

MAIL TODAY

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SHOCKER!

Popular TV actor Sameer Sharma found hanging at Mumbai home

SEE PAGES 4-5



8 DEAD, 40 RESCUED IN AHMEDABAD COVID HOSPITAL ICU INFERN

SEE PAGE 6

ARMY ROADMAP TO FIGHT CHINA BORDER PLOTS

■ 255-km DSDBO road is a game changer for India to foil PLA's actions in Ladakh

■ Despite ongoing tensions, Army is pressing ahead with final phases of construction

By Gaurav C Sawant in Daulat Beg Oldi

THE arm of a giant excavator perched precariously on the mountain slope drills a hole. Standing at an altitude of almost 17,000 feet, Lieutenant Colonel Ajay Chauhan says a silent

Dedicated satellites planned to avoid future LAC surprises

prayer under his breath as the drill of the excavator bores into the mountain.

This is a zero-error exercise as a tiny mistake could send the 20-tonne machine hurtling down into the raging Shyok river 50 feet below.

Turn to Page 2

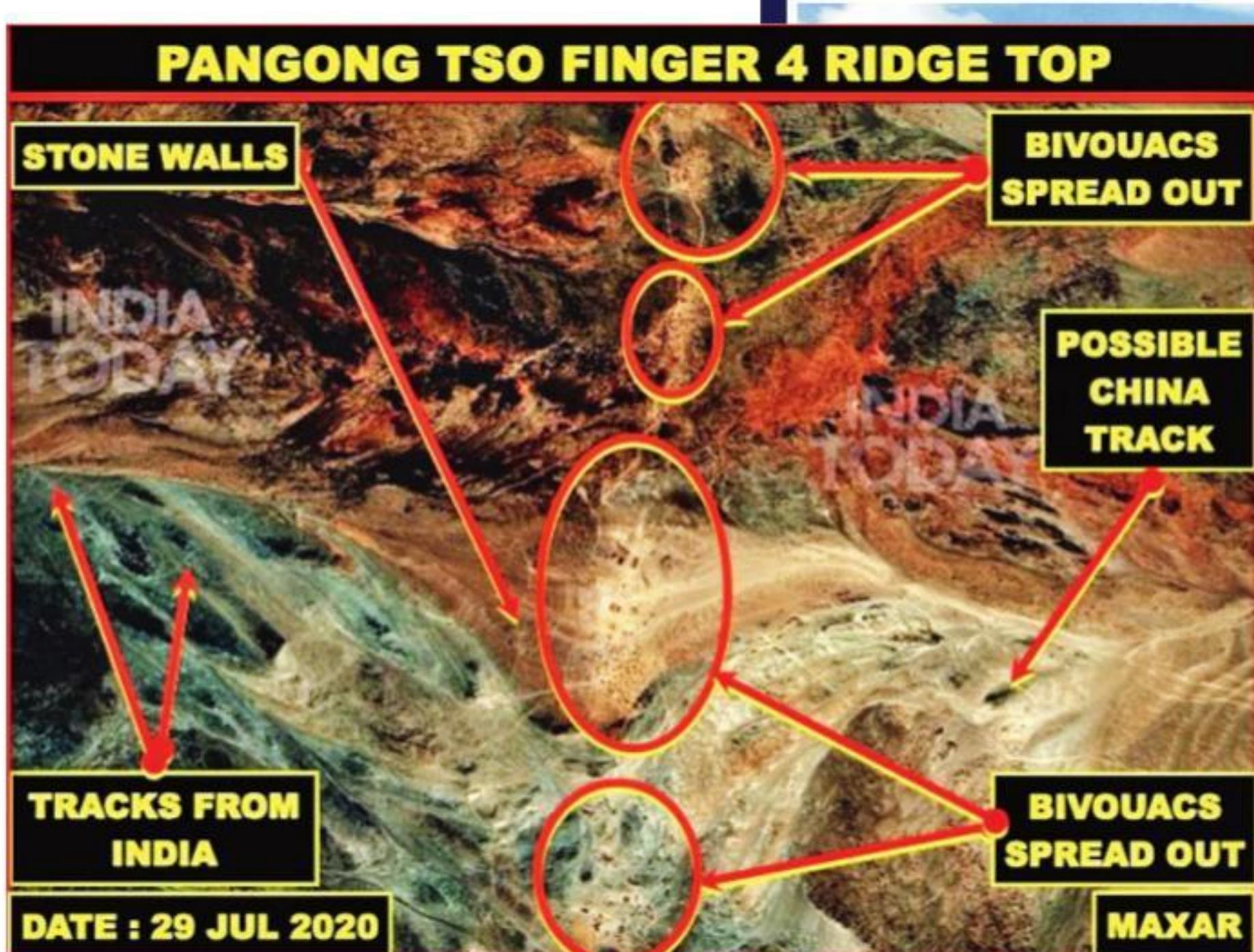
INDIA TODAY TV REACHES COUNTRY'S MOST CRUCIAL STRATEGIC STRETCH

PHOTOS: KRIPAL SINGH



At 17,000 feet, it's a race against time to complete the Durbuk-Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldie (DSDBO) road. The big challenge will be to keep it open round the year.

PHOTOS BY KIRPAL SINGH



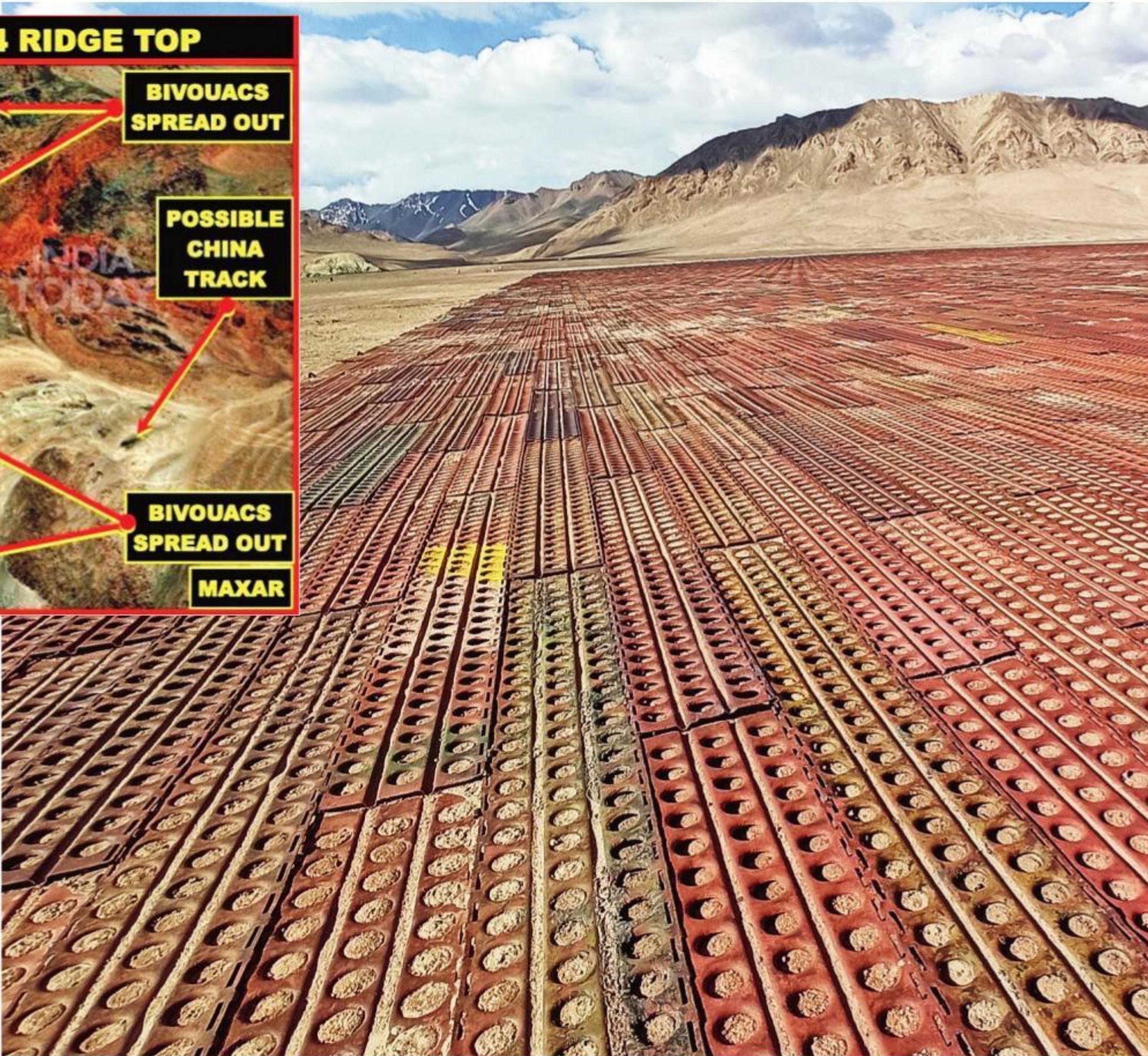
(Top) Satellite image of the Daulat Beg Oldie area where the BRO is working day and night to complete the construction of the road.

INDIA TODAY TV ■ GROUND REPORT ■

Continued from page 1

Engineers of the Border Roads Organisation (BRO) are racing against time to make an all-weather black top road to quickly move men and material from Leh to Daulat Beg Oldie at the Base of the mighty Karakoram Mountain at an altitude of 16,696 feet.

"This is an extremely risky task. There are always chances of an accident. The operators risk their lives. But we are preparing an alternate axis with a gentler gradient so that heavy trucks and equipment can be moved quickly between Durbuk and Daulat Beg Oldie," says Lt Col Chauhan, officer



Why DSDBO road is sending JITTERS TO CHINA

commanding, Road Construction company.

The army has declared the 255-kilometre long Durbuk-Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldie road its top priority for completion. The road starts at Durbuk at an altitude of a little over 14,000 feet and snakes along the Shyok river before climbing up to 18,000 feet near DBO.

"DS-DBO road runs parallel to the LAC and connects the DBO Advanced Landing Ground to Durbuk. We are constructing 37 all weather bridges on the road to enable quick movement of men and material anywhere along the LAC. Earlier it took almost 7 days from Leh to DBO without proper roads now it takes just about a day," says Lt Gen Harpal Singh, Director General, BRO.

In remote high altitude areas, the window of opportunity to work is less than 5 months due to snowfall and extreme cold climate at extreme high altitudes. The temperatures fall to minus 50 degrees Celsius and it becomes worse due to the wind chill factor. Heavy snowfall in some areas also affects road construction.

"Therefore our aim is to complete our task before the onset of winters. We did not let the ongoing tension between India and China at the LAC affect our road construction activity," Lt Gen Singh adds.

The China Study Group has identified 73 strategic roads and labeled them as India China Border Roads. The BRO is to construct 61 of these 73 roads totalling a distance of 3,409 kms. The 255-km DS-DBO road has been identified as one of the most crucial of these roads.

This is perhaps the most criti-



The army has declared the 255-kilometre-long Durbuk-Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldie road its top priority for completion.

cal sector as India faces multiple adversaries in the Karakoram mountain belt. This is the only sector where India shares a border both with Pakistan and with China. And another adversary is the weather.

"We are constructing a black top road at 18,250 feet. This is the highest point on the DS-DBO road and the oxygen in the atmosphere here is greatly reduced. Both men and machines here work at less than 50 per cent of their capabilities. Therefore finishing the task of giving our soldiers a wide black top road is a race against time," says Maj Anand, officer commanding, DBO Cru-

saders Road construction company. The Shyok river is also called the river of sorrow as multiple caravans and traders lost their lives crossing the river along the ancient silk route. BRO is now constructing 37 bridges along the road.

"Till a few years back, even army trucks waded through the river and drove along the river bed. We are in the process of constructing wide bridges capable of carrying 70 tons of load. This road is truly a game changer," says Brigadier Arvinder Singh, Chief

Engineer, Project Himank. Brig Singh is the officer in charge of all strategic roads in eastern

Ladakh.

In November 2019, Raksha Mantri Rajnath Singh inaugurated a 1,400-ft, 70-tonne load carrying bridge – the longest on the Shyok river. "This is the world's highest baley bridge of this span at 14,650 feet altitude. We also used micro piling technique for the first time and completed construction in record 14 months," says Maj Daulat, Officer commanding Bridge Construction company.

Given the current India-China standoff, India refuses to buckle under pressure and is pressing ahead with completing the road and several other roads to enable better patrolling and protection of our territory. "We have also imported latest machines from Europe to pulverize cement and

rock together and make cement based roads. They are quick to construct and relatively easy to maintain. We will lay a layer of black top on this for a smooth ride," says Col Deepak Baskandi, the Task Force Commander.

The army is using the latest equipment and technology to construct roads in the area. Techniques to build runways and airports are being used for speedy road construction. But the challenges for the BRO and army are as high as the Karakoram ranges.

THE CHALLENGE

"The biggest challenge will be to keep the strategic road open through the winters especially at high mountain passes. More men and material are being brought into ensure the roads are kept open till as late as possible," Brig Singh adds.

The Indian Air Force which first landed a Fairchild Packet at DBO in 1962 repeated the unique feat twice, the first time in 2008 when an An-32 aircraft landed at DBO and the second time in 2013 when a C-130 J Hercules successfully landed here. Presently there is a big helipad at the Advanced Landing Ground (ALG), the world's highest at 16,696 feet and the government is considering a proposal to improve the facilities at the ALG. The DS-DBO road and the ALG give the Indian armed forces a unique capability to improve its presence and grip in the area.

For the BRO the immediate task of constructing the road may be all but over but the engineers are now making an alternate access to DBO. The bigger challenge will remain to keep the road operational 365 days a year.



By Abhishek Bhalla
in New Delhi

IN AN unprecedented move, the Ministry of Defence document, admitting Chinese intrusion into Indian territory in May, was removed from the official website on Thursday following a political controversy.

Describing the Chinese aggression in Ladakh as "transgressions", India had in a document said the standoff is likely to be "prolonged" amid China's demand that India moves back in Pangong Lake.

CHINESE 'TRANSGRESSION'

Chinese intrusions are often loosely referred to as transgression — a word that is defined in the dictionary as an act or process of breaking a law or moral rule.

Transgression is also defined as infringement or violation of a law, command, or duty.

The Ministry of Defence note on its website read: "Chinese aggression has been increasing along LAC and more particularly in Galwan Valley since May 5, 2020. The Chinese transgressed in areas of Kungrang Nala, Gogra and Pangong Tso on May 17-18,"

This was later removed from the Ministry of Defence website following a political controversy after Rahul Gandhi once again questioned the government over the standoff.

STALLED DISENGAGEMENT

China's condition that it will pull back from the Finger area of the lake but the move should be reciprocated by India has made the situation complex in Ladakh, sources have said.

In the initial phase of disengagement at Pangong Lake, the Chinese moved back from Finger 4 to Finger 5, but continued with its deployment on the ridge line.

India too pulled back from Finger 4 where troops from both sides had been in an eyeball to

DEFENCE MINISTRY REMOVES CHINESE INTRUSION REPORT



eyeball situation. The mountain spurs jutting out into the lake are referred as fingers in military parlance. Between Finger 5 and 8, China has strengthened its positions, brought in more boats and also set up new pre fabricated huts keeping in mind a winter deployment.

"China has been demanding that India moves back further in Pangong Lake if it wants China to pull back. This has made the situation more tricky as a further retreat by India would mean leaving an area under our control. This would change the status quo," said an official.

STANDOFF LIKELY TO CONTINUE'

In the fifth round of Corps Commander-level talks on Sun-

day, situation in Pangong Lake, the biggest flashpoint in the three-month-old standoff was the main focus.

"While engagement and dialogue at military and diplomatic level is continuing to arrive at mutually acceptable consensus the present standoff is likely to be prolonged," the MoD note read.

The MoD note added that the situation in eastern Ladakh arising from unilateral aggression by China continues to be sensitive and requires close monitoring and prompt action based on evolving situation.

While initial disengagement took place in Galwan and Patrol Point 15, Pangong Lake and Gogra continue to be volatile.



The Chinese intrusion report was on the Defence Ministry website.

Cong flays Centre as LAC paper taken off

By Anand Patel in New Delhi

PRIME Minister Narendra Modi and the central government has come under a volley of attack by the opposition after the Ministry of Defence removed a report on Chinese intrusion in the Ladakh region from its website.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who had earlier quoted the reports on MoD documents and accused PM Modi of lying, once again took to social media to question the ministry's decision to remove the documents from the public domain. Rahul Gandhi claimed that PM Modi did not have the courage to even 'name' Chinese.

"Forget standing up to China, India's PM lacks the courage even to name them. Denying China is in our territory and removing documents from websites won't change the facts," Rahul Gandhi said.

Meanwhile, Congress spokesperson Ajay Maken also trained his guns at the prime minister. Addressing a press conference, Ajay Maken questioned if the defence ministry trying to save PM Modi by withdrawing the document. "PM Modi had said that no one has come into our side of the border; no one has taken our land and no one has taken our post."

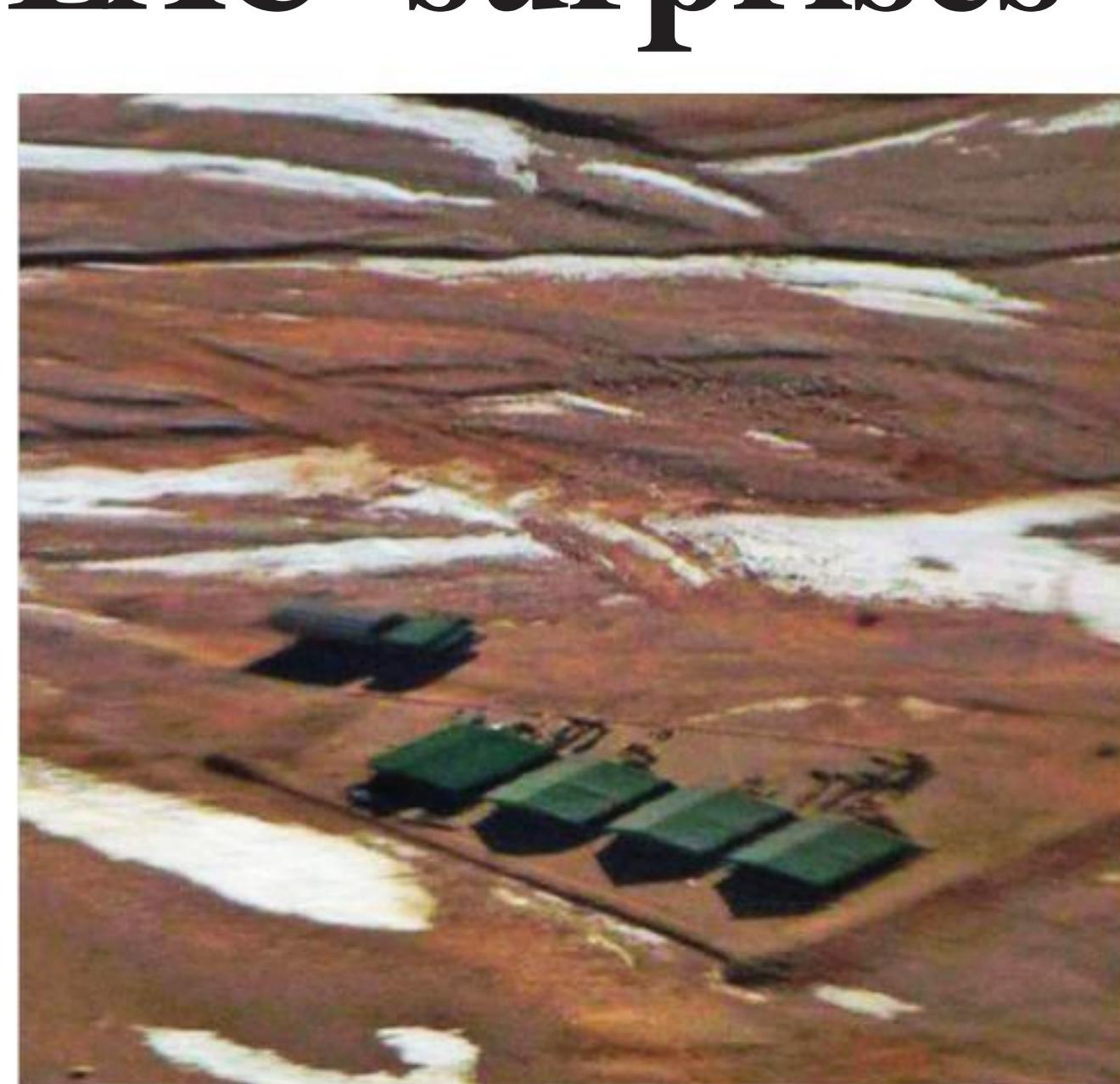


Forget standing up to China, India's PM lacks the courage even to name them. Denying China is in our territory and removing documents from websites won't change the facts.

— RAHUL GANDHI,
CONGRESS LEADER

MoD has detailed major activities in the month of June on its website, but now it has been removed. Is the MoD trying to save the PM?" Ajay Maken said.

Quoting the defence ministry document, Ajay Maken said that Chinese forces had transgressed at different locations on May 17-18 and a violent clash took place on June 15. But, he said, the PM denied this on June 19.



Borders with China stretching from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh are manned by both the Army and the ITBP.

the minutest movement on the ground.

Borders with China stretching from Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh are manned by both the Indian Army and the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP).

The terrain in border areas is very harsh and the number of troops not enough to man even the nooks and corners of the vast border region. Creation of a surveillance satellite network will help

the armed forces reduce reaction time in the case of even the slightest military movement on the Chinese side.

China has built up more than three divisions or 45,000 troops along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh while transgressing into multiple areas including the Pangong fingers, Gogra and Kungrang Nala areas traditionally patrolled by Indian troops.

Forces seek satellites to thwart China's designs & avoid LAC 'surprises'

By Manjeet Singh Negi
in New Delhi

INDIAN security forces have asked the Central government to provide them with five-six dedicated satellites that would allow them to track the movement of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) and avoid any future transgressions by China.

"In view of the ongoing situation and the way China could quietly build up its forces along our borders, there is a need for having four to six satellites that can provide complete coverage of the border area and prevent any surprises

Agencies on the job to explore avenues

in the future," top government sources told Aajtak and India Today.

The Government has been apprised of these requirements and different agencies are working towards finalising the objectives by finding a way to establish this network of satellites in space for surveillance purposes, added sources.

India already has a few military satellites that assist the armed forces in keeping an eye on different adversaries but the new satellites would further strengthen their ability to check even

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Bihar Police team officials come out after meeting with Inspector General, in Patna on Thursday.

CBI books Rhea even as dead filmstar family levels new sensational allegations against her

By Anjana Om Kashyap and Munish Chandra Pandey in New Delhi

A DAY after Sushant Singh Rajput's death case was officially handed over to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), the investigation agency filed an FIR against actor Rhea Chakraborty for abetting Rajput's suicide.

However, the federal probe agency won't be able to investigate the case in Mumbai and in other places in Maharashtra.

Interestingly, the anti-corruption unit VI of CBI has been tasked to investigate the case.

India Today has learnt that the probe team will be headed by Joint Director Manoj Sashidhar (IPS, Gujarat Cadre). DIG Gagandeep Ghambir will help to supervise the probe whereas Anil Yadav, Additional Superintendent of Police will be the investigation officer.

Bihar CM Nitish Kumar, on the request of Rajput's family, handed over the case to CBI which is currently being probed by the Patna police.

In the notification issued on Thursday, the consent by Bihar government has been given for the entire state and other places related to the crime. However, if the probe is outside Bihar, the CBI will again require consent from the respective states.

Experts have told India Today that the Bihar government's notification recommending CBI probe gives consent for the agency to exercise territorial jurisdiction in the whole state of Bihar but as the crime has taken place in Mumbai, the CBI will need separate permission from the Maharashtra government to probe the case in Mumbai.

Sources say, that as part of the probe, CBI will take over documents from Bihar Police. However, they may wait for the Supreme Court to give a clear order or direction so that they can initiate the probe in Mumbai too.

India Today Television has accessed Chakraborty's phone records that reveal that she had made 25 calls to the late actor between January 20 and January 24, 2020.

Chakraborty, Rajput's former girlfriend, has been the prime accused in the late actor's death case, ever since Rajput's father KK Singh filed an FIR in Patna's Rajiv Nagar Police Station. In the complaint, KK Singh accused Chakraborty and her family of abetment to suicide, pocketing Rs 15 crore from Rajput's bank account, and harassment.

India Today TV tracked

Rhea allegedly blackmailed Rajput to return, from Chandigarh wherein she made 25 calls in 3-4 days during his trip

THE SUSHANT DEATH CASE



'SHE HAD PLOTTED TO SEND SSR TO A MENTAL HOSPITAL'

Chakraborty's phone call details, which reveal that she made 25 calls in 5 days to Rajput, when he was with his sister Rani. This was when Rajput had gone to Chandigarh by road, between January 20-24.

In November 2019, Rajput had called for help, even booked his tickets to Chandigarh. Chakraborty allegedly blackmailed him to stay back. Rajput then changed his number in December 2019.

Later, another call for help from Rajput was received, this time from his new number. He said that Chakraborty and her family were scheming to put him in a mental hospital but he didn't want to go. He said that he would wind up his life in Mumbai and settle down in Himachal Pradesh.

Eventually, Rajput drove from Mumbai to Chandigarh because he complained of claustrophobia due to wrong medication. He stayed in Chandigarh with his sister Rani for two days and regained his strength.

Siddharth Pithani tipped off Chakraborty about Rajput going to Chandigarh.



File photo of actor Sooraj Pancholi

Sooraj Pancholi breaks silence on Saliyan case

SOORAJ Pancholi, in an interview with India Today TV's entertainment editor Sushant Mehta, denied the rumours of his involvement in Sushant Singh Rajput and his former manager Disha Salian's deaths. He said that he cannot compete with senior BJP leader Narayan Rane as he is too powerful.

A lot too many rumours about a party held at Pancholi's residence on June 13, a night before Rajput died have been floating around. Rane, in a recent press conference, had said that the people present at the party on June 13 should

be questioned.

Talking about the same, Pancholi said, "Narayan Rane sir should be questioned about who told him all these things. There was no party at my place and I have no connection with Rajput or his manager Disha Salian. So first I want to say that all of these are just rumours, circulated through social media."

He further added, "The Police are aware of me not being included or being attached to this case. I don't know why they are not saying anything. I don't know why Mumbai police



File photo of Sushant Singh Rajput with Rhea Chakraborty

POPULAR TV ACTOR FOUND HANGING IN MUMBAI HOUSE

By **Saurabh Vaktania**
in Mumbai

ACTOR Sameer Sharma, who played the role of Shaurya Maheshwari in 'Yeh Rishtey Hain Pyar Ke', was found hanging in his rented apartment in Malad in Mumbai. The 44-year-old actor, according to the police, died by suicide two to three days ago. The body had started to decompose

Police suspect suicide, but no note found yet

when the cops reached his flat.

Malad Police Station officials who are investigating the case said that the body was found hanging from the kitchen ceiling.

"No suicide note was found at the spot and it is suspected he hanged himself two days back," Malad police station's senior inspector George Fernandes said.

Earlier this year, Sharma had shifted to this rented flat in Chincholi Bunder, Malad West in

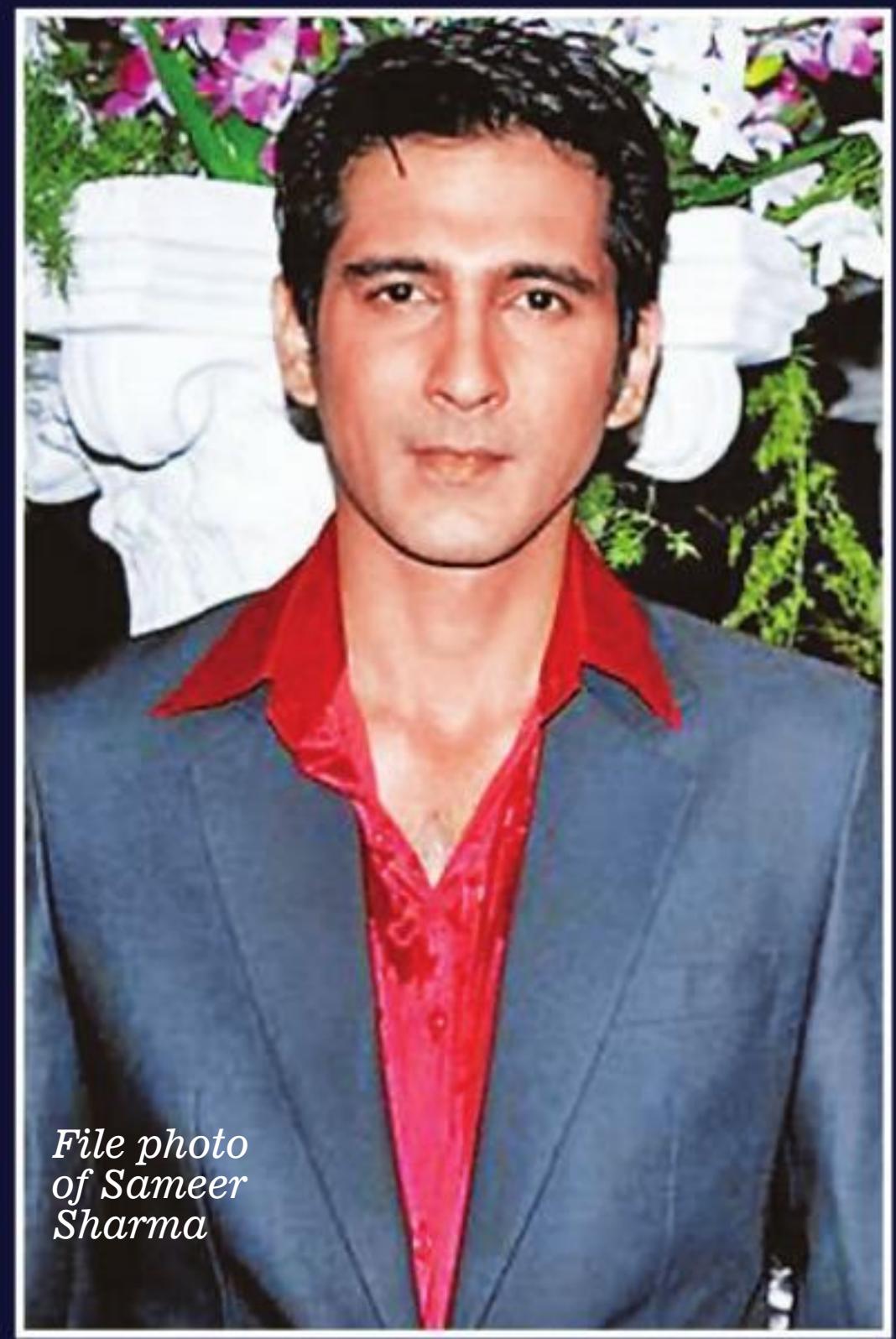
Mumbai. He resided at Neha CHS building at Ahimsa Marg earlier. He moved to this flat in February this year.

Sharma's neighbours had complained that a foul smell was coming from his house. When the building watchman went there, he saw that doors of the kitchen were open and the actor was hanging from the ceiling. He saw the body and alerted the society members.

Looking at the condition of the body, the police suspect that the actor killed himself two to three days ago. No suicide note was recovered at the spot. However, the cops are searching the actor's house for any evidence.

The police are also looking into the financial angle. Malad Police have registered an Accidental Death Report in the case.

Sharma has worked in both television and films. He was seen in films like 'Hasee To Phasee' and shows like 'Left Right Left', 'Kahaani Ghar Ghar Kii', 'Kyunki Saas Bhi Kabhi Bahu Thi' and 'Yeh Rishtey Hain Pyar Ke'.



File photo of Sameer Sharma

Rhea bought 2 properties in Mumbai, finds ED probe

By **Munish Chandra Pandey** in New Delhi and **Sahil Joshi** in Mumbai

THE Enforcement Directorate (ED) sources have revealed details of Rhea Chakraborty's finances to India Today. The ED had lodged a money laundering case against Chakraborty and her family members after Sushant Singh Rajput's family accused her of taking Rs 15 crore from the late actor.

As per the Income Tax Return (ITR) records, Chakraborty's net worth rose in the last few years from Rs 10 lakh to 12 lakh and then Rs 14 lakh. Despite a meagre net worth, Chakraborty bought two properties in Mumbai.

One property is in her name and the other is in her family members' name. It is still not clear who paid for

Chakraborty's property. The agency has asked for the property papers.

Two companies of Rajput have been examined so far. Another company based in Delhi is yet to be examined. The ED isn't satisfied with the statement that has been given by Rajput's Chartered Accountant.

The ED has sent Chakraborty the

Agency probing her Khar flat's purchase worth ₹85L

summons through email. There has been no response as yet.

While the ED claims that Chakraborty has crores worth of property under her name, India Today sources found otherwise. Our sources reveal that she owns only one prop-

erty in her name, worth Rs 85 lakh in Khar (East), Mumbai.

The housing loan on the Khar property is around Rs 60 lakh. The builder's name is Shivalik. The total area of the flat is 550 sq ft. The flat is located in Khar (East), near the Khar subway, revealed India Today sources.

Chakraborty's house manager Samuel Miranda reached the ED office on Thursday. He has again been summoned for questioning in connection with the Sushant Singh Rajput death case. Samuel was questioned by ED on Wednesday also.

On Wednesday, ED had also summoned Chakraborty in the money laundering case. She has been asked to appear on Friday (August 7).

Earlier, ED had also questioned Rajput's Chartered Accountant Sandeep Sridhar.



tha uske sath? I have been facing this humiliation from the past 8 years from my case to now being attached to Sushant case, kyun? Why? I don't know why. These people who are talking about me and these big news channels naming me, what proof do they have? They have nothing to lose. Mr Narayan Rane has nothing to lose. He has made it; he is at a big level and I am nowhere to compete with him. I cannot compete with the biggies. They have nothing to lose but I do."

'GLAD THAT CBI WILL PROBE CASE'

Pancholi said that he is glad about Rajput's death case being transferred to the CBI. He also said that he hopes the actor's family gets justice.

"I'm glad he got CBI. I hope his family is satisfied. I hope they get justice," he said.

Upon being asked about his first reaction when he got to know about Rajput's death, Pancholi said, "I didn't believe it at the beginning. I saw a

few articles on social media. I didn't believe it. Until I made a few calls to my journalist friends that I know, and when it was confirmed, I mean, I was in a state of shock. I still feel really bad for what happened and I don't know whether he committed suicide or what has happened."

SALIAN'S DAD WRITES TO MUMBAI POLICE

Disha Salian's father Satish Salian, in a letter to the Mumbai Police, said that false reports regarding his daughter's death are being circulated. In his letter, he said that news of Salian's rape and murder are all cooked up. In addition, a certain section of the media is mentally harassing him and his family.

He also added that these stories are misleading the people and tarnishing his daughter's as well as his family's reputation. Salian was Rajput's ex-manager and various reports have linked their deaths.

—www.indiatoday.in

are silent about this. They should be saying something. I don't care what Narayan Rane is saying, but did Sushant Singh Rajput's family say anything about this? Did Sushant's father say this? Did Sushant's sister say this? Did Sushant's relatives say this about me?"
"I had nothing to do with Sushant, mera kya lena dena

Bihar DGP: Will move court to free our cop

By **Rohit Kumar Singh** in Patna

MIFFED with the behaviour of the BMC (Brihanmumbai Corporation), who has refused to release Patna City SP Vinay Tiwari, currently under quarantine in Mumbai, Bihar DGP Gupteshwar Pandey has said that the state police was mulling at the option of moving the court to bring back Tiwari to Bihar.

Tiwari was in Mumbai, leading a team of Bihar Police in the investigation of Sushant Singh Rajput's death. The 34-year-old actor died by suicide on June 14.

"We have made several requests to the BMC to secure the release of Vinay Tiwari, but to no avail. We will wait till today [Thursday], during which we will get legal opinion from advocate general and decide our



File photo of IPS officer Vinay Tiwari

next course of action. The option to move the court to get Tiwari released is open to us," said Bihar DGP.

Tiwari is under a 14-day quarantine since Sunday night, after he arrived in Mumbai to carry forward the probe in the Rajput death case. He has been quarantined in the guest house he is staying till August 15. BMC has refused to budge despite facing flak from the SC.

DCW notice to cops as minor's rape sparks outrage

By Ajay Kumar in New Delhi

DELHI Commission of Women (DCW) on Thursday served notice to Delhi police in connection with the brutal rape and physical assault of a 12-year-old girl in west Delhi two days ago.

The incident took place in Delhi's Paschim Vihar area on August 4. The victim has received severe injuries on her body including her private parts. A doctor in AIIMS trauma centre said her condition is stable now. She is in the ward and on oxygen support, the doctor added.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind

Kejriwal and DCW chief Swati Maliwal visited the AIIMS trauma centre and met the victim on Thursday afternoon. The Delhi CM has announced Rs 10 lakh for the victim's family.

One arrested for the horrific crime

"The victim was sexually assaulted in the most brutal manner. He tried to kill her. As per the victim's statement, the accused has beaten her with a blunt object during the assault," Maliwal said.

"We have served notice to



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and Delhi Commission for Women chairperson Swati Maliwal at AIIMS.

Delhi police, sought action report including copy of FIR, medical examination, FSL

report and inspection of crime scene. We have demanded immediate arrest of the cul-

prit. Delhi police were asked to appear before the commission by August 8 and submit a report," Maliwal added.

Dr Eish Singhal, DCP New Delhi and PRO of Delhi police, said: "Delhi police have taken the case registered under POCSO at PS Paschim Vihar seriously. It is a sensitive case. Delhi police are making all efforts to nab the culprit. The police have already scanned the CCTV footage and are questioning suspects on basis of the same."

Late on Thursday night, one man was arrested on charges of attempting to murder and sexually assaulting her inside her home in Peeragarhi.

Islam Gym Ground is submerged due to heavy rainfall, in Mumbai, on Thursday.



Day after: Mumbai flooded & damaged

As per IMD, Colaba sets record with highest rainfall in 46 years

Noida New Okhla Industrial Development Authority

Main Administrative Building, Sector-6, Noida, G.B. Nagar, (U.P.)

Website: www.noidaauthorityonline.com

E-TENDER NOTICE

E-Tenders are invited from firms/contractors registered with UPLC Lucknow for the following jobs against which bids can be uploaded and same shall be opened/downloaded as per schedule mentioned. The details and conditions of all tenders are available on NOIDA Authority's official website: www.noidaauthorityonline.com & <https://etender.up.nic.in>. Please ensure to see these websites for any changes/amendments & corrigendum etc.

Sl. No.	Job No./ Work Name	Amount
1	78/D(H)/DD(H)-II/2020-21, D/o Stadium (P/f of special art work at stadium sector-21A), Noida	Cost Rs. 21.20 Lacs

Which can be uploaded by date 13/08/2020 upto 5:00 PM. Pre-qualification shall be opened/downloaded on Date 14/08/2020 at 11:00 AM.

Office: Sector-39, NOIDA

Director (Hort.), Noida

CLEAN, GREEN, SAFE & SECURE NOIDA

By Tanushree Pandey

in Mumbai

MUMBAIKARS breathed a sigh of relief with no rains on Thursday but the aftermath of Wednesday rains battered the city completely.

The Colaba weather station recorded 33.2 cm of rainfall in the last 24 hours through 8:30 am on Thursday, the highest downpour for a single day in August since 1974, according to the India Meteorological Department. The city recorded 215.8 mm rain, followed by 101.9 mm in eastern suburbs and 76.03 mm in western suburbs.

The record rainfall in 46 years in south Mumbai on Wednesday has left a trail of destruction in the financial capital of the country including a massive landslide at the busy Peddar Road. The landslide site is at the edge of the Malabar Hill just off the Kemp's Corner flyover. The road remained shut and officials told India Today TV, "Stormy winds and rainfall



Uprooted trees are lying on a road in Mumbai on Thursday.

ensure it didn't crash to the ground.

More than 100 big old trees were uprooted due to the heavy wind speed, causing severe environmental damage to the city. Experts also told India Today TV, "Haphazard construction and concretization of area around trees is also one of the major reasons for increasing number of trees falling in Mumbai."

Parts of dilapidated buildings collapsed in Dadar and Prabhadevi after heavy rainfall. No loss of lives was reported but families residing in the houses had to face problems.

As many as three cranes collapsed at Jawaharlal Nehru Port Trust on Wednesday, but no one was injured. The winds also caused extensive damage to the DY Patil Stadium in Nerul. The NDRF and RPF rescued 290 passengers by boats from two local trains stranded on flooded tracks between the CSMT and Sandhurst Road station on Wednesday. Both Central and Western lines witnessed heavy water-logging on tracks due to heavy rains.

Five teams of NDRF are camping in the city

have caused major destruction. We have to now rebuild an entire patch of Peddar Road, as it has completely been destroyed by falling of trees."

Teams of NDRF are doing the restoration work on the ground but the damage resulted in major traffic snarls on Thursday morning.

Gusty winds, sometimes over 100 kilometers per hour, damaged the signage on the top of the 29-story building housing Asia's oldest stock exchange in downtown Mumbai, and the fire brigade was called in to

8 patients die in fire at Ahmedabad hospital ICU

By Gopi Maniar
in Ahmedabad

AT least eight patients died after a major fire broke out at a Covid-19 hospital in Ahmedabad in the wee hours of Thursday.

All eight victims, including five men and three women, were novel coronavirus patients admitted to hospital. They were being treated at the ICU ward of the Covid-19 designated Shrey Hospital in Navrangpura area of Ahmedabad, an official said.

"Eight coronavirus patients admitted in the ICU ward of Shrey Hospital have died due to the fire, which has been doused," said an official of the Ahmedabad fire department.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

56,282 FRESH CASES ACROSS INDIA TAKE TOTAL TO 19,64,536

904 MORE DIE, TOLL NOW 40,699

1,299 NEW CASES IN DELHI, TOTAL NOW 1,41,531

15 MORE DIE, TOLL RISES TO 4,059

A healthcare worker was also injured in the fire, the official added.

The fire broke out at the Ahmedabad hospital around 3.30 am in the ICU unit of, police said.

Several fire tenders were rushed to the spot to douse the flames. The fire was finally brought under control at 4.22 am, officials said. The cause of the fire is not known yet, he said.

Around 40 other Covid-19 patients at Shrey Hospital were rescued and shifted to a civic hospital in the city.

As per officials, around 50 Covid-19 patients were admitted to Shrey Hospital. Of these, 10 were in the ICU unit of the Ahmedabad hospital.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced an ex-gratia of Rs 2 lakh each for the next of kin of those who lost their lives in the fire. Rs 50,000 to be given to those injured due to the fire, the PM said.

Gujarat CM Vijay Rupani has ordered a probe into the incident. "Sangeeta Singh, Additional Chief Secretary (Home Department) will be leading the probe," CMO said.

From PM Modi's meeting to Amit Shah's call, how Manoj Sinha's appointment surprised many

By Poulomi Saha in New Delhi

WHEN the 'press communique' from Rashtrapati Bhavan dropped in on the mailboxes of mediapersons early Thursday morning, it took everyone by surprise. The Centre had stumped everyone and proved all speculation to be wrong.

The communique announced the appointment of former Union minister and BJP leader Manoj Sinha as the second Lieutenant Governor of Jammu & Kashmir.

A three-time BJP MP from Ghazipur in Uttar Pradesh, Sinha served as the Minister of State for Communications and Railways in the first term of the Modi government. He lost the Lok Sabha election from Ghazipur in 2019.

Late on Wednesday evening, Girish Chandra Murmu, the first Lt Governor of the newly formed Union Territory of J&K, resigned him from his position exactly a year after his appointment. The circumstances surrounding his sudden resignation continue to be mysterious.

Later it turned out that Murmu's resignation was only the first surprise in the sequence of events that was to follow.

As media professionals scampered to confirm the news of Murmu's resignation, at least a couple of names for the now vacant post of J&K LG started doing the rounds, including that of Rajiv Mehrishi, the current Comptroller & Auditor General.

But all speculation was put to rest just a few hours later with the announcement of Manoj Sinha's name.

Manoj Sinha is said to enjoy Prime Minister Narendra Modi's trust and confidence. In 2017, he was widely tipped to be the Uttar Pradesh chief minister after BJP's spectacular win. But circumstances changed overnight for the soft-spoken Manoj Sinha, who maintained a dignified silence as the media speculated back then.

It seems 2020 has finally brought him out of the shadows. India Today TV has learnt that BJP president JP Nadda was keen to include Manoj Sinha in his organisational team (that he is yet to announce) but when he communicated that to Prime Minister Narendra Modi a few days ago, the latter told him he

His first challenge is to prepare ground for polls

had other plans for Sinha. It was only last evening though that the reticent son of the soil learnt of his new assignment.

After the Prime Minister returned from the mega bhoomi pujan ceremony in Ayodhya, he called Manoj Sinha to his residence and conveyed the news to him. Manoj Sinha humbly accepted the same although others would've worried about their political careers in the advent of such a move.

Earlier there were murmurs in the BJP about Manoj Sinha being brought to Rajya Sabha on the seat that fell vacant after Member of Parliament Beni Prasad Verma's demise in March this year. The by-election to that seat is to happen on August 24. It was speculated that Sinha could be included again in the Union Council of Ministers for a second stint.

For now though, it appears, a political appointee is all set to take charge of affairs in a Union Territory that is still to lift itself up from the restrictions imposed last year in the wake of its formation.

The first and biggest challenge the Uttar Pradesh native is likely to face in Kashmir is the preparation of ground for elections



File photo of Prime Minister Narendra Modi with then Telecom Minister Manoj Sinha in New Delhi.

WHY SINHA WAS PICKED J&K L-G

HIS WIKIPEDIA PAGE TAMPERED WITH

MANOJ SINHA'S appointment as the second Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir has created a buzz and the same was evident on his Wikipedia page. Unknown elements managed to alter the contents of his Wiki profile and added to it, "(Sinha) would store (sic) 4G in Kashmir. He is secretly supporting freedom of Kashmir from illegal Indian occupation. He won't say it publicly."

The changes were removed shortly after-

wards and the page restored to its original form. Wikipedia shows that the page was last altered at 9:48 am on August 6.

Residents of Jammu and Kashmir have been appealing to the Centre for the restoration of 4G mobile services. These services were snapped in August of last year ahead

of the abrogation of Article 370 by the Indian Parliament.

In its response to the Supreme Court, the central government said in July of this year that it is impossible to restore 4G services in the valley, adding that it has asked the UT administration to take a final call in this regard. - Poulomi Saha

The changes were removed shortly afterwards and the page restored to its original form.

As many as 504 detained separatist leaders were released after they signed bond of good behaviour.

— Dilbag Singh, J&K DGP

Murmu new CAG

FORMER Jammu and Kashmir lieutenant governor Girish Chandra Murmu has been appointed the new Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India, agencies said in a late night report on Wednesday.

The decision came exactly a year after the central government reorganised Jammu and Kashmir, bifurcating it into two Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

Murmu will be replacing Rajiv Mehrishi, a 1978 batch IAS officer of the Rajasthan cadre, as the CAG.

that are long overdue. This will only come with instilling of confidence in the people, who've been much conflicted since August 5, 2019. Manoj Sinha has his job cut out.



Former Lieutenant Governor GC Murmu on his way to Jammu Airport, a day after he submitted his resignation, in Jammu, on Thursday.

BJP sarpanch shot dead in S Kashmir

BJP leader and sarpanch Sajad Ahmad Khan-day was shot dead by terrorists near his home in south Kashmir's Kulgam district on Thursday, police said.

The terrorists, who appeared to have studied the area closely, fired at him from close range at Vessu in Qazigund area, 60 km from Srinagar, police said. Khanday was immediately rushed to a hospital in Anantnag district where he was declared brought dead.

The incident comes less than 48 hours after a BJP-affiliated panchayat member was shot at in Kulgam. - PTI

DAY IN WORDS

The Gehlot government will fail to prove its majority in the floor test in the Assembly. ...The people have lost faith in the government.

— KAILASH CHAUDHARY, Union Minister of State for Agriculture, on the Ashok Gehlot government in Rajasthan

I got a peace in my soul, because I finally was taking care of myself... It's so intense to work at that level and be that public and put yourself out there.

— CAMERON DIAZ, actor, on leaving Hollywood

We want the kids back in school as soon as possible. That's more important than people coming to the stadium.

— PEP GUARDIOLA, Manchester City manager, on getting spectators back at football stadiums

DAY IN NUMBERS

740

MTS of imported ammonium nitrate seized by Chennai Customs Department

₹22k cr

given to Andhra Pradesh as post-devolution revenue deficit grant by the Centre

AROUND THE WORLD

THE GUARDIAN
ON THE CLIMATE CRISIS

We must take environmental issues seriously

THE environmental crisis is one of the most serious issues facing the world today. We are already living with impacts of human-caused global heating, and the world is not doing nearly enough.

But a discourse sharply divided between doom and dismissal risks obstructing climate action, rather than motivating it.

We cannot dismiss the severity of climate impacts

This crisis will not be solved quickly or easily. While it won't be good for us, it also won't be the literal end of the world. But the apocalypse is a needlessly high bar to take action. We see a real risk that dwelling on doom may serve to obstruct climate action rather than motivating it, promoting fatalism and further polarisation.

There is also evidence that fear is not a very effective tool to engage people around the climate. But dismissing the severity of climate impacts and the real possibility of worst-case outcomes is also an extremely dangerous gamble. The risks are serious enough, and we need a common understanding of the urgent need to tackle them.

DAILY HUMOUR

“ I never forget a face, but I'm glad to make an exception for you.”

— Groucho Marx

SHOWER POWER

PTI



Sea waves crash ashore near the Thiruvalluvar Statue, following rainfall in Kanyakumari, Tamil Nadu, on Thursday.

It's time to get tough on China



by Harsh V Pant

In a remarkably forthright speech on China last month, US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo called on the Chinese people as well as the “free nations of the world” to change the behaviour of the Chinese Communist Party, arguing candidly that “if the free world doesn’t change Communist China — [it] will surely change us.”

Ideological bias?

Framing the future of Sino-US relations as a struggle between the free world and tyranny, Pompeo suggested Washington reject “blind engagement” with Beijing and empower the Chinese people against the ruling Communist Party. Beijing responded by underlining that Pompeo’s speech disregarded reality and was filled with ideological bias but what was interesting was how few among Washington’s policy elite challenged the fundamental premise of Pompeo’s argument.

Relations between Beijing and Washington have reached a historic low but a new consensus seems to be emerging in the US about its China policy. The Trump Administration has turned the screws on China over the past few months by taking a range of actions on various fronts – from human rights to trade and technology, from diplomatic and official disengagement to academic and scholarly exchanges. Last week, the US ordered the closure of the Chinese consulate in Houston, prompting China to take over the premises of the US consulate in the southwestern city of Chengdu in retaliation.

The US also decided to challenge Chinese claims more robustly on the South China Sea issue with Pompeo arguing most of China’s claims in the South China Sea are “completely unlawful” calling out Beijing over its campaign of bullying in the area. Where previous US administrations were reluctant to come

out in the open, the Trump Administration has drawn a line for Beijing. It has taken measures to end Hong Kong’s preferential trading status with the US after China’s imposition of its national security law that changes the nature of Hong Kong’s relationship with mainland China by challenging the Hong Konger’s right to freedom of expression. Sanctions have been imposed by Washington on a number of Chinese officials, including a senior member of the Communist Party, over China’s targeting of its Muslim Uighur minority in the Xinjiang region.

Even on Taiwan and Tibet, the Trump Administration managed to rattle China. It approved a US\$180 million arms sale to Taiwan this year and has taken measures aimed at penalising Chinese officials who try to prevent US officials and citizens from going to Tibetan areas.

The beginning

It had started with Trump trying to take on China during his election campaign four years ago. It has now led to one of the most serious efforts by the US towards a trade and technology decoupling. Huawei, China’s largest technology company, has become emblematic of America’s new resolve to take on China. Washington has led a global campaign to blacklist Huawei globally and last month won a major victory when the UK decided to go back on its earlier decision and finally banned its mobile providers from buying new Huawei 5G equipment after the end of this year. More recently, after suggesting he was planning to ban TikTok amid concerns that its Chinese ownership represents a national security risk, he has given around six weeks to Microsoft to finalise its acquisition of

TikTok’s US operations.

Even as the US-China ties touched their nadir in recently, and more is likely to come, there seems to be an emerging consensus that America’s China policy has turned a corner. Even in case of Trump’s election defeat, little of substance is likely to change in the US-China bilateral dynamic. An almost five decade long bipartisan consensus across six US presidencies seems to be coming to an end. The conviction that the US should support China’s rise is being replaced with an equally powerful distrust of Chinese motives across domains – economic, political, diplomatic and even academic.

A unified approach

It is accepted that Trump has been right to challenge China on its unfair trade practices and aggressive geopolitical moves. The Democratic nominee, Joe Biden, is not challenging the fundamentals of this Trumpian approach.

The question remains can the US manage China on its own? In his speech, Pompeo underlined the Trump administration’s strategy toward China as “getting tough” which had to be aided by like-minded nations. Calling upon democracies, he said “we, the free nations of the world, must induce change in the [Chinese Communist Party’s] behaviour in more assertive ways, because Beijing’s actions threaten our people and our prosperity.” Pompeo is right. Unless world’s major democracies don’t come together in managing China, all of them will lose the larger ideological battle. As this churn sharpens, New Delhi’s task is cut out. It has to speak up more about the fundamental values that bind it to other democracies as it seeks to manage one of the most formidable national security threats it has ever faced in the Himalayan frontier. India’s reticence of yore can no longer be an option.

The writer is Professor of International Relations at King’s College London. His most recent book is India’s Afghan Muddle (HarperCollins). The views expressed are personal.



SO FUNNY

Never run for a bus, train, or man. When one leaves another arrives.

“ My formula for success is rise early, work late, and strike oil. ”

— J. P. Getty



BOMBAY TALKIES

SUHANI SINGH

CHIEN-CHI CHANG MAGNUM PHOTOS

Filmmaker Chaitanya Tamhane (left) with director Alfonso Cuarón



Another film by Tamhane heads to Venice festival

THE first time filmmaker Chaitanya Tamhane travelled to Venice it was with his maiden feature, *Court* (2014), which was part of the Orizzonti (Horizons) section of the festival. He'd return with the Best Film and the Lion of the Future awards. Two years later, he was invited as a juror of the Orizzonti programme. On his third trip, Tamhane travelled with his sophomore feature, the Marathi-language drama, *The Disciple*, of the

'Filmmaking is an unstable profession'

main competition. The jury headed by Oscar-winning actress Cate Blanchett will decide if Tamhane, 33, can have the honour of winning awards in both Orizzonti and main competition.

Following up on a debut which wowed audiences and critics and won the National Award for Best Film, Tamhane says he didn't feel the pressure while working on his second film, which unlike *Court* is a "journey of one protagonist, [has] no formal politics and is a lot more subjective". "Before I started writing I might have felt some anxiety," added Tamhane, who was at the Rolex Arts Weekend in Cape Town in early February. (In 2017-18 he was a protege in cinema, getting to learn from

Alfonso Cuaron) Tamhane is not weighed down by expectations. "I never take anything the world has to say too seriously," he said. "I am immersed in the process of creating." *The Disciple* took two years to research and write, with one year to prepare and shoot, and then another year on post production. That's the time Tamhane says he needs to "do justice to the expression" he has. "I do feel the need to be more productive and disciplined," he added. "But [filmmaking] is an unstable profession and one disaster and you are out."

Tamhane is conscious that he is operating at a time when "it's more about churning out quantity and creating an anxiety in viewers about missing out new series" but he's proud that he is "privileged to stay away" from the rat race. With both his films making it at the Venice Film Festival, it's a strategy that appears to have worked well.

—The writer is Senior Editor, India Today

SHUBH Mangal Zyada Saavdhan required Gajraj Rao to be the bad dad, one who didn't approve of his son's homosexuality and neither his partner. "He was a stubborn man," says Rao of his character, Shankar Tripathi, who represents the narrow-mindedness of the society towards the LGBTQ community.

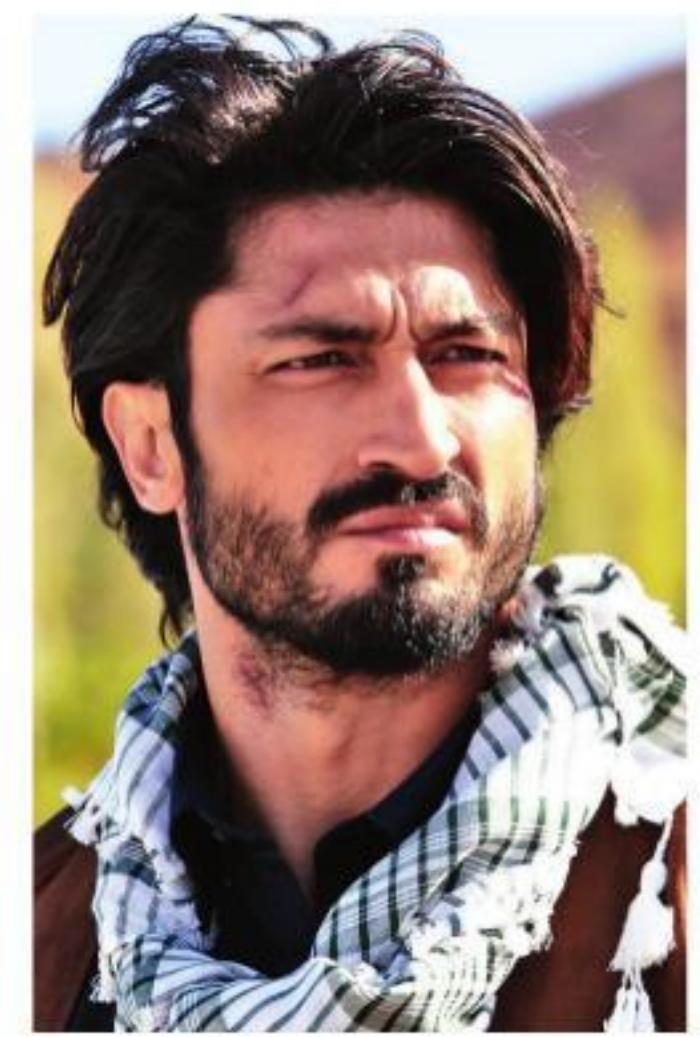
The *Badhaai Ho* actor was heartened with the response he received. "We were worried how people will perceive it," says Rao. "Even if they don't accept homosexuality, they liked how the film treated it within a family drama and situational comedy."

Jammwal's thoughts on going the digital way

VIDYUT Jammwal has the distinction of having two films release on OTT platforms in less than a month. First up there was *Yaara* on Zee5, next is *Khuda Haafiz* on Disney+ Hotstar. Given Jammwal's expertise in action and the scale of those sequences, would they be enjoyed on streaming? "For me nothing is big or small," he said. "This is the right moment and if it is happening then this is it."

"Nothing is big or small. This is the right moment for streaming," says the actor.

Apart from his prowess in martial arts, the actor is also known to interact with his fans who go by the moniker – Jammwilians. Jammwal takes pride in the fact that they "do not troll people, are intelligent and sensible". "I let them know where I am travelling and make it a point to meet them whether it is at the airport or the hotel lobby," he said. "It's a give-take relationship."

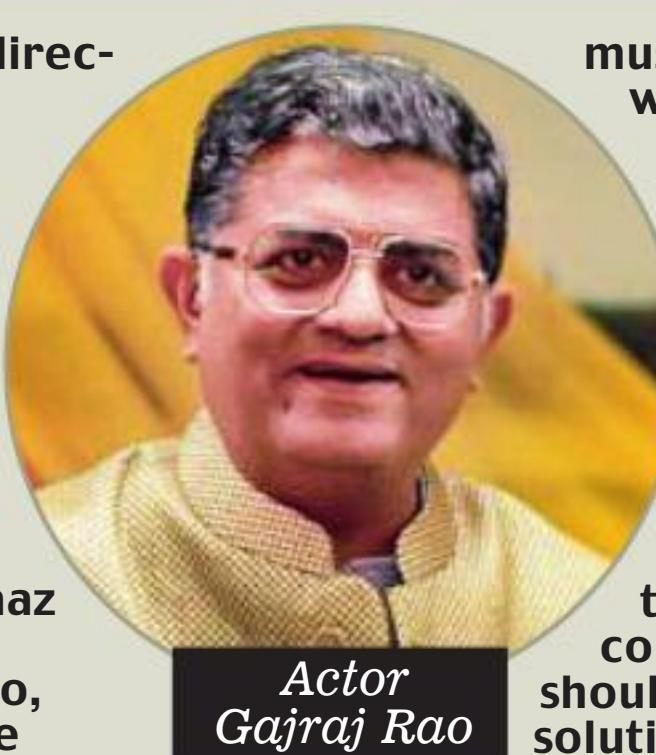


Actor Vidyut Jammwal

VERSATILITY IS SECOND NATURE TO GAJRAJ RAO

Hitesh [Kewalya, writer-director] was clear that he [Tripathi] won't be a convert by the end but that he learns to adjust to the relationship."

SMZS is the closest Rao came to playing a nemesis. In *Lootcase*, streaming on Disney+ Hotstar, Rao plays a corrupt, manipulative politician. Collaborating with Vijay Raaz and Ranvir Shorey on the comedy was great, said Rao, adding how "comedy is like



music if one is off-tune then it won't work".

Up next for Rao is *Maidaan*, a football drama starring Ajay Devgn, which will release in Aug 2021. Meanwhile he has been busy developing a web show to eventually direct.

During the lockdown in Mumbai he has managed to direct at least three commercials from home. "We shouldn't complain but find solutions too," he says.

WORLDLY WISE

Travellers returning to Germany from risk regions will face mandatory coronavirus tests from Saturday, Health Minister Jens Spahn said on Thursday, warning that the accelerating pace of new infections was a cause for concern.



The US is a big country. You can pick out some parts that are looking good and some that don't. You don't get 70,000 cases a day when nothing's going on.

—ANTHONY FAUCI, INFECTIOUS DISEASES EXPERT

Many countries impose stricter curbs to face the threats of a 2nd wave of the virus

WHILE Europe tightened virus restrictions to face the threat of a second wave of Covid-19, US President Donald Trump on Wednesday found himself in the crosshairs of Facebook and Twitter because of a video in which he claims children are almost immune to the new coronavirus.

The worldwide death toll crossed 700,000 as the two US social media giants took action against Trump for spreading what they called misinformation about the virus.

Several European countries and cities re-imposed tighter restrictions, including a wake-up week in Greece and new face mask and quarantine rules elsewhere.

The US tallied another 1,262 deaths and 53,158 cases Wednesday, marking 157,930 total deaths and more than 4.8 million cases — making it by far the worst-hit country in the world.

The continent is the worst hit with 211,764 fatalities

A total of 703,640 deaths have been recorded so far around the world, according to an AFP tally compiled from official sources as of Thursday.

HARDEST-HIT

Europe remains the hardest-hit region with 211,764 fatalities, but the number of deaths is rising fast in Latin America, with 208,329 deaths recorded.

Announcing the re-introduction of restrictions in Greece, government spokesman Stelios Petsas told Mega TV: "We are trying to awaken people with messages and daily announcements on additional measures, citing travel, social gatherings and public transport as major pending concerns."

Restrictions reimposed on the northeast Scottish city of Aberdeen included the closure of all indoor and outdoor hospitality venues starting late Wednesday as First Minister Nicola Sturgeon referred to what could become a significant outbreak.

Toulouse in southwest France made face masks compulsory, with more French cities expected to follow suit.

And Germany included Belgium's Antwerp province on its list of regions requiring arriving travelers to quarantine for 14

Europe jolted by corona scare 2.0



Tourists gather in front of Berlin's iconic Brandenburg Gate on Thursday

COVID-19 PANDEMIC

days unless they can show a negative virus test.

In Belgium, one of the country's biggest meat processing plants, Westvlees, sent 225 staff home to quarantine after a cluster of cases was discovered.

Switzerland added mainland Spain to a quarantine list of 46 countries as well as Singapore and Romania.

In the Netherlands, similar mask-wearing measures came into force in Rotterdam and in some busy neighborhoods of Amsterdam, including its famous red-light district.

TRUMP'S FAUX PAS



- US President Donald Trump on Wednesday found himself in the crosshairs of Facebook and Twitter because of a video in which he claims children are almost immune to the new coronavirus.
- Facebook removed a video clip about the virus from

- Trump's account for violating its content rules.
- Twitter said it had blocked Trump's official campaign account, also for a misinformation violation over a tweet with the same video.

FACEBOOK REACTS

In an extraordinary move late Wednesday, Facebook removed a video clip about the virus from Trump's account.

It was the first time the social network has taken down one of the president's posts for violat-

ing its content rules — for claims that a group of people is immune from COVID-19 which is a violation of our policies around harmful COVID misinformation, a Facebook spokesperson told AFP.

Twitter meanwhile said it had

blocked Trump's official campaign account, also for a misinformation violation over a tweet containing the same video, in which Trump made the case for reopening US schools starting in September.

Soon thereafter, the @TeamTrump account was

A total of 7,03,640 global deaths recorded so far

active, suggesting the contested video had been taken down.

Also in the United States, New York mayor Bill de Blasio, announcing new checkpoints at access roads into the city. The virus killed more than 32,000 people in the city, which was one of its first epicenters in the United States.

—AFP

N KOREA'S VIRUS RESPONSE RAISES FEARS OF OUTBREAK

NORTH KOREA is quarantining thousands of people and shipping food and other aid to a southern city locked down over coronavirus worries, officials said, as the country's response to a suspected case reinforces doubt about its longstanding claim to be virus-free.

But amid the outside skepticism and a stream of North Korean propaganda glorifying its virus efforts, an exchange between Pyongyang and the United Nations is providing new clarity and actual numbers about

what might be happening in the North, which has closed its borders and cut travel near a free-flowing stream by outsider monitors & journalists.

In late July, North Korea said it had imposed its maximum emergency system to guard against the virus spreading after finding a person with Covid-19 symptoms in Kaesong city, near the border with rival South Korea. State media reported that leader Kim Jong Un then ordered a total lockdown of Kaesong.

—AP



Kim Jong Un

AUSTRALIA'S second-biggest city Melbourne began the first day of a six-week total lockdown on Thursday with the closure of most shops and businesses raising new fears of food shortages, as authorities battle a second wave of coronavirus infections.

Shops were shut and streets were deserted in the city of about 5 million people, the capital of Victoria state, which reported 471 new Covid-19 cases and eight deaths in the past 24 hours.

Australia has about 20,000 virus cases

Australia has now recorded about 20,000 Covid-19 cases and 255 fatalities, still far fewer than many other developed nations.

But the Victorian outbreak threatens to spill into other states. New South Wales reported 12 new coronavirus

Six-week lockdown begins in Melbourne



Police officers enforcing the strict lockdown in the city, on Thursday.

cases on Wednesday, taking the national tally to 483. There were no cases reported in other states and territories.

"We've flattened that curve once, we'll flatten that curve again," Health Minister Greg Hunt told reporters.

Victorian Premier Daniel Andrews urged Melbourne

residents, who have already endured weeks of less severe lockdown, to stay calm amid a surge in demand at supermarkets.

"There's no need for people to be trying to stockpile months and months of food," Andrews told reporters in Melbourne.

—Reuters

Macron calls for international aid to help rebuild Beirut ravaged by massive blasts

FRENCH President Emmanuel Macron called for urgent support for Lebanon where he arrived on Thursday, two days after a devastating blast ripped through Beirut, killing 145 people and generating a seismic shock that was felt across the region.

Dozens are still missing after Tuesday's blast at the port that injured 5,000 people and left up to a quarter of a million without homes fit to live in, hammering a nation already reeling from economic meltdown and a surge in Covid-19 cases.

A security source said the death toll was



THE AFTERSHOCKS

likely to rise. The French President, making the first visit by a foreign leader since the explosion, promised to help organise international aid for Lebanon but said its government must implement economic reforms and crack down on corruption.

"If these reforms are not made, Lebanon will continue to suffer," Macron said after being met by his Lebanese counterpart Michel Aoun at Beirut airport. Prime Minister Hassan Diab declared three days of mourning from Thursday after the most devastating explosion ever to hit the city that is still scarred by civil war three decades ago.

DEMANDING REFORM

Offers of medical and other immediate aid have poured in, as officials have said hospitals, some heavily damaged in the blast, do not have enough beds and equipment. But Lebanon was already struggling to secure longer term, economic support. The government's failure to tackle a runaway budget, mounting debt and endemic corruption has prompted Western donors to demand reform.

Meanwhile, some local media reported sightings of drones or planes flying in the area shortly before the explosion and some Beirut residents said they saw missiles fired. But officials have denied the incident was the result of any attack. A Lebanese security source also said that the initial blaze that sparked the explosion was caused by welding work. The World Bank said it would work with Lebanon's partners to mobilise financing for reconstruction. But it was unclear whether this would affect Lebanon's difficult negotiations with the International Monetary Fund. —Reuters



Satellite pics show it's not a nuke blast

By Col Vinayak Bhat
in New Delhi

THE massive explosion at the Beirut port, according to latest updates, was not a nuclear attack, a close study of satellite images of the site indicates. The high resolution satellite images issued by Planet Labs on Wednesday evening make a clear assessment of the damage.

An area of 816 hectares around the point of blast was covered by the satellite image which included

almost the complete area of damage. The satellite image shows that damages caused although alarming are not to the scale of a nuclear blast.

The Beirut blast displayed all signs of a nuclear blast but for the radiations. This sparked conspiracy theories including one that claimed Israel nuked Beirut. The blast blew through the concrete pier and completely destroyed the Warehouse 12 creating a large bowl of water in that place.

PROBE PANEL GETS FOUR DAYS TO FIND CULPRITS

THE government of Lebanon has given an investigative committee four days to determine responsibility for the devastating explosion in Beirut port on Tuesday, Foreign Minister Charbel Wehbe told French radio Thursday. "This morning, a decision was taken to create an investigative committee which in four days maximum must provide a detailed report on responsibility — how, who, what, where? There will be judicial decisions," he said.

"It is serious, and we take it seriously, Wehbe said. Those responsible for this horrible crime of negligence will be punished by a committee of judges," he added. The Beirut Governor estimated up to 300,000 people may have been

made temporarily homeless by the disaster, which he said would cost the debt-ridden country in excess of \$3 billion.

On Wednesday, the government called for the house arrest of those responsible for the storage of a large quantity of ammonium nitrate, a substance used in fertilisers and explosives, in the port of the Lebanese capital. Officials said the explosion was caused by a fire igniting 2,750 tonnes of the substance in a portside warehouse.

Prime Minister Hassan Diab and President Michel Aoun have promised to put the culprits behind bars.

Prime Minister Hassan Diab and President Michel Aoun have promised to put the culprits behind bars, but trust in institutions is low and few on the streets of the Lebanese capital hold out hope of an impartial inquiry.

—AFP

Men inspect the damage near the site of Tuesday's blast in Beirut's port area, Lebanon, on Thursday.



Hiroshima marks 75 years of atomic bombing

PHOTOS: AFP



File photo of the A-bomb Dome, three months after the atomic bomb was dropped over the city of Hiroshima.

BELLS tolled in Hiroshima on Thursday for the 75th anniversary of the world's first atomic bombing, with ceremonies downsized due to the coronavirus and the city's mayor urging nations to reject selfish nationalism and unite to fight all threats. Though thousands usually pack the Peace Park in the centre of the Japanese city to pray, sing and offer paper cranes as a symbol of peace, entrance was sharply limited and only survivors and their families could attend the memorial ceremony.

The city said the significance of the anniversary of the bombing that killed 140,000 people before the end of 1945 had prompted its decision to hold the ceremony

despite the spread of the virus, but taking strict precautions. "On August 6, 1945, a single atomic bomb destroyed our city. Rumour had it that 'Nothing will grow here for 75 years'. And yet, Hiroshima recovered, becoming a symbol of peace," said mayor Kazumi Matsui. At 8:15 am, on August 6, 1945, US B-29 warplane Enola Gay dropped a bomb nicknamed "Little Boy" and obliterated the city with a population of 350,000, where thousands more died later from injuries and radiation-related illnesses.

On Thursday, as cicadas shrilled in the heavy summer heat and the Peace Bell sounded, the crowd stood to observe a moment of silence at the exact time the bomb exploded. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe attended as usual, but the number of foreign visitors was down. The bombing of Hiroshima was followed by the bombing of Nagasaki on August 9, instantly killing more than 75,000 people. Japan surrendered six days later, ending World War Two.



**कार्यालय अधीक्षण यंत्री, ग्रामीण यांत्रिकी सेवा,
भोपाल मण्डल भोपालपुराना सचिवालय भोपाल**
दूरभाष (म) 0755-238774, E-mail_ID: esrshopal@mp.gov.in

निविदा विज्ञप्ति क्र. - 01/2020-21 दिनांक : 05/08/2020
क्रमांक 953 मण्डल अंतर्गत नियमित्वात् कार्यों हेतु आंतर्नाल निविदायें आमंत्रित की जाती हैं। उल्लिखित कार्यों का विस्तृत विवरण येबसाइट <https://mptenders.gov.in> पर देखा जा सकता है।

क्र.	ग्रामीण समाजीक्षण कार्यालय	सिस्टम टेक्नॉलॉजी	कार्य का प्रकार	निर्माण कार्यों की अनुमति लागत (लाख में)
01	परियोजना सम्पादन भोपाल 100636_1	2020_RES	नियमित्वानी "विकास भवन सह ई गवर्नेंस सेटर"	462.22
			अरेस्ट हिस्ट्री भोपाल स्कॉलर्स, ईस्टर्नशेन, टेस्टिंग एवं कॉडिंग	

उपरोक्त निविदाओं के निविदा प्रपत्र (टेंडर डाक्यूमेंट), येबसाइट : <https://mptenders.gov.in> पर अंतर्नाल भुगतान कर क्रम विधे जा सकते हैं। अंतर्नाल भुगतान कर क्रम विधे प्रक्रिया प्रारंभ करने की तिथि 10.08.2020 समय 18:00 बजे है। निविदा (विड) प्रपत्र प्रस्तुत करने का अंतिम दिनांक 24.08.2020 समय 17.00 बजे तक है। यस्तु निविदा सुनहरा व अच्युत जानकारी वेब साईट पर देखी जा सकती है एवं कार्यालय में संपर्क कर भी प्राप्त की जा सकती है। संरोक्षण सर्वेत सूचनाएँ केवल येबसाइट पर ही जारीगी। पृष्ठ से प्रकाशन नहीं किया जावेगा।

इनी/ अधीक्षण यंत्री, ग्रामीण यांत्रिकी सेवा
भोपाल मण्डल भोपाल

G-12931/20, Date-06.08.2020

NORTHERN RAILWAY
OPEN E-TENDER NOTICE

For and on behalf of the President of India, the Divisional Railway Manager (Mechanical), Northern Railway, Delhi Division invites E-Tender for following work from experienced and capable tenderers.

Tender No.	197-S/183/CAMC-RO/C&W/DLI/20/MC-IV
Name of work	Comprehensive Annual Maintenance Contract (CAMC) of Water Purifiers and Reserve Osmosis (RO) systems of C&W depots over Delhi division for two years.
Advertised Tender Value	₹32,83,061.10/- (Excluding GST)
Earnest Money in favour of Sr. DFM/NR, New Delhi	₹65,700/- (Note: It should be in the form of net banking or gateway only. FDR not be accepted as EMD for tender invited on IREPS)
Date & Time of submission of tender bid	Upto 31.08.2020 at 12:00 hrs.
Website particulars where complete details of tender documents can be seen	www.ireps.gov.in
No. : 197-S/183/CAMC-RO/C&W/DLI/20/MC-IV	
Dated: 03.08.2020	1706/20

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

NATIONAL FERTILIZERS LIMITED
(A Govt. of India Undertaking)
A-11, Sector-24, Noida-201301, Ph: 0120-2412294,
2412445, Extn: 1130/1114, Fax: 0120-2412397
(CIN-L74899DL1974GOI007417)

NOTICE INVITING TENDER-CUM-PRE-QUALIFICATION OF PARTIES

OPERATION & MAINTENANCE OF FIRE FIGHTING, FIRE ALARM & PA SYSTEM IN OFFICE

For details, visit website : www.nationalfertilizers.com

Last date of Tender: **21.08.2020 (3.00 PM)**

Note: For any corrigendum, in future, refer to our website.

Chief Manager (HR)
NFL : FARMERS' FRIEND, NATION'S PRIDE

NORTHERN RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE (Through e-tendering)

Name of work with its location	Provision of GRFL Inland Container Depot Railway Siding at Garhi Harsaru in c/w Re-Location of the proposed handling line No. 1 & 2 of Phase-II inside the GRFL Premises at Garhi Harsaru Station on Delhi-Rewari section.
App. Cost of the work (₹)	₹ 20,96,335/- only
Earnest Money Deposit (₹)	₹ 41,900/- only
Address of the office	Senior Divisional Signal & Telecom Engineer-I, Northern Railway, 2 nd Floor, Annex-1, DRM Office, New Delhi-110055.
Date & Time for upload the tender / closing of tender	Tender uploading / closing date & time - 02.09.2020 up to 15.00 hrs.
Website particular & notice board location where complete details of the tender can be seen etc.	See the Northern Railway website www.ireps.gov.in & Notice board at S&T branch, 3 rd Floor, DRM Office, State Entry Road, New Delhi-110055.
No. 558-Sig-16-M-Tender-1346	Dated: 05.08.2020

1708/20
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

KASHMIR POWER DISTRIBUTION CORPORATION LIMITED (KPDCL)
(Fully Owned Government of J&K Undertaking)
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (Planning)
PLANNING & PROCUREMENT WING, KASHMIR
Email: epndcs@gmail.com

EXTENSION NOTICE

In view of the requests from the prospective Bidders and to ensure fair participation, extension in critical dates is given to e- NIT NO: SE/EPL/e-NIT-06 of 2020-21 dated 20.06.2020, "PURCHASE OF 33KV OUTDOOR VACUUM CIRCUIT BREAKERS FOR USE AT 33/11KV SUBSTATIONS" detailed as under.

1.	Submission of e-Bid (end) Date and Time	17.08.2020 15:00 Hrs
2.	Submission of Hard Copy (end) Date and Time	19.08.2020 16:00 Hrs in the office of the Chief Engineer P&P wing, PDD Complex, Bemina, Srinagar
3.	Commercial / Technical Bid Opening Date and Time	21.08.2020 at 14:00 Hrs

All other terms and conditions as stipulated in the original NIT shall remain same.

Sd/-
Superintending Engineer
Planning (KPDCL)

DIPK-NB-1705/20, Date-06.08.2020

GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
MINISTRY OF DEFENCE

Applications/bio-data are invited in the prescribed format to fill up eight vacancies of Judicial Members and five vacancies of Administrative Members in the Armed Forces Tribunal. The details of eligibility conditions, other information and prescribed format of bio-data may be downloaded from the Ministry of Defence's website www.mod.nic.in and the Armed Forces Tribunal website www.aftdelhi.nic.in. The last date of receipt of applications in the Department for the posts of Judicial & Administrative Members is **25th August, 2020**. It may be noted that the previous advertisement of this Ministry dated 25.07.2019 in this regard has been scrapped consequent on the announcement of Hon'ble Supreme Court's final verdict dated 13.11.2019 in Civil Appeal NO.8588/2019 titled "Rojer Mathews v South Indian Bank Ltd" in which "the Tribunal, Appellate Tribunal and other Authorities (Qualifications, Experience and other Conditions of Service of Members) Rules, 2017" were quashed in its entirety. Therefore, such applicants who had applied previously vide circular dated 25.07.2019 will have to apply afresh now. The applications should be addressed to Under Secretary (AFT Cell), Ministry of Defence, Room No.308-A, 'B' Wing, Sena Bhawan, New Delhi: 110011.

davp 10146/11/0001/2021

PROCLAMATION REQUIRING THE APPEARANCE OF ACCUSED PERSON**See Section 82 Cr. P.C.**

Whereas complaint has been made before me that accused Aahat S/o Late Abdul Hamid R/o 3777, 4th Floor, Gali Magen wali, Choori Walan, Delhi-06 has committed (or is suspected to have committed) the offence in case registered vide FIR No. 161/19 u/s 379/411/34 IPC, P.S. Jama Masjid, Delhi. It has been returned to a warrant of arrest thereupon issued that the accused Aahat could not be found and whereas it has been shown to my satisfaction that the said accused Aahat has absconded (or is concealing himself to avoid the service of the said warrant).

Proclamation is hereby made that the said accused Aahat is required to appear before this court to answer the said complaint on or before 29.09.2020.

By Order
Ms. Gita

Metropolitan Magistrate-01 (Central Distt.)

Room No. 180, First Floor

DP/245/CD/2020(Court Matter) Tis Hazari Courts, Delhi

HIMACHAL PRADESH
JAL SHAKTI VIBHAG

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

Sealed item rate tender on form PWD/IPH 6 & 8 are hereby invited by the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Division Sarkaghat on behalf of the Governor of Himachal Pradesh for the work from the appropriate approved and eligible contractors/firms enlisted in I&PH (H.P.) Department so as to reach in his office on or before dt. **11-08-2020 upto 11.00 A.M** and will be opened on the same day at **11.30 A.M.** in the presence of the intending contractors/firms or their authorized representatives who may be present at the time of opening of Tender. The application for issue of tender form will be received along with cost of tender form upto **10-08-2020 till 4:00 P.M.** The tender forms are also available for download on department website "www.hph.org" and the cost of form should be in the shape of D.D in favour of Executive Engineer Jal Shakti Division, Sarkaghat or in cash, which should be submitted with the tender failing which tender will not be opened. The date of sale / receipt and opening of tender shall be considered as next working day if holiday happens of above specified date.

The earnest money (unless exemption) in the shape of National saving certificate / time deposit account and Post Office Saving Bank Account in H.P. duly pledged in the name of Executive Engineer IPH Division Sarkaghat must accompany with each tender. The tender of the contractor who do not deposit the earnest money in the prescribed manner shall be summarily rejected. Conditional tenders /tender without earnest money will summarily be rejected. However the Executive Engineer reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders without assigning any reasons. The offer of the tender shall be kept open for **120 days**. 1% labour cess shall be deducted from every running bill in addition to security, income tax and sale tax.

S. No.	Name of work	Estimated Cost	Earnest money	Cost of from	Time limit.
1	Providing LWSS to P.C Habitation C.V Garoru Chhimba Ka Balh in G.P Pingla Tehsil Sarkaghat Distt Mandi H.P (SH:-Laying, Jointing & testing of R/Main & Supplying and Installation of Centrifugal Pumping Machinery with allied accessories) (UNDER JAL JIWAN MISSION) Job No.2	439421/-	8800/-	250/-	Three Months

Eligibility Criteria: -

The contractor/Firm submitted the following documents at the time of purchase tender:

1. The earnest money or certificate of exemption of Earnest Money.
2. The contractor/Firm should be registered & renewed with I & PH Department alongwith his application seeking for tender form.
3. The Copy of PAN Card, GST registration and latest annual Income tax return thereof.
4. The firm/contractor shall submit EPF/ESIS registration in case the same is not available at the time of tender it should be submitted before commencement of any work awarded to him/ her failing which no work will be awarded.
5. The firms/contractors have to submit the affidavit specifying that the benefit availed under earnest money exemption has not been exhausted so far. Any wrong submission in the matter will directly lead to cancellation of your tender. In case the contractor fails to submit the required affidavit then he has to submit the earnest money.
6. The contractor must quote their rates in words as well in figures. Failing which their tender form shall not be considered.
7. The conditional or single tender will be rejected.
8. The participating contractor shall submit requisite similar work done certificate issued by an officer not below rank of Executive Engineer failing which the tender shall summarily be rejected.

No.EE-IPH-SKT-CB-Tender/2020-3730-3800, Dated:- 31-07-2020.
2031/2020-2021 dt. 06/08/2020

HIM SUCHNA AVAM JAN SAMPARK

Sd/-
Executive Engineer,
Jal Shakti Division,
Sarkaghat.

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY
Tender Notice for Maintenance Cleaning and upkeep

Tender No: RSO - BSP - 2020 - 06.
Date : 31.07.2020

Name of Work : Maintenance Cleaning and upkeep of hostel, Training center, simulator building, lavatories and campus & development of Garden of Electric loco Training Center ELTC/ USL and ELTC/ BSP (Old building of Diesel training centre, Bilaspur for a period of Two year.
Tender Value : ₹ 1,04,9,721.76/-
EMD: ₹ 2,02,500/- **Submission of Tender :** upto 15:00 hrs. on dtd. 24.08.2020. **Opening of Tender :** 15:30 hrs. on dtd. 24.08.2020.

For further details, eligibility criteria & the complete details for the above work, please contact office of the Sr. Divisional Electrical Engineer (OP)/ BSP, South East Central Railway or refer/ download, tender document which is available on our website: www.ireps.gov.in.

Divi. Elect. Engg./O.P.

CPR/10/192 S.E.C. Railway, Bilaspur

South East Central Railway @seceil



Model Merdan Ghappar (Above) with his arms handcuffed to a bed inside his cell (Right).

By Ankit Kumar in New Delhi

LEAKED communication, including text messages, pictures and videos sent from an Uyghur detention facility now give us a first-hand account of what goes inside China's "re-education camps".

Communication from Merdan Ghappar published by BBC and Globe and Mail furnish a rare glimpse of alleged human rights violations underway in the Chinese detention centres for Uyghur Muslims. Ghappar is an Uyghur model who managed to carry a phone during his detention.

A translation of the text messages from Ghappar sent to family members, separately published by James Millward, a professor of history at Georgetown University, suggests that detainees are kept in small caged rooms where there is not enough room for everyone to sleep lying down.

News of Ghappar's detention first surfaced on social media earlier in March of this year.

The 30-year-old model, who worked with retail company Taobao was taken to a detention camp earlier this year. Ghappar's family outside China has not heard from him since.

Accounts claimed that Merdan Ghappar's 16-year-old brother was also arrested by authorities on terror charges owing to his browsing history that included visits to "foreign websites".

LOCKED IN ROOMS

"I saw 50-60 people were locked in a small room not 50 meters square in area," Ghappar wrote in his message. "Because there were too many people and the space so small, not every person could sleep lying down, some had to sit with their legs curled up," an English translation of his message read.

Images and videos sent by Ghappar show him handcuffed and

attached to a bed inside a quarantine centre.

Chinese authorities had shifted detainees running a high temperature to nearby facilities when novel coronavirus infections were on the rise in the region. Ghappar was one of the detainees who were moved to isolation after he exhibited symptoms of Covid-19.

COVER FACES

The extreme living conditions described by Merdan Ghappar suggest that all detainees are required to cover themselves in a four-piece suit and a hood aimed at covering their faces the entire time.

"There was only one window and one working fan for a small room having as much as fifty detainees. The carpet was incredibly dirty, with lots of garbage and lice," he wrote. Ghappar's messages reveal that as the Covid-19 epidemic broke, cops told the detainees to wear masks underneath their cloth hoods.

"A hood and a mask, there was even less air, and that day they had not opened the win-

A first-hand account of what goes on inside China's re-education camps

dow," the Uyghur model wrote in his communication with kin.

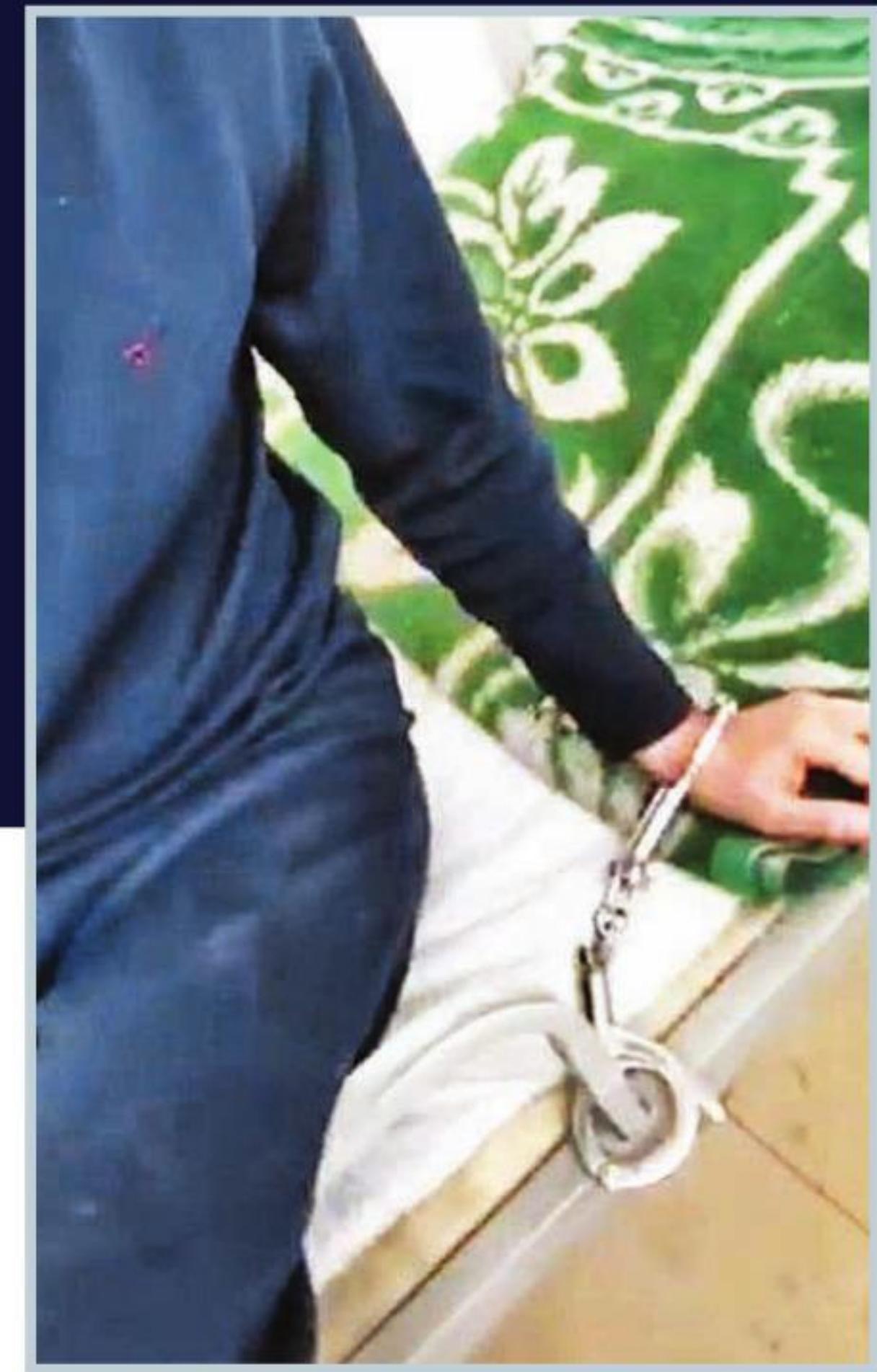
1-3 MILLION IN CAMPS

Merdan Ghappar is one of the millions of Uyghur men and women whose families have not heard from them in recent months.

Earlier, US-based Uyghur activist Rushan Abbas had told India Today that China has been using these camps to carry out genocide. "My sister Dr Gulshan Abbas, a retired medical doctor is one of those who was abducted by the Chinese government and sent to one of these camps," Dr Abbas told India Today's Rahul Kanwal.

Some estimates suggest that between one to three million ethnic Uyghur detainees are being kept inside these camps.

China's Communist Party regime enforces an extreme vigil on the flow of any information about these camps. While the rest of the world relies on such rare evidence of Chinese brutality, demands to hold China accountable are now growing louder.



TALES OF HORROR EXPOSED

■ News of Merdan Ghappar's detention first surfaced on social media earlier in March of this year.

■ The extreme living conditions described by Ghappar suggest that all detainees are required to cover themselves in a four-piece suit.

■ Some estimates suggest that between 1-3 million ethnic Uyghur detainees are kept inside these camps.

Former Prez Rajapaksa wins Sri Lanka polls, PM Modi sends his good wishes

By Geeta Mohan
in New Delhi

MAHINDRA Rajapaksa made a comeback with a resounding victory in the parliamentary elections held on Wednesday. While the counting continued for some of the seats at the time of filing this report, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa declared the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) winners at the Parliament polls, based on results released.

"@PodujanaParty has won a landslide victory in #LKAElections2020 results released so far. I am confident of the capability of establishing a strong parliament to implement #visitasofprosperity with the power given to us," the President tweeted.

India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi was the first world leader to call Mahinda Rajapaksa & congratulate him.

"Thank you PM @narendramodi for your congratula-



Mahinda Rajapaksa

tory phone call. With the strong support of the people of #Sri-Lanka, I look forward to working with you closely to further enhance the long-standing cooperation between our two countries. Sri Lanka & India are friends & relations," Rajapaksa tweeted.

PM Modi responded with a tweet saying, "Thank you, Prime Minister @PresRajapaksa! It was a pleasure to speak to you. Once again, many congratulations. We will work together to further advance all areas of bilateral cooperation and to take our special ties to ever newer heights."

The elections were critical for the Rajapaksas to consolidate their position in the island nations.

India flays China for trying to raise J&K at UNSC forum

By Geeta Mohan
in New Delhi

INDIA hit out at China for making yet another effort to raise the Kashmir issue at the UN Security Council as it asked Beijing to draw proper conclusions from such "infructuous attempts" and "firmly" rejected its "interference" in the country's internal affairs.

China on Wednesday backed an attempt by Pakistan to discuss the Kashmir issue at the

China backs Pakistan over Kashmir issue

UN Security Council. This coincided with the first anniversary of the reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir by India. However, the attempt did not succeed.

In its reaction, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said it firmly rejects China's interference in India's internal affairs.

"We have noted that China initiated a discussion in the UN Security Council on issues pertaining to the Indian Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir," the Ministry of External Affairs said in a statement.

"This was not the first time



Security personnel stand guard on a street in the wake of the anniversary of removal of Article 370, in Srinagar.

that China has sought to raise a subject that is solely an internal matter of India. As on such previous occasions, this attempt too met with little support from the international community," the MEA said.

The MEA added, "We firmly reject China's interference in our internal affairs and urge it to draw proper conclusions from such infructuous attempt."

The move by China to internationalise the Kashmir issue came at a time it is engaged in a bitter border row with India in eastern Ladakh.

China has been critical of India's reorganisation of J&K, and has particularly criticised New Delhi for making Ladakh a union territory. China lays claim over several parts of Ladakh.

A musical arc

ACOLD-blooded assassin in *Hey Ram*, a victim of political conspiracy in *Khakee*, a ruthless character with no

moral values in *Chandni Bar*, one who undergoes a complete transformation in *Rang De Basanti* — Atul Kulkarni believes in stretching his net out wide. This time around, with *Bandish Bandits*, a web series that dropped on Amazon Prime on August 4, he has extended that further.

"I play a modern person well-versed in Hindustani classical music," he says. The only catch: Kulkarni doesn't have a musical bone in his body. "I am one of the few people who don't like music. I have tried to listen to different kinds but it didn't strike a chord. I love the silence after the music has ended. To play

a classical singer, adept at *sargams* and *alaaps*, is difficult. Earlier, when I saw a film, I often wondered how an actor could play a singer convincingly," he says.

Another challenge was that Kulkarni had to imitate singer-composer Shankar Mahadevan who was the playback for him. "He can do a long *alaap* in one breath. The audience can see if I stopped for a breath in between on the screen. I had to train for these nuances. You don't have to master the music but have portray it well on screen. However, to say that I understood classical music after this wouldn't be the truth,"

he says.

Kulkarni says, just like other projects, it was the storyline that made him say yes to this. "It's very well-layered, as is the norm in a web series. There are many characters and several parallel tracks done wonderfully. It's a love story on the face of it but also about modern and traditional music. And I have a backstory with Naseer bhai's character, Pan-ditji. The character, Dig Vijay Rathore, goes through a range of emotions — love, hurt, hate and ambition," explains Kulkarni.

Having switched to a new platform, the actor sees merit

in it. "The technique is the same for both, web shows and cinema, but the elaboration of the story and the character is interesting in the former. Episodes of 40-45 minutes offer an expanse which is less in a film. Moreover, when you repeat the character during the second or third season, you aren't the same person and approach it differently. That is a fantastic possibility. To go vertical into the depth you have to go horizontal to get the nuances, he says.

Kulkarni also enjoyed working with the director Anand Tiwari. "He understands the show, its music, emotions and more. He is directing 10 episodes of 35-40 minutes which translates into 350 minutes of material. To keep a grip on that requires a mastery which Anand has," he says.

Bandish Bandits, actor Atul Kulkarni's OTT foray, helped him discover the fascinating world of *sargams* and *alaaps*



The other Khurrana is on a roll

By Suhani Singh

THE lights and camera were off for the last four months but Aparshakti Khurana continued the show. He did Instagram Lives with different professionals, from a psychiatrist to a fitness trainer, started online *antakshri* on the platform, gained 200,000 followers and released two songs including the latest *Ghanta*.

In 2020 Khurana is taking a leap from being the hero's friend (*Stree*, *Luka Chuppi*, *Pati, Patni aur Woh*) to a lead with *Helmet*. He wasn't the first choice. "It did the rounds and then it came to the back-up list in which I was at top," he says. Khurana has patiently waited for the opportunity to be centrestage but he isn't averse to supporting parts provided they enable him to showcase his skills. "You want to grow and do better things in life and reach bigger stages," he adds. With three days of work left on *Helmet*, Khurana isn't certain if it will make it to cinemas or digital platforms in 2020 but he feels a "happy nervousness to deliver".

Three years junior to Ayushmann, Aparshakti

ALIA Bhatt and Aditya Roy Kapoor's *Sadak 2* will be released on August 28 on Disney+ Hotstar. Alia shared the news on her official Instagram page with a new poster of the much-awaited movie. "Sadak 2, the road to love streaming on @Disney-PlusHotstarVIP from 28 August," Alia wrote in the caption. The film is a sequel to her father, veteran filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt's 1991 crime drama of the same name, starring Pooja Bhatt and Sanjay Dutt. With *Sadak 2*, Bhatt returns to the director's chair after almost two decades. It also marks his first collaboration with Alia. Both Pooja Bhatt and Sanjay Dutt are reprising their characters from the original in the new movie.

It is a sequel to Mahesh Bhatt's 1991 film.

Online release for *Sadak 2*

The details of the plot are not yet known. The movie also stars Jisshu Sengupta, Makarand Deshpande, Gulshan Grover, Priyanka Bose, Mohan Kapur and Akshay Anand. Produced by Vishesha Films and Fox Star Studios, the movie was originally scheduled to be released in cinemas on July 10. Due to the uncertainty around the reopening of theatres, it is being released online. —PTI



hasn't led comparisons with his star sibling weigh on him. The brothers have collaborated on the track *Ik Vaari* in 2016. "The audience never compares us," he says. "We are in different spaces and we don't intrude in each other spaces." Aparshakti is busy on his own journey. It looks exciting with another film and a web series in the pipeline.

Perks of doing a web series

Actor Aahana Kumra likes the eclectic variety that OTT platforms provide her

By Suhani Singh

WHEN it comes to OTT platforms Aahana Kumra has little to complain about. She's done *Inside Edge* (Amazon Prime), *Rangbaaz* and *Bombers* (both on Zee5), and had two shows release during the lockdown, *Betaal* (Netflix) and *Marzi* (Voot Select). Work on a comedy series to be directed by Rohan Sippy which will stream on SonyLIV, has begun. She's covered all major platforms, but there's hunger for more. "I want a show where I am leading," she says, "do a female-centric show." OTT keeps her challenged and motivated. "There's variety which surprises me."

With films though, she admits, it's a trying process. Thus far she has featured in *Lipstick Under My Burkha* and *The Accidental Prime Minister*. "I'm still trying to understand how Bollywood works. The OTT process is simpler, it's translucent; Bollywood is opaque," she says. "They don't want to work with anybody

new, and if they do, it's smaller parts." It doesn't help that these are few and far between. Furthermore, she admits to not knowing when films are cast.

Those obstacles thankfully didn't come her way for *Khuda Haafiz* in which she plays an Arab cop. The film featuring Vidhu Jamwal will release on Disney+ Hotstar. It's her first "big Bollywood masala

Kumra did her own stunts and spoke in Arabic

film". Kumra was apprehensive to take on a supporting part which required her to speak Arabic and Hindi tinged with Arabic accent and do stunts. While she trained in Arabic with a professor in University of Mumbai, action happened in Uzbekistan under the guidance of stunt director Andy Long. It'd be the first time that



Kumra understood that "there is choreography to action". "Long shoots himself, edits and when he showed me my bits I nearly cried because it made me look so good."

Apart from *Khuda Haafiz*, Kumra will be seen in the play *One on One Unlocked* to be streamed on Insider.in on August 14. Kumra's monologue, *Haan Nandubhai*, centres on an actress feeling the effects of the lockdown. She has shot pending for the final episode of Sony Sports show *Colour Me Blue* in which she has interviewed Indian cricketers Harmanpreet Kaur, Smriti Mandhana and Jhulan Goswami at their homes.



'EVERY ACTOR HAS A NICHE'

After both critical and public acclaim in *Badhai Ho*, actor Gajraj Rao now stars in *Lootcase* that recently dropped on an OTT platform

By Saimi Sattar

You were one of the first people to be signed up for *Lootcase*?

Rajesh Krishnan and Kapil Sawant had just finished writing *Lootcase* in 2015 when they spoke to me. I play a politician who is great at rigging things to his advantage. It is grey character. He scares people indirectly. I have admired Rajesh's work for several years in the ad film industry. When I was asked to star in the film, I agreed immediately.

The film is being released on the OTT platform. Is that disappointing?

The script was written in 2014-15. In 2017 we talked about it when I was doing *Badhai Ho*. I was glad to take it on as it was a different kind of role. It was supposed to be released in October 2019. But there were several big films and so it was postponed to April 2020 when the lockdown happened. So, we decided to release it on OTT.

But what I would like to point out is that the audience remains the same irrespective of the platform. On the other hand, more people will watch it on OTT. As long as the audience can appreciate or constructively criticise it, it is good.



Content has changed. What do you attribute this to?

The young writers like Amit Sharma, Zoya or Shakun Batra and more are not limited by any boundary. They watch everything from *Game of Thrones* to world cinema. The exposure has transformed our cinema. These writers and directors are not scared to tell unusual stories.

Would you also say that more of actors are coming to the fore as opposed to stars?

Everything is not black and white in cinema just like in life. There has to be a balance. In the last three-four months I have seen 50 old films of a variety of actors ranging from Amitabh Bachchan to Hrithik Roshan to Govinda. If

'The younger writers and directors these days are not scared to take up unusual storylines'

we need Tiger Shroff, we can't take Rajkumar Rao or Gajraj Rao. No one will put money in the film. Everyone has a niche. Both type of cinema exist at the same time. When Amitabh Bachchan was a star, so was Amol Palekar or even

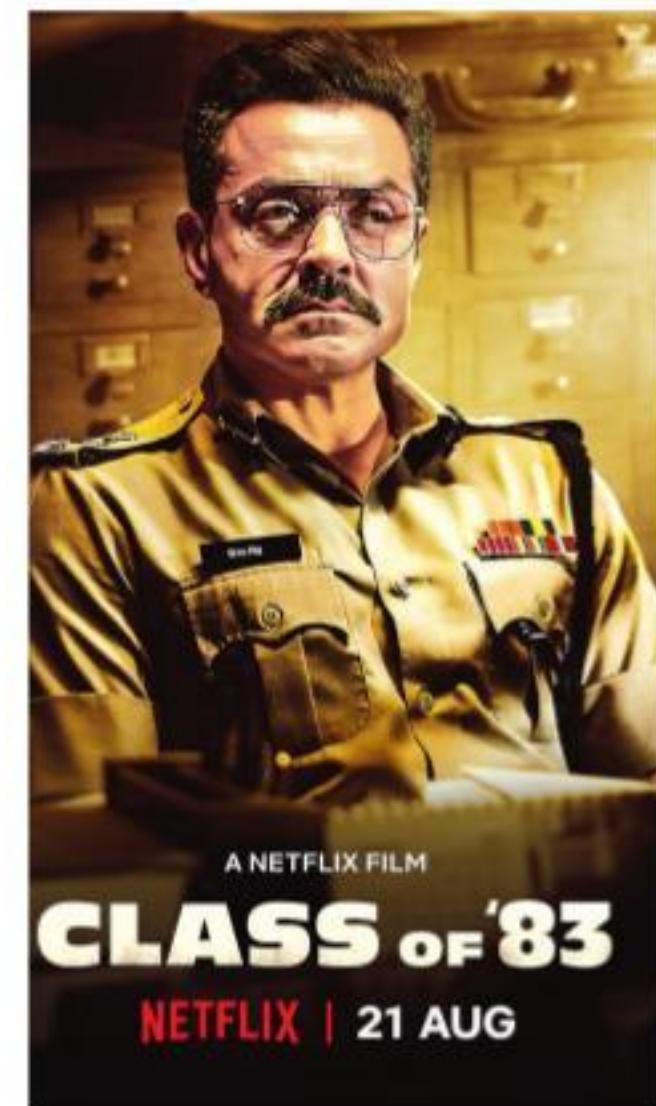
Farooq Shaikh. Manmohan Desai and Yash Chopra co-existed with Basu Bhattacharya and Hrishikesh Mukherjee. Stars are needed to take us away from reality. And to tell us that you can fight 50 goons and win.

Nepotism is a debate that has been raging in the industry of late...

When the film drops, that is when janta's verdict comes out. I don't know anything else. Talent and work are important.

BOBBY: DRAWN TO INTENSITY OF MY CHARACTER

ACTOR Bobby Deol says he's excited for his digital debut with Netflix's *Class of '83* which he immediately agreed to star in as it gave him a chance to revisit the 1980s. The film explores the story of an upright policeman-turned-trainer whose students grapple with the complexities of honour, morals and devotion to the nation. Produced by Red Chillies Entertainment, *Class of '83* has been directed by Atul Sabharwal and penned by Abhijit Deshpande. "The 80s was a fascinating period in Mumbai's history and this film allowed me to



The 80s were a fascinating period.'

live and feel that era all over again. When Atul and Red Chillies Entertainment approached me, I was drawn by the intensity and depth of the character and knew right away that I had to be part of *Class Of '83*," Bobby said in a statement. The 51-year-old actor, who stars as Dean Vijay Singh, said the movie was the perfect project for his plunge into the digital world. "I love the sheer variety of content a digital medium has to offer and it's truly encouraging to know that your work can reach so many people across

the world... It's my first attempt on digital and it also happens to be the first film by RCE and Netflix together. It's an exciting and challenging time to be an actor and I am super excited that everyone gets to see the trailer tomorrow and the film on 21 August," he added. The film also stars Annup Soni, Joy Sengupta, Vishwajeet Pradhan, Bhupendra Jadavat, Ninad Mahajani, Hitesh Bhojraj, Sameer Paranjape and Prithvik Pratap. Bobby was last seen on the big screen in 2019 ensemble comedy, *Housefull 4*.

—PTI



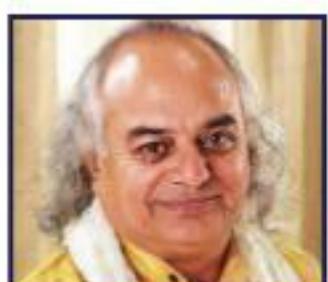
A tell-all book on the epic

A NEW book, published on the 60th anniversary of one of India's greatest movies *Mughal-e-Azam*, captures the rare and most interesting stories from behind-the-scenes of the Dilip Kumar and Madhubala-starrer. *Daastan-e-Mughal-e-Azam*, written by Rajkumar Keswani, tells these tales of sweat and toil, mirth and tears, love affairs and ego wars, passion and fervour — that went into the making of the epic film, Manjul Publishing House said. The film premiered on August 5, 1960 and went on to become one of the most celebrated classics in the annals of Hindi cinema. Director K Asif featured a glittering ensemble of

top stars of the time, including the then heart-throbs Dilip Kumar and Madhubala, and the legendary Prithviraj Kapoor in the lead roles. The book captures Asif's steely resolve that saw him through the over-wrought, and over-stretched, filming schedule besides interesting anecdotes and trivia. The book has 25 paintings by master painter MF Husain from the private collection of Asif's son Akbar Asif. —PTI

RANA Daggubati shares picture from haldi ceremony shared a picture with interior designer fiance Miheeka Bajaj from their haldi ceremony, ahead of their wedding on August 8. Rana, 35, took to Instagram and posted a picture from the pre-wedding festivity. While he sported a white shirt with a matching lungi, Miheeka wore a bright yellow lehenga. "And life moves forward in smiles. Thank you," the Baahubali star captioned the image with a heart emoticon. The duo made their relationship official with a roka ceremony in May this year. —PTI

TWO PAGES OF ASTROLOGY, PUZZLES AND GENERAL KNOWLEDGE



By Dr Ajai Bhambi

ARIES Apr 14-May 14

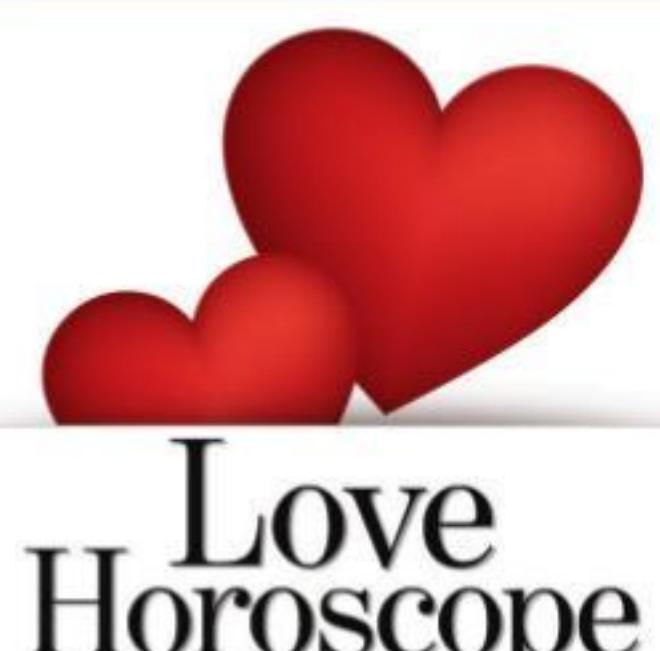
You could be a bundle of nerves as you get to meet the family of your lover. However, all will be well and you are going to be nicely welcomed by all of them.

TAURUS May 15-June 15

Don't throw caution to the winds. It is time to go slow, go steady and be very practical. You could land up in a soup and there might be no one to rescue you.

GEMINI June 16-July 15

It will be a calm day. There is no special event that is going to take place. You will be happy to spend time with your beloved, content in each other's company.



*Dates based on Vedic Sun Signs

LEO Aus 16-Sep 15

You will be calmer now than you have been for quite some time. The stress of working life lessens and you get to enjoy the company of your loved one.

VIRGO Sep 16-Oct 15

You may not get the results you desire. Your love life will not suffer unduly but happiness can be lacking. It may be that more effort is required on your part.

LIBRA Oct 16-Nov 15

You would like a change of partners and be a real social butterfly as well. It will be enjoyable while it lasts and you will be happy with the way things are for the time being.

SCORPIO Nov 16-Dec 15

A nice experience awaits you when you get to meet your sweetheart. It could be a surprise gift. You are going to feel the love and affection much more.

SAGITTARIUS

Dec 16-Jan 13
It is a day when lots will happen. News from overseas is packed with potential. Socialising will take top priority and you will enjoy attending an event with your lover.

CAPRICORN

Jan 14-Feb 11
A short distance journey can be made to visit your love interest. A joyful romance will come alive once again on this trip. There will be much to discuss and catch up on.

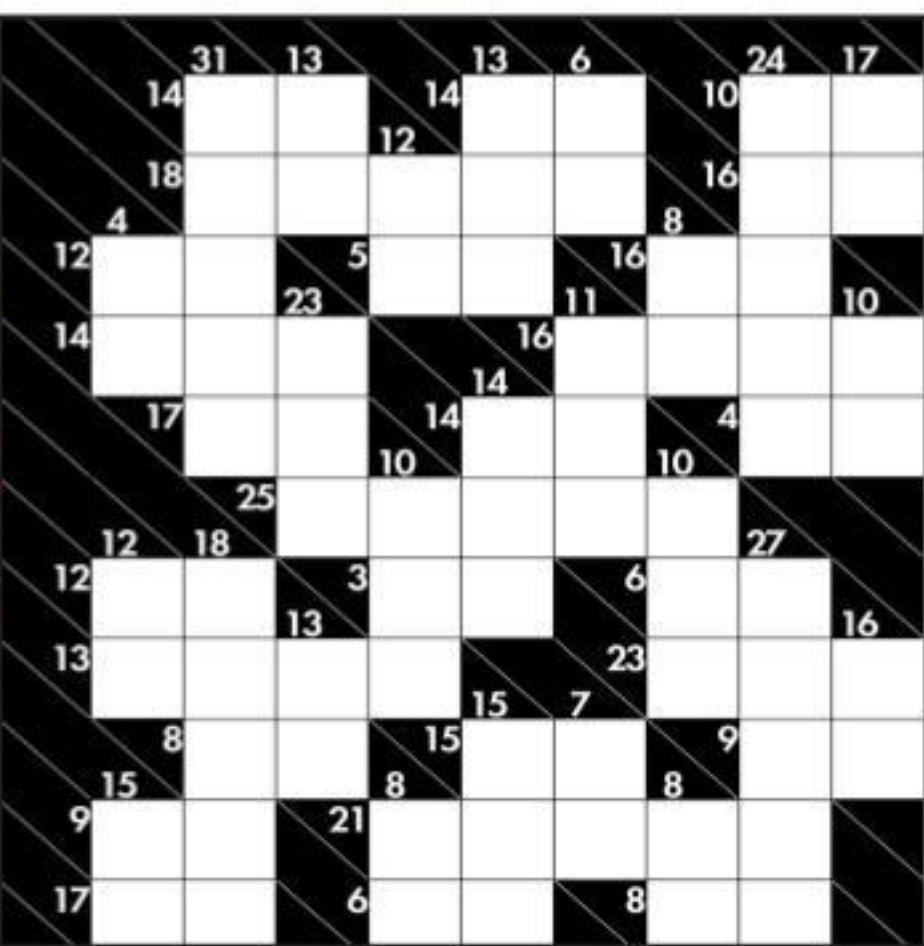
AQUARIUS

Feb 12-March 13
You may not be able to complete all your office tasks and can carry work home. This is not going to be liked by your beloved who is waiting to spend time with you.

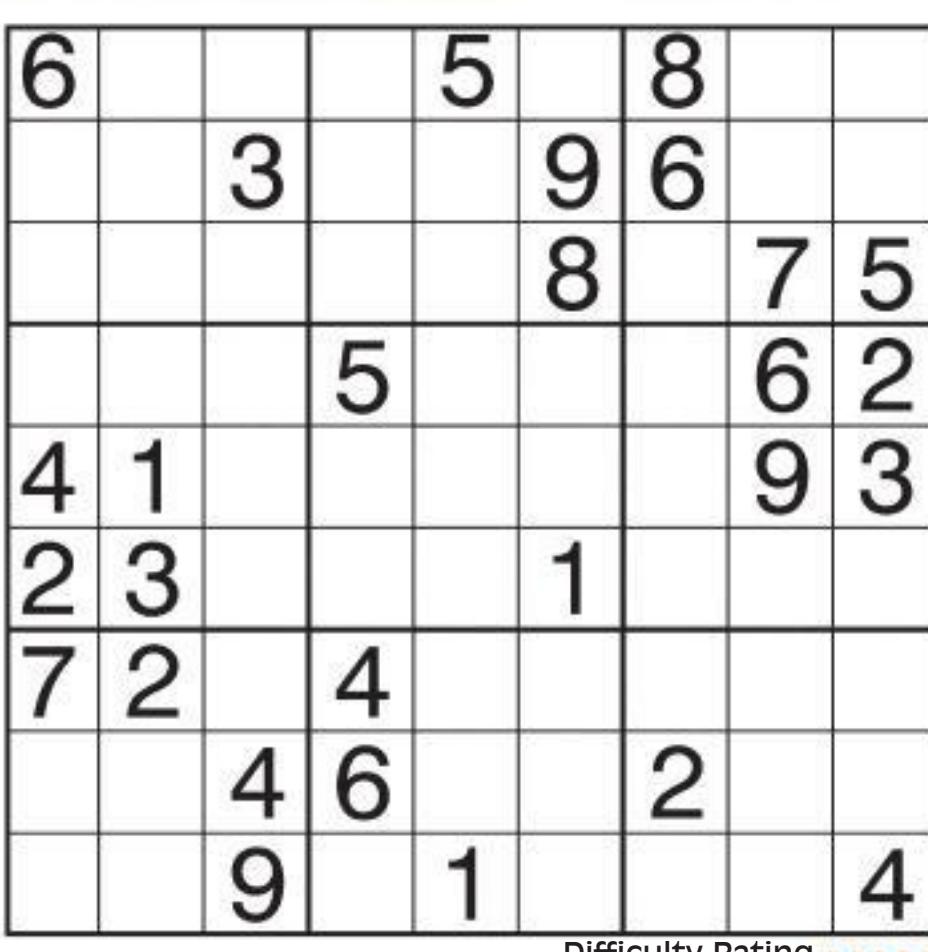
PISCES Mar 14-Apr 13

The day can begin in a relaxed manner but will pick up slowly. Don't expect much action but you can enjoy a peaceful time with your lover being by your side all day.

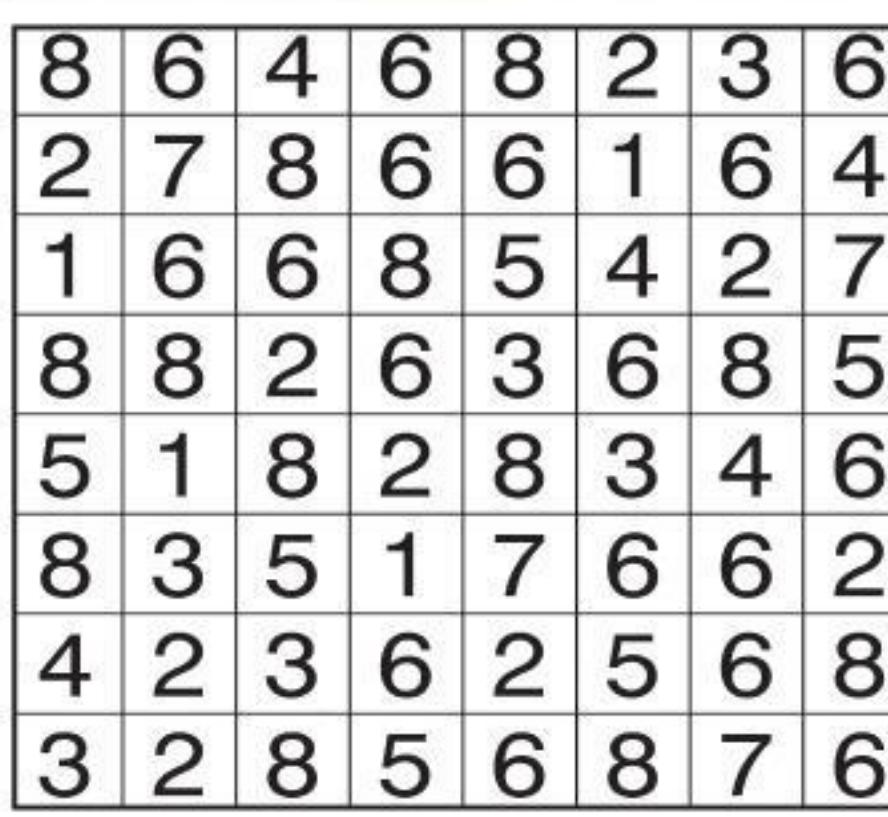
KAKURO



SUDOKU CLASSIC



HITORI



Cross out numbers to create blanks. No digit can appear in a row or column more than once. No two adjacent squares can be blacked out. All the squares left unblacked must be connected — vertically or horizontally — to form a single shape.

DAILY JUMBLE

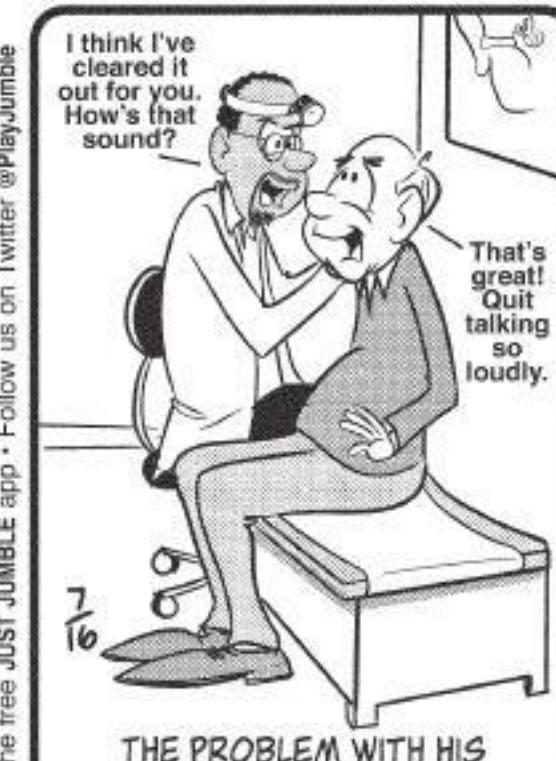
JUMBLE

Unscramble these Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

GAEDA
RYUSL
ETAGEO
HHCATT

THAT SCRABMED WORD GAME

By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek



Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

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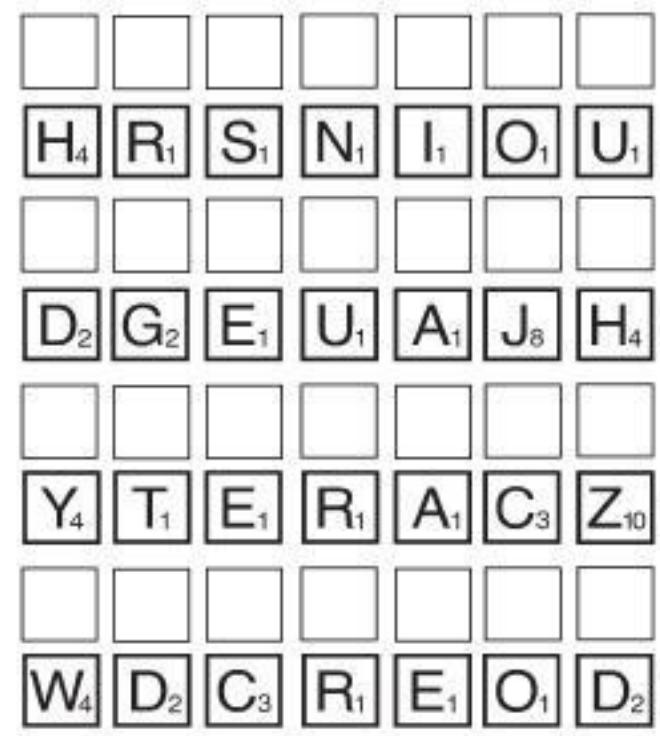
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Ans. here:

SCRABBLE GRAMS

SCRABBLE BRAND

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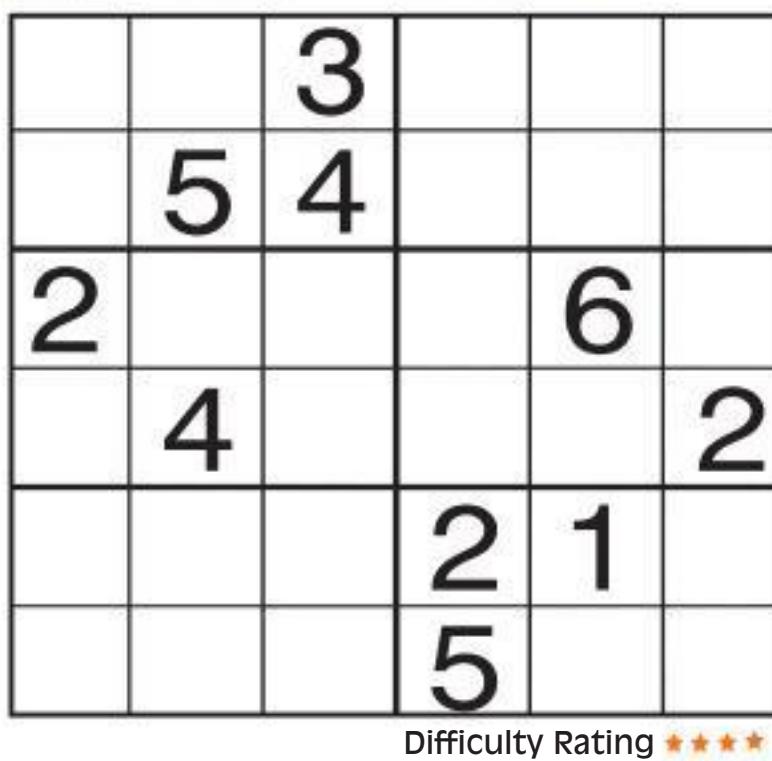


PAR SCORE 155-165
by JUDD

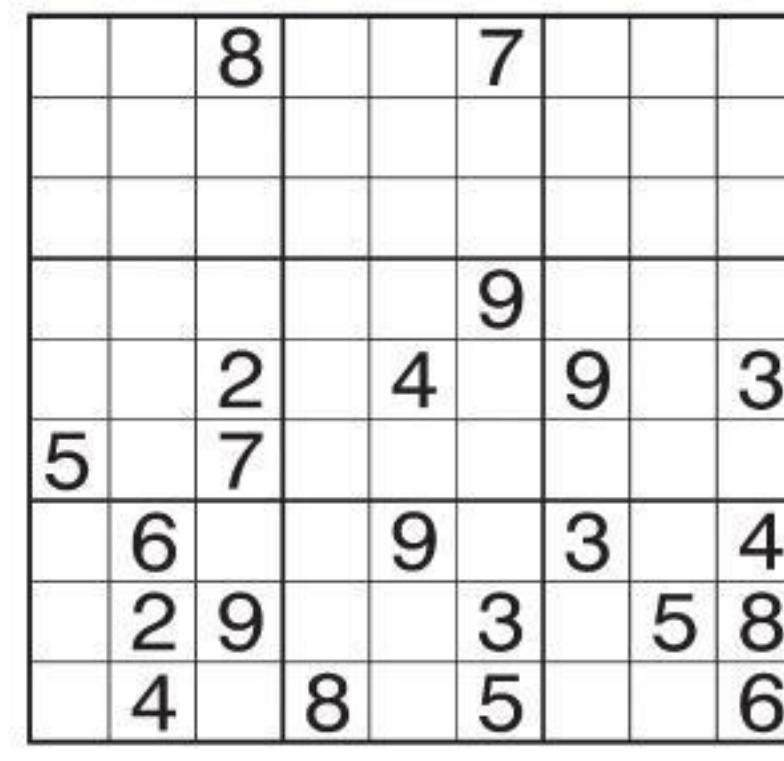
FOUR RACK TOTAL
TIME LIMIT: 20 MIN

DIRECTIONS: Make a 2- to 7-letter word from the letters in each row. Add points of each word, using scoring directions at right. 7-letter words get 50-point bonus. "Blanks" used as any letter have no point value. All Judd's words are in the Collins English Dictionary.

MINI SUDOKU



SUDOKU X

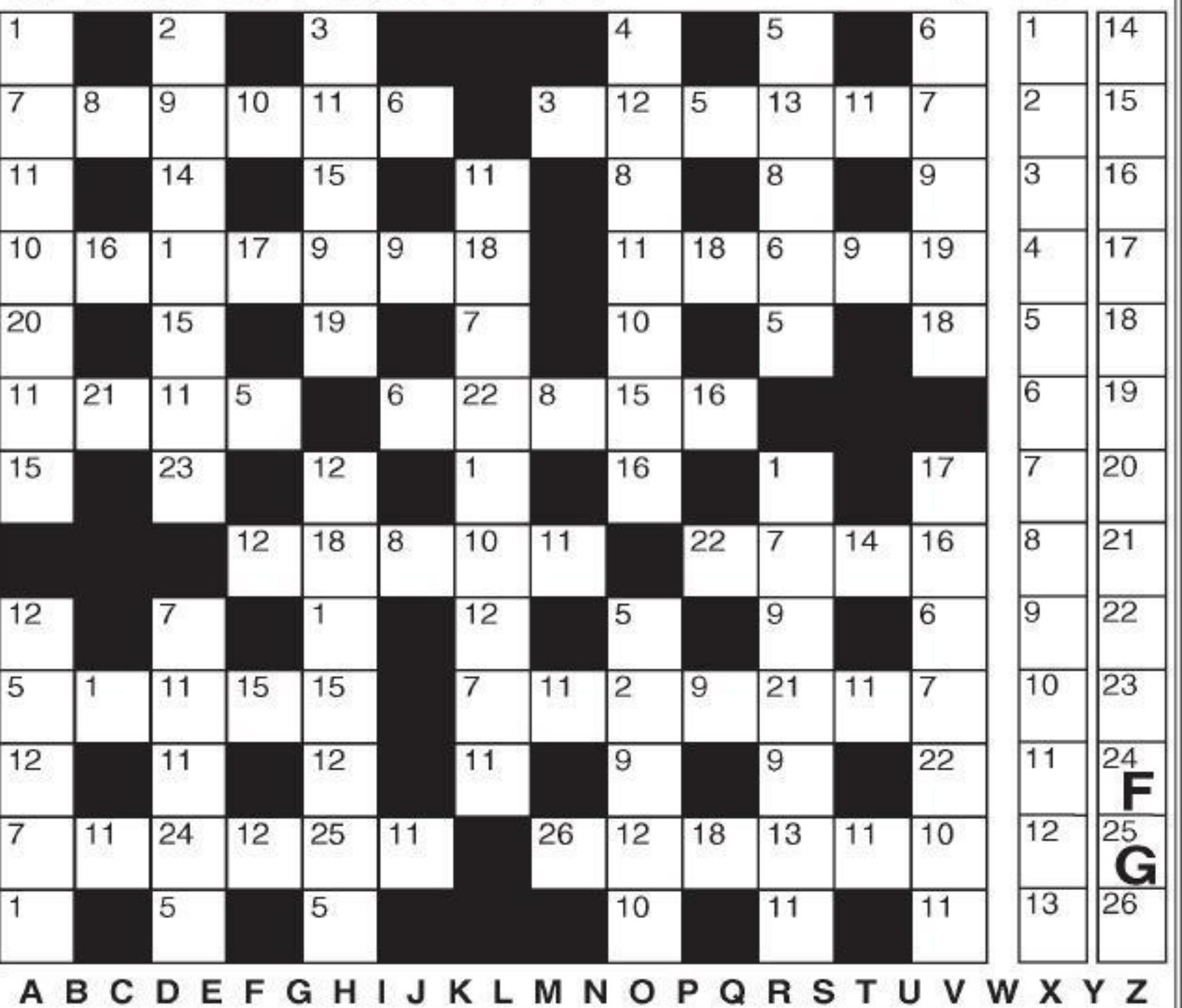


SUDOKU



CODEWORD

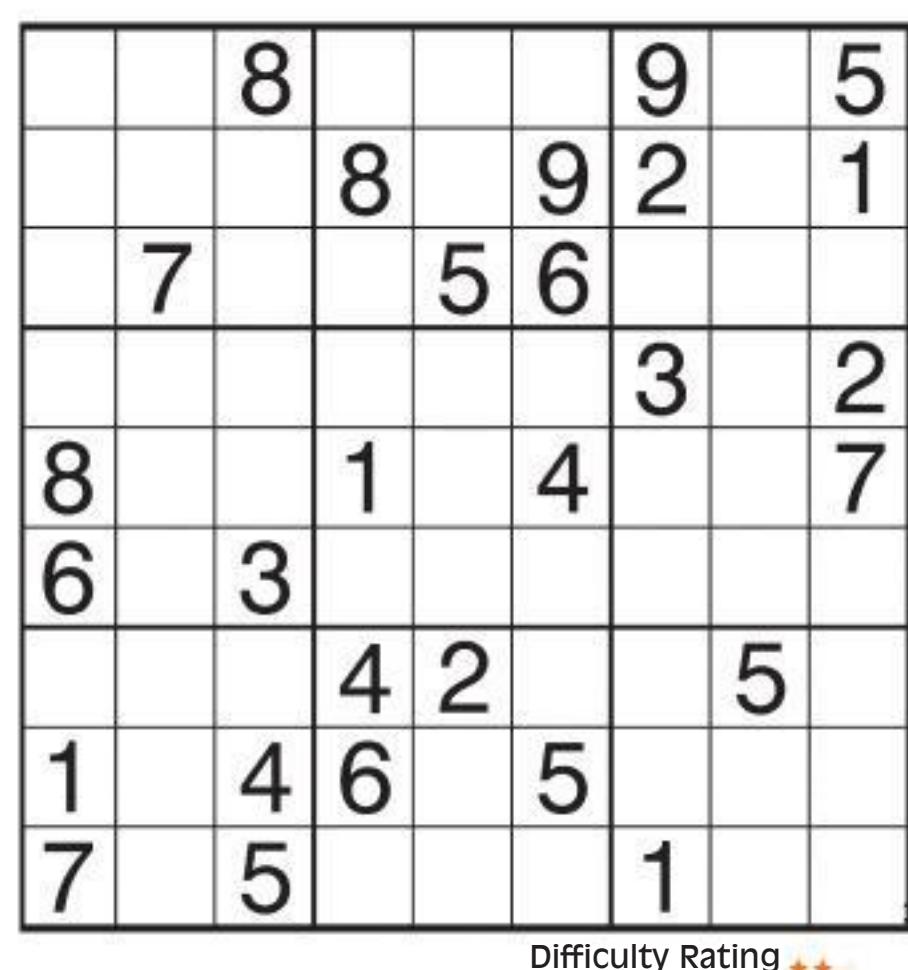
EACH number in our Codeword grid represents a different letter of the alphabet. For example, today 24 represents F so fill in F every time the figure 24 appears. You have two letters in the control grid to start you off. Enter them in the appropriate squares in the main grid, then use your knowledge of words to work out which letters should go in the missing squares. As you get the letters, fill in other squares with the same number in the main grid and control grid. Check off the list of alphabetical letters as you identify them.



TOP SECRET

SUDOKU

Fill in all the squares in the grid so that each row, column and each of the 3x3 squares contains all the digits from 1 to 9. Solutions are below.



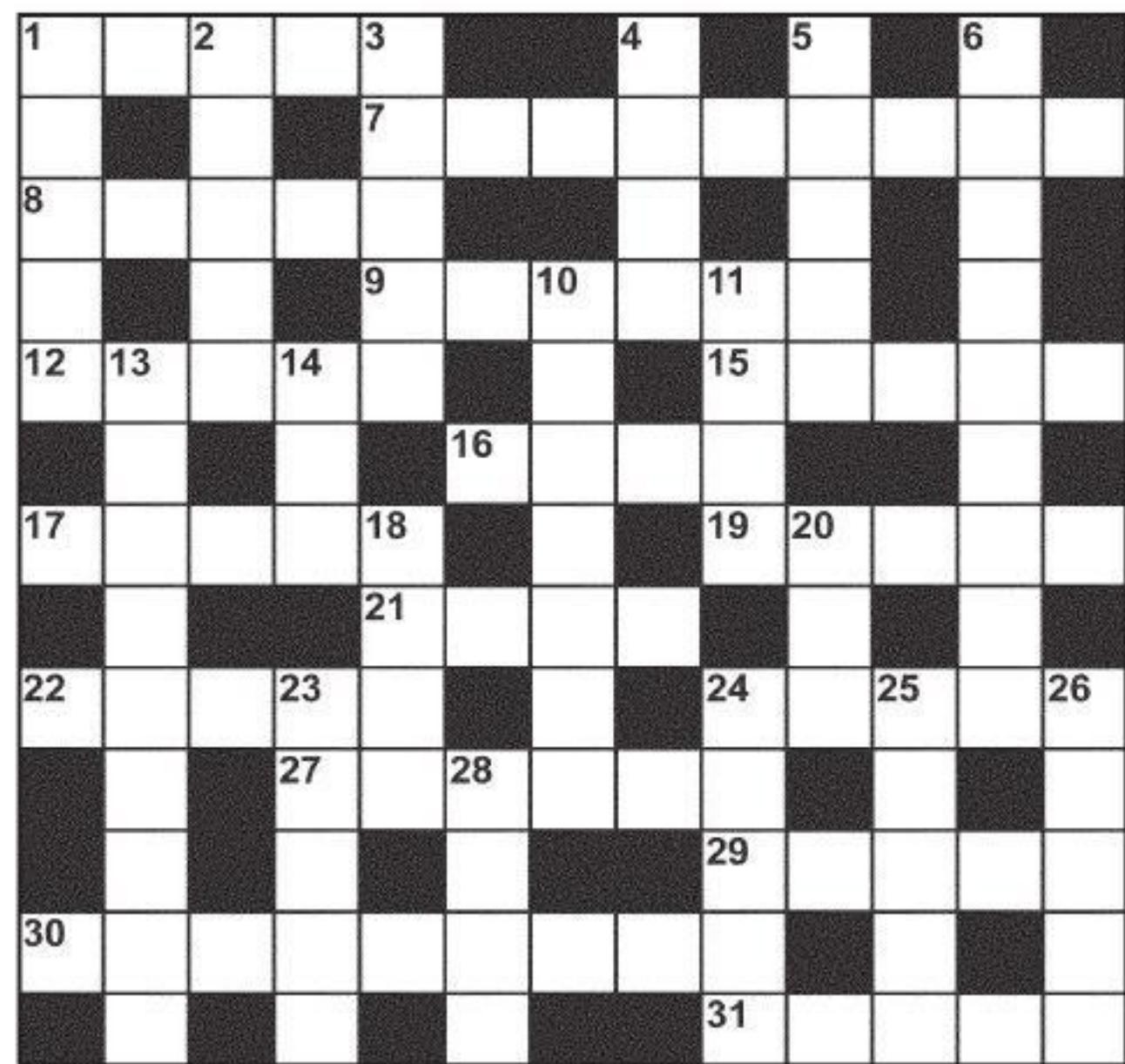
Difficulty Rating ★★



Difficulty Rating ★★★



Difficulty Rating ★★★★

CRYPTIC CROSSWORD**ACROSS**

- I get left with just one fan and that's the finish! (5)
- Peter has the right to it! Just point and he'll translate (9)
- Norma has this sort of a nose (5)
- Kit's to join me? That's fate! (6)
- Fashions domes of a different type (5)
- Left to get money or acquire knowledge? (5)
- It spoils the planet! (4)
- To get a car he has to really perform! (5)
- Most leaves are found just under the roof (5)
- It takes nous to accept responsibility (4)
- Australia's got another name, finally (5)
- Petty quarrels about what to wear on one's legs (5)
- How to beat Ed in an argument (6)
- A senior who can hold his tongue (5)
- Postures which express their feelings? (9)
- When the French put on an act, applause is sure to be forthcoming (5)

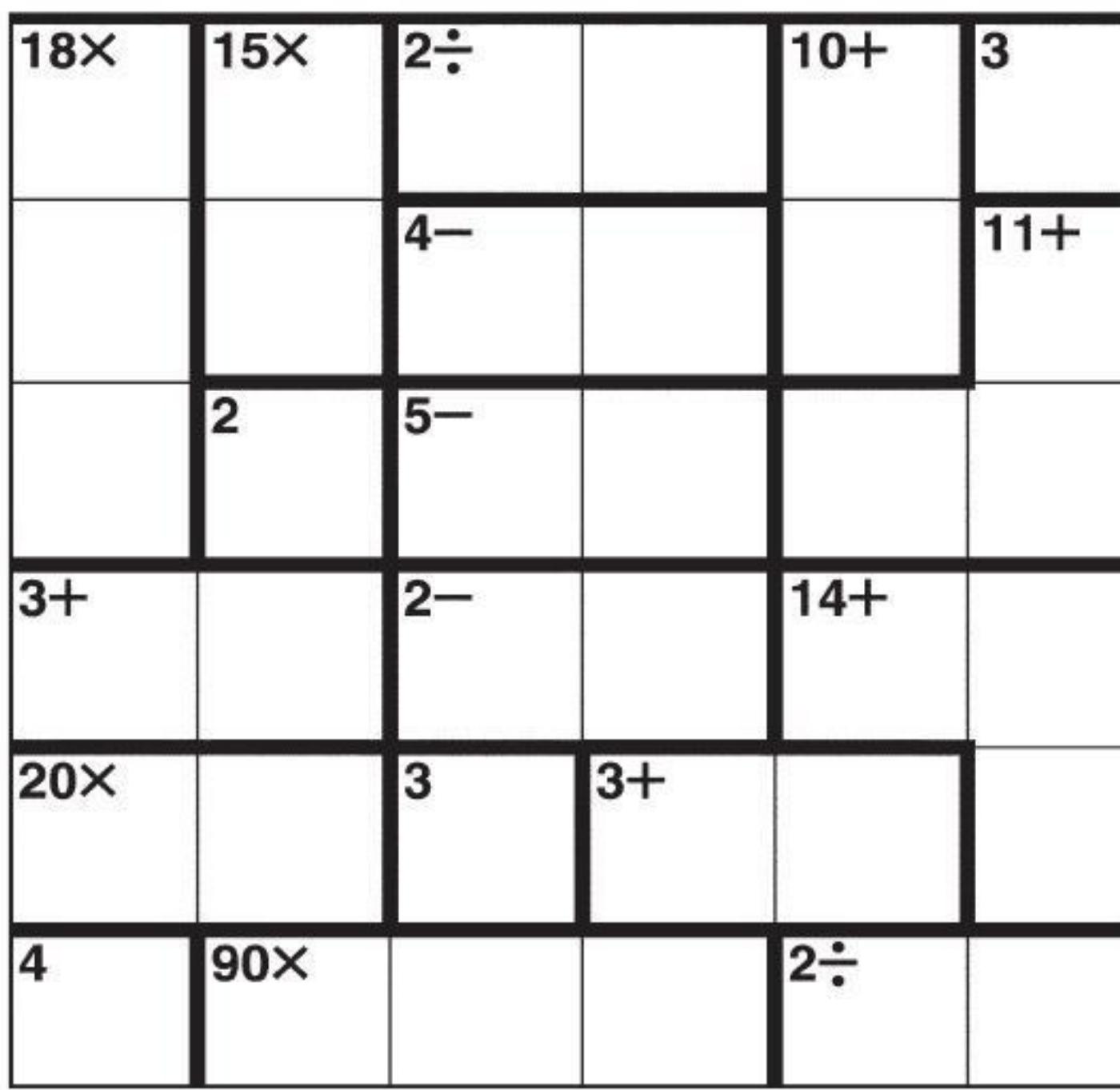
DOWN

- A shopping place at which only

four in a thousand are to be seen (5)
 No insane wanderer, this one! (5)
 You have connections at the golf clubs? (5)
 Mr Alien! That will teach you a lesson! (4)
 I step out causing lasting ill-will (5)
 Ted spills green tea and uses this to clean it up (9)
 Some blade! Paul sat this one out! (7)
 Otherwise, Lee's disturbed (4)
 It's a cello but it's used in swing (9)
 The good seek the conscious self (3)
 A blooming good flower (4)
 Be a pal! Go off to some mountain! (3)
 It gets mad so I let it in (5)
 Of the impression that it's seen in the south? (5)
 I get left to take the rap this month (5)
 Only given small coins to work with? That smells! (5)
 But there's nothing to be gained by such an encounter! (4)

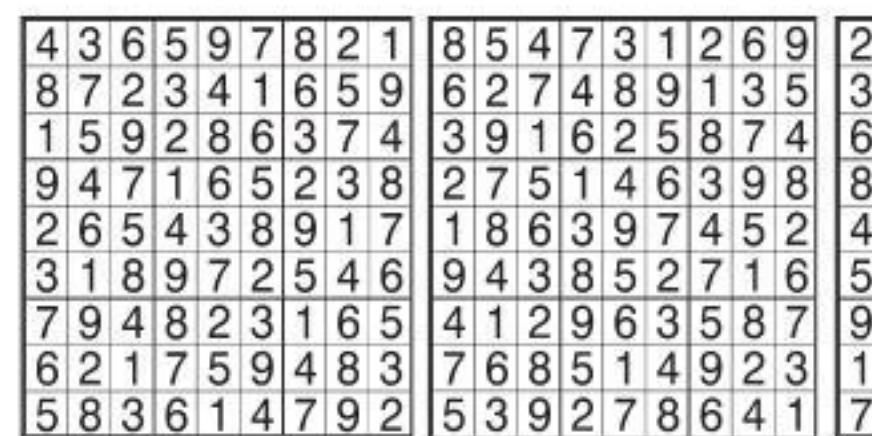
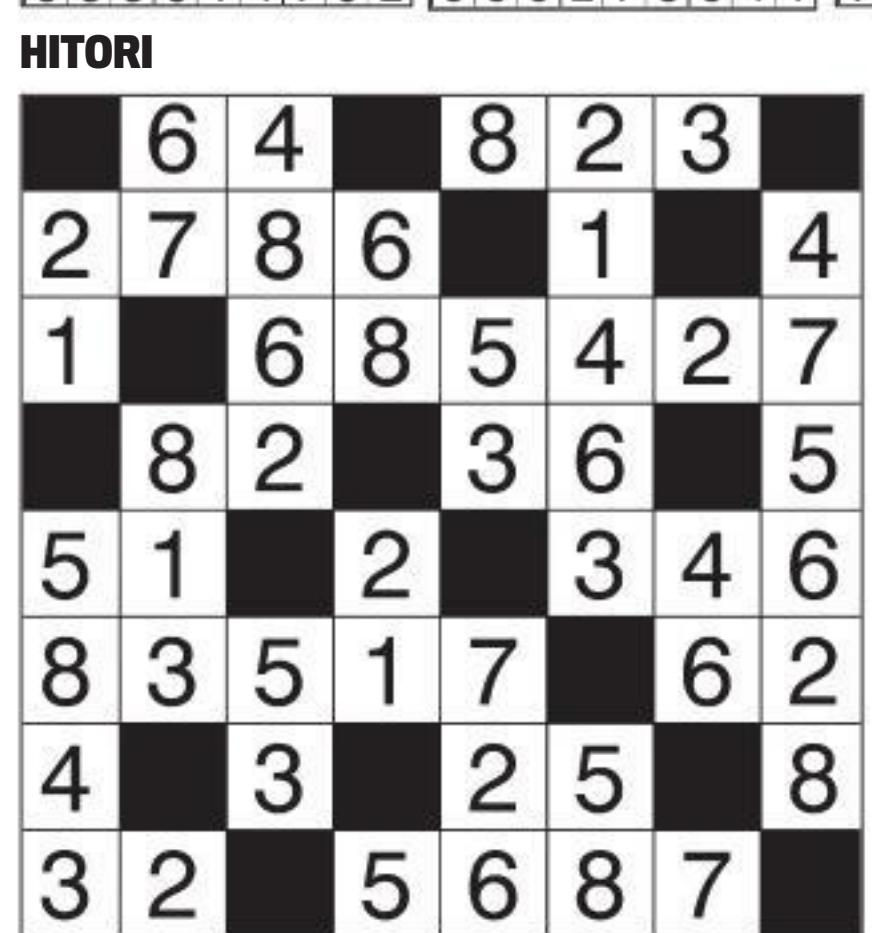
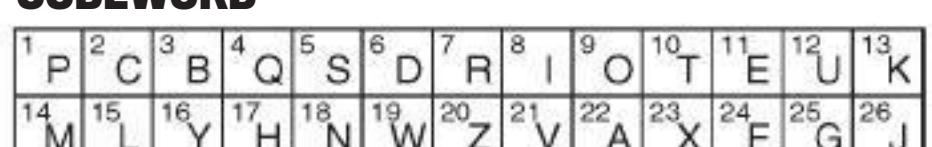
KEN-KEN

Each row & column must contain numbers 1 to 4 (easy) or 1 to 6 (difficult). The numbers within the heavily outlined boxes must combine to produce the numbers in the top-left corner.

**QUICK QUIZ**

Charlize Theron was born on August 7, 1975

- Theron was born in Benoni, in the Gauteng Province of South Africa. Which Second Boer War figure was her great-great-uncle?
- At 16, Theron won a one-year modelling contract at a local competition in Salerno. Which city in Italy did she move to along with her mother?**
- She made her film debut with a non-speaking role in a 1995 horror film. Name the movie.
- In which 1996 film did Theron get her first speaking role, which was that of a hitwoman?
- Name the 1997 horror drama starring Keanu Reeves and Al Pacino, that's also credited to be Theron's break-out film.
- Theron starred as a safe and vault 'technician' in a 2003 heist box office hit, which was an American remake of the 1969 British film of the same name. Name this film.**
- In 2008, Theron was asked to be a UN Messenger of Peace by which UN Secretary General?
- Theron is a supporter of animal rights and has also appeared in an anti-fur campaign. Which American animal rights non-profit organisation is she a part of?**

TODAY'S SOLUTIONS**SUDOKU****HITORI****KAKURO****CODEWORD****CRYPTIC CROSSWORD****SUDOKU X****KEN-KEN****MINI SUDOKU****SUDOKU CLASSIC****SCRABBLE GRAMS**

SCRIBBLE® GRAMS		GRAMS SOLUTION BY JUDD © 2019 UFS. Dist. by Andrews McMeel Syndication																						
N	O	R	I	I	S	H	J	E	H	A	D	C	R	A	Z	Y	C	R	O	W	D	E	D	
RACK 1 =	80	RACK 2 =	32	RACK 3 =	57	RACK 4 =	72	PAR SCORE 155-165 JUDD'S TOTAL 241																
8-35-19																								

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QUICK QUIZ: 1. Danie Theron; 2. Milan; 3. Children of the Corn III: Urban Harvest; 4. 2 Days in the Valley; 5. The Devil's Advocate; 6. The Italian Job; 7. Ban Ki-moon; 8. PETA

**ASTRO FOCUS**

by Manisha Koushik

ARIES Mar 21-Apr 20

You will be full of confidence as the bank balance remains healthy. There will be a plethora of opportunities for people working on commission.

TAURUS Apr 21-May 20

With increase in income, the quality of life improves as you invest in luxuries. You will be able to take important decisions related to career.

GEMINI May 21-June 21

The financial situation is strong and will sail safely. Your concerns related to investment losses or salary cut are baseless. You should take health-related matters seriously.

CANCER June 22-July 22

There are signs of improvement in your financial situation. You can expect to receive an award or reward in professional life. Your performance will be incredible.

LEO July 23-Aug 23

Much financial prosperity is promised to you. Your performance at workplace will keep you ahead. It is possible to get rid of seasonal diseases.

VIRGO Aug 24-Sep 23

You will feel financially safer than before. Foresight and planning will ensure victory in the competition. Time will remain positive in terms of health.

LIBRA Sep 24-Oct 23

It will be possible to arrange funds for some important work. The colleague will judge you positively in front of high officials. There is no harm in resorting to alternative medicine.

SCORPIO Oct 24-Nov 22

There is scope for continuous improvement in your financial situation. Time for promotion is active and inspiring you to keep moving forward.

SAGITTARIUS Nov 23-Dec 21

There are chances of getting desired success in career. There is going to be a tremendous boom in the financial situation. Rashness regarding fitness is not right.

CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 21

Understand the importance of budgeting before you begin anything new. You will get a chance to talk to the higher officials regarding your career progress.

AQUARIUS Jan 22-Feb 19

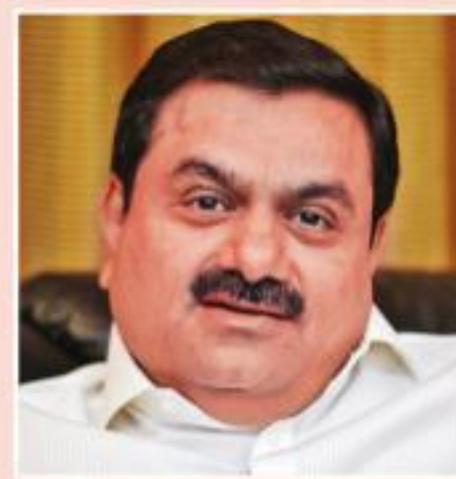
The financial situation will remain hopeful. You can be seen working hard. Do not let your efforts be reduced with respect to health. Students can expect good news.

PISCES Feb 20-Mar 20

It is great time for businessmen to earn money. Expecting success without efforts is not fair. Family conditions will remain hopeful. You will be able to control lifestyle disorders.

MY BIZ

The new JV of French oil giant Total and Adani Fuels Marketing will apply for licences to offer the full bouquet of auto fuels at retail outlets. The French firm had bought 37.4% in billionaire Gautam Adani's firm last year.



NUMBER OF THE DAY

₹2,253 cr is HPCL's net profit in April-June, up 157% compared to last year.

QUOTE OF THE DAY

‘India has 12 Japanese industrial townships across nine states and a 13th is being planned in Assam. These are integrated industrial parks with ready-to-move in infrastructure facilities. ’

— GURUPRASAD MOHAPATRA, DPIIT SECRETARY



RBI pauses on rate cut to curb inflation

● Allows banks to ease personal and corporate loan burdens

By Mail Today Bureau
in Mumbai

THE RBI left interest rates untouched on Thursday in order to rein in rising retail inflation but allowed banks to restructure some corporate and personal loans to revive growth in an economy that has been battered by the Covid-19 pandemic.

RBI governor Shaktikanta Das said space for monetary policy easing remains, but the central bank will ensure inflation stays within its target range.

“Given the uncertainty surrounding the inflation outlook and extremely weak state of the economy in the midst of an unprecedented shock from the ongoing pandemic, the monetary policy committee has decided to keep the policy rate on hold at 4%,” RBI governor Shaktikanta Das said after the three-day deliberations of the committee.

The committee, however, unanimously decided to continue to keep its accommodative policy stance “as long as necessary to revive growth,” he added.

The RBI has already reduced the repo rate by a total of 1.15% since February, on top of the 1.35% in an easing cycle last year. Retail inflation in June rose 6.09%, higher than the RBI’s 2%-6% mandated target range.

DEBT RESTRUCTURING

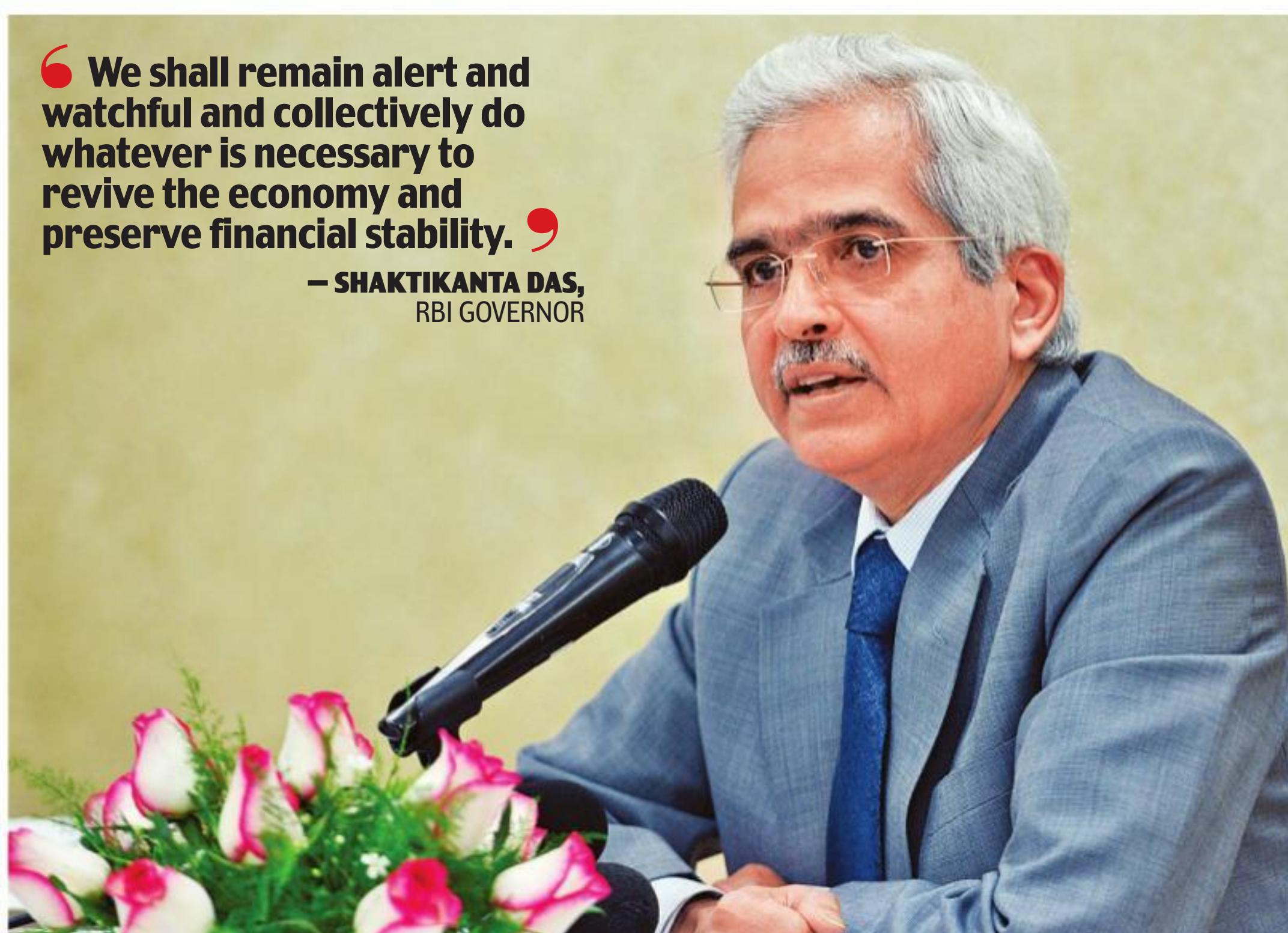
To help banks at a time when bad loans are expected to nearly double, the RBI said it would allow a one-time restructuring of loans.

Das said within the current bad loan resolution framework a window would be provided for lenders to implement a resolution plan for corporate loans without a change in ownership while also allowing these to remain standard and not be downgraded.

Lenders will need to make an additional 10% in provisioning for the restructured accounts.

We shall remain alert and watchful and collectively do whatever is necessary to revive the economy and preserve financial stability.

— SHAKTIKANTA DAS,
RBI GOVERNOR



HIKE IN GOLD-BASED LOANS

THE RBI governor said the limit to which individuals can borrow against gold ornaments is being increased to 90 per cent of the value from the current limit of 75 per cent.

He said the relaxation aimed at mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on households will be available till

“The RBI relaxation seeks to ensure that a viable promoter, solely impacted on account of the COVID pandemic, can continue his entrepreneurship and provide the path of resolving the financial distress within a two-year sunset,” said Veena Sivarajamkrishnan, Partner, Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co, a law firm.

March 31, 2021.
He also announced additional liquidity of Rs 5,000 crore each at repo rate to National Housing Bank (NHB) and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) respectively to protect the housing and farm sectors from liquidity challenges.

Restructuring loan schemes have also been allowed for loans given to individuals and small businesses. In case of personal loans, the restructuring can be extended for two years. For small businesses, the restructuring

scheme already in place will be extended till March 31, 2020.

“Doing away with the loan moratorium and announcing a responsible scheme for restructuring of the stressed assets are both prudent and wise from the perspective of financial stability,” said Rupa Rege Nitsure, chief economist at L&T Financial Holdings.

Das said RBI was setting up a committee under K. V. Kamath, the former head of the New Development Bank, set up by BRICS to give recommendations on the required financial parameters, along with the sector specific benchmark ranges which need to be factored into the resolution plans. In response to the cumulative rate cut of 1.15% announced since February 2020, banks have already transmitted 0.7-0.9% in their home loan portfolio which is the fastest transmission till now, he added.

Cheque photo system to check fraud

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das on Thursday said that the banking system will move to a “positive pay” practice in cheque transactions to check frauds. Under the positive pay system, a customer clicks a picture of the cheque he is issuing to the beneficiary and uploads it on the bank’s mobile application.

This practice will be applicable to all cheques of Rs 50,000 and above which will cover approximately 20 per cent of transactions by volume and 80 per cent by value, the RBI governor said. Operational guidelines in this regard will be issued soon. The second largest private sector lender ICICI Bank already has such a facility for all cheques irrespective of the amount. By following such a system, a bank knows of a cheque being drawn by the customer.

Stiffer rules for current a/cs

THE RBI on Thursday barred banks from opening current accounts for customers who have availed cash credit or overdraft facilities in order improve credit discipline.

The central bank issued a notification saying rather than opening a new current account, all transactions should be routed through Cash Credit or OverDraft account.

This is expected to help instances of fraud such as Rs 4,000 crore PMC co-operative Bank scam in which multiple accounts were opened.

‘India must focus on protecting its economy’

By Divya Chowdhury &
Swati Bhat in Mumbai

INDIA’S policymakers should focus on protecting the economy as businesses struggle amid the coronavirus pandemic instead of being overly focused on what ratings agencies think, former Reserve Bank of India governor Raghuram Rajan said on Thursday.

“It is also important to convince both domestic and international investors that after the crisis associated with the pandemic is over, we will return to fiscal responsibility over the medium term, and the government should do more to convince them of that,” Rajan told the Global Markets Forum.

The government has announced several initiatives to help the poor and small- and medium-size businesses, but actual cash outgo from the government’s measures has been estimated at just about 1% of GDP.

Several analysts attribute the fiscal prudence to fear of a downgrade after Moody’s cut India’s rating and outlook in early June followed closely by a change in outlook from Fitch.

The RBI on its part too has reduced the key lending rate by 115 basis points on top of the 135 bps last year but

Rajan says govt
overly focused on
rating agencies’ views

decided to hold rates steady earlier in the day against market expectations as inflation pressures have risen. “The RBI and government have certainly been cooperating, but it seems like it is elsewhere, the ball is in the government’s court to do more,” Rajan said. He said the RBI needs to focus on whether credit is reaching the stressed areas of the economy and also if the viable firms were able to access credit and not the unviable ones.

“And I think that’s where it has to focus its attention, because resources, as you well know, are limited in India today.”



Former RBI Governor
Raghuram Rajan

Voda Idea loss widens to ₹25,460 cr on AGR dues

By Mail Today Bureau in Mumbai

VODAFONE Idea Ltd on Thursday reported widening of net loss to Rs 25,460 crore in the June quarter after it made additional provisioning to pay past statutory dues, and said its ability to continue as going concern hinges on the Supreme Court allowing more time to pay dues.

The nation's third-largest telecom operator had a net loss of Rs 4,874 crore in April-June 2019 and Rs 11,643.5 crore in the preceding March quarter.

It had reported a net loss of Rs 73,878 crore in full 2019-20 fiscal.

VIL's revenue from operations came in at Rs 10,659.3 crore for the first quarter of FY2021, sliding 5.4 per cent from the year-ago period.

The fiscal's first quarter numbers were

impacted by the nationwide lockdown. VIL said that the availability of recharges due to store closure and ability of customers to recharge on account of economic slowdown were impacted during the challenging quarter.

Loss has shot up from ₹4,874 cr in April-June 2019

The gross additions were severely impacted by closure of retail stores during the nationwide lockdown resulting in subscriber base falling to 279.8 million in June quarter from 291.1 million in March quarter. VIL's Q1 Average Revenue Per User (ARPU) - a key metrics for telcos - took a hit and fell to Rs 114 from Rs 121 in the pre-

vious sequential quarter, the declines presenting a stark contrast to Reliance Jio and Airtel, both of which recorded ARPU gains during the quarter.

Voda Idea recognised an additional charge of Rs 19,440.5 crore in June quarter towards AGR (Adjusted Gross Revenue) dues. "...during this quarter, on prudence, we have recognised a charge of Rs 194.4 billion as an exceptional item towards the total estimated AGR liability, in addition to estimated recognised liability of Rs 460.0 billion as on March 31, 2020," a company statement said. Vodafone Idea faced more than Rs 58,000 crore demand in overall statutory dues, after the Supreme Court last year ordered the non-telecom revenues to be included in calculating statutory liabilities. It has so far paid Rs 7,854 crore towards those dues.

By Mukesh Adhikary
in Mumbai

GIRISH Pai and Hemant Naik of Naturals Ice Cream were left with 26 tonnes of ice cream in over 45,000 small boxes lying in cold storage when the Maharashtra government announced a state-wide lockdown on March 19.

"We don't have a policy of rework if the stock expires. Being a dairy product we can't do anything about it. The only option was to throw away the ice cream," said Hemant Naik, vice president, supply chain & strategy, Naturals Ice Creams.

We did not expect Maharashtra to announce the lockdown before the Centre. It was too sudden, he added.

Naturals and other fresh fruit ice cream makers like Baskin Robins have a shorter shelf life (15 days) than regular long-life ice creams (90-180 days).

While their first idea was to reach out to the poor, the lack of clarity of vehicular movement in the first phase of the lockdown ruled out that option for them.

Bacteria solves environmental problem

"Everyone (police and BMC officials) said till the time the next input comes we are not in a position to do anything. But by then our products would have expired," said Girish Pai, Director, Naturals Ice Creams.

As the days passed, Hemant and Girish started discussing ways to dispose off the ice cream. "If 26 tonnes of ice cream go in a normal drain, the ice cream which has so much protein, lactose and fat will choke the gutter. Then there's the packaging, of course, which is a reusable resource. We did not want to put it in a landfill. We wanted to work with someone who could do justice to both these items," said Naik.

The two of them finally decided to reach out to Sanjeevani S3, a rare wet disposal plants in Mumbai which sees 2,000 kgs of wet waste disposal every day.

Co-founder Zulkif Shaikh said bacteria or microbes consume the ice cream and release biogas, which will later be burnt away.

But, the process is not simplistic and takes time.

"I told Naturals to first send me small quantities of ice

How to throw away 26 tonnes of ice cream?

Lockdown forces Naturals to turn their stocks into gas for disposal



cream, so I could study how the microbes would react and the amount of biogas it would produce. It typically takes about 24 hours for the waste to be converted into gas," he said.

For normal wet waste the amount of gas produced is 100-110m³ per tonne, he said.

"But with ice cream we get 220-250m³ per tonne because bacteria also relish sugar much like humans."

"It takes time for microbes to consume oil and fat. We asked Naturals two days' gap per week so that our microbes con-

sume could recover after consuming the extra fat," said Zulkif. The whole process took more than 40 days, he quipped.

"We flare the methane that gets produced. It keeps burning. That's the end. Ice cream has been turned into fire," said Zulkif. But this is a waste of energy because methane can be converted into cooking gas or electricity. Had the facility been even more advanced, it could have powered 30 homes in any slum of North Mumbai for a month.

Back at Naturals, Hemant too burses the financial losses. The wastage has cost the company Rs 2 crore. But, that's just the tip of the iceberg as the ice cream industry has seen a complete crash in revenue since March this year.

The market size of organised branded ice cream industry in India is about Rs 10,000 crore, according to Pradeep Pai, MD of Hangyo Ice Cream, and a senior member of the Indian Ice-Cream Manufacturers Association. "March, April, May -- see 45% of the turnover for the entire industry. The rest of the nine months see the balance 55% business."

Takes more than 40 days to dispose of stock

MARKETS

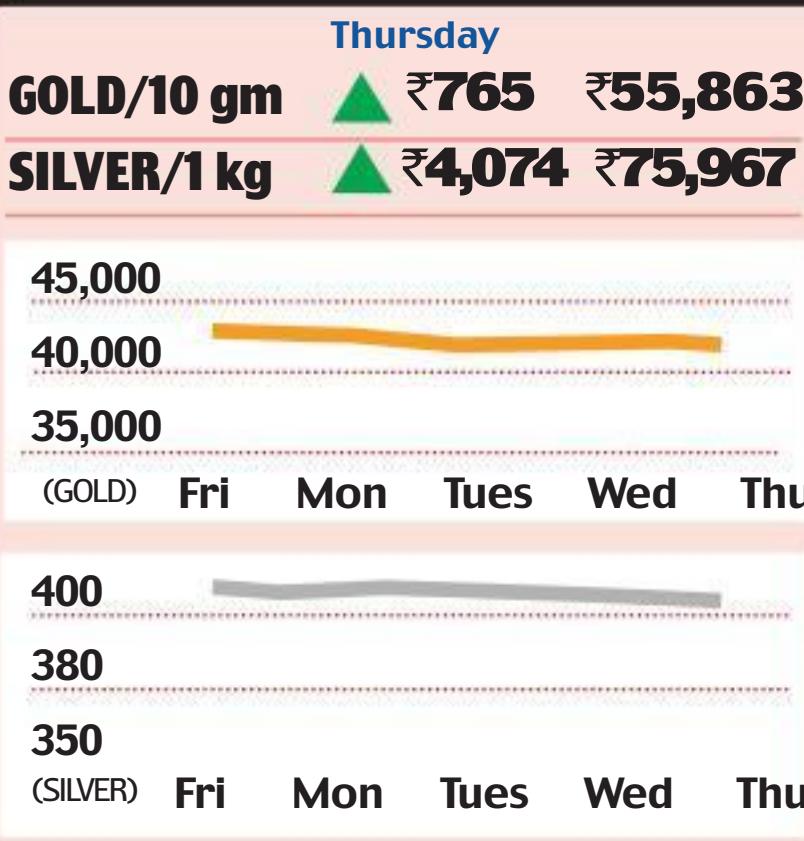
SENSEX	37,663.33	362.12
WEDNESDAY'S CLOSE		
38,025.45	H: 38,221.40	L: 37,755.10

NIFTY	11,101.65	98.50
WEDNESDAY'S CLOSE		
11,200.15	H: 11,256.80	L: 11,127.30

TOP GAINERS		
% change	Price ₹	
1 TATA STEEL	3.82	400.55
2 INFOSYS	2.60	969.20
3 BAJAJFNCE	2.54	3,345.30
4 HCLTECH	2.49	705.20
5 TCS	2.16	2,307.70

TOP LOSERS		
% change	Price ₹	
1 M&M	-0.75	609.55
2 BAJAJ AUTO	-0.67	2,990.45
3 AIRTEL	-0.60	555.50
4 LARSEN	-0.44	921.90
5 AXIS BANK	-0.43	433.00

BULLION



EXCHANGE RATE

	Wednesday	Thursday
Dollar	₹74.84	₹74.96
Euro	₹88.82	₹88.84
Pound	₹98.34	₹98.62
Yen (100)	₹70.94	₹71.06
Dollar	76	72
Euro	100	90
Pound	80	72
Yen (100)	60	64
Dollar/Yen	\$	
Euro/Pound	€	£

Lufthansa lays off staff amid massive loss in April-June

LUFTHANSA put German workers on notice of compulsory lay-offs on Thursday, saying tumbling air travel and slow progress in union negotiations meant cuts were unavoidable after it lost 1.7 billion euros (\$2 billion) in a single quar-

The German airline, which secured a 9 billion euro state bailout in June, flew just 4% of prior-year passengers between April and June as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and expects capacity to increase to only around 50% by the end of the year and two-thirds of last year's level in 2021. Its outlook is more pessimistic than rivals such as Air France-KLM, which expects to fly 80% of its pre-crisis flights next year, and British Airways and Iberia owner IAG, which forecasts capacity to be 24% lower in 2021. Lufthansa CEO Carsten Spohr said on Thursday he does not expect demand for air travel to return to pre-crisis levels until 2024.

AstraZeneca & China firm sign vaccine pact

SHENZHEN Kangtai Biological Products will produce AstraZeneca Plc's potential COVID-19 vaccine in mainland China, the British drugmaker said on Thursday, its first deal to supply one of the world's most populous countries.

The deal underscores Astra's frontrunner position in a global race to deliver an effective vaccine, given that Chinese ventures are leading at least eight of the 26 global vaccine development projects currently testing on humans.

Under the agreement Shenzhen Kangtai, one of China's top vaccine makers, will ensure it has annual production capacity of at least 100 million doses of the experimental shot AZD1222, which AstraZeneca co-developed with researchers at Oxford University, by the end of this year, AstraZeneca said.

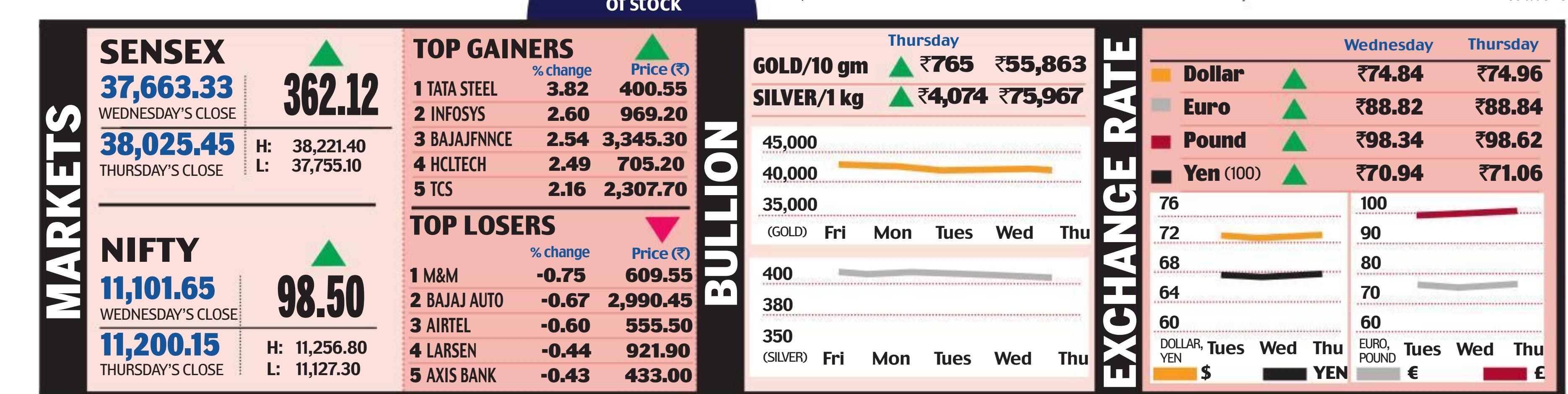
Serum Institute to make Covid drug for Novavax

NOVAVAX Inc said on Wednesday it has entered a supply and license agreement with the Serum Institute of India for the development and commercialization of its Covid-19 vaccine candidate.

The Indian drugmaker will have exclusive rights for the vaccine in India during the term of the deal and non-exclusive rights during the "Pandemic Period" in all countries other than those designated by the World Bank as upper-middle or high-income countries.

The deal was signed on July 30, according to an SEC filing by Novavax. On Tuesday, Novavax reported that its experimental Covid-19 vaccine produced high levels of antibodies against the novel coronavirus in a small, early-stage clinical trial, and that it could start a large pivotal Phase III trial by late September.

— Reuters



Powercracy

Leh airport becomes the 64th airport under Central Industrial Security Force's security

By Mail Today Bureau in
New Delhi

At a recently concluded occasion, the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) took over the security of Leh airport with sanctioned strength of more than 180 personnel. The unit will be headed by a deputy commandant rank officer. With this induction, total units under CISF security cover have been raised to 349, including 64 airports as on date.

Rajesh Ranjan, director general, CISF was the chief guest on the occasion. Umang Narula, IAS, chief advisor to Lt. governor, UT of Ladakh; MA Ganapathy, SDG (APS), CISF; Satish Khandare, IGP, Leh Ladakh; Deepam Seth, IG, ITBP; Raj K Mallick, E.D. Security, AAI; Vikram Singh Mann, IG (APS), CISF and Sonam Norbu, airport director were present on the occasion. The function was also attended by other senior officials of CISF, ITBP, CRPF, Airports Authority of India, representatives of airlines operators and other stakeholders.

During the ceremony, Sonam Norbu, director, Leh airport handed over a key replica to Deputy Commandant Sanket Gaikwad as symbol of handing over the reins of security to CISF.

In his address, Rajesh Ranjan, DG, CISF elaborated the dynamics of security at this hyper sensitive airport. DG, CISF emphasised that coordinated efforts are to be made by all govern-

Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) took over the security of Leh airport with sanctioned strength of over 180 personnel. The unit will be headed by a deputy commandant rank officer. With this induction, total units under CISF security cover have been raised to 349, including 64 airports as on date.



ment agencies and stakeholders to ensure security of Leh airport. Kushok Bakula Rimpochee Leh Airport is located in western Himalayas, Ladakh region and serves as the main airport of whole Ladakh region.

During winter months, Leh airport is the only gateway of Ladakh as there is limited connectivity by road due to heavy snowfall.

Civil commercial flight started in the year 1978. This is the highest altitude airport of India which operates in extreme weather conditions (+350C to -350C). This is the most tourist intensive airport of India.

After the function, DG, CISF alongwith other senior officers of CISF and airport director, Leh airport had a

security walk around all the areas of airport including terminal building and airside.

Earlier, on reaching Leh on August 4, 2020, Rajesh Ranjan, DG, CISF interacted with CISF personnel who will be shouldering the security of Leh airport and exhorted them to strive hard to achieve the state of zero-error security.

He also inaugurated barracks for CISF personnel and reviewed the administrative and operational arrangements at the airpor-

SAIL ACHIEVES HIGHEST EVER JULY SALES; COMPANY'S BORROWINGS COME BELOW FY 2020 LEVELS

By Mail Today Bureau in
New Delhi

Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) attained a sales volume of 15.83 lakh tonne in July 2020 which is its best ever performance in the month of July and an impressive growth of about 50 per cent over July 2019 sales which was 10.59 lakh tonne. The company sold 12.73 lakh tonne in the domestic market while it exported 3.10 lakh tonne of steel during July 2020, attaining a growth of 29 per cent and 349 per cent respectively over CPLY.



Anil Kumar Chaudhary, chairman, SAIL shared, "The synergised team efforts are showing in these record sales numbers, reduced inventory, improved collections and reduced borrowings. The company is focused on reducing its borrowings further towards meeting the expectation of all our stakeholders."

During these challenging times of corona pandemic, the company has reoriented its efforts towards strategic marketing and customer-centric operations leading to improvement in its performance. July records come immediately after the record June sales achieved. Consequent improvement in cash collections, despite the lower prices compared to CPLY coupled with stringent financial measures, the company has been able to bring down its borrowings below psychological level of ₹50,000 crore.

REC LIMITED BAGS THE 'BEST ORGANISATION FOR WOMEN EMPOWERMENT' AWARD

As a testament to healthy culture that it begets at its workplace, REC Limited has bagged the 'Best organisation for women empowerment' award by exchange4media at the women achievers summit and awards 2020. REC Limited continues to lead by example by empowering their women employees through their initiatives, support structures, spreading awareness on gender parity and promoting a fruitful work environment which makes it conducive for their employees to grow as professionals.



SHORT TAKES

CP, DELHI CONGRATULATES RANK HOLDERS OF UPSC EXAM

SN Shrivastava, commissioner of police, Delhi met all the successful rank holders of UPSC examination, who come from Delhi Police families. He congratulated Vishakha Yadav (AIR 6), daughter of ASI Raj Kumar; Navneet Mann (AIR 33), daughter of Insp. Sukhdev Singh Mann; Nisha Mathur (AIR 37); Garima (AIR 459), daughter of ASI Krishan; Gaurav Kumar (AIR 475), son of late Insp. VK Singh and Ct. Firoz Alam (AIR 645) on their astounding success and presented them mementos. During interaction,



CP, Delhi underlined that their success is not only a matter of pride for Delhi Police but would also inspire Delhi Police wards to follow their footsteps. CP, Delhi wished them success for their future endeavours.

RAJIV CHAUDHRY DISCUSSES ABOUT INCREASING SPEED AND SAFETY OF TRACKS

Rajiv Chaudhry, GM, northern and north central railways held a performance review video conference meeting with the departmental heads of Northern Railway.



Safety was one of the pivotal points discussed. He advised all to concentrate on improving the health of the tracks with special focus on quality of welding work and CMS crossings. He also added that issues related to maintenance and movement of wagons and coaches should be dealt with effectively.

IGDTUW STUDENTS RECEIVE EXCELLENT PRE-PLACEMENT OFFERS FROM TOP COMPANIES

Even in these unprecedented times, students of Indira Gandhi Delhi Technical University for Women (IGDTUW) are bagging pre-placement offers from top companies. Dr Jasdeep Dhanoa, training and placement officer, IGDTUW that the on-campus placement drive is yet to start but 13 students have already received a pre-placement offer of 45 lpa from Microsoft after their internship with a 92.8 per cent conversion rate. More students are expected to be hired by Microsoft in the upcoming placement drive. Intuit, Walmart and Expedia have offered full-time returning offers to students with 100 per cent conversion rates.

NFL'S TOTAL FERTILISER SALE REACHES ALL-TIME HIGH AT 18.79 LMT BETWEEN APRIL TO JULY, 2020

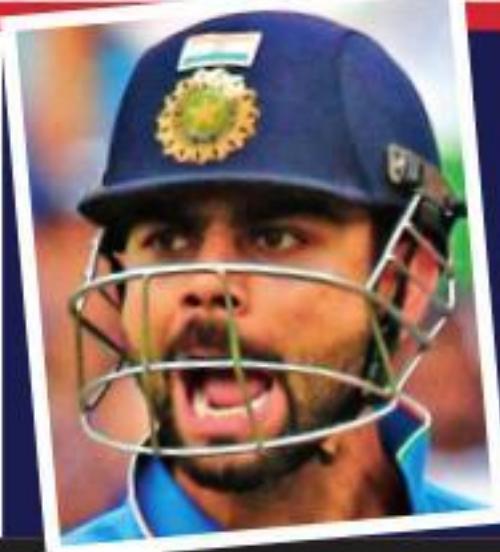
NFL's total fertiliser sale has touched a new high of 18.79 lakh MT in April-July, 2020 showing a growth of more than 20 per cent than the previous best of 15.64 LMT recorded during the same period last year. This includes the sale of urea, DAP, MoP, NPK, SSP and bentonite sulphur during the said period. Out of this, the sale of company's core product, urea has registered a sale of 15.87 lakh MT, higher by 17 per cent than the CPLY.



STF MEETING FOCUSES ON CLEARANCE OF PENDENCY AND REMOVAL OF UNAUTHORISED ENCROACHMENT

At the 49th meeting of STF wherein officers from all the local bodies and other concerned agencies were present, the progress of the complaints received upto July 15, 2020 was reviewed. Total 52,253 complaints have been received and action on 45,955 complaints have been initiated. While reviewing the progress on action taken on the complaints, Chairman STF observed that there has been significant reduction in the pendency. From the last STF meeting, the pendency has reduced from 12,600 to 6,298. The effort taken by NDMC, SDMC and EDMC in disposal of complaints was applauded.

Sports Mail



Kohli's presence at the crease takes pressure off me: Pujara

Masood hits a ton, Pakistan in driver's seat vs England in 1st Test



England's Stuart Broad in action on Thursday. (Left) England's James Anderson stops a ball.



Pakistan's Shan Masood celebrates his century against England on Thursday.

SHAN Masood stood tall with a third successive century as Pakistan moved to 312 for eight on the second afternoon of the first Test against England.

Masood's last two Test knocks saw him make tons in Karachi and Rawalpindi and he followed up with a career-best 151 not out in the vastly different conditions of Emirates Old Trafford.

The 30-year-old opener was reprieved twice by wicketkeeper Jos Buttler on 45 on day one, and took his opportunity superbly as he stretched his innings to 314 balls in 106 overs at the crease.

The hosts had worked hard to manoeuvre their opponents to 187 for five at lunch, taking three for 48 in a relentlessly disciplined opening session, only for a 105-run stand between the defiant Masood and Shadab Khan to turn the tables back in Pakistan's favour.

Two wickets in two balls from Jofra Archer mitigated some of that progress, but Pakistan will be more than happy with their efforts thus far.

At the time of going to press, hosts were 21/3

The morning began with a head-to-head between Babar Azam and James Anderson, the former picking up from a wonderful first day and the latter looking to kick up a notch after a modest showing.

It was the Englishman who came out on top, quickly and decisively. After putting Babar on alert with five probing deliveries he drew a loose drive with his sixth, a thick edge held soundly by Joe Root at slip.

At 38, Anderson has little to prove to anybody but having struggled against Babar on Wednesday, this was a point well made. With the premier stroke-maker back in the pavilion, Anderson and Stuart Broad set about tightening their grip. Together they hammered out a probing line and length and dialling up the pressure with a 28-ball sequence that cost just a single.

The 29th brought deserved reward, Broad dropping just back of a length and getting enough bounce to hit the shoulder of

CLASS APART

NUMBERS GAME

4 The number of centuries scored by Shan Masood in 21 Tests/39 innings. It was his first hundred v England in 5 Tests/9 innings.

3 With this hundred Shan Masood has now scored 3 successive hundred in 3 consecutive innings. Before this hundred, he had scored 135 v Sri Lanka in Karachi in Dec 2019 and 100 v Bangladesh in Rawalpindi in Feb 2020.

1 Shan Masood became the first overseas batsman to hit a century in the current year in England. Before

Shan Masood Blackwood scored 95 runs for the West Indies.

69 Is the highest score of Babar Azam v England, bettering his previous best of 68* in Lord's in 2018.

SCOREBOARD

PAKISTAN BATTING

Batsman	Dismissal	R	B
Masood	batting	151	314
Ali	b Archer	16	37
Azhar	lbw b Woakes	0	6
Azam	c Root b Anderson	69	106
Shafiq	c Stokes b Broad	7	22
Rizwan	c Buttler b Woakes	9	41
Shadab	c Root b Bess	45	76
Yasir	lbw b Archer	5	25
Abbas	c Root b Archer	0	1
Shaheen	batting	1	9
Extras: (b 1, lb 7, nb 1)		9	
Total: (106 Ov, Wickets 8)		312	
Fall of wickets: 1-36, 2-43, 3-139, 4-150, 5-176, 6-281, 7-291, 8-291			

ENGLAND BOWLING

Bowler	O	M	R	W
Anderson	19	6	63	1
Broad	21	8	54	1
Woakes	20	6	43	2
Archer	20	4	45	3
Bess	20	4	74	1
Root	6	0	25	0

Day 2, Till Tea



LASK's Philipp Wiesinger reacts after scoring the opener against Manchester United at Old Trafford on Wednesday night.



EUROPA RESULTS

Shakhtar	3-0	Wolfsburg
Kobahaven	3-0	Basaksehir
Inter Milan	2-0	Getafe
Man United	2-1	LASK

UNITED COMPLETE

Beat LASK 7-1 on aggregate to reach Europa League quarters

IT WASN'T worth waiting five minutes for, never mind five months, but Manchester United had already done more than enough in Austria in March. They advance to the business end of the Europa League in Cologne next week and a quarter-final meeting with Copenhagen.

Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's side will go into the mini-tournament in Germany as favourites and rightly so, even though there was little evidence to support that on a drab night at Old Trafford.

A 5-0 lead from the first leg before lockdown turned this tie into the deepest of rubbers and gave Solskjaer the chance to make changes again. He has used 36 players in Europe this season, a record for the competition.

Although United came back to win, their strength in depth once again left something to be desired. While Solskjaer's first XI is a match for any in the Premier League, this is why he wants to strengthen with new signings like Jadon Sancho and Jack Grealish.

Juan Mata came in for only his second start since facing LASK at the Linzer Stadion 147 days ago and set up an equaliser for Jesse Lingard and a late winner for Anthony Martial after Philipp Wiesinger had put the Austrians in front with an excellent finish.

But Daniel James continues to look like a man whose season has been petering out for some time, Odion Ighalo was sluggish in attack and Fred has suffered through lack of first-team action.

Lingard actually looked quite sprightly but that didn't stop his former team-mate Paul Scholes casting doubt over his future at the club after he was replaced by Paul Pogba just after the hour mark.

'Recently, he's not been good enough,' says Scholes which seemed harsh considering Lingard's goal was his second in two games.

'I know what he's capable of, but at United he's just become a squad player. Unless there are a lot of injuries I don't see Jesse getting a run of games.'



Manchester United forward Jesse Lingard celebrates after scoring a goal at Old Trafford.

To bring him off after an hour when he definitely won't start on Monday that was a little sign – and Fred as well – that he (Solskjaer) might be getting rid of

Martial & Lingard
find the net for
the winners

them.'

Lingard certainly didn't appear very pleased to be taken off having just fired United level on the night.

'I felt like I could score more today but obviously it's the manager's decision and I stand by that,' he said.

Solskjaer's response was pointed. 'He has to stand by the manager whatever decision he makes,' said the United boss.

'When you get your chance in a

game, you have to prove yourself – prove your worth.'

I've known Jesse since he was a kid. There's a good player there, a great personality. He knows what we want from him.'

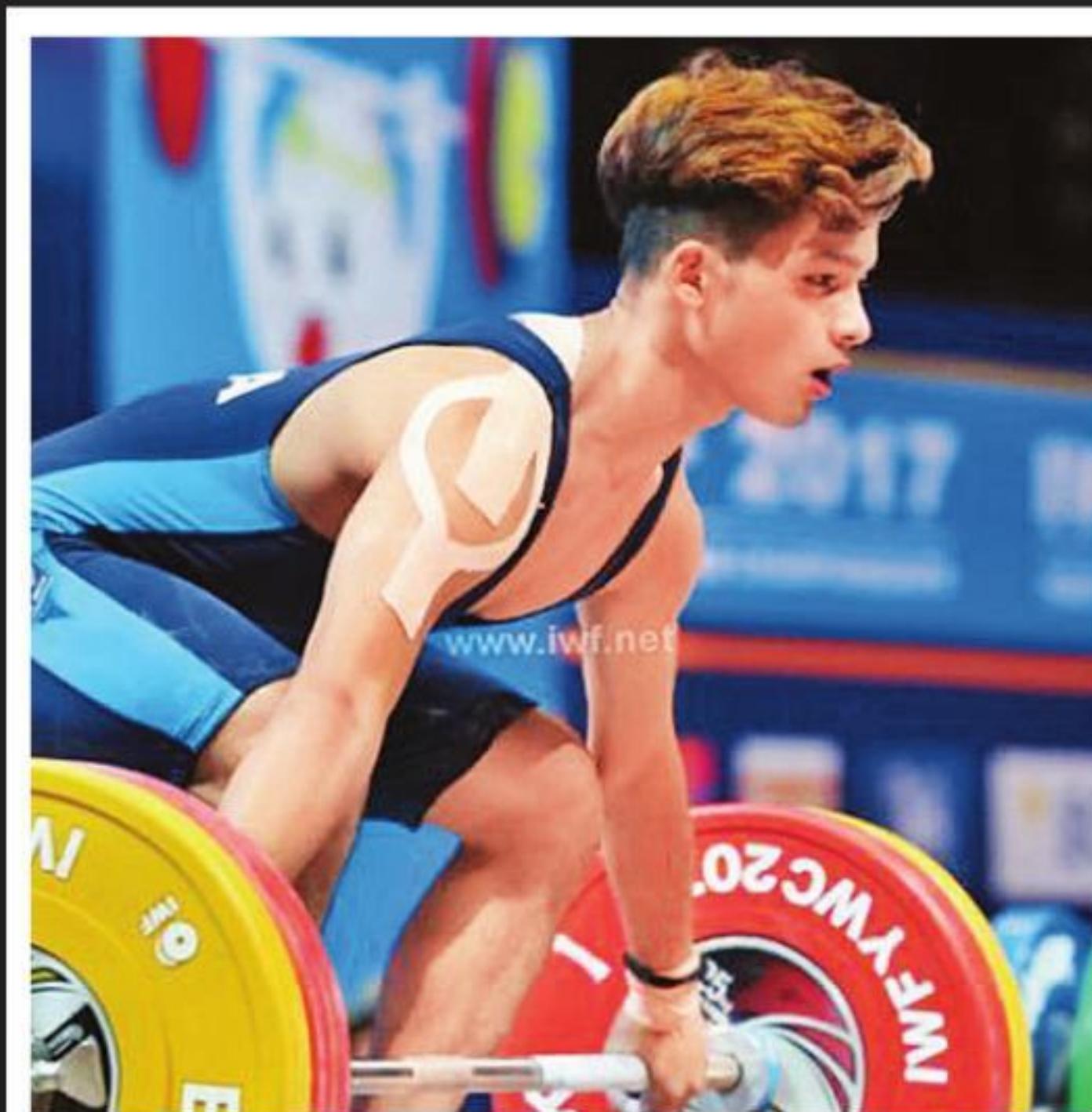
United could certainly have no complaints when they went behind 10 minutes after half-time. LASK had threatened in the first half when Andres Andrade headed against the bar from a corner, and Marko Raguz forced a smart save from Sergio Romero after United gave the ball away cheaply in midfield.

LASK's lead last barely two minutes before United struck back. Mata spotted Lingard's run into acres of space behind the Austrian defence and swung a pass over the top.

Lingard, who scored his first goal of the season on the final day at Leicester, had more than enough time to draw Alexander Schalger before slipping the ball past the keeper. Solskjaer sent on his substitutes and Martial provided the winner in the 88th minute.

—Daily Mail

BIG WIN



Jeremy Lalrinnunga was originally supposed to travel to Patiala on July 18 but his flight got cancelled twice.



Manchester United's Anthony Martial points at team-mate Juan Mata (not in the photo) after scoring team's late winner.

ANSHUL, NEW KID ON THE BLOCK

By S.Kannan in New Delhi

THESE are interesting times for Indian motorsport. As has been the case often, it is race drivers based outside India who managed to do well.

Last Sunday, two drivers, Jehan Daruvala in F2 and Khush Maini in F3 class, did well respectively in Britain. At a time when most athletes based in India are still struggling to go full tilt in training because of post COVID-19 restrictions, racing has been different.

It is well known even for the sea-



Anshul Gandhi was looking forward to compete in the European Karting Championship before it was halted due to COVID-19.

INSTEAD of speculating on the IPL's title sponsorship, Kings XI Punjab co-owner Ness Wadia says the focus must be on ensuring that not a single COVID-19 case is reported during the event, which according to him, is set to be the best ever.

The BCCI has sent an exhaustive 16-page SOP to teams for a smooth conduct of the tournament. It requires players, support staff, team officials

and owners to be part of a bio-secure environment.

Wadia himself has not decided on travelling to the UAE for the IPL but said safety can't be compromised.

"We have to adjust and acclimatise to the (bio-secure) environment. One case could kill the IPL. Extraneous circumstances require ordinary people to do extraordinary things," he added.

—PTI

SHUBHANKAR Sharma got off to a great start with birdies on the first two holes but was then unable to maintain the tempo and slid to even par 71 on the first day of the 2020 English Championship. On the Honbury Manor Marriott Hotel and Country Club course which afforded a lot of scores, Sharma was lying way down in Tied-

110th place needing a really low second round to make the cut.

Last week in his first appearance on the UK Swing Sharma missed the cut at Hero Open.

As many as seven players, three of who had completed their round shot seven-under 64 to share the lead.

—Mail Today

soned drivers like Narain Karthikeyan, Karun Chandhok and Armaan Ebrahim, trying racing options abroad was the key. The first two made it to Formula One, while there are more Indian based abroad nurturing similar dreams.

The latest kid who wants to emulate the Indian stars is Dubai-based Anshul Gandhi. He has done very well in the UAE karting circuits in the junior division. Anshul started his professional karting career in 2017 and has come a long way. From his childhood days, the NRI has been passionate about cars and speed. His family has backed his dreams and provided him with the right exposure in Dubai.

For the youngster to make it to the next stage, he has to compete in harder events. "I was looking forward to competing in the

British and European Karting Championship this summer but it was halted due to travel restrictions and lockdown protocols," Anshul told MAIL TODAY.

For someone aspiring to make it to the highest level, he has used all the time this summer training hard on his fitness in the murderous Dubai heat.

Apart from training hard, he also works with the mechanics and coach on improving his racing knowledge. "Racing and competing are in my blood, it makes me who I am," says the teenager.

In his second year of karting, he

finished fourth in Junior IAME X30 UAE Championship and following year (2019-20) he became the Junior IAME UAE Champion and finished first in the regional standings with the support of his team 'Brand Racing'.

He has so far finished 10 times on the podium, seven of which were in his 2019-20 season. Anshul plans to do well next in the Senior IAME X30 category and DD2 category in the UAE Rotax Championship. Minus sponsors, it is tough for Anshul's family, but they are hoping help will come soon.

Vivo suspends IPL partnership for 2020

official press release.

"The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and Chinese smartphone maker Vivo Communication Technology Co's Indian arm Vivo India on Thursday decided to suspend their partnership for the 2020 season of the Indian Premier League."

The Indian Premier League season will begin this year from September 19th and the final will be played on November 10th.

The tournament will be held in the United Arab Emirates across three venues at Sharjah, Abu Dhabi and Dubai.

The move comes after BCCI and the IPL Governing Council were both criticised for retaining Vivo as the title sponsor at a time when anti-China sentiment is running high in India.

—Mail Today

Jeremy's flight postponed again

MAILTODAY EXCLUSIVE

By Rohit Paniker in New Delhi

TOKYO Olympics hopeful Jeremy Lalrinnunga's wait to restart his training at the national camp in NIS, Patiala gets longer as his flight to Kolkata scheduled for August 4 has been suspended. The 18-year-old will now try to leave on August 8.

This has been the second incident of a flight suspension as Jeremy was originally supposed to travel to Patiala on July 18 but was denied the chance as the flight got cancelled.

He has continued his training at an academy nearby and is relaxed by idea of waiting for his chance to reunite with chief coach Vijay Sharma and other lifters.

"I got to know just a day before the flight. I was ready to leave. I am in con-

stant touch with Vijay sir and he asked me to relax. "He asked me come to Patiala whenever possible, it's not an issue," Jeremy told MAIL TODAY.

"Yes a bit frustrating as it has happened for the second time. I am not losing much on training part as I have evening sessions daily. I'll see what happens this weekend."

MAIL TODAY was first to report that Jeremy would leave with for the camp earlier this week, along with two international lifters Jhilli Dalabehera

and Anuradha.

It has been now learnt that both Jhilli and Anuradha have reached Patiala and are serving their quarantine period in the hostel outside NIS.

"Yes. Both of them have reached Patiala. They were immediately sent to the Sports Authority of India's quarantine centre. They will serve their for 14 days and will undergo COVID-19 test after initial five days."

"Once their report comes negative and they have served the period, they will join the national camp," said an Indian Weightlifting Federation official.

THE original director of the board which represents all four grand slam tennis tournaments is retiring at the end of the year.

Bill Babcock has been the London-based director since the Grand Slam Board was formed in 1989, comprising of the chairs and chief executives of the Australian, French and U.S. Opens and Wimbledon, along with the president of the International Tennis Federation.

Babcock was involved in creating a grand slam rulebook, an independent officiating body, and the old Grand Slam Cup, which ran from 1990-99 and folded into the ATP Tour Finals.

—Agencies

Jhilli & Anuradha have reached Patiala and are serving quarantine period

Sports Mail



Kyrgios says slim to no chance of playing French Open

ANASTASIA TO SKIP US OPEN

RUSSIA'S Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova said on Wednesday that she will not travel to New York to take part in the US Open later this month as organisers could not guarantee her health and safety amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The US Open is set to be played from August 31 to September 12 even as the country leads the world with over 4.7 million confirmed COVID-19 cases and more than 157,000 deaths, according to Reuters.

Pavlyuchenkova, 29, joins the likes of men's defending champion Rafa Nadal and women's world number one Ash Barty who pulled out of the Grand Slam out of fear of contracting the novel

Join the likes of Nadal and Barty who earlier pulled out of the Grand Slam

says organisers could not guarantee her health safety amid pandemic

coronavirus during their stay in the country.

"I've been thinking a lot and decided not to play (the) U.S. Open this year," Pavlyuchenkova, ranked 30 in the world, said on Instagram.

"It wasn't easy because I hadn't missed any Grand Slam in my entire career. Tennis is almost everything for me."

"The main reason is insecurity, (the) U.S. Open doesn't provide any guaran-

tees. I don't feel comfortable to travel to USA in such circumstances."

"From this moment, every player is on his own. My team and I have decided it would be for the best not to participate."

Although Barty has pulled out, nine of the women's top 10 were named in the women's field while world number one Novak Djokovic headlines the men's field after organisers released the entry list on Tuesday.

—Daily Mail



World No. 30 Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova.

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