



Pak. denies admitting that Dawood Ibrahim lives in its territory
page 9



Centre releases SOP for resumption of shooting of films, TV serials
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Trump campaign team releases commercial featuring PM Modi
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Azhar, Rizwan revive Pakistan's innings after Anderson's burst
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NEARBY



A-G declines plea against actor Swara Bhaskar

NEW DELHI
Attorney-General K.K. Venugopal has refused consent to a plea to initiate criminal contempt action against actor Swara Bhaskar for "scandalising" the Supreme Court, regarding the Ramjanmabhoomi title dispute verdict.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 9

Delhi govt. asks Centre to allow metro service

NEW DELHI
Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said his government has requested the Centre to allow Delhi Metro to resume operations in a phased manner on a trial basis. He was interacting with traders to discuss measures to boost Delhi's economy.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

Capital reports highest 24-hour spike in a month

NEW DELHI
The Capital recorded 1,450 new COVID-19 cases on Sunday, taking the total to 1,61,466; while 16 more deaths were reported, taking the tally to 4,300. The last time the number of new cases was above Sunday's figure was on July 18, when 1,475 new cases were reported.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

CLASSIFIEDS ▶ PAGE 4
EDUCATIONPLUS ▶ PAGE 11

With 3 million cases, COVID-19 unlikely to abate soon: experts

'Only a vaccine can prevent infections and help bring out herd immunity'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India crossed three million cases on Sunday after adding nearly 69,239 cases the previous day – the fourth straight day that it added over 69,000 cases.

India continued to be placed behind Brazil and the United States in the overall case load and, at 56,706 deaths, had only half as many as Brazil and less than a third as that of the U.S.

India on Saturday reported having tested a million samples – the first time it surpassed this milestone. It has been conducting an average 8,89,935 tests in the last five days and had tested 34.4 million samples till August 21. Only about 23% of the confirmed cases, or about 7,00,000, are active cases requiring treatment and the case fatality ratio – or the confirmed deaths per ratified cases – has dipped to less than 2%.

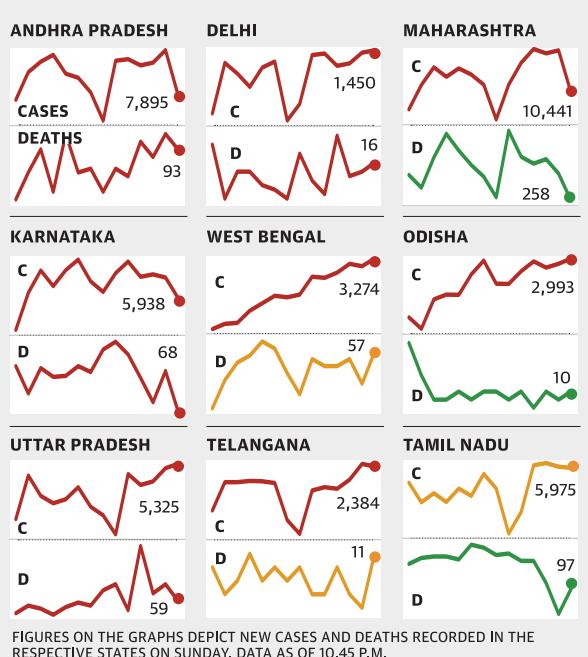
Spread inevitable
Experts said the relentless spread of the virus and infectiousness was inevitable and evident from several epidemiological projections from March.

"India is politically and culturally one country but epidemiologically it is many countries rolled into one,"

Viral tracker

With 61,563 cases on Sunday, India's COVID-19 tally stood at 31,04,989. While it took 169 days for cases to cross the 10 lakh mark, the last 10 lakh cases were recorded in only 16 days. Graphs depict new cases and deaths in the last 14 days across select States which are classified based on where cases or deaths are rising (red); falling (green); or flattening (orange).

NEW CASES AND DEATHS
CASES 61,563
7 DAY-CHANGE +12.3%
DEATHS 843
7 DAY-CHANGE -5.6%



FIGURES ON THE GRAPHS DEPICT NEW CASES AND DEATHS RECORDED IN THE RESPECTIVE STATES ON SUNDAY. DATA AS OF 10:45 P.M.

said Dr. Jacob John, retired professor of virology at the Christian Medical College, Vellore. "This is a respiratory virus and it was always a mistake to think that a single strategy – a national lockdown, for instance – would be effective for the whole country," he said in a phone conversation.

Herd immunity, the idea that once a large fraction of the population was infected, would signal the end of the pandemic was also a misnomer as that would only mean that the virus would have fewer hosts to infect, and was a sign that it had at best become endemic (capable of causing sporadic outbreaks).

Mistake in strategy
"Only a vaccine can prevent infections and help bring out herd immunity. A critical mistake in strategy during February and March was not doing enough to ramp up testing as well as restricting

it to the sole laboratory at National Institute of Virology, Pune. We repeated mistakes that were made during the swine flu epidemic of 2009," he added.

Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh are the top three contributors to the overall case load with a little over a million or about a third of India's case load.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

CHINA VACCINATING PEOPLE
SINCE JULY 22: OFFICIAL ▶ PAGE 12

Find a new party chief, Sonia Gandhi tells Cong.

Move follows letter from senior leaders seeking systemic overhaul



man Khurshid, were among those who openly came out in support of the Gandhis on Sunday.

Opposing the bid by some leaders to challenge the Gandhi family's leadership, Capt. Singh said the move by these leaders demanding a overhaul of the party at this critical juncture would be detrimental to the party's interests and that of the nation.

Ms. Gandhi's response follows a letter from a group of senior leaders including Leader of the Opposition Ghulam Nabi Azad, Anand Sharma, Kapil Sibal, Lok Sabha member Manish Tewari, former Union Minister Veerappa Moily, former Chief Minister Bhupinder Hooda among others.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

CHORUS OF SUPPORT ▶ PAGE 9

India could get vaccine by year-end

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

trials of the two vaccines – one developed by Bharat Biotech in collaboration with the ICMR, and the other by Zydus Cadila Ltd – have been completed and the trials have moved to phase II, ICMR Director General Dr. Balram Bhargava said recently.

Three COVID-19 vaccine candidates, including two indigenous ones, are in different phases of development. The phase I human clinical

The Serum Institute of India (SII), which has partnered with AstraZeneca for manufacturing the vaccine developed by the University of Oxford, has been permitted to conduct its phase two and three human clinical trials in India. It is likely to start the trials next week.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

SII CLARIFIES ▶ PAGE 10



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In Millennium City, rain means pain

Despite a string of measures, the city's structural flaws guarantee waterlogging. Urban planners agree that water recharge systems and check dams alone could be a feasible solution

ASHOK KUMAR
GURUGRAM

The urban planning mess of Millennium City, with its swanky malls, high-rises and luxurious office spaces, is laid bare every time it rains here. The situation has worsened with the growing population and traffic over the years and the city has almost been brought to its knees thrice over the past five years by heavy rain.

It was no different on August 19 when around 120 mm of rainfall within a span of a few hours left the city inundated with flooded underpasses, roads turning into rivers and water seeping into high-rises. Urban planners and the municipal officials, conceding the lacuna in the planning, now agree that water recharge systems and check dams alone could be a feasible solution.

Effective solutions

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Gurugram Municipal Commissioner Vinay Pratap Singh emphasised that water recharge systems and arresting the run-off from Aravallis with check dams were key to

avoiding frequent waterlogging and flooding in the city.

"Even if a good drainage system is put in place, it is better to do rainwater harvesting. It not just prevents flooding, but recharges the groundwater which is so crucial for the city," said Mr. Singh. He cited the example of Maruti Suzuki India Limited digging up around hundred rainwater harvesting pits along the boundary wall of its plant on Old Delhi Gurugram Road four years ago. It effectively addresses waterlogging in and outside the plant and recharge groundwater as well.

Mr. Singh said check dams were constructed in the Aravalis and were inspected before the monsoon this year, but they failed to produce the desired results causing flooding on Golf Course Road. It would be reviewed. This year, the Municipal Corporation of Gurugram (MCG) had an additional limiting factor of shortage of labour due to the lockdown, he added. "The contractors worked with almost 30% workforce," said Mr. Singh.

The new infrastructure developed over the past few years has also disrupted the drainage system and there was a need "to go back and sit with our designers and engineers to see that all that is there on the paper also exists on the ground," said Mr. Singh.

Perennial waterlogging

Since the 2016 gridlock, an underpass and a flyover have been constructed at Hero Honda Chowk, the internal drainage system in many parts of the city has been revamped and Bad-

shahpur drain has been lined and widened almost all along its length. A small patch of the drain in Khanda, though, is incomplete due to land dispute with the owner. However, a stretch of NH-48 near Narsinghpur village is a perennial waterlogging point and the authorities have failed to find a solution.

Unlike Noida, Gurugram is largely developed by private enterprises in bits and pieces and does not have an integrated

drainage system – one of the important reasons for the frequent flooding. The civic infrastructure of the city is also not entirely maintained by the municipal corporation. Around ten private colonies have been taken over by the MCG over the past five years, but the rest, around 70, are still with developers and lack adequate drainage, sewage and electricity infrastructure.

In many areas, including MCG and Haryana Sahar Vikas Prad-

hikaran sectors, the drainage system is not connected to the main drain and has no outlet. The natural water channels and ponds have not been preserved. Most of them have been encroached or thrown open to construction in the last two development plans of Gurugram, thus hampering the natural flow and dispersal of water.

Endorsing the views of Mr. Singh, town planner Parveen Gulia said that creating rainwa-

ter harvesting structures was the most feasible solution. "Gurugram has no integrated drainage master plan. It is also not possible to create a linear drainage system now because of the huge land cost involved. Also, the natural nullahs and ponds have been encroached upon or lost to construction. The most practical solution, therefore, is to create rainwater harvesting wells. It will turn rainwater into a boon," said Mr. Gulia.

The city has been mostly concretised and the run-off coefficient is thus high, around 60-80%. Mr. Gulia said the city had a natural depression from east to west and there was a need to revive bundhs.

Major culprit

Former general-secretary of Sector 23A RWA Bhawani Shankar Tripathy said the MCG was a major culprit since the drainage system was not maintained and the waste management too was poor. "Contracts worth crores are awarded every year for desilting and maintenance of storm water drainage network, but there is lack of honest audit of the work being completed and as per requirement. Wastes of all kinds, be it municipal solid waste, construction and demolition waste or industrial waste, also continuously find their way into storm water drains," said Mr. Tripathy.



A few hours of rain on August 19 left Gurugram inundated with flooded underpasses, roads turning into rivers and water seeping into high-rises. ■ MANOJ KUMAR

Couldn't Complete Degree, What Next?



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Woman missing case transferred to anti-trafficking unit

Unhappy with probe, HC Bench comes down heavily on IO, seeks report by today

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

Unhappy over the manner in which the police handled the complaint of a man, who claimed his wife's father abducted her, the Delhi High Court has transferred the job of tracing the missing woman to Anti-Human Trafficking Unit (Crime).

During a special hearing on Saturday, an HC Bench came down heavily on the investigating officer (IO) of the case for failing to even obtain the call details records (CDR) of the woman's father.

The alleged accused had switched off his phone.

The court also directed the Deputy Commissioner of Police concerned to monitor the investigation and submit a status report on Monday.

It also ordered the police to provide protection to the



In his plea, Mr. Kaseem stated that Ms. Nida's father opposed to this marriage. He said on Saturday, the accused forcibly took his daughter after mercilessly beating him.

'Wife may get killed'
Mr. Kaseem said he has grave apprehension that his wife may be harmed or even killed by her parents.

Taking note of the seriousness of the allegation, the court directed the Station House Officer of Nabi Karim police station to immediately proceed to residence of the woman's father and make enquiries on the whereabouts of Ms. Nida.

Mr. Kaseem had moved an urgent habeas corpus petition for production of his wife, Nida. He stated that they are both major and got married out of their own free will on August 17. He produced the marriage registration certificate before the court.

house without allegedly informing his wife about where he is proceeding and the fact that he has switched off his mobile phone are clear pointers to his involvement in Nida going missing," the court noted.

"We have little hope that the IO will carry out any fruitful investigation in this case. The least he could have done was to immediately obtain the CDRs of the mobile phone number of respondent No.2 as well as Nida's," it said.

"None of the family members of Nida was called to the police station for probe," the court said. This happened despite Mr. Kaseem informing the SHO regarding Ms. Nida leaving the parental home and seeking police protection apprehending harm from her father on August 20.

'DU PhD students can now enter laboratories'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi University on Saturday said registered PhD students, who require access to laboratories, will be allowed to return to their places of work in a phased manner.

A DU notice said the students, whose presence in the research laboratory is essential, may join the labs after getting a certificate from their supervisors.

In this phased re-entry, only two to three of them will be allowed per laboratory at any given point in time. The students will be required to take all necessary precautions such as social distancing, wearing masks, sanitisation while entering the academic areas, the notice states.

robbery.

While Farhan arranged for a toy gun, Munna executed the robbery by venturing into the office wearing a burkha.

The matter came to fore when Samanta told the police about the "robbery". He said at 8.30 p.m. on Saturday, he collected a payment of ₹50,000 from a jeweller and went to office when a burkha-clad woman entered the premises and held him at gunpoint. He alleged that the woman slapped him and also snatched ₹50,000 and keys of lockers from him.

Abhijeet Samanta, who has been dealing in jewellery making for the last four years, hatched the plan as he was not making much profit, mostly due to the lockdown. He along with his accomplices – Farhan (38), a property dealer, and Munna (28), who worked at a garage – staged the fake

lysed and it was noticed that the entry of the woman was friendly and behaviour of the complainant was also suspicious, said DCP (Central) Sanjay Bhatia.

Finally, after a six-hour interrogation, Samanta broke down and confessed to the police about the conspiracy.

During interrogation, Samanta said in order to expand his business, he had availed a loan of ₹61 lakh from three different banks against the gold stock.

Since 2018, his business was not going well and he failed to achieve his targets and finally due to the lockdown, he was not in a position to deposit the EMI of his loans, the DCP said.

To waive the loans, he committed the crime along with his accomplices, the police added.

40-year-old jeweller held for staging robbery to waive ₹61 lakh bank loan

Two of his accomplices also arrested from Central Delhi: police

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A 40-year-old jeweller, along with his two accomplices, allegedly staged a robbery of 2.6 kg gold at his office in central Delhi's Chandni Mahal. He wanted to get bank loan worth ₹61 lakh waived, the police said on Sunday.

They added that the accused, who tried to mislead the investigators, do not have previous involvement in the crime.

Abhijeet Samanta, who has been dealing in jewellery making for the last four years, hatched the plan as he was not making much profit, mostly due to the lockdown. He along with his accomplices – Farhan (38), a property dealer, and Munna (28), who worked at a garage – staged the fake

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Timings

DELHI

MONDAY, AUG. 24
RISE 05:56 SET 18:51
RISE 11:19 SET 22:43
TUESDAY, AUG. 25
RISE 05:56 SET 18:50
RISE 12:23 SET 23:26
WEDNESDAY, AUG. 26
RISE 05:57 SET 18:49
RISE 13:29 SET 00:00

Delhi Weather

max min

Delhi City 34 26

Safdarjung 34 26

Palam 34 27

Delhi Palam Today 34°C Warm and humid afternoon. A spell of passing rain with partly cloudy sky likely.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow 35°C Short spell of rain likely at some places with partly cloudy sky and warm day.

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THE HINDU

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IN BRIEF

Man dies after speeding car rams two-wheeler

An executive with a multinational company was killed near DLF Phase-II rapid metro station on Sunday after his motorcycle was hit by a speeding car. The incident happened at 6 a.m. when Alok Gupta was on his way to Noida. Alok's friend, riding another motorcycle behind him, took him and the two occupants of the car to Naraina Hospital. Alok died during treatment. A case of rash driving and causing death due to negligence has been registered, the police said.

Have requested Centre to open metro in a phased manner: CM

Kejriwal discusses measures to revive economy as traders present suggestions

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said that the Delhi government has requested the Centre to allow functioning of the Delhi Metro in a phased manner on a trial basis. He was interacting with traders to discuss measures to boost Delhi's economy when a trader pointed out that customers were staying away due to lack of public transport.

"We have raised the issue and have requested the Centre to consider Delhi somewhat separately from the whole country. The COVID-19 situation in Delhi is improving. If they do not want to open the metro in other States, they can do that. But the metro should be allowed in Delhi on a trial basis and in a phased manner. I hope that the Central government will soon take a decision on the same for the convenience of the people," the Chief Minister said.

Assuring the traders that the government was planning several measures to



Metro trains parked at the Khyber Pass Train Depot in the Capital. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

boost the economy, Mr. Kejriwal said that in the last five years, the people of Delhi have collectively overcome many challenges and they will also overcome the challenge of economic revival by working together in this hour of necessity.

The meeting was attended by more than 215 traders from a variety of sectors like manufacturing, electronics, garments, automobiles, etc. and from all regions of Delhi, who presented a host of suggestions to the Chief Minister.

Replying to them, Mr. Kejriwal said that on one hand

his government is trying to keep the people safe by fighting the pandemic, and on the other hand trying to ensure that people do not die of hunger and reviving the economy. He said he understood work and COVID management can go hand-in-hand and therefore Delhi did not impose any lockdown after it was lifted.

"I want to assure you that we will overcome the challenge of reviving the economy in Delhi. The pollution has decreased by 25% in the last five years, we controlled dengue last year, and novel coronavirus this year, and

we are working together to revive the economy," Mr. Kejriwal said.

He added that measures like reducing the price of diesel, coming up with a start-up policy and starting a Rozgar Bazaar were some of the measures already taken.

Marketing tricks

The Chief Minister said one of the suggestions was to launch a portal of industries and shops based on the material they manufacture and sell, especially in industrial areas such as Wazirpur, Bawana, and Badli.

"Through this portal, Delhi's wholesale market and industries can put their products in front of the whole world and they can receive orders from the whole world. We can call it Delhi Bazaar where the people can market their products," he said. He added that Chandni Chowk has been redeveloped as a pilot project and that other markets and roads will soon be redeveloped in the same manner.

Increasing for the past six consecutive days and is the highest in over 25 days. The active cases, which were 27,007 on July 1, had fallen to 9,897 - below the 10,000 mark - on August 4, but since then it has remained above 10,000.

Though Delhi has a capacity to conduct around 11,000 RT-PCR tests per day, only 6,261 such tests were done in the past 24 hours. During the same period 12,470 rapid antigen test were conducted.

City sees highest single-day spike in cases for the month

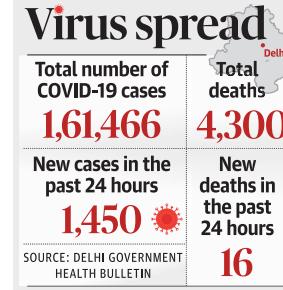
1,450 new cases recorded on Sunday

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Capital recorded 1,450 new COVID-19 cases on Sunday, the highest single day spike in August, taking the total number of cases here to 1,61,466, according to a health bulletin issued by the Delhi government.

It added that 16 people died in the past 24 hours, taking the total number of deaths to 4,300. During the same period, 1,250 people recovered, taking the total number of recoveries to 14,388. At present, the government said, there are 11,778 active cases in the Capital and 627 containment zones.

The last time the number of new cases was above Sunday's figure was on July 18 with the count being 1,475. The number of active cases in the city has been in-



Registration camp for workers starts in Delhi today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government on Sunday announced that it will conduct a campaign for the registration of construction labourers between August 24 and September 11 in all 70 Assembly constituencies as well as online.

Once registered, the government said, the construction workers will be able benefit from nearly 18 assistance schemes that the government is providing for them.

Employment and Labour Minister Gopal Rai said that registration and physical verification will be done together during the 15-day camp. According to law, carpenters, construction site guards, people who work with concrete mixers, crane operators, electricians, mason, tiles stone fitters, welders, coolies and others can apply.

Mr. Rai said that during the pandemic, the government provided financial assistance of ₹5,000 to all registered construction workers for two months.

High Court asks AIIMS to treat critical patient earlier turned away by institute

Woman suffering from large fibroid uterus and severe anaemia

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH

NEW DELHI
The Delhi High Court has ordered All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here to provide necessary treatment to a woman who was

previously denied treatment by the institute as it had stopped conducting surgeries due to the ongoing pandemic.

Justice Navin Chawla ordered the Medical Superintendent of AIIMS to get the woman medically examined and get the required treatment administered to her.

Gulshan Farooqi, 37, who is suffering from large fibroid uterus and severe anaemia, in

her petition, stated that she was earlier admitted in Newa Care & Gynae Centre at Kanpur. The hospital advised her to go to AIIMS, Delhi, for treatment as it involved complications and needed higher medical set-up.

In her plea filed through advocate Ashok Aggarwal, Ms. Farooqi said she had come to Delhi on August 8 from Kanpur and had gone to

AIIMS but was denied treatment despite repeated requests. "No reason whatsoever was given," she said.

Mr. Aggarwal said since she needed continuous medical care, she got herself admitted at Sita Ram Bhartiya Institute Science and Research (SRBISR), New Delhi, and is still there under EWS category. However, the SRBISR has advised her surgery at a high-

er tertiary care centre with in-house blood bank facility and intensive care unit. Mr. Aggarwal submitted that such a facility is available at AIIMS and if AIIMS refuses to provide treatment, Ms. Farooqi would most likely die.

Mr. Aggarwal further submitted that Ms. Farooqi also approached the office of the Union Health Minister with a request to persuade AIIMS to

provide her treatment. "However, she was told that though the request was sent from Union Health Minister's office on August 8 to AIIMS, the institute said surgeries were not being conducted for time being," the plea stated.

"If a premier institution like AIIMS stops conducting surgeries upon critical patients, where will they go?" Ms. Farooqi said.

'Substandard material may have led to corridor collapse'

Separate complaints filed by RTI activists seek registration of FIRs in the case

ASHOK KUMAR

A two-member team of experts has expressed apprehension that use of substandard construction material could have led to the collapse of a portion of the elevated corridor on Sohna Road and suggested the need for a review of the design.

Two separate complaints have been filed in the matter by RTI activists, seeking registration of FIRs.

Around 40-metre-long span between two piers of the 4.75-km-long under-construction elevated corridor on National Highway-248A had crashed late on Saturday evening.

The corridor is part of the six-laning and strengthening of 22-km-long stretch of the highway, starting from Rajiv Chowk.

Experts Alok Bhowmik and Vinay Gupta visited the spot along with top National Highway Authority officials on Sunday. Mr. Bhowmik was of the view that may be



A portion of the elevated corridor on Sohna Road collapsed on August 22. ■ MANOJ KUMAR

the quality of concrete of crushed segment was not up-to-the-mark, while Mr. Gupta stressed the need for holistic review of the design.

Third-party testing They suggested there is a need for a third-party testing of the concrete.

Since a portion of the collapsed span is still hanging from one of the piers, the experts suggested placing

of sand bags under the hanging portion to arrest the impact if it falls further and develop proper methodology to take down the hanging portion. They also suggested third-party test of the source of materials.

The spot of collapse has been cordoned off. The preliminary report of the collapse stated that it was "gradual". A group of RTI activists and whistle-blowers, Aadhi-

IN LOVING REMEMBRANCE OF A FRIEND & A MENTOR



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SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

In an emergency meeting of the Delhi Pradesh Congress Committee (DPCC) on Sunday, a resolution was passed demanding that Rahul Gandhi be appointed as the president of the All India Congress Committee. Delhi Congress chief Ch. Anil Kumar said that the members of the DPCC felt that it was only Mr. Gandhi who could provide dynamic and youthful leadership to the party in these trying times.

The DPCC, in its resolution, said: "Only a powerful and fearless leader like Mr. Rahul can expose the lies and falsehood of the BJP and the Modi government

and make the people of India aware of the dangerous direction the country was going towards under the Modi government."

In a statement, the DPCC said that while it acknowledged freedom of speech, it felt that some senior leaders publicly saying that a change of leadership in the Congress was needed was improper as it not only gave ammunition to the opponents to criticise it, but also demoralised the party cadre. "The resolution noted that this was an issue that should have been raised in the internal forum of the party, instead of going public by leaking it to the media," the DPCC said.

Four held for printing pirated NCERT books

Alleged mastermind yet to be arrested, lakhs of books seized from UP's Meerut

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GAZIABAD

More than 48 hours after the Uttar Pradesh Special Task Force and the Meerut police raided godowns and printing press units in Meerut and Amroha for printing pirated versions of the National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) books worth crores, the alleged mastermind Sachin Gupta and his uncle and co-accused Sanjeev Gupta were

still absconding.

On Saturday evening, the Bharatiya Janata Party suspended Sanjeev Gupta, the vice-president of its Meerut unit, for damaging the image of the party. Meanwhile, the police have arrested four persons, including the supervisor of the godown in Meerut.

On Saturday, the STF recovered around 9 lakh pirated books with NCERT logo from a godown which alleg-

edly belonged to the Gupta in the Partapur area of Meerut, an official release said.

"Four members of the racket have been arrested and 8,90,439 pirated books were recovered from the godown situated on the road between Achhrood and Kashi in Partapur area of Meerut," the release said.

The STF has also recovered nine computers, bill books, letter pads and visiting cards from what Brajesh

Kumar Singh, Deputy Superintendent of Police, STF, described as a "big set up".

The team also raided a printing facility in the Gajraula town of Amroha which also belonged to the Guptas.

Officials informed

"The counting of pirated books in the Gajraula unit is still on," Mr. Singh said, adding NCERT officials have been informed about the raids.

Oppn. flays Punjab govt. over curbs

Lockdown decision irrational and beyond anybody's comprehension, says AAP

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHANDIGARH

After the Punjab government announced a weekend lockdown in towns and cities of the State, the Opposition parties have hit out at ruling Congress, raising questions about rationality behind the move and accused the government of failing to provide efficient health services to curb COVID-19 spread.

While the principal opposition – the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) – termed the decision of lockdown irrational and beyond anybody's comprehension, the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) asked the

Congress government to improve health services instead of indulging in coercive shutdowns, which the party said were having a devastating effect on small shopkeepers, traders and skilled workers.

'Govt. hiding failures'

Senior Akali Dal leader and former Minister Daljeet Singh Cheema said the Congress government was taking unilateral decisions to hide its failures and prevent large-scale protests against its 'misrule', and asked the Amarinder Singh regime to strike a balance between lives and livelihood.

"The government should improve ambulance services and hospital infrastructure, increase bed strength and recruit more doctors and nurses. It is not doing this at all and instead is forcing lockdowns without any scientific basis. The lockdowns will only result in more crowding in markets when they reopen leading to a further spike in COVID-19 cases. They are simultaneously leading to hardships for shopkeepers and tradesmen," said Mr. Cheema.

Earlier this week, the Punjab government ordered extension of the weekend lock-

down with daily night curfew from 7 p.m. to 5 a.m. in all the 167 cities and towns in the State from August 21 in a bid to deal with COVID-19 situation.

AAP MLA and leader of the Opposition Harpal Cheema said imposition of lockdown by the government in the name of containing the spread of COVID-19 was completely irrational and beyond anybody's comprehension.

Mr. Cheema said the lockdown could be scientifically beneficial only if it was implemented for at least 14 days.

Now, an app for farmers' grievances

It will deal with water-based issues and its redressal in Odisha

SATYASUNDAR BARIK

BHUBANESWAR

Odisha is working on a mobile-based application to enable farmers to upload picture of grievances such as water availability in canals and their redressal in a fixed timeframe.

The application being developed through Odisha Computer Application Centre (OCAC) will use command area of projects as geo-fenc-

ing region to forward the grievance to the authority concerned.

Under 5T (Teamwork, Technology, Transparency, Time leading to Transformation) governance system, action will be initiated for redressal within a timeframe.

The State Water Resource Department will provide spatial information on sector-wise command area as a web service, which the grievance

management application will consume. As per sources, the application is likely to be ready by September this year and inaugurated in the fourth week of the same month.

Top engineers of the Water Resource Department have been asked to make information available regarding irrigation projects to the agriculture departments before the start of cropping season looking at water availability.

Five of family found dead in M.P.

STAFF REPORTER

BHOPAL

The Tikamgarh district police on Sunday morning found bodies of five members of a family, including that of a four-year-old boy, hanging at their house

"The cause of the deaths is still unclear, we are investigating the matter," said Prashant Khare, district Superintendent of Police.

Neighbours had informed the police after the family did not open the main door as a milkman arrived at the house in the morning. Police later broke into the house in Khargpur and found the bodies hanging. No note was found, they said.

The deceased have been identified as Dharamdas Soni, 62, a retired government employee, his wife Poona, 55, their son Manohar, 27, daughter-in-law Sonam, 25, and grandson Sandhya, four. The bodies have been taken to a hospital for post-mortem.

Those in distress may dial helpline 7389366696.

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No: KDL/AD/Covid/Inj-Remdesivir/Quotation/53/2020-21 Date: 21.08.2020

QUOTATION NOTIFICATION

Ref:1.KDL/AD/Covid/Inj-Remdesivir/ Quotation/53/ 2020-21 Dated: 21.08.2020 2.KDL/EQPT/COVID-19/CBNAATcartridge/84/2020-21 dated:21/08/2020.Nationwide Quotation is invited through KSDLWS website under KTPP Act 1999 and Rules 2000 under (a)4 exemption for the following quotations:1.Quotation for supply of Inj. Remdesivir. 2. Quotation for supply of CBNAT Xpert Xpress SARS CoV-cartridge Details regarding specification, Terms and Conditions and other information are available in the website www.kdlws.kar.nic.in from 21.08.2020 to 25.08.2020 the eligible firms shall submit the sealed quotations before 5:00 pm on 25.08.2020 in the name of Director, KSDLWS, Dr. Siddappa Puranik Road, KHB colony, Magadi road, Bangalore-560079 Or Mail the KSDLWS quotations in password protected PDF to E-mail ID: ksdlswcovid-19.procurement@gmail.com

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Food Safety and Standards Authority & Director, KSDLWS.

D-17

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ADDENDUM TO EOI

In reference to the Expression of Interest called regarding Development of Udhna Freight Handling Railway Terminal as a Common User facility for multi cargo, multi modal operation including provision of additional freight parcel handling line, covered warehouse, open stacking area (including containers), mechanization of handling systems and truck parking terminal on a PPP model, the following addendum may please be noted: The last date of submission of EoI response is extended till 05.09.2020 up to 15 hrs.

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BRIDEGRoOMS WANTED

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INDEX OF MATRIMONIAL

BRIDEGRoOMS WANTED

BRIDES WANTED

BRIDES & GROOMS WANTED

Classification common for Brides, Bridegrooms, Brides & Grooms

Assamese

Awadhi

Bengali

Bhopuri

Bihari

Chhattisgarhi

English

Gujarati

Haryanvi

Hindi

Kannada

Kashmiri

Konkani

Malayalam

Manipuri

Marathi

Marwari

Nepali

Oriya

Parsi

Punjabi

Saurashtra

Sindhi

Tamil

Telugu

Tulu

Urdu

MARRIAGE BUREAUS

WEDDING ARRANGEMENTS

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GENERAL STUDIES

COMPREHENSIVE BATCH-2020-21

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 16.30 HRS)

Forecast for Monday: Heavy to extremely heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over southwest and east Rajasthan, Gujarat, Odisha, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, west Madhya Pradesh, Bihar, Gangetic West Bengal, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura and Goa

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	1	34.3	25.8	Kozhikode	—	32.2	25.0
Ahmedabad	30.7	29.0	24.7	Kurnool	—	33.0	25.3
Aizawl	—	27.0	19.4	Lucknow	1.3	33.4	25.2
Allahabad	1.6	34.7	25.6	Madurai	—	39.0	25.5
Bengaluru	15.4	29.0	21.0	Mangaluru	4.6	29.0	23.0
Bhopal	22.3	27.6	23.2	Mumbai	3	29.7	26.4
Dhubaneswar	0.5	31.0	26.5	Mysuru	—	30.0	22.0
Chandigarh	79.6	34.4	25.1	Patna	—	34.2	26.4
Chennai	—	35.0	27.4	Pond Blair	0.6	33.0	26.6
Coimbatore	—	34.0	23.9	Puducherry	0.5	30.7	26.0
Dehradoon	—	32.8	23.9	Pune	1.4	28.5	22.5
Gangtok	5.3	21.7	17.9	Raipur	2.6	30.8	25.6
Goa	11.8	30.5	24.8	Silvassa	—	30.8	25.6
Guwahati	2.9	35.0	25.5	Ranchi	—	30.5	23.9
Hubballi	—	26.0	22.0	Shillong	23.4	22.0	18.0
Hyderabad	—	31.8	23.6	Shimla	—	25.8	19.4
Imphal	—	31.0	21.7	Srinagar	—	32.0	16.9
Jaipur	0.8	30.0	25.6	Thiruvananthapuram	—	32.3	25.5
Kochi	8	28.4	24.4	Tiruchi	—	39.0	26.0
Kohima	0.8	29.0	17.6	Vijayawada	7.8	32.4	25.4
Kolkata	5.3	32.0	26.7	Visakhapatnam	0.2	30.8	27.2

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Yesterday

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	CODE
Ahmedabad	10	43	27	55	10	■■■■■
Bengaluru	.3	5	25	59	—	■■■■■
Chennai	.7	12	102	56	—	■■■■■
Delhi	37	20	106	29	—	■■■■■
Hyderabad	.7	42	4	13	18	■■■■■
Kolkata	.7	25	12	81	—	■■■■■
Lucknow	.9	36	.71	26	80	■■■■■
Mumbai	18	.2	53	11	26	■■■■■
Pune	16	.6	47	17	17	■■■■■
Visakhapatnam	19	.33	.52	82	—	■■■■■

In observation made at

Greater Noida,

Uttar Pradesh recorded an

overall air quality index

(AQI) score of 160

indicating a moderate level

of pollution. In contrast,

Aizawl, Mizoram recorded a

healthy AQI score of 14

No people, no show for folk artistes during pandemic

In Rajasthan, they have turned to odd jobs for survival

ANUJ KUMAR
NEW DELHI

The pandemic has forced Shamshad Beharupiya to play a different part these days. Every morning, he fills his cart with footwear and heads to villages near Bandikui town in Dausa district of Rajasthan to make ends meet.

At times, villagers taunt him as if he is the same Shamshad who dressed up as Ram at the invitation of the Yogi Adityanath government last year for the Deepotsav in Ayodhya or as Krishna, his favourite act, during the Haryana government's 2019 Surajkund Mela where he was the face of the festival.

"They say 'Yeh kya Bhagwan theli par?' (What is this, God pulling a cart)," says Shamshad. With a lump in his throat, he explains that hunger will not wait.

"It fills me with shame. But then some of them buy an extra pair just because they have been our *yajmans* (patrons)," he adds.

"This disease has dried up all art-related work," says Shamshad. "Between the festivals, we used to go to our *yajmans*, who would pay us in cash or kind for putting up a show on the occ-

casion of a birth, birthday or wedding. All that has become a thing of the past during the last four months."

Family of performers

Shamshad comes from a family of beharupiyas – folk artistes who don various costumes to play figures from mythology, folklore and traditional stories – that once used to serve Maharaja Sawal Madho Singh of the erstwhile Jaipur kingdom. They are also said to have helped freedom fighters during the struggle for Independence.

Shamshad's father Shivraj Beharupiya, known for playing Lord Shiva, was selected by the Ministry of Culture to travel to different festivals in India and abroad.

When the *rajas* (kings) gave way to *rajnetas* (politicians), Shamshad says, his father travelled to Uttar Pradesh for survival but is now working as a labourer in a private construction company on the Jaipur-Udaipur road.

Hailing from a village near Bharatpur, Shivram used to perform in top hotels of Jaipur and Agra before the lockdown. Well-known and even having featured in the television show *Hindustan Ke Hunarbaaz*, the lockdown made Shivram realise that despite the fame and popularity, he hasn't risen much on the social ladder.

"When my niece passed away, her body was taken down from the funeral pyre in Kakarpura village



Shamshad Beharupiya standing besides the hoarding of Surajkund Mahotsav-2019, featuring him as Krishna. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

street performer known for his aerial rope acts, first turned park keeper in the residential areas of Jaipur for survival but is now working as a labourer in a private construction company on the Jaipur-Udaipur road. Hailing from a village near Bharatpur, Shivram used to perform in top hotels of Jaipur and Agra before the lockdown.

Shivram Nat, another

of Agra as the Thakurs and the village pradhan objected. We had to take her body to another village more than seven kilometres away." It was only when the news went viral, says Shivram, that the district administration promised to allow the Nats to cremate their dead in the gram sabha cremation ground.

Maihpal Sapera, from a community of snake charmers, is keen on getting an MNREGS card made to tide over the lockdown.

Son of a well-known snake charmer, Sheesha Nath, Maihpal says there was a time when their village on the Badarpur border figured in every Delhi hotel's must-visit list for fo-

reign tourists. He says animal rights' groups defanged their art by taking the snake out of the performance. "We can't use them but we are still called when a snake is spotted in a residential area or somebody gets bitten in a village," he says of their deep relationship with the reptile.

Left with only their *beens*, a wind instrument made from a bottle gourd and bamboo, Maihpal says people still call them to weddings. "The government takes us to festivals as some signposts of the past. But the lockdown has put a full stop to even that. Do you expect an artist to lift bricks? Will such a person find social acceptance?" he says, as he rushes to buy medicines for his father who is recovering from a heart attack.

Skill upgrade

Shailaja Kathuria, director of the Centre for New Perspectives (CNP), a non-profit working with street performers, says what they need is "creative dignity". She feels the pandemic has proved harsher for street performers living in urban spaces as in rural areas the ties with patrons are still intact.

The CNP has come up with a crowdfunding campaign to organise a virtual Tama Show wherein they are working with street performers to tell innovative picture book stories to chil-

dren. Recently, dancer Arupa Lahiry performed a story, while a street magician performed an online 'levitation'.

"We are also working with classical musicians and dancers to upscale their skills. Flautist Rajat Prasanna is working with the snake charmers to help them learn new tunes. We are trying to rope in an Uzbek acrobat who knows Hindi to train Shivram in developing floor acts, as he only knows aerial ones," says Ms. Kathuria.

The most important aspect, notes the CNP director, is that the sooner performing artistes think out of the box and shift from dependence on State patronage, the better. "And digital literacy and digitally innovative performances is an important cog in this process. We are approaching the Sangeet Natak Akademi to include their performances in their online calendar so that they could get regular work," she says.

Both Shamshad and Juaid Rehman – son of street magician Rehman Shah – say they are up to the task as far as performing online is concerned.

"I am now familiar with Zoom meetings, etc. and have put up a virtual show

with a crowdfunding campaign to organise a virtual Tama Show wherein they are working with street performers to tell innovative picture book stories to children," says Kathuria.

Punjab reports 50 virus deaths, Haryana six

Suraksha Samiti members wield lathis, impose fine on those found with an axe

SIDHARTH YADAV
BHOPAL

For years, there had been indiscriminate felling of trees in the Birsa area of Balaghat district in Madhya Pradesh rendering acres of fertile land barren. As things came to a head two years ago, local women came together, wielding lathis, to shoo away those felling trees and impose a fine on them.

"We had to take ownership of the forest near us,

take its responsibility. This was the only way to protect it," said Kavita Sahu, 28, on the phone, from Kaniya village. Foresters tasked with curbing the felling patrolled in vain. A challenge had to be mounted from within the community. And women took the lead.

Nearly 250 acres of land is now seeing a revived foliage with foresters planting saplings and women taking initiative to protect them. In

addition, the 34 women members of the Van Devi Suraksha Samiti from four villages are preventing deforestation by imposing a ₹500 fine on those found with an axe.

Since women are tasked with venturing into forests to cut trees, fetch fuel wood, only women can stop them, believes Ms. Sahu, president of the group.

"Sustainable use of forests by picking fruits and

medical plants judiciously, allowing enough time for their replenishment must be the way," said Kamla Bai, 52, a member. Three times a day, the women in groups of four-five patrol the forest having harra, bahera and teak varieties, keeping foresters informed of any illegal activity.

Leadership roles adopted by women have united them, made them more aware of environmentalism.

partment said the active cases are 14,165 and 26,528 patients have so far recovered.

In Haryana, 1,096 fresh cases surfaced, taking the total tally of cumulative cases to 54,386. Haryana also reported six deaths taking the total tally to 603. The major chunk of new cases, 134 and 113 were reported from Panipat and Gurugram districts respectively. Active cases are 8,961 and 44,822 patients have been discharged.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHANDIGARH

Punjab recorded 1,136 fresh COVID-19 cases on August 23 and reported 50 more deaths taking the tally to 1,086, according to an official statement.

The number of positive cases have reached 41,779. The major chunk of new cases, 242 and 188, were reported from Ludhiana and Jalandhar districts respectively. The Health de-

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Failing on fires

Srisailam power plant accident underscores the importance of fire safety codes

A fire in a hydroelectric station located close to unlimted quantities of water would seem to be a contradiction, but as the deadly blaze in the Srisailam power plant shows, the risk is very real. Nine people, including five engineers, perished in the facility on the Telangana-Andhra Pradesh border. At 900 MW capacity, the plant on the left bank canal of the Krishna is one of the biggest contributors to the Telangana State Power Generation Corporation; another branch serves Andhra Pradesh. What makes the accident more disturbing is that it comes as another shock in a season of disasters. Industries and power plants in Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Telangana have been wracked by accidents during the COVID-19 pandemic. In Srisailam, the fire appears to have started in a control panel during maintenance. The victims were unable to make an exit through an escape tunnel and were overwhelmed by smoke, while others at a different level could flee in time. Going by official accounts, the smoke made it difficult even for rescue personnel to enter the four-storeyed structure. Moreover, videos made by staff present a spectacle of a small fire rapidly engulfing the working area, trapping the personnel and leaving little room for manoeuvre. Telangana has instituted a CID inquiry, apart from the plant operator's own probe. But an external technical audit with no conflicts of interest could better serve the objective, identifying lacunae to stop a future catastrophe. It can determine why the victims could not make a safe exit, as per standard procedure.

Large hydroelectric power plants are usually built well below surface level, where generation, control and transmission equipment are located. Handling a fire becomes complicated in such circumstances, and safety features have to be extremely reliable. IEEE standards for substation fire protection, issued a quarter century ago, lay down norms for fixed and portable ventilation systems that can remove heavy smoke – as seen in Srisailam. Use of fire-retardant materials in construction, dual exits, easy vertical escape routes using staircases and alarm systems are all part of safety codes. Whether these features were available in the Telangana power plant, and if they were, why the personnel could not use them to quickly escape the inferno should be investigated. The dam fire is primarily the State government's responsibility, but the Centre should take the opportunity to review safety in places such as Jharkhand, where extensive underground coal field fires have affected remote communities. India loses many lives to fires each year: at 12,748 accidental deaths in 2018, nearly double the number caused by forces of nature, according to NCRB data. Only a rigorous adherence to safety codes can reduce this shocking toll.

Women, uninterrupted

Access to contraception and abortion services must be continuous

Among the more serious ramifications of the pandemic has been the rather extensive, even if unintended, disruption of health-care services. Normal life has been crippled by the restrictions flowing from control measures, and access to medical services has become infinitely tougher for a vast majority. The scale of the impact on women's lives is only now being recognised, as global reports of inability to access contraceptives and abortion services during the long lockdown warn of dire consequences, including unwanted pregnancies, increase in domestic violence, and maternal mortality. A recent estimate by Marie Stopes International (MSI) said about two million women missed out on services between January and June; 1.3 million were in India alone. According to WHO, a recent survey of responses from 103 countries found that 67% reported disruption in family planning and contraception services. UNFPA projections indicate that 47 million women in 114 low- and middle-income countries would be unable to use modern contraceptives if the average lockdown continued for 6 months with major disruptions to services, and an additional 7 million unintended pregnancies are expected to occur.

At the heart of this issue is the bulk of health-care services shifting to cater to COVID-19 related emergencies, and lockdown disruptions. India listed abortions as essential services under the lockdown, but the disruption of transport services hampered access to centres of care, and lack of awareness about these services being available during this period was a factor. It is pertinent to ask if services to facilitate abortion and contraception were indeed available in the cities and rural areas during the period, despite being listed as 'emergency' and thus allowed to remain open even during intense lockdowns. Almost 30% of the respondents seeking an abortion said that the clinic in their area was closed, according to the MSI report. Further, a study in six States by the Foundation for Reproductive Health Services India, showed a severe shortage of medical abortion drugs in pharmacies. For a country setting out to bolster its contraception and abortion services outreach, this pandemic and its lockdowns have dealt a blow. The need for contraceptive services remains high in India, with over 1 in 3 women (35%) reporting a need for contraceptive advice, as per the MSI study. Providing uninterrupted abortion and contraceptive counselling, devices and care services are essential to safeguard the reproductive rights of women, and protect them from abuse. These services must continue through measures such as telemedicine, incentives to local clinics to open their doors, resolving drug supply chain disruptions, besides improving access to health care. For, countries that do not prioritise women's health-care needs will bear the heaviest of burdens, not so long after.

Thinking through the Nepal policy

India should reject the Nepali state's ill-conceived territorial claims but do all to nurture the Nepali people's goodwill



SHYAM SARAN

On August 15, Nepal Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli made a friendly gesture towards India by telephoning Prime Minister Narendra Modi to convey greetings on India's Independence Day. This should be welcomed. This was followed by a meeting of the India-Nepal Joint Project Monitoring Committee on August 17 chaired by the Indian Ambassador to Nepal and the Nepal Foreign Secretary.

The committee was set up to review progress in the large number of bilateral cooperation projects. An India-Nepal Joint Commission meeting at the level of Foreign Ministers is due later in October but may be held virtually due to the novel coronavirus pandemic. But will the two sides hold Foreign Secretary-level talks on the vexed boundary issue that is related to Kalapani and Susta?

Unilateral actions

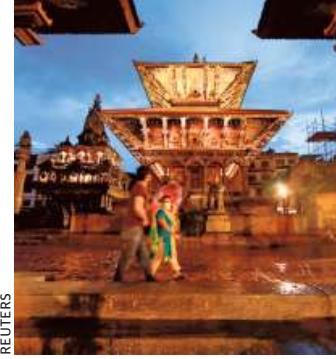
The Nepali side has upset the apple cart by taking a series of unilateral actions. A relatively minor dispute involving about 35 square kilometres of territory around the Kalapani springs, was expanded to claim a large wedge of Indian territory towards the east, measuring nearly 400 square kilometres. The expanded claim was incorporated into Nepal through a constitutional amendment and a revised offi-

cial map. India has been confronted with a *fait accompli* though Nepal has conveyed its willingness to negotiate on the issue in Foreign Secretary-level talks. India should be willing to engage in talks with Nepal on all aspects of India-Nepal relations. But any talks on the Kalapani issue should be limited to the area which was the original subject for negotiations and Susta. To agree to talks which include the unilateral changes will create a very bad precedent not only in India-Nepal relations but in managing India's borders in general. This is irrespective of Nepal presenting historical documents or maps which support its claims.

Borders which have been accepted by both sides for more than 100 years and which have also been reflected on their official maps cannot be unilaterally altered by one side coming up with archival material which has surfaced in the meantime. This would make national boundaries unstable and shifting, and create avoidable controversies between countries as is the case now between India and Nepal.

Geography and boundaries

The Treaty of Sugauli of 1816 sets the Kali river as the boundary between the two countries in the western sector. There was no map attached to the treaty. Nepal is now claiming that the main tributary of the Kalapani river rises east of the Lipu Lekh pass from the Limpiyadhura ridge and hence should serve as the border. Even if the lengthiest tributary may be one principle for a riverine boundary, which is itself debatable, it is not the only one. There are many



REUTERS

boundaries which do not follow any geographical principle at all but are the result of historical circumstances, mutual agreement and legal recognition.

The fact is that once the British side carried out detailed surveys of the region, they consistently showed the India-Nepal border heading due north of Kalapani springs to a few kilometres east of the Lipu Lekh Pass. This alignment never changed in subsequent years and was also reflected in Nepali official maps. This is just a fact.

It has been argued that it was the East India Company and successor governments which engaged in "cartographic chicanery" to shift the source of the Kali river towards the east. What prevented successive Nepali governments to reject such chicanery and assert the Nepali claim? There is no record of such a claim being raised at any point including when the Company was in a generous mood, having received Nepali help in putting down the 1857 Indian war of independence.

In 1969, the then Prime Minister of Nepal Kirti Nidhi Bishwokarma demanded that India military per-

sonnel manning 17 villages along the Nepal-Tibet border since the early 1950s be withdrawn. Here is the National Panchayat record of Bishwokarma's statement: "The Minister informed that the check posts manned by the Indian nationals exist in seventeen villages – Gumsa, Mustang, Namche Bazar, Lamabagar, Kodari, Thula, Thumshe, Thulo, Olanchung Dola, Mugu, Simikot, Tin Kar, Chepuwa, Jhumshing, Pushu, Basuwa and Selubas."

If Lipu Lekh and Kalapani were on Nepali territory then why were they omitted from the list?

I have pointed out earlier that the argument that the omission was due to Nepali "magnanimity" taking into account India's security concerns *vis-à-vis* China is laughable. The withdrawal of Indian military personnel from the Nepal-Tibet border was precisely to win brownie points with China.

The inconvenient fact is that the Chinese, at least since 1954, have accepted Lipu Lekh Pass as being in Indian territory. In the Nepal-China boundary agreement of 1960, the starting point of the boundary is clearly designated at a point just west of the Tinker Pass.

History and ties

In a recent article (*The Hindu*, Editorial page, August 19, 2020), Nepali journalist Kanak Mani Dixit advised Indians "must try and understand why Nepal does not have an 'independence day'", the implication being that Indians should with humility remember their history as a colonised country while Nepal was always an independent nation. Independence Day has meaning for us because we en-

gaged in a long and painful struggle for independence from British colonial rule. We also recall that it was the ruler of "independent" Nepal which sent troops to fight alongside the East India Company, mercilessly killing those who were fighting India's first war of independence. The same independent country was happy to receive as reward chunks of Indian territory in the Terai through the treaty of 1861. If no agreement has superseded the Sugauli treaty as has been claimed then, perhaps the "Naya Muluk" received after Nepal's alliance with the Company against Indians fighting for freedom, should be restituted. Or should this brand of "chicanery" be excused since it benefited Nepal?

Reversing history selectively may seem tempting but it can open a Pandora's box which may have irretrievably negative consequences for what Mr. Dixit rightly describes as "the most exemplary inter-state relationship of South Asia".

For India, more than the exemplary inter-state relationship, it is the unique people-to-people relations between India and Nepal; and, fortunately, inter-state relations have been unable to undermine the dense affinities that bind our peoples together. While India should reject the Nepali state's ill-conceived territorial claims, it should do everything to nurture the invaluable asset it has in the goodwill of the people of Nepal.

Shyam Saran is a former Foreign Secretary and Senior Fellow, Centre for Policy Research. He was India's Ambassador to Nepal in 2002-04

More evidence of India's food insecurity

The SOFI report and lockdown distress have renewed focus on what is also the world's largest food insecure population



VAISHALI BANSAL

Data from the latest edition of the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World (SOFI) report show that India retains the dubious distinction of being the country with the largest population of food insecure people. Estimates presented in the report which was released by several United Nations organisations show that the prevalence of food insecurity increased by 3.8 percentage points in India between 2014 and 2019, the first term of the Narendra Modi government. By 2019, 6.2 crore more people were living with food insecurity than the number in 2014.

Authoritative indicators

The SOFI report, which is published annually, presents the most authoritative evaluation of hunger and food insecurity in the world. Since 2017, SOFI presents two key measures of food insecurity: the conventional measure called the Prevalence of Undernourishment (PoU) and a new measure called the Prevalence of Moderate and Severe Food Insecurity (PMSFI).

Both of these are globally-accepted indicators of progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Target 2.1 to end hunger and food insecurity. While

PoU is focused on estimating the proportion of population facing chronic deficiency of calories, the PMSFI is a more comprehensive measure of the lack of access to adequate and nutritious food. Estimates of PoU are based on food balance sheets and national surveys of consumption. Given that consumption surveys are done infrequently in most countries, these estimates are often based on outdated data and are revised when better data become available.

In contrast, the PMSFI is based on annual surveys that collect information on experiences of food insecurity (such as food shortages, skipping meals, and changing diet diversity because of a lack of resources). The PMSFI uses the Food Insecurity Experience Scale (FIES), a gold standard in food security measurement developed by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), for estimating globally-comparable prevalence rates. Given the solid conceptual foundations of this methodology and the ease of collection of data, FIES and the PMSFI have been widely adopted by countries across the world.

The FAO commissions Gallup to include FIES questions in the Gallup®World Poll (FAO-GWP) survey conducted in more than 140 countries across the world. Many countries have also started conducting their own FIES surveys. Unlike most other countries, the government of India neither conducts official FIES surveys nor accepts estimates based on FAO-GWP surveys.

Although FAO-GWP surveys are conducted in India, India is among



the few countries that do not allow publication of estimates based on these surveys. Consequently, as in the past years, estimates of PMSFI for India are not published in SOFI.

Country data

However, interestingly, these estimates can be derived for India from the information provided in the report. The report provides three-year average estimates of the number of food insecure people for South Asia as a whole and for South Asia (excluding India). By taking a difference between the two, one can derive the estimates for India.

These estimates show that while 27.8% of India's population suffered from moderate or severe food insecurity in 2014-16, the proportion rose to 31.6% in 2017-19. The number of food insecure people grew from 42.65 crore in 2014-16 to 48.86 crore in 2017-19. India accounted for 22% of the global burden of food insecurity, the highest for any country, in 2017-19. It is also noteworthy that while the PMSFI increased in India by 3.7 percentage points during this period, it fell by 0.5 percentage points in the rest of South Asia.

India has not released the latest National Sample Survey Office

(NSSO) consumption expenditure survey data for 2017-18. As a result, conventional measures of poverty and food consumption are not available for recent years. Lack of availability of data from this consumption survey also has implications for the FAO's PoU estimates for India.

Because of a lack of regular availability of consumption survey data from most countries, the FAO uses supply-wise data on per capita food availability to measure changes in average per capita calorie intake. While this is a reasonable approach, it has become untenable for India because of a large and growing disparity between the supply-side data and data from the consumption surveys. Not only do the supply-side data show a much higher level of per capita availability of food than the amount of food that is captured to have been consumed in the surveys, even the direction of change between the two does not seem to be consistent.

While the per capita dietary energy supply in India increased by 3.8% between 2011-13 and 2015-17, the consumption survey data that became available through a media leak showed that the average consumption expenditure (covering food and other expenses) fell by 3.7% between 2011-12 and 2017-18. On the whole, withholding of consumption survey data by the government has meant that SOFI continues to use outdated data for variability of food intake, making PoU estimates for India untenable.

Given this, estimates of the

PMSFI for India have become particularly valuable.

Causes of suffering

The significant rise in food insecurity, as shown by these data, is a clear manifestation of the overall economic distress during this period marked by a deepening agrarian crisis, falling investments across sectors and shrinking employment opportunities. The latest PLFS data have shown that the unemployment rates in the recent years have been higher than in the last four decades. It is widely believed that demonetisation and introduction of the Goods and Services Tax were two prime causes of economic distress during this period.

A sudden imposition of an unprecedented and prolonged lockdown in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic has brought renewed focus on the problems of hunger and food insecurity. With a sudden loss of livelihoods, a vast majority of India's poor are faced with increased food insecurity, hunger and starvation. A number of starvation deaths have also been reported in the media.

Given this, these estimates of the PMSFI provide an important baseline estimate for the situation before the COVID-19 pandemic. It is critical for India to conduct a national survey on food insecurity to assess the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on food security of different sections of the population.

Vaishali Bansal is a research scholar at the Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, Jawaharlal Nehru University

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.

Training in Hindi

The report, "AYUSH training in Hindi ignores T.N. group" (Page 1, August 22), left me shocked. Even if the Secretary of the Union Ministry of AYUSH alleges that the video of his comments was "manipulated" and that his address was disrupted by "hooligans", one would like to know whether he is the Secretary of the AYUSH Ministry for the country or for Hindi-speaking States. As this was a three-day programme, care should have been paid to ensuring that all participants were comfortable with the mode of instruction. The organisers should have recognised that there were participants from across India. Was it so difficult in arranging for translation services? AYUSH stands for Ayurveda, Yoga and

Naturopathy, Unani, Siddha and Homoeopathy and I would like to remind the Secretary about the recent remarks made by a Bench of the Madras High Court while referring to the Centre's alleged discrimination against Siddha. While expressing dismay over meagre fund allotment for the research and development of Siddha, the judges, while directing the Assistant Solicitor-General of India for the High Court to find out the reason, said, "If this is the case, then the government can remove the letter 'S' from AYUSH and rename the department as Ayurveda department." S. CHANDRASEKARAN, Chennai

■ The Ministry has a right to choose the language of instruction and invite the

delegates of its choice for its training programmes. But the alleged manner in which participants from non-Hindi States were treated was in bad taste. Officials should know that there are large sections who are not very conversant in Hindi nor is there a need to know the language in daily life. The privileged space for a select language in the Indian Union will create needless tensions. Central agencies ought to be more sensitive to the needs of the vast number of citizens who merit an unbiased playing field. H.N. RAMAKRISHNA, Bengaluru

■ The official's alleged statement is more akin to linguistic imperialism and adds insult to injury. It is in gross violation of the constitutional provision that English may continue as an associate link language in

India as long as non-Hindi speaking people want it. Languages must be windows and not walls. K. CHELLAPPAN, Chennai

■ In a national-level training programme, the trainer or key resource person should have conveyed the information in a language such as English which would have made all participants comfortable. India is multilingual country and one should not expect one and all to be proficient in Hindi. What if the key person had been from Tamil Nadu and had decided to speak only in Tamil. What would the Hindi-speaking participants have done? P. BHARATH VARUN, Tirunelveli, Tamil Nadu

■ The language faultlines have erupted again, and in a predictable fashion between

Tamil Nadu and the rest of India, with no end in sight. The education policy in many northern States has been exclusively a single language formula of teaching only Hindi to its common residents. This shortsightedness, based on sheer political heft and population numbers, has divided our nation in some form or the other. Meanwhile, in Tamil Nadu, the Dravidian parties and offshoots continue to advocate the narrow-minded policy of "No Hindi" as a wedge issue for political gain. This has made Tamil aspirants permanent outliers in the fields of education and employment nationwide. The losers of the "Hindi only" policy of the North and the "No Hindi" policy of Tamil Nadu are the common people. G. PARAMESWARAN, Coimbatore

■ Saving the elephant

There is no doubt that growing human-elephant conflict is cause for concern. In this connection it is worth following the new guidelines released ("Forest Ministry releases guide to managing human-elephant conflict", August 13). As the publication says, if water and food are available within forests, the movement of elephants into human habitation could be restricted. Many a time we come across reports of elephants being electrocuted in south India. Perhaps there needs to be better awareness in this part of India of practices such as "use of chili smoke in north Bengal and playing the sound of bees or carnivores in Assam". Sustained action is needed.

Russia is jumping the gun with its vaccine

The vaccine is not only potentially dangerous, it could also impede efforts to develop quality immunisations



ATANU BISWAS

Earlier this month, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced the 'approval' of Russian COVID-19 vaccine, Sputnik V, dubbed after the Soviet spacecraft of the 1950s. Numerous scientists around the world, however, found the announcement ridiculous, as the approval came before phase III of the required clinical trial was even started.

Stages of a clinical trial

In its developing stage, a vaccine must go through three phases of rigorous experimental testing on human beings, referred to as clinical trials, to judge its safety and efficacy. With an average sample size of less than 100, phase I is the preliminary study of safety, where the objective is to find the acceptable dose level which will not cause serious side-effects. Phase II is a study of safety and efficacy together, with a few hundred people or even fewer. Doses appearing to be simultaneously effective and safe are forwarded for a phase III study, which is a detailed evaluation of effectiveness in comparison to some existing treatment or some similar-looking treatment having no effect (called placebo). Hundreds or even a few thousand people are given either the vaccine or a placebo. They are then tracked over months to determine whether the people receiving the vaccine get infected less than people who get the control. This stage even allows scientists to look for rare side-effects that can't be spotted in smaller, earlier stage trials. After the three phases, if the vaccine is found to be safe and effective, the study report is forwarded to the regulatory agency, which, if convinced, permits its usage en masse. Phase IV is the postmarketing surveillance stage. Such surveillance can only be conducted after the drug is marketed.

Note that the phase I/II of the much-hyped Oxford trial had 1,077 participants, whereas Russia has claimed to have tested its vaccine on just 76 people in the first two phases.



"The Russian vaccine at the moment seems to be a lethal game of chance, such as the Russian roulette." The Nikolai Gamaleya National Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology in Moscow, Russia. ■AP

Even as researchers worldwide are rushing to develop vaccines for COVID-19, following standard practice, they continue to publish their studies in peer-reviewed journals, which are constantly scrutinised by the relevant scientific community. The community, in effect, enhances the credibility of these studies. However, no such article is available in the public domain about the Russian vaccine.

Playing Russian roulette

The race to find a vaccine is more of a marathon than a sprint. Top scientists such as the U.K.'s chief scientific adviser, Sir Patrick Vallance, and his U.S. counterpart, Anthony Fauci, and even the World Health Organization (WHO) have repeatedly maintained that a vaccine is not expected before 12-18 months. In contrast, the Russian vaccine is dangerously rushed – it got approval in less than two months of starting the trial.

A *Nature Medicine* article in June stated that SARS-CoV-2 antibodies may last only 2-3 months after a person becomes infected. Another recent study of King's College London found that levels of antibodies that can destroy the virus peaked about three weeks after the onset of symptoms and then started declining. Certainly, if antibody levels due to infection wane in 2-3 months, the vaccine might potentially do the same thing.

And nobody knows the durability of the antibody created by the Russian vaccine – is it durable for a few years or a few weeks? This should be scientifically settled before the vaccine is used. Also, carefully conducted clinical trials might even show that a vaccine could be harmful for a section of the population. For example, a new type of measles vaccine in the early 1990s was found to be detrimental to baby girls, and so it was never licensed for the general population.

In a 2018 research article published in the journal *Biostatistics*, a group of MIT scientists analysed data of 4,06,038 trials on drugs and vaccines in 2000-15. They observed that for vaccines of infectious diseases, the probability of success from phase II to phase III was 58.2%. And the approval rate of vaccines that passed phase III successfully was 85.4%. An approval, however, doesn't always mean the vaccine works particularly well. For example, the seasonal flu vaccine was approved with no good alternatives being available.

Thus, the Russian vaccine at the moment seems to be a lethal game of chance, such as the Russian roulette. In this dangerous game, a bullet is loaded into one chamber of a revolver, the cylinder is spun, and then the trigger is pulled while pointing the gun at one's own head. In fact, in a survey of 3,040 Russian doctors

and health specialists, conducted by the Doctor's Handbook app, 52% said they were not ready to be vaccinated; only 24.5% said they were. And just a fifth said they would recommend the vaccine to patients, colleagues or friends. What's more, a leading respiratory doctor in Russia has quit the Health Ministry citing "gross violations" of medical ethics in the development of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Also, a vaccine should come out with clear-cut guidelines. For instance, the guidelines should specify whether one or more booster doses would be required. An inadequately vetted vaccine is not only potentially dangerous for the people who receive it, it could also impede global efforts to develop quality COVID-19 immunisations. Another Russian experience might illustrate the importance of the trust factor in vaccination programmes. In the 1990s, the massive re-emergence of diphtheria in the Newly Independent States of the former Soviet Union was the result of the fall in rates of the diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis vaccination due to rapidly decreased trust in the public health system.

The driving force

Could Russia not imagine the possible worldwide outrage over its sudden premature announcement of vaccine? In early August, the WHO warned against "vaccine nationalism", noting that unless countries cooperate, an actually successful vaccine could touch off a worldwide frenzy. While a premature Russian vaccine might have partially been triggered by Russian nationalism, weren't there similar shades when Dr. Fauci expressed "serious doubts" about the effectiveness of the Russian vaccine? The Russian vaccine might even emerge as a very effective vaccine in future. Also, didn't Russia want to capture the huge world market for COVID-19 vaccines? That's a potential market of billions of dollars. Ethics, however, should be the driving force for developing a vaccine. People taking the Russian vaccine at this stage would effectively be part of a grand phase III clinical trial. And I'd like to be a guinea pig of the trial in this way.

Atanu Biswas is Professor of Statistics at the Indian Statistical Institute Kolkata

FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

The source of self-regard

Journalists should realise that the source of their self-regard does not lie in their tweets but in their journalism



A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

these guidelines as intrusive and violative of their right to free speech.

In 2019, the public broadcaster BBC revised its editorial guidelines on staff use of social media, and for the first time it brought in verbal norms into writing for employees. BBC staff were told in an unambiguous manner that disclaimers in Twitter biographies such as "my views not the BBC's" would not give them any defence against posts that may conflict with BBC's guidelines. The revised guidelines stated: "The risk is greater where the public expressions of opinion overlap with the area of the individual's work. The risk is lower where an individual is expressing views publicly on an unrelated area, for example, a sports or science presenter expressing views on politics or the arts."

Suggesting good practices

The freedom of the press lies in the intersection of media freedom, media pluralism, media independence and safety of journalists. As recent events have shown, sometimes an online presence compromises the safety of journalists. I refrain from giving prescriptive directions and prefer to suggest good practices. I am convinced that it is not desirable for a news ombudsman to entertain complaints against journalists for their social media posts and engagements. As a news ombudsman, my daily task is to reconcile freedom with responsibility. In the case of the newspaper, one has access to all the facts. It is nearly impossible to follow such a method to analyse the social media posts of a journalist.

The policy adopted by Reuters explains both the possibilities and the pitfalls offered by these platforms. It said: "Think before you post. One of the secrets to social media's success is how easy it has become to participate. But that also makes it easy to respond or repeat before you have thought through the consequences. Whether we think it is fair or not, other media will use your social media output as Reuters comment on topical stories. And you will play into the hands of your critics unless you take care. Resist the temptation to respond in anger to those you regard as mistaken or ill-tempered."

In her Portland Arts and Lectures series in 1992, Nobel laureate Toni Morrison talked about the source of self-regard. Journalists should realise that the source of their self-regard does not lie in a 280-character tweet but in their journalism.

readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

Not Mensheviks, but Bolsheviks

The Congress needs a cadre committed to a total structural and ideological overhaul of the party

MOHAMMED AYOOB

The attempt by 23 senior Congress leaders to demand long overdue organisational reforms is a welcome sign. What is ironic, however, is that many signatories, with honourable exceptions, of the letter demanding a "full time and effective leadership" and transparent elections to the Congress Working Committee (CWC) are themselves part of the current decrepit top echelon of the party. Apparently, in response to the letter, Sonia Gandhi has asked the CWC to find a new president. It remains to be seen whether in a knee-jerk reaction they will nominate Rahul Gandhi once more. Some senior leaders including the Punjab Chief Minister have already come out in support of the Gandhi continuing at the helm.

Many of the current CWC members and other senior leaders realise that if a genuine revamping of the leadership takes place they will lose their positions. This is what makes the intent of many of the signatories suspect. At best they can be compared to the Mensheviks of pre-revolution Russia when what the Congress needs today is a cadre of Bolsheviks committed to a total structural and ideological overhaul of the party and removal of the deadwood in the high command.

No signs of reshaping the party
There are no signs so far of an alternative leadership committed to radically reshaping the party emerging within the Congress. Leave alone Bolsheviks there is no sign even of a group similar to the Young Turks who appeared in the wake of the Congress's "poor" performance in the 1967 Lok Sabha election when the Congress won over 54% of the seats which was significantly lower than its share in the previous three elections then.

Today the Congress holds less than 10% of the Lok Sabha seats but no one challenged the discredited leadership after the debacle in the 2019 election. Members of the CWC tried to outdo each other in pleading with Rahul Gandhi to stay on as the party president and when he refused, they beseeched his mother, in what appeared to be a choreographed act, to take over the position.



DATA POINT

Quick but confined spread

Spread among States | The table depicts the State-wise % share of India's new cases recorded in three periods: between 0 and 1 million cases (P1), between 1 million and 2 million cases (P2) and between 2 million and 3 million cases (P3). For instance, Maharashtra recorded 28% of India's new cases during P1 and 19% each in P2 and P3.

	P1	P2	P3
Maharashtra	28	19	19
A.P.	4	16	15
Karnataka	5	10	11
T.N.	16	12	9
U.P.	4	6	7
Bihar	2	5	5
W.B.	4	5	5
Odisha	2	2	4
Assam	2	3	4
Telangana	4	3	3
Kerala	1	2	3
Rajasthan	3	2	2
Punjab	1	1	2
Delhi	12	2	2
Gujarat	5	2	2
M.P.	2	2	2

The locus of spread has not changed much in the last two periods. Four States – Maharashtra, A.P., Karnataka and T.N. – accounted for more than 50% of the new cases in both the periods. In P1, Delhi accounted for 12% of the cases, but in P2 and P3 it accounted for only 2% each.

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

Spread among districts | The table depicts the share of districts with >1%, >3%, >5% and >10% of a State's new cases in P1, P2 and P3. For instance, the share of Maharashtra's districts with >1% of the State's cases increased from 26% in P1 to 46% in P2 to 54% in P3. The share of Maharashtra's districts with >10% of the State's cases decreased from 9% in P1 to 6% in P3.

	Share of districts with >1% of State's cases			Share of districts with >3% of State's cases			Share of districts with >5% of State's cases			Share of districts with >10% of State's cases		
	P1	P2	P3	P1	P2	P3	P1	P2	P3	P1	P2	P3
Maharashtra	26	46	54	17	29	31	9	11	14	9	9	6
Gujarat	27	70	64	9	15	21	9	12	12	9	6	9
Punjab	91	86	100	32	41	45	23	23	23	14	14	14
W.B.	65	78	87	30	26	48	17	17	26	13	9	9
T.N.	50	66	71	11	32	24	8	13	11	3	3	3
Karnataka	67	83	87	23	27	30	7	7	10	3	3	3
Odisha	70	77	87	23	23	43	13	10	17	7	7	7
M.P.	37	42	58	12	12	8	8	8	8	4	4	4
A.P.	100	100	100	92	100	100	62	69	92	31	23	8
Rajasthan	58	53	53	33	25	31	14	19	19	6	6	6
U.P.	44	40	44	7	8	8	4	3	4	0	1	1
Bihar	95	95	89	24	26	26	5	3	3	3	3	3
Kerala	100	100	100	86	93	86	79	71	57	14	7	14

In Gujarat, the share of districts with >1% of the State's cases increased from 27% in P1 to 64% in P3; in W.B., from 65% to 87%; in Karnataka, from 67% to 87%. In Gujarat, the share of districts with >3% of the State's cases increased from 9% in P1 to 21% in P3; in T.N., from 11% to 24%. So, while the disease has largely remained confined to a few States, cases are spreading across districts.

However, the share of districts with >10% of the State's cases has not increased much in any of the States. Thus, the bulk of cases continues to be in the urban centres in all the States.

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO AUGUST 24, 1970

Individualism in invention

(From an editorial)

Nothing obscures vision more than conventional illusions. One such illusion that has been nurtured with the emergence of the large-scale firm is that "a benign Providence has made the modern industry of a few large firms an almost perfect instrument for inducing technical change." A book review published in the first number of The Unilever Quarterly this year tellingly reminds one that much of the material progress of mankind has been due to the "Eureka" of independent inventors rather than what organised research in big firms has been able to contribute. In fact, the review adds, "research is a matter of finding out, of adding to knowledge; invention is a matter of creating something useful, often out of existing knowledge." All scientific progress consists in the inventiveness of the independent inventor. Studies made on the sources of invention in the United States have confirmed that a good number of them ranging

FROM PAGE ONE

COVID-19 unlikely to abate soon: experts

India's doubling time was nearly 30 days with most States with over 50,000 cases recording a doubling time of 30-40 days. Delhi, is an exception with a current doubling time of over 70 days.

An official associated with the national COVID task-force said the spurt in cases was likely "until September or even October" given that

testing and the spread of the infection had concomitantly risen. "The strategy now is to ensure deaths remain low and that is by detecting cases and contacts early. In March and April, we lacked enough infrastructure to ramp up testing. We have learned from the experience of Europe and therefore don't have the fatality rates of Italy and France."

Find a new chief, Sonia tells Congress

In their letter, written about two weeks ago, the group questioned the Congress party's style of functioning and suggested sweeping reforms.

Multiple sources told this reporter that nearly 300 party functionaries across different State units have endorsed the contents of the letter, which are likely to be made public depending on the Congress Working Committee meeting on Monday.

The group has called for a "full time and effective leadership who are active in the field, a mechanism for

collective leadership and elections to the CWC".

The letter was leaked to a prominent newspaper after the party announced the dates for the CWC meeting as Mr Surjewala had earlier denied the existence of it. The group is also said to be opposed to attempts being made to hand the reins back to Mr Gandhi and would rather push for decision-making through a Parliamentary Board.

Congress dissenters who wrote to Sonia Gandhi met late on Sunday ahead of CWC meeting.

India could get vaccine by year-end: Minister

In a tweet in Hindi, Dr. Vardhan said on Saturday, "I hope that if everything goes well, India will get a vaccine by the end of this year."

The apex health research body, ICMR, is in the process of developing an online vaccine portal which will provide information related to vaccine development in India and abroad, with the

majority of the updates in several regional languages in addition to English.

The aim of creating the website is to provide all information and updates related to development of the vaccine on one platform, said Samiran Panda, Head of the Epidemiology and Communicable Diseases at the ICMR.

+ Oppn. targets Adityanath for remark against MP

He referred to Sanjay Singh as 'namoona'

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav has requested Parliament to take decisive action against Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath for his oblique remarks allegedly referring to Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Singh as a 'namoona'.

The word in Hindi roughly translates into 'specimen' or 'sample' but when used colloquially may have a derogatory connotation.

While speaking in the Uttar Pradesh Assembly on Saturday, Mr. Adityanath, without taking names, said: "A 'namoona' from Delhi comes to Uttar Pradesh and says there is no strategy in place against COVID-19 in U.P."

Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party president and former Cabinet Minister Om Prakash Rajbhar also condemned Mr. Adityanath for his remark.

He said the CM used the derogatory word as he did not like anyone speaking about the right to equality of the State's Backward class, Dalit, minorities and neglected sections of society.

Mr. Singh countered Mr. Adityanath by saying that he was free to dub the common people as "namoona" and abuse them but would have to explain why Brahmins were facing atrocities under his rule.

"You only work for Thakurs, carry on. But where will the remaining 94% of the population go?" asked Mr. Singh on Twitter.

Reacting to Mr. Adityanath's remarks, Mr. Yadav said the use of an offensive



Assessing the damage: Minister for Energy G. Jagadish Reddy and CMD of TS Genco D. Prabhakar Rao inside the plant.

Heed appeal of NEET, JEE candidates: Rahul to govt.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi urged the government to consider the demands raised by students across the country on deferring the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test and the Joint Entrance Examination scheduled for September.

"GOI must listen to the

#StudentsKeMannKiBaat about NEET, JEE exams and arrive at an acceptable solution," Mr. Gandhi tweeted. Party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said that since the COVID-19 situation was yet to normalise, it was only obvious that the government listen to the concerns raised by students and parents.

Andhra Pradesh case tally crosses 3.5 lakh mark

Over one lakh cases in Telangana; Kerala adds nearly 2,000 more; Mysuru records 92 cases after doctors end strike

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Telangana's COVID-19 cases crossed one lakh on Friday with 2,474 new cases recorded on August 21. On August 22, 40,666 tests were conducted, and 2,384 cases detected. The total stood at 1,01,865.

The first case in the State was detected on March 2, the first 10,000 in 115 days, and 90,000 more in 58 days.

The latest 10,000 cases leading up to the one lakh mark were recorded in seven days from August 15. A far lower testing rate in Telanga-

na in a day. While around 23,000 samples were tested in a day till August 20, the figure shot up to 43,095 on August 21.

Kerala reported 1,908 new cases on Sunday, its cumulative cases going up to 58,262.

Active cases stood at 20,330. The death toll rose to 223, with the Health Department confirming five more fatalities: Two from Thiruvananthapuram and one each from Kozhikode, Kollam and Alappuzha.

Locally acquired infections constituted 1,768 cases out of 1,908 on Sunday. This included 50 health care workers.

On Sunday, Thiruvananthapuram reported 397 cases, of which 384 cases, including those of 17 health care workers, were locally acquired infections.

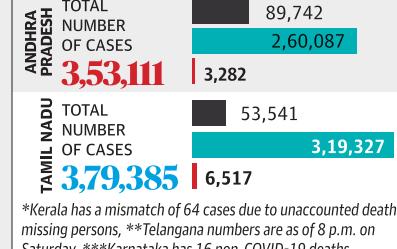
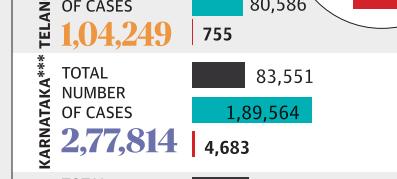
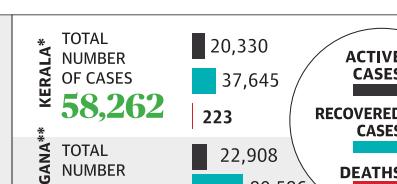
The COVID-19 tally exceeded 3.5 lakhs in Andhra Pradesh, with 7,895 cases

In good faith

Despite the surge in COVID-19 cases, the government has allowed some places of worship to open as part of the unlock measures. The graphs show the spread of the pandemic in the southern States



Taking precautions: A volunteer disinfecting a hall for a public Ganeshotsava celebration in Mangaluru, Karnataka, on Sunday. ■ H.S. MANJUNATH



*Kerala has a mismatch of 64 cases due to unaccounted deaths, missing persons. *Telangana numbers are as of 8 p.m. on Saturday, **Karnataka has 16 non-COVID-19 deaths

the highest.

In Karnataka, 5,938 new cases were detected on Sunday, taking the total to 2.77 lakh. Also, 68 new fatalities were reported, the number of deaths linked to COVID-19 rising to 4,683.

Mysuru, with no positive cases for two days due to a strike by doctors, on Sunday reported 92 new cases.

The Tamil Nadu Health Department recorded 5,975 fresh cases of COVID-19 on Sunday, and put active patients in the State at 53,541.

Till date, 3,79,385 persons had tested positive in the State.

At the same time, 6,047 persons were discharged from various facilities following treatment, taking the overall tally of those recovered as on date to 3,19,327.

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

Heat inside power house delays damage estimation

Two units of the Srisailam left bank underground hydel station have been found to be in a good condition, say officials

B. CHANDRASHEKHAR

HYDERABAD

High temperatures in the Srisailam left bank underground hydel station of the Telangana State Power Generation Corporation (TS-Genco) have been hampering primary assessment of the damage, two days after the fire was put off.

A team of directors of the power utility, camping at Eegalapura in Nagarkurnool district, the nearest location to the power station, made a vain bid to go beyond a certain extent in the underground generation station. The Genco team has come to a primary conclusion that the first two units of the 6x150 megawatt hydel station, located towards the entrance side of the tunnel, are in a good condition.

Chairman and Managing Director of TS-Genco D. Prabhakar Rao told *The Hindu* that efforts would be made to resume power generation over the next couple of weeks in the first two units. "We may come to some understanding about the extent of damage only after going further inside the plant. We can also assess the primary cause for the accident only after visiting the plant. We will make one more attempt to go inside on Monday," the CMD said.

Mr. Rao, who reached the left bank hydel station around 3 a.m. on Friday, said the rescue and fire fighting operations. "Everyone was in a state of panic when we reached there. Smoke that engulfed the tunnel and lack of oxygen killed the seven brave engineers and two employees of a private company," he said.

Stating that they were yet to arrive at a conclusion to what led to the mishap in the state-of-the-art plant, he said all the six units, which were engaged in power generation at the time of the accident, did not trip and they had to be isolated from outside by disconnecting the power supply.

Meanwhile, Genco has constituted a four-member committee of senior engineers to ascertain the cause that led to the accident on the night of August 20.

CID teams gathering info on hydel plant blast

MARRI RAMU

HYDERABAD

For the second consecutive day on Sunday, special teams of the Telangana Crime Investigation Department (CID) examined the site of the explosion at the Srisailam hydel power project.

Initial reports indicated that a short-circuit in the panel boards of the power house could have triggered the explosion. However, this had to be corroborated scientifically.

The main task before the CID now is to establish the source of the fire, what ignited it and whether any human error or other factor was behind the incident.

Citing SC verdict, Madras HC orders enhanced pension

Petitioner found eligible for revision under EPS-95 scheme

B. TILAK CHANDAR

MADRAS

The Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court, citing the Supreme Court verdict in the landmark R.C. Gupta case (2016), has ordered enhancement of pension payable to a litigant found eligible for the revision of pension on higher wages.

The petitioner, B. Dhansakaran, had joined the Agricultural Cooperative Credit Society in Paramakudi as secretary in 1978 and retired in 2012. He contended that from 1992, he had been remitting the provident fund contribution on the entire salary and not based on the wage ceiling limit.

Under Clause 11(3) of the Employees Pension Scheme, 1995, on the determination of pensionable salary, the maximum pensionable salary was limited to ₹6,500 per month. However, if at the option of the employer and the employee, the contribution paid on the salary exceeding ₹6,500 per month from the date of commencement of this scheme or from the date the salary exceeded ₹6,500, whichever is later, and the 8.33% share of the employer is remitted into the pension fund, the



In 2014, the maximum pensionable salary was revised to ₹15,000.

pensionable salary will be based on such higher salary. In 2014, under the Employees Pension (Amendment) Scheme, the maximum pensionable salary was revised to ₹15,000.

No cut-off date

The Supreme Court ruled in the R.C. Gupta case that there was no cut-off date to determine the eligibility of the employer-employee to indicate their option under Clause 11(3) of the Pension Scheme.

A beneficial scheme ought not to be allowed to be defeated by reference to a cut-off date.

Further, the Supreme Court held that in the situation where the deposit of the

employer's share was on actual salary and not the ceiling amount, all that the Provident Commissioner was required to do was adjustment of accounts. He/she could seek the return of all such accounts that employees concerned may have taken or withdrawn from their Provident Account Fund before granting the benefit of Clause 11(3) of the Pension Scheme.

Relying on this, the petitioner sought enhancement of pension. His earlier petition in 2018 was disposed of with a direction to the authorities concerned to consider his representation based on the SC ruling. As his representation was not considered, he filed a fresh petition before the court.

Justice G.R. Swaminathan took cognisance of the communication sent to the petitioner by The Provident Fund Commissioner, where it was admitted the petitioner was eligible for revision of pension on higher wages.

It directed the Additional Central Provident Fund Commissioner (Pension) and the Provident Fund Commissioner to undertake the exercise as per the Supreme Court ruling.

Wounded Attappady elephant still critical

Injuries from chewing on explosives

STAFF REPORTER

PALAKKAD

The condition of an elephant that suffered a grievous wound in its mouth at Attappady last week continued to be critical on Sunday. The elephant was found with an injury, apparently caused by an explosion about a week ago in the Veettikkundu Chavadiyur area of Attappady in Agali range of Mannarkkad forest division in Kerala.



The injured male elephant in Attappady on Sunday.

There was cautious optimism when the elephant drank some water. However, it rejected much of the food given by the veterinarians and appeared weak due to lack of intake.

It was suspected that the elephant suffered the injury after it chewed on an explosive. Forest officials suspect the injury took place while the animal was in the Tamil Nadu forest area. The full-grown elephant was known to have caused a lot of destruction in the Sholayur area over the last couple of years. However, it had not killed any human being. The animal was nicknamed 'Bulldozer' because it had reportedly destroyed around two dozen houses since 2018.

IN BRIEF



Opposition seeks probe into Life Mission deal

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The controversy surrounding the Life Mission-UAE Red Crescent deal to provide housing for the poor continued to simmer on Sunday with Leader of the Opposition Ramesh Chennithala daring the Kerala government to release the details of the contract. Mr. Chennithala demanded a CBI inquiry into the receipt of ₹20 crore as aid from the UAE Red Crescent for the construction of 140 houses for landless families under the scheme in Thrissur.

Apex Council meet postponed again

HYDERABAD

The second meeting of the Apex Council, which was scheduled to be held via videoconferencing on August 25, has been postponed again due to "unavoidable circumstances". Union Minister

BJP dismisses 'theory' on ex-CJI as CM candidate

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The BJP has dismissed speculation that former Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi would be its chief ministerial candidate for the 2021 Assam election as a "mere theory". Veteran Congress leader and former Assam Chief Minister Tarun Gogoi said on Saturday that the ex-CJI was on a list of names the BJP was considering for projecting as the next CM. "I am not surprised because the former CJI gradually entered politics by accepting the Rajya Sabha offer after the BJP was happy with his judgment in the Ayodhya Ram Mandir case," the former CM said.

State BJP spokesperson said he had no words for reacting to "anything that is like building castles in the air".

Akhil Gogoi to be CM face for proposed party

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Jailed anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act activist Akhil Gogoi will be the chief ministerial candidate of a new regional political party, his peasant rights group Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) said. The announcement followed an initiative by the Congress to form a "grand alliance" with the All India United Democratic Front and other "like-minded" parties to take on the BJP and its allies in the 2021 Assembly poll.

"We have decided to form a political party and contest the next State election with Akhil Gogoi as our CM face," KMSS president Bhaskar De Saikia told journalists on Saturday evening.

He added the party's name would be decided after Mr. Gogoi is released from prison.

The KMSS hopes Mr. Gogoi would be released within two months.

A-G declines plea against Swara

Petitioner says she differs with Venugopal, seeks consent of Solicitor-General

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Attorney-General (A-G) K.K. Venugopal has refused consent to a plea to initiate criminal contempt action against actor Swara Bhaskar for "scandalising" the Supreme Court, saying her comment regarding the Ramjanmabhoomi title dispute verdict "appears to be a factual one" and her "perception". The prior consent of the Attorney-General is required for the Supreme Court to initiate criminal contempt action in a case.

The contempt plea was filed by a Karnataka resident, Usha Shetty. She has now sought the consent of Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta. She wrote to him on Sunday, saying she "respectfully differs" with Mr. Venugopal.

The contempt plea refers to a public address made by Ms. Bhaskar in a meeting or-


[Ms. Bhaskar's] comment refers to the judgment of the Supreme Court, and is not an attack on the institution. This does not offer any comment on the Supreme Court itself or say anything that would scandalise or tend to scandalise, or lower or tend to lower the authority of the Supreme Court

K.K. VENUGOPAL
ATTORNEY GENERAL

ganised by Mumbai Collective following the top court's judgment in the Ramjanmabhoomi title dispute case in November last year. The petition quoted Ms. Bhaskar saying "We are living in a country where the Supreme Court of our country states that the demolition of Babri Masjid was unlawful and in the same judgment rewards the same people who brought down the mosque".

Mr. Venugopal, in a two-page note dated August 21, said, "The statement in the

first part appears to be a factual one, and is a perception of the speaker." "The comment refers to the judgment of the Supreme Court, and is not an attack on the institution. This does not offer any comment on the Supreme Court itself or say anything that would scandalise or tend to scandalise, or lower or tend to lower the authority of the Supreme Court. In my opinion, this statement does not constitute criminal contempt," the A-G wrote.

The top law officer and

constitutional authority then proceeded to the second statement allegedly made by Ms. Bhaskar: "We are now in a situation where our courts are not sure whether they believe in the Constitution or not..."

'Vague statement'

Mr. Venugopal said this was a vague statement not related to any particular court. "I do not think that this is a case where the offence of scandalising the court or lowering the authority of the court would arise. I therefore decline consent to initiate contempt proceedings against Ms. Swara Bhaskar," he concluded.

Ms. Shetty said in her petition that Ms. Bhaskar's statements were not only a "cheap publicity stunt to get a brief applause" but also an attempt to turn the masses to resist and revolt against the Supreme Court.

Pakistan denies Dawood's presence in its territory

Aug. 18 order mentioned former don's addresses, passports

SUHASINI HAIDAR

NEW DELHI

Pakistan denied that two Special Regulatory Orders (SROs) issued by its Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), which included Dawood Ibrahim and other designated terrorists believed to be in Pakistan, amounted to an 'admission' that Dawood Ibrahim lives there.

The listings published on

August 18 included three re-

sidential addresses and five

Pakistani passports issued to

the former underworld don

and directed Pakistani auth-

orities to ensure that Ibra-

him and hundreds of others

named in the UNSC ISIL and

al-Qaeda sanctions commit-

tee list of designated terro-

rists would be denied access

to funds, arms and transi-

ture through Pakistan.

"The assertions made by some sections of the Indian media, as to Pakistan admitting to the presence of certain listed individuals on its territory, based on the information contained in the SRO, are baseless and mis-leading," said a Foreign Mi-

nistry statement, also deny-

ing that the measures were

'new'.

Pakistan also said the

SROs were issued "periodi-

cally as a routine matter"

and the same list has been



Dawood Ibrahim

sued in the past, including

last in 2019.

Government sources, ho-

wever, said Dawood Ibrahim

and LeT operations chief Za-

ki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi had

not been included in past

lists issued by Pakistan,

though they appear on SROs

from 2015 and 2019 on the

MFA website now. They sug-

gested those had been 'back-

dated' to comply with stipu-

lations of the Financial

Action Task Force (FATF),

where Pakistan's actions are

both included. Pakistan has

repeatedly said it has no

knowledge of their present

whereabouts.

Officials said that to com-

plete its FATF commitment,

Pakistan will have to add

both Ibrahim and Lakhvi to

their own watchlist, which

would be the first time it will

acknowledge Dawood Ibra-

him Kaskar, wanted in India

for masterminding the

Mumbai blasts of 1993 in

which 250 people were

killed, as a terrorist.

In October, the FATF plen-

ary session is expected to

take a decision on whether

Pakistan would be cleared

from the 'greylist' it is on or

be downgraded to a 'black-

list' as a 'high-risk jurisdiction'

and face stringent finan-

cial sanctions. Pakistan

has thus far cleared 14 of a

27-point action plan handed

down by the FATF, directing

Cong. CMs, 10 State units back Sonia

Chorus follows letter seeking change

SOBHANA K. NAIR

NEW DELHI

The chorus to retain Sonia Gandhi as the Congress presi-
dent started hours after a news report about a letter written by senior Congress leaders demanding clarity on the leadership question. All the four Congress Chief Ministers – Ashok Gehlot, Captain Amarinder Singh, Bhupesh Baghel and V. Narayansamy – along with more than ten State units

have come out in her sup-

port.

The outpouring came a day before the Congress Working Committee is to meet, making the outcome a foregone conclusion. The CWC has three options: one,

Sonia Gandhi can be pressed to continue as a full

time president foregoing the

"interim" tag; second,

Rahul Gandhi who was elected

for a term till 2022, is per-

suaded to return to the post;

and third to place a dummy

candidate, who can sit-in for

the Gandhi family.

The current CWC is heavily tilted in favour of the

Gandhi family. However,

SC gives court a month for Babri verdict

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has given a court that is hearing the Babri Masjid demolition case against several accused persons, including prominent BJP leaders like L.K. Advani, Murali Manohar Joshi and Uma Bharti, time till September 30 to complete the trial and deliver its verdict.

A three-judge Bench led by Justice Rohinton Nariman allowed a request made by Special Judge S.K. Yadav for more time. The deadline was August 31. The Bench noted that the trial was drawing to a close and a month more would be sufficient to complete the proceedings.

The BJP and the Sangh Parivar leaders are accused of criminal conspiracy which led to the demolition of the 16th-century mosque in Ayodhya on December 6, 1992.



Sonia Gandhi

among the members, Ghulam Nabi Azad, Anand Sharma and Jitin Prasada had endorsed the letter to Ms.

Gandhi asking her to settle

the leadership question.

Another CWC member Deependra Hooda's father Bhupinder Hooda is also one of the signatories of that letter.

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot in a series of tweets said at this "crucial juncture" in the fight to save the ethos of democracy, Ms. Gandhi should continue to lead the party.

"But if she has made up her mind, I believe @RahulGandhi should come ahead and be the Congress president as the country faces the biggest challenge," Mr. Gehlot said.

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Not possible to fully block Chinese firms: officials

They say many companies have linkages of some sort with military

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

Despite the uproar against the use of Chinese products amid the border stand-off in eastern Ladakh and the government's decision to ban several apps, government officials say it is not possible to fully decouple the trend due to the substantial investments by Chinese companies in India.

Intelligence assessments have cautioned on the direct and indirect links many companies have with the People's Liberation Army (PLA).

"While some measures can be taken, several Chinese investments are quite substantive. It is not possible to fully block them. A worrisome factor is that these Chinese companies have linkages of some sort with the Chinese military," one government official said on

condition of anonymity.

In June 2017, China passed a national intelligence law, which gave Beijing powers over Chinese companies' overseas investments as well. As per the Annual report of the U.S. Secretary of Defence to the Congress on the "Military and Security Developments involving the People's Republic of China 2019", this law requires Chinese companies, such as Huawei, ZTE and TikTok to support, provide assistance, and cooperate in China's national intelligence work, wherever they operate.

Article 7 of the law states, "Any organisation or citizen shall support, assist and cooperate with the state intelligence work in accordance with the law... The state protects individuals and organisations that support, assist and cooperate



Strict action: India has so far banned 106 Chinese apps, including TikTok, citing national security.

with national intelligence work."

It has direct security implications for all overseas Foreign Direct Investment from China, a second official said.

Intelligence assessments have flagged some large Chinese companies with major presence in India having direct or indirect links with the PLA. They include Xindia Steels Limited, China Electronics Technology Group Corporation (CETC), Hu-

wei, Alibaba and Tencent.

For instance, Xindia Steels Limited is considered one of the largest joint ventures between India and China and has commissioned a 0.8 mtpa iron ore pelletisation facility in Koppal district of Karnataka at a cost of over ₹250 crore. Its main investor is Xinxing Cathay International Group Co. Ltd. which, as per its website, is "reorganized, reconstructed and unhooked from previous

production department and subordinate enterprises and institutions of the General Logistics Department of the PLA".

Huawei, which has generated global concern over its 5G services, was founded by Ren Zhengfei, a former deputy director of the PLA's engineering corps in 1987. A government decision on its bid for 5G services in India is expected shortly.

Multi-million funding

CETC in 2018 announced \$46 million investment in a 200 MW photo-voltaic manufacturing unit in Andhra Pradesh. Officials pointed out that CETC is China's leading military electronics manufacturer, and also makes Hikvision CCTV cameras.

It has been implicated by the U.S. Department of Justice in at least three cases of illegal exports and many employees have been convicted for military espionage, the

second official stated.

CETC also provides technology used for human rights abuses in Xinjiang, where around one million are held in re-education camps, assessments noted.

Another aspect that raised red flags is Chinese investments in Indian technology start-ups. The U.S.-China Economic and Security Review Commission, a U.S. Congressional commission, said in its 2019 report, "The Chinese government's military-civil fusion policy aims to spur innovation and economic growth through an array of policies and other government-supported mechanisms, including Venture Capital VC funds, while leveraging the fruits of civilian innovation for China's defence sector."

This raises a question mark on Chinese VC investments in India, including big names like Alibaba and Tencent, the second official said.

no visitors or audience are to be allowed, and in case of outdoor shootings coordination has to be done with the local police and the administration. "Staggered call and pack-up timings for different production units shall be ensured by studios having multiple sets," the advisory states.

Common locations such as sets, cafeteria, make-up rooms, edit rooms, vanity vans and washrooms have to be sanitised regularly. The Ministry has advised the industry to discontinue usage of lapel microphones.

Costumes, hair wigs and make-up items for actors should not be shared. Make-up artists and hairstylists have been advised to use PPE. A designated COVID-19 supervisor shall be nominated from among the cast and the crew.

Centre releases SOP for resuming film shooting

Part of restarting economic activities

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar on Sunday released standard operating procedures (SOPs) for the resumption of production of films and television series.

Announcing the decision on Doordarshan, Mr. Javadekar said the SOP was part of the decision to restart all economic activities.

"Aspects such as scenes, sequences, set-ups, camera locations, positions of various crew members, seating arrangements, food and catering arrangements, staggered meal timings, etc. shall be planned while giving due consideration to physical distancing norms," the advisory states.

The Ministry has advised that a minimum number of cast and crew be involved,

MHA had warned of plot to trigger blasts

Outfits backed by Pak. planned attacks

S. VIJAY KUMAR
CHENNAI

Against the backdrop of the Delhi police recovering large quantity of explosives from the house of a suspected IS operative in Uttar Pradesh, it has come to light that the Ministry of Home Affairs had warned of terror modules of religious fundamentalists, backed by Pakistan intelligence, triggering blasts in an Indian city.

Acting on intelligence inputs, the MHA issued an alert to all States two days before Independence Day that members of some banned outfits had planned to cause IED blasts in Jammu & Kashmir, West Bengal and some other places in the north-east along the Indo-Myanmar and Indo-Bangladesh border, police sources told *The Hindu* on Sunday.

The MHA also relied on interception of a conversa-

tion between two foreign agents who quoted a Pakistani-based source as saying that "something big is being planned in one of the cities in India", the sources said.

The alert said Pakistan's ISI and handlers stationed in other places had tasked some absconding gangsters to vitiate the communal atmosphere in Punjab, while another input detailed a plan of Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen, Bangladesh, to trigger low-intensity blasts in West Bengal. JMB chief Salahudin Salehin was reported to have visited a number of places in West Bengal and Jharkhand in March-April.

Another banned organisation, Sahadat-e-al-Hikma, was also reported to have been involved in imparting training to radicalised youth in Muzirabad, Uttar Dinajpur and Burdwan in West Bengal.

New publisher for book on Delhi riots, say authors

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Sonali Chitalkar and Preerna Malhotra, was set to be released next month. The authors organised a launch event in which BJP leader Kapil Mishra was the guest of honour, leading to a backlash on social media.

Mr. Mishra had given a speech a day before the riots broke out, asking for the anti-CAA protesters to be removed from the area. The authors write about what they call "the urban Naxal and jihadi riot model".

The book, *Delhi Riots 2020: The Untold Story*, by advocate Monika Arora and Delhi University teachers

Police raid terror suspect's house

Large quantity of explosives, IS flag recovered from Mustakim Khan in U.P.

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi police recovered a large quantity of explosives and an Islamic State flag from the house of Mohammad Mustakim Khan in Uttar Pradesh's Balrampur a day after he was arrested in the national capital, a senior police officer said on Sunday.

An alleged IS operative, Khan, armed with two pressure cooker IEDs, was arrested in central Delhi's Ridge Road area on Friday night following a brief exchange of fire. Khan was sent to eight-day police custody by a Delhi court on Saturday.

Packed jackets
A Delhi police Special Cell team took him to his Badhi-

yaa Bhaisaahi village in Balrampur district. A brown jacket containing three explosives packets and a blue check jacket containing four explosives packets were re-

covered from his house, a senior officer said.

"Each explosives packet, removed from the jackets, was wrapped with transparent tape which contained

explosives and cardboard sheet pasted with ball bearings, and electric wires were coming out from it," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Special Cell) P.S. Kushwah said in Delhi.

The police on Sunday conducted raids at several places. Two bicycle shop owners were among those questioned in Uttar Pradesh, possibly over the origin of the ball bearings found by the police.

Khan's father Kafeel Ahmed and wife Ayesha were also questioned, an officer said.

Mustakim Khan had planned to carry out a "lone wolf" strike at a heavy footfall area in the national capital, the police said.

False reports on vaccine availability: Serum Institute

Phase 3 trials still under way, it says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PUNE

Serum Institute of India (SII) on Sunday clarified that claims in the media regarding the availability of its COVID-19 vaccine, Covishield, in 73 days are completely "false" and "conjectural".

It said Covishield would be commercialised once the trials were proven successful and all the requisite regulatory approvals were in place.

"The phase-3 trials for the Oxford-AstraZeneca vaccine are still under way. And only once the vaccine is proven immunogenic and efficacious, SII will confirm its availability, officially," it said.

Adar Poonawalla, CEO, SII, had earlier said at least 300 million doses would be ready by December.

Tablighi cases become diplomatic headache

Several countries have expressed concern to New Delhi over the continued custody of their nationals

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

Five months after the government ordered a crackdown on all members of the Tablighi Jamaat present at their headquarters or 'Markaz' in New Delhi when a number of coronavirus cases were detected, the matter is becoming a diplomatic headache for the government.

The action ordered by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) in March included 2,550 foreigners from about 45 countries who belonged to the ultra orthodox Islamic sect; and several countries have expressed their concern to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) over the

continued custody of their nationals in India, diplomats and officials told *The Hindu*. The MEA has been left to coordinate the various cases with "real time coordination" with the MHA and the Bureau of Immigration, even as they deal with the diplomatic misses, say officials.

Earlier this week, Bangladesh Foreign Secretary Masud Bin Momen said he had raised the issue of about 173 Bangladeshis still being held in India when he met Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla in Dhaka on Wednesday, asking him to expedite their return. According to diplomatic sources privy to the meeting, the Bangladesh go-

vernment is particularly worried as many of them have run out of money, and may not be able to pay the fines of ₹5,000-₹10,000 in order for them to leave.

"The Bangladesh Foreign Secretary during his meeting with the Foreign Secretary

acknowledged that most of their nationals have returned home, and we will continue to work with the relevant authorities to ensure that for others who remain, their return will be facilitated," said MEA spokesperson Anurag Srivastava in response to a question from *The Hindu*, adding that about 550 foreigners charged in the Tablighi cases had been able to leave thus far, while 1,030 have been allowed to leave by courts.

Indonesian and Malaysian officials, whose nationals make up the majority of cases, have also raised the issue of their nationals not being able to return both through

their embassies and even at a recent India-ASEAN meeting of senior officials, where such bilateral and consular matters are rarely raised.

The U.S. Embassy said it had been in contact with the Government of India on the arrests of about six U.S. nationals. "The safety and security of American citizens is the Department of State's highest priority. We are in contact with multiple U.S. citizens who were arrested by the Indian authorities in connection with the Tablighi Jamaat case," a U.S. Embassy spokesperson said.

(With inputs from Kallol Bhattacharjee and Vijaita Singh)

Group gifts sanitary pads to Himanta

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

A group of women's rights advocates has gifted sanitary pads to Assam Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma and the Assam State Disaster Management Authority to draw the government's attention to the plight of women living in flood relief shelters.

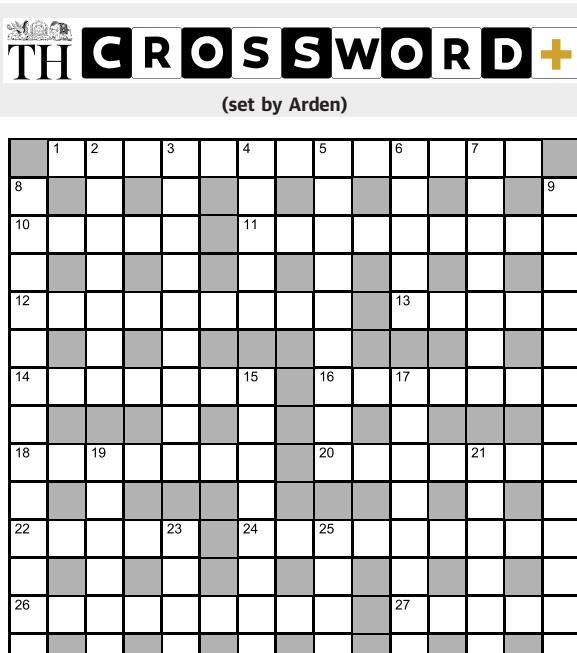
"We delivered the gift boxes, each containing 300 pads and hygiene kits, toward including menstrual hygiene products in the list of essential materials provided at the shelters," said Mayuri Bhattacharjee of the Dignity in Floods campaign.

TH CROSSWORD

13022

(set by Arden)

Are you good with numbers or better with words? Pick from Sudokus and crosswords.
at <https://qrgo.page.link/jipTn>



ACROSS

- Shouldn't go bad, could be traded (6,3,4)
- Anorak too small to wear, don't bother initially (5)
- Fifty or ten? Get corrected glasses (9)
- Whistle-blower briefly backed by political group gets popular votes (9)
- May be a factor in only one animal (5)

SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★

Solution to puzzle 13021

R	E	C	I	P	F	O	O	L	S	C	A	P
E	O	H	T	N	I	A	A					
B	A	L	I	O	R	E	N					
U	L	L	I	A	A	A	A					
T	R	A	V	A	I	R	I					
R	A	V	A	I	R	I						



FREEPIK

The learning must go on

Like colleges, corporates too have moved online to resume their training and development programmes for graduate hires

■ MADHUMITHA SRINIVASAN

During the pandemic, the spotlight has largely been on educational institutions that are shifting to online methods of learning. Several companies are making this transition too; specifically, departments that handle training of graduate hires and new recruits.

For instance, Infosys conducted its Foundation Training programme virtually this year and enabled this transition midway for 63 batches simultaneously

with close to 5,000 people being trained across different stages of their training

Thirumala Arohi Mamunoor, Vice President & Head of Education-Training & Assessment, Infosys, gives insights on how corporates share similar challenges and goals in learning and development.

What is the focus of the Foundation Training programme? How different is it from courses offered in colleges?

The Foundation Training programme focusses on enabling the graduate hires to develop enterprise applications that require training on full-stack technologies. In the final phase, they work on a capstone project that provides them with the experience of how a real-life project is executed in the Infosys context.

Apart from technical skills, soft skills such as communication skills, corporate etiquette, time

management, teamwork and design thinking skills form a part of the training, which focuses on aiding the individuals' transition from an education campus to a corporate environment.

These are different from college courses, as they are 'training' programmes geared towards enabling a powerful talent ecosystem that can build and scale capabilities of the future. They are built on the new construct of 'hybrid

jobs' that combine technology, domain and industry experience.

What are some of the challenges in implementing this programme online?

One is the non-availability of hardware and software infrastructure and stable Internet connectivity that hampers online learning. Another is the disjointed collaboration tools that impact the virtual classroom experience. A third is the lack of peer learning opportunities. Despite all this, learners are willing to spend time, energy and effort to improve their skills and that is a welcome sign.

Is Infosys considering adopting this online mode of training for the long term?

The future of learning, like the future of work, will be the hybrid model. To transition to conducting all the training online, we are building collaboration tools that

How can soon-to-be graduates and students make the most of this period to improve their skills and employability?

Students can focus on developing their skills in areas that are in demand like full stack development, Cloud Computing, Cybersecurity, Data Science, Machine Learning, Big Data, IoT, AI and automation and blockchain. Getting certified in these areas will be an added advantage. In addition to the hard skills, improving their problem solving, collaboration, communication and persuasion skills will make them work effectively in project teams.

Classroom time will be utilised for in-person discussions, exchange of knowledge and ideas and to nurture critical thinking. By leveraging our existing online learning platforms and incorporating these new aspects, we will be able to make virtual trainings viable across the board soon.



Are you uncertain about a career option? Do you lack the freedom to choose a subject that you want to pursue? Do you feel low on self-confidence? A Q&A column to assuage your doubts



OFF THE EDGE

NANDINI RAMAN

I am pursuing an M.A. in Sanskrit. Am I eligible to write the IAS exam? – Gaurav Tiwari

Dear Gaurav,

Yes, absolutely. The academic requirements, as per the IAS eligibility criteria, is that the candidate must hold a degree from government-recognised universities or possess an equivalent qualification and produce proof of having passed the said exam. Sign up to an online IAS coaching course that helps you develop some sense of routine and discipline to start working towards your goal. It will also familiarise you with the exam pattern, questions and help build up speed. You can still study Sanskrit in your free time and keep that going as well. Good luck.

I am a third-year, BTech computer science student. Of late, I have become interested in economics and banking, and want to get into the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). I am also interested in data science and am planning to learn econometrics. Can I make it to RBI, given my engineering background? – Prasanth Medicharla

Dear Prasanth,

The RBI continuously invites applications for two direct entries now, across the clerical and the managerial cadre. Detailed information with entrance exam dates and criteria for application is available on <http://www.rbi.org.in>. Study that in detail and prepare extensively for these exams. Good luck.

I am in my first year of B.A. Sociology (Hons) and want to do an MA too. What are my career options? – Basudev Dash

Dear Basudev,

You could do a MA in Sociology and, post that, employment opportunities are available across multiple sectors such as research

firms, public health and welfare organisations across local and central government, law firms, international organisations, advertising agencies, public relations firms, survey and polling organisations to police and probation services. You should introspect and identify what part of sociology you enjoy and where would you like to make a contribution while working. Best wishes.

I graduated in Mechanical Engineering last year and I am currently working in an EPC company. I want to pursue my MS in Atmospheric Science. Is it feasible? Should I shift my stream or do something in the existing one? – Balasubramanian G

Dear Balasubramanian,

Yes, it is both possible and feasible. I would like to understand, though, what is it that you want to do thereafter? Are you not enjoying the EPC job? What are you passionate about; what gives you joy and happiness? Is Atmospheric Science a hobby or a deep passion? How young are you? There are plenty jobs available in that field, including air pollution specialist, air quality scientist, alternative energy consultant, atmospheric science researcher, climate change analyst, educator, environmental impact assessor, environmental monitoring scientist, environmental scientist, a meteorologist and so on, but are you convinced that this is what your heart wants? It is almost like reinventing the wheel. Could this be a keen hobby that you can engage with while continuing your EPC job? Work on a cost-benefit analysis and identify the pros and cons of both and then take a evaluated call. Best wishes.

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The writer is a practising counsellor and a trainer. She has worked extensively with students and young adults across a range of issues. Send your questions to eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com with the subject line 'Off the edge'. Set designated hours for

E-LEARNING

One step at a time

Transitioning to online learning may seem like a seismic shift. Here are some tips to help you settle into the new system.

■ SARASWATHY RAMAMOORTHY

The COVID-19 pandemic has left everyone in a state of conflict. And nowhere is this more manifest than in education. Despite the uncertainty and speculation surrounding it, e-learning is here to stay and it is time for students to adapt to it. Below are six strategies that they can adopt:

E-class vs. traditional

Don't discriminate between online and traditional learning. Take notes during class. Hold yourself accountable and push yourself to be more dedicated. Even though remote learning is flexible, stick to a schedule. If you find it difficult to cope, work with a friend. Find the right person to support and motivate you. Also, a bit of healthy competition between your friend and you will bring out your best performance.

Stick to a schedule

Don't fall victim to the vicious cycle of waking up late, sleeping late, and then waking up late again. E-learning's flexibility factor can be both favourable and fatal. The online class is as difficult as a traditional class. So, ensure you don't lag behind by creating a weekly and daily study schedule, designating hours as per priority, setting deadlines for assignments, projects, and self-study, and adhering to these diligently.

Social distance from social media

Remember when your worst nightmare was getting caught using a phone in class? Well, now your worst nightmare is not having a phone, tablet, or laptop to attend your online classes. The numerous notifications ranging from 'New Releases on Netflix' to 'You were mentioned in a comment' can easily derail you from the study track. So mute, or better still, turn off such notifications. Set designated hours for



being on social media. If this doesn't help, resort to website blocking apps to help you focus during the stipulated study time.

Set up your study space

Even though e-learning about flexibility, create a well-defined, neat, and organised space to attend online classrooms and to study in. Ensure the space is as far away as possible from your sleeping and entertainment spaces, as well as from foot traffic at home. Equip it with all the essentials like study material to necessary technological support. Even though the class is online, sit and behave as you would in a traditional class.

Participate actively

It is crucial to contribute your ideas to class discussions. This isn't just about grades, but about learning. Ask and answer ques-

tions, and actively engage. Collaborate with your peers in brainstorming sessions for projects and sharing of resources. Try using apps to brainstorm ideas.

Have a virtual social life

Social distancing and remote learning don't mean you can't have a social life. Do it virtually! Building and maintaining your social network is especially critical in times like this, as your peers are a steady source of ideas, support, and inspiration. Your friends will also appreciate your help. Remember, it is all about having and maintaining a balance and let this only be a re-creation and not a complete distraction.

The transition to online learning is a seismic shift for everyone. If you feel overwhelmed, keep these tips in mind and start by taking one step at a time. That is more than enough to take you in the right direction.

The writer is co-founder and Chief Marketing Officer at Learning Matters Pvt. Ltd, a Bengaluru-based ed-tech company. Contact@learningmatters.xyz

SCHOLARSHIPS

IIT Kharagpur CORAL Junior/Senior Research Fellowship

IIT Kharagpur invites applications from postgraduate degree holders to work on the project "A Biotechnological Approach to Elucidate Adaptation Mechanism, Migration Pattern and Reproductive Biology of Indicator Temperate Alpine Plants in the Himalayas in Response to Changing Climate (BBI)".

ELIGIBILITY: Candidates below 27 years, who hold a master's degree in Science or Engineering. Must be NET/GATE qualified and have relevant experience in remote sensing and modelling and two years of relevant experience (for SRF).

PRIZES AND REWARDS: Up to ₹31,000 per month

DEADLINE: August 31

APPLICATION: Online

www.b4s.in/edge/DLT3

National Meritorious Invention Awards NRDC

The National Research Development Corporation invites applications from Indian students. It offers tax-free cash awards to meritorious inventions in three categories: National Innovation Award, National Societal Innovation Award and National Budding Innovators Award.

PRIZES AND AWARDS: Variable awards

DEADLINE: August 31

APPLICATION: Online

www.b4s.in/edge/DLT3

The Dalai Lama Trust Postgraduate Scholarship

The Department of Education, Tibetan Children's Educational and Welfare Fund, invites applications from postgraduate degree holders.

PRIZES AND AWARDS: Up to ₹5 Lakh

DEADLINE: August 31

APPLICATION: Online

www.b4s.in/edge/NMIS

Courtesy: Buddy4Study

VASANTDADA SUGAR INSTITUTE
Manjari (BK) Tal- Haveli Dist - Pune 412307 Maharashtra India
Ph: 020-26902100, 26902171/72, Fax: 26902244 Email - registrar@visugar.com

ADMISSION OPEN

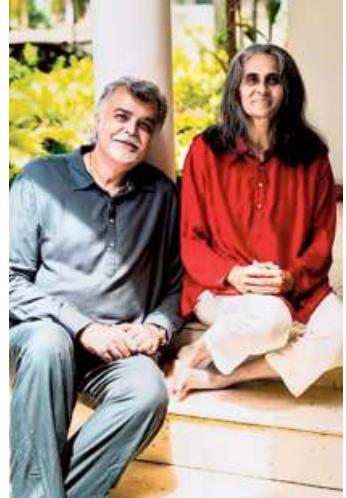
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4. Sugar Engineering Diploma (SED)	4. Juice Supervision
5. Sugarcane Development (SCD)	5. E.T.P. Operation and Maintenance
6. M.Sc. Environmental Sciences	
7. M.Sc. Wine, Brewing & Alcohol Technology	

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The Extended Last Date of applications is : 31st August 2020 Director General

All dressed up



ANASUYA MENON

"Not everything an elderly person confined to his or her bed wears needs to look like hospital clothes or night wear," says Ashima Bhan, who recently launched Aaraam Se, an adaptive clothing line for the differently-abled, those with prosthetics, and the elderly, who may find movement difficult. Ashima has run her eponymous label in Kochi for five years now.

The functional clothes have no buttons, button holes, or tie-ups.

Wrap it up

Soumita Basu, who has psoriatic arthritis, founded her label Zyenika a year ago to offer solutions for people with various kinds of disabilities. "I had my own body to understand what I would have to do," says Soumita, who is based in Kolkata, and a wheelchair user. Zyenika has a wrap-up sari, which can be worn lying down and a slip on sari, which can be worn with little effort. She is working on a range of kurtas without buttons for men and on adaptive inner wear.

Visit [@zyenika on Instagram](https://zyenika.com)

Instead there are zippers, Velcro, and elastic. The core idea was to create designs that would make dressing easy for the wearer and the caregiver. She started with two basic design variations – one set of garments that opened at the back and the other that opened from the side. This makes them ideal for wheelchair-users, those confined to their beds, or those who find it difficult to dress themselves.

The collection includes kurta and shirts with Chinese collars, pyjamas, kaftans, and dresses that also open at the shoulders. In solid colours, they are made of locally-sourced fabric. Currently, the collection has 10 styles and Ashima says she will be adding to this.

Ashima is also working on stitched saris, a cross between a sari and a set *mundu*, complete with an elasticated underskirt. "For elderly women prone to osteoporosis and arthritis, self-dressing is a struggle, and inevitably it is a depressing shift from a sari to a 'nightie'. It does not have to be that way; there is a lot of scope to still dress with elegance and dignity," she says.

Visit [@aaramse.in on Instagram](https://aaramse.in)



No-fuss fabric

Kottayam-based Joe Ikareh has been designing for people with disabilities since 2015 under Move Ability. It began with his daughter, Tilotama's need for school uniforms, since she has a partially paralysed right arm. His wife, Murielle, who is a movement therapist, aided in the conception. It is not surprising he has now taken the plunge with another segment: clothes for those with autism. For starters, he sent some fabric samples to a child on the spectrum to test, and after a discussion with his mother, decided upon cotton viscose as the ideal material. He chose bold prints and added some magnets, which are concealed in the shirt's placket. Joe was delighted that the child loved the shirt and was excited by the sound of the magnets. "Children with autism are sensitive to fabric and it can affect their mood," says Joe, who had designed for an inclusive fashion show recently.

Visit [@moveability_clothing on Instagram](https://moveability.in)

Getting creative

Ekansh Trust, an NGO that works with people with disabilities, held an adaptive clothing design contest 'Ad-dress' last year in Pune. Fifteen design teams showcased their work on the runway. A year after the contest, founder of Ekansh, Anita Iyer says the Trust has come up with a catalogue of about 30 designs for people with disabilities. These designs can be accessed by anyone and modified according to their specifications and get it made to fit their body types. People can send in illustrations and ideas of designs, which would help people with disabilities. Ad-dress will be a continuing project of Ekansh, Anita says.

Visit [@addressnow on Instagram](https://addressnow.onInstagram), https://youtu.be/bfN_9jeCfDg

Blind fashion sense

Parul Sachdeva – a designer who has her own women's ethno casual range, Renati – brought out a capsule collection of clothing for people with visual impairment. The garments, which were made using textured fabric, had Braille tags attached to them. "This would give the wearer an idea of what colour the garment is, what is the pattern, the details of the fabric and the like," she says. "People with visual impairment cannot choose clothes with complex patterns; I believe, an initiative such as this would bring in some choice in clothing to them. It would also help them shop for their own clothes," she says. Done as part of a college project (Pearl Academy for Excellence), in 2017, Parul had showcased the range of five garments at a show organised by the Fashion Design Council of India. Parul, who is based in Jabalpur currently, is hoping to launch 6 Dots under her label, Renati, once the COVID-19 situation is under control, she says.

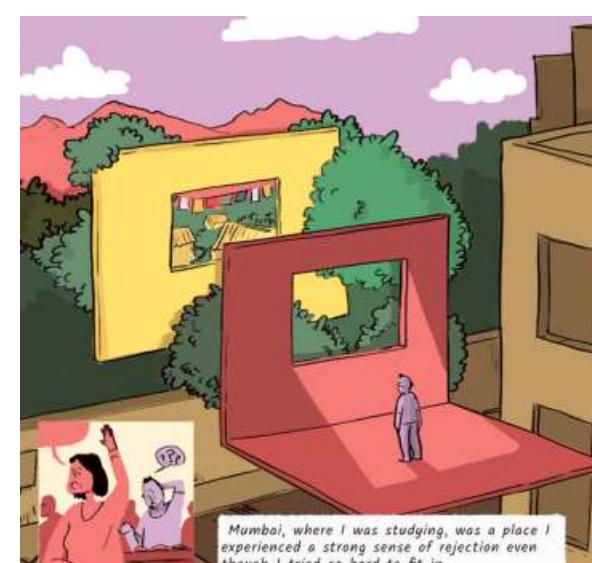
Visit [@parulsachdeva on Instagram](https://parulsachdeva.onInstagram)



Deep compression Tees

Mumbai-based Saakshi Mahnot, who works as a buyer, created a range of weighted T-shirts for children with autism as part of her project, while she was a student at NIFT in 2016. Using deep pressure therapy, (which involves applying mild pressure on a child's body as part of treatment), she designed a model, which "calms and comforts the wearer". "Weighted vests for autistic children can help them organise their sensory organs and balance their movement," says Meenakshi Agrawal, a special educator and a certified sensory

integration therapist. "Wearing the T shirt, gives the same sensation as receiving a hug," says Saakshi. After extensive research and working with Santosh Institute for Mentally Challenged and Autistic Children in Mumbai, Saakshi developed a prototype. She used cotton rib, a stretchable material and added six beach sand filled pouches within the T-shirt. "These are not daily wear T-shirts, but a child with autism can wear it up to two hours a day, during therapy time." These can be washed too, after removing the sand bags. *Saakshi can be reached @saakshimahnot on Instagram*



What it's like to be me

Mann Mela, a digital and travelling mental health museum, shares first-person stories of trauma, self-acceptance, recovery and growth

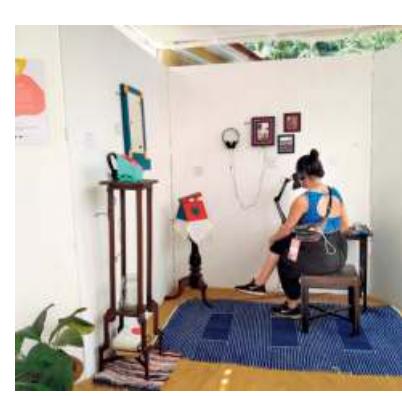
SWETA AKUNDI

It is *Persepolis* in colour and set in India – Imphal to Mumbai. Sadam Hanjabam has made a quasi-graphic novel of his journey in self-acceptance, from rising out of a mental health crisis to establishing Ya_All, a youth and queer-led and focussed organisation in the North-eastern region of India.

The illustrations are part of Mann Mela, one of India's first digital museums dedicated to sharing personal, autobiographical stories of mental health, from youth across India, in the age group of 18 to 35. "Overcoming my trauma and sharing my experiences on mental health and inclusion have been very overwhelming," reveals Sadam. Started by Sangath, Mann Mela is a step forward from its initiative, It's Okay To Talk, the latter being a blog of mental health diaries.

Through sharing people's experiences, Mann Mela hopes to tackle common misconceptions around mental conditions, break stigma associated and encourage seeking help.

"We wanted to capture first-person narratives but by utilising new media formats to talk about it in a much more



nuanced way. That means using illustrations, film, interactive videos, VR and so on," says Pattie Gonsalves, project head at It's Okay To Talk and founder of Mann Mela.

If Sadam's story is in an illustrated form, Chandigarh-based Tarini Chawla's story of being diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder, is in lightly animated chapters, voiced by her. Eight others are to join Sadam and Tarini's, and released monthly on the Mann Mela website.

Since April, Pattie and her team travelled to five places: New Delhi, Goa, Bhopal, Ahmedabad and Imphal, and



held group discussions of 72 people with lived experiences of mental health needs. A team of seven young mental health advocates and four mental health professionals, consulted with 38 participants from 10 cities that included technologists, artists, mental health experts, and researchers. "We also held a national mental health artist-in-residence programme with 10 young artists selected through a national application," adds Pattie.

Each story takes three to four months to create; the interviews are transcribed, scripts are written, and the video or artwork is created. "The person whose story it is, participates as much as possible, whether it is by lending audio or by reviewing and writing parts of the script," she says.

Sharing space

Well before the launch of this digital museum – before the pandemic struck – Mann Mela was envisioned as a travelling museum that would take the conversation of mental health from city to city. "The online museum was supposed to be more for archiving the artefacts we displayed in the physical spaces, but as things stand right now, we are going dig-

THE CREAKING TREE

Have you learnt French yet?



SHOVON CHOWDHURY

the Hawaiian guitar because of prior experience.

When I was a youth in Calcutta, and my mother asked whether I wanted guitar lessons, I agreed eagerly, imagining I would become a Bengali Eric Clapton, with girls climbing all over me. Unfortunately, it turned out to be a Hawaiian guitar, an instrument much beloved of cultured Bengali mothers. For those who do not know, it is a plumpish instrument that you place flat on your lap like a baby who needs a diaper change, and is played with the help of a steel cylinder and fake finger nails, useful for slashing your throat when the pain and humiliation become too much for you. It is used mainly to play Robindro Sangeet and Nazrul Geeti, and, if you are an optimist, 'Smoke on the Water'.

The first question that any Bengali girl of good sense asks before deciding whether to reject a potential boyfriend is "Does he play the Hawaiian guitar?" The popularity of the Naxalite movement in the early '70s in Calcutta can also be explained by the fact that many young boys ran away from home to avoid playing it. Faced with this as one of my only two musical options, memories of pain and suffering came flooding back to me.

+

So, it looks like pots and pans for me. I have found myself a metal ladle, which weighs just right in my hand, and I am working on my sense of rhythm. When the number of COVID-19 cases hits 100,000 per day, and we are blamed for not banging pots enough, I will be out there on the street, and you can rest assured that my skills will astonish the neighbourhood.

No pots or pans were damaged in Shovon Chowdhury's most recent novel, *Murder With Bengali Characteristics*.



+ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

ital-first," says Pattie.

A prototype of the museum, hosted in Goa in February, is a precursor to what the travelling museum will eventually entail. "We wanted it to be an immersive space, where people can interact with other people's journeys and feel like they are getting to know the other person better."

A human library of sorts: corporeal. "For example in the (One Day in the Life Of...) stations, we recreated a section of this person's bedroom with different objects, and headphones were provided to listen to audio cues, of that individual telling you their story. So it feels like like you are with them."

However, now, when the museum travels again, things would have to be changed. Six people in a booth, sharing headphones, touching a screen, will be out of the question. "Like museums all over, we will have to innovate," says Pattie.

Underlining the necessity of relaying personal stories of mental health, she says, "People understand those much better than an intellectual sounding PSA [public service announcement]". Moreover, she adds, that it helps take into account the varying socio-political realities in the country. Growing up in a conflict-embattled area, or being of a certain sexual orientation influences mental health in separate ways.

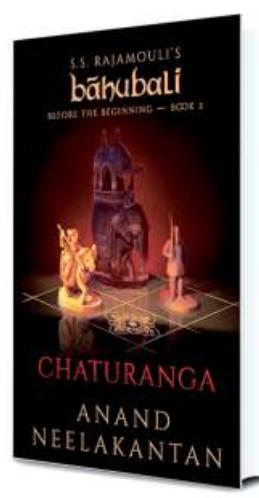
Alongside the stories, they also have learning resources, similarly illustrated in an easy-to-understand-and-share manner in both English and Hindi. "It tells you that if they have recovered, you can too. That kind of solidarity encourages people to seek help," she says.

But even when you do want to seek help, it is readily available in India – a country that has far less clinical psychologists than it has psychiatrists? Perhaps not, "which is why," says Pattie, "we want to train non-specialists to be able to provide first aid. We want to equip young people with life skills that allow them to help themselves and people around them before they need to leverage external support."

Visit mannmela.in

A ND-NDE

CM YK



'I love history, it is so full of lies'

Author Anand Neelakantan discusses *Chaturanga*, the second book in the *Baahubali* prequel trilogy, in which he traces the journeys of young Sivagami and Kattappa

SANGEETHA DEVI DUNDOO

It is nearly impossible to not recall the images of actors Ramya Krishna and Sathyaraj from the *Baahubali* movies while reading writer Anand Neelakantan's *Chaturanga* (published by Westland), the second book in the prequel trilogy *Baahubali: Before the Beginning*.

The story takes off where Book 1, *The Rise of Sivagami*, ended. Young Sivagami wants to avenge her father's death, and a young Kattappa is at crossroads of serving the king and preserving his family honour. *Chaturanga* is a page turner, drawing readers into Mahishmati that is in the middle of a political whirlwind. Excerpts from an interview:

What made you choose Sivagami for the trilogy?

• Greyness in any character fascinates me. In the world of *Baahubali*, the hero is almost flawless and the villain is as dark as coal. I found shades of grey in Sivagami and Kattappa. A woman who is ruthless enough to order the assassination of her beloved 'son' and a slave who is loyal enough to kill his beloved 'nephew' and 'master' are worth writing about.

We see Kattappa and Sivagami as middle-aged people on screen. Did that give you more freedom to develop their childhood and adolescence?

• I had to move away from the film's realm and yet stay close to it, as this is an official prequel. Adolescence is the period that forms character. What made Sivagami and Kattappa the personalities



World of fantasy Anand Neelakantan • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

they are in the film... that is what my story is about.

Mahishmati is a fictitious kingdom in an undisclosed time period. How did you establish the time for a trilogy that pre-dates this era?

• Though the period is not specified in the film, there are enough indications about the era. The middle-eastern merchant who comes to Kattappa with a sword, the architecture of the sets, social structure and the costumes talk about the period. In my mind, I fixed it as 8th-Century Deccan, and my research centred on that period. Otherwise it is difficult to orient the story world, which is essential for such historic fiction.

In your book, Mahishmati is

dark, vicious and has secrets to hide. How did you construct this gloomy kingdom?

• I wanted to stay away from an idealistic world. I don't believe that it exists. I wanted to bring out all the glory and gory facets of the medieval era. It is reflection of our times too. It gives me the freedom to create fleshed-out characters with many layers and give valid agendas for each character.

Tell us about your writing process.

• My writing has always been visual. I am a film buff; though I read a lot, I consume stories more in a visual format. Even when I write stories, I think of camera angles, frame setting, lighting, mood and the expressions of the character.

That has helped me stride the worlds of novels and screenplays. I think visually, and copy that in simple words.

In *Chaturanga*, Sivagami is the lone woman in an administrative position. Did you consider archetypes of women in history while shaping her character?

• I love history. It is so full of lies, and it is the diet of any fiction writer. Sivagami is based on archetypes of women who made a mark in history. From Draupadi to Cleopatra through Razia Sultana, Indira Gandhi and Jayalalithaa, there are many women who made it big in the ruthless world of men. Their stories fascinated me, and Sivagami has a slice of many of these historical characters in her.

Socio-political commentary like how Somadeva and Bijjaladeva use religion/spirituality to divert attention from the failings of the government seem contemporary...

• Using religion for power is nothing new. Pop Spirituality is a glittering cloak worn by the power-hungry. The marriage of religion and power is eternal.

So, no wonder when I mention it in my books, you feel it is contemporary. Even after a thousand years, this relation between religion and politics will remain relevant.

When can we expect Book 3?

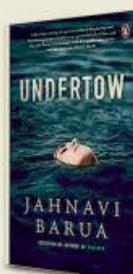
• I have finished 90% of Book 3. I am waiting for some reader feedback to wrap up the trilogy. I expect it to be out by December 2020.



HOMING IN

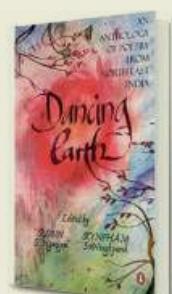
Janice Pariat, winner of the Yuva Puruskar (Young Writer) Award from the Sahitya Akademi, recommends a **Reading List** of powerful, poetic writings both from and about Northeast India

MEGHNA MAJUMDAR



Undertow by Jahnavi Barua

Where is home? How does belonging grow? Follow the journey of a young girl back to her ancestral home in Guwahati, where she strikes up a slow, surprising friendship with her grandfather. Jahnavi is a deft storyteller, intimate with the places in which her stories are set.

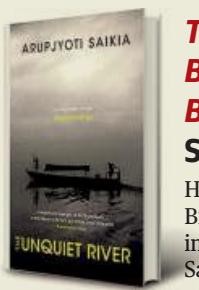


Dancing Earth: An Anthology of Poetry from North East India, edited by Robin S Ngangom and Kynpham S Nongkynrih

How better to get to know a place than through its poetry? Here, an incredible array of voices brought together from so many corners of the region. Dip into this as you would into a treasure.

The Legends of Pensam by Mamang Dai

We hear so much about collections of "intertwined" short stories now, but Mamang has done that long before this became fashionable. These magical, powerful stories from Arunachal are an absolute pleasure to read – Mamang's prose is poetry, and always carefully treads that line between the real and fantastic.



The Unquiet River: A Biography of the Brahmaputra by Arupjyoti Saikia

Having grown up in Assam, with the Brahmaputra never far from sight or imagination, this book is a revelation. Saikia reimagines the multilayered history of a region, placing this great and beautiful beast at its very centre.

Through the Green Door by Nigel Jenkins

This little-known book is travelogue interwoven with a historical journey, a quest, a discovery. Jenkins, a Welshman, traces the Welsh Christian mission in Meghalaya through the 19th and early 20th centuries. In it, read about the first Anglo-Khasi war of 1829 – yes, the Northeast too has its share of "freedom fighters". This is what your history textbooks will not cover, what falls outside syllabus in mainland India. But above all, it is a hilariously wonderful read.

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

Recycled POWER

Seeing success during the lockdown, Hyderabad startup PureEV talks about their budget-friendly two-wheeler

DIVYA KALA BHAVANI

Rohit Vedara is excited to speak about ETrance, a new electric scooter with a low carbon footprint which is geared towards the budget-conscious market: meant for those looking to get around town for under ₹60,000. Rohit is the CEO of PureEV, a Hyderabad-based startup that has made a corner in the EV (electric vehicle)

market in India.

The startup, just under five years old, already has an in-house battery manufacturing facility and a research setup based out of IIT-Hyderabad campus, Sangareddy. This is where their research and development team works on core areas of battery thermal management system for development of long range and high-performance

batteries.

The ETrance+ is not PureEV's first release, they have the ETrance, Etron+ and EPluto, as well as the EPluto 7G which is their higher-end scooter, priced at around ₹90,000 roughly. Rohit shares that servicing and dealership points across the country are available for PureEV's scooters; and the list keeps growing.

"In the last one or two years, we are seeing only a positive trend as more players come into the market," he says, inferring this is helpful to the bigger picture of green vehicles and the environment. He describes an interesting challenge with regards to materials supply chain too: "Though the EV industry is growing fast, not everyone has the depth of expertise required. So we have to make sure that suppliers of materials for our EVs are convinced of our growth rate and impact."

PureEV uses recycled batteries – meaning, these are batteries created ages ago but put back into recycling process that happens every three to four years

from the scooter and plug it into an at-home outlet safely for charging," he points out.

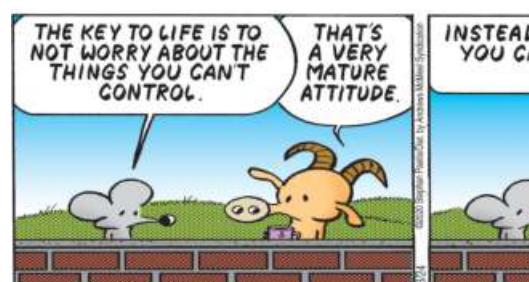
There is certainly a cultural shift towards greener vehicles in India, but one of the main points of hesitation is the harmful chemicals needed to make an e-vehicle battery. Luckily, PureEV uses recycled batteries – batteries which have been created ages ago but put back in the circular loop of recycling.

"We recover all the metals for those batteries too," he says, "and in India, there are many requirements by which to abide, policy-wise, to use these batteries, including where we have a solid tie-up with a recycling company. The recycling stage will come in about three to four years (in, say, 2023) because that's the life cycle of this type of battery. We are taking steps to avoid batteries don't end up sitting in a dump-yard."

POOCHE CAFE



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



PEANUTS



TIGER



CALVIN AND HOBBES



Trump team releases ad featuring Modi

This is the first commercial by the President's campaign specifically targeting Indian-origin voters

SIRIRAM LAKSHMAN

Trying to specifically woo Indian-American voters, the Trump campaign has released a commercial featuring footage of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.S. President Donald Trump held in Houston almost one year ago and in Ahmedabad in February. While the data show that Indian Americans mostly vote Democrat, the Republican Party is trying to target voters who are likely to be switch loyalties based on the Modi-Trump camaraderie.

Tweeting out the ad, Kimberly Guilfoyle, who heads a fundraising unit for the Trump campaign, wrote, "America enjoys a great relationship with India and our campaign enjoys great support from Indian Americans!" This is the first Trump campaign ad specifically for an Indian-American audience.

Clips of joint events

The commercial was conceptualised by Al Mason, a Trump supporter who is advising the U.S. President on the Indian-American vote.

The clip shows Mr. Modi holding up Mr. Trump's arm on the stage in Houston and a shot of the two walking



Grand welcome: Prime Minister Narendra Modi and U.S. President Donald Trump at the 'Howdy, Modi!' event in Houston, Texas, in September 2019. • AFP

around the arena, hands clasped.

There is also a clip of Mr. Trump's Ahmedabad address. "America loves India, America respects India... we have come to know the splendour of the four million Indian Americans, they are truly spectacular people," Mr. Trump says in the clip.

Both the GOP and Democrats are appealing to Indian voters, especially those in

battleground States, where the number of Indian-American voters – at least in some cases – exceeds the difference in vote margins between Mr. Trump and his 2016 opponent Hillary Clinton. A relatively small number of votes could help the candidate win the entire State (i.e., the electoral college votes for the State). These States include Arizona, Georgia, Iowa, Michigan,

North Carolina, Pennsylvania, Texas and Wisconsin, with a total of 1.3 million Indian American voters, according to data from CRW Strategy shared at a Democratic Party campaign event.

Republicans such as Mr. Mason are hoping that Indian Americans will move in sufficient numbers from the Democratic Party to the GOP in battleground States.

Mr. Mason talks about

"grassroots polling efforts" in a July op-ed he authored and said the results of these efforts "show that as many as 50 percent of potential Indian-American voters, the vast majority of whom traditionally have voted Democratic in presidential elections, will defect from the Democratic Party and vote for President Trump."

No details of the survey methodology or numbers were provided however. *The Hindu* has reached out to Mr. Mason for these.

Townhall in July

Democrats too have been specifically pursuing the Indian-American vote. In the middle of July, Democratic National Committee (DNC) Chairman Tom Perez spoke at a virtual 'Indian Americans for Biden' townhall and drew attention to the battleground States.

Democratic presidential and vice-presidential nominees, Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, also sent out Independence Day greetings during a Democratic event organised for that purpose on August 15 and Mr. Biden's campaign has released a specific set of policies addressing Indian-American concerns.

S. Korea tightens curbs after fresh COVID-19 outbreak

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
SEOUL

South Korea ramped up COVID-19 restrictions on Sunday to try to contain a growing outbreak, as many countries battled worrying spikes in infections.

The pandemic has killed more than 8,00,000 people globally, and continues to unleash destruction, with many countries detecting

spikes in infections not seen for many months. Infections have soared past 23 million globally, and some countries are still facing first waves.

South Korea, which largely brought its outbreak under control, tightened curbs to try to contain a new cluster. "The situation is very grave and serious as we are on the brink of a nationwide pandemic," warned Jung

Eun-kyeong, chief of the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Clubs, bars closed

Nightclubs, karaoke bars and beaches have been closed, with tight restrictions on large gatherings and religious services, after hundreds of infections were linked to Protestant churches. Face masks will be mandatory in the capital Seoul's public areas from midnight.

Lockdowns, physical distancing and masks are among the few options available to governments with no effective vaccine available yet. The World Health Organization said on Friday that the world should be able to rein in the disease in less than two years.

Italy – once the European

epicentre – said on Saturday it had registered more than 1,000 infections in the past 24 hours, the highest since the end of a punishing lockdown in May. The story is similar across Spain, Germany and France. The Rome region said it registered a record number of cases in the past 24 hours, a rise health officials blamed on people returning from holiday.

China has been vaccinating people since July 22: official

Those given doses include health workers and border officials

ANANTH KRISHNAN

China has since July 22 been administering its domestically developed COVID-19 vaccines to a broad range of people whose number may soon be in the hundreds of thousands, including medical workers, the armed forces, and employees of companies who are working overseas on Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) projects, said a health official on Saturday.

China has eight different vaccines which are going through clinical trials, and none have so far been approved for the market. Some of the vaccines have, however, been administered on an "urgent use" basis for the past month, Zheng Zhongwei, director of the Development Center for Medical Science and Technology of the National Health Commission, which is leading the vaccine development programme, told state media.

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Two doses

Authorities have permitted administering vaccines to medical workers, border officers and those employed overseas, while the People's Liberation Army (PLA) has also begun inoculating military personnel. Vaccines are being administered in two doses, with the second given one month after the first shot.

"The number of people being vaccinated on an urgent basis may reach hundreds of thousands across China, considering that personnel in wider sectors are being offered free injections," Tao Lina, an immunology expert, was quoted as saying by the Communist Party-run newspaper, *Globe Times*.



In hope: A staff member testing samples of a potential vaccine at a plant of SinoPharm in Beijing. • AP

Arab Emirates (UAE) had taken vaccines in Phase Three clinical trials, while SinoPharm has signed agreements with three other countries, Peru, Morocco and Argentina, for trials.

BRI employees

The *Global Times* quoted an employee of a state-run enterprise working on overseas projects as part of the BRI as saying "all staff in her company have been offered inactivated vaccine injections on a voluntary basis for free."

The employee took the vaccine on August 7 and said "at least 10 percent of the employees, mainly those in charge of projects overseas, have been vaccinated in groups since they were notified on July 30."

The inoculation of workers going overseas has, however, raised questions with some of the countries receiving them, with Papua New Guinea barring the entry of Chinese workers on a mine project who had been inoculated on August 10 before travelling.

Navalny was under surveillance by police during Siberia trip

Report reveals that his movements were being monitored

REUTERS
MOSCOW

Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny, who fell gravely ill on Thursday after what his allies believe was poisoning, was under intense police surveillance in preceding days, a Russian tabloid newspaper cited law enforcement sources as saying.

Before he collapsed on a flight during a trip to Siberia Navalny was followed by plainclothes FSB officers and his movements were closely monitored via CCTV, the report in the *Moskovsky Komsomolets* newspaper said. Mr. Navalny, a long-time opponent of President Vladimir Putin and campaigner against corruption, was flown in an air ambulance on Saturday for treatment in Germany.

Mr. Navalny, 44, was in an induced coma when he was evacuated from the Siberian



city of Omsk, but there has been no word yet from the Charite hospital in Berlin on his condition.

His team were due to host a briefing via YouTube on Sunday evening to discuss "everything we know so far about Alexei's poisoning," but subsequently cancelled it saying they were not ready, press secretary Kira Yarymish and campaign HQ head Leonid Volkov wrote on Twitter. Citing security

service sources, the *Moskovsky Komsomolets* described the timeline of his trip before he fell ill. An apartment rented for him by one of his supporters was discovered by police surveillance, the paper reported, when a sushi takeaway was ordered to the address by one of Mr. Navalny's supporters.

Suspicion of poisoning

In its report, the *Moskovsky Komsomolets* paper cited security sources as saying that their surveillance of Mr. Navalny's movements did not reveal any suspicious contacts that could be related to his illness.

Security services believe that if Mr. Navalny was poisoned, the incident took place either in the airport or on the plane, the newspaper wrote. However the paper said they are still awaiting results of laboratory tests.

Christchurch shooter arrives for sentencing

Brenton Tarrant has pleaded guilty to 51 charges of murder and a terror charge

REUTERS
SYDNEY

The suspected white supremacist who killed 51 Muslim worshippers last year, a massacre that prompted a global campaign to stamp out online hate, arrived in Christchurch on Sunday ahead of sentencing hearings.

Brenton Tarrant disembarked a New Zealand air force plane at Christchurch Airport on Sunday afternoon, wearing a protective vest and helmet and escorted by armed officers, before being directed into the back of a white van, television footage showed.

Multiple charges

He has pleaded guilty to 51 charges of murder, 40 charges of attempted murder and one charge of committing a



Terror attack: Mourners in Christchurch paying their respects in March 2019 to the victims of the shootings. • AP

terrorist act. Tarrant was transported to Christchurch, the city where the shootings occurred, from Auckland

Prison at Paremoremo, the *New Zealand Herald* reported.

A court in Christchurch

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ASK US



VIDYA BALA

Q. What are the ways in which I can invest in India in the name of my minor granddaughter who lives in the U.S. and is an American citizen by birth.

G.V. PADMANABHAN

A. The investment options for U.S./Canada NRIs per se are limited. And, it gets more complex with the person being a U.S. citizen. First, for any investment that is permitted, be it a deposit or policy, your U.S.-citizen-granddaughter needs to have an OCI (Overseas Citizenship of India).

Even with that, many options are closed to NRIs and more specifically U.S./Canada NRIs. For example, most mutual funds do not offer schemes for U.S./Canada residents as the respective regulatory authorities abroad require local firms to report to them on such investments by their residents. Similarly, Post Office deposits are not available for NRIs.

While there may be insurance policies available, such child policies are best avoided as either their cost structure can be poor, or they would be market-linked and would require you to track the performance. Stocks are permitted but it is best not done in a minor's name.

Unless your granddaughter has any plans to come to India or shift her citizenship, it is best that you do not invest in the name of the minor. Instead, you can choose any of the following options: one, you can simply continue investing in a mix of FDs and mutual funds (if you are familiar) in your name and add her as a beneficiary for some of these investments. Two, spell out in a simple Will, what you would like to leave for her. Three, you can simply do an international money transfer for her education as and when needed, as a gift. You can do \$2.5 lakh per financial year. Please consult your auditor for any tax implications.

Q. I have a fund with over ₹6 lakh in value. Looking back, it was a poor investment choice. It had an SIP of ₹5,000 which I cancelled. This fund is about 30% of my portfolio. I want to switch this amount to another fund from a different fund house. I understand that I would have to redeem the amount first to invest. Should I redeem the entire amount or do an SWP? I am asking this question for tax purposes as the corpus is large. And, once redeemed, should I invest the entire amount through lump sum or do a STP from a debt fund?

AJAY KUMAR

A. Yes, you need to redeem fully and reinvest. Once you realise your fund is a poor performer, there is no point removing it systematically, unless the amount is exceptionally large.

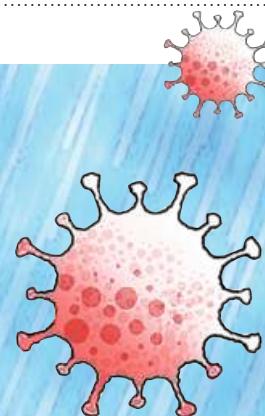
Please consult your auditor on the tax impact and exit in one shot. Given that equity gains of up to ₹1 lakh are free of tax and your fund's performance has anyway been mediocre, you are unlikely to see large gains as the market itself has not delivered much in the past 5-10 years.

Generally, when you move from one equity fund to another, there is no timing risk. You remain invested in equity as an asset class – just that you move to another fund. However, most investors worry that reinvesting a lump sum in the new fund in one shot may result in losses if the market is at a peak. Again, technically it doesn't as you need to consider your original entry as the point of investment in equity. Hence, we leave it to the investors to make the choice.

If this timing issue worries you, exit in one shot and use an STP (from a liquid fund and no other category) to invest in 12-18 months. Else, move in one shot and top it up immediately with monthly SIPs to ensure you average, in case markets fall after your new investment.

(The author is co-founder, PrimeInvestor.in)

Readers can send in queries on personal finance and investing to moneywise@thehindu.co.in. Our experts who write on personal finance will answer these queries. Moneywise will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund scheme, share or fixed deposit.



Taking cover during a pandemic

AMIT CHHABRA

During the ongoing pandemic, insurance products – health and term-life insurance in particular – have started gaining traction. More and more people are now becoming aware of the importance of having health or life insurance, with insurance shifting from being a push product to becoming a pull product.

Even though people seem

well in control of their financial health and related matters, they are extremely worried about the risk to their and their family's physical health. As a result, the perception of the importance of health and life insurance is now more than ever before. This indicates that both life and health insurance have started becoming the cornerstone of personal financial planning in times of COVID-19.

The pandemic has definitely

accelerated awareness about insurance in India where coverage remains relatively low despite the country being the world's second-most populous with a population of 1.35 billion.

Health cover

Since the nationwide lockdown due to COVID-19 in the last week of March, demand for health insurance policies has seen a huge spurt. As per gener-

al and specialised health insurers, online sales of health insurance policies have doubled between March and May compared with the same period of the previous year.

Business – in terms of fresh policies issued – of the health insurance industry grew by 40% in the last two months while the year-on-year growth was 13%. A prominent reason for the continued growth of the health insurance business is health insurers are doing their best to ensure seamless service and support to policyholders.

Most insurers have started offering health insurance policies through tele-underwriting or telemedical process in the place of physical medical check up to follow social distancing norms and keep people off the medical centres. Through telemedical process, you can buy a health insurance policy of up to ₹1 crore sum insured. To make sure that the maximum number of people are covered under some kind of health cover against COVID-19, on the directions of IRDAI, general and health insurers have started offering Corona Kavach, a standard, indemnity-based health plan and Corona Rakshak, a fixed-benefit health insurance policy. PolicyBazaar.com sells almost 1,000 policies per day on an average

with a conversion rate of 10-15%. Customers buying these policies are

mostly young individuals. The most preferred tenure is 9.5 months with 70% customers choosing the tenure while buying the policy. Similarly, the most preferred sum insured is ₹5 lakh, which is the maximum allowed under the policy construct. Among Corona Kavach and Corona Rakshak, 85% of customers opt for Kavach and 15%, Rakshak.

People buying health insurance plans with a higher sum insured have increased drastically. Earlier, the share of people buying health insurance plans with ₹20 lakh – ₹1 crore sum insured was less than 5%. However, in the situation, the share has now increased to 50% over the last two-three months.

Moreover, insurers are now focussed on how they can use digital technology to better solve customers' access problems. With everyone being sure that COVID-19 is here to stay for a while, most processes in the insurance sector are now shifting online.

Term life cover

The pandemic has also changed the people's perception of term life insurance as the demand for such policies has seen a significant rise since the lockdown began. Reports suggest that demand for term insurance picks up during epidemics, with insurers also reporting a rise in the number of queries for pandemic covers by businesses even as savings'

With rising awareness among the public following outbreak of the contagious COVID-19, insurers have seen a surge in demand for health and life covers

policies may remain weak.

Surely, COVID-19 has awakened public awareness of the need for term life insurance.

With the world almost shut down and media reports filled with stories of tragic loss of life, people are becoming increasingly aware that a long life is not something they can take for granted. Reports suggest that online sales of term life insurance have increased by 40% in the last 3.5 months. Life insurers have also started to ramp up their telemedical tools with an increased volume of physicians and other health professionals lined up to consult with patients who are concerned about visiting physical centres.

Issuance of life insurance policies through the telemedical process is catching on. During the lockdown, PolicyBazaar.com issued 58% of the policies via the online process compared with the pre-COVID-19 period figure of 36%. Talking about life insurance, under the telemedical process, the insurer checks the credit score of the customer along with his/her financial history of before issuing a term plan.

This is because term plans have a sum assured that is approximately 1000 times of the premium paid. While buying a term plan, the maximum sum assured that one can opt while taking a plan through telemedical process is ₹2 crore.

(The author is Health Business Head, Policybazaar.com)



IMAGING: J.A. PREMKUMAR

THINK INVESTOR

Yellow metal can be the flavour for all seasons

Investment in gold exchange traded funds is a better option than buying the precious metal in physical form

VENKATESH BANGARUSWAMY

Is this a good time to invest in gold? And if it is, should you buy physical gold or invest in gold Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs)? In this article, we discuss whether market timing is important for investing in gold.

Your decision on when to invest in gold (market timing) should be determined by your objectives. Are you planning to invest in gold for consumption purpose? If so, market timing is not important. Why?

Suppose your objective is to buy gold for your daughter's marriage 10 years hence. You can set up a systematic investment plan for 120 months to achieve this objective. This way, you will be setting aside money from your monthly income and also spreading your investments through the ups and downs in gold prices. Your objective is to buy jewellery for your daughter's wedding, not



Just in time: Gold ETFs allow one to buy trendy jewellery closer to an upcoming wedding without worrying about prices. ■ PTI

to profit from fluctuations in gold prices.

Investment asset

What if you are considering gold as an investment asset? Your objective then is to buy

and sell gold to capture short-term movements in gold prices. Market timing is, therefore, important. You can apply technical analysis to time your investments. Investors also buy gold during market crises that occur

because of a natural disaster or pandemics such as COVID-19 or events such as the 2008 sub-prime crisis. During such times, gold prices rise because of 'flight to quality' – investors consider gold to be the safest asset during a crisis. It is preferable not to have more than 15% of your total portfolio in gold.

Financial versus physical

You should consider investing in gold ETFs and not physical gold for two reasons. One, you can easily liquidate your investments at the spot price of gold. Selling physical gold is not easy. Also, the merchant who buys your gold will charge a commission (charge) on the spot price.

Note that your objective of buying gold was to sell the investments close to the wedding date and use the sale proceeds to buy jewellery. So, using gold as collateral to raise money cannot be argued as a reason

for buying physical gold.

Importantly, investing in gold ETFs allows you to buy trendy jewellery closer to the wedding without worrying about the increase in gold prices. Why? If gold prices move up, so will your investments in the gold ETF, as the ETF tracks the spot price of gold.

If you are investing in gold to capture short-term gains, market timing is easy with ETFs. Not only can you buy and sell ETFs intraday, you can also convert your investments into cash in quick time.

Two, storing your financial gold is easy; you need a demat account to keep your gold ETFs. In contrast, you need a bank locker to store your physical gold. Now, getting a bank locker is difficult. Also, lockers have become expensive in recent times.

Before you buy a gold ETF, check the proportion of physi-

cal gold that the ETF holds in its portfolio; higher the proportion of physical gold, closer the ETF will trade to the spot price of gold. And, that means your objectives will be well served.

You can find an ETF's portfolio composition from the fact sheet available on the investment firm's website. Also, ensure that the gold ETF you intend to buy is actively traded in the market; active trading will help keep the ETF's price closer to its net asset value.

Note that asset management firms also offer gold fund-of-funds, an open-ended fund that invests in a gold ETF managed by the same firm. You should buy gold ETFs, not the fund of funds; for the latter will charge you a fee in addition to the fee for investing in the gold ETF.

(The author offers training programmes for individuals to manage their personal investments)

LOOSE CHANGE

RAVIKANTH



"Give me a good price. Or, I will bargain from here and the whole street will know how little those tomatoes actually cost!"

Bank Fixed Deposit Rates				
Bank Name	Highest Slab	1-year tenure	3-year tenure	5-year tenure
SMALL FINANCE BANKS				
Suryoday Small Finance Bank	8.25	7.25	8.10	8.25
Utikarsh Small Finance Bank	8.00	7.25	7.25	7.25
Jana Small Finance Bank	7.50	6.90	7.50	7.00
Fincare Small Finance Bank	7.50	6.95	7.20	6.50
Equitas Small Finance Bank	7.35	7.10	7.15	6.75
ESAF Small Finance Bank	7.00	7.00	6.50	6.00
AU Small Finance Bank	6.75	5.50	6.75	6.50
Capital Small Finance Bank	6.65	6.50	6.50	6.25
Ujjivan Small Finance Bank	6.50	6.50	6.05	5.80
PRIVATE SECTOR BANKS				
RBL Bank	7.25	7.00	7.25	6.75
IDFC First Bank	7.00	6.75	6.75	6.75
IndusInd Bank	7.00	7.00	6.75	6.75
DCB Bank	6.95	6.50	6.95	6.95
Nainital Bank	6.50	5.40	5.50	5.50
Lakshmi Vilas Bank	6.25	6.00	6.00	6.00
Bandhan Bank	6.00	5.75	5.75	5.75
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	6.00	5.90	5.75	5.75
Karur Vysya Bank	6.00	5.50	5.65	5.65
CSB Bank	5.75	5.25	5.75	5.75
City Union Bank	5.75	5.50	5.75	5.50
Karnataka Bank	5.70	5.50	5.65	5.65
South Indian Bank	5.60	5.50	5.60	5.60
Dhanlaxmi Bank	5.60	5.25	5.50	5.50
Federal Bank	5.50	5.35	5.50	5.50
PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS				
Axis Bank	5.50	5.20	5.50	5.50
HDFC Bank	5.50	5.10	5.20	5.35
ICICI Bank	5.50	5.00	5.10	5.35
Jammu & Kashmir Bank	5.30	5.10	5.30	5.30
Kotak Mahindra Bank	5.10	4.75	4.90	4.50
PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS				
Punjab & Sind Bank	5.55	5.55	5.55	5.55
Union Bank of India	5.45	5.40	5.40	5.45
Canara Bank	5.40	5.40	5.30	5.30
State Bank of India	5.40	5.10	5.30	5.40
Bank of India	5.35	5.35	5.25	5.25
Bank of Maharashtra	5.35	5.30	5.35	

Azhar and Rizwan help Pakistan fight back

Crawley-Buttler show takes England to a mammoth 583

PAKISTAN IN ENG

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
SOUTHAMPTON

Pakistan captain Azhar Ali reached the 6,000-run milestone in Tests as he thwarted England on the third day of the third Test here on Sunday.

Azhar was unbeaten on 82 and shared an 83-run partnership with wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan (22) as Pakistan reached tea at 158 for five. The tourists were replying to England's mammoth total of 583 for eight declared.

Pakistan was 41 for four at lunch on a rain-marred morning session before Azhar scripted the revival in the company of Rizwan.

For England, the 38-year-old Anderson did most of the damage, taking four for 42 off 16 overs. England is seeking its first series win over Pakistan since 2010 and went into the final game with a 1-0 advantage.

On the second day, Zak Crawley had converted his maiden Test hundred into a memorable double (267) as the hosts piled on the runs.

Crawley and Jos Buttler, who made 152, shared a stand of 359 to power England to 583 for eight declared.

Record partnership

Crawley faced 393 balls, hitting 34 fours and one six. His partnership with Buttler was a new fifth-wicket record for

Pakistan 236 for six

■ Pakistan was 236 for six in 80 overs with skipper Azhar Ali (113) and Yasir Shah (15) at the crease. Mohd. Rizwan was dismissed for 53 by Chris Woakes.



Piling it on: England's Crawley and Buttler added a record 359 runs for the fifth wicket. ■ AFP & GETTY IMAGES

England, surpassing the 254 shared by Keith Fletcher and Tony Greig against India in Mumbai in February 1973.

Buttler completed just the second hundred of his 47-match Test career, and the first as a wicketkeeper.

When he was on 99, Buttler was given out caught be-

SCOREBOARD

England — 1st innings: Rory Burns c Masood b Afridi 6, Dom Sibley lbw b Yasir 22, Zak Crawley st. Rizwan b Shafiq 267, Joe Root c Rizwan b Naseem 29, Olly Pope lbw b Yasir 3, Jos Buttler c & b Alam 152, Chris Woakes c Yasir b Alam 40, Dom Bess (not out) 27, Stuart Broad b Afridi 15; Extras (b-4, lb-13, nb-4, w-1): 22; Total (for eight wkts. decl. in 154.4 overs): 583.

Fall of wickets: 1-12, 2-73, 3-114, 4-127, 5-486, 6-530, 7-547, 8-583.

Pakistan bowling: Afridi 33.4-5-121-2, Abbas 33-8-82-0, Yasir 39-3-173-2, Naseem 27-6-109-1, Alam 12-0-46-2,

Masood 3-1-11-0, Shafiq 7-0-24-1.

Pakistan — 1st innings: Shan Masood lbw b Anderson 4, Abid Ali c Sibley b Anderson 1, Azhar Ali (batting) 82, Babar Azam lbw b Anderson 11, Asad Shafiq c Root b Anderson 5, Fawad Alam c Buttler b Bass 21, Mohd. Rizwan (batting) 22; Extras (b-2, lb-6, nb-2, w-2): 12; Total (for five wkts. in 60 overs, at tea): 158.

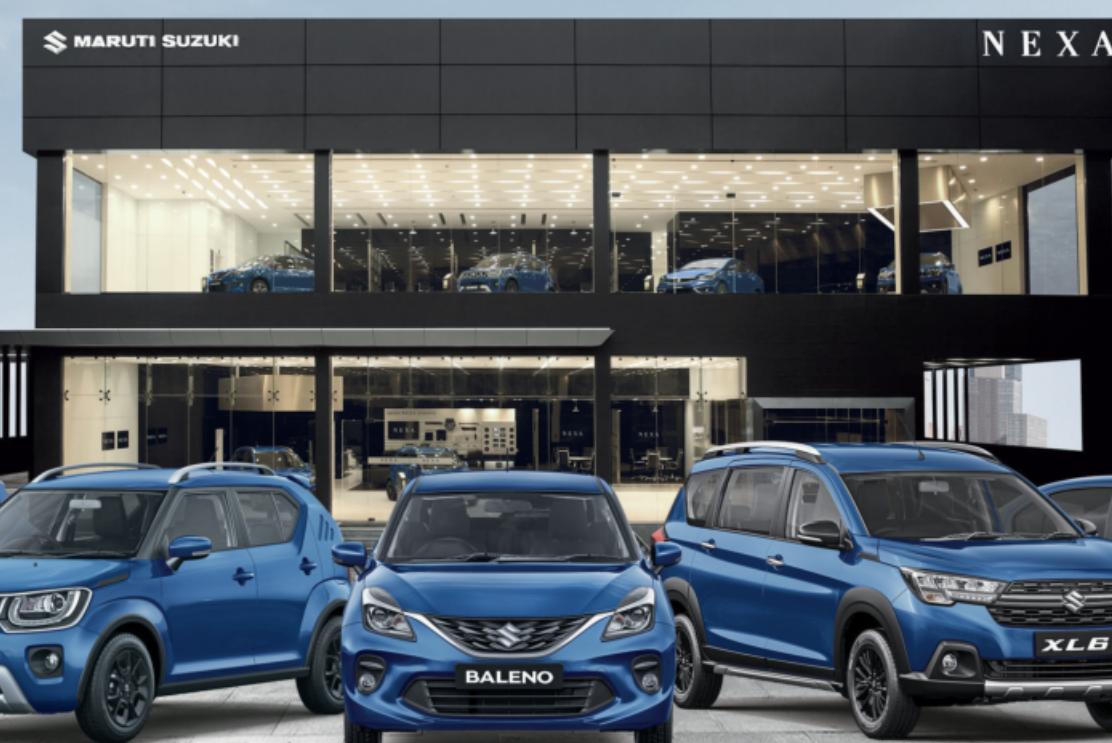
Fall of wickets: 1-6, 2-11, 3-24, 4-30, 5-57.

England bowling: Anderson 16-2-42-4, Broad 12-4-18-0, Archer 11-3-31-0, Woakes 10-1-26-0, Bess 11-2-33-1.

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SHORT TAKES

James on a roll as Lakers outplay Trail Blazers

MIAMI

LeBron James finished with 38 points as Los Angeles Lakers outplayed Portland Trail Blazers on Saturday for a 116-108 win in game three of their NBA playoff series.

Lakers have a 2-1 lead now.

Other results:

Milwaukee Bucks 121 (Antetokounmpo 35) bt Orlando Magic 107 (Augustin 24, Vucevic 20) **Bucks 2-1;**

Miami Heat 124 (Butler 27, Dragic 24) bt Indiana Pacers 115 (Warren 23, Brogdon 34) **Heat 3-0;** Oklahoma City Thunder 119 (Schroder 29, Paul 26) bt Houston Rockets 107 (Harden 38, Green 22) **Rockets 2-1.** AFP



Murray makes winning return in USO warm-up

Britain's Andy Murray made a

winning ATP comeback on Saturday, defeating Frances Tiafoe 7-6(6), 3-6, 6-1 in his first match of 2020 at the Western and Southern Open.

Other results (first round):

Men: Felix Auger-Aliassime bt Nikoloz Basilashvili 6-4, 6-1;

Denis Shapovalov bt Marin Cilic 6-3, 6-3; Borna Coric bt Benoit Paire 6-0, 1-0, (retd.); Kevin Anderson bt Kyle Edmund 7-6(3), 4-6, 6-3;

Milos Raonic bt Sam Querry 6-4, 6-4.

Women: Kristina Mladenovic bt Anastasija Sevastova 6-3, 6-4; Dayana Yastremska bt Venus Williams 5-7, 6-2, 7-5;

Maria Sakkari bt Coco Gauff 6-1, 6-3; Victoria Azarenka 6-2, 6-3. AFP

ICC Hall Of Fame inductees



ICC HALL OF FAME											
JACQUES KALLIS				LISA STHALEKAR				ZAHEER ABBAS			
M	Runs	W	100s	M	Runs	W	100s	M	Runs	W	100s
Tests	166	13289	292	45	200	8	416	23	1	3	78
ODIs	328	11579	273	17	131	125	2728	146	2	49	62
T20Is	25	666	12	-	7	54	769	60	-	16	-

India stuns China, reaches quarters

CHESS

P.K. AJITH KUMAR
KOZHIKODE

India shocked second seed China and topped Pool A at the online Chess Olympiad on Sunday.

The 4-2 victory in the final round in the preliminary league helped the seventh seed finish with 17 points, one more than the Chinese.

It was the juniors that helped the team pull off the memorable win, as R. Praggnanandhaa and Divya Deshmukh took full points off Liu Yan and Zhu Jiner. All the four boards featuring the seniors were drawn 3-3.

Earlier, India beat Georgia 4-2 and Germany 4.5-1.5.

India thus won eight of its nine matches in the league.

It should have been nine out of nine if power failures

at Nashik and Vijayawada hadn't interrupted the games of captain Vidit Gujrathi and Koneru Humpy in the match against Mongolia on Saturday. The match was drawn 3-3.

"Bharat Singh Chauhan of the AICF has informed Vidit and me that arrangements have been made to play our remaining matches from a five-star hotel if we want to," said Humpy.

The Tour witnessed some engaging chess involving some of the best names in the game.

It recorded a whopping 70 million views across various online platforms and select TV channels.

Here we come...



Blue brigade: The Delhi Capitals players before leaving for the Gulf for IPL 2020. ■ PTI

Carlsen tour Season 2 in November

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

After the stupendous success of the inaugural million-dollar Magnus Carlsen Chess Tour, the second season will commence in November.

The Tour witnessed some engaging chess involving some of the best names in the game.

It recorded a whopping 70 million views across various online platforms and select TV channels.

Sevilla triumphs

EUROPA LEAGUE

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
COLOGNE

Sevilla won the Europa League for a sixth time, beating Inter Milan 3-2, after Diego Carlos's overhead kick deflected in off Romelu Lukaku 16 minutes from time, in a thrilling final here on Saturday.

Carlos and Lukaku's evening had got off to a very different start as the defender hauled the Belgian striker down and the latter's penalty put Inter in front after

just five minutes.

Two Luuk De Jong headers turned the game around for Sevilla, but Diego Godin quickly levelled in a four-goal first half.

Italy's wait for a first European trophy in a decade, and Inter's nine-year trophy drought, goes on after Lukaku could not stop Carlos's spectacular strike on another famous Europa League night for Sevilla.

The result:
Sevilla 3 (de Jong 12, 33, Lukaku 74-OG) bt Inter Milan 2 (Lukaku 5-pen, Godin 35).



Champion: A delighted Sevilla squad with the trophy. ■ AP

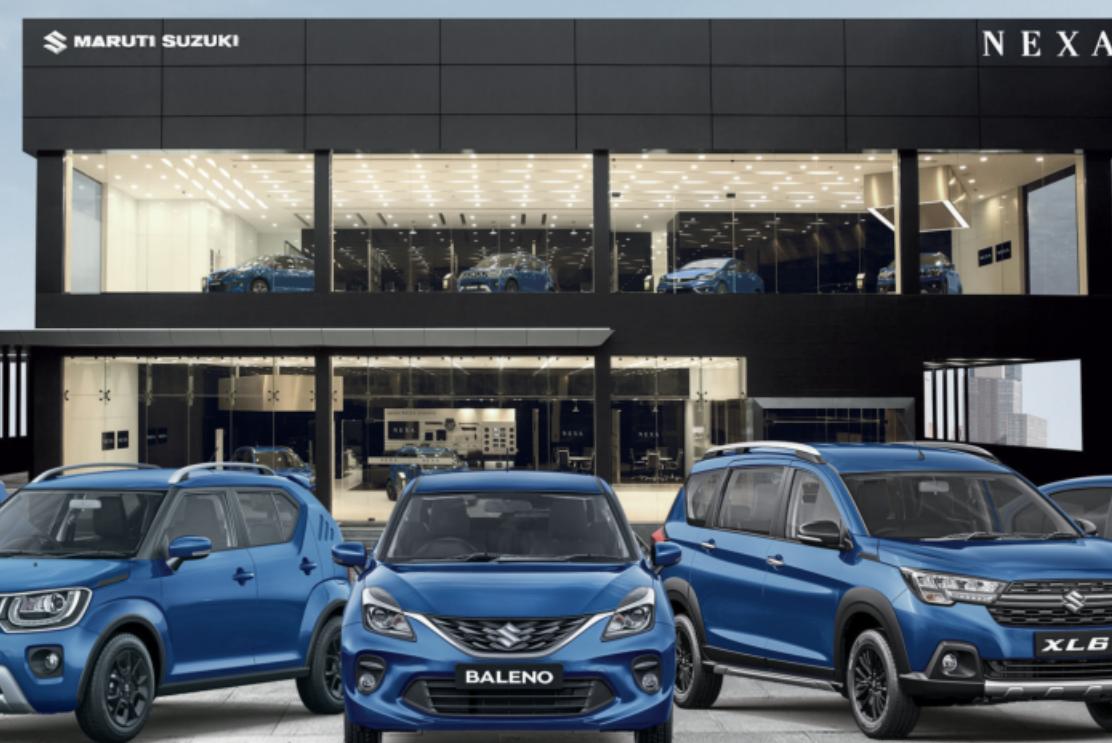
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