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NEARBY



Delhi records highest
virus cases and tests

NEW DELHI
With a record 58,340 COVID-19 tests being done, the Capital on Thursday witnessed the highest number of daily cases – 4,308 – in the past 24 hours. The total number of cases stood at 2,05,482. Also, 28 more deaths were reported, pushing the toll to 4,666.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

Officials confirm two incidents of firing at south bank of Pangong Tso

Shots were first fired on August 30 as Indian troops prevented PLA efforts to change status quo

VIJAYA SINGH
NEW DELHI

The south bank of the Pangong Tso (lake) where Indian and Chinese troops are currently engaged in a face-off, witnessed firing in the air not only on September 7 but also a week earlier, a senior government official told *The Hindu*.

The official said the first incident when a few rounds were fired in the air was reported on August 30 from

the same area. It was not clear how the firing began.

This is the first time since 1975 that shots were fired along the disputed Line of Actual Control (LAC). The Indian Army said on Tuesday that it was the Chinese troops who fired a few rounds in the air on September 7.

On August 31, the Army issued a statement, saying China had carried out provocative military movements to

change the status quo in the south bank of the Pangong Tso and "Indian troops preempted this PLA activity".

The official said the two instances of firing were worrying as no concrete solution on restoring the status quo had been achieved so far through military and diplomatic-level dialogue.

"So far, the policy at the China border has only been reactionary. China takes some action and Indian

troops react. It cannot be a long-term solution as winter is approaching and it will be difficult to maintain posts at such high altitudes," said the official.

Till now, no dispute has been reported in the south bank and for the past week, the Indian Army has dominated the ridges and hills here.

The official asserted that the Army had not transgressed into Chinese territory.

ry and was occupying ridges and heights that fall in Indian territory.

China has been amassing troops along the LAC in eastern Ladakh since April-May. Many areas in Depsang, Gogra-Hot Springs, Galwan and the north bank of Pangong Tso, within the LAC, have been out of bounds for patrolling by Indian troops since May.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8



Hostile terrain: An IAF helicopter flying over a mountain range in Leh, Ladakh, on Thursday. ■ AFP

Jaishankar, Wang hold talks

First face-to-face meeting of Foreign Ministers held in Moscow amid stand-off

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi held their first face-to-face meeting in Moscow on Thursday to discuss the four-month-long stand-off at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh, which has seen violent clashes and even gunfire for the first time since 1975.

The meeting took place on Thursday evening, after the completion of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Council's Foreign Minister's meeting as well as a Russia-India-China trilateral meeting that both Ministers attended. However, the outcome of the India-China bilateral meeting was not immediately known.

"Both India and China are in regular touch through diplomatic and military channels to resolve the situation, and this was the consensus when the two Ministers met," said External Affairs Ministry spokesperson Anurag Srivastava, confirming the meeting between Mr. Jaishankar and Mr. Wang.

"As we have reiterated several times in the past, India is committed to resolving the situation on the India-



A step forward: External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov and China's Wang Yi in Moscow on Wednesday. ■ AP

China border through peaceful negotiations," he said.

Meanwhile, there was little change at the LAC, where ground commanders at the north bank of Pangong Tso (lake) met for the second consecutive day.

Commanders' meet

China has amassed more troops and occupied ridges in the Finger area of Pangong Tso since Tuesday night, although Indian troops are holding on to dominant positions on the South Bank, said officials. A senior government official said the commanders meeting was cordial but remained inconclusive. He added that

status quo was maintained on Thursday.

Mr. Jaishankar, who travelled to Russia to attend the 8-nation Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, also held bilateral meetings with Foreign Ministers of the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan on the sidelines of the 2-day Council of Foreign Ministers meet. The only member of SCO he did not meet was Pakistan, whose Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi was also present.

In what would be considered a provocative statement in New Delhi, the Pakistani Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) said that they

had discussed India when Mr. Qureshi met with Mr. Wang on Thursday evening, a meeting that took place before Mr. Wang's meeting with Mr. Jaishankar.

Pakistan statement

"Foreign Minister Qureshi emphasized that India's expansionist and unilateral actions, particularly since August 5, 2019, have been imperilling regional peace and security," said a Pakistani MFA statement issued in Islamabad, referring to the government's moves with Jammu and Kashmir and Article 370 last year.

The MEA did not respond to the Pakistani statement.

Earlier Mr. Jaishankar and Mr. Wang took part in an extended lunch with Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov as part of the Russia-India-China trilateral. Russia has consistently encouraged dialogue between Delhi and Beijing, particularly at the most tense moments of the crisis. In the days after the Galwan clash in June in which 20 Indian soldiers were killed, Russia hosted a videoconference meeting of the RIC trilateral.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Body of woman caught in Ladakh border tensions

She had fallen into Shayok river

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

With the border in Ladakh tense, it will take at least seven days for the body of a 30-year-old woman, Kherun Nissa, to cover 4 km to reach home for burial in the Nubra Valley, Leh, from Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK).

Nissa, who left her husband's home at Leh's Bogdang village on August 26, mysteriously fell into the Shayok river and was washed away over 10 km into PoK's Baltistan region.

With the relations between the two countries tense and the Chinese aggression aggravating the situation, the villagers alerted their counterparts in PoK on a common WhatsApp group, which has kept the Balti community together despite the barriers.

Social media news

"We flashed the news of missing Nissa on a common WhatsApp group, which helps us to stay connected with the other side. We have relations there as Bogdang joined India after the 1971 war. The news went viral there and finally the villagers from Thugmas [in PoK] spotted the body and informed us on the social media," Ghulam Muhammad Tso, uncle of the deceased



Locals from Baltistan in PoK with the body at Thugmas village. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

woman, said.

Since then, the father of the deceased woman, Muhammad Ibrahim, has been making appeals to both the Indian and Pakistani governments to allow the body to be handed over at the shortest possible distance. "Bogdang is just four km away from the Zero Line at Thang. It was easy to handover the body there but the permission was denied," Mr. Tso added.

With no progress on handing over the body at the tense Ladakh border, the Baltistan administration on Thursday rushed the body to PoK capital Muzaffarabad from Skardu, which is at least 467 km apart. From Muzaffarabad, the body is likely to be handed over in Baramulla's Uri and will cover 376 km to reach Nubra valley. The body is expected to reach Leh by Saturday.

SIT to probe 'expensive' COVID kit purchases in U.P.

Gram panchayats in several districts had allegedly bought oximeters at a cost higher than market price

COVID-19 surveillance kits in every gram panchayat. The fund transfer was to be made from the State Finance Commission.

Additional Chief Secretary, Revenue Department, Renuka Kumar will head the SIT, which has been asked to submit a report in 10 days, said a government spokesperson.

In June, the State government issued orders for procurement of pulse oximeters, infrared thermometers and sanitiser sets as part of the

procurement of COVID-19 kits is absolutely true," he stated.

Suheldev Bhartiya Samaj Party president Om Prakash Rajbhar quoted local news reports to allege that the COVID-19 kits in the said districts were purchased at five times the market rate.

Judicial probe demanded Mr. Rajbhar demanded that the "scam" be probed by a sitting judge of the Allahabad High Court.

"Turning a disaster into an

opportunity, the BJP government is involved in a major

Seven people died in Baghpat and Meerut in 24 hours under mysterious circumstances. While residents claimed they died after drinking spurious liquor, the local administration said prima facie no evidence of hooch had been found.

Five people died in Chamarwali village of Baghpat while two died in Mirpur Jakheda village in Meerut.

'Spurious' liquor kills 7

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GHAZIABAD

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DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 4

I&B Ministry green-lights Sudarshan News show

HC had stayed its telecast on August 28

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Information and Broadcasting Ministry on Thursday allowed Sudarshan News channel to telecast on what the channel claimed was a "big expose" on "infiltration of Muslims" in the civil services.

It however, directed the channel to ensure that the show proposed to be telecast did not violate any programme code and that action would be taken in accordance with the law if any violation was found.

The channel, in its written submission, stated be-

fore the Ministry that its show was not violative of the law and if at all was found to be so, action could be taken against it. The programme, *Bindaas Bol*, was to be originally telecast on August 28.

The Delhi High Court on August 29 refused to vacate its stay on the telecast of the programme on a prima facie finding that the show's trailer violates the Programme Code under the Cable Television Networks (Regulations) Act, 1995. The court directions came after students and alumni of Jamia Millia Islamia filed a petition against the channel.

The report, based on a study conducted by the Indian Institute of Toxicology Research (IITR), however, says that concentration of various parameters analysed are lower than the prescribed limits and "will not be toxic to humans and environment".

Taking a note of the report, a Bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh

not find any valid reason to reject the expert report."

The report dated August 20 read, "The analysis reflects that concentrations detected will not be toxic to human and environment. Cellulose acetate is a major component (95%) of the cigarette butts along with the wrapping paper and rayon.

In general, the toxicity rate are not available for cellulose acetate." The tribunal has asked CPCB to lay down guidelines within three months. ■ FILE PHOTO

Kumar Goel said, "While tobacco is undoubtedly harmful and the concerned authorities are seized of the remedial action, the tribunal is mainly concerned with the manner of disposal of cigarette and beedi butts. We do

suggested as one among the immediate solution to the problem until the degradation and safety data are generated," it said. The study added that natural environmental conditions and laboratory stimulating conditions would be required to conclude the safety or toxicity of cigarette butts to further correlate with human and environmental health risk assessment.

The NGT directions came while hearing a plea moved by NGO 'Doctors for You' that sought instructions to regulate the disposal of cigarette and beedi butts apart from prohibiting consumption of tobacco in public places.

Cellulose acetate is a major component of the cigarette and beedi butts and its degradation studies show that it will persist for a longer duration. Recycling of cellulose acetate after recovery from cigarette butts may be

Frame rules for disposal of cigarette butts: NGT

Recent report suggests recycling of their major components as immediate solution

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Following a report filed by the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB), the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the board to lay down guidelines pertaining to disposal of cigarette and beedi butts within three months.

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IN BRIEF

'Living condition in night shelters not satisfactory'

NEW DELHI
The Delhi State Legal Services Authority on Thursday informed the High Court that basic living conditions were "below satisfactory" in the night shelters run in the Capital by the urban shelter improvement board. The DLSA said the shelters lacked sanitiser, masks, basic first aid, bedding and there was shortage of washrooms and lack of hygiene. PTI

Air quality of Delhi-NCR			
Delhi	Gurugram	Noida	Faridabad
Good 0-50	Satisfactory 51-100	Moderate 101-200	Poor 201-300
Very poor 301-400	Severe >401		
AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) SOURCE: CPCB			

Youth arrested for raping four-year-old

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A four-year-old girl was allegedly raped by her neighbour in Shahdara's Mansarovar Park on Wednesday, the police said on Thursday. The accused has been arrested, they said.

A police officer privy to the case said that the PCR received a call on Wednesday afternoon regarding an incident of sexual assault. When the police reached the spot, it was revealed that the neighbour - a 25-year-old daily-wage labourer - had committed the crime, they said.

During probe, the police found that the girl was alone at home when the accused spotted her and raped her. The parents, both labourers, were at work at the time.

A case under Section 376 of the Indian Penal Code and under sections of Prevention of Children from Sexual Offences Act was registered and the accused was arrested. The victim's medical examination was conducted. Further investigation is under way, the police added.

Stage II of resumption of Delhi metro services to kick in today

Ridership recorded on the network was 84,841 till Thursday evening

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Ridership on the Delhi metro network was 84,841 till 7.30 p.m. on Thursday, with the first stage of graded resumption of services coming to an end. The second stage of graded resumption will kick in on Friday.

Under the last phase of Stage I resumption, the Red, Violet and Green Lines became operational.

In the first four hours of operations - between 7 a.m. and 11 a.m. - the Yellow Line connecting Samaypur Badli to Huda City Centre saw the maximum footfall with a ridership of over 29,656.

It was followed by the Blue Line - running from Dwarka Sector 21 to Noida Electronic City and Vaishali - with a ridership of over



The nearly 400-km-long Delhi metro network will become fully operational from Saturday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA

31,234.

The nearly 30-km Green Line, which connects Kirti Nagar/Inderlok to Bahadurgarh, saw the least footfall with a ridership of 3,564.

The second stage of graded resumption on Friday will see Magenta Line

(Janakpuri West to Botanical Gardens) and Grey Line (Dwarka to Najafgarh) becoming operational.

Extension of timings

Timings will also get extended to 12 hours a day - between 7 a.m. and 1 p.m.

and from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. Delhi metro officials said that 26 trains making around 318 trips will be pressed into service on the Magenta Line and 2 trains making 135 trips will be run on the approximately 4-km-long Grey Line on the first day of its resumption.

The resumption of operations on the Magenta Line, which runs till Botanical Gardens, will also facilitate commuters to avail the Noida-Greater Aqua Line after interchanging trains to the Blue Line.

With the Rapid Metro, Gurugram and Noida-Greater Noida Aqua Line being operational since Monday, the nearly 400-km-long Delhi metro network will become fully operational from Saturday, with services available throughout the day.

Tahir Hussain's plea challenging remand infructuous, ED tells HC

Suspended councillor handed over to Tihar jail authorities

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate has informed the Delhi High Court on Thursday that the plea by suspended AAP councillor Tahir Hussain challenging his three-day remand in a money laundering case related to the northeast Delhi riots has become 'infructuous' as he has been sent to judicial custody now.

The ED said Mr. Hussain's plea need not be heard now as he has been handed over to the Tihar jail authorities on expiry of his three-day ED custody. The submission came on Mr. Hussain's plea seeking to set aside the remand order of September 7, passed by a trial court and a direction to the ED to immediately send him to Tihar jail.

Additional Solicitor General S.V. Raju, representing the ED, said the trial court's



Tahir Hussain

September 7 order clearly says that the accused be handed over to Tihar jail authorities on September 10, and the agency has complied with the direction.

Mr. Hussain's counsel opposed the submission of ED and said he is on the point of law and his prayer is to set aside the trial court's order. Justice Yogesh Khanna posted the case for hearing on November 24.

The ED was probing the allegation that Mr. Hussain and his linked persons laun-

dered about ₹1.10 crore funds by using purported shell or dummy companies to fuel the protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and the riots.

Mr. Hussain's counsel challenged the trial court's extension of remand order on the ground that the 15-day period for grant of police custody has to begin from the date of formal arrest, that is, August 20 and thus, further extension of police remand is not permissible in law.

"Trial Court has erred in deciding the above-mentioned application. It is held by the Supreme Court of India in a chain of judgments that 15 days period for grant of police custody has to begin from the date of formal arrest i.e. 20.08.2020 and thus, further extension of police remand is not permissible in law," his petition stated.

Absconding man held for sale and encroachment of government land

Accused has been produced before court, say police

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 56-year-old man, who had been absconding since 2011, was arrested for his alleged involvement in a conspiracy of facilitating the sale and encroachment of government land on which 38 flats were constructed, the police said on Thursday.

They said accused Diler Singh, a resident of Chhattarpur village, was arrested by the Economic Offences Wing of the Delhi Police. He was produced before the court, police said, adding that further investigation is in progress.

A case was registered on a complaint of the then Principal Secretary-cum-Divisional Commissioner, GNCT, New Delhi, the police said.

According to the police, the complainant reported that an unauthorised apartment block in the name of 'Neelakanth Apartment' came up on the evictee property bearing number 152 to

During investigation, it emerged that the accused person got executed the sale documents of two plots in Chhattarpur village using forced documents

O.P. MISHRA
Joint Commissioner of Police (EOW)

154 in Chhattarpur village, and flats have been sold to general public.

The apartment has been built on Government Land (Compensation Pool Property) bearing plot number 152 to 154, and private land bearing plot number 151 and 108 in Chhattarpur village.

Joint Commissioner of Police (EOW) O.P. Mishra said that during investigation, it emerged that the accused person got executed the sale documents of two plots - number 151 and 108 in Chhattarpur village - using forced documents. Plot no.

151 was owned by his aunt Pritam Kaur and plot no. 108 was owned by Bola Singh, the father of Diler Singh and Kulwant Singh.

Mr. Diler is the nephew of Ms. Pritam and the real brother of Mr. Kulwant residing at plot no. 150, he said.

Builder occupied plots

Mr. Diler on the strength of forged GPA purportedly executed by Ms. Pritam sold plot no. 151 to Rajesh Dhir and further transferred to builders without any demarcation of the properties. Taking benefit of non-demarcation, the alleged builders occupied the adjacent plots - no. 152-154 - illegally and constructed apartments and sold to the general public, the officer said.

Two other accused persons, namely Jagbir Singh and Ganesh Kumar, who sold the flats and executed sale documents in favour of buyers have already been arrested in the cas-

Two held for duping businessmen

Accused promised extra money in exchange of 'white' money

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Two friends were arrested for allegedly cheating businessmen on the pretext of offering extra money in exchange of white money, the police said on Thursday.

The accused have been identified as Anuj (27), a resident of Sonipat in Haryana, and Vikram (29), a resident of Panipat in Haryana, police said.

Vikram counted ₹8,50,000 before Mukesh in his car and said that ₹2 lakh was kept in the boot space of the car, the police said.

On July 13, property dealer Yogesh Bansal filed a complaint at Patel Nagar police station where he alleged that his friend Mukesh Gupta had introduced him to one Anuj through a local property dealer, Karan, on June 21, said a senior police officer.

Anuj had claimed that he was in need of ₹8 lakh in white money for a property deal and offered ₹9 lakh in cash, the complainant said, adding that he had agreed to the deal.

On July 1, Anuj called Mukesh and said that he was sending his younger brother with his accomplices, they said.

During investigation, it was revealed that the accused were operating in Delhi and also duped other businessmen with the same

him to collect it after transferring ₹8 lakh to his account, the officer said.

Thereafter, three persons met Mukesh at a petrol pump near Shadipur flyover where accused Vikram introduced himself as Anuj's younger brother.

Vikram counted ₹8,50,000 before Mukesh in his car and said that ₹2 lakh was kept in the boot space of the car, the police said.

Mukesh counted the money and confirmed the complainant about the cash, following which the complainant made two transactions of ₹3,99,886 and ₹3,99,980, they said.

After the money was transferred, Mukesh asked Vikram to give the cash. Vikram took him behind the car where he pushed him and fled the spot along with his accomplices, they said.

During investigation, it was revealed that the accused were operating in Delhi and also duped other businessmen with the same

During investigation, it was revealed that the accused were operating in Delhi and also duped other businessmen with the same

Husband arrested for killing woman

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 21-year-old woman was strangled to death allegedly by her husband in outer Delhi's Mundka on Thursday morning. The accused has been arrested, the police said.

Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer) Sudhanshu Dhami said that the accused has been identified as Majid, a 21-year-old labourer and resident of labour camp in Bakkawala.

Police said that a call was received at 10 a.m. at Mundka police station regarding the death of a woman. When they reached the spot, victim Shabila Khattoon was found dead. It was found that her husband Majid was absconding.

With the help of human intelligence, he was later arrested. The accused told the police that he suspected his wife of having an extramarital affair.

A case under IPC Section 302 has been filed and a probe is on, the police said.

Four in police net for stealing luxury cars in city

11 cars, duplicate keys, toolkits and other accessories recovered from them

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Four persons have been arrested for allegedly stealing luxury cars, the police said on Thursday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (South) Atul Thakur said that the accused have been identified as Mohd Sajid (35), Sonu (37), Akash Rathore (26) and Munna (55).

The police said that theft



of an SUV was reported from Chhattarpur Enclave on September 3.

During investigation, the police found a CCTV footage, which showed the accused coming in an autorickshaw, stealing the car and escaping within minutes.

With the help of human intelligence, the auto driver, identified as Akash Rathore, was found. At his instance, the accused were arrested.

A total of 11 cars, including five luxury cars, duplicate keys, toolkits and other ac-

Monsoon to last longer in Delhi, withdrawal in early October: IMD

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Monsoon is likely to stay longer in the national capital and start withdrawing only in the "initial days of October", an India Meteorological Department official said on Thursday.

"According to the extended range forecast, monsoon showers will continue till September end. The withdrawal is likely to happen in the initial days of October," said Kuldeep Srivastava, the head of the IMD's regional forecasting centre.

Earlier this year, the Met department revised the date for the withdrawal of monsoon from Delhi from September 21 to September 25.

The IMD revised the withdrawal date considering the trend in the last 20-25 years," Mr. Srivastava said. He said that light to moderate rain is possible in Northwest India from September 15. Till then, mostly dry weather will prevail in Delhi.

The air quality index is also expected to remain in 'satisfactory' and 'moderate' categories due to a longer monsoon, he also said.

GURU GOBIND SINGH INDRAPRASHTHA UNIVERSITY (Established by the Govt. of NCT of Delhi) Sector-16 C, Dwarka, New Delhi – 110 078 Website: www.ipu.ac.in

TENDER NOTICE FOR INVESTMENT OF CPF FUNDS

Guru Gobind Singh Indraprastha University intends to invest its funds of CPF Trust approx Rs. 12 Cr. to 22 Cr. in fixed deposit for the period from 01 year to 03 years and accordingly invites competitive interest rates from the Nationalized Banks only by 14th September 2020 upto 1.00 P.M. by post or via Email on Email Id: investment@ipu.ac.in with the validity of interest rates upto 15th September 2020. The detailed notice can be seen on the University website "www.ipu.ac.in" under the Head "Tenders" in Events & Notices.

(CONTROLLER OF FINANCE)

Timings
DELHI

FRIDAY, SEP. 11	
RISE 06:05	SET 18:31
RISE 00:00	SET 13:53
SATURDAY, SEP. 12	
RISE 06:05	SET 18:30
RISE 00:25	SET 14:49
SUNDAY, SEP. 13	
RISE 06:06	SET 18:28
RISE 01:20	SET 15:42

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	36	26
Safdarjung	36	26
Palam	36	27

Delhi Palam Today
35°C Mainly clear sky with few patchy clouds. Dry and very warm day would prevail.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
35°C Comfortable morning turn warm afternoon with partly cloudy sky.

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THE HINDU
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Capital records highest virus cases and tests for second day

4,308 new cases recorded, 58,340 COVID-19 tests conducted in the past 24 hours

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI



People queue up to register for COVID-19 test at Majlis Park in north Delhi. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

With a record number of COVID-19 tests being done, the Capital on Thursday witnessed the highest number of daily cases with 4,308 people tested positive in the past 24 hours, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government.

The total number of cases stood at 2,05,482. This is the second day in a row Delhi is recording the highest number of cases and tests.

A total of 58,340 COVID-19 tests were done in the past 24 hours, which is the highest since the virus outbreak. In July, the average daily tests were around 20,000 and it was even lesser in June when the highest number of cases till today – 3,947 – was reported on June 23.

Positivity rate

Though the number of cases has gone up, the positivity rate was 7.3%, (percentage of people testing positive for every 100 tests done) which is the lowest in September.

Also, 28 more deaths have been reported, taking the total number of deaths to 4,666.

Of the total cases, 1,75,400 people have recovered and there are 25,416 active cases.

Of the total 14,228 beds available for COVID-19 treatment in the city, 8,453 (59.4%) were vacant, as per government data on Thursday.

Also, 56.7% of ventilators have been occupied, according to official data.

Also, the number of containment zones in the city jumped to 1,272, which is

the highest till now.

Plasma therapy

Health Minister Satyendar Jain on Thursday said that the Delhi government will continue with plasma therapy to fight COVID-19.

A study funded by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) has found that use of convalescent plasma therapy in COVID-19 patients does not help in reducing mortality or progression to severe COVID-19, PTI had reported on Tuesday.

"The ICMR did not say that there is no benefit [of using plasma therapy].

BJP is sending notices for demolition of slums: AAP

If needed, will move SC and also protest on the streets: Chadha

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party on Thursday said that the Central government has started pasting notices outside many slums, notifying that their houses will be demolished. The party said that it will approach the Supreme Court against it if needed.

"The BJP is pasting these notices outside houses in slums across Delhi. These notices are against humanity, against the Constitution, against the right to live. I want to tell the BJP that till Arvind Kejriwal is alive, not even one family's house will be allowed to be demolished," AAP national spokesperson Raghav Chadha said while addressing a press conference.

"The slum dwellers should not worry because CM Kejriwal, who is your elder brother, will not allow any displacement of the slum dwellers in the city."

"Any ID proof is needed [for testing]. I think everyone in Delhi has an Aadhaar card. In the country also, how many people are there, all of them have an Aadhaar card," he said.

"Illegal' notices

Terming the notices as "illegal", Mr. Chadha said that



AAP leader Raghav Chadha addresses the press at the party head office in the city on Thursday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

ing an alternative accommodation was against the law.

"Today I want to expose the BJP and challenge them. I have with me various notices served by the BJP-ruled Central government. One such notice which was put at various houses of the slum dwellers of the Tughlakabad area noted that they have to evacuate their house by September 11. After this, their houses will be demolished. At the same time in some other areas, notices were issued which noted that by September 14 the slum dwellers will need to evacuate their houses," the AAP leader said.

DDA, CSC tie up to help residents of illegal colonies

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Development Authority (DDA) on Thursday said that it had tied up with Common Service Centres (CSC) in a bid to facilitate residents of unauthorised colonies complete the registration process for grant of ownership rights.

Four DDA processing centres were made operational for the scheme in Pitampura, Dwarka, Hauz Khas and Lakshmi Nagar, the urban body said, while adding that three other centres will be made operational over the next 15 days.

26,705 applications

According to the latest data provided by the land-owning agency, 26,705 applications were received by the DDA on its online portal while 1,348 residents had been granted the ownership rights.

Additionally, a total of 1,342 applications had been rejected for not meeting the policy regulations.

"In addition to DDA's 28 help desks, residents of unauthorised colonies in Delhi can now also walk in to their nearest CSC to apply for ownership rights to property or to file replies to the deficiency memos issued. Necessary training to the personnel have been provided by the DDA to enable them to effectively support the citizens in availing the benefits of the scheme," a DDA official said.

Officials added that while residents can complete the registration portal online by themselves, those who need assistance can approach the CSCs.



Slums adjacent to the railway track near Sarai Rohilla station in New Delhi. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

'Allot vacant houses to slum dwellers'

BJP asks AAP govt. to 'stop the drama'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Thursday asked the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) to "stop the drama" of tearing government notices and allot vacant houses to slum dwellers with immediate effect.

If the Delhi government demolishes the slums located near the railway tracks, Leader of the Opposition in the Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri warned that the BJP karyakartas will then shift the residents to the vacant houses available with the Delhi government.

"No work done yet"

Even after taking ₹11.25 crore from the Railways to rehabilitate slums, the Delhi government did not work to this end, he alleged.

The BJP, Mr. Bidhuri said, stands with the slum dwellers and will not allow any injustice to happen to them.

Govt. working in collusion with private schools: BJP

'It is ignoring their arbitrariness'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Thursday alleged on Thursday that the way the Delhi government was "ignoring the arbitrariness of private schools" showed that it was in collusion with them.

Names removed

Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta alleged that private schools are removing the names of children from online classes and removing their parents from WhatsApp groups when they are unable to pay fees, even after government directives against increasing fees.

"The instructions issued by the Delhi government for private schools are also a kind of publicity stunt like other such instructions," Mr. Gupta alleged.

The Delhi BJP demanded that the Delhi government control "the increasing arbitrariness of private schools" regarding fees with immediate effect and direct the schools to give time to parents to pay.

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THE HINDU

India's National Newspaper

Mishap waiting to happen



Jumbled-up electric wires in a residential area at Majlis Park in north-west Delhi. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Govt. revokes school's permission to hike fees

Private schools cannot increase fees, they are allowed to collect only tuition fee'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI



Manish Sisodia

have already received multiple complaints from parents regarding Sanskriti School doubling its fee. The school increased its fees by almost 75% which is unacceptable.

"The Chief Minister and I

Therefore, after consultation with CM Arvind Kejriwal, we are revoking the order issued for Sanskriti School regarding increasing the fee," the Minister said.

Lapses in system
According to Mr. Sisodia lapses were found in the school's functioning. Under the system called GAAP, it is necessary to follow a special system of accounting and audit but the school did not follow it, he said.

Also, he said, there was no need to increase the fees as the school already had a surplus amount gained during 2017-18, due to which their

proposal to increase the fee was rejected by the government. "During the same year, we directed this school to pay the teachers under the Seventh Pay Commission from the surplus amount and not to put this burden on the students. But the school did not comply with this order," the Minister said.

"A school gets permission for establishment only if it has a three-month salary fixed deposit for the staff. Therefore, now the demand to increase the fees is unreasonable because that amount has already been deposited as a fixed deposit since the inception of the school," he said.

"The order is meant to show the people that the Delhi government is addressing their problems but in reality, the Delhi government is busy filling its pocket in collusion with private schools," he also alleged.

Mr. Gupta said the Delhi government did not acknowledge issues related to the economic situation of the students' parents, impacting their ability to pay for the education of their children.

Give time to pay
The Delhi BJP demanded that the Delhi government control "the increasing arbitrariness of private schools" regarding fees with immediate effect and direct the schools to give time to parents to pay.

DU to write to foreign varsities on admissions
STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi University on Thursday announced that it would write to foreign universities on a case-by-case basis to allow students, who are waiting for their marksheets after the open book exam, to be provisionally admitted.

Following a Delhi High Court order, the university has made this a one-time provision. Students requiring their final results to get admission at foreign universities will now have to send in special requests carrying the name of the programme, college and university they are applying along with their examination roll number and other details.

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CM YK

AN-ND-E

Haryana farmers protest against farm ordinance

Police use mild force to disperse them

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHANDIGARH

Farmers and commission agents (arthiyas) on Thursday held a rally in Haryana's Kurukshetra against the Centre's recently promulgated agriculture-related ordinances, even as the police attempted to stop them from reaching the venue amid COVID-19 restrictions.

As the protesters marched towards the rally venue in Pipli's grain market and blocked National Highway-44, disrupting vehicular traffic for a few hours, the police used mild force to disperse them. Kurukshetra administration had issued prohibitory orders under Section 144 Cr.PC in Pipli to prevent gathering of more than four people.

The police said no permission was given for the rally and necessary legal action will be taken against the participants. The rally was organised on a call given by the Bhartiya Kisan Union (BKU) and the Congress had announced its support to the agitation. Several farmers and commission agents, who were on their way to participate in the State-level rally, were stopped by the police at their respective districts on account of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Congress leaders, including Bhupinder Singh Hooda, Ranveer Singh Surjewala and Kumari Selja, condemned the use of "force" against the farmers, accusing the police of resorting to "lathi-charge".

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION

General Public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of a male Namely Unknown S/o Unknown, R/o Unknown, Age: about 30 years, Height: 5'5", Complexion: Wheatish, Wearing: Blue coloured shirt and green coloured lower was found dead on footpath near ESI Dispensary, Mori Gate, Delhi on 05/09/2020. In this regard a DD No. 18A, U/s 174 Cr.PC dated 05/09/2020 has been lodged at P.S. Subzi Mandi, Delhi. If any one having any clue about deceased male may kindly inform the undersigned and contact on following numbers.

SHO
P.S. Subzi Mandi, Delhi
DP/550/N/2020
Ph.: 011-23823161, 238354

SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED GIRL

General public is hereby informed that this girl namely Poonam D/o Pramod Kumar R/o M-68, 1st Floor, Shastri Nagar Delhi Age : 14 years, Height : 4'6", Complexion : Slallow, Face : Round, wearing blue colour suit and salwar, has been missing/ kidnapped since 01.04.2019. In this regard FIR No. 101/19 dated 04.04.2019 has been registered at P.S. Sarai Rohilla, Delhi. Any person having any information or clue about this missing/kidnapped girl may kindly inform to the following.

E-mail: cic@cbi.gov.in SHO : P.S. Sarai Rohilla, Delhi
Website: http://cbi.nic.in Ph. : 011-23693611,
Fax: 24368639, 23691106
Tel.: 24368638/24368641

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General Public is hereby informed that one lady Namely: Aarti, D/o: Rajpal, R/o: Sec-10, Pocket-7, Narela, Delhi, Age: 21 Years , Height: About 5', Complexion: Fair, Face: Round, Built: Healthy, Wearing: Green Suit & Salwar, Pink Dupatta and Hawai Chappal in feet has been missing since 20.08.2020 from the area of P.S. Narela, Delhi. In this regard DD No. 68A, Dated 24.08.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Narela, Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out the missing lady but no clue has come to light so far. If anyone have any information about this missing lady please inform the undersigned.

Web-site : <http://cbi.nic.in> SHO
E-Mail ID: cic@cbi.gov.in
Fax: 011-23011334
DP/453/ON/2020 Ph.: 011-27280435, 27282350 & 7065036323

Government of Jharkhand Directorate of Food & Consumer Affairs Ground Floor, Engineers Hostel, HEC, Sector - III Dhurwa, Ranchi - 834004, Jharkhand

Reverse Auction Procurement Notice

Tender Ref No:Kha.up.Ni-01-Namak-35/2020 - 1338 Dated - 10/09/2020
Empanelment of Sellers for Procurement of Free Flow Refined Iodized Edible Salt for 3rd Quarter (Oct- Dec'20) of FY 2020-21 through Reverse auction platform of NCDEX markets limited.

1	Tender published on website	10.09.2020
2	Name of the Client	Directorate of Food and Consumer affairs, Ground Floor, HEC Engineers Hostel No. 2 Dhurwa, Ranchi - 834004
3	Address and concerned person for Correspondence	Customer service Group - NCDEX e Markets Limited, Akriti corporate park, 1st floor, Near GE Garden L.B.S. marg, Kanjuram (west) Mumbai - 400078 Tel: 022-48810555 or 7575002165 E-mail: askus@ncdex.in
4	Registration Fees	Rs 5000/- Only (Non-refundable) + 18% GST
5	EMD	2% of Value of Bid
6	Quantity (in MT)	16748
7	Last Date of Registration	29.09.2020
8	Date of Reverse Auction	01.10.2020

1. All eligible individuals or partnership firm, Registered Company or Co-operative society or any legal organization should mandatorily register with NCDEX e-Markets Limited for participation in Reverse Auction.
2. The schedule of Auction to be Conducted on Date 01.10.2020 will be posted on website <http://jharkhand.gov.in> or <http://www.ncdex.in/circulars.html>.
3. Any changes/modification in the Tender documents in the tender documents will be posted on website <http://jharkhand.gov.in/food>.

Sd/-
Director
(Directorate of Food & Consumer Affairs)

PR 232692 (Directorate of Food and Consumer Affairs) 20-21 (D)

7 die after drinking 'spurious' liquor in Baghpat and Meerut

Prima facie no evidence of hooch, says administration; viscera report awaited

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GHAZIABAD

Seven people died in Baghpat and Meerut in 24 hours under mysterious circumstances. While the locals claimed they died after drinking spurious liquor, the local administration said prima facie no evidence of hooch had been found.

Four people died on Wednesday in Chamraval village of Baghpat while one passed away on Thursday morning. Two persons died in the neighbouring Mirpur Jakhera village Jaani area which is in Meerut district.

The family members of the four who died on Wednesday cremated their kin on Wednesday itself.

Mohanlal, brother of Shyamal, told reporters that his brother died on Thurs-

day morning. "We drank a pouch each on Wednesday morning and night. When his condition deteriorated, we took him to a local doctor who declared him dead." Another local Mahesh claimed that all these deaths had happened after drinking spurious liquor which was available in the village.

Cremation stopped

When the news of a possible hooch tragedy spread, District Magistrate Shakuntala Gautam rushed to the village with officials and stopped the cremation of Shyamal. "It took us one hour to convince the family that without post mortem no charge could be proved. Usually, in such cases, people don't cremate their dead and demand

action," she said.

R.K. Tandon, Chief Medical Officer, Baghpat, said the post mortem report was inconclusive. "In such cases, the viscera report is crucial. We have preserved the viscera and it is being sent for investigation to the Agra lab," he said.

Ms. Gautam said nobody had approached the police to register a case in this regard. "It has emerged that all of them were habitual drinkers and at least two of them were suffering from other ailments as well. The families of two of the deceased have provided empty pouches of the country-made liquor. We have sent them for testing. Leaving nothing to chance, a team comprising the additional district magistrate, additional superinten-

dent of police and excise officials are carrying out a thorough search of the area," she added.

On possible spurt in the illegal liquor business considering the Panchayat elections are round the corner, she said, the administration had carried out an operation to recover illegal liquor.

Two friends dead

In a related incident, two daily wage workers died in Mirpur Jakhera village of Meerut on Wednesday. The family members of Pawan and Jagpal said the two were friends and bought liquor from a man who is doing illegal liquor business in the village. District Excise Officer Alok Kumar said prima facie it was not a case of spurious liquor.

Include Punjabi as official language in J&K: Akali Dal

'We will take up the issue with PM'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHANDIGARH

The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) on Thursday announced that the party will raise the issue of including Punjabi as one of the official languages in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir.

The Union Cabinet had recently approved a Bill to include Kashmiri, Dogri and Hindi as official languages in the newly-created Union Territory.



SAD chief Sukhbir Badal

guage in Jammu and Kashmir with Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah.

"Besides, we will take up the issue in Parliament as well," he said, adding that a decision regarding this was taken at a high-level meeting of the party.

Sukhbir Singh Badal, former Deputy Chief Minister and SAD president, said the party has decided to take up the issue of restoration of Punjabi as an official lan-

Two SOG personnel killed in Odisha

They were part of an operation against Maoist cadres

SATYASUNDAR BARIK BHUBANESWAR

Two personnel of Odisha police's Special Operation Group (SOG), a special force raised to combat left-wing extremists, died of the injuries they sustained in a gunfight between security forces and CPI (Maoist) cadres in the bordering areas of Kandhamal-Kalahandi districts, police said.

The exchange of fire left five CPI (Maoist) cadres, four women and a man, dead, police said.

The two SOG personnel were identified as Sudhir Kumar Tudu and Debasish Sethy. While Tudu hailed from Sanbadua village under Suriabandha police station in Mayurbhanj district, Sethy was

from Angapada village under Rajkishornagar police station limit of Angul district.

On the basis of reliable intelligence input, an operation was launched by the Kalahandi police in Madan Ramput area on Tuesday. The SOG and the District Voluntary Force (DVF), a special constabulary unit of the State Police, participated in the operation.

According to Kalahandi Superintendent of Police Battula Gangadhar, there could be around 40 to 50 ultras in the forest. It was suspected that the cadres belonged to the Kalahandi-Kandhamal-Boudh-Nayagarh division of the CPI (Maoist).

Security forces have seized huge cache of weapons.

The SOG was created in 2004 to combat the CPI (Maoist), which was dominating many areas in Odisha. Over the years, the force has tasted many operational successes.

157 rebels killed

According to the proceeding of the last meeting of the Unified Command, 157 Maoists have been killed in SOG's operations from 2010. In the same period, 1,438 have been arrested.

In July last, the SOG and the DVF bravely confronted left rebels in Kandhamal. On July 5, four left-wing extremists were killed near Tumudibandha area of Kandhamal.

Most calls on M.P. mental health helpline relate to COVID-19: NHM

People finding it difficult to come to terms with the upheaval

SIDHARTH YADAV BHOPAL

Most residents of Madhya Pradesh dialling the mental health helpline of the National Health Mission (NHM) and most contacted through proactive callings reported COVID-19-related stress and anxiety or depression.

Initially, people reported higher levels of anxiety while being locked up in their homes. They were anxious about their jobs and families. The scenario shifted after the lockdown when people began entering a more depressing phase, mostly owing to lost jobs and salaries. Adjusting to the new normal is challenging for many," explained Dr. Sidana.

Madhya Pradesh has so far reported two deaths by suicide of patients, and none by health workers, also contacted by counsellors of the helpline. At the Jabalpur-based Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose Medical College and Hospital, one patient reportedly died by suicide on September 4, while two others reportedly attempted it last month.

In a bid to do away with anxiety surrounding the pandemic, the college is now organising live interactions between patients and families.

In case of distress, call the helpline on 18002330175 or 08046110007.

NHRC update sought on 5 anti-CAA stir deaths

People do not accept Act because it makes NRC toothless, says Congress MP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT GUWAHATI

Assam Lok Sabha member Gaurav Gogoi has sought an update from the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) on the death of five people during the violent anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) protests in the State.

In a letter to NHRC chairperson H.L. Datu on September 9, Mr. Gogoi said he wanted to know about the steps taken by the rights bo-

dy to "find out the truth behind the killing of five young, unarmed protesters in the police firing during the spontaneous street protest against the CAA" across the State in December 2019.

The five who died were schoolboy Sam Stafford, Dipanjali Das, Abdul Alim, Ishwar Nayak and Dwijendra Pangal.

The State people did not accept the CAA because it violated the Assam Accord and made the National Re-

gister of Citizens (NRC) toothless, said the Congress MP from Kaliabar.

Act unconstitutional

"Further, the Act is unconstitutional as it violates the basic structure of the Indian Constitution and is against Articles 14 and 21," said Mr. Gogoi, also a member of the Standing Committee on Finance.

The CAA seeks to grant Indian citizenship to non-Muslims, who allegedly fled

religious persecution in Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Pakistan till December 31, 2014.

Various groups representing indigenous communities in Assam say the Act makes a mockery of the Assam Accord of 1985 that set the midnight of March 24, 1971, as the cut-off date for detecting, detaining and deporting "illegal migrants". The NRC was updated in Assam on the basis of this date.

Infant with rare disorders being treated in Jaipur

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT JAIPUR

In a first-of-its-kind case, a 45-day-old child diagnosed with a combination of two rare genetic disorders is being treated with an enzyme replacement therapy (ERT) at the State government-run J.K. Lon Children's Hospital here. The newborn boy, hailing from Agra, was brought with the complaint of fast breathing and decreased movements of lower limbs.

The infant is suffering from lysosomal storage disorder, also known as Pompe disease, and spinal muscular atrophy (SMA) type-I. While Pompe disease is a rare inborn error of metabolism, SMA-I is a disorder affecting the nervous system.

Ashok Gupta, in-charge of the hospital's Rare Diseases Centre, said here on Thursday that this might be the first-ever instance of a child suffering simultaneously from two rare genetic diseases.

Opposition grows in Tripura to large-scale Bru refugee enclaves

Bengali, Mizo groups want even distribution across State

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

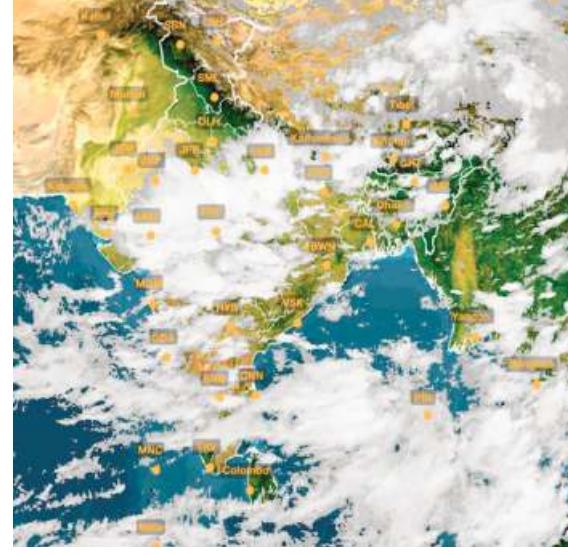
A coordination body of non-Bru people in Tripura has opposed the large-scale settlement of Bru refugees across seven sites. The locations straddle two subdivisions of the State's northern region adjoining Mizoram.

The Joint Movement Committee (JMC) comprising the Bengali-dominated Nagar Suraksha Mancha and the Tripura Mizo Convention said the State government's move to settle 4,900 Bru families in Kanchanpur and Panisagar subdivisions of North Tripura district would have "negative social, cultural, political, environmental and ecological impacts".

Opposing the move, the committee said it would not deviate from its stand that Kanchanpur and Panisagar subdivisions can at most accommodate 500 Bru refugee families in areas the JMC had proposed for maintaining social balance.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

Forecast for Friday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Sikkim, West Bengal, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Vidarbha, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yanam, Telangana, Konkan & Goa, north interior Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala and Andaman & Nicobar Islands

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	5.6	34.2	26.7	Kozhikode	45.3	27.0	23.4
Ahmedabad	14.6	36.2	26.2	Kurnool	—	34.0	24.8
Aizawl	—	28.1	—	Lucknow	—	35.6	27.0
Allahabad	—	37.1	27.8	Madurai	6.5	33.2	24.8
Bengaluru	65.1	27.6	20.4	Mangalore	6.2	27.2	23.4
Bhopal	25.8	33.7	24.8	Mumbai	5.6	33.0	26.6
Bhubaneswar	—	31.2	26.1	Mysuru	—	29.0	21.6
Chandigarh	—	35.5	25.3	New Delhi	—	36.4	26.0
Chennai	—	34.1	26.3	Patna	2.3	35.0	25.0
Coimbatore	3.9	29.2	23.0	Pond Blair	33.2	29.9	23.7
Dehradoon	—	33.7	23.6	Puducherry	27.6	32.0	22.8
Gangtok	18.4	22.0	17.5	Pune	39	33.1	22.5
Goa	—	32.0	25.0	Raipur	11.8	32.6	25.5
Guwahati	25.2	35.0	24.0	Ranchi	—	32.7	23.0
Hubballi	—	29.0	22.0	Shillong	7.9	24.6	17.5
Hyderabad	—	33.5	24.6	Shimla	—	26.7	18.0
Imphal	1.1	31.5	21.0	Srinagar	—	30.0	13.7
Jaipur	—	35.5	24.5	Thiruvananthapuram	54.4	30.4	24.1
Kochi	12	29.0	24.0	Tiruchi	34.8	33.9	24.0
Kohima	—	26.5	—	Vijayawada	—	36.2	27.0
Kolkata	—	34.1	28.2	Visakhapatnam	—	34.2	28.4

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES SO₂ NO_x CO PM2.5 PM10 CODE

Ahmedabad	16	54	40	78	80	GREEN
Bengaluru	—	20	31	27	40	GREEN
Chennai	29	33	38	71	—	GREEN
Delhi	10	39	63	145	132	ORANGE
Hyderabad	39	30	44	58	72	GREEN
Kolkata	—	33	19	61	80	GREEN
Lucknow	6	58	33	191	134	ORANGE
Mumbai	26	28	19	54	79	GREEN
Pune	36	14	52	33	29	GREEN
Visakhapatnam	12	36	13	33	55	GREEN

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

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

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

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

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

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Charkhi Dadri, Haryana recorded an unhealthy index (AQI) score of 245 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Kannur, Kerala recorded a healthy AQI score of 19

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Charkhi Dadri, Haryana recorded an unhealthy index (AQI) score of 245 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Kannur, Kerala recorded a healthy AQI score of 19

Mayor tests positive

Mumbai Mayor Kishori Pednekar on Thursday said she has tested positive for COVID-19. Ms. Pednekar said her rapid antigen test returned positive, but she is asymptomatic. "As I don't have any symptoms I have home quarantined myself as per the doctors' advice," she said in a tweet.

Fifth incident near Yerwada jail since Maharashtra govt. imposed lockdown in March

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PUNE

The Pune City Police are on the lookout for two COVID-19 positive prisoners who broke out from a temporary prison near Yerwada jail on Thursday morning.

The two – identified as Anil Vetal, a resident of Bhima Koregaon; and Vishal Kharat, a resident of Nigdi in the Pimpri-Chinchwad area – had been arrested for rioting and attempt to murder.

The Shikarpur police had arrested Vetal in a case of assault and robbery, while Kharat had been caught by the Chikhaldara police for attempted homicide. Both were on the first floor of the temporary jail on expiry of their respective police custody and recently tested positive. Sources said they escaped sometime after Wednesday midnight.

The police has appealed to people to inform them on the whereabouts of the two as they could be potential spreaders of COVID-19. The police has witnessed at least four such incidents since lockdown in March. In July, five undertrials lodged in a government hostel, which had been converted into a temporary prison, near Yerwada escaped. However, the police traced and arrested all five.

Speaking to The Hindu, he said he had first undergone a test on September 1 after one of his close aides had tested positive. "At the time, my swab test result had returned negative. However, a few days later, on September 4, I started feeling unwell and had fever. A high-resolution computed tomography thorax screening revealed the virus had infected my lungs. After consulting with doctors, I decided to quarantine myself at home as I felt it would help save a critical care bed for someone whose condition was worse than mine," he said. His wife and son, too,

Two COVID-19 positive inmates escape from prison in Pune

SSS chief to be kept under observation for a week

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

Swabhiman Shetkari Sanghatana (SSS) chief Raju Shetti, who recently tested positive for COVID-19, was moved to Pune from Kolhapur for treatment after he experienced breathing problems and ill-health.

Mr. Shetti, a noted farmers' leader and a former two-time MP from Hatkanangale in Kolhapur, was rushed to the city's Deenabandhu Mangeshkar hospital on Wednesday in a cardiac ambulance. Reassuring his supporters on Thursday, he said he was stable and would be kept under observation of doctors for the next week.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, he said he had first undergone a test on September 1 after one of his close aides had tested positive. "At the time, my swab test result had returned negative. However, a few days later, on September 4, I started feeling unwell and had fever. A high-resolution computed tomography thorax screening revealed the virus had infected my lungs. After consulting with doctors, I decided to quarantine myself at home as I felt it would help save a critical care bed for someone whose condition was worse than mine," he said.

Since the past month, the SSS under Mr. Shetti has been agitating across Maharashtra for increased prices for dairy farmers who have been hit hard by the lockdown. All through August, Mr. Shetti and his SSS activists have staged agitations in Satara, Solapur, Ahmednagar and Baramati.

The drastic spike in cases brought on by the alarming spread of the contagion has compelled authorities in Kolhapur and neighbouring Sangli district to call for a 10-day Janata curfew.



Raju Shetti

ramati among other places, demanding that the State government announce a subsidy of ₹5 per litre of milk while urging the Centre to stop importing milk powder when thousands of tonnes generated by local farmers were lying unutilised.

"At least 20-25 of my supporters have tested positive... however, we had no option but to stage these protests given that the smaller dairy farmers were in dire economic straits," Mr. Shetti said.

Kolhapur district, which has emerged as one of the virus hotbeds in western Maharashtra, has been reporting an average 1,000 fresh cases since the beginning of September. The district has more than 10,000 active cases and recorded over 850 deaths, with the scourge of the virus sparing neither citizen, bureaucrat or politician.

Besides Mr. Shetti, the Shiv Sena MP for Kolhapur, Sanjay Mandlik had tested positive. Congress MLA Rituraj Patil had also tested positive this month.

The drastic spike in cases brought on by the alarming spread of the contagion has compelled authorities in Kolhapur and neighbouring Sangli district to call for a 10-day Janata curfew.

Sena targets Fadnavis over CAG report on Jalyukt Shivar

₹9,633.75 crore spent on scheme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

Latching onto the Comptroller and Auditor General's (CAG) adverse remarks about the Jalyukt Shivar scheme rolled out by the previous Devendra Fadnavis-led government, the ruling Shiv Sena on Thursday asked whether he will do some introspection now.

The Jalyukt Shivar scheme had little impact in achieving water neutrality and increasing groundwater level, and its execution was characterised by lack of transparency, the CAG said in its report, which was tabled in the Legislative Assembly on Tuesday.

A sum of ₹9,633.75 crore was spent on the scheme, a flagship programme of the Fadnavis government (2014-19) that sought to make Maharashtra a drought-free State, the CAG said.

The now scrapped project involved deepening and widening of streams, construction of cement and earthen stop dams, undertaking work on nullahs and digging of farm ponds.

Referring to the findings, the Sena said any scheme is good on paper, but the real question is about its transparent and effective implementation.

"When there is a problem [with such implementation of a scheme], then the rant about it [the scheme] turns out to be hollow and expenses superfluous," the Sena said in an editorial in party mouthpiece *Saamana*.

"Precisely this is what happened in the case of Jalyukt Shivar scheme," the Sena, which was part of the Fadnavis government, said.



Devendra Fadnavis sought to make Maharashtra a drought-free State through a drought-free scheme.

Now the CAG itself has put a question mark on the scheme's success. What do those who tom-tommed about it have to say about it?

SAAMANA EDITORIAL

Had the implementation of the scheme been effective, water sufficiency would have been achieved in parts of the State in the real sense. But it did not happen, the Uddhav Thackeray-led party said.

The real question is whether those who released high the balloon of the Jalyukt [Shivar] will introspect now as to why its burst," the party said, without naming Mr. Fadnavis.

Experts had criticised the scheme during the previous regime. But Mr. Fadnavis and others dismissed the criticism terming it political and wrong, the editorial added. "Now the CAG itself has put a question mark on the scheme's success. What do those who tom-tommed about the scheme have to say about it now?" the Sena said in the editorial.

Two govt. staffers caught taking bribe

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
AKOLA

Two government employees were arrested on Thursday for allegedly demanding and accepting a bribe of ₹15,000 for approving a leave application in Maharashtra's Akola city, an official said.

Based on a complaint, a team from the Anti-Corruption Bureau nabbed Barshikali Panchayat Samiti's block development officer Gopal Rajaram Bonde (56) and junior clerk Anant Tulshiram Rathod (39) from Khetan Nagar area, the official said on Thursday.

Mr. Bonde and Mr. Rathod had allegedly demanded and accepted a bribe of ₹15,000 from the complainant for passing his leave application, he said, adding that a probe is under way in the case.

No entry



Tight security: Police personnel barricade the entrance to Chaitya Bhoomi, the resting place of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, in Dadar on Thursday. Republican Party of India workers have been staging protests demanding the reopening of the site. • VIVEK BENDRE

HC asks district social welfare authorities to monitor digital education programme

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Thursday directed the district social welfare authorities across Maharashtra to assess the digital education programme for specially-abled students amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

A Bench headed by Chief Justice Dipankar Datta directed district social welfare officers to pay "surprise visits" over the next two



Something rotten

The death of Sushant appears to have laid bare deeply entrenched social prejudices

A young talented Bollywood actor tragically ended his life on June 14. But the events that followed Sushant Singh Rajput's death by suicide have been even more shocking. On full display in the subsequent weeks were some of the worst regressive traits of Indian society, from misogyny, invasion of privacy, voyeuristic glee to a collective loss of clarity. All hell broke loose soon after his family accused the 34-year-old actor's girlfriend Rhea Chakraborty, 28, of foul play; the grief-stricken father said she had poisoned his son and filed an FIR charging Rhea with 'abetment to suicide', a crime punishable by up to 10 years in prison. A section of the media pounced on Rhea, terming her a gold digger, and handed out instant verdicts in the newsroom. Anchors appeared to have little time to discuss India's crossing four million COVID-19 cases, the 23.9% GDP contraction or the heightened border tensions. That Sushant hailed from poll-bound Bihar added a political dimension impossible to ignore. The actor, reported to have been suffering from depression, lived in Mumbai, which is now ruled by estranged Bharatiya Janata Party partner, the Shiv Sena, together with the Nationalist Congress Party and Congress, and his demise has become political fodder crossing limits of decency, drawing in other Bollywood celebrities.

Three top government agencies, the Enforcement Directorate, the Central Bureau of Investigation and the Narcotics Control Bureau grilled Rhea for days. The NCB finally arrested her on September 8 linking her to a drugs case in Sushant's death probe. Rhea has denied any wrongdoing, telling the media that she didn't speak after Sushant's passing away out of grief and respect for him. Whether Rhea has committed a crime the law will decide, but as she and her family fight this battle, the spotlight is firmly on Indian society and its deeply entrenched prejudices. Women's rights activists have spoken up against the demonisation of Rhea, and how gender, the clothes she wore, the undefined relationship she had with the actor, all played a role. What is perhaps more disturbing is that many women, far from empathising with a girl who lost her boyfriend in such circumstances, have been quick to pronounce Rhea guilty of any number of wrongdoings. That people could erupt with joy at her arrest on charges not directly related to the death is an indication that vague demands of justice for Sushant have played out as a blood sport. A mob that seems to find its voice through TV anchors and social media appears to have overruled ideas of justice, fairness and even the law. It is important that India's criminal justice system delivers justice in this case.

Drawdown in Iraq

Jihadist groups should not be allowed to fill security vacuum after American troops leave

The U.S.'s decision to cut troops in Iraq is both a relief and a challenge to the Iraqi government. It is a relief because public opinion in Iraq is increasing against the continuing presence of U.S. troops in the country, particularly after the assassination of Iranian General Qassem Soleimani in Baghdad in January. Iraqi lawmakers passed a non-binding resolution after the assassination, asking the government to oust the Americans. The new government of Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi has stated that it does not want U.S. troops in combat operations. But he has asked for training services and other assistance. Now that the U.S. is cutting troops from 5,200 to 3,000, Mr. Kadhimi could argue that his government is committed to seeing the full withdrawal of the U.S. troops. It is a challenge because the U.S. troops had played a key role in the war against the Islamic State (IS), and with the drawdown, the Iraqi forces would have to share a greater burden in the fight against jihadists. The American political leadership has long wanted to pull troops out of Iraq. President Barack Obama had set a timetable for the pull back and withdrew most troops by 2011, but he had to send thousands of soldiers back to Iraq after the rise of the IS. President Trump promised to end the "endless wars" during his campaign. Now that the IS has been driven out of the major population centres of Iraq, he could claim victory and draw down troops.

While the U.S.'s decision is part of the Trump administration's larger policy of bringing back American troops home, the local factors cannot be overlooked. The U.S. found it increasingly difficult to station a large number of troops in Iraq. At the height of the war, the U.S. had over 1,50,000 troops in Iraq. But in recent years, it found stationing even 10,000 troops risky. This is partly because of the hostile political environment and partly due to the growing influence of Iran and Shia militias in Iraq. In January, the U.S. killed Soleimani after Shia militias attacked American troops. Iran retaliated by launching ballistic missile attacks on a U.S. air base in Iraq, injuring some 100 American soldiers, while the Shia militias continued attacking U.S. troops. In March, three of the coalition troops, two of them Americans, were killed in such an attack. Since then, the U.S. has repositioned troops, and the drawdown will reduce risks of such confrontations in the future. While the Americans leave, the Iraqi government should be careful of not letting any security vacuum being filled by jihadist groups. Though the IS has been driven underground, at least 10,000 IS fighters are still active in Iraq, according to UN assessments. The sectarian policies of the Nouri Al-Maliki government, coupled with the security vacuum left by the U.S. withdrawal in 2011, allowed Al-Qaeda in Iraq, with battle experience from the civil war-stricken Syria, to exploit Sunni resentment in northern Iraq and build the IS. The Iraqi government should not allow history to repeat itself.

An agriculture-led revival as flawed claim

The crisis in agriculture demands that the government announce a strong fiscal stimulus for the rural economy



R. RAMAKUMAR

A rather confident statement heard in the midst of India's COVID-19-induced economic slowdown is this: "Agriculture will lead India's economic revival". But how valid is this claim put forward by government spokespersons and some observers?

Four major arguments are offered. First, India's food grain production in 2019-20 was 3.7% higher than in 2018-19. The procurement of *rabi* wheat in 2020-21 was 12.6% higher than in 2019-20. These indicate, it is argued, resilience in the agricultural sector. Second, food inflation in the Q1 of 2020-21, at 9.2%, was higher than in the previous year due to "sustained demand for food". This shows a shift of terms of trade in favour of agriculture. Third, the area under *kharif* sowing in 2020-21 was 14% higher than in 2019-20. Higher *kharif* sowing was accompanied by higher tractor and fertilizer sales, which bodes well for economic recovery. Fourth, the government's economic package for agriculture – as part of the ₹20-lakh crore Atmanirbhar Bharat package – will further position agriculture as the engine of revival.

Let us now consider each of the above claims.

Rabi procurement

During the lockdown, State governments in many northern States put in considerable efforts to ensure that procurement did not suffer. As a result, procurement of *rabi* wheat was higher in 2020-21. However, this claim hides

more than it reveals. As per official data, only 13.5% of paddy farmers and 16.2% of wheat farmers in India sell their harvest to a procurement agency at an assured Minimum Support Price (MSP). The rest sell their output to private traders at prices lower than MSP.

One should, then, be looking not at procurement but market arrivals. I compared total market arrivals of 15 major crops in India between March 15 and June 30 in 2019 and 2020. The market arrivals of all the 15 crops were lower in 2020 than in 2019. It was only in paddy, lentil, tomato and banana that market arrivals in 2020 constituted more than 75% of market arrivals in 2019. In wheat, barley, potato, cauliflower, cabbage and lady's finger, market arrivals in 2020 were between 50% and 75% of market arrivals in 2019. For gram, pigeon pea, onion, peas and mango, market arrivals in 2020 were less than half of market arrivals in 2019. In wheat, the most important *rabi* crop, only 61.6% of the arrivals in 2019 was recorded in 2020.

Thus, the most important problem faced by farmers during the lockdown was the loss of markets, stemming from the disruption in supply chains, closure of *mandis* and a fall in consumer food demand. Farmers suffered major loss of incomes, and higher procurement was hardly alleviating. In addition, there were major losses in the milk, meat and poultry sectors; industry associations estimate the total loss for the poultry industry at ₹25,000 crore.

Inflation and prices

Inflation rates estimated using consumer price indices are not representative of farmer's prices. Inflation was largely due to disruptions in supply chains and rise in trader margins. I examined the wholesale market prices for 15



agricultural commodities between March 15 and June 30, 2020. Prices of most crops declined. For example, average paddy prices were about ₹1,730 per quintal on March 23, but ₹1,691 per quintal on June 30. Average wheat prices were ₹2,045 per quintal on April 1, but ₹1,865 per quintal on June 30. A moderate uptick in prices was visible in a few vegetables, but not before June 2020.

The dark side of higher rural inflation in India is that small and marginal farmers are not net sellers, but net buyers of food. So, it was not just that farmer's prices fell; most were also forced to pay more for food purchases. There is also strong evidence from small sample surveys that rural households reduced food purchases during the lockdown. Thus, the claims that higher rural inflation benefited farmers, and that it was due to higher food demand, are misplaced.

Higher kharif sowing

There is no surprise in the growth of *kharif* sowings in 2020. Given that *rabi* incomes fell during the lockdown, many rural households may have returned to farming or intensified farming for food- and income-security. Lakhs of migrant workers returned to their villages from urban areas. They may have taken up agriculture in previously fallow or uncultivated lands. Data

on monthly employment released by the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) show that the number of persons employed as "farmers" in June and July 2019 were 11.2 crore and 11.4 crore, respectively. But in June and July 2020, these numbers rose to 13 crore and 12.6 crore, respectively.

These are indicators of distress, not prosperity. It is no cause for celebration also because the rural unemployment rates rose sharply in 2020, to 22.8% (April), 21.1% (May) and 9.5% (June). Even in August 2020, rural unemployment rates were higher than in February 2020 or August 2019.

Trickle from package

Agriculture contributes only about 15% to India's Gross Value Added (GVA). Thus, even if agriculture grows by 4%, it is likely to contribute only 0.6 percentage points to GVA growth. To contribute a full one percentage point to GVA growth, agriculture will have to grow by 6%, which is unlikely in 2020-21. This is not to deny a potential rise in demand from higher *rabi* procurement, higher *kharif* sowing and flow of cheap credit, which together appear to have resulted in higher purchase of tractors and fertilizers. But the counteracting tendencies in rural areas – i.e., lower crop prices, lower market arrivals and higher unemployment – would overwhelm these "green shoots".

Rural expectations were high when the Atmanirbhar Bharat package was announced. However, the details were disappointing. Total fresh spending for agriculture in the package is a trickle: less than ₹5,000 crore. The rest are schemes already included in the last Budgets, announcements with no financial outgo or liquidity/loan measures routed through banks.

The package also failed to pro-

vide financial support to farmers. PM-KISAN, or Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi, is hardly an ideal scheme. But instead of frontloading the instalments of PM-KISAN, the government should have doubled the payments to farmers from ₹6,000 a year to ₹12,000 a year. Instead of raising the minimum support price (MSP) for *kharif* paddy by ₹53 per quintal (which, actually, was the lowest rise in over a decade), or cotton by ₹260 per quintal, the government should have set all MSPs at 150% of the C2 cost (comprehensive cost) of production.

Instead of a moratorium on loan repayments, the government should have waived the interest on loans taken by farmers in 2019 and 2020. Instead of vague loan-based schemes in animal husbandry, the government should have announced a package of direct assistance for the crisis-ridden poultry and meat sectors amounting to at least ₹20,000 crore. Instead of loan-based schemes to support private investment in dairy, the government should have arranged direct financial assistance to small milk producers, for whom milk prices have literally plummeted.

In all, the government's strategy appears to be to squeeze farmers without investing in agriculture or rural employment. Such an approach would not just fail; it would also be counterproductive. Rural incomes will remain depressed, and push the economy further into a vicious cycle of poor demand, low prices and low growth. The government should discard its role as a passive observer, and decisively intervene in rural India with a substantial fiscal stimulus. The earlier the better as delays would only compound mistakes.

R. Ramakumar is NABARD Chair Professor, Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai

The great greying of China

There is evidence that the country's aging population will incrementally impede its economic growth



YOGESH GUPTA

China's one child policy (OCP) was conceived by Senior Leader Deng Xiaoping in 1979 to seek popular support for the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) after Mao's disastrous 'Great Leap Forward' and 'Cultural Revolution' (which led to the death of about 60-65 million people). Prof. David Lampton, an American sinologist, has observed that Deng was worried that "if the party did not produce significant gains in per capita income, it would lose what little legitimacy" it had retained.

Policy fallout

The results of the one child policy have been disastrous. Average birth rate in China has fallen to 1.6 births per woman (National Bureau of Statistics of China) in 2017, though the unofficial figures put it as low as 1.05 (the United States: 1.77, India: 2.24) and much less than the population replacement rate of 2.1. Fewer children were born and of them, fewer were females (given China's preference for boys like in some other countries). Research by Prof. Yi Fuxian (2019) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, U.S., reveals that the proportion of China's population aged above 65 years would increase from 10% in 2010 to 32.6%

in 2050 (corresponding figures for India are 5.6% and 14.2% and the U.S. 14.6% and 23.2%). Its labour force (ages 20-64) will reduce from about 1 billion in 2017 to 787 million by 2050. Thus, China will be a country dominated progressively by older people in the coming years.

Despite the raising of the limit to two children in 2016, the number of newborns has not improved and slipped to the pre-2016 level. The one child policy has changed China's child-bearing attitudes for the worse as many young couples do not want to have two babies for economic and lifestyle reasons. Prof. Fuxian has affirmed that China's population has started contracting from 2018 onwards; local authorities in China bloat the birth and school enrolment figures to seek more funds from the central government. If China can stabilise its fertility rate at 1.2, its population will fall to 1.07 billion in 2050 and 480 million by 2100.

The implications

The aging population will have a multi-dimensional impact. China will need huge expenditures on health, social welfare and pensions; its savings rate will decline; a fall in the number of young people will lead to a decline in manufacturing, exports, and also mean lower revenues for government. With its annual per capita income at \$10,000, increasing population of older people and slowing economic growth rates, China will get old before reaching the levels of rich countries like the United States, Singapore, Japan and oth-

ers. China's armed forces are already struggling as many one child policy children are often misfit for fighting in tougher conditions.

Will the population decline create a richer society in China? Japanese economist Prof. Hisakazu Kato, says, using Japan's experience, that it is unlikely as a smaller population reduces intellectual exchanges among diverse human groups, reducing chances of the emergence of great innovators. Developed countries have reduced the impact of declining population by raising the total factor productivity (TFP) growth (ratio of output versus cost of inputs per hourly basis).

China has already availed its rapid TFP growth by shifting its large population of migrant workers from agriculture to manufacturing and reforms in state-owned enterprises, housing and other sectors (China's TFP grew by 5% annually in 1980s, 7% during 1991-95, 4% from 1995 to 2010 and 2% from 2010-2015, before declining to lower levels afterwards).

Three factors are considered critical for increasing the TFP: market reforms, improvement of governance and scaling of human skills in manufacturing and service-

es. Many economists have argued that faster rates of TFP growth are associated with rapid and liberal economic reforms. In China's case, while President Xi has talked of market reforms and increasing consumption, there has been little progress on the ground on issues such as opening of services such as banking, insurance, education or the establishment of an independent legal system for the enforcement of contracts or a creative education system. Post-2008, China's economic growth has been driven progressively by higher government investment which has created unproductive assets in many cases, i.e., overcapacity in metals, cement and other industries, empty apartment complexes, or rarely used infrastructure such as metro networks, oil pipelines and ports.

Absolute control

China has never ranked very high in governance indicators of international organisations such as the World Bank; in 2016, it was in 68th percentile for 'government effectiveness' and 77th in the annual

Corruption Perceptions Index of Transparency International (2017).

Instead of giving representation to new interest groups such as industrialists, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), professionals, media and academics, Mr. Xi has moved in the direction of curbing any dissent and establishing absolute control over Chinese society.

In improvement of China's human resources, there are big variations in high school pass rates of

urban (90%) and rural children (24%). Considering that about 40% of China's population still lives in rural areas, this huge gap will be an inhibiting factor in raising TFP. In the last 70 years, only 15 countries have managed to climb from middle to high income status, e.g. Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan, others and all of them had skilled their workforces with three quarters or more of their working population having completed high school.

Under Mr. Xi, China is not moving in the direction of reforms incorporated by developed countries, but evolving its own agenda mainly focused on administrative and bureaucratic improvements concomitantly enhancing party's control over the economy. Even many Chinese economists are doubtful if Mr. Xi's plans for augmenting TFP and high economic growth through induction of emerging technologies such as 5G, artificial intelligence or rapid urbanisation will succeed in the absence of much-needed reforms in economy, governance and the education system.

Also, unlike the past, China will face a hostile external environment in the coming years as a reaction to Mr. Xi's unfair and aggressive policies, which will further constrain cooperation in new technologies. In this background, a more likely scenario is that China's economic growth will stutter and decline as the impact of aging gets more pronounced in the coming years.

Yogesh Gupta is a former Ambassador

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

LAC tensions

Despite the Moscow meet and the "assurance" by China to maintain status quo, what is being witnessed instead is massive tension after China's move to pile up troops on the LAC (Page 1, "Massive Chinese build-up on north bank of Pangong lake", September 10). It also shows Beijing's utter disregard for the Agreement on the Maintenance of Peace and Tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control in the India-China Border Areas, of September 1993, and the Agreement on Confidence Building Measures in the Military Field along the Line of Actual Control in

the India-China Border Areas, of November 1996. With time running fast, the ball is in India's court to work on multiple fronts to tackle the unprecedented security challenge. It becomes even more crucial at a time when the Indian economy is showing no signs of recovery.

K.R. SRINIVASAN,
Secunderabad

Politics and Bollywood
The demolition of 'illegal portions' of an actor's bungalow in Bandra, Mumbai – since stopped by the Bombay High Court – is a pointer of something very murky and the possibility of the government of Maharashtra feeling the

heat of ongoing investigations (Page 1, "HC stops demolition of house, Kangana lands in Mumbai", September 10). The speed and manner in which the Brihamumbai Municipal Corporation has executed this demolition can place it in the *Guinness World Records*. When there are thousands of illegal constructions in and around the city, the targeting of this particular actor only sets off many pertinent questions.

A.P. THIRUVADI,
Chennai

■ It was surprising to have *The Hindu* cover the actor's arrival in Mumbai and the demolition of parts of her

house on its front page. Why the straying away from the path of objective journalism? There is no dearth of critical issues of the day to be covered on the prime page. Unfortunately, the intemperate remarks from

How much is too much when collecting data for planning?

PARLEY

It is useful in delivering development outcomes, but technology has to be deployed carefully

On Independence Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the launch of the National Digital Health Mission (NDHM) under which "every Indian will get a Health ID card." He said: "Every time you visit a doctor or a pharmacy, everything will be logged in this card." The NDHM seeks to create an ecosystem under which health records will be digitised. The government has clarified that this would be voluntary, data will be stored locally, and only anonymised data will be shared upwards. In a conversation moderated by Varghese K. George, A.R. Nanda and Venkat Srinivasan discuss whether real-time capturing of demographic data and broad health indicators of the population will lead to benefits that outweigh the perceived and real risks of erosion of privacy. Edited excerpts:

Mr. Srinivasan, how can technology transform data collection and analysis?

Venkat Srinivasan: You can't think of data without technology. This is digital data. And of course, it is important to recognise privacy issues. But the only way, I think, we need to think about this is [how it can] transform health outcomes, access and care, and not [in terms of] separate data alone. Use of this data with technology, I think, is the real intent of this policy. As you know, in the U.S., we've had this electronic health records initiative for a while. So, technology can, if used properly, dramatically transform healthcare at all levels. Technology can't work without data. So, it can be at the population level, it can be at the individual health level. At the population level, it can be used effectively to control the outbreak of a pandemic. At the individual level, you have several levels of benefits. In India, millions of people don't have access to quality healthcare. The silvery lining is that the government has allowed for digital health, which allows a lot more people access. I'm sure that will happen over time.

Mr. Nanda, what problems do we face when it comes to demographic and health data?

In terms of sampling, frequency, accuracy, range...

A.R. Nanda: We face problems in all these areas. Sampling size, sampling errors, non-sampling errors, how frequently we collect data. Cost is a big factor in addressing these questions. The use of technology is the cheapest and easiest way forward, in collection of data, monitoring the quality. The problems are daunting, but nothing that cannot be solved.

In your career as a demographer and a planner, did you ever wish the technology had been better?

ARN: Yes. I have been associated with the Indian Census since the 1970s. It used to take years before Census data and family health survey data could be tabulated. By the 1990s technology came to our help, starting with early mainframe models. Now it is far smoother.

Mr. Srinivasan what can technology do for collecting data, keeping it safe, and using it for the public good, which was impossible a decade ago?

VS: You have nicely framed it in those three buckets. Technology is the only solution. It is an excellent solution on the collection side. We can expand the sample [size] at low cost. Computing devices that can use 'store and forward' type architecture [can overcome] connectivity challenges. But the quality of the data is where I think the biggest advances will be felt because you can control it through many methods such as pattern matching and looking for trends, all real-time. On the privacy and security side you hear daily reports of hacking. There are several ways of making technology more robust – create levels of anonymisation, make it much harder for somebody to figure out who you are. AI algorithms can protect data and prevent theft. But [that] has to be complemented with a legal framework that acts as a deterrent for anybody who is caught stealing or misusing personal health data. It must be independent of any politi-



cal machinery. So, possibly, create an independent commission, like the Election Commission.

C Technology could make data capture and analysis possible in smaller units but at the same time, one has to be very judicious doing that. We need an independent agency outside of the government to take these decisions.

A.R. NANDA

VS: We have the Health Information Protection Act (HIPA), which is being enforced quite effectively. We have similar concerns across the spectrum. Recently, there was a very controversial idea of declaring your citizenship in the Census. The data are also encrypted, but nothing is hack-proof. But the regulatory framework is very important.

How is private data used for analysis and policymaking?

VS: In policymaking, the use of data is increasing but it is not extensive. For instance, the response to the pandemic. We use electronic health records at the population level and individual level all of a sudden now. A much greater amount of information sharing has happened. All of a sudden, hospitals are talking to each other. And they're all sharing information not only on individual patients but on incidents. With anonymised data, people have less of an issue but in some cases it may not be anonymised – for instance, in contact tracing. When you go beyond health, we have other interesting issues in this public health crisis, policy issues – pensions, loans that were given to businesses. The issue is these policy interventions are all based on data that are

not real-time. There is a 10-year interval between two Censuses.

The decennial Census has been around for more than 130 years now. This time it is being disrupted by the pandemic. Can't we have a real-time capture of demographic data?

ARN: That is a distinct possibility. Some countries, such as Germany, have already gone into that. To get there, we have to improve the system of our birth and death and marriage registration and registration of other statistics. This has improved, but only in urban areas, and not to the level where you can say that you can make the data usable and also won't have to go for the same data to the Census. But we must also remember that there are other types of data which are also collected in the Census regarding culture, language, economy, but yes, we don't need that every 10 years. That could be collected at longer intervals.

Mr. Srinivasan, is it possible and desirable to collect at least basic demographic data on a real-time basis rather than wait for 10 years?

VS: Totally. In fact, it is not going to be very expensive. Technology costs have come down so dramatically, and you have such a large penetration of mobile phones in India. Individuals will have to be willing to report and that's really where I suspect India's challenge might lie. For this, it is important that they see a personal benefit. You can introduce a lot of intelligent algorithms that detect the quality at the source. When you think about intelligent algorithms, I'm total proponent of traceable technologies. And traceability here implies that you should be able to understand exactly what happened at the individual level in the use of the technology. If you can afford to do that, that will get the game more acceptability. It may seem trivial, but I think it's critical.

We are discussing finding a balance between individual privacy and promoting innovation and efficiency. Now, at what level of specificity and granularity in data could that balance be optimally achieved? How much is too much and how

much is too little when it comes to data?

ARN: That's a real problem. In a census as well as in the big demographic surveys, health surveys, we have this compromise. The smallest area level is the village. More sensitive data and what involves the question of quality are shared only at the broader units such as the State or district level. Technology could make data capture and analysis possible in smaller units but at the same time, one has to be very judicious doing that. We need an independent agency outside of the government to take these decisions.

Consent and anonymisation are the key words often used to reassure sceptics. Is it all good as long we adhere to these two principles?

VS: Both are very important, though, to me, they are elementary. You must have that, but you do need a stronger, autonomous regulatory framework. It is also potentially possible that you separate this into two categories. One is census. And your question is relevant on how granular you get, how you protect data, and again, you can use technology to separate different layers as necessary. There are things you need to be more sensitive about, more judicious, and so maybe you have layers, maybe three layers of access. You have one layer that many people can access; that's completely at a population level. Another layer is only some people that you know, and so on. And their informed consent and anonymisation are important. The ability of an individual to have their health records to be stored digitally at a centralised location and access it across the country could be separate from this. But I think you can have a different set of protocols and permit. For that, all that is technologically possible, but I think you need a strong set of laws like this HIPA compliance.

VKG: We do have a consensus that technology can do a world of good in delivering health, education and other development outcomes, but one has to be very careful and judicious in its deployment, and there should be an independent and robust regulatory mechanism to oversee that process.



Venkat Srinivasan
is a Boston-based technology entrepreneur who deploys AI in finance, accounting, health and education



A.R. Nanda
is a demographer who served as Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India as well as Health Secretary



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A deepening rift

Estrangement between the BJP and the Shiv Sena has reached a point of no return

MOHAMMED AYOOB

tion from Shivaji's campaign against the Mughals.

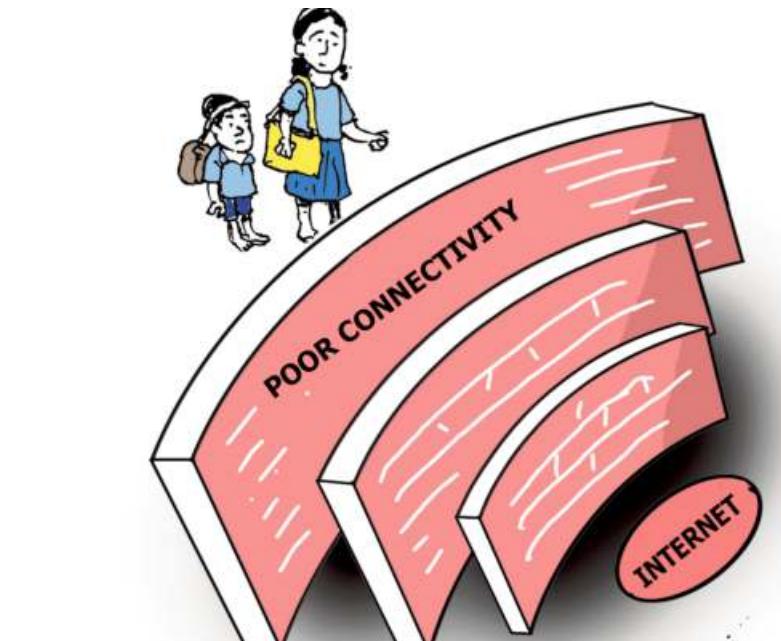
The Shiv Sena's adoption of Hindutva facilitated its tie-up with the BJP and paved the way for a political alliance. However, the inherent contradictions between the BJP and Shiv Sena continued to persist. The Shiv Sena was primarily interested in reviving the past glory of the Marathas and increasing employment opportunities for the *Marathi manus*, while the BJP's basic goal was consolidating the Hindu vote behind itself across the nation.

The BJP's national aspirations could only be fulfilled if it kept its base in the Hindi heartland intact. The Shiv Sena's periodic anti-north Indian eruptions could put this goal in jeopardy. The Sena on its part could not abjure its 'sons of the soil' ideology without running the risk of losing its base, especially among the Marathas.

Hold on Maratha constituency
This has become more imperative for the Shiv Sena as its hold on the Maratha constituency is already under challenge by the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) that garnered almost as many seats in the last elections as the Shiv Sena. The two may be coalition partners now but there is no guarantee that this relationship will last, especially since they compete for the same caste base. Thus, one cannot rule out a falling out between the two before the next Assembly election. Therefore, the Shiv Sena cannot renounce its role as the standard bearer of Marathi honour lest the NCP or breakaway factions of the Shiv Sena outflank it on this score.

The contradictory impulses of the BJP and Shiv Sena are clearly on display in the Kangana Ranaut case where both Ms. Ranaut and the BMC appear to be merely pawns of the two parties. Therefore, it would not be wrong to predict that the estrangement between them has now reached a point of no return displaying clearly their fundamentally conflicting goals.

Mohammed Ayoob is University Distinguished Professor Emeritus of International Relations, Michigan State University



NOTEBOOK

The daily difficulties in collecting COVID-19 data

A standard format across States will help citizens, epidemiologists and researchers

SUMANT SEN

Everyday, past midnight, I compile data on the number of samples tested for COVID-19 and the total number of positive cases recorded till date in India. However, the job at hand is always incomplete. Data from Telangana and Tripura and the Indian Council of Medical Research's daily bulletin are released only the next morning. The data help us track the response of the States to the pandemic, and are used as part of the State tracker on COVID-19 on *The Hindu*'s website as well as to churn out data stories for print.

I started compiling COVID-19 data in late March when the pandemic in India was still at a nascent stage. It was clear by then that testing was crucial in identifying and isolating those who were infected, to control the spread of the virus. Hence, it became necessary to track how States

fared on the testing front. But this was not easy.

The initial struggle was to identify the online sources. States disseminated data in about four different ways. States such as Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Madhya Pradesh published their daily bulletins on their Health Department websites or as press releases on their Information and Public Relations Department website. Others such as Rajasthan, Odisha and Gujarat updated their numbers on their State health dashboards. The daily bulletins of some States such as Maharashtra, Assam and Bihar were uploaded on Twitter by the State Health Departments. Uttar Pradesh's bulletin is circulated only among a select group of people in touch with health officials of the State, who then put out the data in the public domain.

While most States today have a dedicated web portal for COVID-19 where bulletins are issued, it is frustrating that there is no standard format for publication of data. There are differences in the details provided by the States too. For example, when the Delhi High Court for using very few RT-PCR tests and ramping up rapid antigen detection tests, we decided to do a story. Our aim was to record the share of antigen tests across States to check whether they exceeded the number of RT-PCR tests. We found that only some States published data on the different tests being conducted. We had to contend with data from these States even though most have taken recourse to rapid antigen testing lately.

While ICMR publishes only bare-bones information on testing, the Union Health Ministry's data publications too leave a lot to be desired. The Health Ministry website had district-wise data on cases and deaths. However, the data was in a state of disarray. There was no time stamp on the data. Nor were the numbers archived, which meant we had to use Internet archival tools to access the previous day's data. We also found data with errors (different district spellings, States having cases not attributed to any district, etc.). District-wise data have now been removed from the Ministry website.

If we are to tackle this pandemic effectively, information is the key. Administrations should strive to be transparent. A standard set of guidelines which explain the kind of information given should govern bulletins which are published at the State level. This is bound to benefit not just citizens but epidemiologists and health experts whose research will help us find the means to end this pandemic. And I look forward to a good night's sleep.

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The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO SEPTEMBER 11, 1970

A moribund zoo

Will animals prefer the Museum or the Zoo? Given the choice, they would gladly prefer the former. This was the poignant remark made by a visitor who went around the Zoo last week. What was once one of the main attractions of the City (Madras) is now in a neglected condition. "If they are not dumb, the animals will speak volumes about the deplorable conditions in which they are kept," said another visitor. Most of the animals which are few by any standard, with weather-beaten looks and emaciated bodies, are sleepy and inactive. Lack of natural habitat and proper upkeep, suitable feeding and attention, are evident from the manner in which the animals are looked after. This makes the visitor think it will be only a matter of time before the animals languish and finally find their resting place in the Museum. Dingy cages, emitting a foul smell from rotting mutton pieces strewn all over, repel anyone who tries to have a close look at the wild animals. Very rarely do the lions, tigers and leopards roar to delight the spectators.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO SEPT. 11, 1920

Indian labour abroad
(From an Editorial)

India won the esteem of the ancient world as the land of light and learning, in the glorious days of her pristine power and prosperity by sending her children abroad as the sacred messengers of her divine culture and religion. But it may well be said of her at the present day that, as a nation that has fallen from her proud position of yore to that of the helot and the menial, since many of her children are now reduced to the pitiable condition of seeking foreign lands in search of food and other necessities of life. Thanks to the steady impoverishment of the country under alien rule and the loss of employment to many among the masses by the decay of indigenous industries, India has been turned into a profitable field for recruiting cheap labour to the European planter and capitalist, engaged in the exploitation of the adjoining lands. The consequences of this menial type of national expansion into foreign lands is injurious alike to the prestige, and welfare, of moral as well as material, of the individuals going and the nations sending them out. Nor is the treatment meted to these Indians in the countries they are invited for labour, in any way consistent with our national honour and self-respect.

FROM PAGE ONE

Officials confirm two incidents of firing

On June 15, as many as 20 Indian soldiers were killed in violent clashes with the People's Liberation Army (PLA) in the Galwan Valley.

The official said the number of Indian troops in Eastern Ladakh has been doubled in the past few days. "Both sides carry automatic weapons now but it is as per the agreed norms and within the prescribed limit. We have no clarity till when the tensions will persist," said the official.

As reported by *The Hindu*, a massive build-up had again begun in the Finger area of the north bank since Tuesday evening but no violent incident was reported.



An Army convoy moving on the Manali-Leh road on Thursday. ■ PTI

"The current position in south bank gives the Indian troops an advantage as they have a clear vision of the Chinese base at Moldo. They are exposed. The action at north bank seems to be a reaction to it," the official said.

Jaishankar, Wang hold talks in Moscow

Although India refused to discuss bilateral issues at the time, the meeting eased tensions and paved the way for talks between the Special Representatives a couple of weeks later in July. Last week, Moscow provided the venue for the first face-to-face political level talks between the two sides

when Defence Minister Rajnath Singh met with his Chinese counterpart General Wei Fenghe along with their delegations. There was no breakthrough, but the talks set the stage for Mr. Jaishankar's visit to Moscow.

(With inputs from Vijaita Singh)

Punjab approaches Centre to block social media sites

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

In a crackdown against rumour-mongers spreading misinformation about COVID-19 on social media, the Punjab police on Thursday approached the Centre for blocking access to 45 links indulging in false propaganda after the social media platforms concerned failed to act against them within the mandated 36 hours of notices being issued to them by the State.

Director General of Police Dinkar Gupta said with 13 more accounts/links blocked by the various platforms, the total number of URLs/links blocked for spreading false propaganda in the State has gone up to 121, while the Central government's intervention has been sought in 45.

"While Facebook has blocked 47, Twitter has blocked 52, YouTube 21 and Instagram 1 accounts/links from their platforms. In addition, 292 more such URLs/links carrying malicious content have been reported to social media platforms for blocking the same," said the DGP.

On the 45 accounts/links that the social media platforms concerned had failed to block despite notices from the police, the DGP said a letter has been sent to the cyber law division of the Union Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology. In the letter, a request has been made for blocking of access to the said YouTube channels/accounts under Section 69A (1) of Information Technology Act, 2000.



KARNATAKA

No mandate to decide on A.P. capital: Centre

STAFF REPORTER
VIJAYAWADA

The Union government has asserted before the Andhra Pradesh High Court that Section 94 of the A.P. Reorganisation Act-2014 (APRA) only provides for extending financial assistance for the new capital chosen by Andhra Pradesh and not for deciding a capital.

Referring to the argument that the phrase "a capital for the State of A.P." contained in Sections 6 and 94 (3) and (4) read with 13th Schedule of APRA connotes that the Act mandated a single capital city, the Centre submitted to the court that Section 13 of The General Clauses Act, 1897 makes it clear that in all Central Acts and regulations, words in the singular includes the plural and vice-versa, unless there is anything repugnant in the subject or context.

Team Krishna



All smiles: Inmates of a children's home in Thiruvananthapuram celebrating Sree Krishna Jayanthi on Thursday. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant distancing norms, public celebrations were banned in Kerala. ■ S. MAHINSHA

spread of COVID-19.

The suggestions were part of a study published in *The Journal of Travel Medicine* recently. The authors include K. Rajasekharan Nayar, Professor, Global Institute of Public Health, Thiruvananthapuram; Shaffi Fazaluddin Koya, research analyst, Boston University School of Public Health, U.S.; Althaf Ali,

Associate Professor of Community Medicine, Government Medical College, Manjeri; and Shahul H. Ebrahim, Adjunct Professor, University of Sciences, Technique and Technology, Bamako, Mali.

The study suggested that only "5,000 in-State pilgrims" should be allowed in a staggered manner during

the six-week season. Among them, 60% should be "persons of other State origin residing in Kerala." It said each of the six weeks could be designated to various districts in the State to enable ease of transportation and contact tracing in the future. An exclusive COVID-19 command and control centre should be set up for Sabarimala. A web-

site and a web application should be developed in Malayalam, Tamil, Kannada, Telugu, and Hindi for online registration. The selection should be through draw of lots. The pilgrims should have completed 20 years of age as on the first day of scheduled departure for Sabarimala and must not be over 50 years as on the sche-

duled end of the pilgrimage.

Individually identifiable electronic non-removable monitoring tools should be placed on their person to enable compliance with home isolation for 14 days before the departure and 10 days after the pilgrimage. The recommendations may be presented to the State government soon.

■ CM

A.P. claims wider testing than Maharashtra, T.N.

8.2% of A.P.'s population covered, say data; Kerala tally goes up by 3,349 cases; Karnataka's active cases exceed one lakh

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Telangana reported 11 deaths and 2,534 COVID-19 positive cases on Wednesday.

The Directorate of Public Health said on Thursday that there were 32,106 active cases including 25,066 in home and institutional isolation and 7,040 in government and private hospitals.

Along with Greater Hyderabad (327), eight other dis-

Viral battle

Civic bodies are trying to contain the spread of COVID-19 by disinfecting areas where large number of cases are reported. The graph shows the spread of the pandemic in the southern States



Chemical wash: Sanitation workers spraying sodium hypochlorite in Vijayawada on Thursday.
■ K.V.S. GIRI

*Kerala has a mismatch of 67 cases due to unaccounted deaths, missing persons. **Telangana numbers are as of 8 p.m. on Wednesday. ***Karnataka has 19 non-COVID deaths.

tricts reported over 100 cases: Kamareddy (123), Karimnagar (107), Khammam (109), Medchal-Malkajgiri (132), Narayanpet (149), Rangareddy (195), Siddipet (103) and Warangal Urban (124). On Wednesday, 63,017 samples were tested. Of the tally of cases, 69% (1,03,621) were asymptomatic and 31% (46,555) symptomatic.

The COVID-19 surge in Andhra Pradesh in recent weeks saw several highs, and with 10,175 fresh infections, the overall tally rose to 5,37,687, representing 1.01%

of the State's population of 5.34 crore, official data said on Thursday. Fresh fatalities were put at 68. So far, 8.20% of the population had been tested. In all, 43,80,991 sam-

ples, including 72,229 in one day had been tested, with a positivity rate of 12.27%; tests per million stood at 82,041 and confirmed cases per million 10,069.

Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu as of Thursday morning had tested 3.92% and 7.20% of their populations respectively.

Kerala, after testing 40,014 more samples, reported 3,349 new cases on Thursday. The number of patients in hospitals was 26,229.

The toll touched 396 with 12 more deaths which had occurred between August 21 and September 6.

Seven deaths were recorded in Malappuram, two in Thrivananthapuram and one each from Alappuzha, Thrissur and Kasaragod.

Karnataka's active cases crossed one lakh on Thursday at 1,01,537. Nearly 3% of the active cases were in Bengaluru Urban, besides 6,816 and 4,466 in Mysuru and Ballari, respectively.

The State reported 9,217 new cases on Thursday. With 129 more deaths, the toll rose

to 6,937. Bengaluru Urban reported 3,161 cases. A total of 54,709 tests were conducted in 24 hours, 25,468 of them rapid antigen tests.

Tamil Nadu reported another 5,528 new cases of COVID-19 and recorded 64 deaths on Thursday. While 6,185 more persons were discharged after treatment, the total number of persons presently under treatment was 48,482.

As of date, a total of 4,86,052 persons had tested positive for COVID-19. Of this, 4,29,416 persons were discharged after treatment and 8,154 persons died.

Of the 48,482 active cases in the State, Chennai accounted for 10,845.

A total of 85,473 samples were tested in the last 24 hours in the State.

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

IN BRIEF



HC notice on plea against works in sanctuary

BENGALURU
The High Court of Karnataka on Thursday ordered issue of notices to the State and the Union governments on a PIL petition questioning the permission granted to carry out a survey and geo-technical investigation, by drilling 12 boreholes inside the Sharavathi Valley Lion-Tailed Macaque Sanctuary, for setting up underground pump storage hydro-electric project.

The SEC is responsible for the preparation of voters' lists and conduct of elections to the local self-government institutions.

An all-party meeting convened by Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Friday will debate the issue in detail.

The panel can only make a recommendation to the EC, which has the sole authority in the matter. Party leaders reportedly gave each other the impression that the bypolls were inessential given the Assembly elections in mid-2021.

The Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) and the ruling Left Democratic Front (LDF) will attempt to put a united face in front of the SEC to push their case for postponement of the local body elections despite the opposition by the BJP.

Amendment required
Congress MLA V.D. Satheshan told *The Hindu* the government would require to amend the Kerala Pancharatna Raj Act and Rules, possibly by issuing an Ordinance, to postpone the local body elections.

Local body polls
The meeting is also likely to attempt to arrive at an accord on the growing demand to postpone the local body elections.

Karnataka govt. to buy saris to help weavers
BENGALURU
In a bid to help the weaving community in distress amid the pandemic, the Karnataka government plans to buy saris from weavers and distribute them among corona warriors like ASHAs and anganwadi workers, Textile Minister Srimant Patil has said.

Kerala jewellery scam leaves IUML jittery
KOZHIKKODE
The gold jewellery scam involving Manjeswaram M.L.A. M.C. Kamaruddin has left the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) leadership in an unenviable situation as the party has sensed trouble brewing within its ranks and file in Kasaragod district over the issue. The case has turned into a matter of political embarrassment for the IUML.

Man sets self afire near Telangana Assembly
HYDERABAD
A 54-year-old man set himself on fire in front of Ravindra Bharathi auditorium near the Telangana Assembly here on Thursday. Narlakanti Nagulu, working as a security guard in Banjara Hills, yelled 'KCR sir, Jai Telangana. KCR sir Jai Telangana' as passers-by and police doused the flames. He is said to be out of danger. Two days ago, Nagulu had left home after a fight with his wife, the police said.

Emirates flight to Dubai resumes from Hyderabad
HYDERABAD
The Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Hyderabad got re-connected with Dubai from Thursday onwards, as part of the efforts of the Central government to re-start international air connectivity. The UAE-based Emirates airline would be operating on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays.

CPI(M) to oppose 'distortion' of freedom struggle history

Removal of names of freedom fighters slammed

K.S. SUDHI
KOCHI

Protesting against "attempts to rewrite the history of Indian freedom struggle by the Sangh Parivar," the CPI(M) will organise political campaigns across the State.

The CPI(M) Polit Bureau will discuss the RSS attempts to distort history and finalise the campaigns, Polit Bureau member M.A. Baby said on Thursday.

The Punnappa-Vayalar agitation was an integral part of the freedom movement as the workers wanted Travancore to be part of the Indian Union, Mr. Baby said. Malabar Rebellion leader Variamunnath Kunhamad Hajji and others fought against feudal lords and the British. Though the leaders of the re-



The martyrs' column at Kayur in Kasaragod district of Kerala. ■ FILE PHOTO

conspiracy cases and the Punnappa-Vayalar struggle and other Communist uprisings were an integral part of the freedom struggle, said P. Rajeev, State Secretariat member of the party. The party and independent historians will highlight the role of Communists and others in the freedom movement, he added.

'Move unjustifiable'
B. Shobhanan, Kerala coordinator of the fifth volume of the 'Dictionary of Martyrs: India's Freedom Struggle (1857-1947)', said the deletion of the victims of the Wagon Tragedy, martyrs of the Malabar Rebellion and the communist movement in Kerala from the list was unjustifiable.

Different approaches to history should not come in the way of acknowledging the role of martyrs, Dr. Shobhanan said.

The Kanpur and Meerut

Allow only pilgrims from Kerala at Sabarimala this season, say doctors

STAFF REPORTER
KOZHIKODE

With just two months to go for the start of the Mandala-Makaravilakku season, a group of doctors have suggested that only pilgrims from Kerala be allowed to perform rituals at the Sabarimala temple this time and their numbers should be restricted to avoid drastic

spread of COVID-19. The suggestions were part of a study published in *The Journal of Travel Medicine* recently. The authors include K. Rajasekharan Nayar, Professor, Global Institute of Public Health, Thiruvananthapuram; Shaffi Fazaluddin Koya, research analyst, Boston University School of Public Health, U.S.; Althaf Ali,

Associate Professor of Community Medicine, Government Medical College, Manjeri; and Shahul H. Ebrahim, Adjunct Professor, University of Sciences, Technique and Technology, Bamako, Mali.

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the six-week season. Among them, 60% should be "persons of other State origin residing in Kerala." It said each of the six weeks could be designated to various districts in the State to enable ease of transportation and contact tracing in the future. An exclusive COVID-19 command and control centre should be set up for Sabarimala. A web-

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duled end of the pilgrimage. Individually identifiable electronic non-removable monitoring tools should be placed on their person to enable compliance with home isolation for 14 days before the departure and 10 days after the pilgrimage. The recommendations may be presented to the State government soon.

APPEAL

Sreeji aged 39 years old is a Muscular Dystrophy patient living in Varkala, Kerala. He has been operated on his Limbs a few months ago. Now he is advised to remove the implanted Palette for his normal functioning. As he is from a poor family he cannot afford the whole expenditure of surgery, hospital and after services which amounts to Rs. 1,00,000/- Kindly help him for urgent need of this surgery. The donations sent through Ch.D.NEFT Transfer/Syndicate Bank, IFSC No. SYNB000081018 favouring WOMEN'S

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WWS

IN BRIEF



Nadda says Mamata has 'anti-Hindu' mindset

KOLKATA
BJP president J.P. Nadda on Thursday criticised the West Bengal government for observing a lockdown on August 5, the day of the foundation stone laying for the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, and accused Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee of having an "anti-Hindu" mindset. "On July 31, the day Bakrid (Id-ul-Adha) was observed, there was no lockdown... We are happy that there was no lockdown on July 31, but why impose a lockdown on August 5?" Mr. Nadda said.

A-G's nod sought for case against Rajdeep Sardesai

NEW DELHI
A plea has been made to the Attorney-General for permission to initiate contempt proceedings in the Supreme Court against senior journalist Rajdeep Sardesai. The plea concerns Mr. Sardesai's tweets in connection with the Supreme Court verdict in a contempt case against lawyer Prashant Bhushan. The plea by Astha Khurana says the statements by Mr. Sardesai attempt to erode faith in the judiciary.

Consultant chosen for OFB corporatisation

NEW DELHI
The Defence Ministry has appointed the KPMG Advisory Services-led consortium for consultancy on corporatisation of the Ordnance Factory Board. "Consequent to evaluation of the technical and financial proposals of the bidders, the Department has selected KPMG Advisory Services Pvt. Limited, lead consortium member, with Khaitan & Co. Ltd. as consortium member, as the consultancy agency for the said project," the Ministry stated.

Ram temple trust loses money in cheque fraud

LUCKNOW
Fraudsters allegedly used cloned cheques to withdraw around ₹6 lakh from the bank account of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, which is entrusted with the Ram temple construction. Police have launched a probe. DSP of Ayodhya Rajesh Kumar said that on September 9, the general secretary of the trust, Champat Rai, submitted an application to the police saying that around ₹6 lakh had been withdrawn from the trust's account through fraudulent cheques. The matter relates to an SBI account in Nayaghat.

'House can select Dy. Speaker'

Om Birla makes it clear that it is for the Lok Sabha to fill the vacant post

SOBHANA K. NAIR
NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Thursday said that if there is a provision for the post of Deputy Speaker in the Lok Sabha, then it was only obvious that there should be one, but it was not the Speaker's job to appoint one, and that the Deputy Speaker was chosen by the House.

His comments come against the backdrop of renewed efforts by Opposition parties in urging the government to fill the Deputy Speaker's position, which has been vacant for the past 15 months. The Congress has been angling for the post with the party's Lok Sabha floor leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury urging the Speaker to fulfil the Constitutional mandate given to him [the Speaker].

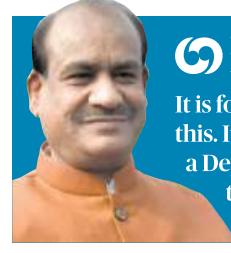
'There is a necessity'

"Leaders of all political parties have the right to express their views. It is for the government to act upon this. It is not for the Speaker to appoint a Deputy Speaker. It is for the House to do so," Mr. Birla added.

Mr. Birla said that the Parliament is meeting at a time when the whole world has been challenged by the COVID-19 pandemic. "Holding the monsoon session was a challenge during the pandemic but we have to fulfil our Constitutional responsibilities. We want Parliament to become more accountable and answerable to the people," he said.

Mr. Birla was speaking to presspersons ahead of the unprecedented session that will, for the first time in Indian parliamentary history, have some members sit outside the chambers.

According to sources, 20 Lok Sabha members have tested positive for SARS-CoV-2. "So far, out of these 20 MPs, 14 have recovered. Five others are still positive



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OM BIRLA, Lok Sabha Speaker

menced the procedure to elect the Deputy Chairman for the upper council. "It is not for the Speaker to appoint a Deputy Speaker. It is for the House to do so," Mr. Birla added.

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but out of danger. Unfortunately, we lost Kanniyakumari MP H. Vasanthakumar," a senior Lok Sabha official said.

Safety measures

Every person, including MPs, will need to get an RTPCR (reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction) test done prior to the session. No visitors or staff members of an MP will be allowed on the premises.

A host of measures have been taken to ensure that physical distancing is maintained. Each of the seats, and each row, in the Lok Sabha have been separated by polycarbonate sheets.

In the Lok Sabha chamber, only 257 members will be accommodated. Another 172 will be accommodated in various galleries in the House. A total of 111 members will have to participate in the debate from the Rajya Sabha chamber. Communication lines have been laid to ensure they can make inter-

ventions and deliver speeches from the Rajya Sabha chamber.

To tackle the unusual situation, for the first time ever, LED screens in both Houses of Parliament will have a real-time transmission from the other House.

The Lok Sabha Secretariat has marked out the places for each of the political parties, and it is for the parties themselves to decide which of their members gets to sit in the main hall and who will have to sit in the galleries or in Rajya Sabha.

The members who will sit in the galleries will not be able to speak from their seat. Instead, special podiums have been erected in the galleries for their use.

This also means that most of the spontaneous interventions and protests would not be possible in the new setting for those sitting in the galleries.

To minimise contact between the members, the Lok Sabha Secretariat has also launched a special mobile application named 'Attendance Register' for the members.

The app utilises GPS and face recognition systems. Members can mark their attendance only when they are present within the Parliament premises.

RS post: NDA reaches out for support

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The government on Thursday set about securing numbers for getting the NDA's candidate elected for the post of Deputy Chairman of the Rajya Sabha on September 14, with calls going out to non-NDA parties for support.

The NDA has nominated Janata Dal(U) MP and former Deputy Chairperson Harivansh again. Bihar Chief Minister and JD(U) president Nitish Kumar lost no time in canvassing support from Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik. Sources said the two Chief Ministers spoke on the phone, with Mr. Kumar asking for the Biju Janata Dal's support.

Union Ministers Piyush Goyal and Pralhad Joshi (who is also Parliamentary Affairs Minister) called up Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister and YSRCP chief Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy for support to the NDA candidate. Mr. Reddy has six MPs in the Rajya Sabha and has reacted positively to the appeal.

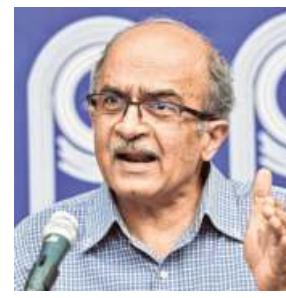
Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) MP Manoj Jha has filed nomination papers on behalf of certain parties in the Opposition, including the Congress.

SC seeks A-G's aid in Bhushan case

Venugopal must be heard, says court

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday reached out to Attorney-General K.K. Venugopal to act as *amicus curiae* and assist it with legal questions raised in a contempt case initiated against civil rights lawyer Prashant Bhushan for his remarks on judicial corruption in *Teheran* magazine in 2009.



Prashant Bhushan

tempt of Courts Act, 1971. Mr. Dhavan has strongly pitched for the questions to be referred to a Constitution Bench.

Due process

One of the questions also deals with the violation of due process as *suo motu* contempt proceedings in the Supreme Court has no provision for appeal.

This is the maiden hearing of the contempt case before the Justice Khanwilkar Bench.

Earlier, the case was listed before another three-judge Bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra, who retired on September 2.

The Justice Khanwilkar Bench ordered the copies of the case records to be served on the Attorney General and posted the case for hearing on October 12.

Golden Temple gets FCRA registration

It is eligible to receive foreign funds

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI



The Union Home Ministry has granted Foreign Contribution Regulation Act (FCRA) registration to Gurdwara Harmandir Sahib, or the Golden Temple, in Amritsar, enabling it to receive foreign donations.

The gurdwara is currently administered by the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC), controlled by the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), one of the oldest allies of the BJP.

Any association, non-government organisation (NGO) or registered society requires FCRA registration to receive foreign donations for specified purposes.

In the present case, the foreign contribution can be used by the Sikh shrine for activities such as providing financial assistance to the poor, medical assistance to the needy and organise lan-

BJP unit comes under U.S. Foreign Agents Act

Overseas Friends of the BJP has registered itself voluntarily, says foreign cell chief Vijay Chauthaiwale

NISTULA HEBBAR
SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

The BJP has become the first mainstream political party from India to have named itself as a foreign principal of an organisation in the United States, after the Overseas Friends of the BJP (OFBJP) registered under the 1938 Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) under the U.S. Department of Justice. The registration was done on August 27, 2020, according to the registration statement filed by the OFBJP.

The FARA requires "agents representing the interests of foreign powers in a political or quasi political capacity [to] disclose their relationship with the foreign government and information about related finances."

BJP's foreign affairs cell chief Vijay Chauthaiwale confirmed that the registration had taken place.

"The OFBJP registered it

self under FARA voluntarily," he said.

Mr. Chauthaiwale said while the BJP and OFBJP had no financial transactions, and "all of the meetings and activities arranged by the OFBJP have been on a volunteer basis", it was felt that it would be better to register under FARA and that the OFBJP had also consulted lawyers.

'No compensation'
Under activities and services, the OFBJP says that it "primarily engages in support of the Principal (BJP) on its own initiative and receives no compensation for its efforts. Registrant does engage in regular communication with officials of the BJP and from time to time acts under the direction or at the request of BJP officials when planning events or distributing materials in the U.S."

Following the registration, the OFBJP will have to declare any meetings with U.S. legislators, organisation of events and funding from U.S. groups. It will also not be possible for OFBJP members to use organisational help during the U.S. elections as it would then be seen as foreign interference.

Mr. Chauthaiwale in fact wrote to the OFBJP last month that this separation should be followed strictly.

Most other entities from India registered under this Act are legal, lobby or public relations firms engaged by U.S. entities.

While Mr. Chauthaiwale did not comment on what



The OFBJP engages in support of the BJP on its own initiative and receives no compensation for its efforts. It does engage in communication with officials of the BJP and from time to time acts under their direction or request when planning events or distributing materials in the U.S.

VIJAY CHAUTHAIWALE
BJP's foreign affairs cell chief

were the triggers in this voluntary registration under FARA when the Act has been around since 1938, sources say that in April this year the U.S. Department of Justice had announced that it would conduct an FARA enforcement drive with wider scrutiny of all consultants and organisations and sent a number of "deficiency notices", asking suspected foreign agents to register or stop activity on behalf of foreign entities.

Party's denial

The BJP has denied that the party received any such notice. The DoJ also published for the first time the names of more than a dozen entities which had been made to register or stop activity on behalf of the foreign entities, along with the names of more than a dozen entities which had been made to register between 2017 and 2019.

HC issues notice to Raja

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday asked former Telecom Minister A. Raja and others to respond to the plea of the CBI and the Enforcement Directorate for an early hearing of their appeals challenging their ac-

tuities in the 2G spectrum allocation case.

Justice Brijesh Sethi issued notice to individuals and firms related to the case and listed the case for hearing on September 21. The agencies have sought advancement of the hearing from October 12.

KERALA WATER AUTHORITY e-Tender Notice
Tender No : 60-64 KWA/PHC/03/TVM, Jaffeevan Mission-2020-21- Thiruvananthapuram District-providing functional household tap connections and related works in Vithura,Tholicode,Poovachal,Thirupuram and Parassala Panchayats in Thiruvananthapuram District EMD : Rs. 20000/- Each for tender nos.60 to 63 and Rs. 5,00,000/- for tender no.64 Tender fee: Rs. 10,00/- Each for tender Nos. 60 to 63 & Rs.15,000/- for tender No.64. Last Date for submitting Tender: 05-10-2020, 03:00 pm. Phone: 0471-2322303. Superintending Engineer Website : www.kwa.kerala.gov.in PH Circle www.etenders.kerala.gov.in KWA-JB-GL-6-323-2020-21 Thiruvananthapuram

NLC India Limited
Navratna - Government of India Enterprise
Regd. Office : 1st Floor, No. 8, Mayuram Subramanyar Road,
Corporation Complex, Chennai - 600 031.
Corp. Office : Block - N, Neyveli-607 801, Cuddalore District, Tamil Nadu.
CIN No.: L93090TN1956G0003507. Website: www.nlcindia.com

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS FOR SUPPLIES (e-TENDER NOTICES SI.No.283)

SI.No. **Tender Ref./Scope of Supply & Qty. Reqd.**

1. NTPL/TUTICORIN: ENQ/NTPL/20-21/00139/C&P01 (01): Purchase of Sea water Reverse Osmosis Membrane. **EMD:** ₹ 2,00,000/-
2. UNIT: M.M.COMPLEX:PTE/ENQ/20-21/001292/MM02(01) Dt:03.09.2020:Forged fish Plate for UIC-60 Rail. **Qty:** 6515 Nos. **Date of opening:** 05-10-2020
Date & time of opening: 05-10-2020
Due date of opening: 05-10-2020
For e-TENDER DOCUMENTS/DETAILS/CORRIGENDUM VISIT: www.nlcindia.com
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Re-e-TENDER-INVITATION FOR BIDS No.22/2020-21 Dt. 10.09.2020

- For details, visit www.tntenders.gov.in & www.tnphc.com
- e-Bids are invited by the Superintending Engineer/CC/TNPHC Ltd., for the Supply, Delivery, Installation and Commissioning 16 Nos. of 13 Persons Capacity passenger lift for the work of Construction of 596 Nos. of PC/HC quarters for Armed Reserve Police at Pudupet in Chennai City. (Re-tender) (SE/CC/DB/4020/2018).
- Approximate value of work : Rs.384.03 Lakhs (with GST)
- Date and time for Downloading/Uploading of bid documents through online: 21.09.2020 at 12.00 Noon to 06.10.2020 upto 6.00 P.M.
- Date & time of opening of the bid : 08.10.2020 at 11.15 a.m.
- Other details can be seen in the bid documents.

Superintending Engineer/CC
TNPHC Ltd., Chennai.

KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD
(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)
49, East Wing, 4th & 5th Floor, Khanija Bhavan Race Course Road
Bengaluru – 560 001. . Phone No. 080-22265383
website : www.kiadb.in

No. IADB/ENGG/ETND-EP-26/4820/2020-21 Date: 09.09.2020

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER
(Through GOK e-Procurement Portal Only)

KIADB is inviting Item rate tenders under two cover system as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through electronic procurement from KPWD Class-I (Civil Contractors) who have got adequate financial resources & sufficient past experience for the following work 1). Formation of 18M wide road (Road no. 3, 4, 5, 6 & 7), 12m Wide Road (Road No.4A) Including Asphalt, Construction of RCC Side Drains, RCC Cross Drainage Works, RCC Storm Water Drain, Chain Link Fencing & HDPE Dual Water Supply Pipe Line for Kotur Belur Industrial

Former Union Minister Raghuvansh quits RJD

You're not going anywhere, says RJD chief Lalu Prasad

AMARNATH TEWARY
PATNA

Senior Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader and former Union Minister Raghuvansh Prasad Singh on Thursday quit the party amid speculation that he would join the ruling Janata Dal (U). However, imprisoned RJD chief Lalu Prasad said, "You're not going anywhere."

On June 23, Mr. Singh resigned from his post as RJD vice-president and despite repeated requests from party leader Tejashwi Yadav, he did not withdraw his resignation.

Mr. Singh, 74, is currently at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), New Delhi, as he was indisposed after his treatment for COVID-19 at the Patna AIIMS and subsequent recovery a month ago.

In a handwritten, one-page resignation from his hospital bed, Mr. Singh said, "After the death of 'jan nayak' [people's leader] Karpoori Thakur, I stood behind you for last 32 years but not now... Please forgive me".

Letter to Lalu

He addressed the letter to Mr. Prasad, who is admitted to RIMS (Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences) in Ranchi.

Mr. Singh, a five-time MP from Vaishali, was said to be upset over the likely induction of another Rajput lead-



Back in the day: Tejashwi Yadav with Raghuvansh Prasad at a RJD national council meeting in 2019. ■ RANJEET KUMAR

er of his constituency, Ramakishore Singh, former Lok Jan Shakti Party (LJP) MP from Vaishali.

In the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, Mr. Ramakishore Singh was denied a ticket by the LJP and defeated as an independent candidate by party candidate Veena Devi. In 2014, he defeated Mr. Raghuvansh Prasad Singh, who was the RJD candidate.

Mr. Ramakishore Singh is said to have some influence in the Raghoban Assembly constituency of Vaishali, represented by Mr. Yadav, heir apparent of Mr. Prasad.

Earlier, amid speculation that Mr. Raghuvansh Prasad Singh may quit the party, Mr. Yadav had gone to Delhi to assuage him, but, party sources said, the former told the latter that it would be difficult for him to remain in the party along with Mr. Ramakishore Singh.

The buzz in the political circle is that Mr. Raghuvansh

Centre's policies led to loss of crores of jobs, says Rahul

Roll out minimum income scheme, says Congress leader



Rahul Gandhi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Thursday alleged that the Narendra Modi government's policies have led to the loss of crores of jobs and appealed to the people to make the Modi government "listen to their voice" as part of the Congress' social media campaign 'Speak Up for Jobs'.

"The policies of the Modi government have caused the loss of crores of jobs and a historic fall in GDP. It has crushed the future of India's

Comply with undertaking in Sunanda case, says HC

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Thursday directed Republic TV anchor Arnab Goswami to comply with his undertaking to exercise restraint and "bring down the rhetoric" while reporting on the Sunanda Pushkar death case.

Justice Mukta Gupta directed Mr. Goswami to be bound by his undertaking to the court while reporting on the case, as the investigation is still pending.

The High Court's direction came while hearing Congress leader Shashi Tharoor's interim plea seeking to restrain the news channel from levelling allegations in connection with the ongoing trial.

During the hearing, Justice Gupta questioned the claims made by Mr. Goswami that a "murder" has been committed when the chargesheet says it's a case of abetment to suicide. "Were you [Mr. Goswami] at the spot? Are you an eyewitness? You must respect the sanctity of an ongoing investigation," Justice Gupta said.

Pushkar was found dead in a suite of a luxury hotel in the city on the night of January 17, 2014.

Have a clear loan policy: SC to govt.

Deliberations are being held at the 'highest level' of govt., says Solicitor-General

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday gave in to a persistent plea of the Union government for two more weeks to brainstorm with the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and banks on crucial issues such as sector-specific loan restructuring, charging borrowers' interest on interest for loans deferred during the moratorium period.

The next hearing is scheduled for September 28. Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta told a Bench led by Justice Ashok Bhushan that deliberations were being held at the "highest level" of the



government.

Individual borrowers and various sectors of commerce and industry, including traders, power and real estate, urged the court to pass an interim order extending the loan moratorium that expired on August 31.

Centre flags violation of COVID-19 testing norms

'As per guidelines, two specific categories of persons must necessarily be retested using RT-PCR tests'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry on Thursday noted with concern that "some large States were not following up symptomatic negative cases tested by Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT) with RT-PCR [Reverse Transcriptase-Polymerase Chain Reaction] testing".

Coming down heavily on these States, the Ministry said that as per its and the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) guidelines, two specific categories of persons must necessarily be retested through RT-PCR tests.

"This includes all symptomatic [fever, cough or breathlessness] negative cases of Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT) and asymptomatic negative cases of RAT that develop symptoms within two or three days of being tested negative," said a senior Health Ministry official.

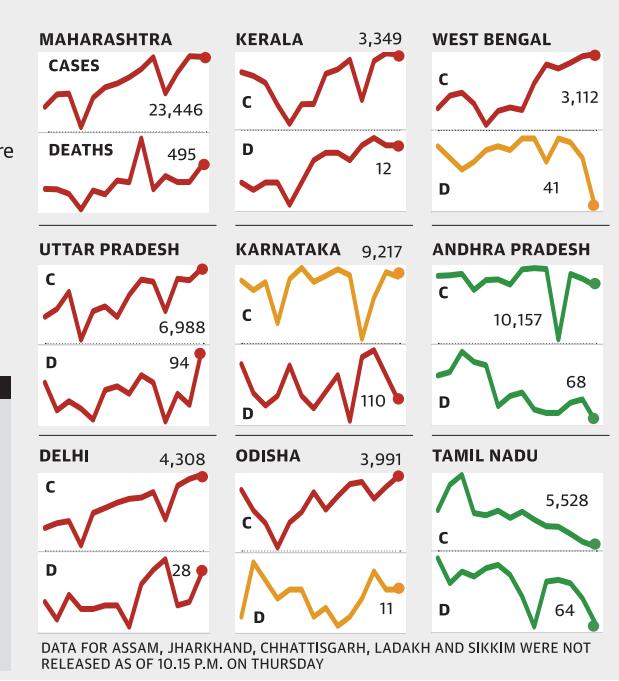
Ministry writes letter
The Ministry and the ICMR have jointly written to all the States/UTs and urged them to ensure that the all symptomatic negative cases of RAT are mandatorily retested us-

Viral tracker

With 90,033 COVID-19 cases recorded on Thursday, India's tally stood at 45,52,993. As many as 1,166 new deaths were registered, taking the toll to 76,281. The graphs depict new cases and deaths in the last 14 days in select States. The States are classified based on where cases/deaths are rising (red), falling (green) or showing a mixed trend (yellow).

NEW CASES AND DEATHS

CASES	90,033
7 DAY-CHANGE	+10.9%
DEATHS	1,166
7 DAY-CHANGE	+13.5%



DATA FOR ASSAM, JHARKHAND, CHHATTISGARH, LADAKH AND SIKKIM WERE NOT RELEASED AS OF 10.15 P.M. ON THURSDAY

ing the RT-PCR test.

"This is necessary to ensure that such symptomatic negative cases do not remain untested and do not spread the disease among their contacts. This will also ensure early detection and isolation/hospitalisation of such false negatives. The joint letter reiterates that while the

RAT is being used to increase access and availability of testing in the field, RT-PCR remains the gold standard of COVID-19 tests," said the Ministry.

It urged the States/UTs to urgently establish a monitoring mechanism in every district (a designated officer or a team) and at the State-level

to follow up such cases.

Monitoring teams at the district-level shall analyse details of RAT conducted on a daily basis and ensure that there were no delays in retesting of all symptomatic negative cases, it stated.

"The aim of States/UTs should be to ensure that no potentially positive case is

missed out. They have also been advised to undertake an analysis on a regular basis to monitor the incidence of positives during the RT-PCR tests conducted as a follow-up," it noted.

Nine States

Data released by the Ministry on Thursday said that more than 74% of the total active COVID-19 cases were in nine most-affected States.

"Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh presently contribute 49% of the total active cases. Maharashtra is leading this tally with more than 2,50,000, whereas Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh follow with more than 97,000 each," said the Ministry.

A total of 1,172 deaths have been registered in 24 hours, it said.

"32% of deaths reported yesterday are from Maharashtra with 380 deaths, followed by Karnataka with 128 deaths, and Tamil Nadu with 78 deaths. Of the total deaths, 69% are concentrated in five States/UT of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Delhi and Andhra Pradesh," it added.

Health Ministry issues revised SOP for exams

Isolation room mandatory at centres

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry has issued a revised standard operating procedure (SOP) on preventive measures to be followed to contain spread of COVID-19 while conducting examinations, here on Thursday, removing the clause to facilitate symptomatic candidates who insist on taking the exam to do so in isolation.

The revised SOP notes that in the regular course, a symptomatic candidate should be referred to the nearest health centre and given an opportunity to undertake the examination through other means, or the university/educational institution shall arrange for the exam at a later date, when the student is declared fit.

Granted as per policy
However, if a student is found to be symptomatic, the permission or denial thereof in such cases shall be granted as per the policy

already enunciated on the issue by the authorities conducting the examination.

The SOP notes that the examination centre should have a designated isolation room for isolating any person found to be symptomatic at the time of screening or during the examination, till such time that medical advice may be sought.

"A clear policy on allowing/disallowing symptomatic candidates to undertake examinations shall be delineated by the Examination Conducting Authorities in advance," it added.

Trials were stopped globally after a recipient in the U.K. showed adverse symptoms.

In a statement on Thursday, the SII said, "We are reviewing the situation and pausing India trials till AstraZeneca restarts the trials. We are following DCGI's instructions and will not be able to comment further on trials. You can connect with DCGI for more updates."

While trials were stopped in four countries as a precautionary measure, the DCGI, in its notice to the SII, asked why it was progressing with the trials and why it had not sent a detailed report about the U.K. patient.

The SII maintained that they were going by the DCGI's direction and were not told to pause the trials. "We are going by DCGI's direction and so far were not told to pause the trials. If DCGI has any safety concerns, we will follow their instructions and abide by the standard protocols," it had said.

British-Swedish pharma giant AstraZeneca had stated that the said volunteer suffered "an unexplained illness" and such pauses in drug trials are "routine".

Earlier, the SII has come out with a statement, saying nothing untoward has been reported during the trials.

and that they would be continuing them.

"We cannot comment on reports of the U.K. trials, other than that they have been paused for further review and that they hope to restart soon. As far as Indian trials are concerned, they are continuing and we have faced no issues at all," said a statement issued earlier today by the SII, the world's third largest vaccine manufacturer.

Till date, 100 volunteers have been administered the vaccine shots, following the commencement of the phase two trials in India on August 26. As many as 34 of the volunteers who were administered the shots were from the Pune-based Bharati Vidyapeeth Medical College and Hospital.

According to the medical authorities in Pune, none of these volunteers had shown signs of ill-health and all their vital parameters were appearing normal more than a week after being administered the vaccine shots.

Activists question govt.'s new advisory on migrants

They say it will have little impact

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI

Labour rights activists on Thursday questioned the Centre's recent advisory for States and Union Territories regarding migrant workers, lakhs of whom were forced to start walking home in the wake of the lockdown in March. He added that one of the main demands of workers and other suggestions mentioned.

On Tuesday, the Labour and Employment Ministry released an advisory for States and UTs on the situation of migrant workers. The advisory said States should carry out screening and testing for COVID-19 free of cost for workers before they leave from their home States to the destination States. Among the 18 points on the advisory was the creation of a database of all migrant workers to be shared by the State of origin with the destination State.

States were also instructed to make sure that workers are enrolled in the various social welfare schemes of the government.

Sudhir Katiyar, the secretary of the Prayas Centre for Labour Research and Action and a member of the National Human Rights Commission's core group on bonded labour, said: "The only good thing about this advisory is

that it has been issued. It will have no impact."

He said the advisory had failed to come up with any new social security measures for migrant workers, lakhs of whom were forced to start walking home in the wake of the lockdown in March. He added that one of the main demands of workers and other suggestions mentioned.

"Workers are being forced to return to work at a time COVID-19 cases are increasing. They are risking their lives, so a safety network should be created. Employers should have been asked to provide insurance against COVID-19 to workers. In case a worker contracts the virus and is isolated, there is loss of wages for the worker and all contacts," he said.

Asif Shaikh, the director of Jan Sahas, said the guidelines were a good initiative. "I'm glad the government is thinking about workers," he said. However, he said there was a need for a national-level database of migrant workers for which the Centre should set up a technology-based platform. He said the database of workers under the Inter-State Migrant Workmen Act, 1979 had not been developed.

SC looks into cases against legislators

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday prioritised the need to expediently complete trial in over 4,000 criminal cases, from corruption to money laundering, pending against legislators across the country.

A Bench led by Justice N.V. Ramana was alarmed to find that cases registered against politicians nearly 40 years ago were still pending.

One such case in Punjab dates back to 1983, and is one of the oldest found in a report submitted by the court's *amicus curiae*, senior advocate Vijay Hansaria and advocate Sneha Kalita. "Charges were framed in the case. It is still pending. It has been 36 years," Mr. Hansaria submitted.

"This is shocking... Why is it pending?" Justice Ramana asked advocate Karan Bharihoke, for Punjab. The Bench asked the Punjab and Haryana High Court to make an inquiry and get back. It asked Mr. Hansaria to recommend a plan to complete the trial in pending cases and suggest if more special courts were required to be set up.

The court scheduled the case for hearing on Wednesday.

India and Japan sign logistics agreement

Armed forces of both sides will coordinate closely in services and supplies

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

sador of Japan Suzuki Satoshi.

Closer cooperation
A statement from the government informed that the agreement on 'Reciprocal Provision Supplies and Services' will "increase interoperability between the Armed Forces of India and Japan" and assist in maintaining regional security.

"The agreement establishes the enabling framework

for closer cooperation between the Armed Forces of India and Japan in reciprocal provision of supplies and services while engaged in bilateral training activities, United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, Humanitarian International Relief and other mutually agreed activities," the statement said.

The Prime Ministers of Japan and India welcomed the signing of the agreement, which will help both sides coordinate on medical requirements, supplies, maintenance, airlifting and communication.

Naval exercises
Significantly, the agreement signed on Wednesday is mainly aimed at greater maritime cooperation and can dramatically upgrade India-Japan naval exercises as the participants are expected to share maritime facilities for mutual benefit.



Paresh Rawal appointed NSD chair

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Paresh Rawal, actor and former BJP MP, has been appointed Chairperson of the National School of Drama by President Ram Nath Kovind, Union Culture Minister Prahad Singh Patel said on Thursday.

Speaking with reporters here on Thursday, Mr. Chouhan said he had spoken to Mr. Thackeray and requested him "during a crisis like this, oxygen supply shouldn't be stopped".

Madhya Pradesh used to get 20 tonnes oxygen from Maharashtra, he added.

"There is a firm named INOX which supplied it from Nagpur. Now, the same company will supply it from Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh," he said.

Mr. Chouhan said the Maharashtra Chief Minister had told him even they were facing a problem owing to COVID-19 patients. "But he said they would make efforts to ensure oxygen supply to our hospitals," said Mr. Chouhan.

Stating that Madhya Pradesh had made alternative arrangements, he said, "Initially, our production capac-

26% of candidates did not take JEE-Main

Only 6.35 lakh wrote the examination

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Over a quarter of students who registered for the JEE-Main last week failed to appear to write the exam.

Of the total 8.58 lakh registered candidates, 6.35 lakh actually wrote the exams, a tweet by Education Minister Ramesh Pokhray Nishank said on Wednesday.

A section of students had held protests and gone to court to postpone the exams due to the COVID-19 pandemic and difficulties in transportation due to local lockdowns.

On the first day of the exams for the B.Arch. and B. Planning admissions, less than 55% of the students showed up.

About 80% of students appeared for the BE and B.Tech. entrance stream on the remaining days, resulting in a total attendance rate of 74%.

Last year

Last year, over 94% of the registered students wrote the B.E/B.Tech. papers, while the B.Arch and B.Planning papers saw more than 80% attendance.

The JEE-Main is for admission to all Central engi-

Don't stop oxygen supply to M.P., Chouhan tells Maharashtra CM

Situation was critical in Jabalpur after cases spiked, now under control: official

SIDHARTH YADAV
Bhopal

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Thursday appealed to his counterpart in Maharashtra, Uddhav Thackeray, to continue supplying medical oxygen to his State, which is reportedly facing a shortage.

Speaking with reporters here on Thursday, Mr. Chouhan said he had spoken to Mr. Thackeray and requested him "during a crisis like this, oxygen supply shouldn't be stopped".

Madhya Pradesh used to get 20 tonnes oxygen from Maharashtra, he added.

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Stating that Madhya Pradesh had made alternative arrangements, he said, "Initially, our production capac-



Madhya Pradesh CM Shivraj Singh Chouhan. ■ FILE PHOTO

ity was only 50 tonnes, which we ramped up to 120 tonne. We will take it to 150 tonne by September 30."

"Our small plants were generating 50%-60% oxygen against their capacity. We have asked them to produce oxygen to their full capacity so that there is a greater availability," he added, while reassuring the State's people against a shortage.

As for long-term planning, he said, INOX would install a plant at Mohasa near Babai in Hoshangabad district. "The plant will have an installed capacity of 200 tonnes in the next six months. No one can say until

when COVID-19 will last. So, wearing masks is the only option left to prevent it," he added.

Sources of supply

Madhya Pradesh has two major sources of oxygen supply – manufacturing capacity available in the State with 11 manufacturers is around 45-50 MT a day, which is not in surplus, and 70-80 MT a day in liquid form being transported largely from Gujarat and Maharashtra. S. Dhanaraju, Officer on Special Duty with the Madhya Pradesh Public Health Services Corporation Limited told *The Hindu*.

The Nagpur firm supplies to Jabalpur and Rewa, he added. Cases increased rapidly in Jabalpur, and in the meantime Maharashtra government ordered a ban on out-of-State transportation of oxygen. "This order came suddenly. Only the Jabalpur area had some critical moments, which have been addressed," he said.

On Thursday, Madhya Pradesh got 32 MT oxygen from Bhilai. "Now that this route has started, I don't think there will be an issue. We are comfortably placed. The oxygen available with us can cater to 5,500 patients in oxygen beds and ventilators," said Mr. Dhanaraju.

Further, he said the State government planned to ramp up the availability to 200 MT a day by September-end, which would roughly translate to 8,000 patients. "Given the increasing rate of consumption, we will be comfortably placed with this capacity," he added.

Meanwhile, former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath on Twitter echoed Mr. Chouhan's request to Maharashtra to ensure complete supply.

COVID-19 delays Army officers' training at OTA

Passing-out parade likely to be postponed to November

DENNIS S. JESUDASAN
CHENNAI

The COVID-19 pandemic and the eventual nationwide lockdown has delayed the training schedule in the Army's prestigious Officers' Training Academy (OTA) here. A batch of officer cadets, who were supposed to have completed their training this month, is expected to do so only after a few months.

On Thursday, Madhya Pradesh got 32 MT oxygen from Bhilai. "Now that this route has started, I don't think there will be an issue. We are comfortably placed. The oxygen available with us can cater to 5,500 patients in oxygen beds and ventilators," said Mr. Dhanaraju.

Further, he said the State government planned to ramp up the availability to 200 MT a day by September-end, which would roughly translate to 8,000 patients. "Given the increasing rate of consumption, we will be comfortably placed with this capacity," he added.

Meanwhile, former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath on Twitter echoed Mr. Chouhan's request to Maharashtra to ensure complete supply.



Ceremonial induction: Cadets at a parade at the Officers' Training Academy in Chennai in March. ■ B. VELANKANNI RAJ

in November this year, the fresh batch of cadets would report only after that for their training schedule. "It is not that every September and March batches keep on coming. It is only when one batch passes out, the next batch will come," the official said.

Asked whether the training has been rescheduled, the officer clarified, "Because of nationwide lockdown due to government guidelines, the training started late. Most probably, tentatively, it [the passing-

out parade] will be in November."

The ceremonial parade in the OTA is usually held in March and September every year. It marks the completion of the training programme of officer cadets and these officers are commissioned into various arms and services of the Army on the day of the parade.

The 750-acre academy is the only institution in the country to train both men and women cadets into officers for various arms and services of the Army.

BMC defends demolition in court

Kangana made 'false, baseless and unwanted allegations'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Thursday defended its stand on demolishing parts of actor Kangana Ranaut's bungalow before the Bombay High Court and said, "she made false, baseless and unwanted allegations of harassment."

A Division Bench of Justices S.J. Kathawalla and R.I. Chagla was hearing a petition filed by Ms. Ranaut after the Shiv Sena-run BMC demolished parts of her bungalow at Pali Hill in Mumbai. Her plea states, "The action of the BMC is illegal, arbitrary, mala fide and without application of mind, in violation of principles of natural justice, unreasonable and improper."

After directions from the Bench, the BMC officer Bhagavant Late from the H West Ward filed an affidavit on Thursday. It stated: "The petitioner has unlawfully made substantial alterations and additions to the property, contrary to the sanctioned building plan."

It pertains to details regarding substantial alterations and additions unlawfully carried out, including the construction of new toilets (including in open chowk area and in parking area), conversion of existing toilets into cabins and rooms, construction of pan-



The day after: Actor Kangana Ranaut at her partially demolished office in Mumbai on Thursday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

try, kitchen, cabins, and so on.

Senior advocate Aspi Cheyney representing the civic body said Ms. Ranaut, in her reply, did not dispute the substantial work of alterations and additions carried out in the commercial complex.

Advocate Rizwan Siddiqui appearing for the actor interrupted, and said the premises were residential, and sought time to file a rejoinder and to make amendments in the plea. The matter is adjourned till September 22.

The BMC also issued notice to fashion designer Manish Malhotra for an existing unauthorised construction under Section 351 (proceedings to be taken in respect of buildings or work commenced) of the Act.

Defamation complaint against actor

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

A complaint has been filed against actor Kangana Ranaut for using defamatory language against Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray.

It was filed on September 9 at the Vikhroli police station as soon as the actor made a video addressing the CM when she learnt about the demolition being carried out at her bungalow by the Shiv Sena-run Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation.

At 4 p.m., Ms. Ranaut uploaded a video on Facebook and Twitter, in which she addressed the Chief Minister.

Senior police inspector Sanjay Dalvi of the Vikhroli police station told *The Hindu* that a non-cognisable complaint had been registered on Wednesday.

Advocate Nitin Mane's complaint said, "The actor has defamed the CM by linking him with the film mafia." It sought a First Information Report to be registered against her under Section 499 (defamation) of the Indian Penal Code.

Court to pass order on Rhea's bail plea today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

ders in relation to any narcotic drugs or psychotropic substances. NCB is silent on the amount of financing, quantum of drugs and type of drugs allegedly procured and financed by her. The case against her is that she would co-ordinate the delivery of drugs for her boyfriend and occasionally pay for them herself. These allegations make for an offence which is bailable." Her 19-page plea says, "She was coerced into making self-incriminatory confessions. There is serious risk to her life if she were to be detained in judicial custody."

HC surprised there is no state control over electronic media

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

While hearing pleas seeking restraint on the "media trial" in the Sushant Singh Rajput's death case, the Bombay High Court on Thursday observed, "We are surprised to find there is no state control over electronic media."

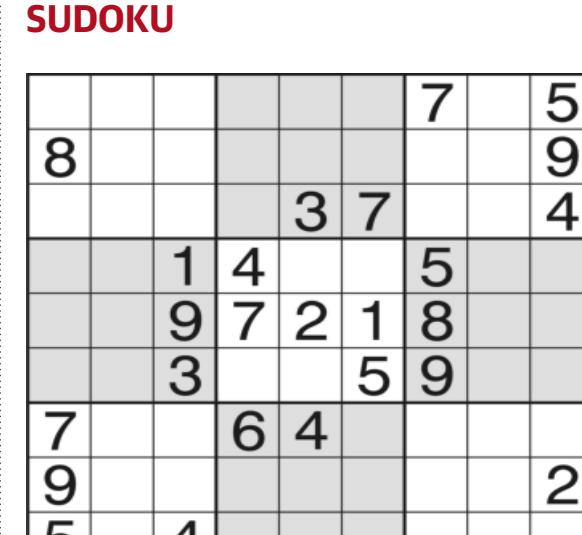
A Division Bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice G. S. Kulkarni was hearing two public interest litigation (PIL) petitions.

One of them pertains to the "unfair, malicious and false media campaign against Mumbai Police".

The court directed all parties to file their affidavits, and that the ER, NCB, India TV, News Nation and ABP News be added as respondents in the matter, and adjourned it for October 8.

Republic TV filed an affidavit stating the petition had been filed with the ultimate motive to curtail the freedom of the press.

SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to puzzle 13037

P E R I S H B A G P I P E R
I L A T J S A U E
N O N P O R O U S N O R T H
A D N K U E P I
F R O Z E I R R E G U L A R
O M N E Y E E
R O I L L I N G D I R E
E Y C I R D
D E E P S E C R E T E
I E H R T D N
S H A D O W I E R Q U A R T
L G U M A U L I
A X I L E S A L I V E N E S S
N E E E T T E R E R T
D I S A S T E R U N I T E S

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

7 5 2 3 4 6 9 8 1
9 4 6 1 2 8 5 7 3
8 1 3 5 7 9 4 2 6
1 9 4 2 5 7 6 3 8
2 7 5 6 8 3 1 4 9
3 6 8 4 9 1 2 5 7
6 2 9 7 3 5 8 1 4
4 3 1 8 6 2 7 9 5
5 8 7 9 1 4 3 6 2

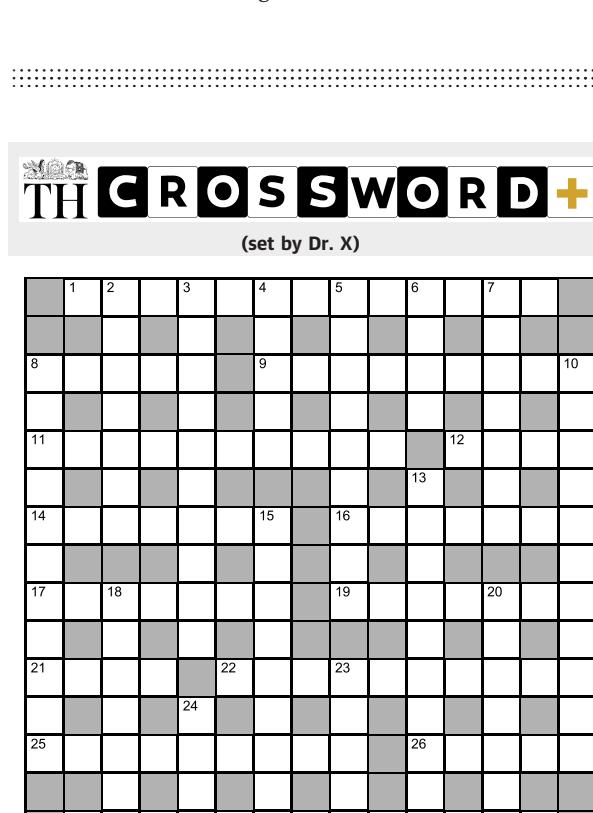
FAITH

Andal echoes Krishna

In the Gita, chapter 6, verse 9, Lord Krishna tells Arjuna that a certain state of mind is essential for the practice of yoga. One must treat everyone alike. Whether someone is well disposed towards us (suhrt), or a friend (mitra); whether someone is indifferent to us (udaaseenah) or is by nature neither friendly nor unfriendly towards us (madhyasthah); whether someone hates us (dveshyah) or is a relative (bandhusuh); whether someone follows the Sastras (sadhusuh); whether someone is a sinful (paapeshu) – one must view them all alike. If one does so, that means one's mind has been conditioned to practise yoga.

This is in continuation of what Bhagavan says in the previous verse, where He states that a karma yogi treats a piece of clay and gold alike – sama loshta asma kanchanah. While seeing gold and mud alike is difficult enough for most of us, it is even more difficult for one to see friend and foe alike. So, from treating all material objects the same way, we must progress to the next and more difficult stage of not differentiating between people, said V. Sowmyanarayanan in a discourse.

The Bhagavad Gita guides us towards moksha by showing us the pitfalls and hurdles that a person who seeks moksha faces. In chapter two, the Lord says that he who meditates on Him is freed from likes and dislikes. Such a person achieves control over his senses, and his sins will be destroyed. Andal in her Maayanai pasuram reminds us of the Lord's assurance to us. She says that if we offer flowers to Damodara, and sing His praises, our sins will be burnt (theeyinal doosagam). In Oruthi maganalai pirandu pasuram, Andal goes a step further and says not only will our sorrows vanish, but eternal joy will be ours if we worship Krishna.



ACROSS
1 Risky act by man, a little dazed after ecstasy and a beer in escapade (4,2,3,4)
8 Model involved in homicide allegedly (5)
9 Elegant name regularly used for refined fellow (9)
11 Unlawfully taking time to instigate group (10)
12 Most want to keep India secular (4)
14 Came across wild animal crossing park, going west (3,4)

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

SCAN TO PLAY

16 Drink one created, sadly not right (4,3)
17 Book store (7)
19 Advanced and raced to embrace darling coming back (7)
21 With knight for rook, end is imminent (4)
22 Demi's heartless, so cruel, wrongly entraps Douglas finally in this movie (10)
25 Supplies ecstasy and crack to chaps at bar (9)
26 It's easily bought online on Kindle primarily (5)
27 Elegant literature in extraordinary bestseller about Lashkar-e-Taiba (6-7)

DOWN
2 Smooth opener dismissed! Three wickets left (4,3)
3 Very different from description of divorced Europeans perhaps (5,5)
4 Government in control around African country (5)
5 Fix new troubles causing digital problems (9)
6 Rebel adroitly hides around valley (4)
7 Shoot to arrest men going berserk in scrap (7)
8 Narrow-mindedness spread in frenzy of election (11)
10 What honeymooners might do when extremely close together? (4,3,4)
13 Been disturbed by brutal assassination of one liberal (10)
15 Want new date turning up over lunch with present essentially (9)
18 Celebrity in figure-hugging racy top (7)
20 Masquerade masks put together, mostly feathered (7)
23 Attractive person's style, extremely immaculate (5)
24 Gemstone in shop, alluring (4)

Yesterday's puzzle (*The Hindu Cryptic 13037*) was set by Sunmet, and not Afterdark as was wrongly mentioned. The error is regretted.



Banana, sweet potato, and carrot have been around in the form of chips and fritters for a while. But have you tried mushroom or eggplant? We look up age-old favourites and a few new trends that deserve some space in your recipe book

PRABALIKA M BORAH

If you still think potato chips are the only mindless fun food with a crunch, you are in for a rude shock. Not only are they old news, their successors carrot and beetroot are also part of the mainstream now. Chips made of sweet potatoes are the new happening finger foods, along with a few others. While you are still recovering from this shock, brace yourself for another one. Recipes for chips made of carrot, beetroot and okra are dominating discussions at various food platforms on Facebook. Yes, people are willingly whipping them up at home, instead of frying some good old potato.

Also strange but true – *karela* (bitter gourd) chips don't seem to go out of fashion. Debatable? Make a quick visit to the local 'hot chips' vendor: he is sure to settle it, and throw in a few more lesser-known, regional old favourites into the bargain for you.

The West might have discovered kale chips that made it to food trends a couple of years ago but Indians have been gorging *palak papdi chaat* for as

long as we have known the joys of having *chaat*. Kale chips can be healthy and fancy, but they can never match the joy of munching on jackfruit chips from Kerala.

The lockdown has forced parents to look at healthy yet crisp and crunchy options. That said, zucchini chips are here to stay and the humble *begun bhaja* have been rediscovered as aubergine fritters served with copious amounts of Parmesan cheese (the writer sadly shakes her head but tries not

to judge). The possibilities are endless, says Chef Vikas Khanna, "I make chips out of cauliflower, beet, carrot, turnip, garlic and mushroom."

Here are some simple recipes to try at home:

Okra chips: "Chuck the pan and oil," said baker and teacher Arundati Rao on her Instagram story during lockdown. She urged everyone to try *bhindi* or okra (or ladies finger, take your pick of name) in the oven as she spoke about eating healthy and tasty



Old favourites (Clockwise from far left) Carrot, beetroot, potato and sweet potato chips • GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

food at the same time. She elaborates over the phone, "Slit *bhindi* diagonally. Lay them out and let them sit under the fan for about 20 minutes. Add salt and spices and drizzle some oil. Finally, dust or toss them with some *besan* or gram flour. Line a baking tray with parchment paper and spread the *bhindi* on it without overlapping. Pop them in the oven for 15-20 minutes at about 200 degrees Celsius (temperature varies from oven to oven). If required, let them sit for some more time. Take it out, let it cool, and your okra crisps will be done.

Aubergine chips:

This is an absolute delight if you are a fan of brinjal (or *baingan* or aubergine – again, take your pick of name). The trick here is to find the right aubergine. Pick the long ones instead of the fat short brinjal. Bengaluru-based corporate chef at Windmills Crafts, Manda Sukhtankar, says, "Cut them into thin slices and give them a good salt water



bath. Pat dry in a clean towel or kitchen tissue, making sure there is no water left. Mix corn flour and flour in a bowl (1 cup flour with 1/12 tablespoons of corn flour), add little salt and chilli powder. Add water little by little to avoid making the batter too runny. Once done dip a finger, if the batter forms a light fine coat on your finger evenly, then it is perfect for the sliced aubergines to be dipped. Heat oil in a pan and fry them until crisp. Let it cool and serve with Parmesan cheese."

Raw banana chips:

This is Navi Mumbai-based home chef Chandrima Sarkar's favourite. "To make raw banana chips wash, peel and make thin slices of raw banana. Do not add salt yet. Heat oil in a *kadai*; I use mustard oil. Let the oil come to the smoking point. Add the slices without crowding the *kadai*, crowding will not let the chips become crisp. Fry on high flame for about two-three minutes, sprinkle salt then reduce flame and continue to dry until it gets crisp. Let it cool down and enjoy with a simple meal of dal-rice."

Zucchini chips: Winner of Masterchef India Season Six Abinas Nayak says from Hyderabad, "Zucchini chips are increasingly replacing potato chips as a side at food trucks in the West. They are good to eat and don't make you miss the potato while munching on them. Zucchini chips are, however, batter fried and are best when fried with potato flour. My favourite however is baby *kumro* (pumpkin) chips. We let the skin on and make fine thin slices then batter fry it. It is an absolute delight when served with *cholar dal* (split Bengal gram dal) and *bhaat* (steamed rice)."

Bitter gourd chips: This is a favourite in many homes in South India. Chennai-based Chef Sri Bala says, "To make *karela* chips, slice them fine. In a bowl mix one tablespoon each of *besan*, rice and corn flour. Add salt, dry spices like coriander, cumin, chilli powder. Add *karela* slices and toss well, making sure every slice is well coated with the dry mix. Fry in oil until crisp. Let it cool and store in an airtight container."



The way we were (Clockwise from left) Ambat Kunjikutty Amma with her grandchildren; the e-book cover and an extract of a page • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



The taste of memory

How one family compiled its sentiments and recipes spanning multiple generations, continents and cultures, creating a legacy that is now being turned into an e-book

SHILPA NAIR ANAND

Though Ambat Kunjikutty Amma is no more, her presence as family matriarch can be felt in every page of *Kaipunyam - A Gift of Magical Flavours*, a digital book of family recipes and food-related memories.

What started as a lockdown activity by the descendants of her five daughters and four sons – granddaughters, great granddaughters and daughters-in-law of each generation – to keep in touch with each other, turned out to be a labour of love.

Compiled as a culinary memoir, the book criss-crosses cities, countries and continents as family members scattered across the globe chipped in with memories relived. While some wrote in, the others told their food stories.

The genesis of these, spanning generations, lies in a stately house

in Chittur, Palakkad called Janaki Vilas, named after Kunjikutty Amma's mother Janaki Amma. Widowed at 28, Kunjikutty Amma raised her children there. She passed away in 1959. The family house is the focus of the food memories.

As much as the compilation is about food, it is also about love – for mother, father, sibling and the in-laws too. The 21 chapters span memories from more than 50 years ago, from the simply-named 'mom's *sambhar*', chicken curry, *pappada vada* and Gurkhali chutney to tomato fried egg. The latter is the contribution of Qingdi Huang, who is married to one of Kunjikutty Amma's great grandsons. The editing and illustrations are by the female members of the family.

This is not the Ambat family's first lockdown project: earlier, in

PAPPADA KOTAN

INGREDIENTS:

- Pappadam (Uncooked, cut into small pieces)-4
- Coriander seeds - 3 to 4 tsps
- Coconut (Grated) - 3/4 Cup
- Dry red chillies - 4 to 5
- Asafoetida (Kayam)- 1 small piece
- Fenugreek seeds-1/4 tsp
- Shallots (Sliced into halves)- 15 nos
- Curry leaves - 2 sprigs
- Tamarind - 1 gooseberry sized ball soaked in water
- Coconut oil
- Turmeric powder-1/2 tsp
- Salt to taste

METHOD:

To a pan Add oil, Coriander seeds, dried red chillies and fry till the coriander seeds start crackling. Then add fenugreek seeds, asafoetida and the coconut. Fry until the coconut loses its moisture. Cool the mixture and grind it to a fine paste.

Take a pan. Add oil and fry the shallots and curry leaves. Fry the shallots until they are pinkish and soft. Now add the ground paste. Once it starts bubbling, add some water and let the mixture boil for another 5 minutes and switch off the flame.

For the oil to add Mustard seeds, Curry leaves, dried red chillies and until the mustard crackles. Then add the cut Pappadam pieces to this and fry till the Pappadam puffs up.

Add this tempering to the curvy. Mix well.

Tasty Pappada Kotan is ready!

Glossary - Naadan - traditional

May-June, the women had worked on a music-dance video, a virtual compilation, in which they showcased their skills. The compilation resulted in a WhatsApp group – Rocking Family – exclusively for the women of the family, formed by Malaysia-based Vineetha Panicker. The cookbook originated from conversations in the group.

Rathi Menon, retired Head of Department (Malayalam), St Xavier's College, Alva, suggested they compile the recipes. She is married to one of Kunjikutty Amma's grandsons. "Hers was an initiative that proved to be a great way to connect with each other as well," note the editors and sisters, Sudha Prabhakar and Usha Menon.

The entire book, cover to cover, is the work of the women of the family. The youngest of the lot like Bharati Rohit and Anjali Narendra illustrated the front and back cov-

ers respectively. At 17, Anjali is the youngest to be part of the project. Seventy-five-year-old Kamala Pillai rediscovered her passion for painting when she illustrated a chapter. Each chapter is accompanied by a photograph of the contributor with their mother or mother-in-law whose recipes are in it.

The Janaki Vilas household cooked vegetables available within their compound, says Vasanthi Aravind. Breadfruit was plenty, which was made into *mezukkupuratti* (a dry dish made with shallots and chilli, crushed and fried in coconut oil). Other dishes, cooked often were, *olan*, *molokoshayam* (a preparation of *toor dal*, vegetable of choice cooked with salt, turmeric and chilli powder) made with papaya, moringa leaves, Chinese potato or pigeon pea.

For some, the exercise of picking one or two dishes was an emotional experience. Like for Sudha Menon, whose mother died when she was just two years old. Her relationship with food was shaped largely by her father. For her, it is a metaphor for the bond she shares with him and her brother.

For Qingdi, who is of Chinese descent, contributing to this book was an acknowledgement of the love and affection her husband's family has shown her. She says, "I have fond memories of the first time I met Sandeep's family. Although I was quite nervous, their warmth made me feel instantly at ease. For me, becoming part of the family was very natural, as they welcomed me with open arms. Although the time we spent together in person was short, we always shared laughs, long conversations, and I wish I could learn more of Amma's cooking." Qingdi's recipe is a dish her grandmother used to cook. She also cooks Indian food such as *sambhar*, *idli*, *dosa*, *chutney* and *fish curry* too.

The family is so buoyed by the response for the book that they are now planning to bring it out in the print form.



Tennis stars on my pancake

Would you like a Venus Williams pancake for breakfast? Or would you rather opt for a Novak Djokovic shaped one? Nathan Shields, a pancake artist, has been cooking up pancakes shaped like the faces of 2020 US Open players. He has created delectable portraits of 19 players, such as Serena Williams, Grigor Dimitrov, Stefanos Tsitsipas, Angelique Kerber, Petra Kvitova, and Dylan Alcott. The US Open recently posted some of Nathan's incredible pancake-making videos on their official Twitter account. The artist drizzles batter on the skillet and flips the finished pancake to reveal faces that closely resemble those of the players.

HORS D'OEUVRES



Biryani made easy

Once in a while, DIY cooking kits help ease the burden of meal prep. Hyderabad-based Kitchen Stories, run by Manju Dugar, Rekha Bhandari and Pallak Sancheti, have launched a range of kits for some complicated dishes, catching our eye with their quirk. Their kits semi-finished mixes, pastes, accompaniments and easy to follow instruction cards (priced from ₹ 400 to ₹ 1200) include Burmese *khow suey*, *pav bhaji* fondue, Thai curries and even *biryani*. The products are handmade, free of preservatives, and can be stored up to a month, they say. Most of the vegetables used in pastes and mixes are from their kitchen garden. Currently they deliver only in Hyderabad but having delivered large gifting orders, they are expanding their deliveries to other cities soon.

Check out their social media pages or call 9000881705.



We learned survival skills, spent our days and nights amidst wind and rain...it's like we were animals in a forest. We also listened to stories from years ago from the locals

While the rest of the world was keeping track of day-to-day COVID-19 cases, Shrekanth RG and his family were foraging for fruit for breakfast at a farm in Pavunjur near Chengalpet, Tamil Nadu. The family of three – including Shrekanth's wife Banu and nine-year-old son Aarush who is being unschooled – have been spending the lockdown between three farms in Chengalpet, Tiruvallur, and Kanchipuram districts. They have been living off farm produce – sometimes, just fruit for all three meals of the day.

The family has been travelling for two years now, and as Shrekanth puts it, are "wanderers who do not have

The nomads

a home". They have been to several reserve forests, cities and towns across the country. But lockdown was special because they got to pitch a tent in the middle of a farmland, rise with the sun, eat raw food, and make friends with parakeets and cows.

"We learned survival skills, spent our days and nights amidst wind and rain... it's like we were animals in a forest," says Banu. Shrekanth meanwhile, was converting their host's farm into a natural food forest. "We made friends with local farmers, who sold us fresh

produce," explains Shrekanth, adding that they learned some valuable lessons along the way.

"We listened to stories from years ago from the locals," he says. Such as how, during a famine 50 years ago, people in the region depended on the palm tree to feed them through the year.

The family, too, shared their knowledge with people they met. Shrekanth, for instance, showed some farmers how they could make jam out of mangoes that they could not market due to lockdown. Their next stop is a farm too: a 300-acre dry patch in Ramanathapuram that they hope to convert to fertile land.



One day at a time
(Clockwise from far left) Shrekanth, Banu, and Aarush; Parvathavarthini; Kishore and his friend at their farm

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Calf love

It was a path he always wanted to take. Thanks to the pandemic, Chennai-based photographer P Panneerselvam made up his mind to relocate to his ancestral farmland in Sooradimangalam village, seven kilometres from Kalpakkam. He and his wife Parvathavarthini Eswaran, an artist, lived in Ekkattuthangal in Chennai during pre-pandemic times. "After the lockdown was announced, we spent 30 days indoors. We do not have a television set at home – we never felt the need for one – so we played indoor games, caught up on news online...we found it difficult to stay cooped up at home. Finally, we decided to pack our bags and move to Sooradimangalam," explains Panneerselvam.

Financially and career-wise, the move did not affect them much, since both of them are freelancers. But the change from a busy city life to one in a quaint village, was dramatic.

"I start my day with cows, and end my day with them," says the 34-

year-old Panneerselvam. His family owns farmland in the village, in which they grow paddy, ragi, and chillies. There are plenty of chickens to tend to, and 10 cows. Panneerselvam wakes up at 5 a.m. to clean the cow shed and milk the cows. Then there is work at the farm; since they want to cut down on labour costs, Panneerselvam and his father do most of the work. Parvathavarthini is busy with her art; she sometimes conducts sessions online. The best thing about the move, feels Panneerselvam, is that they get to eat the best kind of food. "Our eggs come from our own chickens, and we know for sure that they are free range," he adds. "And with all the work I do, I've lost all my flab without hitting the gym." Then there are other perks of life on a farm. "Our three-month-old calf has taken a special liking for my wife," laughs Panneerselvam. "It responds to her instantly, but doesn't bother much if I call for it."

CHILDREN OF NATURE

The lockdown was a picnic for these families that moved to farms from the big city: they woke up with the sun, milked cows, toiled in the fields and slept under a starry sky

AKILA KANNADASAN

We went fishing in a pond nearby; I taught my son to brush his teeth with a neem twig; he played to his heart's content; ate fruit in place of junk food; bathed in an open water tank...life was good

Vinod Jayaprakash did not want his 10-year-old son Kishore spending lockdown glued to a mobile phone or laptop screen. The Chennai-based businessman who makes metal sheets, decided to shift base for three months to his one-and-a-half acre farm near Siperumbudur. "We moved there along with my friend's family; they have a 11-year-old daughter," he explains. Vinod grows apples, oranges, strawberries, papaya, grapes, walnuts, and almonds in the farm. "I would wake up at 5 a.m. every day to water and tend to the plants," he says. The kids would join him too. "They even prepared a small patch of land and sowed green gram seeds," he adds.

They vowed not to use their phones much, and as a result, had plenty of time. "We went fishing in a pond nearby; I taught my son to brush his teeth with a neem twig; he played to his heart's content; ate fruit in place of junk food; bathed in an open water tank...life was good," says Vinod.

One night after the rains, they had a visitor: a myna chick. She was quite frazzled. "The kids took good care of her," says Vinod. "Once she was better, she flew back to her parents." The bird taught the children what no online class can.

Myna goes home



Sci-fi laced with ragas

Debut music composer of web series *JL50*, Aseem Trivedi, talks about working with Piyush Mishra to bring his background in Hindustani music to a thriller

SWETA AKUNDI

For his first big scale production, Aseem Trivedi is in great company. The 24-year-old musician and singer from Mumbai has gone from releasing independent singles and providing backing vocals in the Hindi film industry to composing music on his maiden TV series, *JL50*, streaming on Sony Liv.

The sci-fi series, revolving around the

crash-landing of a plane that had been missing since 35 years, stars big names such as Abhay Deol, Pankaj Kapur and Piyush Mishra. As the music director of *JL 50*, Aseem has composed five songs, including originals, 'Gharonda', 'Main Hi Hoon', 'Now I'm Here' and 'Jugnu (Jungle ki Raat)'.

The last one has been co-composed, along with Piyush Mishra, who wrote the song. And Aseem is starstruck to



have worked with the multi-hyphenate talent behind the music in *Gulaal* and *Gangs of Wasseypur*. It was a surreal moment for Aseem to share the recording studio with Mishra: "Until just two days before that, I had only seen him on my phone," he laughs.

"As soon as I read the lyrics to 'Jungle ki Raat', I knew what I had to do with

the track. It's intense, and has some of the best lyrics," says Aseem over a phone call from Kanpur, where he has temporarily moved back to.

He is quick to add that Piyush was a pleasure to work with. "Someone of his stature could have easily overridden me. But he would never interrupt me if I had an idea in mind, he would let me



tell him what I thought the treatment of this section of song should be like. There was no arrogance, it was like working with a friend," he says.

Tracking the story
It was a step up, learning to compose music for songs, admits Aseem. "I had to be careful about what's going on in the story. We were in conversation with the director (Shailender Vyas) every day. If they were changing the scene's visual treatment, we had to change the track as well," he says.

His 'Now I'm Here' resounds in one of the web series' pivotal scenes, "so I had to be particularly careful about the

Maiden project (From left to right)
Aseem Trivedi; with Piyush Mishra and director Shailender Vyas

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

tempo it demanded," he says the track has a late 1980s-early 1990s vibe to it, which is why, he adds, "We got Siddharth Basrur on board, for his trademark grunge." Frontman of Mumbai progressive metal band Goddess Gagged, Siddharth has also given voice to movies such as *David*.

The rock scene, however, was far from Aseem's childhood. Having grown up in Kanpur, Aseem has had a background in Hindustani Classical music. His previous release, 'Rooh', is testament to that, and in keeping with that style, 'Jugnu' too starts and ends with an electric sitar riff. "In another song, we had the Rageshree raga incorporated into sarangi," he says.

"It was not until I arrived in Mumbai, at 18, for college, that I began experimenting with new genres of music and learning Western music theory," he says. It was here that he joined a six-member acapella group, Instrumen. "We are actually working on harmonising Ritz' 'Udd Gaye' with a Billie Eilish song."

POOCH CAFE



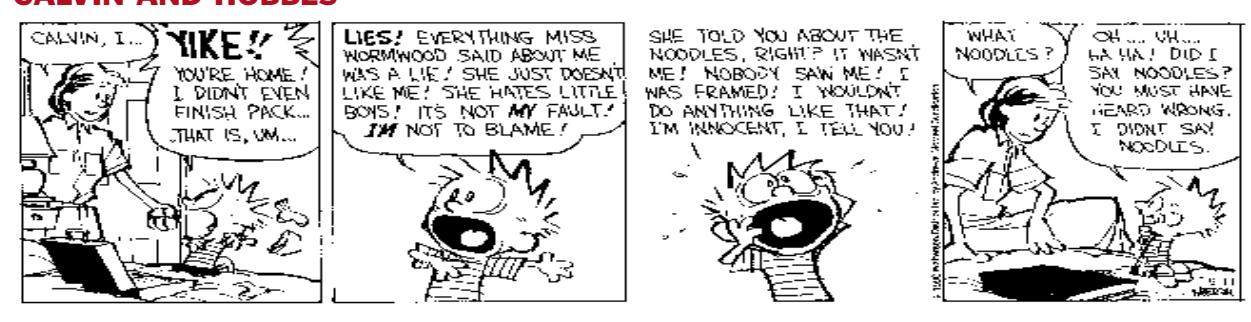
PEANUTS



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



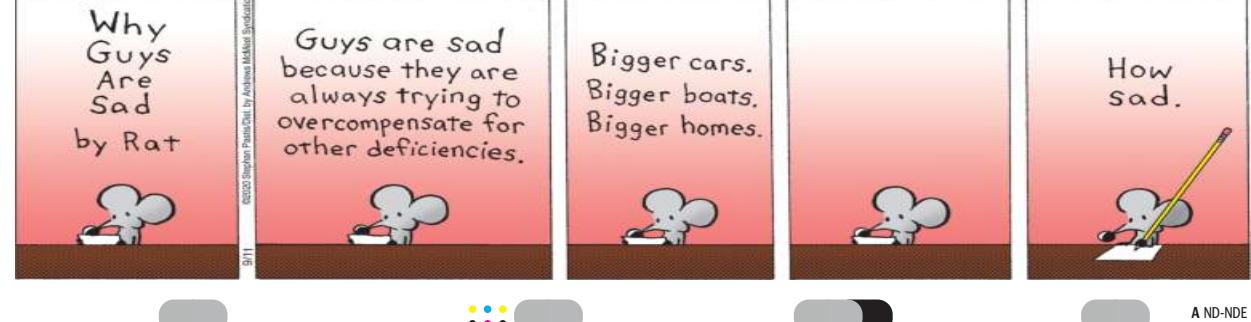
CALVIN AND HOBBES



TIGER



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



Trump admits he played down virus

U.S. President tells Bob Woodward he minimised the threat because he did not want to create panic

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump admits he tried to minimise the seriousness of the threat from COVID-19 at the outset of the pandemic in audio recordings released on Wednesday from interviews with veteran U.S. journalist Bob Woodward.

"I wanted to always play it down," Mr. Trump said in an interview with Mr. Woodward on March 19, according to a CNN preview of the book *Rage*, due to be published September 15.

"I still like playing it down, because I don't want to create a panic," he said in the conversation with Mr. Woodward, which was recorded.

In another recorded interview, on February 7, he told Mr. Woodward the virus "goes through the air" – despite repeatedly mocking people who wear masks, in the weeks and months after.

It took until July before the President was seen publicly wearing a mask.



Admission of truth: U.S. President Donald Trump at the White House on Thursday. ■ REUTERS

thing you want to do is create a panic."

He slammed Mr. Woodward for doing "hit jobs with everybody" and said he "probably, almost definitely won't read it because I don't have time to read it."

Fresh ammunition

However, *Rage* will give fresh ammunition to the Democrats arguing that Mr. Trump failed to prepare Americans for the severity of the coronavirus outbreak or to lead them into a proper response.

In the interviews with Mr. Woodward, Mr. Trump made clear he'd understood at the outset that the virus was "deadly stuff" – far more dangerous than the ordinary flu.

In public, however, Mr. Trump repeatedly told Americans during the initial weeks at the start of 2020 that the virus wasn't dangerous and would "disappear" by itself.

"I'm not going to drive this country or the world into a frenzy," he said. "We have to show leadership and the last

"He knew how deadly it

Speaking to reporters at the White House, Mr. Trump denounced the book as "another political hit job" and said if he'd downplayed COVID-19 it was to prevent a "frenzy". "I don't want people to be frightened," he said.

"I'm not going to drive this country or the world into a frenzy," he said. "We have to show leadership and the last

was," Democratic presidential challenger Joe Biden said while campaigning in Michigan. "He lied to the American people. He knowingly and willingly lied about the threat it posed to the country for months."

"It was a life and death betrayal of the American people," Mr. Biden added.

"It's disgusting," Mr. Biden later told CNN. "Think about it. Think about what he did not do."

But there was support for Mr. Trump from the highly respected infectious diseases expert Anthony Fauci, who has consistently told the public that the coronavirus requires a tough response – even when the President appeared to be saying something different. "I don't recall anything that was any gross distortion in things that I spoke to him about," he told Fox News. Mr. Trump was keen to stop the country from getting "down and out," Mr. Fauci said.

"For sure we were scared, it's only been a month since the explosion that destroyed Beirut. We saw the same thing happening again," 53-year-old Andre Muarbes said as some districts of the capital were shrouded by a cloud of black smoke.

A military source said early indications suggested the blaze started when cooking oil in the port area caught fire and spread to stores of tyres. At one point, live television footage showed flames licking up near a pile of tires in a smashed warehouse.

Army helicopters dropped water on the fire, as firefighters battled the blaze on the ground. There were no immediate reports of injuries.



Sparking panic: Firefighters trying to extinguish the fire at warehouses at the seaport in Beirut on Thursday. ■ AP

A month after explosion, huge blaze at Beirut port

Minister says fire has been brought under control

REUTERS
BEIRUT

A large fire erupted at Beirut port on Thursday, sending a huge column of smoke over the Lebanese capital weeks after a massive blast devastated the port and surrounding residential area.

The blaze began in the shattered duty free zone of the port, prompting some residents to flee the city still traumatised by last month's explosion which followed a port fire.

"For sure we were scared, it's only been a month since the explosion that destroyed Beirut. We saw the same thing happening again," 53-year-old Andre Muarbes said as some districts of the capital were shrouded by a cloud of black smoke.

A military source said early indications suggested the blaze started when cooking oil in the port area caught

Michel Najjar, public works minister in the outgoing government which resigned in the wake of the blast, told Lebanon's MTV the fire had been brought under control, saying initial indications suggested the blaze was sparked by repair work at the port.

The August 4 blast killed about 190 people.

Vaccine still possible this year: AstraZeneca

Company 'voluntarily paused' trial after unexplained illness in a volunteer

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

Drugs giant AstraZeneca on Thursday said a COVID-19 vaccine could still be available by as early as the end of the year, despite a randomised clinical trial being paused.

"We could still have a vaccine by the end of this year, early next year," the U.K.-based company's chief executive Pascal Soriot said in comments at a media event.

AstraZeneca announced on Wednesday it had "voluntarily paused" its trial of a drug developed alongside



An independent committee was drafted to review the safety of the vaccine. ■ AP

Oxford University after a U.K. volunteer developed an unexplained illness.

An independent committee was drafted to review safety but the company said

it was a "routine action" designed to maintain the integrity of the trials.

"We will be guided by this committee as to when the trials could restart, so that we can continue our work at the earliest opportunity," Mr. Soriot said in a statement.

AstraZeneca's vaccine candidate is one of nine around the world currently in late-stage Phase 3 trials.

In the U.S., the company began enrolling 30,000 volunteers across dozens of sites on August 31, and smaller groups are being tested in Brazil and elsewhere in

South America.

The vaccine, called AZD1222, uses a weakened version of a common cold-causing adenovirus engineered to code for the spike protein that the novel coronavirus uses to invade cells.

After vaccination, this protein is produced inside the human body, which primes the immune system to attack the coronavirus if the person is later infected.

The director of U.K. scientific research charity the Wellcome Trust, Jeremy Farrar, said there were often pauses in vaccine trials.

12 held after woman raped in Lahore

Pak. Christian sentenced to death for blasphemy

He was accused of 'insulting Prophet'

ASSOCIATED PRESS
MULTAN

A Pakistani court sentenced a Christian man to death after finding him guilty of blasphemy for insulting Islam's Prophet Muhammad in text messages he sent to a Muslim co-worker in 2013, a defence lawyer said on Thursday.

Saif Malook said his client, 37-year-old Asif Pervaiz, was convicted and sentenced this week in the eastern city of Lahore. It was the latest example of the Islamic nation's strict upholding of blasphemy laws.

Mr. Malook said the court rejected Pervaiz's denial of the charges and he plans to appeal.

Mr. Pervaiz was accused of blasphemy by Muhammad Saeed Khokher, a supervisor in a hosiery factory where Pervaiz worked. Dur-

ing his trial, Pervaiz claimed he was accused after he refused to convert to Islam.

Prosecutors, however, submitted evidence that Mr. Pervaiz sent text messages to Khokher that contained insulting remarks against the Prophet, according to a court document. Mr. Khokher in his testimony denied pressuring Mr. Pervaiz to change his religion.

Under Pakistan's blasphemy laws, anyone accused of insulting Islam or religious figures can be sentenced to death if found guilty.

The latest development comes weeks after a Pakistani man killed an American, Tahir Naseem, inside a courtroom in Peshawar, where he was on trial for blasphemy. Naseem had been arrested two years ago after he allegedly declared himself Islam's prophet.

The bloc is mulling legal action against Britain over new Bill

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

Britain held emergency talks with the European Union on Thursday, facing warnings of legal action over a new Brexit Bill and a threatening reminder of its obligations to Northern Ireland from leading U.S. Democrat Nancy Pelosi.

Warnings redoubled too within the ranks of the governing Conservative party as former Prime Minister John Major, who helped lay the foundations for Northern Irish peace in the 1990s, said his successor Boris Johnson risked trashing the U.K.'s global reputation.

"If we lose our reputation for honouring the promises we make, we will have lost something beyond price that may never be regained," Ma-

jor said, after the government conceded that the proposed new legislation would breach an EU withdrawal treaty in the countdown to a full Brexit divorce.

European Commission Vice-President Maros Sevcovic headed to London demanding "clarifications" over the new U.K. Internal Market Bill.

"I came here to express serious concerns the European Union has over the proposed bill," Mr. Sevcovic told reporters before starting the meeting with his counterpart on a UK-EU joint committee, Michael Gove.

The Bill would give British Ministers unilateral powers to regulate trade among England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, once the force of EU law expires after

a post-Brexit transition period at the end of this year.

But under the EU withdrawal treaty, Britain is meant to liaise with Brussels on arrangements for Northern Ireland, which will have the UK's only land border with the EU, and where 30 years of bloodshed ended with a peace deal in 1998.

Legal options

EU diplomats have ridiculed Downing Street's argument that the EU treaty was written "at pace" and contained problems relating to a protocol on Northern Ireland.

More immediately, the EU's executive commission circulated a paper setting out legal options against London, including recourse to the European Court of Justice.

"This is outright political persecution and racial discrimination. It seriously violates the human rights of these Chinese students," said foreign ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian at a press conference on Monday. He said that China reserved the right to "further respond".

The U.S. State Department offered its first figures on the effects of Mr. Trump's order on Wednesday, saying more than 1,000 visas from students and researchers had been revoked.

The high-risk graduate students and research scholars made ineligible under this proclamation represent a small subset of the total number of Chinese students and scholars coming to the U.S., a State Department spokeswoman said.

IN BRIEF

California wildfires growing bigger

Experts say fire behaviour is driven by drought and warming temperatures

ASSOCIATED PRESS
SACRAMENTO

When it comes to California wildfires, it now takes days, not decades, to produce what had been seen as a once-in-a-lifetime occurrence.

Last weekend, a fire burning in California's Sierra National Forest exploded in size overnight, trapping hundreds of Labor Day holiday campers who could only be rescued by helicopters that made a series of white-knuckle flights into the smoke. Fire officials said they'd never seen a fire move so fast in forestland – 24 km in a day.

On Wednesday, a wildfire in Plumas National Forest northeast of San Francisco spread 40 km in a day and devoured an estimated 1,036 sq. km.

In between those events,



All-out effort: A firefighter trying to douse flames as they push towards homes in Madera County, California. ■ AFP

driven by drought and warming temperatures they attribute to climate change. Among the most concerning developments is that fast-moving wildfires leave less time for warnings or evacuations.

A prime example is the so-called Creek Fire in Sierra

National Forest near Yosemite National Park, which exploded through miles of drought- and beetle-killed timber, moving so fast that it trapped hundreds of campers.

"When you have a fire run 15 miles in one day, in one afternoon, there's no model that can predict that," U.S. Forest Service forester Steve Lohr said. "The fires are behaving in such a way that we've not seen."

California already has seen a record 10,100 sq. km burn and it's only now is entering what traditionally is the most dangerous time for fires. Labor Day weekend brought record-breaking temperatures across the state that exacerbated what already are drought conditions in a large swath of the state.

Greece races to shelter migrants after camp fire

Desperate families spend a second night out in the open

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LESBOS ISLAND

Thousands of asylum seekers on the Greek island of Lesbos languished on roadsides on Thursday, homeless and hungry after the country's largest camp burned down, with local officials stonewalling government efforts to create new temporary shelters.

Desperate families, many with young children, spent a second night out in the open, many without tents or even basic bedding. "We've lost everything, we were abandoned, without food, water or medicine," said Fatima Al-Hani, a Syrian woman who barely had time to grab her identity papers before

the flames engulfed the camp.

Some of the bleary-eyed homeless had to trek to the nearest villages for water and other supplies, AFP TV footage showed.

The fire on Tuesday at Moria camp, Greece's most notorious migrant facility, sent thousands fleeing for safety.

Gaelle Koukane, a 21-year-old pregnant Congolese refugee, said the police had fired tear gas to extinguish the fire. "We have children, old people, disabled among us. Why this lack of humanity," she asked, seeking shelter from the beating sun under an olive tree.

Germany and France on

Thursday agreed on an initiative for EU states to share out some 400 minors from the camp, a source close to the talks told AFP.

The minors were flown out of the island overnight and rehoused in "safe" facilities in northern Greece.

But the Greek government had bigger problems close at hand, with local authorities resisting plans to temporarily set up campsites for the homeless.

"We don't want another camp, and we will oppose any construction work. We've faced this situation for five years, it's time for others to bear this burden," Vangelis Violatzis, a municipal leader, said.

58 killed in attacks in eastern DR Congo

Fifty-eight people have been killed in the eastern DR Congo province of Ituri, the province's Interior Minister said on Thursday, attributing the massacres to a notorious militia Allied Democratic Forces (ADF). ■ AFP

MARKET WATCH

	10-09-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	38,840	1.69
US Dollar	73.46	0.12
Gold	52,391	0.46
Brent oil	40.54	1.38

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	341.60	-2.25
Asian Paints	2056.55	77.50
Axis Bank	446.85	15.60
Bajaj Auto	2914.70	4.55
Bajaj Finserv	6129.25	102.45
Bajaj Finance	3498.70	75.85
Bharti Airtel	497.35	-6.90
BPCL	430.30	24.35
Britannia Ind	3719.25	-19.05
Cipla	726.80	-0.75
Coal India	126.65	-0.30
Dr Reddys Lab	4380.15	-49.30
Eicher Motors	2175.60	-1.35
GAIL (India)	90.80	-0.25
Grasim Ind	713.30	26.20
HCL Tech	722.40	0.45
HDFC	1777.45	16.70
HDFC Bank	1090.55	-5.95
HDFC Life	601.60	15.90
Hero MotoCorp	2948.75	44.75
Hindalco	176.65	-6.15
Hind Unilever	2133.90	1.65
ICICI Bank	370.70	3.10
IndusInd Bank	620.45	15.85
Bharti Infratel	199.95	-10.50
Infosys	940.05	12.30
Indian Oil Corp	83.55	3.00
ITC	184.90	1.10
JSW Steel	285.35	-1.50
Kotak Bank	1319.50	-6.65
L&T	920.95	11.45
M&M	615.45	1.55
Maruti Suzuki	7231.65	16.40
Nestle India Ltd.	16420.70	108.20
NTPC	90.55	0.15
ONGC	73.65	0.95
PowerGrid Corp	177.60	2.35
Reliance Ind	2314.00	152.65
State Bank	198.15	3.30
Shree Cement	19643.35	241.85
Sun Pharma	507.95	-1.35
Tata Motors	143.30	3.20
Tata Steel	408.00	-9.40
TCS	2331.15	3.50
Tech Mahindra	750.00	-3.35
Titan	1155.25	-5.85
UltraTech Cement	3915.50	79.90
UPL	491.00	-3.55
Wipro	284.55	1.70
Zee Entertainment	223.15	1.60

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	73.27	73.59
Euro	86.69	87.08
British Pound	95.43	95.85
Japanese Yen (100)	69.07	69.39
Chinese Yuan	10.71	10.76
Swiss Franc	80.58	80.98
Singapore Dollar	53.54	53.78
Canadian Dollar	55.68	55.92
Malaysian Ringgit	17.59	17.69
Australian Dollar	53.27	53.50

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



RIL first in India to cross \$200 bn in market cap

NEW DELHI Shares of Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL) closed over 7% higher, helping its market valuation cross the \$200-billion mark and become the first domestic firm to achieve the milestone. The stock rose by 7.1% to close at ₹2,314.65 on the BSE. During the day, media reports surfaced that RIL was offering to sell a roughly \$20 billion stake in its retail business to Amazon.com Inc. PTI

Jane Fraser to be first woman CEO of Citigroup Citigroup Inc chief executive officer Michael Corbat will step down in February 2021, after 37 years with the bank, and will be succeeded by president Jane Fraser, making her the first-ever woman executive to head a major Wall Street bank. Ms. Fraser was seen last year as a CEO candidate by Wells Fargo & Co's board. The bank eventually settled on former JPMorgan executive Charles Scharf. REUTERS

Fuel offtake dips most since April

Aug. diesel sales fall 12% from July, total petro products demand slumps 16% y-o-y



Safety driven: Petrol sales rose 5.3% from July as commuters preferred driving to public transportation. ■ V. RAJU

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI India's fuel demand in August posted its biggest decline since April as local lockdowns put the brakes on economic activity and transportation, official data showed on Thursday.

Petroleum product sales fell to 14.39 million tonnes in August, down 7.5% over the previous month, and about 16% from a year earlier, data from the oil ministry's Petroleum Planning and Analysis Cell (PPAC) showed.

Decline extends

The decline in August was the sixth consecutive year-on-year slide.

Fuel demand had slumped by a record 48.6% in April to 9.4 million tonnes as the government imposed a nationwide lockdown in an attempt to curb the spread of

the novel coronavirus.

It recovered in the subsequent two months, but has been falling again since July, on a monthly basis.

Sale of diesel, the most consumed fuel in the country, fell 12% to 4.84 million tonnes in August, from 5.51 million tonnes in the previous month. On an annual basis, the demand for diesel

declined by 20.7%.

Petrol sales fell 7.4% year-on-year to 2.38 million tonnes, although it rose 5.3% from 2.26 million tonnes in July as commuters preferred driving to using public transportation.

LPG sales were down 5% year-on-year to 2.2 million tonnes, while kerosene demand fell 43% to 1,32,000 tonnes in August 2019.

Upstream aluminium units working at full capacity: Birla

Hindalco chairman says exports offset muted local demand



Kumar Mangalam Birla

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI Post restart of operations after the COVID-19-related shutdown, all upstream aluminium plants of Hindalco Industries are operating at almost full capacity, said Kumar Mangalam Birla, chairman.

The aluminium downstream plants were operating at partial capacity and copper facilities were ramping up to optimal levels, Mr. Birla said at the company's AGM.

He said Hindalco would continue to strengthen its balance sheet with growth strategies and by generating

positive free cash flows.

"The pandemic has had an unprecedented impact on economic activity... and employment," he said. "Given the fog of uncertainty all around, it is hard to be prescient in these times with respect to the extent of the economic contraction, and pace of recovery," he added.

"Despite this slump in Q1, activity levels are gradually normalising," he said.

He said export demand remained stable and continued to offset subdued domestic market conditions.

Mr. Birla said the company's broad strategy to reduce its exposure to London Metal Exchange (LME) price fluctuations and increasing the share of downstream, value-added products across businesses was playing out well.

Meanwhile, the board recommended 100% dividend.

'Immunity booster' tag drives exports of spices

Increased demand from U.S., Europe'



K.A. MARTIN
KOCHEE

The \$3-billion spices export business has found an unlikely ally in COVID-19 as the pandemic appears to have added a new sheen to the export of spices considered to boost immunity.

"Export of spices like ginger, turmeric, coriander and cumin has shown a considerable increase during April-July this year compared to the same period last year," D. Sathiyar, secretary of the Spices Board, said here on Wednesday.

The increased demand was seen in big markets like the U.S. and Europe, he said.

Demand from other countries such as Bangladesh, Morocco, Iran, Malaysia, China and Pakistan is also showing encouraging signs. A communication from the Spices Board ear-

lier this year had said that the spice which showed the most promise in 2019-20 was ginger, which registered an increase of 178% in volume of exports and 129% in value at 50,410 tonnes and ₹449 crore respectively.

Spices export business crossed the \$3-billion mark during 2019-20 for the first time with 10% growth in value, even though the overall exports from the country showed a decrease of 5% for the whole of 2019-20.

I am pleased to report that the bank has fully repaid the ₹50,000 crore provided by RBI as a special liquidity facility (SLF) amid the crises faced by the lender earlier this year, its chairman Sunil Mehta said.

He further said FY21 will be a year of transition for the bank, which has just come out of an unprecedented ₹10,000 crore bailout led by SBI after setbacks received under the funding team.

The government and the RBI had replaced the entire board of the lender in March and also stopped depositors from accessing their funds for a few days.

"I am pleased to report that the bank has fully repaid SLF of ₹50,000 crore to the RBI on September 8, well before the due date," Mr. Mehta told shareholders at the bank's AGM.

Yes Bank pays ₹50,000-cr. dues to RBI

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

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TV PICKS

US Open: SS Select 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 9.30 p.m. & 1.30 a.m. (Saturday)
Tuscan Grand Prix: Practice, SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 2.20 p.m. & 6.20 p.m.
England vs Australia: T20I, Sony Ten 3 & Sony Six (SD & HD), 5.30 p.m.
Tour de France: Eurosport (SD & HD), 3.30 p.m.
PGA Tour: Eurosport (SD & HD), 1.30 a.m. (Saturday)

IN BRIEF



Raptors outlast Celtics to stay alive

With its season on the brink and title repeat hopes in jeopardy, Toronto Raptors outlasted Boston Celtics for a dramatic 3-3 series-tying 125-122 double-overtime triumph on Wednesday in the NBA playoffs.

The results (semifinals): EC: Toronto Raptors 125 (Lowry 33, Powell 23) bt Boston Celtics 122 (Brown 31, Smart 23). **Series level 3-3;** **WC:** LA Clippers 96 (Leonard 30) bt Denver Nuggets 85 (Jokic 26). **Clippers 3-1,** **APP**

Koepka out of US Open with lingering injury

Two-time champion Brooks Koepka withdrew from the U.S. Open because of lingering pain in his left knee that has troubled him for most of the year. "I'm looking forward to getting healthy and competing at 100% again very soon," he said. Koepka was replaced in the field by Paul Waring, the first alternate based on the Aug. 23 world ranking. **AP**

Tvesa begins well, but Diksha struggles

HOLZHAUSERN (SWITZERLAND) Tvesa Malik continued her good run, carding a one-under 71, but fellow Indian Diksha Dagar stumbled to a 15-over 87 on the opening day at the VP Bank Swiss Ladies Open golf tournament on Thursday. Tvesa shot a no-frills round to be tied-19th. Kim Metraux led table with a six-under 66. **PTI**



CA to investigate racist comments against Christian

JOLIMONT (AUSTRALIA) Cricket Australia (CA) on Thursday said it is "deeply disappointed" to see "blatantly racist and uneducated comments" against Dan Christian and has launched an investigation. **ANI**

Rhodes to take over as Sweden's cricket coach

STOCKHOLM Former South Africa international Jonty Rhodes will be moving to Sweden with his family after the IPL to take charge as head coach of the country's national team, the Swedish Cricket Federation (SCF) has announced. Rhodes said he is excited about the fresh challenge he will face in a country not known for its cricket. **PTI**

JFC ropes in Eze

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOLKATA Jamshedpur FC has made its sixth foreign signing by drafting in the Nigerian national team defender Stephen Eze.

The 26-year-old Eze, who has represented the national team 13 times since his debut in 2016, was a prominent member of the Super Eagles side that finished runner-up in the African Nations Championship in 2018.

Standing at an imposing 6'6", Eze has played the previous three seasons with Lokomotiv Plovdiv in the Bulgarian top division. With Plovdiv, he won the Bulgarian Cup in the 2018-19 season and also represented it in the Europa League (2019-20).

Medvedev, Thiem cruise

Azarenka blows away Mertens; Serena overcomes Pironkova

US OPEN

AGENCIES
NEW YORK

Third seed Daniil Medvedev continued his march towards a first Grand Slam title on Wednesday powering into the US Open semifinals with a clinical 7-6(6), 6-3, 7-6 (5) victory over childhood friend Andrey Rublev.

The first Russian duo in the quarterfinals at a Grand Slam since Igor Andreev and Nikolay Davydenko at Roland Garros in 2007, Medvedev showed no hesitation during a ruthless, controlled display that sends him through to the last four without dropping a set.

Crushing win

He will face second seed Dominic Thiem, who put in a sublime performance to dismantle Australian Alex de Minaur's challenge during a 6-1, 6-2, 6-4 victory.

In the women's section, a confident Victoria Azarenka overpowered Elise Mertens 6-1, 6-0 on Wednesday to advance to the semifinals where she will face a familiar rival in Serena Williams, who won their encounters here in 2011, 2012 and 2013.

Azarenka, smiling and bobbing her head along to music being played during changeovers, spread the court with 21 winners to dominate 16th seed Mertens in their first career meeting.

FALLEN SEEDS

Men: 10-Rublev; 21-de Minaur

WOMEN: 16-Mertens

FRIDAY'S SCHEDULE

SEMI-FINALS: **MEN:** 2-Thiem vs. 3-Medvedev

5-Zverev vs. 20-Busta

QUARTERFINAL RESULTS

Men: 3-Daniil Medvedev bt 10-Andrey Rublev 7-6(6), 6-3, 7-6(5), 2-Dominic Thiem bt 21-Alex De Minaur 6-1, 6-2, 6-4.

Women: 3-Serena Williams bt Tsvetana Pironkova 4-6, 6-3, 6-2; Victoria Azarenka bt 16-Elise Mertens 6-1, 6-0.

"I don't think I have ever enjoyed tennis, to be quite honest," she said. "I felt that it was a job and something you were meant to do. Winning, you enjoy it. Losing, I was so upset and for a couple of days I couldn't function normally. Now nothing bothers me. I can say I am feeling the moment."

Serena holds an 18-4 lead in their head-to-head, winning their most recent match at Indian Wells last year.

Serena, seeded third, came from a set down to overcome unseeded Bulgarian Tsvetana Pironkova and keep alive her bid for a 24th singles Grand Slam title at Flushing Meadows.

Her comeback included two astonishing shots with her left hand that contributed to winning points.

"At that point I was fighting so hard. I was just trying to do everything I can whether righty or lefty," she said.

THIEM, VS. MEDVEDEV



ZVEREV VS. CARRENO BUSTA

HEAD-TO-HEAD: Zverev leads 1-0

ONLY MEETING: 2018 Miami Masters, Zverev won 7-6(4), 6-2

CARRENO BUSTA

▪ The Spaniard's second Slam semifinal, the earlier one in New York in 2017

▪ At Flushing Meadows, Busta is 11-1 in 2020 (5-0 in US Open singles, 1-1 in Cincinnati singles and 5-0 in Cincinnati doubles)

Will miss the energy of Eden Gardens: Karthik

Fans will be in our heart, he says

IPL 2020

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
ABU DHABI



FILE PHOTO: B. VELANKANNI RAJ

Dinesh Karthik.

sure it will put a smile on every KKR fan out there."

KKR's Kuldeep Yadav, who will be representing the team for the seventh season, said: "This year we want to win the title for our fans. They have given us so much love over the years, and this year even when they aren't with us, we can feel their support and energy."

KKR CEO and MD Venky Mysore said: "For KKR, our biggest strength is our fans. The players have always been inspired by the unwavering dedication of our fans who support the team in highs and lows."

"This year, it's not so much for us. We're playing for you all. We want to put a smile on their faces through our cricket. If we play the right brand of cricket, I'm

Business as usual



Play and prepare: It was another day at the office in the UAE.

▪ TWITTER

BCCI's ACU arrives in UAE

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Preventing corrupt approaches through social media will be the focus of BCCI's Anti-Corruption Unit (ACU) in the upcoming IPL, ahead of which the watchdog will educate players through video-counselling rather than physical sessions. An eight-member BCCI team, led by Ajit Singh, landed in Dubai on Tuesday and is in the middle of their six-day quarantine.

The ACU will be speaking to all the eight teams separately and the sessions will be more useful for the younger players who are not exposed to international cricket and the glamour of IPL. The established players are already aware of the ACU protocols.

"This time there will be video counselling and it won't done on one to one basis. We can do it in a group as well as individual basis depending on what is possible and we will do it one by one (with all teams).

"We have also hired sports integrity agencies. We will use their help in bet monitoring activities."

need from the Dr. Karni Singh Range and other accredited academies and continue their sporting activities," the minister said in a statement.

Commonwealth Games champion Anish Bhanwan, who got to talk to Rijiju at the range, said, "If we get ammunition and practice at a range closer to our homes, it will not just ensure our safety during COVID times, but also allow us to devote more time to training."

Asian skeet champion and world record holder Angad Vir Bajwa had run out of his stock of ammunition before the Sports Authority of India (SAI) rescued the situation and ensured he could continue to train at his home range in Chandigarh.

"I got ammunition from SAI last month. So, I am good till November. I am regularly chatting with my coach Tore Brovold. I am planning with him on how much to shoot and train, so as to peak during the Olympics, which is crucial," said Angad Bajwa.

Thomas and Uber Cups camp cancelled

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM
HYDERABAD

The Badminton Association of India has cancelled the preparatory camp for the Thomas and Uber Cups, to be held in Denmark from October 3.

"With the standard protocol and seven days of mandatory quarantine not ending before September 17, the initial scheduled date of team selection, it was decided to cancel the preparatory camp and the Indian team

selection was conducted by the six-member selection committee today," the BAI general secretary Ajay Singhania said in a statement on Thursday.

The teams: **Thomas Cup:** K. Srikanth, P. Kashyap, Lakshya Sen, Subhankar Dey, Siril Verma, Manu Attri, B. Sumeth Reddy, M.R. Arjun, Dhruv Kapila, and G. Krishna Prasad.

Uber Cup: P.V. Sindhu, Saina Nehwal, Akashrishi Kashyap, Malvika Bansod, Ashwini Ponnapa, N. Sikki Reddy, D. Pooja, Sanjana Santosh, Poorvishi S. Ram, and J. Meghana.

Denmark Open, Denmark Masters: Srikanth, Lakshya, Sindhu, Saina, Ashwini, and Sikki.

Vettel inks deal with Racing Point

FORMULA ONE

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON

Four-time Formula One champion Sebastian Vettel will drive for Racing Point starting next season.

The team, which will be renamed Aston Martin, announced the move on Thursday, a day after driver Sergio Perez said he was on his way

out. The team said Vettel has signed for the 2021 season and beyond but did not reveal the length of the contract. One of the most successful drivers in F1, Vettel is leaving Ferrari at the end of this season after he was not offered a new contract.

Vettel has won 53 GPs, a tally surpassed only by Michael Schumacher and Lewis Hamilton.

Having finished second in the second stage in Nice and third in the ninth stage in Laruns after a long solo breakaway in the Pyrenees, the former Under-23 World champion held off a group of chasers to prevail following a bumpy 218-km trek.

France's Pierre Rolland was second and Hirschi's Sunweb teammate Soren Kragh Andersen of Denmark took third place as Slovenian Primoz Roglic retained the overall leader's yellow jersey.

It was a quiet day for the main contenders but sparks could fly on Friday when the 13th stage takes the peloton to Puy Mary, at the top of the ascent to the Pas de Peyrol (5.4km at an average gradient of 8.1%).

Giving it his all

"I went full gas. It's super nice. Actually I was always doubting, I had the picture in my mind of the last two stages. My first victory as a professional, it's incredible. I know I'm strong. It just gave me extra power, it was now or never," said the 22-year-old.

"It was a quiet day for the main contenders but sparks could fly on Friday when the 13th stage takes the peloton to Puy Mary, at the top of the ascent to the Pas de Peyrol (5.4km at an average gradient of 8.1%).

AFC Cup not to be held this year

UTHRA GANESAN
NEW DELHI

The AFC executive committee on Thursday accepted the recommendation to cancel this year's AFC Cup, the AFC Solidarity Cup and the AFC Futsal Club Championship due to complexities created by COVID-19.

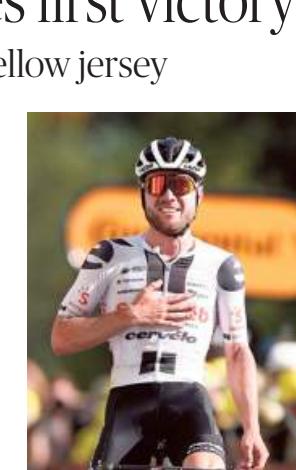
The virtual meeting chaired by AFC president Shaikh Salman bin Ebrahim Al Khalifa, agreed that difficulty in coordinating the five zones and completing inter-

zone matches of the AFC Cup constituted a force majeure event leading to the cancellation. Chennai City FC was India's representative in the AFC Cup, which had been suspended since March along with the AFC Champions League, the continent's premier club tournament.

The EC also confirmed the postponement of U-16 and U-19 championships, scheduled for Bahrain and Uzbekistan, to early 2021. The Solidarity Cup will be held in 2024 and Futsal Club



Retro look: Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel and Charles Leclerc will drive SF1000s sporting a darker red livery, to stir memories of the team's debut at the Monaco GP in 1950, at this weekend's Tuscan GP. ▪ TWITTER/SCUDERIAFERRARI



What a feeling! Marc Hirschi celebrates his first-ever Stage win. ▪ AFP

stages. My first victory as a professional, it's incredible. I know I'm strong. It just gave me extra power, it was now or never," said the 22-year-old.

"It was a quiet day for the main contenders but sparks could fly on Friday when the 13th stage takes the peloton to Puy Mary, at the top of the ascent to the Pas de Peyrol (5.4km at an average gradient of 8.1%).

AN-ND-NDE