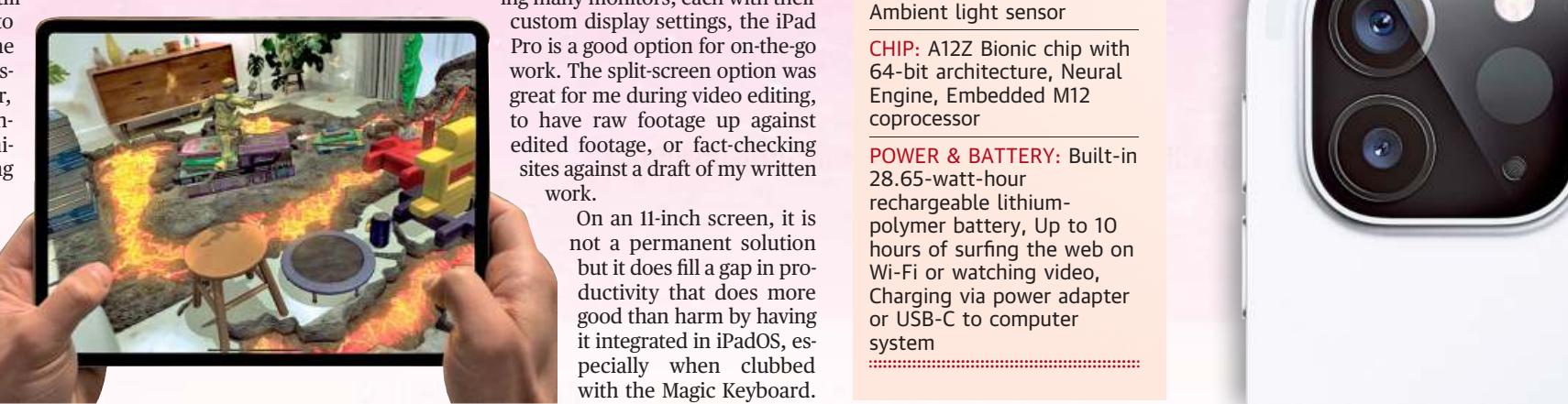
drive rather than manoeuvring AirDrop or switching across cloud-based storage sites between devices.

A lot of the heavy campaigning for the iPad Pro was geared towards vi-

deo editors, graphic designers and photographers – people who are used to multiple screens or split screens ways of working.

Though it is not the same as having many monitors, each with their custom display settings, the iPad Pro is a good option for on-the-go work. The split-screen option was great for me during video editing, to have raw footage up against edited footage, or fact-checking sites against a draft of my written work.

On an 11-inch screen, it is not a permanent solution but it does fill a gap in productivity that does more good than harm by having it integrated in iPadOS, especially when clubbed with the Magic Keyboard.



Tabular experience The iPad Pro comes with an improved display powered by the latest in their A12 series of chips ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

If you are more of a visual worker, opt for the 12.9-inch version for more room to play around in.

The camera itself has an iPhone 11 feel – the wide 12 megapixel rear camera with f/1.8 aperture, and the ultra-wide; 10 megapixel rear camera with a 125 degree field of view. The iPad Pro comes with a LiDAR scanner too, and this is not limited to developers or computer engineers. I had long been playing Hot Lava on Apple Arcade but on an iPhone. However, on the iPad Pro, the game will soon come with an Augmented Reality mode to enhance the danger factor of the game by bringing it to your surrounding space. When this comes out, I will surely be immersing myself.

This year marks 10 years since the first iPad, and the 2020 iPad Pro is a great upgrade and standalone piece of technology for the Apple ecosystem. Yes, the iPad Pro is expensive but I feel this is due to the technically savvy, who will make the most of the more niche specs such as the ARKit, the LiDAR scanner and others. If you are keen on an iPad, look to the older models which are easier on the bank account and on the user experience.

The 11-inch iPad Pro starts at ₹7,990 for the Wi-Fi model and ₹8,990 for the Wi-Fi + Cellular model. The 12.9-inch iPad Pro starts at ₹8,990 for the Wi-Fi model and ₹10,990 for the Wi-Fi + Cellular model.

For the VR geeks

Facebook's Horizon is open to beta testers who want a crack at 'social VR'



At QG6 in 2019, Facebook offered a look at Horizon, a social experience where you can explore, play and create with others in Virtual Reality. Horizon makes it easy to meet up with your friends and make new ones. Once you are there, you can join a Party to chat together as you navigate the platform. Now Horizon has opened a beta waitlist for beta testers.

"Our mission is to create meaningful connections between people and foster a strong sense of community for everyone who joins Horizon. That's why we're excited to hear your feedback and work with early adopters to evolve Horizon as we begin to grow its community," says Facebook in a blog post. "Horizon is as much about meaningful connections as it is about creating VR worlds and expressing yourself. Eventually, we envision large spaces where many people can gather in Horizon, but for now, up to eight people can share a space."

Facebook's aim to push the boundaries of 'social Virtual Reality' marks the importance that people feel in control of their Horizon experience. The company says, everyone in Horizon must follow the Oculus Code of Conduct, and Facebook is introducing several new features that make it easier to submit reports and address issues.

These beta testers who got in on the VR fun can access a personal Safe Zone through a wrist menu at any time in Horizon; this is based on company research concluding that when people experience something overwhelming or surprising in VR, they want the option to step away first, and then take action second. Once the user is in their personal Safe Zone, they can mute, block or report people and content around them.

"Make what inspires you," says Horizon creator Sunny Ammerman. "Don't feel like you need to meet some popularity benchmark, or cater to what you think other people want. Make something that you want, and your originality and uniqueness will shine through and inspire others. Above all, have fun!"



A hardened act to follow

have four different play styles to experiment with. From a quick and agile rogue like character, to a tank that is able to absorb damage, to a well-balanced warrior. You can take over each of these body types to find the play style you like, or if you get bored of one you can switch it around. Each of these Shells come with their own equipment upgrades and abilities and it adds a versatility to the game which most Souls games lack. There are distinct movesets for each shell right down to the way they evade, especially the rogue, who disappears into a puff of smoke.

MORTAL SHELL
DEVELOPER: Cold Symmetry
PUBLISHER: Playstack
PRICE: ₹1,999 on PlayStation 4, ₹1,400 (\$19) on Epic Store

Rather than choosing a vocation or class outright, you

lanced warrior. You can take over each of these body types to find the play style you like, or if you get bored of one you can switch it around. Each of these Shells come with their own equipment upgrades and abilities and it adds a versatility to the game which most Souls games lack. There are distinct movesets for each shell right down to the way they evade, especially the rogue, who disappears into a puff of smoke.

Demons and armour
Screenshots from the video game ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



Customer-centric and community-driven

Wide product offerings spanning Endowment, Money Back, Term Assurance, Children, Pension, Micro Insurance, Health Insurance and Unit Linked type plans*



the digital experience of customers and provide convenient services at the click of a button. More than 1.4 crore users are registered on LIC's Customer Portal, which covers nearly 3 crore policies.

Visitors to LIC's corporate website are greeted by a chatbot named LIC Mitra, which has the capacity to answer a wide range of questions on available plans, premium payment, and other service related queries. LIC Mitra services over 18,000 queries from about 5000 users every day.

Mobile app: LIC's customer mobile App, available on both Android and iOS platforms, has more than 34 lakh users. The 'My LIC App' provides information on products and services and has options for viewing premium payment and premium comparison.

Digital services: In keeping with the needs of contemporary users, LIC has a range of options for electronic premium payment through digital platforms such as PayTM (directly), PhonePe and GooglePay (through Billdesk), without any service charge.

Traction through the online/digital medium

LIC's digital and online initiatives have seen good traction from customers.

During the first quarter of the current financial year, LIC's online transactions grew by over 50 per cent. About 70 per cent of premium transactions are outside the branch cash counter.

For the financial year 2019-20, digital transactions for LIC policies initiated by customers clocked a growth of 36 per cent. Digital collections for the year rose 31.5 per cent, while total collection grew 21.6 per cent.

Corporate social responsibility

The LIC Golden Jubilee Foundation (GJF) Trust was established in the year 2006 to provide relief from poverty and distress, advancement of education, and medical relief. The foundation has supported several projects including construction of hospitals, school buildings, old-age homes, and empowerment of women for livelihood generation.

Some initiatives of GJF

₹1.54 crore for construction of 169 toilets in 113 schools across the country under 'Swachh Vidyalaya Abhiyan'.

Adopted the poorest village of Govindpur in Sonbhadra District of Uttar Pradesh for health and literacy campaign.

Web portal: The Customer Portal system of LIC has been designed to enhance

Since its formation in 1956, Life Insurance Corporation of India has played a "stellar role" in the development of the country. Its main role is to provide financial security, through life insurance, to citizens of India.

It has primary obligation to its policyholders, whose money it holds in trust, to deploy its funds to the best advantage of its policyholders. The Corporation has touched every Indian's life through partnering with the Government by providing funds for building infrastructure.

LIC is committed to provide best possible services to its esteemed policyholders; physically as well as through latest Information Technology tools. It is at the forefront of managing various Social Security Schemes.

As one of the largest employment providers in the country, it has about 1,10,000 employees and about 12,00,000 agents.

On this solemn occasion of its 64th anniversary, LIC of India re-dedicates itself to the service of its esteemed policyholders and nation at large.

RAJ KUMAR
Managing Director

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Staying fit and strong during the pandemic



LIC has continued its impressive business performance even during the current turbulent period. When the pandemic hit the country, LIC left no stone unturned to ensure that people stayed covered through insurance. It worked overtime to help people make payments and review their policies, so that the purpose of life insurance was preserved. In the last few months, LIC has given a major thrust to its digital initiatives.

LIC announced a host of measures to minimise the adverse effects on policyholders and address their hardships during the tough times. These include digital payment options without service charge, with tie-ups with Amazon and Google Pay, payment through mobile app LIC Pay Direct, and payments at DIBL and Axis Bank branches and in cash through 'common service centres' at the branch office.

LIC assured policyholders that death claims due to COVID-19 would be treated at par with other causes of death and payments would be settled on an urgent basis. It announced that policies that could be revised without any evidence of good health could be done within a few clicks.

Allaying fears of contact and its impact, LIC created an Online Payment Gateway, an on-demand premium collection service through which customers can make real-time payment of renewal premium via net banking within a few clicks.

In a proactive measure, LIC obtained the list of people who died due to Covid-19 from government sources. This was then compared with its database of

policyholders to identify if the people who had died due to Covid-19 were LIC policyholders. In case of a match, LIC reached out to the respective families to verify the information. Once verified, it began processing and settling claims immediately. With respect to Covid-19, LIC has settled Covid-19 death claims under 776 policies, amounting to ₹24.43 crore.

During the lockdown, the branches of LIC continued to operate with skeletal staff. Digital and online payment channels were also functional 24x7; therefore, there was no unfavourable impact on renewal premium payment.

During the crisis, LIC banked heavily on its enviable legacy of corporate tie-ups and extensive distribution network to consolidate its leadership position in the industry. Its market share in new business premium rose to 74 per cent in June from 69 per cent in March 2020, right in the thick of the Covid-19 health crisis.

Despite the nationwide lockdown during April and May, LIC had a net addition of 13,740 agents to its already strong force. At the end of July, LIC had a net addition of 58,216 agents.

U.S.-Israeli delegation lands in Abu Dhabi on historic visit

This marks the beginning of commercial flights between Israel and the UAE

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ABU DHABI

A U.S.-Israeli delegation, led by White House adviser Jared Kushner, arrived on Monday in Abu Dhabi on the historic first commercial flight from Tel Aviv to mark the normalisation of ties between the Jewish state and the UAE.

The word "peace" was written in Arabic, English and Hebrew on the cockpit of the El Al flight that landed at the VIP terminal in the Emirates capital where U.S. flags flew alongside the Star of David banner.

"While this is a historic flight, we hope that it will start an even more historic journey in the Middle East and beyond," Mr. Kushner, who is President Donald Trump's son-in-law and a key architect of his West Asia policy, said before boarding.

"The future does not have to be predetermined by the past. This is a very hopeful time."

Riyadh's permission

Saudi Arabia allowed the "historic" flight to cross its airspace, Mr. Kushner said at Abu Dhabi shortly after the flight landed. "This is the first time this has ever happened. I would like to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for making that possible."

The landmark direct flight by Israel's national carrier, numbered LY971 in a nod to the UAE's international dialling code, is due to return on Tuesday with the number 972, matching Israel's dialling code.

The agreement to normalise ties was announced by Mr. Trump on August 13, marking the UAE the first Gulf



A new normal: Senior U.S. presidential adviser Jared Kushner, right, with U.S. National Security Adviser Robert O'Brien before their departure to Abu Dhabi on Monday. ■ REUTERS

country and only the third Arab nation to establish relations with Israel.

Unlike Egypt, which made peace with its former battlefield enemy in 1979, and Jordan, which followed in 1994, the UAE has never fought a war with Israel.

The fact the flight also passed through Saudi airspace was a sign of Riyadh's cooperation with Israel after the kingdom refused publicly to normalise relations.

However, it skirted the Gulf states of Qatar and Bahrain who have declined so far to follow the UAE's move, which has been met with criticism in some parts of the Arab world.

Advancing relations

Israeli National Security Advisor Meir Ben-Shabbat, who was also on the flight to the UAE, said "our goal is to achieve a joint working plan to advance relations in a very broad range of areas."

'Russia should contribute more in Navalny probe'

Germany seeks action from Moscow

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

Germany on Monday urged Moscow to step up its efforts to investigate the apparent poisoning of Opposition leader Alexei Navalny who is currently being treated at a Berlin hospital in a coma.

Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said in a special address to French Ambassadors in Paris that Europe needed "constructive" relations with Russia for the sake of the continent's own security but it was clear now that "dark clouds" were hanging over bilateral ties.

"Of course, we have the expectation that Russia should contribute more to clearing up of the Navalny

case than it is doing at the moment," he said alongside French counterpart Jean-Yves Le Drian.

Berlin's renowned Charite hospital said on Friday there was "some improvement" in Mr. Navalny's condition but he remains in a medically induced coma and on a ventilator.

Mr. Navalny fell ill after boarding a plane in Siberia earlier this month. He was initially treated in a local hospital before being flown to Berlin for treatment.

Charite doctors said they believed he was poisoned with a substance that inhibits the cholinesterase enzyme, a feature of nerve agents.

ELSEWHERE



Piketty casts doubt on release of book in China

PARIS

French economist Thomas Piketty said on Monday his latest book would probably not be released in China after the publisher demanded too many cuts. His *Capital and Ideology* surveys the rapid rise of inequality around the world and includes attacks on the "plutocracy" of the Chinese regime, which he says has overtaken Western countries. AFP

Canada announces deal for vaccine with U.S. firm

OTTAWA

The Canadian government announced on Monday a deal with American biotech firm Novavax for 76 million doses of its COVID-19 vaccine in development. Procurement Minister Anita Anand said the deal "will give Canadians access to a promising COVID-19 vaccine candidate." AFP

Rwanda arrests famous hotelier on terror charges

Rusesabagina was a critic of President

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
KIGALI

Rwandan investigators announced on Monday that they had arrested Paul Rusesabagina, whose heroic actions during the 1994 genocide were depicted in the Oscar-nominated movie *Hotel Rwanda*, accusing the high-profile government critic of terrorism.

The Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB) said Mr. Rusesabagina, who lives in Belgium, had been detained "through international cooperation" and was being held at a police station in the capital on serious charges.

"With the cooperation of the international community, Paul Rusesabagina was arrested and he is now in the hands of RIB," RIB acting spokesman Thierry Murangira told reporters in Kigali.

Mr. Murangira refused to detail how the arrest occurred or the extent of involvement of international



Paul Rusesabagina at the White House in 2005. ■ AP

authorities in detaining the outspoken critic of long-ruling President Paul Kagame, claiming doing so "could jeopardise investigations".

Mr. Murangira said Mr. Rusesabagina, who has agitated for political change in Rwanda from abroad, was the subject of an international arrest warrant and "suspected of financing and creating terror groups" operating in East Africa and overseas.

The startling episode drew an apology from the Mayor, led to the suspension

of festivities and added a frisson of horror to an event that usually draws tens of thousands of visitors for what's supposed to be a fun time at the two-day festival.

The child hovered above throngs of spectators and was zipped around by strong winds for a heart-stopping 30 seconds amid inflatable pandas and astronauts as screams erupted from spectators.

The girl, who was identified by news outlets only by her last name Lin, landed mostly unscathed at the Hsinchu International Kite Festival.

She suffered abrasions around her neck and face, the mayor of Hsinchu, Lin Chih-chien, wrote in a Facebook post on Sunday. She was admitted to a hospital for medical examination, he said.

The starting episode

followed a fatal shooting amidst weekend clashes

REUTERS

Portland Police late on Sunday declared a demonstration in the northeastern part of the city as an "unlawful gathering" and ordered crowds to disperse from an area near a building housing offices including the police, or risk facing arrest.

"To those near the Kelly Building, this has been declared an unlawful assembly due to criminal activity," Portland police wrote on Twitter. "Failure to adhere to this order may subject you to arrest, citation, and/or the use of crowd control agents including, but not limited to, tear gas and/or impact weapons".

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, speaking alongside Mr. Kushner in Jerusalem on Sunday, praised "the swift pace of normalisation" between his country and the UAE.

The talks in Abu Dhabi aim to boost cooperation between the two regional economic powerhouses in areas including aviation, tourism, trade, health, energy and security.

An Israeli government statement said there would be "working meetings of joint teams on a range of issues ahead of the signing of cooperation agreements in the civil and economic spheres".

The visit will also include a meeting between Mr. Kushner, Mr. Ben-Shabbat and UAE National Security Advisor Sheikh Tahnoon bin Zayed, it said.

Israel's Health Ministry had late on Sunday updated its list of "green countries" with low COVID-19 infection



Rallying for justice: A protest against racism and police brutality in Washington on Saturday. ■ AFP

on Sunday night that Oregon State Police would send personnel and resources to Portland to help keep the situation in the city under control. "We all must come together – elected officials, community leaders, all of us to stop the cycle of violence," Governor Brown said in a statement which laid out plans to end the nightly protests.

Governor Kate Brown said the overnight demonstration followed a fatal shooting amid weekend street clashes between supporters of President Donald Trump and counter-demonstrators in downtown Portland.

Demonstrations against

racism and police brutality have swept the U.S. since the death in May of George Floyd. The Trump administration deployed federal forces to Portland to crack down on the protests.

On Sunday, Mr. Trump denounced Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler, a Democrat, as "weak". The President has often said that cities run by Democrats have descended into chaos.

Trump has fomented violence: Biden

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MOSCOW

Democratic White House hopeful Joe Biden on Monday castigated President Donald Trump as a "weak" and morally deficient leader who has sown chaos and fomented the violence that has recently gripped U.S. cities. "This President long ago forfeited any moral leadership in this country. He can't stop the violence – because for years he has fomented it," the Democratic presidential nominee will say in a speech, according to excerpts released by his campaign.

"He may believe mouthing the words 'law and order' makes him strong, but his failure to call on his own supporters to stop acting as an armed militia in this country shows you how weak he is," Mr. Biden will say. Two U.S. cities in particular – Kenosha, Wisconsin and Portland, Oregon – have been battered by fierce protests.

On Sunday, Mr. Trump denounced Portland Mayor Ted Wheeler, a Democrat, as "weak". The President has often said that cities run by Democrats have descended into chaos.

China detains Australian journalist

Move comes amidst deteriorating relations between the two countries

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
SYDNEY

China has detained an Australian news anchor working for its state-run English-language television network CGTN, Australia's Foreign Minister said on Monday.

The detention of journalist Cheng Lei is a new blow to deteriorating relations between the two countries that have seen China warn its citizens of travelling to Australia and vice-versa.

Foreign Minister Marise Payne said Australia was informed on August 14 that Ms.

Cheng was being held by Beijing authorities.

Australian consular officials spoke to Ms. Cheng in her detention facility via video link on August 27 and were in touch with her family, Ms. Payne said in a statement. She provided no further details, but public broadcaster ABC said Ms. Cheng's friends became concerned after she stopped responding to messages in recent weeks.

The ABC said Ms. Cheng was being held under "residential surveillance at a de-

signated location", a form of detention that allows investigators to hold and question a suspect for up to six months without them being formally arrested. The broadcaster published a statement by Ms. Cheng's family in Melbourne expressing confidence that "in China, due process will be observed and we look forward to a satisfactory and timely conclusion to the matter."

Ties began to sour between Australia and China – its biggest trading partner – more than two years ago when Australian authorities began to move against what was seen as China's growing political interference and influence peddling in the country.

Beijing was particularly infuriated by Australia's leading role in international calls earlier this year for an investigation into the origins of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ms. Cheng is the second high-profile Australian citizen to be detained in Beijing after writer Yang Hengjun was arrested in January 2019 on suspicion of espionage.

Baltic states sanction Lukashenko, 29 others

Action follows allegations of rigging

REUTERS
VILNIUS

Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia imposed travel bans on President Alexander Lukashenko and 29 other Belarusian officials on Monday, jumping into action to impose sanctions before the rest of the EU.

The three Baltic states have led calls for the West to take firmer action against Mr. Lukashenko, who is accused by opponents and the West of rigging an election to prolong his 26-year rule.

Under Lebanon's political system, the Premier must be a Sunni, the presidency is reserved for a Maronite Christian and the post of parliamentary Speaker goes to a Shia person.

Mr. Lukashenko's inclusion in the lists sends a message to other European countries which have been reluctant to back measures against him personally. Mr. Lukashenko, an ally of Moscow, denies electoral fraud.

Tens of thousands of protesters again took to the streets in central Minsk on Sunday, seeking to keep up pressure on Mr. Lukashenko to resign. At least 140 people were detained, Russia's RIA news agency reported, citing the Belarusian Interior Ministry.

Mr. Lukashenko threatened on Friday to cut off European transit routes across his country in retaliation against any sanctions.

Lebanese leaders choose ex-envoy as PM

Mustapha Adib vows to resume talks with IMF for financial assistance, amid crisis

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BEIRUT



Big responsibility: Lebanese Prime Minister-designate Mustapha Adib speaking in Baabda on Monday. ■ AP

was traumatised by Beirut's deadly August 4 explosion.

"I want your trust," an AFP correspondent heard him tell a resident of Beirut's badly-hit Gemmayzeh neighbourhood during a tour of the area devastated by the

blast that rocked the city and further shook confidence in the political class.

Mr. Macron, who had toured the area two days after the disaster, was due to return on Tuesday and was expected to renew his calls for a radical overhaul of the country's complex, sectarian political system.

Mr. Macron had demanded "deep change" and warned then he would check on progress when he returned for the September 1 centenary of Greater Lebanon, expected to be a glum commemoration.

President Michel Aoun and his political ally, Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah, both expressed willingness in speeches on Sunday to change the way Lebanon is governed.

Under Lebanon's political system, the Premier must be a Sunni, the presidency is reserved for a Maronite Christian and the post of parliamentary Speaker goes to a Shia person.

Under Lebanon's political system, the Premier must be a Sunni, the presidency is reserved for a Maronite Christian and the post of parliamentary Speaker goes to a Shia person.

The girl was swept high after a streamer got wrapped around her neck during a kite-flying festival

of festivites and added a frisson of horror to an event that usually draws tens of thousands of visitors for what's supposed to be a fun time at the two-day festival.

The city government expresses its deepest apologies to the public and to the individuals involved, and we will review the reasons to avoid this type of accident from ever happening again, conducting a thorough review and holding people to account," he wrote.

The girl, who was identified by news outlets only by her last name Lin, landed mostly unscathed at the Hsinchu International Kite Festival.

She suffered abrasions around her neck and face, the mayor of Hsinchu, Lin Chih-chien, wrote in a Facebook post on Sunday. She was admitted to a hospital for medical examination, he said.

The starting episode



Lucky escape: Powerful winds swept the Taiwanese girl into the air after she got entangled in the kite's tail. ■ NYT

last weekend before kindergartens and other schools reopened for a new year. On Saturday, the Asia Kite Foundation, a Taiwan-based group that helped promote the kite-flying event, had urged families to take care on Sunday, when gales were forecast for the afternoon.

Sure enough, the winds were strong.

At 4 p.m., children gathered around for the unfurling of a "candy kite," officially named "Joy Falls From Heaven." A compartment at

tached to the long, voluminous orange fabric was filled with candy, and once it was sent into the air like a flying piñata, confection was supposed to rain down. Footage showed several men struggling to control the long streamer as gusts of wind whipped it around.

Somehow, as a powerful draft lifted the ballooning kite from the grass, its tail lassoed the three-year-old by the neck and hoisted her upward. The pumpkin-orange kite suddenly became a

parachute. Dangling from the kite, the girl was whizzed across a sky full

MARKET WATCH

	PRICE	CHANGE
Sensex	38,628	-2.13
US Dollar	73.60	-0.29
Gold	52,638	0.93
Brent oil	45.91	2.32

NIFTY 50

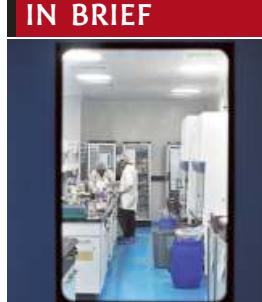
	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	355.75	-4.30
Asian Paints	1899.10	-59.00
Axist Bank	496.75	-12.45
Bajaj Auto	2967.00	-47.15
Bajaj Finserv	6190.35	-355.20
Bajaj Finance	3487.80	-183.00
Bharti Airtel	513.10	-10.35
BPCL	407.80	-7.25
Britannia Ind	3726.05	-67.80
Cipla	713.55	-35.05
Coal India	134.35	-4.70
Dr Reddys Lab	4264.20	-109.60
Eicher Motors	2092.00	-121.60
GAIL (India)	95.65	-3.45
Grasim Ind	674.85	-26.30
HCL Tech	694.40	-12.05
HDPC	1832.60	-50.65
HFDC Bank	1115.85	1.35
HDPC Life	574.80	-14.55
Hero MotoCorp	3006.05	-53.25
Hindustan	185.25	-8.55
Hind Unilever	2117.35	-34.60
ICICI Bank	394.60	-15.10
IndusInd Bank	630.20	-35.45
Bharti Infratel	198.55	-2.95
Infosys	928.60	-6.65
Indian Oil Corp	85.80	-2.00
ITC	191.10	-4.45
JSW Steel	269.80	-10.90
Kotak Bank	1401.35	-65.75
L&T	944.95	-36.90
M&M	606.90	-24.50
Maruti Suzuki	6839.95	-264.15
Nestle India Ltd.	15949.55	-151.70
NTPC	96.40	-5.15
ONGC	81.95	1.60
PowerGrid Corp	178.95	-3.35
Reliance Ind	2080.70	-35.45
State Bank	212.00	-12.85
Shree Cement	20283.00	-1046.55
Sun Pharma	520.25	-35.50
Tata Motors	143.20	0.40
Tata Steel	413.00	-11.20
TCS	2257.25	-18.70
Tech Mahindra	741.00	-11.35
Titan	1100.50	-33.60
UltraTech Cement	3903.85	-158.70
UPL	505.95	-13.30
Wipro	271.30	-0.75
Zee Entertainment	203.55	-0.30

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	73.41	73.73
Euro	87.50	87.88
British Pound	97.79	98.25
Japanese Yen (100)	69.29	69.63
Chinese Yuan	10.72	10.77
Swiss Franc	81.13	81.49
Singapore Dollar	53.97	54.21
Canadian Dollar	56.17	56.42
Malaysian Ringgit	17.63	17.71
Australian Dollar	54.00	54.27

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



Biocon arm, Mylan to sell insulin shot in U.S.

BENGALURU

Biocon arm Biocon Biologics India and Mylan introduced Semglee (insulin glargine injection) in vial and pre-filled pens to help control high blood sugar in adult and pediatric patients with type 1 and 2 diabetes, in the U.S. They will offer Semglee at a wholesale price of \$147.98 per package of five 3ml pens and \$98.65 per 10ml vial after a list-price discount of 65%, as per a statement.

NTPC to seek nod to raise up to ₹15,000 cr.

NTPC will seek shareholders' nod to raise up to ₹15,000 crore through issuance of bonds in the annual general meeting (AGM) scheduled for next month. The funds are proposed to be raised on a private placement basis in one or more tranches, not exceeding 30, as per the notice for the AGM. The funds would be raised for capital expenditure, working capital and general corporate purposes. PTI

Integrated Core buys ₹1,953-cr. Bharti shares

NEW DELHI

Integrated Core Strategies (Asia) Pvt Ltd. on Monday bought shares of Bharti Airtel Ltd. worth about ₹1,953 crore through open market transaction.

According to NSE data, the acquirer bought over 3.8 crore shares, representing about 0.69% shareholding of Bharti Airtel, at ₹513.79 apiece. Shares of Bharti Airtel on Monday fell 2.1% to ₹512.45 on the NSE. PTI

Cyient to acquire IG Partners for A\$11.6 mn

HYDERABAD

Cyient is acquiring Australian consultancy IG Partners in a A\$11.6-million deal to strengthen digital capabilities in the energy and mining industry. Under the deal, all key management personnel will stay with the business under Cyient's ownership. The acquisition of 100% equity will be for an upfront payment of A\$11.6 million on a cash-free and debt-free basis.

CYK

RBI moves to ease liquidity further

Says it aims to foster orderly market; to conduct repo operations for ₹1 lakh cr. to help banks cut costs

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday announced more measures to ease liquidity pressures amid rising yields on government securities and concerns of higher government borrowing and said that it would conduct additional, special open market operations (OMOs) as part of its efforts to ensure orderly market conditions and congenial financial conditions.

The OMOs via auctions involving the simultaneous purchase and sale of government securities for an aggregate amount of ₹20,000 crore in two tranches of ₹10,000 crore each, would be conducted on September 10 and September 17. "The RBI remains committed to conduct further such opera-



The RBI said market sentiment had recently been impacted by concerns relating to the inflation outlook. •PTI

tions as warranted by market conditions," the central bank said.

The central bank's announcement came on a day when the government announced the biggest quarterly contraction in economic

output and other data showed the Centre's fiscal deficit had exceeded 100% of its full-year budget target in the first four months of the current fiscal.

"The RBI remains committed to use all instruments

at its command to revive the economy by maintaining congenial financial conditions, mitigate the impact of COVID-19 and restore the economy to a path of sustainable growth while preserving macroeconomic and financial stability," it said.

As part of the measures, the RBI also allowed banks to hold fresh acquisitions of statutory liquidity ratio securities acquired from September 1 under Held-To-Maturity up to an overall limit of 22% of net demand and time liabilities up to March 31, 2021, which shall be reviewed thereafter, it said.

RBI said it will conduct term repo operations for an aggregate amount of ₹1 lakh crore at floating rates (i.e., at the prevailing repo rate) in the middle of September to assuage pressures on the

market on account of advance tax outflows. Thus, the banks may reduce their interest liability by returning funds taken at the repo rate prevailing at that time (5.15%) and availing funds at the current repo rate of 4%."

Observing that market sentiment had recently been impacted by concerns relating to the inflation outlook, the RBI said, "there are indications that food and fuel prices are stabilising and cost push factors are moderating". It said the recent appreciation of the rupee was also working towards containing imported inflationary pressures.

The RBI assured that the borrowing programme of the Centre and States for the year 2020-21 would be completed in a non-disruptive manner.

Fiscal deficit overshoots FY budget target

REUTERS

NEW DELHI

India's fiscal deficit in the four months to end July stood at ₹8.21 trillion (\$11.7 billion), or 103.1% of the budgeted target for FY21, government data showed.

Net tax receipts were ₹2.03 trillion, while total expenditure was ₹10.5 trillion, the data showed, indicating the government had stepped up its spending to combat the impact of the COVID-19.

The deficit is predicted to cross 7.5% of GDP in FY21, private economists said, from initial government estimates of 3.5%, mainly due to a sharp economic contraction triggered by the pandemic of MIAL.

"It is therefore important, that we bring in a financially strong investor in the shortest possible time to improve the financial position of MIAL," he said.

Adani all set to fly into Mumbai airport

To acquire GVK's debt; move will enable Adani Group to get 74% stake in MIAL

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD/MUMBAI

Adani Group on Monday said it had decided to acquire debt of GVK Airport Developers (GVKADL), the firm through which GVK Group holds 50.5% stake in Mumbai International Airport Ltd. (MIAL).

The move will pave the way for Adani to get a controlling, 74% stake in MIAL.

Adani Group said the holding firm for its airports business – Adani Airport Holdings (AAHL) – would acquire the debt of GVKADL from its airport lenders. The financials of the deal, neither the debt nor the terms of conversion into equity, however, were not disclosed.

Adani said in a statement that GVK Group and AAHL



had agreed that AAHL would offer a standstill to GVK, in addition to release of the guarantee given by GVK Power & Infrastructure with regard to the debt acquired by it.

The Adani Group will also take steps to complete the acquisition of a 23.5% equity stake from ACSA and Bidvest

in MIAL, for which CCI approval had been obtained. On acquisition of GVKADL's debt, Adani Group said it would take steps to obtain customary and regulatory approvals to acquire controlling interest in MIAL. AAHL intends to also infuse funds into MIAL to ensure that the latter received the "much needed liquidity" and achieved financial closure of Navi Mumbai International Airport to commence construction.

GVK founder and chairman GVK Reddy said the aviation industry had been severely impacted by COVID-19, setting it back by many years and also impacting the financials of MIAL.

Separately, GVK Group said it had signed an agreement to cooperate with Adani in relation to MIAL.

The terms of cooperation include acquisition of debt

will come out of this slump with reasonable growth in the near future," he said.

In the coming year, the automobile industry would see new trends, with the industry trying to recover from the COVID-19-induced recession. There could be a preference for personal mobility with entry-level vehicles standing to benefit. E-commerce would see more traction, which will drive sales of light commercial vehicles. Two-wheelers also could see traction since they are used for last-mile delivery, MRF officials said.

The road to recovery will not be smooth, given the impact on disposable incomes, consumer behaviour and credit, they said. The bright spot would be the rural and semi-urban areas.

"Based on its assessment, if the CRA is of the view that the restructuring by the lenders/investors is solely due to COVID-19-related stress or under the ... RBI framework, CRAs may not consider the same as a default and/or recognise default," SEBI said.

Only one out of four companies that availed of loan moratorium was rated in the sub-investment grade, Crisil Ratings said.

"Most of them were grappling with a slowing economy before the pandemic began. The severely curtailed business activity that followed in the first quarter of this fiscal had cramped cash flows, so the moratorium came as a big relief," it said.

One out of four companies that availed of the moratorium is rated in the investment grade (rated CRISIL BBB- or higher). They took recourse to the moratorium to build a liquidity cushion for exigencies in the near term, the ratings agency added.

Stocks slump amid fresh China border tensions; banks drag

Nifty falls 2.2%, bank index drops 3.1%

REUTERS

BENGALURU

Indian shares closed lower on Monday, snapping a streak of six straight sessions of gains, as a fresh border flare-up between India and China outweighed initial optimism from further reopening of the economy.

The NSE Nifty 50 index closed down 2.23% at 11,387.50, while the S&P BSE Sensex ended 2.13% lower at 38,628.29.

India said it foiled an attempt by Chinese troops to encroach over the countries' disputed and ill-defined border in the western Himalayas, in a fresh flare-up of tensions that have been running high for several months.

The news undid initial optimism over the government's further relaxation of COVID-19 restrictions, which include reopening of underground train networks and allowing sports and religious events in a limited manner from September.

"The market was trading in an over-bought zone, so a sell-off was expected, and the news of fresh tensions at (the India-China) border has impacted sentiment," said Rahul Sharma, market strategist and head of research at Equity99 in Mumbai.

The Indian rupee also retreated from near six-month highs on the border tensions. In Mumbai, all major sectoral indexes ended in the red, with the Nifty bank index closing 3.14% lower, after a 13.3% rally in August. Lender State Bank of India was among the top per-

TV PICKS

US Open: SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 8.30 p.m.; SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 9.30 p.m.
England vs Pakistan: T20I, Sony Ten 3 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 10.30 p.m.
Tour de France: Eurosport (SD & HD), 5 p.m.

IN BRIEF



Celtics goes 1-0 up in Conference semifinals

ORLANDO Jayson Tatum and Marcus Smart scored 21 points apiece to lift Boston Celtics to a 112-94 win over Toronto Raptors in the opener of their Eastern Conference semifinal series on Sunday.
The results: Second round: Celtics 112 (Tatum 21, Smart 21) bt Raptors 94. **Boston 1-0;** **First round:** Clippers 111 (Leonard 33) bt Mavericks 97 (Doncic 38). **Clippers win 4-2;** Nuggets 119 (Murray 50, Jokic 22) bt Jazz 107 (Mitchell 44, Conley Jr. 21). **Series tied 3-3.**



Flame to be on display in Japan Olympic Museum

TOKYO The Olympic flame is going on display here, just a short walk from the new National Stadium where it was supposed to be burning a month ago. The flame arrived in Japan from Greece in March and has been largely hidden away here since the Olympics were postponed until next year because of the COVID-19 pandemic. AP

Leon Mendonca wins Skalicky chess festival

CHENNAI IM Leon Luke Mendonca, with 7.5 points from nine rounds, has won the Skalicky chess festival in Slovakia. The 14-year-old, Goa-based player remained unbeaten and notched up six wins on his way to the title. PTI



Birdie bomb lifts Rahm playoff triumph

WASHINGTON Jon Rahm drained a 60-foot birdie putt at the first playoff hole to win the US PGA Tour BMW Championship over World No. 1 Dustin Johnson on Sunday. Rahm powered to the top with six birdies in an impressive six-under par 64 – the lowest round of the week. Johnson had started the day tied for the lead with Hideki Matsuyama. AP

Aditi finishes tied 49th at NW Arkansas

ROGERS (USA) Aditi Ashok finished tied 49th at the Walmart NW Arkansas Championship after carding two-under 69 in the final round here. Aditi, playing her first LPGA event in the United States since the coronavirus outbreak, had three birdies against a sole bogey after starting from the 10th on Sunday. Her earlier rounds fetched her scores of 69-68 for a three-day total of five-under 208. PTI

Raina has been influential as a CSK player: N. Srinivasan

Former BCCI chief says comments attributed to him were taken 'out of context'

IPL 2020

S. DINAKAR

CHENNAI

N. Srinivasan said here on Monday that certain statements attributed to him about Suresh Raina, which appeared in some sections of the media, were taken "out of context."

Raina had pulled out of the upcoming IPL, beginning in the UAE on September 19, after travelling with the team to Dubai.

The former BCCI and ICC chief, who is the managing director of India Cements that owns the Chennai Super Kings, told *The Hindu*, "Let me make one thing very clear. We own the franchise but not the players."

No interference

He added: "One of the key reasons for the tremendous success of CSK over the years is that the franchise doesn't interfere in the cricketing affairs. That is left to the skipper and the coach."

Srinivasan praised Raina for his contribution to CSK over the years.

"He has been so influential for CSK as a player. I acknowledge his enormous contribution. He has been with us for so many years."

Raina is the leading run-getter for CSK with 4,527 runs and, at one stage,



Run-machine: N. Srinivasan has acknowledged Raina's 'enormous contribution' to CSK. ■ FILE PHOTO: K. PICHUMANI

played a staggering 158 successive matches for the franchise before missing a game due to fitness concerns.

The CSK boss said, "If Raina now has opted out of this edition for personal reasons, I completely support his decision." Srinivasan noted, "Look, I will never speak ill of a cricketer. I respect players. I am a cricket lover myself. India Cements has always been supportive of the cricketers, much before the IPL came into existence."

Asked whether CSK will seek a replacement for Raina, he said, "That call will be taken by the team management."

Dhoni's decision

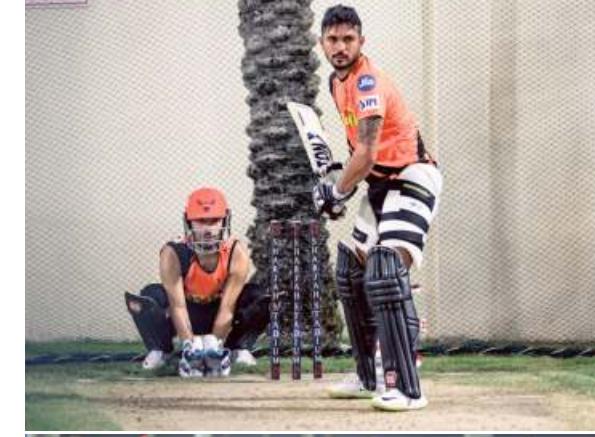
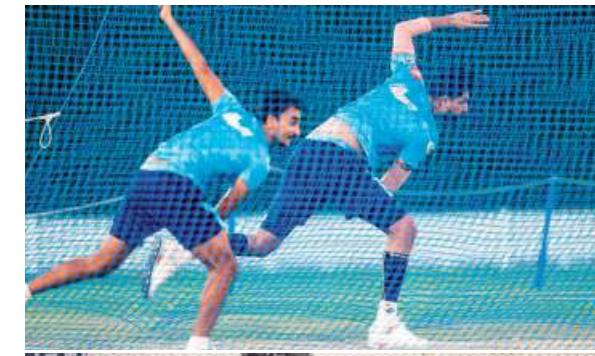
Queried about the most suitable cricketer to replace Raina in the playing eleven, Srinivasan answered, "Now you are entering M.S. Dhoni's area. He will take that decision. Like I said before, we don't interfere in the cricketing affairs."

Despite the team being hit by COVID-19 and the early departure of Raina, Srinivasan remained confident about CSK's prospects.

Team is united

"The team is united and there is no friction in the squad. We have a strong captain in Dhoni. The team is solidly behind him."

Getting match-ready



From top: Delhi Capitals' Ishant Sharma and Harshal Patel lettin' it rip at the nets, Sunrisers Hyderabad's Manish Pandey is all concentration during practice and Mumbai Indians' Suryakumar Yadav honing his fielding skills. ■ TWITTER

POWERPLAY



Dhoni should bat at No 3 for Super Kings: Gambhir

NEW DELHI M.S. Dhoni should bat at No. 3 for CSK now that Suresh Raina has pulled out of the IPL, feels Gautam Gambhir. "He would end up getting a lot more balls to face at No. 3 and get to anchor the innings as well," said Gambhir. PTI

BKT Tires to sponsor six IPL teams

DUBAI Balkrishna Industries Limited (BKT Tires) on Monday said it will be sponsoring six teams – Mumbai Indians, Chennai Super Kings, Delhi Capitals, Kings XI Punjab, Kolkata Knight Riders and Rajasthan Royals – in IPL 2020. PTI



Seniors like Shami should set an example: Rhodes

DUBAI KXIP's fielding coach Jonty Rhodes feels it's important for senior players like Mohd. Shami to set an example. "Guys like Shami are so important. If they set high standards, then it's easier for young players to follow." PTI

England squads for series against Australia

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

MANCHESTER

The England squads for the three T20Is and three ODIs against Australia were announced on Monday.

The squads:

T20Is: Eoin Morgan (Capt.), Moeen Ali, Jofra Archer, Jonny Bairstow, Tom Banton, Sam Billings, Jos Buttler (wk), Sam Curran, Tom Curran, Joe Denly, Chris Jordan, Dawid Malan, Adil Rashid, and Mark Wood;

Reserves: Liam Livingstone, and Saqib Mahmood.

ODIs: Morgan (Capt.), Moeen, Archer, Bairstow, Banton, Billings, Buttler (wk), Sam Curran, Tom Curran, Rashid, Joe Root, Woakes, and Wood; **Reserves:** Denly and Mahmood.

The schedule (all times IST):

T20Is (all at Southampton): Sept. 4, 10.30 p.m.; Sept. 6, 6.45 p.m.; Sept. 8, 10.30 p.m.

ODIs (all at Manchester): Sept. 11, 5.30 p.m.; Sept. 13, 5.30 p.m.; Sept. 16, 5.30 p.m.

Messi skips training

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

MADRID

Lionel Messi boycotted Barcelona's first pre-season training session on Monday, club sources confirmed.

After skipping coronavirus tests on Sunday, Messi was absent again from the club's Ciutat Esportiva training

ing ground, where Ronald Koeman held a session, his first after being appointed Barcelona coach.

The 33-year-old and his lawyers believe that participating in the pre-season programme would contradict their argument that Messi no longer belongs to the club.

"And specially, in these times of the pandemic, this was the best social event I had in some time. Winning the Olympiad medal will add

Anand thrilled with addition to medal collection

Says he liked the sensation and ambience of winning as part of the Indian team

CHESS

RAKESH RAO

NEW DELHI

One medal was missing from Viswanthan Anand's collection – the one from the biennial Chess Olympiad. On Sunday, the gold-sharing performance of India in the inaugural FIDE online Olympiad gold has ensured a new addition to five-time World champion's trophy cabinet.

"I think Olympiad is a very special title. And on top of it, I really liked the sensation and the ambience of winning as part of this team. Somehow, getting together with lots of chess players, and feeling that we are fighting for a common cause, that's very inspiring."

"And specially, in these times of the pandemic, this was the best social event I had in some time. Winning the Olympiad medal will add

to my collection and my trophy cabinet. Just a great memory," said an elated Anand.

After a drama lasting two hours on Sunday, India's protest over two "lost" games fol-

lowing internet outage across several nations, was upheld and it was declared joint winner with Russia.

Many Indian players, including Anand, congratulat-

ed Russia. In contrast, leading Russians – Ian Nepomniachtchi and former women's World champion Alexandra Kosteniuk – took to Twitter to express their disappointment.

Timely recovery

When *The Hindu* asked Anand if Nihal's timely recovery to reach an equal position, when seen together with Divya Deshmukh's high winning prospects (in the two affected games), had a role to play in the eventual verdict, he said, "I would say it could've had an impact. But honestly, it's not nice for FIDE to decide these things by judging the positions. I guess, it would have been hard for FIDE to take that decision, if we had lost on all

six boards, or something like that."

"So it helped that we were in good positions, on Divya's board and Nihal's position had improved a bit and it must have helped. But I would be uncomfortable to know that they are sitting and judging the positions or something!"

Great experience
On his part, skipper Vidit Gujrathi said, "It was a great experience to lead a team, featuring Anand and Humpy. I still have the autographs I took of these two legends. In case of juniors, we had to consider their styles before finalising our line-up."

"Like Nihal and Vantika Agrawal are more solid in their approach while Praggnanandhaa and Divya are sharper. So the choice depended on the situation we were in."



Bonding together: Anand felt that in the current situation, the Olympiad was the best social event he has had in some time. ■ FILE PHOTO

wanathan] Anand on the top board and then the young exciting talent who played their bit in clinching crucial wins," Humpy said.

Formulating strategies
She credited captain Vidit Gujrathi and non-playing captain Srinath for all the efforts in formulating strategies. "Essentially, the trust amongst the players and everyone pulling off wins when they were expected to were key to the Indian team's success"

C The trust amongst the players and everyone pulling off wins when they were expected to were key to the Indian team's success

C We had the highly experienced [Viswanathan] Anand on the top board and then the young exciting talent who played their bit

It is a great feeling to be part of a champion Indian team, says Humpy

The World No. 2 reflects on the challenges she conquered during the country's Olympiad triumph



V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM

HYDERABAD

World rapid chess champion K. Humpy faced a different kind of challenge as she played a significant role in India being declared joint-winner along with Russia in the online Chess Olympiad.

The 33-year-old had to make the difficult choice of staying away from her two-year-old daughter Ahana and playing the games from her parents' home in Vijayawada.

"Yes, since it would not

have been easy to play with her at home, I preferred to be with my parents [her father K. Ashok has been her coach-mentor since her early days] and it was comparatively easier," Humpy told *The Hindu* from Vijayawada.

Reflecting on her contribution to the team's win, Humpy said it was immensely satisfying that she could give her best in the crucial Armageddon (a tie-break) in the semifinal as she beat Monika Socko of Poland and helped India move into the fi-

nals. "Everything fell in place and luckily being the best woman player, I got the chance to play that big match and I am glad with my performance," said a smiling Humpy.

"Well, it is a great feeling to be part of a champion team in the Olympiad, this being my third or fourth appearance," she said.

The World No. 2 said India enjoyed a huge advantage because of the Olympiad's mixed-team format. "We had the highly experienced [Viswanathan]

wanathan] Anand on the top board and then the young exciting talent who played their bit in clinching crucial wins," Humpy said.

Formulating strategies
She credited captain Vidit Gujrathi and non-playing captain Srinath for all the efforts in formulating strategies. "Essentially, the trust amongst the players and everyone pulling off wins when they were expected to were key to the Indian team's success"

C We had the highly experienced [Viswanathan] Anand on the top board and then the young exciting talent who played their bit

Ewan takes Monday's honours

Julian Alaphilippe retains yellow jersey after the third stage



Caleb Ewan. ■ AFP

TOUR DE FRANCE

REUTERS

SISTERON

Australian Caleb Ewan timed his effort to perfection to win the third stage of the Tour de France in a bunch sprint at the end of a 198-km hilly ride through the Alpine foothills on Monday.

Sam Bennett looked in control but the Irishman had probably underestimated the headwind and settled for second place as he watched Lotto-Soudal fastman Ewan whizz around him to snatch his fourth stage win on the Tour. Italian Giacomo Nizzoli said.

He took third place. France's Julian Alaphilippe retained the overall leader's yellow jersey.

Tuesday's fourth stage is a 160.5-km effort from Sisteron to Orcieres-Merlette for the first summit finish of the race.

An all-French breakaway featuring Anthony Perez, polka dot jersey holder Benoit Cosnefroy and Jerome Cousin was kept on a tight leash by the bunch. Perez later abandoned with a rib fracture and a possible collapsed lung after crashing into his team's car, his Cofidis outfit said.

Kerber overcomes Tomljanovic

Vondrousova has it easy against Minnen in opener

US OPEN

REUTERS

New York

Former champion Angelique Ker