



Residents at sea as heavy rain inundates Hyderabad again

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Women soldiers check drug smuggling through Line of Control

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Anti-Trump women's rallies draw thousands across the U.S.

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Rahul's Kings XI pips Mumbai Indians after two thrilling Super Overs

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## NEARBY



3,299 fresh COVID-19 cases reported in Delhi

NEW DELHI  
The national capital reported 3,299 new COVID-19 cases in the past 24 hours, taking the total to 3,31,017, said a government health bulletin.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

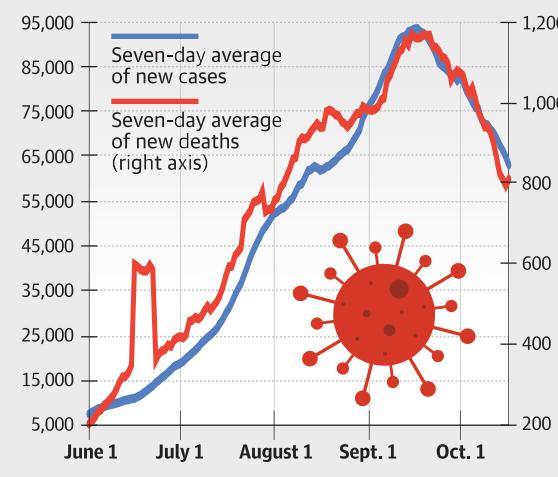


EDUCATIONPLUS ▶ PAGE 5

## India past COVID peak, says DST panel

### Climbing down

After peaking in mid-September at about 93,000 new COVID-19 cases and 1,170 deaths, the seven-day average of infections and fatalities declined to about 63,000 and 800 a day respectively, as of Saturday



Predicts 'minimal' cases by Feb., if festival spikes are avoided

JACOB KOSHY

NEW DELHI

India passed its COVID peak in September and, if current trends continue, there will be "minimal cases" by February. These are the findings of a modelling study by a seven-member expert panel on the future course of the pandemic, commissioned by the Department of Science and Technology.

According to the study, India's COVID burden is expected to be capped at 106 lakh symptomatic infections by early next year, with less than 50,000 active cases from December. There were over 75 lakh confirmed cases as of Sunday, of which about

7,74,000 are active infections.

This, however, is premised on no spikes being triggered by festivals or mutations in the virus aiding its spread in winter.

Scientists associated with the study said there would be no gains from lockdowns or from measures harsher than those in place now.

A complete shutdown should be considered only at sub-district levels if there is a spike that threatens local healthcare capacity, they said.

The modelling study, called the "COVID-19 India National Supermodel", is the result of analysis by an expert committee of mathematicians and epidemiologists. There have been several mathematical model-based projections within India and internationally. However, experts and government officials have publicly warned that they were projections meant to guide policy and not be taken literally.

"The pandemic has peaked. But this isn't reason for complacency as this nice downward trend will continue only if we continue with protective measures," said Prof. M. Vidyasagar of IIT-Hyderabad, chairman of the committee.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## GST cess will stay: finance panel chief

It will continue till States' dues are paid



VIKAS DHOTU  
NEW DELHI

The levy of compensation cess on Goods and Services Tax (GST) may have to be extended for quite a few years, perhaps till as late as 2025-26, to pay off the States' GST dues, Chairperson of the Fifteenth Finance Commission N.K. Singh has said.

The Commission's report on the devolution of funds between the Centre and the States for the five-year period of 2021-22 till 2025-26, will be submitted to the government soon. It will factor in unpaid compensation dues while working out States' revenue flow calculations beyond 2022.

Asserting that the Centre has at no point backtracked from the fact that the States will get compensation for the first five years, Mr. Singh said, "A lot of misgivings about the fiscal compact having been broken and

there being a trust deficit" in negotiations over the GST compensation cess were "somewhat exaggerated".

"On the important issue of GST compensation, the last word has not been said. Both the States and the Centre are recalibrating the contours of a consensus within the GST Council

Cess shortfalls cannot be met from the Consolidated Fund of India. So it has to be raised through some borrowing arrangement like the present one

N.K. SINGH, CHAIRMAN,  
FIFTEENTH FINANCE COMMISSION

On the important issue of GST compensation, the last word has not been said. Both the States and the Centre are recalibrating the contours of a consensus within the GST Council. It is for the Council to take such decisions," Mr. Singh told *The Hindu*. "At no point has the Centre said it will not pay for those five years. It's only a question of how it can be adjusted in the most efficient way to undertake the borrowings."

Too much was being made of who should borrow to meet shortfalls, Mr. Singh suggested, stressing that the investing community looks at the Centre and the States' combined debt, not their disaggregated debt levels.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## Kerala paying the price for gross negligence during Onam: Vardhan

Others must learn from the State's mistake and be careful during the coming festival season, says Union Health Minister

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Kerala is seeing a spurt in cases due to "gross negligence" during Onam celebrations, Union Minister of Health and Family Welfare Harsh Vardhan during his weekly online interaction, Sunday Samvad.

In response to a question on how had Kerala, once portrayed as a "model State" for keeping the virus in check, has now posted over 8,000 cases and what could other States learn, Mr. Vardhan replied, "Movement of

people due to trade and tourism led to cases increasing beyond the two districts of Kasargod and Kannur. The epidemic curve of Kerala changed completely due to Onam festivities across the State during August and September. During August 22-Sept 2 (Onam week) there were huge congregations where people convened in large numbers and didn't take precautions. Kerala paid the price for its gross negligence after good control in the initial part of the pandemic. Other States must



learn a lesson due to Kerala's negligence during Onam and States need to be careful during the coming festival

season."

Though there was a surge in cases since September, data shows that the State's "second wave", one which hasn't yet seen a peak, had begun in early May. The second wave was attributable to the return of migrant workers from other States and returnees from abroad. Nearly 10.61 lakh people had entered the State through various routes, since the pandemic began of which half entered via flights alone.

Until June, 90% of cases were imported and by July

this had reversed to 90% of cases being locally transmitted.

### 3.3 lakh cases

The share of cases from Kerala in India's overall load jumped from 2.9% until September 15 to 6.4% in the second half of the month to about 10% as of this month. Kerala also didn't increase testing to keep up with the population surge and also slackened on its contact tracing efforts that had helped it to contain significant spread until May. There were as of

Sunday nearly 3.3 lakh cases in Kerala of which 96,000 are active infections, the Minister said.

Responding to another question on the market being flooded with oximeters made in China, Mr. Vardhan observed that "consumers should look for FDA/CE approved products with ISO/IEC specifications." However, he pointed out that a dip in oxygen saturation level was not always a COVID-19 symptom, and it could happen due to other underlying medical conditions as well.

## EC's distancing norms go for a toss in Bihar

Rules are visibly violated in indoor public meetings

NISTULA HEBBAR  
PATNA/PALI

India's first full-fledged Assembly election amid the COVID-19 pandemic is under way in Bihar, and the Election Commission of India's guidelines for campaigning are clearly being observed only in the breach.

In indoor public meetings where the crowd is not to exceed 200 and social distancing of at least six feet is expected in rallies, the rules are visibly being violated.

### Stage collapses

At Chapra, during a Janata Dal (United) meeting held by candidate Chandrika Rai (ex-father-in-law of Tej Pratap Yadav), the stage collapsed as there were too many people crowding it.



Guidelines ignored: Supporters waving as Bihar CM Nitish Kumar arrives for a rally in Rohtas district. ■ PTI

Politically, social distancing norms violations have become an equal opportunity infringement.

Some of it, say party leaders, is due to the fact that for long elections have been a participative event not just on polling day but during the campaigns too.

Shows of strength with a large turnout are par for the course while filing nominations.

tions and at public rallies. The Election Commission's rules allowing only a handful of people in these events is a culture shock yet to be adapted to.

"The Election Commission has set proper guidelines, although yes, they are being observed more in breach as we as a society experience elections as a festival with high participation. Fortunately for Bihar, COVID-19 incidence is low with highest recovery rate and second highest level of testing in the country. Perhaps it has given people some sort of signal to move ahead with activities, but that cannot be allowed, we need to improve," said BJP prabharti for Bihar polls Devendra Fadnavis when he spoke to *The Hindu* during a sit down interview.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

MORE REPORTS ▶ PAGE 9

## Back on track



Nowhere to go: Migrant workers gather in search of jobs at Jivraj railway crossing bridge in Ahmedabad on Sunday. ■ VIJAY SONEJI

## Celebrating skinks, ZSI lists 62 species in India

The harmless, insectivorous lizards are found across the country in every bio-geographic zone

SHIV SAHAY SINGH  
KOLKATA

With long bodies, relatively small or no legs, no pronounced neck and glossy scales, skinks are common reptiles around homes, garages, and open spaces such as parks and school playgrounds, and around lakes. Although they are common reptiles and have a prominent role in maintaining ecosystems, not much is known about their breeding habits, and ecology because identification of the species can be confusing.

A recent publication by the Zoological Survey of India (ZSI) reveals that India is home to 62 species of skinks and says about 57% of all the skinks found in India (33 species) are endemic.



The Bronzed Grass Skink. ■  
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

invertebrates. The reduced limbs of certain skink species or the complete lack of them make their slithering movements resemble those of snakes, leading people to have incorrect notion that they are venomous. This results in several of these harmless

creatures being killed.

### Wide collaboration

"The publication is a result of four years of work and study of over 4,000 specimens in all 16 regional centres of ZSI and also at the Bombay Natural History Society, Indian Institute of Science, Wildlife Institute of India, and the Salim Ali Centre for Ornithology & Natural History. It also makes an attempt to 'rediscover' all the 62 species with their taxonomic identification keys, distributional maps, habitats, habitat and breeding biology," Dr. Chandra said.

The book also gives a phylogenetic and bio-geographical analysis of distribution of these species in all the 11 bio-geographic

zones of India and a detailed account on the historical studies on this group of lizards from the British era to the present.

Dr Deuti, however, pointed out that with 1,602 species of skinks across the world, making it the largest family of lizards, their occurrence in India is less than 4% of the global diversity.

Other authors of the publication, Achyuthan Srikanth from the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru, and three other ZSI researchers – Sujoy Raha, Prohbat Bag and Sudipta Debnath – said that alongside its taxonomic significance, the book will generate interest among nature enthusiasts and lay people about skinks.

## Main accused in Ballia shooting case arrested

STF nabbed him following a tip-off

OMAR RASHID

LUCKNOW

The main accused in the Ballia murder case, Dhirendra Pratap Singh, who had allegedly opened fire in the presence of police and administrative officials during a village meeting on October 15, was arrested by the Uttar Pradesh police on Sunday.

Dhirendra is linked to local BJP MLA Surendra Singh. He was arrested by the U.P. Special Task Force near the Polytechnic Crossing in Lucknow around 11.40 a.m. following a tip-off that he was coming there to meet an associate, the police said.

The family of the deceased, Jai Prakash Pal, had alleged that after firing the shots on Thursday, the accused was allowed to flee by the police.

Dhirendra's brothers, Narendra Singh and Devendra Singh, have already been arrested. The police said they arrested two associates of the accused – Santosh Yadav and Amarjeet – in Ballia on Sunday and recovered two 315 bore illegal countrymade pistols from their possession.

Dhirendra will be taken to Ballia for further investigation, an STF officer said.

Jai Prakash was killed at Durjanpur village in the Reoti area of Ballia when Dhirendra opened fire during a dispute between two local groups over the allotment of a government ration shop. The State government had ordered suspension of the Sub-Divisional Magistrate and the police team present at the spot for "laxity".

## Assam-Mizoram border tense after clash

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

AIZAWL/ SILCHAR/ GUWAHATI

Tension prevailed on the Assam-Mizoram border after a violent clash took place between the people of the two States, officials said on Sunday.

The situation is now under control in the area, which is on the border between the Kolasib district of Mizoram and Cachar district of Assam, they said.

A meeting chaired by Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla between the two States will be held on Monday to take stock of the situation, Mizoram Home Minister Lalchamliana said. The Chief Secretaries of the two States will be present in the meeting, he said.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 10

A ND-NDE

# Man arrested wrongfully in riots case granted bail

HC says senior citizen a victim, his house damaged in incident

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH

NEW DELHI  
The Delhi High Court has granted bail to a 65-year-old man, who was arrested in connection with the north-east Delhi riots, noting that there was no evidence against him and that rather he was a victim.

"That petitioner [Mr. Singh] is a victim of the riots. His house was also damaged by an unlawful assembly to which he has also lodged a complaint dated February 28," the court said.

Justice Suresh Kumar Kait granted bail to Mithan Singh against whom the police have registered a case for rioting at Khajuri Khas police station here.

The Special Public Prosecutor (SPP) had opposed bail plea stating that there are serious allegations of him playing "an active role in the riots".

The SPP said Mr. Singh's



Houses were burnt during the riots in Delhi. •FILE PHOTO

pointed out that on perusal of the complaints initially made, it reveals that no role was assigned to Mr. Singh, however, in supplementary statements he and his sons are named.

#### No video or photograph

"It is also a fact that there is no video clip or photograph on record against the petitioner whereby the petitioner was charged with the present crime," Justice Kait said adding, "In view of above, I am of the view that the petitioner deserves bail."

The court ordered that Mr. Singh shall be released on bail on his furnishing a personal bond in the sum of ₹25,000 with one surety in the like amount.

"It is made clear that the trial court shall not get influenced by the observations made by this court while passing the order," it said.

Justice Kait, however,

#### IN BRIEF

##### Campaign launched against drug abuse

NEW DELHI  
Delhi Women and Child Development Minister Rajaendra Pal Gautam on Sunday launched a campaign against drug and substance abuse. He said there was a need for coordination of all stakeholders for a meaningful contribution.

# Student moves HC after govt. school denies admission

Petition alleges 18-year-old had applied for enrolment but was not accepted due to age restrictions

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A student has approached the Delhi High Court alleging that a government school had denied admission to him on grounds of his age being higher than the requirement.

Shekhab Habibul, who is 18-and-a-half years old, said he was forced to leave his private school due to financial constraints during the pandemic. He was studying in

K.D. Model School at Bawana Road in Barwala since Class II. He passed his Class X CBSE examinations earlier this year.

Shekhab said his family suffered a major financial loss after the COVID-19 outbreak and could not pay his school fee.

The petition, filed through advocate Ashok Agarwal, stated that Habibul has been trying to get admission in Government Sarvodaya Bal Vi-

dyalaya, Prahalad Pur in Delhi, under non-plan admission since the first week of September.

Mr. Agarwal said the student had visited school several times and also applied for admission in Class XI through online mode under non-plan admission for academic session 2020-21, which was not accepted on the website.

Mr. Agarwal stated that the government has issued a circular laying down age criteria for non-plan admissions in government schools, seeking direct admission, in all classes upto to Class XII for the academic session 2020-21.

The circular provides that only those students will be granted direct admission in Class XI who are over 15 years of age but are less than 17 years.

The circular further provides that the age criteria

laid down is not applicable to plan admissions i.e. the existing students of government schools.

The plea contended that there is no justification on the part of the government school to deny admission to Habibul on grounds of his age. The plea stated that Habibul has no gap in his studies and him coming from a private school to a government school cannot be a ground for differentiation.

# Youth beaten to death by neighbours

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 22-year-old man was allegedly beaten to death by a group of men in east Delhi's New Ashok Nagar on Friday, the police said on Sunday.

The victim, Manish Yadav, was found unconscious in the building where he lives with his family on rent. His family alleged that he was beaten to death. "We have registered an FIR. The post-mortem report is awaited," said an officer.

However, during probe, the police said the incident happened when Manish came home late at night from work with a friend. Manish worked at an automobile workshop in Noida.

An officer said the duo consumed alcohol in the building. When Manish was leaving the building to drop his friend, he urinated in the toilet inside the premises when one of his neighbours complained against it. "A group of people started beating him. During commotion, a liquor bottle broke in Manish's pocket and a piece of glass damaged his main artery. He died due to excessive bleeding," said the officer.

# Man arrested for duping IPS officer, others

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 49-year-old man was arrested for allegedly duping people, including an IPS officer, by creating their fake profiles on Facebook and asking money from their friends on the social media site on the pretext of an emergency, the police said on Sunday.

The accused – Munnalal Mavasi – from Satna district in Madhya Pradesh, is a graduate and holds a diploma in veterinary. He worked as a veterinary doctor in his village and later joined a firm – International Marketing Corporation, they said.

To earn quick money, he started committing the crime along with his accomplices. Two mobile phones, which were used to create fake FB IDs, have been recovered. The matter came to the fore on September 26 after an IPS officer lodged a complaint at

Lodhi Colony police station alleging that someone had created his fake account on Facebook. He also said the accused asked for money from his friends on the pretext of an emergency.

During investigation, the details of the Facebook account were verified and with the help of technical surveillance, location of the accused was traced to Madhya Pradesh, said DCP (South) Atul Kumar Thakur.

"A team was sent to Satna from where the accused was nabbed. On questioning, he tried to mislead them but finally confessed to his crime. He also disclosed that he spent all the cheated money in opening a hotel business," he said.

As per his preliminary account statement, there are approximately ₹44,000 suspicious transactions. The officer said a manhunt on for his accomplices.

# Riding for change



People take part in a cyclothon to promote use of SMS – social distancing, mask and sanitisation – at Connaught Place in New Delhi on Sunday morning. • SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

# Trader stabbed to death in Ghazipur

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 43-year-old trader was allegedly stabbed to death in east Delhi's Ghazipur Mandi. He said there was a need for coordination of all stakeholders for a meaningful contribution.

The deceased – Omkar Sharma – is from Haryana, they said. The police suspect Sharma was killed somewhere else and later his body was packed in a bedsheet and dumped here at Ghazipur Mandi. His body was recovered on Friday and handed over to his family after post-mortem, an officer said. He was killed over money dispute. CCTV cameras near the spot are being scanned while his family members are being questioned in connection with the case.

#### INTERVIEW | ADESH GUPTA

# 'Will give fresh faces a chance again in 2022 polls'

BJP's main strategy for the elections is to expose the AAP government's failures on the civic front

JATIN ANAND

*With a vision to enhance its stature in the 2022 civic body elections, the BJP in Delhi has pressed the reboot button. Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta speaks to The Hindu on issues ranging from the recent reorganisation of the party's State unit and internal discontent to repeating its strategy of fielding fresh faces in the polls.*

2022? What do you think are the strengths you will build your campaign on?

your stance on the reunification of the three civic bodies?

problem related to funding actually lie and why?

■ Despite being starved for funds, the Municipal Corporations of Delhi have done very good work in public healthcare, education and mitigating pollution, which the people of the city know. Delhi has a peculiar system because of its municipality authorities. Many times, the civic body does the best possible work but it either fails through because of the inaction of another authority. People know this. On one hand, we have undertaken projects such as improvements related to landfills – both the Balswa and Ghazipur landfills will see drastic reductions in height within a year – and on the other, we will expose the Delhi government for its failure in not doing what it has the power to, in relation to civic issues for the elections.

Delhi government is attacking the BJP-run civic bodies on a daily basis, regarding the lack of funds to run hospitals and schools. How do you respond to these charges?

Where does the

problem related to funding actually lie and why?

■ In this city, the fact that the civic bodies do 90% of the work and must remain dependent on the Delhi government for 90% of the funds is a tragedy. The Delhi government has surpassed all limits when it comes to starving the corporations for funds which obviously hampers their work. But in spite of it, they have performed exceedingly well on various fronts. On one hand, there are the civic bodies that are doing the best they can despite delayed funding and on the other, is a government which promises to pay the examination fees of economically backward students but refuses to do that at a time when they are struggling due to the COVID-19 crisis. There have been times in the past when there was one party's government at the Centre and another's in the city but such politics around funding didn't exist; it was never this bad.

Speaking of politics, both the Delhi BJP and AAP have more or less gone silent on the Delhi riots. What is your opinion?

■ The riots were a sponsored conspiracy to aid appeasement politics. It is clear and there are WhatsApp chats to prove that Popular Front of India, AAP and Tukde Tukde gang came together to create the riots. AAP's Tahsin Hussain was not acting alone; he is connected to AAP's senior leadership. People were called to wreak havoc for the political gain of others.

Are you likely to field fresh faces in the municipal elections like in 2017? Do you think such a strategy would work again? What is

the strength of the party?

What are your strategies for the municipal polls in 2022?

■ Many times, the civic body does the best possible work but it either fails through because of the inaction of another authority.

What are your strategies for the municipal polls in 2022?

■ The main objective was to pump young and energetic individuals into the party. No one was chosen because they are considered close to someone else. We did not impose the choices of the party's leadership on the cadre. We surveyed and made choices on the basis of the opinions of over 5,000 individuals connect-

ed to the party and by considering how they could add to the organisational strength of the State unit?

There seems to be some discontent in the unit after the reorganisation. Some individuals – from MPs to previous office bearers – are apparently unhappy. How do you plan to persuade everyone to come together and work for the same objective?

■ I would not say there is discontent but, rather, disagreements which are characteristic of any big family. The party's constitution limits the number of posts but just because someone did not get one doesn't mean they will not be utilised. We have spoken to each other about the fact that overall we now have a very good team with an average age of 47; the strengths and efforts of every individual will be needed and utilised whether or not they occupy a post.

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Timings  
DELHI

MONDAY, OCT. 19	
RISE 06:25	SET 17:48
RISE 09:00	SET 19:58
TUESDAY, OCT. 20	
RISE 06:25	SET 17:47
RISE 10:10	SET 20:49
WEDNESDAY, OCT. 21	
RISE 06:26	SET 17:46
RISE 11:16	SET 21:45

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	35	17
Safdarjung	35	17
Palam	33	20

Delhi Pali Today  
34°C Comfortable hazy morning and warm day mainly sunny day.

Delhi Pali Tomorrow  
34°C Pleasant hazy morning and warm day with light dry winds.

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IN BRIEF

BJP accuses Delhi govt. of failing to run DU colleges

NEW DELHI  
The Opposition BJP on Sunday accused the Delhi government of failing to administer Delhi University colleges under its jurisdiction and suggested that they be handed over to the Centre. Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, warned of a mass movement if the Delhi government did not pay due salaries to teachers and other staffers.

Workers allege termination without notice

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GURUGRAM

Eight women workers of a garments export company, Chelsea Mills in Udyog Vihar Phase-IV here, have filed a complaint before the Labour Department against the management for "terminating" them without assigning any reason and also not paying their legal dues.

The women also staged a demonstration outside the company this past week seeking reinstatement.

Garment and Allied Workers Union general-secretary Amarnath Sharma said the garments companies in the area had been terminating old workers, citing lack of work due to the lockdown, but they are hiring new workers at lower wages.

# Active virus cases in Delhi rise for sixth day in a row

With 3,299 fresh cases, the total now stands at 3,31,017

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

As many as 3,299 new COVID-19 cases were reported in Delhi in the past 24 hours, taking the total number of cases to 3,31,017, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Sunday.

Also, 28 more deaths have been reported, taking the total number of deaths to 6,009. Of the total cases, 3,01,716, people have recovered and there are 23,292 active cases.

There are a total of 2,770 containment zones.

49,414 tested

A total of 49,414 COVID-19 tests were done in the past 24 hours. Of the total tests, 14,506 were RT-PCR - the third highest in the month. Friday had seen the highest number of such tests till now with 15,660 RT-PCR tests.

The High Court had directed the Delhi government to increase the number of RT-PCR tests, which is consi-



A rapid antigen test for COVID-19 in progress in New Delhi.  
• SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

## Virus spread

Total number of COVID-19 cases	Total deaths
<b>3,31,017</b>	<b>6,009</b>
New cases in the past 24 hours	New deaths
<b>3,299</b>	<b>28</b>

SOURCE: DELHI GOVERNMENT HEALTH BULLETIN

dered as the gold standard when it comes to COVID-19 testing.

Also, the number of active cases increased for the sixth consecutive day and the people under home isolation

increased for the fifth straight day. The number of people in hospitals also slightly increased on Sunday.

Out of the total 15,704 beds available for COVID-19 treatment in the city, 67.9% were vacant, as per government data. However, 57.2% of ICU beds with ventilators have been occupied and 54.5% of such beds without ventilators are full.

The positivity rate was 6.6% - the highest in October. The overall positivity rate till now is 8.3%.

## Shopkeepers join anti-dengue campaign

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Responding to the appeal by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, shopkeepers joined the '10 Hafte 10 Baje 10 Minute' anti-dengue campaign here on Sunday.

Mr. Kejriwal welcomed the move and thanked the shopkeepers for taking part and protecting themselves and their customers from dengue.

The seventh week of the programme sought to encourage shopkeepers in national capital to inspect their shops and surroundings for stagnant water every Sunday for 10 minutes and drain it to prevent the breeding of dengue mosquitoes around them.

"This time, shopkeepers of Delhi also took part in the fight against dengue, checked the shops and changed the stagnant water. By doing so, they are protecting themselves and their customers from dengue. Delhi is again defeating Dengue [sic]," Mr. Kejriwal tweeted.

## COVID-19

A total of 1,50,033 people have tested positive for COVID-19 so far and there are 10,042 active cases. On Sunday, 169 people in the State were on oxygen support and 31 on ventilator.

The State conducts 93,549 tests per million and the cases are doubled every 42 days with the positivity rate of 6.34%. The recovery rate is 92.21%.

## No virus death in Haryana after over four months

1,640 people have lost their lives so far

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GURUGRAM

After a gap of over four months, no COVID-19 related death was reported in Haryana on Sunday. The last time zero death was reported was on June 6.

"Haryana Health Department is happy to announce that no death has been reported on account of COVID-19 so far today [Sunday]. While it is heartening, there is no room for complacency and the Haryana Health Department will remain in the highest position of alert till there is a lasting solution to the COVID-19 infection," said Additional Chief Secretary Health and Home, Rajeev Arora.

RAJEEV ARORA  
Additional Chief Secretary  
Health and Home

(190), Karnal (115) and Panchkula (106). Charkhi Dadri has reported four deaths, the least in the State.

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Those died include 1,448 with co-morbidities. Faridabad at 238 has recorded the highest number of deaths, followed by Gurugram

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on Sunday, 169 people in the State were on oxygen support and 31 on ventilator.

The 59-year-old leader accused the Congress of playing the politics of "hypothetical fears", adding that people had now seen through its tactics.

"The Congress did only lip service. The BJP will do the real service. People of the region are making up their mind for development," he quipped.

Mr. Dhankar said development was the most important issue in the by-election and the key to it was with the BJP in Haryana and Delhi for the next four years.

"The Congress did only lip service. The BJP will do the real service. People of the region are making up their mind for development," he quipped.

Playing the politics

"They tried to create an atmosphere of fear by saying that crops will not be bought on Minimum Support Price and mandis cease to exist. But the crop is being bought on MSP and the mandis are running. Now they say the government will gradually stop procurement on MSP. Congress has this habit to play politics by showing fear of hypothetical situations. They did so [played politics] on Article 370 and triple talaaq. But pe-

ople have seen through it," argued Mr. Dhankar.

On the guarantee for MSP, Mr. Dhankar said no one can control the entire market in a country and the demand was not "viable". He, however, asserted that the government would continue to procure crops on MSP.

On the coalition partners

failing to reach a Common Minimum Programme for the governance even a year after they came into power, Mr. Dhankar conceded that though nothing was available in "black and white", the two parties had reached an agreement on 30-odd points and had a few differences.

"The coalition is running on the common and viable points of the manifestos of the two parties," said Mr. Dhankar. He said that he aimed to expand the base of the party in the State and change the electoral pattern so that the party remained in power for long. "Though people in Haryana don't usually repeat the government unlike Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, I hope to change it and make sure that the party get mandate for long," said Mr. Dhankar.

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## Amarinder should resign immediately: Akali Dal

Law of the jungle in Punjab, says party

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHANDIGARH

While the police are yet to make any arrests in the killing of Shaurya Chakra awardee Balwinder Singh Sandhu, the Opposition has hit out at the ruling Congress government, asking Chief Minister Amarinder Singh to take moral responsibility for the breakdown in the law and order situation in the State and resign immediately.

### 'Rampant killings'

Former Minister and Shiromani Akali Dal leader Daljit Cheema in a statement, said, "It seems there is a law of the jungle in Punjab. We are witnessing rampant killings and armed dacoities. A Shaurya Chakra awardee – Balwinder Singh Sandhu – was murdered at his native village Bhikhwind, a few days after his security detail

was withdrawn. Not only this, there have been at least three incidents of killing in one week in the area under the Bhikhwind police station alone."

### Call for action

Calling for an immediate course correction, Mr. Cheema said if the law and order situation was not brought under control immediately and peace and communal harmony was not restored there was likelihood of Punjab becoming a disturbed State yet again.

Balwinder Sandhu, who had fought against terrorism in Punjab for years, was shot dead on October 16 by unidentified assailants at his native Bhikhwind village in Tarn Taran district. The Chief Minister had later ordered the constitution of a Special Investigative Team (SIT) to probe the incident.

# Fight will go on against Centre's agriculture laws, says Punjab CM

Views of the MLAs would be taken into account while finalising the strategy'

### SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT CHANDIGARH



CM Amarinder Singh

Ahead of the two-day special session of the Punjab Assembly, beginning October 19, Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Sunday said views of the MLAs would be taken into account while finalising the strategy to battle the Centre's farm laws, in consultation with legal and independent experts.

The Opposition parties – Aam Aadmi Party and Shiromani Akali Dal – however, questioned the State government's alleged "secrecy" surrounding the proposed agenda.

"This fight will go on, we will take the fight to the Supreme Court," Captain Amarinder said at a meeting of the Congress Legislature Party (CLP). He said the

whole world was watching Punjab with a lot of expectation and the views of the MLAs were extremely important for drafting a comprehensive strategy to protect the State's farmers and agriculture.

### 'Clear stand'

He said for the Congress, the fight was not about politics but to save the State's farm-

ers and decision will be taken in the interest of the farming community. Taking a dig at the Akalis, the Chief Minister said the Congress was not double-faced and had a clear stand on the issue of the farm laws.

### Extend session: AAP

AAP has demanded an extension to the proposed one-day special session to at least seven days to discuss and debate the implications of the farm laws. A delegation of the party, led by Leader of Opposition Harpal Singh Cheema, met Assembly Speaker Rana K.P. Singh and submitted a memorandum flagging certain core issues of concern.

"Barely a few hours were left for the special session to commence, neither the Pun-

jab government nor the Vidhan Sabha secretariat had informed the principal opposition party about the detailed agenda to be put across in the Vidhan Sabha," he said.

### 'Fool-proof legislation'

The SAD asked the Chief Minister to come out with a fool-proof legislation so that the rights of the farmers were secured in perpetuity.

SAD leaders Sharanjit Singh Dhillon and Bikram Singh Majithia said there were already apprehensions that the Congress was hand-in-glove with the Modi government and had purposefully not taken all stakeholders into confidence so that no effective step was taken to stymie the implementation of the Central laws in Punjab.

## M.P. hooch tragedy: Ujjain district SP, ASP transferred

Two constables also arrested for alleged involvement in the sale of illicit liquor that led to 12 deaths

### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA UJJAIN

Ujjain District Superintendent of Police and another police officer were transferred to Bhopal on Sunday following the death of 12 people after consumption of spurious liquor, while two constables were arrested for their alleged involvement in

its sale, officials said.

The move to shunt out Ujjain District SP Manoj Singh and Additional SP Rupesh Dwivedi came after Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan took a serious view of the incident during a review meeting at his residence in Bhopal, a government official said.

Satyendra Kumar Shukla replaces Mr. Singh, who has been shifted to Bhopal as Assistant Inspector General at the police headquarters (PHQ), and the area city superintendent of police is suspended, said an order from the State Home Department.

Besides, Ujjain's Additional Superintendent of Police

has also been transferred to the PHQ as Assistant Inspector General, the order said.

At the review meeting, Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Dr. Rajesh Rajora, who heads the Special Investigation Team (SIT) which is conducting a probe into the incident, apprised Mr. Chouhan of the ground situation.

Mr. Chouhan asked the officials to check the sale of illicit liquor and other intoxicants.

Earlier, constables Shaikh Anwar and Nawaz of Kharakuan police station in Ujjain were arrested on Saturday for their alleged involvement in the sale of spurious liquor, a police officer said.

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3	Manager (Civil), E-3 grade	67,700/- to 2,08,700/-	02	78,500/-	01	01	-	-
4	Manager (IT), E-3 grade	67,700/- to 2,08,700/-	01	78,500/-	-	-	01	-
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<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>02</b>	<b>04</b>	<b>01</b>	<b>05</b>

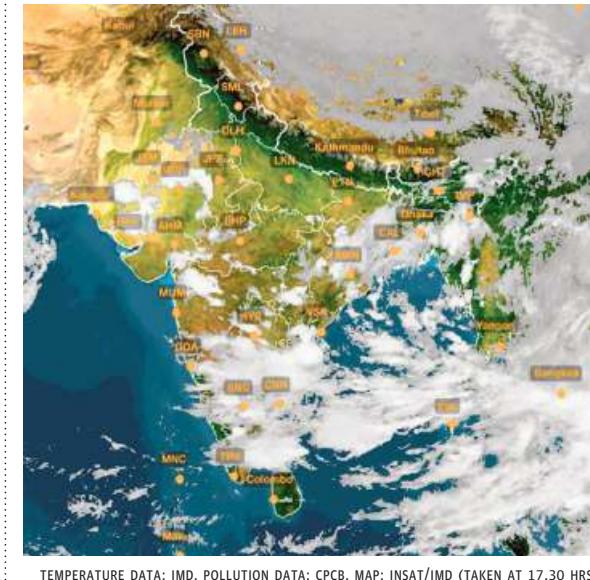
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### WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.30 HRS)

**Forecast for Monday:** Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Telangana, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, Odisha, Andaman Islands, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Yanam, Rayalseema and north interior Karnataka

**CITY** **RAIN** **MAX** **MIN** **CITY** **RAIN** **MAX** **MIN**

Agartala ..... 33.2... 25.8 Kozhikode ..... 34.4... 25.0

Ahmedabad ..... 36.0... 26.4 Kurnool ..... 32.1... 24.5

Aizawl ..... 27.9... 18.9 Lucknow ..... 34.5... 21.2

Allahabad ..... 35.5... 23.8 Maduraj ..... 0.5... 24.2

Bengaluru ..... 28.0... 20.8 Mangaluru ..... 32.2... 23.5

Bhopal ..... 35.1... 23.8 Mumbai ..... 32.5... 26.2

Bhubaneswar ..... 32.2... 24.9 Mysuru ..... 29.5... 21.3

Chandigarh ..... 34.7... 18.1 New Delhi ..... 34.7... 16.6

Chennai ..... 26.5... 25.5 Patna ..... 36.4... 24.6

Coimbatore ..... 33.0... 23.4 Port Blair ..... 9.1... 24.4

Dehradun ..... 32.7... 23.0 Puducherry ..... 19.9... 22.3

Gangtok ..... 21.0... 17.3 Pune ..... 31.5... 20.8

Goa ..... 32.2... 23.6 Raipur ..... 32.2... 23.5

Guwahati ..... 35.5... 25.0 Ranchi ..... 31.7... 2

# A question of adjustments

The post-pandemic situation will be challenging, both for students and teachers. A look at the issues that may crop up

R. W. ALEXANDER JESUDASAN

Of the current global human population of 7.8 billion in 2020, nearly 1.3 billion are learners who have been affected by the closure of educational institutions due to COVID-19. Such spaces are fundamental not only for academic interactions but also to build social and emotional skills and mental and physical health. As governments contemplate when and how to re-open schools and colleges, it is

**Exposure to cultural, club and other extracurricular activities shape the life of students, but this is not possible now.**

clear that the post-pandemic situation will be different for both teachers and students.

#### Resuming classroom

With students and teachers getting used to remote teaching, which has been the norm for much of this year, getting back to the traditional classroom environment will be challenging. One immediate issue will be lack of focus, as students may be distracted by sharing their experiences of life during the lockdowns. This initial hiccup can be overcome by giving them the right orientation.

#### Psychological stress

Owing to SMS – social distancing, masks and

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

sanitisers, which are the non-negotiable – the classroom environment will be new, difficult and possibly stressful. Students will have to get used to physical distancing instead of sitting close together and joking or playing pranks. Further, students who exhibit symptoms of headache, cough and fever are likely to be suspected to be infected with the Coronavirus. This could lead to some amount of embarrassment.

**Lack of excitement**  
Students who have already begun a new academic year online have lost the charm and excitement of a new classroom environment along with that of getting new uniforms, books and other essentials. Further, a physical connect after a vacation usually is a happy time of sharing experiences of travel and other thrilling moments, none of which was possible this year. Also, educational

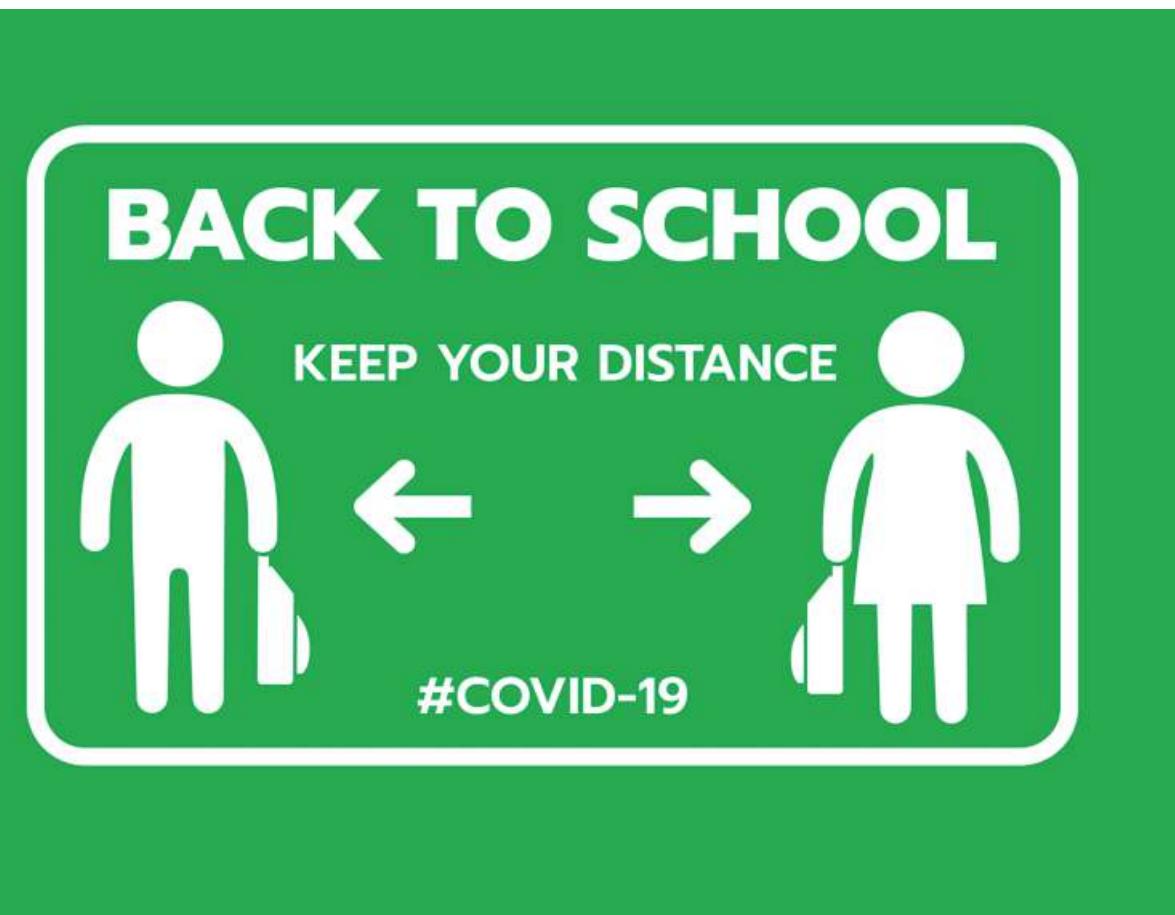
institutions are considering a shift system so that fewer students will be present in the classroom, leading to smaller groups.

**Transition hampered**  
Students who finished school this year have had their introduction to college through a virtual walk-through. This does not really help in showcasing the institution. Also their interactions in the college would have depended on

whether they were day scholars or hostel residents. Exposure to cultural, club and other extracurricular activities shape the life of students, but this is not possible now.

Authorities and the faculty will have to find solutions to circumvent these problems.

The writer is Pro Vice-Chancellor, Hindustan Institute of Technology & Science (Deemed to be University) alexjesu62@gmail.com



# Overseas options

Sumeet Jain, the founder of Yocket, talks about the findings from a recent survey on studying abroad

MADHUVANTI S. KRISHNAN

Much like other industries, the education sector was thrown off course, due to the COVID-19 lockdowns, and lakhs of students who aspired to go abroad for their higher education witnessed their plans come to a screeching halt. 'What next? Which courses do we opt for? Which countries are safe?' were some inevitable questions that cropped up. To allay their doubts, online platform Yocket recently conducted a survey with a sample size of 123,309 students, regarding studying abroad. Sumeet Jain, the founder of Yocket, spoke to *Education Plus* about the findings and prospects of foreign studies.

#### Trends over time

Yocket's main aim, he says, is to foster aspirations to study abroad, so, "it is crucial for us to observe changing trends. We also wanted to examine the impact of COVID-19 on this sector. Therefore, data of four years was considered." The survey looked at pre-COVID (2018-19), COVID (2019-20) and post-COVID (2020-21).

Sumeet believes that students should opt for higher education now. "This is the best time to develop skill-based individuals who can encourage business. Recessions are known to be the best time for people to upskill themselves, as the opportunity cost is low, and people will be well-equipped for when the economy bounces back."

#### Top countries

**United States:** According to the survey, more than 81% of the students aspired to study in the U.S., which until recently had the highest number of COVID-19 cases. "Not every region in the U.S. is as badly affected," clarifies Sumeet. "Most universities are away from the main cities; most are college towns themselves. Universities are opening up campuses when

they are sure of providing a safe environment. Apart from physical distancing measures and regularly sanitising campuses, universities can have a mix of online and on-campus classes."

Asked about the recent changes to visa criteria, Sumeet points out that, overall, there wasn't much in the last four years. "The U.S. understands the importance of international students, not just in terms of revenue but also the diversity and the quality they bring to the campuses. Especially after the pandemic, the education sector will get a boost. So, students can definitely expect some positive news post the elections, irrespective of whoever wins."

**Australia:** The least number of students (below 2%) wanted to study here. However, there are many reputed colleges and universities with supportive International Student Schemes. "Most of our respondents were people from STEM courses and they prefer the U.S. Also, Australia has a limited number of universities in comparison to the U.S., but is doing well in Accounting and Management-related subjects. Employment opportunities and pay scales are quite high in the U.S., which makes it a more viable option. Many students have also started to consider Canadian and European schools, which explains low numbers for Australia." Sumeet also feels a post-study work visa will

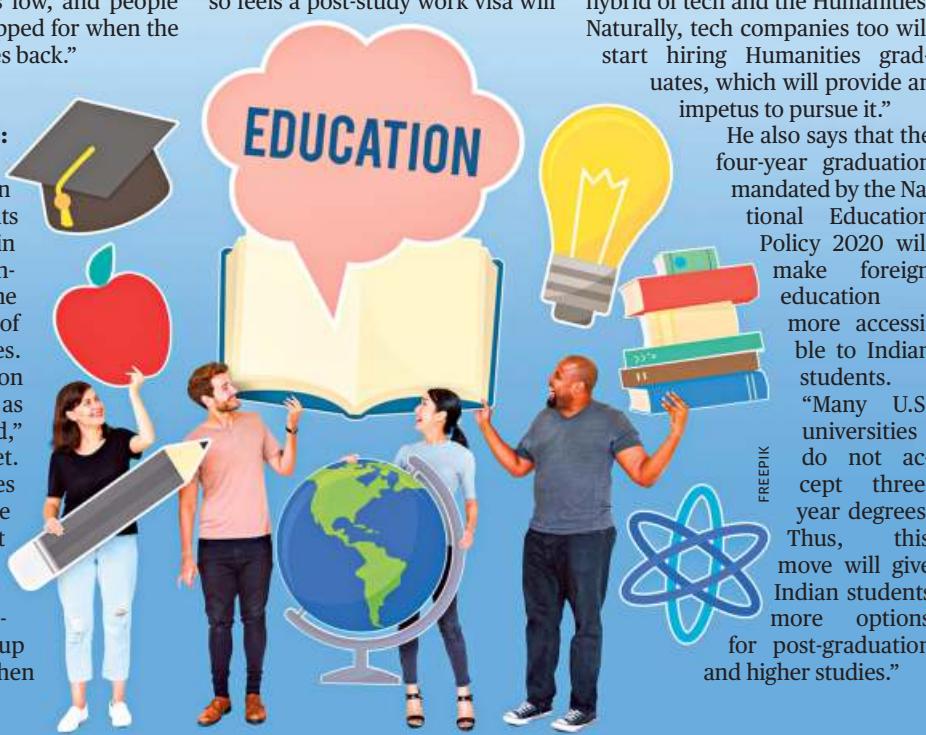
help attract students and hopes that the government will be "student-friendly", pointing to the constant change in the skilled labour list and the need for employment opportunities for students without Permanent Residence (PR).

**Germany:** While some universities offer free tuition, most are highly competitive and focus on academic performance. While knowing German is not mandatory, it will definitely make life easier.

**United Kingdom:** When the post-study visa option was cancelled, numbers dipped. But now that it has been revived, things could improve. But post-Brexit, job opportunities for international students will have to be seen, he says.

**STEM vs Humanities:** According to the survey, only students with a commerce or science background preferred to study abroad. "Studying abroad is expensive and, often, students have to avail loans. They have to check post-study options to be able to repay it. In the U.S., for instance, the STEM courses have a post-study work visa option of two years; whereas, for the Humanities or Arts, the option is just one year. Getting a job in these sectors can be challenging. So, there is a need for government-sponsored scholarships for these courses. In a post-COVID environment, there will be a number of courses and careers that will be a hybrid of tech and the Humanities. Naturally, tech companies too will start hiring Humanities graduates, which will provide an impetus to pursue it."

He also says that the four-year graduation mandated by the National Education Policy 2020 will make foreign education more accessible to Indian students. "Many U.S. universities do not accept three-year degrees. Thus, this move will give Indian students more options for post-graduation and higher studies."



## WEB WORLD



# Have you completed your cybersecurity homework?

With technology now being the enabler of education, staying safe online too must become part of school culture

VENKAT KRISHNAPUR

The pandemic has transformed the traditional classroom model to a digital screen – a single pane for the entire education system. With classrooms operating virtually, students and teachers are exposing themselves to more cyber risks than they realise. Educational institutions have long been a target for malicious actors and this has been validated by recent research that names education and manufacturing as the most targeted sectors since the pandemic.

#### Is security the backbencher?

Lack of awareness and weak policies governing the space make the education sector alarmingly vulnerable to cyber threats. Shortage of resources and technology investment further deepens the problem. There is a pressing need to maintain control over how the influx of data is used, stored, and shared inside and outside of the virtual class. As students and teachers operate from less

controlled environments outside of school, the need to educate them on basics such as phishing and cyberbullying, and inculcating overall cybersecurity hygiene is imperative.

Government initiatives like CSC help students understand the implications of security in the digital world through interactive workshops and trainings that help them make responsible and informed decisions in cyberspace. However, there is a lot more to be done and only by prioritising these conversations at the grassroots can we go beyond the tip of the iceberg.

**Raising digital citizens**  
Online scams are successful because they ride on emotional vulnerability and behavioural limitations. Parents and teachers need to empower students with information and strategies to defend themselves online. Cybersafety must be discussed often, and with due seriousness.

The past few months have created the perfect storm for online predators. Young learn-

ers and first-time users on insecure networks are exposed to malware or phishing.

**What you can do:** Never click unsolicited links included in emails, text messages, or screen pop-ups. Even if you know the sender, scrutinise the email/text before you reply. Just like the real world, beware of 'digital stranger danger' in the virtual one. Do not befriend strangers, send them personal photos/videos, no matter how much they insist.

There is a possibility of cyberbullying or cyberharassment from known and unknown people online.

Remember, all online content is permanent. Even if you try deleting it, there is still a record floating around in the cyber-world. It is imperative that kids pay close attention to all posts, videos, and images they upload.

**What you can do:** Engage in safe social networking and avoid giving out too much personal information. Maximise privacy settings on social profiles and delete any post that unintentionally gives away per-

The writer is Vice-President of Engineering and Managing Director, McAfee India

## SCHOLARSHIPS

### Sardar Patel Scholarship

**APPLICATION:** Online

b4s.in/edge/EWS1

### NSP Merit-Cum-Means Scholarship

The Ministry of Minority Affairs is inviting applications for NSP Merit-Cum-Means Scholarship for Professional and Technical Courses CS (Minorities).

**ELIGIBILITY:** Open to students studying in the first or second year of a three-year graduation programme (in any stream), from a recognised university/institution. The annual income of the family should be less than ₹6 lakhs per annum.

**PRIZES AND REWARDS:** ₹15,000  
**APPLICATION:** Online  
**DEADLINE:** October 31 b4s.in/edge/SPS1

### EWS Scholarship

Buddy4Study India Foundation supports students belonging to Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) of society.

**ELIGIBILITY:** Open to students who have got at least 50% in Class X board exams and are studying in classes XI and XII. The annual family income should be less than ₹6 lakhs per annum.

**PRIZES AND REWARDS:** Course fee and maintenance allowance  
**APPLICATION:** Online  
**DEADLINE:** October 31 b4s.in/edge/SFM2

**Courtesy:** buddy4study.com



## An incomplete solution

The Centre must assure States on the timeline for payment of the GST compensation due

**T**he past week witnessed some forward, albeit inexplicably delayed, movement towards breaking the deadlock between the Centre and States on bridging this year's shortfall in cess collections to recompense States for adopting the GST. Following a lack of consensus at a third meeting of the GST Council on the issue last Monday, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said States that had agreed to the Centre's proposal could begin borrowing from the market. To recap – the Centre had argued that just ₹1.1-lakh crore of the estimated ₹2.35-lakh crore shortfall in GST cess inflows was due to GST implementation; the rest was due to COVID-19. States could borrow ₹1.1-lakh crore with interest and principal payments to come from future cess collections; or borrow the ₹2.35-lakh crore, but bear the interest from their coffers. By Wednesday, 21 States had agreed to the Centre's first option and were permitted to raise about ₹79,000 crore (0.5% of their gross State domestic product) as additional borrowing linked to their acceptance of the option. On Thursday, however, the Centre changed tack and said it was now willing to borrow the ₹1.1-lakh crore and lend it onward. Calling this an administratively easier measure to ensure States do not end up borrowing at different interest rates, the Ministry asserted this would neither increase the fiscal deficit nor the general government debt.

States and economists have welcomed this change of heart, especially as it helps bring in much needed cash for States to fight the pandemic. However, it is odd that the 'administrative ease' of the Centre borrowing and lending to States, had not struck North Block mandarins earlier – given that the cess collection worries surfaced soon after the lockdown was imposed. Over the course of the negotiations, States had urged the Centre to borrow and pay them, but the Finance Ministry had repeatedly stressed that this would push up interest rates and upset its fiscal math. Precious time could have been saved had the Centre made this offer earlier – seven months into a year that has seen economic activity and revenue sources dry up, and States have only received ₹20,000 crore from the GST cess. Kerala, which was considering a petition in the Supreme Court with other Opposition-ruled States, has cooled off on the legal route, but sought full payment of the ₹2.35-lakh crore shortfall this fiscal. On Friday, Ms Sitharaman wrote to Chief Ministers suggesting that the ₹1.1-lakh crore, in addition to the 0.5% of GSDP borrowing, would give them ₹2.16-lakh crore, or almost 90% of the compensation shortfall. Cash flow assurances aside, the Centre must now talk to States to ensure greater clarity on the unanswered questions – including when the States will get the balance GST compensation. That is imperative to sustain the fragile peace attained for now.

## No great escape

India's low global rank in tackling nutritional deficits calls for a revamped PDS

**I**ndia's poor progress on nutritional indices must dispel the hubris surrounding strong economic growth for years, and turn national focus on persisting hunger, wasting and stunting among children. This year's Global Hunger Index (GHI) places India in the company of Sudan – rank 94 among 107 countries – with the unedifying assessment of the national situation as "serious". The country's score of 27.2 is the worst among BRICS countries, and inferior to Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh and Nepal. The GHI is developed around wasting and stunting (under five), the share of the population with insufficient caloric intake, and child mortality. Index scores by international agencies have been critiqued as flawed for choosing the wrong weights in scoring, and also for not including genetics and social determinants, but that would be a narrow view. The evidence from the NFHS-4 of 2015-16 is not very different. The reality is that national policy has no appetite for a radical transformation in the delivery of adequate nutrition especially to women and children, and has paid inadequate attention to achieving diet diversity through the PDS. On the other hand, the country is widely seen as falsely equating energy calories with a diverse diet. The existing deprivation has been aggravated by the pandemic, with food inflation putting pressure on depleted incomes or meagre pensions and savings.

The NFHS-4 found that under-five stunting from chronic undernourishment stood at 38%, and wasting, a result of acute lack of nutrition, at 21%. These data represent some progress, at a drop of about 10 percentage points in both categories compared to a decade earlier, although steady economic prosperity should have yielded a far bigger social dividend. The latest GHI measure is a reminder that much work is necessary to bring the true benefits of the National Food Security Act to the unreached, not merely as hunger mitigation through cereals, but as nourishment through a diverse diet that includes fat, protein and micronutrients. But there are worrying indications that the Centre has chosen the wrong course. In its pursuit of fraud within the PDS, it is inclined to take hard measures that would deprive the disabled and the elderly of even cereals, by insisting on biometric verification to get supplies. Strengthening the PDS, with a focus on women's health, would lead to healthier pregnancies, and stronger supplemental nutrition under the ICDS scheme would give children a better chance at all-round development. The importance of sustained, immediate intervention is further underscored by recent findings of International Food Policy Research Institute scholars that three out of four rural Indians cannot afford a balanced, nutritious diet. The right to food would be meaningless if it leaves a large section of Indians hungry, stunted and wasted.

# The Raj Bhavan's new role – taking centre stage

The political design behind increasing gubernatorial over-reach is simple – to crowd in on certain State governments



HARISH KHARE

**W**hen in 2007 at the height of the agitation in Nandigram in West Bengal, Governor Gopalkrishna Gandhi had allowed himself to express his "cold horror" at the ugly violence, Raisina Hill overseers were not pleased and their displeasure was conveyed to the Raj Bhavan in no uncertain terms. There was a definite clarity in New Delhi that a Governor need not get involved in the fracas among the political parties and leaders. That was "old India" and there was a commitment to the federal principle.

In the "new India", a new role is being scripted for the Raj Bhavan, as is for all other constitutional institutions. The Governors in the non-Bharatiya Janata Party-ruled States have been given a licence to convert Raj Bhavans into a rival centre of political activism – even intrigue – against the elected governments.

### The letter in Maharashtra

Hon'ble Jagdeep Dhankhar at the Kolkata Raj Bhavan, so far, had the distinction of being the most active licentiate – till his counterpart in the Mumbai Raj Bhavan decided last week to cross all limits of gubernatorial propriety. Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari's by-now famous letter to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, demanding re-opening of the places of worship to the devotees across Maharashtra, is a brilliant but thoroughly unnerving innovation in a Governor's bag of tricks of over-reach.

Various Raj Bhavans, of course,

have become embroiled in extremely unsavoury controversies over the decade, partly because the Constitution of India does allow a certain discretion to the Governor. And a discretion invariably does get abused. The framers of the Constitution had definitely disfavoured the idea of an elected Governor because they were unambiguously clear that political power would only be vested with the Council of Ministers, headed by a Chief Minister; yet, they were not inclined to put in a formal Instrument of Instructions for the Governors and were content to believe that political decencies and correctness would be observed both by the Governor and the Chief Minister.

As the distinguished constitutional expert, Nani A. Palkhivala, saw it, "the Constitution intended that the Governor should be the instrument to maintain the fundamental equilibrium of the people of the State and to ensure that the mandates of the Constitution are respected in the State". The assumption, of course, was that those appointed to a Raj Bhavan would be endowed with "a buddhi [wisdom] which sets apart a statesman from a politician".

### A twist to discretion

In the post-Nehruvian era, as our politics became rough and our politicians rougher, that *buddhi* eluded most Governors. As an appointee of the Union Government, the Governors have, predictably enough, been all too prone to do the bidding of the ruling party at the Centre.

Inevitably the "discretion" – be it choosing a Chief Minister, or requiring a Chief Minister to prove his/her majority, or dismissing a Chief Minister, dissolving the legislature, recommending President's Rule – came to be tainted with partisan political considerations.



More often than not, the gubernatorial discretion was abused, sometimes absurdly, even whimsically.

The Supreme Court did try, through its judgment in the S.R. Bommai case, to restore some kind of order on the rampant proclivities of Raj Bhavans. That, of course, did not prevent a Governor from becoming difficult. For example, a Governor has been known for, once, withholding his assent to the Budget because the Chief Minister was not inclined to accede to the Raj Bhavan's demand for a fourth imported luxury car for "His Excellency".

But now, the BJP has accelerated the process of institutional lamination. A new role for the Governors in the non-BJP ruled States has been devised. Without seeming to abuse his "discretion", a Governor, like the gentleman in the Kolkata Raj Bhavan, can blatantly put the licence of 'gubernatorial activism' in the service of his bosses' party interests. There is probably nothing in the Constitution that forbids a Governor from making a political nuisance of himself. The Twitter handle comes in handy. Or, no one can fault a Governor for granting an audience to delegations hostile to the Chief Minister. The Maharashtra Governor was all too willing to get himself photographed with a film actress, who was demonstratively brawling with Chief Minister Thackeray.

Or, take the case of the West

Bengal Governor openly suggesting that the police officials and the bureaucrats should perform their duties as "public servants are not political workers". Almost, a hit-and-run strategy. And, then, leave it to the media to whip up a political cloud over such loaded utterances.

### New low

Article 167 of the Constitution does allow a Governor to call for any information "relating to the administration of the affairs of the State"; but, with a wink from the bosses in the Union Home Ministry, a Governor like Mr. Dhankhar or Mr. Koshyari can become a total partisan. But, it was a new low when the Maharashtra Governor mockingly asked the Chief Minister if he had suddenly turned "secular".

In the "old India", the President of India would have mostly probably found a way of communicating the Rashtrapati Bhavan's displeasure to the Maharashtra Governor for this 'secular' taunt. After all, secularism is very much a part of the basic structure of the Constitution, the very sacred book that a Governor takes oath to "preserve, protect and defend".

"Secularism" is not a dispensable part of the Constitution, nor is it a dirty word, as Governor Koshyari's letter implied. After all, it has been pointed out by jurists and constitutional scholars that in the Kesavananda Bharati case, the Supreme Court had declared secularism as a basic feature of the Constitution, even before the Forty-Second Amendment had introduced the word 'secular' in the Preamble to the Constitution. The political design behind an over-active Raj Bhavan is simple: poke, prod, pinprick and provoke the elected government to waste its political energies and capital in an unwanted war of attrition; the BJP

can be the only beneficiary from the resulting skirmishes.

### Reflecting an arrogance

However, there is a certain method to this gubernatorial madness. Governors like Mr. Koshyari and Mr. Dhankhar are too insignificant as political players to have crafted on their own this new gubernatorial meddlesomeness; their over-reach is only a reflection of a new arrogant mindset at work.

The Narendra Modi-Amit Shah leadership subscribes to a maximalist approach to the obligation of institutionalised sharing of power within our federal framework. Over and above the primacy of the Union, the BJP is allergic to the idea of having to share power and space with other political parties and players. The non-BJP governments, an unafraid Mamta Banerjee and unimimidated Uddhav Thackeray, are seen as eyesores which need to be removed. To that end, wherever possible, the Raj Bhavans would become the State BJP's extension counters. No one should be surprised if the BJP were to use the contrived Koshyari-Thackeray dust-up in the Bihar election campaign later this month.

This itch for political intolerance is a recurring nightmare for the Indian Union. After she returned to power in 1980, Indira Gandhi was determined to use the Raj Bhavans to get rid of unhelpful non-Congress governments. Remember Governor Ram Lal in Andhra Pradesh or Governor Jagmohan in Jammu and Kashmir. But, now, a new righteous of the "new India" is being deployed to beautify an old-fashioned power lust. An over-bearing Centre appeals enormously to wannabe emperors.

Harish Khare is a senior journalist based in Delhi

# The hues in the green tribunal's resilient journey

Over 10 years, the NGT has made a difference to environmental protection, helped by a new tribe of legal practitioners



JAIRAM RAMESH

**Y**esterday (October 18) was a significant day, as it marked the 10th anniversary of the National Green Tribunal, or NGT (<https://bit.ly/2T8BzLO>). Few ministries can boast of as varied, diverse, and challenging a mandate as the Ministry of Environment and Forests. The downside to this vast and all-encompassing scope, which covers forests, wildlife, environment, climate change and coastal protection, is that it gives rise to an equally diverse volume of litigation.

### Complexities from day one

This was one of the very first things I realised upon assuming office as the Minister for Environment and Forests in the year 2009. The sheer number and complexity of cases, with several more being added every week, led the Supreme Court of India to designate a special Bench to handle these matters. This Bench, which met every Friday to deliberate on these and many other matters, came to be known fittingly as the 'Forest Bench'. And this was to say nothing of the numerous matters that were filed and pending hearings in the various High Courts.

Given the time constraints of the top court and the High Courts, some cases had been pending for decades and in turn, spawning

other linked matters which further delayed the process. I also realised that despite the efforts of the capable officers and experts assisting the Supreme Court, this was at best an *ad hoc* solution.

### Stages in an evolution

Several years prior to my tenure, Parliament had passed laws related to the establishment of a National Environment Tribunal (1995) and a National Environment Appellate Authority (1997). The Authority (<https://bit.ly/3oQjOb>) was intended to act primarily as a forum for challenges to environmental clearances while the Tribunal (<https://bit.ly/2HgGA9g>) could award limited amounts of compensation in cases of environmental damage to life or property. In my opinion, these did not go far enough in terms of jurisdiction, authority, impact, or autonomy.

It was clear that the enforcement, protection, and adjudication of environmental laws required a specialised and dedicated body. A tribunal, staffed with judges and environmental experts, would need to be empowered to hear these issues so that the burden on the High Courts and the Supreme Court could be reduced.

The quality of time spent on these issues could also be increased as, unlike the Supreme Court, the tribunal could have benches in various States, thereby increasing access to all citizens. Thus, the idea for the 'NGT' was born.

This was not the first time that the idea had been mooted. In judgments such as *M.C. Mehta & Anr. Etc vs Union Of India & Otrs. Etc* (1986), the then Chief Justice of India

Justice P.N. Bhagwati, had suggested "to the Government of India that since cases involving issues of environmental pollution, ecological destructions and conflicts over national resources are increasingly coming up for adjudication and these cases involve assessment and evolution of scientific and technical data, it might be desirable to set up Environmental Courts on the regional basis with one professional Judge and two experts drawn from the Ecological Sciences Research Group keeping in view the nature of the case and the expertise required for its adjudication. There would of course be a right of appeal to this Court from the decision of the Environmental Court" (<https://bit.ly/3tjDxEv>).

These observations were recalled in 1999 by the Supreme Court in the landmark case of *A.P. Pollution Control Board vs Prof. M.V. Nayudu (Retd.)* which added its own emphasis on the need for a court that was "a combination of a Judge and Technical Experts" (<https://bit.ly/345PPIR>) with an appeal to the Supreme Court from the Environmental Court.

The NGT's first year was a turbulent one. Unlike the opaque legislative process followed today, the first draft of the NGT Bill was circulated as part of a pre-legisla-

tive consultation process and inspired widespread debate. Concerns ranged from the genuine to the absurd. In the first category, one of my senior colleagues argued that it would contribute to the trend of 'tribunalisation' (a debate that would achieve some closure a year later with the Supreme Court's judgment in *R. Gandhi's case* in 2010). In the last category, an environmental non-governmental organisation took issue with the name and argued that the word 'Green' could act as a green signal to potential polluters. Following its passage, the Madras High Court even issued notice on a petition which had challenged the Act as unconstitutional and stayed appointments to the body (an order vacated by the Supreme Court on appeal).

Incidentally, I had intended for the parent bench of the NGT to be in Bhopal, as a tribute and homage to the memory of the victims of the Bhopal Gas Tragedy of 1984. However, many of the jurists and retired judges I consulted suggested that for administrative considerations, it would be better for the Chair to be at Delhi.

The rules (though not the Rule making power) were ultimately suspended by the Supreme Court. But key challenges remain: the NGT must focus less on governance issues and more on adjudication. Benches have to expand manifold. Vacancies have to be filled quickly.

### The track record

Since its inception, the NGT has, apart from creating a new breed of legal practitioners, protected vast acres of forest land, halted polluting construction activities in metros and smaller towns. It has penalised errant officials who have turned a blind eye towards enforcing the laws, and held large corporate entities to account. It has protected the rights of tribal communities and ensured the en-

forcement of the "polluter pays" principle in letter and spirit. In this endeavour it has been assisted by brilliant practitioners, many of whom are young counsels, passionate and dedicated towards protecting the environment.

### A change in attitude

Perhaps the biggest testament to the NGT's success has been the attitude of the ruling government towards it. Three years ago, in a fashion similar to what has been done with the Right to Information Act, the Central Government attempted to dilute the criteria for appointments to the NGT and other tribunals. I challenged this dilution before the Supreme Court and my counsel, the renowned senior advocate, Mohan Parasaran, was called upon to assist the Bench as an *amicus curiae* in the case.

The rules (though not the Rule making power) were ultimately suspended by the Supreme Court. But key challenges remain: the NGT must focus less on governance issues and more on adjudication. Benches have to expand manifold. Vacancies have to be filled quickly.

In its next decade, the NGT must continue to remain a proactive 'inconvenience' to all those who, while pontificating grandiloquently on the need for environmental protection, take actions that make economic growth ecologically unsustainable.

Jairam Ramesh is a Member of Parliament and the Chair of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science & Technology, Environment & Forests



with an 'insistence' on electronic authentication, I fear that many an elderly or disabled person will face hunger. There should be an alternative way to supply provisions when the machine does not work.

Dr. JESSIE LIONEL,  
Vellore, Tamil Nadu

concerned has to come in person and affix his thumb impression – that is if the machine is working. It is sad that it is an uncertain situation for the elderly, the disabled and the poor. Till now, in Tamil Nadu, the poor did not have to worry about their basic needs as a result of the Public Distribution System. But

### CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

A news report about J&K topper in NEET examination from a trouble-torn area (October 18, 2020) had erred while giving the name of the candidate who had earned that distinction. The Jammu and Kashmir State topper, according to the statement available on the National Testing Agency's website, is Avikshit Gupta, and not as reported. It was clarified by the bureau that the list of Toppers was not included in the statement given to the reporters earlier. However, the bureau said, it is now available on the NEET website, with a footnote saying that the list was added later.

The Readers' Editor's office can be contacted by Telephone: +91-44-28418297/28576300; E-mail: readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

## 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.

### A strong bond

Former President Pranab Mukherjee not only lives in the hearts of Indians but also in the hearts of Bangladeshi (Page 1, 'Special', October 18). The love and respect Bangladeshis have for the former President is overwhelming. There are forces out to divide people in the name of religion, but the underlying spirit of oneness between India and Bangladesh must not be left forgotten.

POOJITHA VISWANATH,  
Thottakara, Ottapalam, Kerala

# Probing judicial impropiety and corruption

Only retired judges of high credibility would be able to conduct a robust inquiry into Jagan Reddy's complaint



PRASHANT BHUSHAN

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy dropped a bomb last week when he wrote to the Chief Justice of India (CJI) accusing a sitting judge of the Supreme Court of judicial impropiety and corruption and State High Court judges of bias.

#### Contents of the letter

The letter refers to the purchase of agricultural land, in the area to be declared as the capital city of Andhra Pradesh, between the time when Chandrababu Naidu became Chief Minister in 2014 and the time when he announced the demarcation of the new capital at Amaravati. The charge is that the land was purchased by persons, including the Supreme Court judge's daughters and in-laws (named subsequently in an FIR), after declaration of the capital area limits, at the same low price for the lands which existed before the demarcation, when in fact the market prices had skyrocketed, thereby causing huge pecuniary gain to them. In this connection, in March, the Principal Secretary (Home), Andhra Pradesh Government, wrote to the Secretary of the Union Ministry of Public Grievances and Pensions seeking a CBI inquiry into the findings of a Cabinet sub-committee, set up to investigate charges of corrupt dealings in land purchases. The sub-committee had "opined that public servants at the helm of affairs in the erstwhile government misused and abused their official position to pre-determine the location of the new capital and subsequently purchased lands to unjustly and illegally benefit their associates and their companies and businesses, family members and political party members..."

Mr. Reddy accused the Supreme Court judge of influencing the allocation of benches at the State High Court (his parent High Court) to hear politically sensitive cases. This, he wrote, led to the passing of a string of orders staying a number of investigations of corruption against the Naidu government. One of the cases the letter cites to show that the High Court



S. SUBRAMANIAM

is favouring Mr. Naidu is an extraordinary order passed late one evening by the Chief Justice of the High Court staying all investigations into the FIR involving this land scam, which mentions the relatives of the Supreme Court judge as well as a former Advocate General as beneficiaries. The Chief Justice also issued an unprecedented gag order on the media from reporting the contents of the FIR.

The letter also mentions the High Court's recent order of an inquiry into a private conversation between a retired judge of the High Court and a district judge (under suspension). In the conversation, the retired judge is heard mentioning his knowledge about the corruption of this Supreme Court judge and asking the district judge if he has more information in this regard. The district judge then surprisingly files an application in a pending writ (seeking an investigation into the death of a backward class registrar of the High Court due to alleged violations of COVID-19 guidelines at the High Court) bringing on record this telephone conversation which he had secretly recorded. This unrelated conversation, filed in an intervention which was not even allowed, and which has nothing to do with the prayers in the main writ, is then made the basis for ordering an inquiry into what the High Court terms "designing a plot against The Hon'ble Chief Justice of High Court of Andhra Pradesh and another sitting Judge of the Supreme Court". This is a rather extraordinary order, especially considering that much of the conversation contained information on the Supreme Court judge already in the public domain and does not make out any plot or conspiracy against a judge or the judiciary to warrant such an inquiry.

With these developments, two questions have arisen: one, whether such a letter/complaint against the

Supreme Court judge should have been put out in the public domain; and two, what the CJI's response should be. In 1997, judges adopted an in-house procedure for inquiring into such charges. In case of a complaint against a Supreme Court judge, the CJI is expected to order an inquiry by three sitting judges of the Supreme Court. Though in *C. Ravichandran Iyer v. Justice A.M. Bhattacharjee* (1995), the court held that such complaints should be kept confidential, the unfortunate reality is that the judiciary tends to try and brush complaints of corruption against judges under the carpet. Sometimes, if the public becomes aware of such complaints, the CJI is compelled to order an inquiry. But we have often seen that even credible complaints against judges, made confidentially to the CJI, are ignored.

The same is seen in attempts to impeach a judge. I have found that at least two conditions must be satisfied before a sufficient number of MPs are willing to sign an impeachment motion against a judge: there should be solid documentary evidence of corruption and it should have become a public scandal. In the absence of the second condition, MPs are reluctant to sign an impeachment motion even if there is documentary evidence of corruption. The *Ravichandran Iyer* decision, that the complaint should be kept confidential, is only likely to lead to more serious complaints being shelved. In any case, as the court has held, sunlight is the best disinfectant and there is no reason why such complaints, even if made against senior sitting judges, should not be put out in the public domain. The view that this would scandalise the court is archaic and has been discarded in most progressive democracies.

Now, petitions have been moved seeking action against Mr. Reddy for releasing the letter to the media.

Contempt proceedings against him would be counterproductive, since he is unlikely to be cowed down. The issue will probably escalate, further denting the image of the judiciary. Some say Mr. Reddy's charges against the judge should not be taken seriously since he is himself facing several corruption cases. In fact, a Bench headed by the same Supreme Court judge ordered fast-tracking of such criminal cases against MPs and MLAs. However, the fact that the complainant may be corrupt should not cloud the view about the charges made by him; if those charges are serious and backed by evidence, they must be investigated. Charges of corruption can also be a ground for initiating impeachment. Such charges therefore cannot remain secret.

#### What should the CJI do?

The purpose of the in-house procedure is that all credible complaints of misconduct against judges of the High Court and Supreme Court should be looked into by a committee of judges. The charges made in Mr. Reddy's complaint are serious and appear to warrant an in-house inquiry. The code of conduct requires an inquiry by three sitting judges of the Supreme Court. But in a complaint involving the senior-most puisne judge, it is unlikely that junior judges will conduct a robust and credible inquiry. In the case of the sexual harassment complaint against the previous CJI, Ranjan Gogoi, by a woman employee of the Supreme Court, the in-house committee did not allow the complainant to be accompanied by her lawyer, nor did it allow recording of the proceedings. The final report, which purportedly exonerated Mr. Gogoi, has not yet seen the light of day. Strangely, the woman whose allegations were found to be unsubstantiated by this committee was later reinstated by the Court. This casts serious doubts on the credibility of the report.

Only retired judges of high credibility will be able to conduct a robust inquiry into Mr. Reddy's complaint. The Chief Justice should set up a credible inquiry committee. This will enhance the reputation of the judiciary, dispel mistrusts, and redeem the image of the judge concerned.

Prashant Bhushan is a public interest advocate practising at the Supreme Court

#### FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

## The global pandemic and its impact on journalism

While the impact has been mostly negative, there is some good news too



A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a toll on every sector. Its impact on journalism is immense. Economists have given us sufficient warnings about how the lack of reliable data in India hurts the most vulnerable. Just as we do not have data on migrant labourers, we do not have any data on COVID-19's impact on Indian journalism. But a global survey gives us an indication of the cost extracted by the pandemic from the world of journalism.

The International Center for Journalists (ICFJ) and Columbia's Tow Center for Digital Journalism started the 'Journalism and the Pandemic' survey to understand how members of the media are faring in these trying times. The authors of this project are Julie Posetti, an award-winning journalist and academic who leads the ICFJ's global research programme; Emily Bell, Founding Director of the Tow Center for Digital Journalism at Columbia Journalism School; and Peter Brown, Research Director at the Tow Center for Digital Journalism. They surveyed 1,406 English-speaking journalists and news workers from 125 countries with the aim of providing a meaningful and actionable snapshot of the challenges faced by journalists in the first few months after the World Health Organization declared COVID-19 a pandemic.

#### Many threats

Thirty per cent of the respondents who were reporting in the field during the first wave of the outbreak said their news organisations did not supply them with a single piece of recommended protective equipment. Forty-five per cent said they did not receive a face mask; 49% said they were not given hand sanitiser; and 85% said they did not receive appropriate technical equipment such as extendable boom microphones and telescopic lenses that would have enabled them to conduct interviews at a safe distance.

The survey found other threats too. Seventy per cent of the respondents rated the psychological and emotional impacts of dealing with the COVID-19 crisis as the most difficult aspect of their work, and 82% re-

ported having at least one negative emotional or psychological reaction as a result of the pandemic. Two-thirds of the respondents reported multiple negative mental health impacts. Twenty per cent said their experience of online abuse, harassment, threats or attacks was "much worse than usual".

The question of false balance comes out in a critical manner in the survey. In their report, 'How are we feeling?', the authors write: "Readers have been outraged at the commissioning of dangerously inflammatory opinion columns under the justification that it's important to expose readers to a range of views." Reliance on platforms such as WhatsApp and Facebook saw a sharp increase as reporters depended on remote sourcing rather than being a witness. Many questions emerge from this development: "Are they more like public meetings or private conversations? How secure are they? And what are the ethical implications of dependence on tech platforms for building communities?"

The survey also said that "politicians and elected officials were identified by 46% of the respondents as top source of disinformation, along with government agencies and their representatives (25%), and State-linked troll networks (23%), highlighting a serious lack of trust in political and governmental actors as the pandemic took hold." It identified Facebook as a "prolific disinformation vector" (66%). Over one-third (35%) also found the Facebook-owned closed-messaging app WhatsApp as a top spreader; 11% of the respondents identified Instagram, also Facebook-owned, as a top enabler; 9% cited Facebook Messenger; and 42% cited Twitter as a "prolific disinformation spreader".

#### Some positive findings

Amidst this generally depressing news, there were some positive findings too. Forty-three per cent of the respondents reported that audience trust in their journalism had increased during the first wave of the pandemic and 38% said they had experienced increased audience engagement (which was also largely positive) during the period. And 61% expressed an increased commitment to journalism as a result of the pandemic.

Most respondents want to alter the publishing environment in favour of high-quality reporting, and governments and civil society organisations to reaffirm a belief in the value of critical, independent journalism.

readerseditor@thehindu.co.in

## Still awaiting police reform

It is time for the judiciary to step in and enforce the diktats it had passed in 2006

M.P. NATHANAEL

Police brutality in recent months has turned quotidian. The thrashing of a Dalit Ahirwar couple by the police in Guna district of Madhya Pradesh on July 14 was very distressing. But for the media coverage, the incident would have gone unnoticed. The District Collector and the Superintendent of Police have been transferred and six police personnel have been suspended since the incident. The matter will soon be forgotten.

The public outcry following the brutal torture of J. Benicks and his father P. Jayaraj in Sattankulam town in Thoothukudi district of Tamil Nadu resulting in their death had still not died when news came that a gangster, Vikas Dubey, was killed by the Uttar Pradesh police in Kanpur when he allegedly tried to flee from custody. The police version of the incident was quite unbelievable. It looked like the law had been subverted.

These incidents and several others show that we need immediate remedial measures lest the country witnesses an upheaval of the kind that the U.S. saw following the death of George Floyd. Should such a situation arise, it will be the political class that will squarely be held responsible, for it is they who have proved to be the stumbling block in the implementation of various apex court directives aimed at improving the functioning of the police.

**Solutions that remain on paper**  
Commissions and committees are set up every time there are demands for police reforms after a major incident. Then the recommendations of such commissions and committees are simply consigned to the archives. But they are not forgotten as some senior police officials vociferously demand implementation of their recommendations from time to time.

The first serious attempt to overhaul the policing machinery was made when the National Police Commission (NPC) was set up in 1977. The NPC submitted eight reports to the Ministry of Home Affairs between 1979 and 1981. Seven of these reports were circulated to the States in 1983 with an annotation that "the Commission has been unduly critical of

the political system or the functioning of the police force in general". In a subtle manner, a signal had been sent. The report was put in cold storage until Prakash Singh, a retired IPS officer, filed a PIL in the apex court in 1996 demanding the implementation of the NPC's recommendations.

In 2006, the Supreme Court issued a slew of directives on police reform. These would have had a far-reaching impact had the States and the Centre paid any serious attention to them. But that would have upset the applecart of our politicians and even the bureaucrats, some of whom are known to be corrupt and mired in crime. According to a report by the Association for Democratic Reforms (2018), there were 1,580 MPs and MLAs facing criminal charges. Therein lies the crux of the matter.

**Turning a blind eye**  
The one diktat that would hurt the most is the setting up of a State Security Commission (SSC) in each State which would divest the political leaders of the unbridled power that they wield at present. Of the States that constituted an SSC, only Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka have made SSC recommendations binding on the State government, according to the Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative. Only six States provided a minimum tenure of two years to the Director General of Police (DGP). In Tamil Nadu, T.K. Rajendran, who was made DGP (Intelligence) and given full additional charge as DGP in September 2016, was formally appointed DGP on the day he attained the age of superannuation. Many States have not implemented a single directive of the Supreme Court.

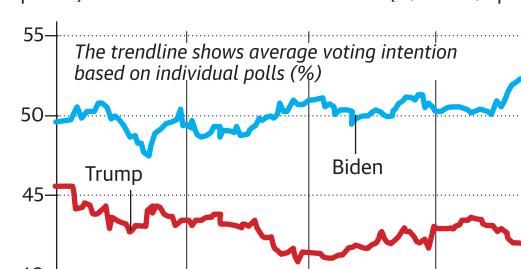
Since expecting political will to implement police reforms is a far cry, it is for the judiciary to step in and enforce the diktats it had passed. Fourteen years is too long a period for any further relaxation. The Court has to come down heavily on the States and the Centre to ensure that its directives are not dismissed lightly. A bold step towards bringing down crimes is possible only when the politicians-criminals-police nexus is strangled.

M.P. Nathanael is Inspector General of Police (Retd.), CRPF

#### DATA POINT

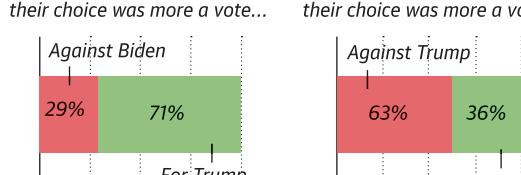
## Advantage Joe Biden

**POLL FAVOURITE** | According to data from multiple opinion polls, aggregated by fivethirtyeight.com, a U.S.-based news website, Biden had a 10.7% point lead over Trump in national polls as of October 17. In March, the gap was narrower (4.6-6% points). It widened in June (6%-9.5% points) and increased further in October (8%-10.5% points)



**NOT THE OTHER** | According to a study by the Pew Research Center, views on Trump are central to voting choices – both among his supporters and Biden's. In October, 63% of Biden's supporters said their choice was more a vote "against Trump". Also, 71% of Trump's supporters said their choice was more a vote "for Trump".

% of Trump supporters who said their choice was more a vote... % of Biden supporters who said their choice was more a vote...



\*Pew surveyed 11,929 adults, including 10,543 registered voters, during the last week of Sept. and the first week of Oct. 2020

A fortnight before the U.S. presidential election, opinion polls show that democratic nominee Joe Biden is significantly ahead of incumbent Donald Trump in the race for the White House. While Biden appeals to a broad variety of people cutting across age, race and gender lines, Trump holds an edge among white, male, older and under-educated voters. By **The Hindu Data Team**

**PREFERENCE MAPPING** | Overall, Biden enjoys significant acceptance across gender, race, age and education lines. However, Trump holds a slight advantage over Biden in certain sections of the population. Charts show the % of voters who would vote for Biden /Trump if the presidential election was to be held today\*. Among both men and women, Biden was favoured by the majority, though the gap was narrow among men

Men 45 49  
Women 39 55

Trump trailed Biden by a wide margin among Black, Hispanic and Asian voters while leading among White voters

White 51 44  
Black 8 89  
Hispanic 29 63  
Asian 22 75

Younger voters overwhelmingly favoured Biden. Support for Biden reduced as the age of the voter increased

18-29 29 59  
30-49 38 55  
50-64 47 49  
65+ 49 49

Voters with a college degree preferred Biden. Support for him increasingly faded as voter's education levels decreased

Postgrad 28 68  
4-year college 37 57  
Some college 46 48  
High school 49 45

The Hindu

#### FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO OCTOBER 19, 1970

#### Quebec extremists kill minister

Quebec extremists executed Labour Minister Pierre Laporte after holding him captive for a week but as a wave of deep shock and anger swept Canada there was confusion over the fate of the second kidnap victim – British diplomat James Cross. The body of Mr. Laporte, 49-year-old father of two children, was found wrapped in blood-covered blankets in the boot of a car in Montreal, with a single bullet held through his head. Police in reporting the grisly find last night also said they had discovered the body of Mr. Cross abducted from his Montreal home on October 5, by members of the Quebec Liberation Front (FLQ). But the police later would not confirm or deny the report. A Montreal radio station reported that a letter written by Mr. Cross saying he was alive was received to-day [October 18] by the Montreal police. With the letter was a communiqué from the FLQ. Police later confirmed receipt of the letter and communiqué. According to the radio station the communiqué said the full demands of the FLQ must be met or Mr. Cross would be executed.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO OCTOBER 19, 1920

#### The Coal Strike

(From an editorial)

The threatened strike of the miners in Britain has now begun. On the merits of the miners' claims, the non-recognition of which has resulted in the present disastrous strike, we do not now propose to enter. We shall be content with touching briefly the position taken up by the Government and the miners respectively. The Government's case is that at the present level of coal prices and wages of miners, many of the mines could just only manage without closing down and that therefore no rise in wages or reduction in prices was justifiable or possible. The Government strengthened their position with statistics which tended to show that, far from production increasing or at least keeping pace with rise in wages, it had fallen concurrently with such rise. The miners, on the other hand, at first contended that there must be effected a reduction in prices by 14s.2d per ton and, subsequently, shifting their ground, asked for a 2s. increase in wages. The miners are consumers as well as producers of coal and they are interested as much in getting coal prices decreased as in getting miners' wages increased; and hence their first request to get coal prices reduced as the cost of living was high.

CM YK

Heavy rain continues to wreak havoc in the southern States of Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka

## Second flood warning issued in Andhra Pradesh

Inflows at Prakasam Barrage on the rise

STAFF REPORTER  
VIJAYAWADA

With the inflows at the Prakasam Barrage rising gradually after a brief downward trend, a second flood warning was issued in the early hours of Sunday.

The second flood warning, which had been in force since October 14, was withdrawn only on Saturday afternoon as the discharge at the barrage fell to less than 5.69 lakh cusecs.

The discharge as of 7 p.m. was 6.15 lakh cusecs. It was 5.70 lakh cusecs at 6.30 a.m. As of 5 p.m., the discharge at the Srisailam project was 5.09 lakh cusecs. It was 5.23 lakh cusecs at Pulichintala.

The inflows and outflows at the barrage was more than 6 lakh cusecs throughout the day. A similar situation was likely to continue for another day, officials said.



Water being discharged downstream of Prakasam Barrage. ■ K.V.S. GIRI

Meanwhile, thousands of flood victims continue to stay either at the relief centres or at other safe places as their houses located along the Krishna remain marooned. Minister for Transport Perni Venkataramaiah, along with other officials, inspected the flood-hit islands of Edurumondi, Nagayalanka and Eelachetla Dibba.

## Hyderabad inundated again

Downpour from Saturday evening leaves localities inundated; 2,100 families shifted

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD

Another bout of very heavy rain after a gap of three days saw widespread flooding in Hyderabad again, with lakes and drains breaching their bunds, leaving several housing areas inundated, people stranded and vital road links snapped.

The latest spell of torrential rain began on Saturday evening, and continued unabated for over six hours during the night, dumping close to 20 cm of rain in a few locations.

Residents of colonies in Hafiz Baba Nagar and surrounding localities had to be shifted at 3 a.m. on Sunday, as a breach in the Gurram Cheruvu lake inundated the locality. Eyewitnesses said water level rose to five feet, and there was a possibility of casualties.

The entire district administration, GHMC Commiss-



**Tough times:** Residents being shifted from a flooded street near Balapur in Hyderabad on Sunday. ■ NAGARA GOPAL

sioner D.S. Lokesh Kumar, Water Board MD M. Dana Kishore, Police and Irrigation officials reached the area to monitor relief operations. A statement from the GHMC said 2,100 families were shifted from the Gurram Cheruvu flooding area on Saturday evening. The affected families were being given ration kits and blankets.

With the Himayatsagar exceeding full tank level, HMWS&B officials opened the flood gates and released water into the Musi river, which is already in spate, submerging the causeways at Chaderghat and Musarambagh yet again.

Waist-deep water in the Malakpet road underbridge hampered traffic, and areas on the eastern side of the city were cut off. Traffic came

to a standstill on the Vijayawada highway for a five-km stretch, starting from Abdul-lahpuram.

Several colonies in Nacharam, Mansurabad, Nagole, Karmanghat and other locations were inundated as lakes nearby overflowed. Water in the Hussainsagar also exceeded full tank level, and was flowing through the surplus nala towards Musi.

The Singapore Township area near Ghatkesar received the highest rainfall at 19.7 cm, followed by Peerzadiguda at 18 cm.

Rocktown Colony in Nagole, Bhavaninagar, L.B. Nagar received over 17 cm, while localities such as Alkapuri, Habsiguda, IS Sadan, Ramantapur, Thattianaram, Bandlaguda, Asmanagadh, Shantinagar, Uppal, Revin Bazar, Lingojiguda, Shaikpet and other areas, too, received heavy rainfall upwards of 15 cm.

## Standing crops ruined by the Bhima in Kalaburagi

20,000 people shifted to safer places

STAFF REPORTER  
KALABURAGI

River Bhima that had been wreaking havoc along its course downstream at Afzalpur, Jewargi, Chittapur, Shahabad and Kalaburagi talukas in Karnataka's Kalaburagi district for the last five days continued its devastation on Sunday as well.

As per the district administration, the average discharge from the Sonna barrage remained at 8 lakh cusecs. Reports reaching the district headquarters late in the evening indicated continued destruction of standing crops and inundation of thousands of houses in over 157 villages.

The administration estimated around 10,000 houses were flooded till Sunday evening. It said 20,024 people from 57 flood-prone villages were shifted to safer places. While 140 relief centres were operating by Sunday evening, no loss of human life is reported.



A flooded road in Afzalpur taluk of Karnataka's Kalaburagi. ■ ARUN KULKARNI

were operating by Sunday evening, no loss of human life is reported.

According to the Central Water Commission, the level in Bhima measured at Deoagon Bridge situated close to the barrage has, for the first time after 2006, breached the danger level (404.5 metres) and highest flood level (407.34 metres) late on Friday.

### FROM PAGE ONE

## India past COVID peak: DST expert panel

The ICMR in its latest sero-survey in August, had estimated that 7% of the adult population had been exposed to the virus.

The modelling committee, however, said this was an under-estimate. Citing the smaller sero-survey conducted in several cities that showed antibody prevalence between 22% to 30%, the panel said that as of August, about 14% of the population was likely infected. Extrapolating from here, nearly 30% of the country had been exposed to the virus as of Sunday, they reckoned. A possible reason for India already reaching its peak could be the varying susceptibility of different people to the virus, said Lt. Gen. Madhuri Kanitkar, physician and a member of the committee.

"Some people infected by the virus develop the disease and some only develop antibodies. Normally you'd

expect that 60%-70% of the population would need to be infected for herd immunity. However, the "attack rate" (rate of new cases) of the virus seems to have slowed down," Lt. Gen. Kanitkar said at a public webinar to publicise the results of the study.

Had there been no lockdown India would have seen symptomatic active infections peak from 40-147 lakh by June and a lockdown beginning on April 1 or May would have seen a peak of 30-40 lakh by July, Prof Vibasagar said.

"We would have had a peak 15 times greater (no lockdown) and completely overwhelmed our health systems and anywhere between 6-25+ lakh deaths, instead of the 1 lakh that we saw till September. The lockdown was necessary and came at the right time," he added.

## GST cess to stay: Finance Commission chief

GST compensation cess is levied on goods such as cars, aerated drinks and tobacco products, over and above the highest GST rate of 28%, and was to be levied for the first five years of the GST regime to compensate States. The GST Council has decided to extend the levy beyond that period to meet shortfalls in accruals this year.

**Sequence of borrowing**  
"Cess shortfalls cannot be met from the Consolidated Fund of India. So it has to be raised through some borrowing arrangement like the present one. The only issue is the sequence of the borrowing. To some extent, it doesn't make much of a difference. What investors see

is the general government debt, not the differentiated debt between the Centre and the States. So this entire thing would be a shuffling of accounts," he said, referring to the Centre's decision to borrow ₹1.1 lakh crore on behalf of States and lend it onward.

"I see there is now some forward movement. I have no doubt in my mind that the Union government would make sure that the period for which the cess is extended, would be adequate enough to extinguish the liabilities which arise upto July 2022. This means that the cess may have to be continued up to a much later period, I think maybe 2025-26," Mr. Singh, a former Revenue Secretary, said.

## Man goes on stabbing spree in Bengaluru

One person was killed and five others were injured in unprovoked knife attack

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU

There was panic and chaos in Bengaluru's Cottontop on Sunday morning when a knife-wielding man attacked pedestrians, killing one and injuring five others. According to the police, the accused, identified as Ganesh, walked 2 km around Anjanappa Garden, Bakshi Garden and Balekai Mandi at 7.35 a.m., attacking people without any provocation.

As word spread, residents locked themselves indoors and alerted the police, who subdued the assailant and recovered the weapon.

According to the police, Ganesh, who



Ganesh

works as a loader in the Balekai mandi, allegedly stole the knife from a butcher's shop.

"Usually there is a lot of pedestrian activity on Sunday mornings, but when people



Mari

heard about what was happening no one stepped out.

There was an eerie silence for some time, until the police announced that Ganesh had been arrested," said a resident.

The police are yet to as-

certain whether Ganesh was under the influence of drugs or alcohol when he went on the stabbing spree.

"His family members claimed that he is mentally challenged, which will have to be verified. We are waiting for medical reports," said Deputy Commissioner of Police (West) Sanjeev Patil. "Ganesh has been living in Cottontop with his mother for the last two years after his wife separated from him."

The victims were taken to hospitals but one of them, Mari, 30, succumbed to injuries. Two others, Velayudhan and Muniswamy, are said to be in a critical condition.

## Two Maoists killed in Telangana

P. SRIDHAR  
BHADRADRI-KOTHAGUDUM

Two unidentified Maoists were killed in an "exchange of fire" with the police in Telangana's Mulugu district on Sunday afternoon, police said.

The face-off took place at Musallamaggutta forest area in the tribal-dominated district. This is the fifth such encounter in recent months. The incident escalated tension in the forest region straddling the Telangana-Chhattisgarh border. It comes more than a week after the ultras stabbed to death TRS party activist M. Bheemeshwara Rao in the same district on October 10.



**Metropolitan of Mar Thoma Church no more**

PATHANAMTHITTA  
Joseph Mar Thoma, 21st Mar Thoma Metropolitan and current primate of the Malankara Mar Thoma Syrian Church, died here on Sunday. He was 89. The Metropolitan had been undergoing treatment for pancreatic cancer at a private hospital in Thiruvalla and his condition deteriorated over the last one week. He breathed his last at 2.38 a.m. on Sunday.

### 12 charged in human trafficking case

HYDERABAD  
The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Saturday filed a chargesheet against 12 people, including nine Bangladeshis nationals, in an international human trafficking racket operating from Hyderabad, in a special court here. The case was initially registered on September 21, 2019 at Pahadi Shareef police station of Rachakonda

Commissionerate. Further investigation is on, NIA said.

### 37.4% fall in Kerala's GST collection

KOCHI  
Kerala's economy has taken a massive knock on the face with GST collection sliding 37.4% overall with the goods segment accounting for a fall of 37.5% and the services segment accounting for a fall of 36.8% between March and August 2020, compared to the same period last year. The overall GST collection fell from ₹10,079 crore during March-August 2019 to ₹6,307 crore 2020, said a study by Anand Singh, State GST Commissioner, and N. Ramalingam, associate professor, at the Gulati Institute of Finance and Taxation.

## 3 IS operatives from Hyderabad convicted by NIA special court

They were sentenced for radicalising youth via social media

ABHINAY DESHPANDE  
HYDERABAD

Three Islamic State (IS) operatives from Hyderabad were among the 15 people sentenced to rigorous imprisonment by a special court for National Investigation Agency (NIA) cases in New Delhi.

The three persons were sentenced in a conspiracy case in Delhi, registered by the agency in 2015.

Nafees Khan alias Fatima Khan alias Abu Zarrar of Madhupur, Mohammed Shaffiq Moinudeen from Toli-chowki and Mohammed Obaidullah of Saidabad were among the accused awarded prison terms along with a



TELANGANA

fine. The orders were passed by Special Judge for NIA Parveen Singh on Friday.

While Nafees Khan was sentenced to 10 years RI with a fine of ₹1.03 lakh, Moideen and Obaidullah got five years RI each and a fine of ₹38,000.

The case was registered by the NIA, New Delhi, on September 12, 2015, and pertains to criminal conspiracy by the ISIS to establish its base in India by recruiting Muslim youth using different social media platforms.

During the investigation, searches were conducted in various cities across the country and 19 accused were arrested. It was revealed that

the accused formed an organisation by the name Ju-nood-ul-Khilafa-Fil-Hind (a group seeking to establish Caliphate in India and pledging allegiance to ISIS/ISIL) to recruit Muslim youth to work for ISIS and commit acts of terrorism in India at the behest of one Yusuf-Al-Hindi alias Shafiq Armar, alias Anjan Bhai, based in Syria and who was allegedly the media chief of the ISIS.

The case had a huge impact on people who were likely to join ISIS, officials said. "After the arrest, their activities were minimised and their other associates were identified to unravel their further plans," they said.

"Some lawyers' associations and Bar councils in the country are commenting on the issue when the matter merits a serious look at

## It's up to CJI to take a decision on CM's letter

An inquiry is must, say BBA members

STAFF REPORTER  
VIJAYAWADA

A few members of the Bezwada Bar Association (BBA) and the YSRCP Legal Cell have observed that the Chief Justice of India (CJI), accusing Justice N.V. Ramana, a judge of the Supreme Court, of influencing justice delivery in the Andhra Pradesh High Court should not be treated as a personal matter.

"An inquiry into it is a must for the sake of transparency and accountability in the system. It's up to the CJI to take a decision," they said on Sunday.

"Some lawyers' associations and Bar councils in the country are commenting on the issue when the matter merits a serious look at



Bezwada Bar Association members addressing the media on Sunday. ■ K.V.S. GIRI

higher levels of judiciary," said BBA member B. Raghava Rao.

"Advocates' associations should desist from meddling with the functioning of the system to be in the good books of a few officers," said O. Gavaskar, advocate.

## Kerala, with over 7,600 cases, expands testing

Karnataka, too, adds over 7,000 cases; A.P. incidence below 4,000; in Telangana, 1,436 test positive

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala reported 7,631 new cases of COVID-19 on Sunday after testing 58,404 samples.

The test positivity rate swung from 17.3% to 13% on Sunday. However, sample testing, which had barely

Karnataka reported 7,012 new COVID-19 cases on Sunday. The Health and Family Welfare department said there were 51 COVID-19 deaths.

The test positivity rate for the day was 6.67% and the case fatality rate 0.72%. Also, 1.05 lakh tests were conducted on Sunday, 21,876 of them Rapid Antigen Tests.

Telangana recorded 1,436 more cases on Saturday and six more deaths. Out of the 41,403 people tested on Saturday for coronavirus infection, 38,241 underwent tests at government facilities and 2,802 at private labs.

In Andhra Pradesh, there were 3,98

INTERVIEW | DEVENDRA FADNAVIS

## 'Cannot wish that Chirag is a victor'

Nitish Kumar is NDA's leader in Bihar, says BJP's State poll in-charge

NISTULA HEBBAR

*Former Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, currently the BJP's Bihar poll in-charge, is confident of the NDA's prospects and stresses that Chief Minister Nitish Kumar is the leader of the alliance in the State.*

ergy. I have been involved in seat negotiations in the last few weeks, and the way the conversations took place here were very different from that with the Sena, in tone and tenor. The coordination here was much better, far more convivial.

You must be getting a feeling of *deja vu*, since through the Maharashtra polls and after, you have dealt with alliance issues with the Janata Dal(U) and Lok Janshakti Party.

■ It is not exactly *deja vu* as there is a huge difference between our alliance here and the one we had in Maharashtra. In Maharashtra, there was always a hostility; for five years they [Shiv Sena] were with us but since the municipal corporation elections, they had already declared they would not want to continue the alliance. But we came together in the Lok Sabha polls. Even when with us, they [Sena] behaved like an Opposition party within the government.

That is not the case in Bihar. We may have separated in 2013, but when we came back together in 2017, there was absolutely coherent syn-



When you say you are part of the NDA at the Centre, you cannot say that you will disregard Modi ji

he is not fighting as part of our coalition.

I think that his position, which he took, was incorrect. When you say you are part of the NDA at the Centre, you cannot say that you will disregard (Prime Minister Narendra) Modi ji. In the same way in Bihar, if you are part of the NDA you cannot disregard Nitish Kumar. Undoubtedly, the leader of the NDA in Bihar is Nitishji.

What is your opinion of Chirag Paswan?

■ We have a lot of respect for Ram Vilasji [late leader Ram Vilas Paswan] and I wish young Chirag well. I cannot wish that he is a victor in these elections as ultimately

yet. In politics, you cannot predict what will happen in the future.

A very painful thread of events has been the situation with regard to inter-State workers during the lockdown. There was a lot of hurt feeling among these workers at what they felt was abandonment by their home State. How do you view the issue?

■ Initially, there were problems of transportation, but once that was sorted out, the government here, with its experience of running relief camps due to seasonal flooding, very soon created camps for these workers, and arranged money in their accounts. Once it started, people seemed okay with it. I do not see any anti-incumbency due to that.

What will be the main thrust of your campaign?

■ It can be summed up in one word, *bharosa* (faith). People have faith in Modiji; we are going forward on that. Also, Nitishji has been at the helm of affairs for 15 years and his image is clean, which is not a very common occurrence, and it matters to the voter.

INTERVIEW | CHIRAG PASWAN

## 'We will see a BJP-LJP govt. in Bihar'

Adverse comments by BJP leaders are due to pressure from Nitish, says LJP chief

SOBHANA K. NAIR

*Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) president Chirag Paswan speaks about the political turmoil after his father Ram Vilas Paswan's death and BJP leaders' comments against himself.*

This is the first election where your father Ram Vilas Paswan is not with you and a critical election for the LJP, at that. Your thoughts?

■ The past couple of weeks have been a very difficult time for me. Apart from shuttling between the hospital and party meetings, what made me restless was the fact that I could not talk to my father. For me, it was a matter of routine to share in the evening whatever happened through the day. He was my best friend...

In fact, I would say, the worst day was when we took the decision to go it alone in the election. My father was already on the ventilator. I wanted to tell him, seek his advice. But he was not in a position to speak to me. My mother told me to go, hold his hand and say whatever I had to say. I spent some 3-4 hours in that ICU cubicle holding his hand, speaking

to him, and that gave me a lot of comfort.

In the past, whenever the LJP and the JD(U) have come face to face, your party has had a dismal performance. Haven't you bitten more than you can chew?

■ Not really, my confidence comes from my father, he used to push me... He would say that if he could go it alone in 2005, then why should I at a young age be averse to taking bold decisions? And you must remember, we have always fought against the JD(U), be it the 2005, 2010 or the 2015 Assembly election. In fact, in 2017, overnight, he [Nitish Kumar] became part of the NDA and we were thrown together. He has always worked against us. In the 2019 Lok Sabha election, despite being on the same side of the alliance, the JD(U) made every attempt to sabotage my election from Jamui.

My confidence also comes from the hard work I have done over the past few years and brought about organisational changes in the party along with my father. It also comes from the vision document 'Bihar First and Bihar



I won't have issues if political compulsions force Modiji to make adverse remarks about me

First' that we came up with after my *yatra* across the State. We spoke to over four lakh persons... My confidence comes from the anger that people have for Nitish Kumar.

You have been claiming that your campaign is for

installing a BJP-LJP government, but BJP Ministers and leaders in repeated statements have disowned you. Your comments?

■ I have no issues with their comments. I know my Chief Minister, I know his working style. He does not speak on his own but makes others talk on his behalf. All these comments are because of

Nitishji's pressure on the BJP. If the reports are correct, he did not even come to the NDA press conference till he got a written assurance that the LJP will not be allowed to use Prime Minister Narendra Modi's photographs during the campaigning... And I will give the BJP leaders their due, since, technically, they are in alliance with the JD(U) and not us in the State. I would, in fact, go a step ahead and say I am sure Nitishji will apply pressure on Modiji too. I will not have issues if political compulsions force Modiji to make adverse remarks about me

So, out of the 143 seats, how many are the LJP projected to win?

■ I am not an astrologer and I would not like to challenge the intelligence of the Bihar voters by making such predictions. All I can say is that the current Chief Minister will not return to power and we will see a BJP-LJP government in Bihar.

## Cong. calls for inquiry against defectors

Sonia Gandhi says PM abdicated his responsibility in the fight against COVID-19

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday accused the BJP of reducing politics to *dukaandari* (commercial transaction) and claimed that the party's former MLAs, who had defected to the BJP earlier this year, have now openly admitted to "receiving diverse offers in the past".

Addressing a virtual press conference, Congress spokesperson Abhishek Singhvi demanded a judicial inquiry by a sitting Supreme Court or High Court judge and the filing of charges against defectors under the Prevention of Corruption Act and criminal charges under the Indian Penal Code. "They have eliminated the distinction between *dukaandari* and political fighting of battles," he said.

At a virtual meeting of the All India Congress Committee general secretaries and State in-charges, Ms. Gandhi said India was passing through a "tumultuous phase", in which the rights of the citizens are being "systematically" handed over to a handful of crony capitalists. This was the first meeting of the general secretaries and in-charges after the Congress carried out a major organisational reshuffle last month.

The party prepared a road map of various agitation programmes against the farm laws and the growing incidents of violence against Dalits and women. It includes a plan to petition President

Ram Nath Kovind by submitting two crore signatures of farmers against the new laws on November 19, the birth anniversary of Indira Gandhi.

"Atrocities on Dalits have reached a new zenith. Instead of honouring the law and granting adequate protection to India's daughters, the BJP governments are siding with the criminals. The voice of oppressed families is being suppressed by the agencies of the State. Is this the new 'Raj Dharma'?" Ms. Gandhi asked. The Congress chief's comment comes in the backdrop of the party's aggressive stance over the Hathras incident, in which a

19-year Dalit girl was allegedly raped and murdered.

Attacking the Modi government over the farm laws, she accused the government of hatching a 'conspiracy' to undo the gains of the Green Revolution. Lives and livelihoods of crores of farm labourers, lease hold farmers, small and marginal farmers, toiling labourers and small shopkeepers are under attack! It is our solemn duty to join hands to defeat this sinister conspiracy."

**Economic impact**  
She accused the Modi government of pushing the country into "an abyss with its ineptitude" in dealing

with COVID-19 and its impact on the economy. "The stark truth is that a Prime Minister, who promised to defeat corona within 21 days, has abdicated his and his govt.'s responsibility towards the citizens," she said.

"Never has the country witnessed such a free-fall in GDP as also all other economic indices... Small and medium businesses, small shopkeepers and other small enterprises are shutting at an unprecedented pace, yet an uncaring government remains a mute spectator," Ms. Gandhi said.

On October 31, Kisan Adhikar Diwas (Farmers' Rights Day) will be observed through a day-long fast. There will be nationwide protests over the alleged atrocities on women, Dalits and farmers on November 5. Between November 1 and 10, there will be daily tractor rallies against the farm laws. An online campaign for public sector undertakings and symposiums on Nehruvian ideology will be organised on November 14.

Both slam erstwhile Lalu regime

It has to be earned: Justice Ramana

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Justice N.V. Ramana, the senior-most judge in the Supreme Court, on Saturday said the greatest strength of the judiciary is the faith of the people in it.

"Faith, confidence and acceptability cannot be commanded, they have to be earned," Justice Ramana said in a virtual condolence meeting held in the memory of former Supreme Court judge, Justice A.R. Lakshmanan, by the Madras Bar Association.

Justice Ramana's words are significant in the background of protests launched by Bar Associations and former judges against Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy for levelling allegations against the top court judge and some judges of the Andhra Pradesh High Court in an irresponsible manner.

The lawyers' bodies have condemned Mr. Reddy's actions of calling a press conference recently and sharing the letter he wrote to Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde with



Justice N.V. Ramana

mediapersons. "It is an important quality for a judge to withstand all pressures and odds and to stand up bravely against all obstacles... Most importantly, particularly for a judge, one must be steadfast in holding on to their principles and fearless in their decisions," Justice Ramana said at the event.

Justice Ramana, who is next in line of seniority to be the Chief Justice of India, said, "There are innumerable qualities that a person needs to live what can be called a good life: humility, patience, kindness, a strong work ethic and the enthusiasm to constantly learn and improve oneself."

CMK

V. RAGHAVENDRA  
VIJAYAWADA

Former Supreme Court (SC) judge V. Gopala Gowda has described the letter sent by Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to the Chief Justice of India (CJI) regarding the alleged misconduct of Justice N.V. Ramana and some judges of Andhra Pradesh (A.P.) High Court as an "affront to a vibrant judiciary".

"The Chief Justice of India has to apply his mind to the matter and then take appropriate action," he observed in an email interview to *The Hindu*. Mr. Gowda said the letter was unprecedented, particularly in view of the manner of its release in the public domain and the allegations levelled against Justice Ramana as well as the Chief Justice and other judges of the A.P. High Court. An independent judiciary was

not only an important wing of constitutional democracy but also the very sentinel of the rule of law and good governance, he said.

The letter and its public disclosure not only compromised the dignity, independence and majesty of the top court and the A.P. High Court, but has also, consequently, interfered with administration of justice and scandalised the court in the eyes of the people by sensationalising the issue, Mr. Gowda said.

Aspersions and allegations against them ought not

I understand that as a matter of fact, a number of cases, including criminal cases, are pending against the CM as on date before courts of law. Timing of the letter and sensationalising the issue ostensibly cast a doubt on the motive

V. GOPALA GOWDA  
FORMER SUPREME COURT JUDGE



V. Gopala Gowda

court, but has also, consequently, interfered with administration of justice and scandalised the court in the eyes of the people by sensationalising the issue, Mr. Gowda said.

The majesty of the judiciary has never been more fragile ever since the unprecedented press conference addressed by four former judges of the top court, he added.

Mr. Gowda said: "Article 121 and Article 211 of the Constitution expressly bar Parliament and the State legislatures to discuss the conduct of any judge. The Constitution confers such immunity having regard to the onerous responsibility of judges in discharging constitutional functions. The matter at hand must be seen in this

context." Asked if the Chief Minister's letter amounted to contempt of court as is being argued by a section of the legal fraternity, Mr. Gowda said it is subject to a decision by the CJI on the touchstone of the applicable contempt law(s) in the country.

Regarding suspicions about the timing of the letter, the intentions behind it and the fears that the judiciary has been deliberately dragged into the political muddle, Mr. Gowda said: "I understand that as a matter of fact, a number of cases, including criminal cases, are pending against the CM as on date before courts of law. Timing of the letter and sensationalising the issue ostensibly cast a doubt on the motive."

"Such being the immunity and privileges conferred on judges by the Constitution, it is highly unfortunate that politics took the discussion on constitutional functionaries to social media making a circus out of it all," he said.

Mr. Gowda said the Chief Minister should have taken up the matter confidentially with the CJI, and not in the way the issue was raked up publicly.

of the association, that he is strongly opposed to the resolution "on principle." Mr. Pandey told *The Hindu* that the resolution was passed "unanimously" and Mr. Dave had "recused". In his communication to the SCBA secretary, Mr. Dave said it was "premature" to pass such a resolution. "We have no idea about the truthfulness or otherwise of those allegations. Truth will emerge once the inquiry, if any, is done. At this stage we would be pre-empting the inquiry," he said.

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## Jagan's letter an affront to judiciary'

Matter should have been taken to CJI confidentially, says former SC judge

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

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Justice N.V. Ramana

CMK

Premature to pass a resolution: SCBA chief

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

&lt;p

## In rush for immunity, Ayurveda supplements have an untested run

Studies show that none of them have been fully tested for their effectiveness in COVID-19 management, but there has been a sharp rise in demand for them

JACOB KOSHY  
NEW DELHI

For a chemist shop that is usually lined with pharmaceutical drugs, Noida-based proprietor Mahesh Agrawal prominently displays his containers of Chyawanprash. "There is a lot of demand for it and honey, and sales have increased ever since the unlock phases began."

Multiple grocers and stores that sell organic-labelled products say they have been seeing a sharp demand for products that are even tangentially linked to "boosting immunity". A July report by market research company Nielsen says chyawanprash sales have increased by 283% in June, while the sales of branded honey increased by 39%. "There is a rising sentiment towards 'local' with in-

creasing support for Atma Nirbhar Bharat and Ayurveda," the report said.

Shoppers told *The Hindu* that while they did not believe immunity products would protect them from COVID-19, they saw it as a way to bolster their immune defences. "I regularly take chyawanprash but will never go to an Ayurveda doctor," said Swapna Banerjee, a teacher. "These products do no harm and play a role in general good health, from my experience, but aren't substitutes for masks, social distancing, avoiding crowds and getting tested."

Companies that have been marketing these products have capitalised on the association between COVID-19 and immunity and the government's encouragement of Ayurveda and



**Big boost:** Sales of products like chyawanprash and branded honey have shot up due to COVID-19. ■ GETTY IMAGES

and in recovery from "influenza like illnesses".

Ashwagandha has been recommended by the committee because laboratory studies show that it "inhibited the entry" of SARS-CoV-2 into healthy cells and guduchi showed "high binding efficacy" against SARS-CoV-2 targets involved in attach-

mising anti-viral activity in lab studies but were not significantly effective in improving disease outcomes.

The viral cells, as it is now understood, infiltrate the lung cells and multiply. The SARS-CoV-2, scientists say, is particularly sneaky and the body's immune system is frequently unable to detect these viral particles early on to neutralise them and keep them from proliferating. As has been seen in instances of those suffering a severe infection, the immune system goes into an overdrive. The body is deluged by chemical messengers called cytokines that, while alerting the body's defence cells to destroy the virus, also trigger inflammation in multiple organs. It's to stem such over-reaction, that many a time ends up being fatal, that steroids such as dexamethasone

are administered. Thus the holy grail of COVID treatment is to ensure that immune system fights the virus without going berserk.

### Complex mix of herbs

In the Ayurveda system, chyawanprash is a "complex mix of herbs" and several common herbs – like turmeric, black pepper and ginger infusions contribute in varying measures to keeping the immune system in a state of preparedness against fighting pathogens, said an expert.

"Turmeric, Ashwagandha, giloy all confer varying degree of immunity and may confer varying degrees of benefit to different people, depending on their individual constitution," said Bhavna Prasher, an Ayurveda doctor and scientist at

the CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology.

In the modern-science view, there are two kinds of immunity: one is 'innate' immunity which is the first line of defence against an infection. A class of cells called "natural killer cells" and produced in the bone marrow directly attack infectious microbes. The other, a so-called adaptive immunity, where specialised cells produced in the thymus gland actively monitor and produce antibodies that are specific to viruses and bacteria. Both systems work in tandem.

Ayurvedic literature, said Ms. Prasher, suggests that several of the herbs have been tested in immune disorders and there is evidence to show that many of them have "immunomodulatory" properties.

## Tension at Assam-Mizoram border after clash

Several people from both States injured in violence, situation under control in the area, say officials

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

AIZAWL/ SILCHAR/ GUWAHATI  
Tension prevailed on the Assam-Mizoram border after a violent clash took place between the people of the two States, injuring several, officials said on Sunday.

The situation is now under control in the area, which is on the border between the Kolasib district of Mizoram and Cachar district of Assam, they said.

A meeting, chaired by Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla, between the two States will be held on Monday to take stock of the situation, Mizoram Home Minister Lalchamliana said. The Chief Secretaries of the two States will be present in the meeting, he said.

**PMO informed**  
Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal said he has apprised the Prime Minister's Office and Union Home Ministry of the prevailing situation in the area. Mr. Sonowal also telephoned Mizoram Chief Minister Zoram-

thanga and spoke to him on the border incident, stressing on the need to take productive measures and joint efforts to address the border issues.

Mr. Zoramthanga assured Mr. Sonowal of efforts to maintain peace at the inter-State border and cooperation, the Assam government said in a statement.

The two States have deployed security personnel, including those of the Indian Reserve Battalion, in the violence-hit areas near the Vairengte village in Mizoram and Assam's Lailapur, officials said.

Vairengte in Kolasib district is on the northern fringe of Mizoram through which the National Highway-306 (formerly 54) passes, linking the State to Assam. The nearest village in Assam is Lailapur, which is in Cachar district.

Kolasib Deputy Commissioner H. Lalchamliana said a large number of Vairengte residents assembled when some people from Assam,

armed with sticks and *dao*, pelted stones at a group near the auto-rickshaw stand on the outskirts of the border village on Saturday evening.

The mob from Vairengte retaliated and set on fire about 20 temporary bamboo huts and stalls built along the National Highway by residents of Lailapur despite prohibitory order being in place, he said.

One of the injured persons, who suffered a cut in his neck, was admitted to the Kolasib district hospital and his condition was critical. Three people were being treated at a Public Health Centre in Vairengte, he said.

The Assam government also said that the situation is under control and senior officials along with police are in the area to defuse the tension.

State Forest Minister Parimal Shuklabaitya, on the direction of Mr. Sonowal, visited Lailapur during the day and interacted with the people.

The incident was the handiwork of miscreants to create disturbance in the community, a statement issued by the Assam government quoted him as saying.

sons, who suffered a cut in his neck, was admitted to the Kolasib district hospital and his condition was critical. Three people were being treated at a Public Health Centre in Vairengte, he said.

The incident could be the fallout of the demolition of a makeshift hut used by local volunteers who guard the inter-State border near the Saihupui 'V' village, about 3 km from Vairengte, he said. It is cleared at the earliest.

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Mr. Zoramthanga also held a Cabinet meeting during the day. "I sincerely request everyone to maintain peace and to kindly not bypass any administrative proceedings," he tweeted.

Speaking to reporters after the meeting, Home Minister Lalchamliana said the Mizoram government has urged Assam to make efforts to defuse the tension and restore peace and tranquillity in the area.

### Recent troubles

He alleged that recently troubles were created by Assam at three border points – Thinglun in Mamit district, and Saihupui 'V' and Vairengte, both in Kolasib. "We have approached the Centre over the border dispute. Accordingly, Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla will hold a virtual meeting with Chief Secretaries of the two States on Monday," he said.

At least seven people from Mizoram were injured in the clash on Saturday night, he said.

## Post-lockdown, rights of domestic workers in focus

Many of them lost their jobs or were denied salary

JAGRITI CHANDRA  
NEW DELHI

The denial of salaries and loss of employment faced by domestic workers as well as harassment by employers and Resident Welfare Associations (RWAs) following the nationwide lockdown have brought into focus the need for safeguarding their rights. They have now brought out a manifesto demanding universal registration of employers and domestic workers and a national legislation.

A survey done in Bengaluru among 2,400 domestic workers during the first two weeks of May showed that 87% of the workers were told not to come to work after the lockdown and were not sure when they would be called to work. A staggering 91% of workers lost their salaries for April. It also found that nearly 50% of those above the age of 50 also lost their jobs during the lockdown.



Welfare groups have sought job security for such workers.

The study was conducted by the Domestic Workers Rights Union, the Bruhat Bangalore Gruhakarmaka Sangha, and the Manegala Kaarmikara Union.

Another telephonic survey conducted in New Delhi by the Institute of Social Studies Trust with 35 women workers between April 23 and 28 recorded that nearly 83% of women reported severe to moderate economic crises as well as anxiety over job security. As many as 51% workers surveyed had un-

employed spouses and 36% were divorced, separated or widowed women.

About 17 organisations and unions who work in Delhi-NCR joined hands to form the Network of Rights and Voices of Domestic Workers and to ensure the well-being of these women. They held discussions with the workers to prepare a manifesto of demands which calls for a minimum cash transfer, universal registration of employers and workers, an urban employment guarantee scheme and strengthening of local committees where workers can complain about sexual harassment at workplace.

"We have also shared a list of suggestions with parliamentarians and sought inclusion of domestic workers under the social security code and a comprehensive legislation for them," says Shruti Batra, project manager, Jagori.

## 1 more held for Barabanki rape, murder

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
LUCKNOW

The police have arrested a second person in connection with the rape and murder of a minor Dalit girl in Barabanki district of Uttar Pradesh on October 14, and upgraded the charges to gang rape.

On the basis of information gathered from arrested accused Dinesh Gautam, 19, a second accused Rishikesh Singh, 21, was arrested, said Additional SP Barabanki Ram Sewak Gautam. The two planned and executed the crime, claimed the officer.

Singh runs a kirana store in the village, said police. On October 14, Singh informed Dinesh Gautam that the minor girl had gone to a paddy field alone, said the Additional SP.

**More sections added**  
The police lodged a case under murder and also invoked Section 376 D (gang rape) of the Indian Penal Code, POCSO Act and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Prevention of Atrocities Act.

The body of the girl was found in a paddy field at Satrik area in Barabanki late on Wednesday by her father who went in search of her. Police initially registered a murder case but after the post-mortem confirmed rape, charges under Section 376 of the IPC were included in the FIR. The POCSO Act was added after it came to light from the victim's documents that she was under 18.

## Cong., BJP get into spat over Tharoor's tweet

MP criticised  
Modi govt. at  
Lahore Think Fest

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday accused the BJP of resorting to *jumblebaazi* (empty rhetoric) after BJP spokesperson Sami Patra charged party's Lok Sabha member Shashi Tharoor with "discrediting and demeaning" India at the Lahore Think Fest event and asked if Congress leaders now plan to contest elections in Pakistan.

The BJP spokesperson attacked the Congress after Mr.

Shashi Tharoor spoke about the Modi government's "failure" in effectively handling the COVID-19 situation and the prejudice against a community during the pandemic.

"It is unbelievable that an MP spoke like this... After all, what does the Congress party want. Do they want to contest elections from Pakistan?" asked Mr. Patra and said Mr. Tharoor also questioned the nation's democratic credentials. "What was the need to discuss such matters at a Pakistani forum? There is no country in this world as democratic and just as India," he said.

In the online interaction, Tharoor had shared the link to the event, one that reportedly took place last month, on his official Twitter handle on Saturday.

In the online interaction,

Mr. Tharoor spoke about the Modi government's "failure" in effectively handling the COVID-19 situation and the prejudice against a community during the pandemic.

"It is unbelievable that an MP spoke like this... After all, what does the Congress party want. Do they want to contest elections from Pakistan?" asked Mr. Patra and said Mr. Tharoor also questioned the nation's democratic credentials. "What was the need to discuss such matters at a Pakistani forum? There is no country in this world as democratic and just as India," he said.

Mr. Tharoor, however, has not reacted to the BJP's charge.

The BJP spokesperson also claimed that former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi is already hailed as a 'hero' in China and Pakistan because of his statements against the Modi government.

Hitting back, Mr. Singhvi said, "If somebody is praising a particular achievement or pointing to a particular area of activity in which you are laggard in India, to call that person to stand for elections from Pakistan is to ridicule the debate and diminish us as a democracy."

Mr. Tharoor, however, has not reacted to the BJP's charge.

## BJP legislator freed offender: Congress

Priyanka, Rahul seek Yogi's reply

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi and party general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Sunday targeted the BJP over a news report that its MLA in Uttar Pradesh's Lakhimpur Kheri allegedly barged into a police station to free a person booked on charges of harassing a woman.

Mr. Gandhi used an ongoing Twitter trend to attack the BJP. "How it started: Save Girl child. How it's going: Save criminals," Mr.

Gandhi tweeted, tagging a news report about MLA Lokendra Bahadur.

Ms. Vadra said, "Will the UP Chief Minister tell under which mission it is taking place? Save the girl child or save the criminals?"

She also referred to a recent shooting incident in Ballia in which a local BJP MLA defended the accused who had shot dead a person in the presence of police and local government officials after a fight over the allotment of a ration shop in the area.

## Punjab BJP leader quits over farm laws

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

Punjab BJP general secretary and core committee member Malvinder Kang has resigned from the party over the Centre's agriculture sector legislations, as he felt that neither the party's State nor the central leadership was paying heed to the demands to address the concerns of farmers surrounding the laws.

Mr. Kang, in his resignation letter to BJP State president Ashwani Sharma, wrote: "The farmers, 'arthyas' [commission agents], small traders and labour organisations have been democratically and rightly protesting the new Acts passed by the Central go-

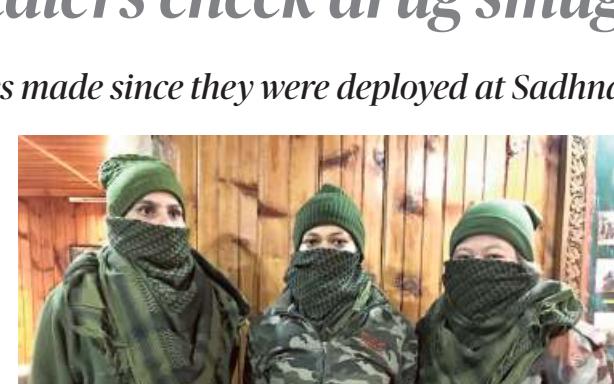
vernment. As a general secretary of the State BJP and being a member of the core group of the party, I raised my voice in support of the protesting farmers and others... I requested the party's State and central leadership many times to address their grievances but no positive step was taken... therefore, supporting the farmers agitation, I resign from the party post, core group and primary membership."

A day after Mr. Kang's resignation, Mr. Sharma on Sunday told *The Hindu* that he had not received the resignation. "I have come to know about it through newspapers. Unless I receive the resignation, I can't say anything on it," he said.

## Women soldiers check drug smuggling through LoC

Two major recoveries made since they were deployed at Sadhna Pass, at an altitude of over 10,000 feet

DINAKAR PERI  
SRINAGAR



**In charge:** Some of the riflemen of Assam Rifles deployed at the Sadhna Pass. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

seized. Officials also raised concern on several villages ahead of the border fence which are used as safe grounds to abet smuggling. "The anti-narcotics grid

and Improvised Explosive Devices (IED)," the officer said. Narcotics smuggling has been going for some time, but the recoveries increased significantly in the last two years, he said. In addition, checking is carried at various points and intelligence-based operations are being carried out to search and seize narcotics.

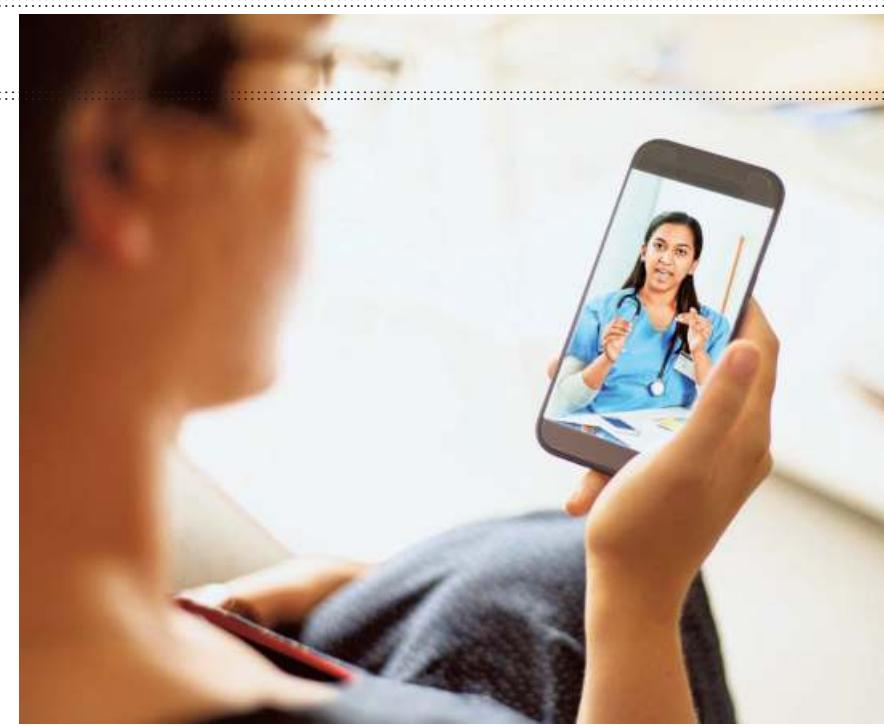
**Major deterrent**  
The nine women soldiers were deployed at the pass at over 10,000 feet and three of them are on duty at any point of time, another officer said. There were two major narcotic recoveries since they were inducted and they underwent a special 21-day orientation

capsule at the 15 Corps Battle school before deployment. The riflemen handle all women-related tasks and have separate accommodation and wash rooms within the camp, the second officer said. "They are acting as a major deterrent. Earlier we used to get specific intelligence that a certain woman was carrying narcotics. But we couldn't do anything," he said.

Riflewoman Nitu Kumari from Bihar said the local population was happy to see women soldiers. "They share their issues with us. Their children are inspired by us," she said talking to a small group of journalists at the Sadhna Pass.

# No time like now

Despite news of alcohol flying off the shelves after the lockdown, many used the past six months to pause, and set themselves free from their addictions



**More to health**  
Several people went online for help to tackle their dependence on alcohol, drugs, and cigarettes

■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

AISHWARYA UPADHYE

"Every time someone compliments me on my health, I break into a big smile. Not because I crave validation but because these are the results of putting my past behind me. It was a past defined by alcoholism and the time I had spent regretting, but not acting on it," says Robin\*, a 27-year-old corporate employee.

#### Support and courage

Two years ago, Robin moved to Bengaluru from Dharwad for a new job. "Initially it was great but in a few months the work environment started turning toxic and I was stressed all the time. This led to a fallout with my long-term partner. Rather than handling it in a healthy way and working on my mental health, I turned to alcohol just to numb the pain. In a few months' time I had gone from an occasional drinker to an alcoholic," he says.

This continued for over one and a half years. Then the lockdown was announced. "I was at my parents' place when the restrictions were imposed. Both of them are teetotallers so there was no alcohol at home. With my previous experiences, I couldn't go more than a week without drinking. I did manage to sneak in a whisky bottle which I downed in two days but after that there was no way to procure alcohol. I struggled to get a grip over myself as the withdrawal symptoms started showing," he adds.

Robin recalls those weeks of nausea, fever and heavy sweating. "My parents, initially, did not understand what was happening to me, but they helped me deal with it and that was my wake up call. I knew I had to give up drinking so I started reading a lot about



it online and learnt about withdrawal symptoms and how to deal with them," he says. He has been sober for over three months now.

#### Locking up temptations

Several people used the lockdown to tackle their dependence on alcohol or drugs. "Having friends and family who are supportive is extremely important when one tries to get over addictions. After the lockdown, I have noticed a positive trend where parents are willing to come forward and help their kids rather than judging and humiliating them," says Leonora R Mohan, consultant psychologist who runs Sparsh Counselling Centre in Visakhapatnam.

Leonora says that her clinic saw a 25% increase in the number of people who sought help for addiction. Most are young adults and teenagers for weed addiction. "Lockdown gave people the

time and space to rethink their decisions. It also crippled easy access to the addictive substance," she says, adding that being away from a group or situation that may have earlier supported the addiction, also helped.

The lockdown was a busy time for the staff of Green Valley Foundation, a de-addiction centre in Visakhapatnam. Earlier, they would get one or two calls for help in a week. "During the lockdown we had six to 10 calls every day from families. Our team turned to online counselling," says Uma Raj, caretaker at Green Valley Foundation. The staff guided families through the deaddiction process and counselled members about talking to loved ones. They also chalked out diets and exercises to help the person regain health.

Uma believes that the true test for people who curtailed their dependency on drugs and alcohol during lockdown would be now, when we have easy access to everything. "I would advise people to seek professional help, as counsellors are trained to identify behavioural patterns, and avoid the chances of a relapse," she says.

Amrita\*, 29, who quit smoking during the lockdown agrees that a relapse can happen any time. "I went 61 days without a cigarette and then after a tough day at work, I decided to light just one. Over the next few days, I smoked an entire pack. The relapse hurt a lot. I felt terrible, like a failure." But she has now gone without one for 85 days.

What worked for Amrita was setting smaller goals and support from her partner and her friends. "I announced it on social media. Once you put something out on social media and get some validation, it's helpful," she says, of turning a negative of online platforms, into a positive.

(\*Names changed to protect identity)

■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

**Smoke Free** Based on the data you enter it provides you the health and financial benefits you'll enjoy if you resist a cigarette. On Android and iOS

**Sobriety counter** With a colourful interface this app has a health tracker that gives details about your cell regeneration, withdrawal symptoms, blood alcohol levels, when you're in the process of quitting alcohol.

It also has a game to distract until the urge to drink passes, and a tab that shows your savings by giving up drinking. There are badges for every time you say no. On Android

**I Am Sober** The app helps you choose from options that include alcohol, marijuana, smoking, and drugs. It keeps a track of the number of days, minutes, and seconds spent sober and the money saved.

It also connects you to a wide network of people in the recovery stage and those who have recovered. On Android and iOS

■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

## EVERESTING

### WHAT IS IT?



■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

PRABALIKA BORAH

Everesting is a sporting challenge that requires a sportsperson to run or cycle up and down a hill (or on a trainer set at an incline) until they reach the total vertical elevation equivalent to the height of Mt Everest. The rules on Everesting.cc say that the person must go up and come down the same way multiple times, taking U-turns at the bottom (downhill cannot be a different route) until you climb 8,848 metres.

Colleagues Chitti Babu and Gokul Krishna from Hyderabad completed the challenge on October 2, cycling in 26 hours and 27 hours respectively, without a break to sleep, as the rules say. Gokul in fact continued until he reached a total elevation of more than 10,000 metres, while Chitti Babu did a climb of 9,000 metres.

To date 12,236 have participated from 97 countries across the world, and their names feature in the Hall of Fame (on Everesting.cc) alongside the best climbers in the world. "We started training in August. It was also necessary to see that the route was safe for us, as we would have to do a day and night climb," says Gokul.

They decided to raise awareness and funds for the Dr Maxwell Trevor Cycling Academy, whose main focus is to train the underprivileged.

"In the path chosen, there was a flat part in the beginning of the uphill section. Our focus was to take a sip of

water/energy drink mix, reset lap on our Wahoo, and ensure we built up speed to the start of the climb. It worked well initially, but on D-Day we started getting very tired," explains Chitti Babu.

Guwahati-based Dr Sanjeev Handique feels Everesting is "a test of endurance", while Arpo a Delhi-based cycling coach says, "One needs a lot of planning before one even attempts it. The support team is equally crucial." The duo chose to start at night to escape the heat, supported by friends and fellow cyclists who rode with them in turns.

Gokul says, "Climbing is all about watts per kilogram. So the key aspects were to increase my FTP (functional threshold power, the maximum amount of power one can hold for an hour), and lose about 10 kilograms. By giving up sweets and following a vegan diet I lost about seven kilograms, but was happy given the time available."

He adds, "I rode a few times a week on my trainer and used Sufferfest (an app for cyclists). I made sure we had at least one day per week of four-eight hours of riding with about 2,000-3,000 metres of elevation gain. The target was a weekly elevation of about 5,000 metres.... I was very disciplined and used the spare time to catch up on much-needed sleep."

In this column, we demystify the buzzwords in wellness.

How the Wheelchair Basketball Federation of India is working to help differently-abled athletes in COVID times



ANISHA MENEZES

This year has not been kind to sportspersons. With COVID-19 and the ensuing lockdown, teams had to bid sports facilities and group training, an abrupt adieu.

Differently-abled athletes have got the short end of the stick, as physiotherapy sessions, water therapy and a host of other facilities were unavailable to them until Unlock 5. But, P Madhavi Latha, founder-president of the Wheelchair Basketball Federation of India (WBFI) is made of sterner stuff. Through the lockdown, she has organised a host of online activities and training sessions to lift both the spirits of the members, and their game.

Madhavi explains, "We conducted webinars on game rules by both Indian and foreign coaches, and a series of success stories by Paralympic gold medal winners, from across the globe. We arranged online sessions with physiotherapists, fitness and

conditioning experts with simple tips on how to exercise with items found at home like bottles of water. Those recordings are available on our social media platforms and the players can watch them any time."

Madhavi is also a national paralympic swim athlete, and has been longing to get some laps in. "In the absence of regular swimming, I started spending at least two hours practising yoga, including laughter yoga, pranayama, some other exercises, and meditation. But still it's not equivalent to the effect of swimming."

Seeing the plight of wheelchair basketball players across the country, WBFI has helped soften the blow by reaching out to 300 of its members, with groceries and medical aid. "More than the equipment and essentials, we need financial support to engage the services of coaches and physiotherapists

## Virtually unstoppable



Changing narratives P Madhavi Latha (below) organises online activities and training sessions for differently-abled athletes ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



who are currently supporting the players on an honorary basis. We are also looking for support to arrange skill development sessions as many players are facing fiscal challenges due to loss of income during the pandemic," Madhavi entreats.

To bring some sense of normalcy to an otherwise event-free year, WBFI has decided to conduct a competition as it does every year. This time it will be online, at the national and zonal level. 'Virtually Unstoppable' comprises four categories: quiz, art, skills and fitness challenges. Each State can send 20 participants. So far, there have been entries on Facebook, with movement, music, jewellery making, art. Likes and comments on social media will impact overall judgment in the category, to invite more public participation.

Fitness and skill challenges have more stringent criteria. International basketball referee, Anupam Sharma explains, "For the skills challenges, three or four judges will scrutinise the one-minute videos of the athletes dribbling, shooting, or displaying defence using the wheelchair. There is flexibility in whether the athletes use a sports wheelchair, a regular one or even a chair." The fitness challenge entails doing wheelchair push-ups, upper body workouts using Thera-Bands, 2 kilogram dumbbells or filled water bottles, and pranayama or surya namaskar in a wheelchair.

Hima Kalyani, who is currently working from her hometown in West Godavari, and practising her dribbling skills, says,

"During the lockdown it was tough for us, as there was no court, but we have been in touch with each other via conference calls and that really lifts our morale and makes us feel like a team."

### THE CREAKING TREE



## Why the bicycle business is booming



SHOVON CHOWDHURY

without walking, is a bicycle. In Delhi at least, walking is completely out of the question, which is why there is so much competition to park right in front of the McDonald's, instead of three feet from the entrance, which is too far away. Of course, it's not all about high petroleum prices and lack of horses.

Cycling is green. In fact, some Government officers have even explained that the high price of petrol and diesel is all part of a master plan, designed to lessen our dependency on fossil fuels. They are doing it because they care.

Some of the upper classes feel the same way and are rolling out bikes to save the planet. It is also an opportunity to buy cool helmets and hot pink cycling shorts. Fitness levels are improving. COVID-19 is being avoided, unless you perch a loved one on the handlebar, but no one really does that anymore. Most of us are plumper, and the handlebars are slim.

Unfortunately, I myself am not part of this phenomenon. I never learnt how to cycle when I was young. I was raised as a sort of science experiment, without friends who could have been a bad influence, and avoiding all sudden movements, which might have caused injury. But don't mind me. Go right ahead. I'll be on the balcony waving you on as you pass by.

No horses were harmed during the production of Shovon Chowdhury's most recent novel, Murder With Bengali Characteristics.



# It's your LIFE

SWETA AKUNDI

Upasana Kamineni claims she is two steps away from being vegan, all thanks to Samantha Akkineni. The Hyderabad-based actor is one of the many stars Upasana has got on board, apart from actor-husband Ram Charan and stylist Tanya Ghavri for her new wellness portal, UR Life.

During the pandemic, with people putting a greater focus on health and fitness, the vice president of Apollo Life has revamped her magazine *B Positive*, which she had been running for 14 years. This April, the magazine was transformed into an online platform, curating all aspects of well-being, from fitness and diets to sleep, self care, and healthy relationships.

Upasana, who was recently in

Upasana Kamineni, of the family that runs Apollo Hospitals, gets actor Samantha Akkineni on board for her recently launched online wellness platform

Chennai to visit her grandparents, says, "My grandfather (Prathap C Reddy, founder of Apollo Hospitals) always maintained that it is our moral responsibility to keep people away from hospitals. 'Yes, we will treat them when they are sick, but it is our

time to move by a few centuries and pick up this story about a dark unknown child brought into a genteel house. He grows up on the margins of power and also whipped by power. He is driven away by all that does not belong to him. When he comes back, he uses the instruments of power that had marginalised him to empower himself. But he loses, in the process, what was most precious to him.

**Own your body** Upasana Kamineni loops in Samantha Akkineni for her wellness platform ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## Pad Women

Actor Taranjit Kaur and producer Chitra Subramanian's initiative to distribute free sanitary pads in Mumbai is catching on in other cities too



**For a cause** Chitra Subramanian has distributed over five lakh pads ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

PRAVEEN SUDEVAN

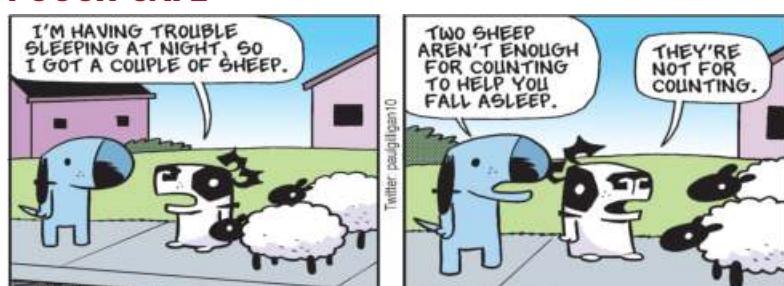
While buying groceries for the needy during the lockdown, one particular item - the sanitary pad - caught the attention of actor Taranjit Kaur and producer Chitra Subramanian. Menstrual hygiene is a challenge in India as only 58% of women in the age group of 15 to 24 use a hygienic method of menstrual protection, according to the National Family Health Survey report published in 2017.

The pandemic restricted access to sanitary pads for economically disadvantaged women and the duo decided to address this problem. They started Pad Squad, an initiative to distribute free sanitary pads in Mumbai. "We started with just our neighbourhood. But more people joined when we posted on social media. We received over 10,000 pads in three days," says Taranjit. The Pad Squad now has 55 members from over 25 cities. They have distributed over five lakh pads.

Chitra visited slums in Shivaji Nagar, Juhu and Ambawadi in Mumbai. "With the lockdown, it was challenging to move around. But you have to go to these places to understand the problems. You need to talk to the women and explain menstrual hygiene to them." Taranjit reckons it is not a one-shot solution. "You need to revisit these places, to get to know their issues."

For this year's Daan Utsav, a week-long philanthropy festival, Chitra and Taranjit requested the 'padsquadders' to keep a 'pad peti', a box to collect sanitary pads, in their houses. "We collected over 1.5 lakh pads in that week alone."

## POOCHE CAFE



## HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



## TIGER



job to empower them', he would say. That's why I named this platform UR Life, because you are in charge of making your life better."

The team at UR Life features dietitians, psychologists, fitness trainers, dermatologists and other healthcare professionals, from across India and not just from Apollo, emphasises Upasana.

This month, UR Life has Samantha Akkineni as the guest editor. "Sam is a big believer in leading a sustainable life, so she fit the bill perfectly. As the guest editor, she helps us curate articles from her circle of influence. For example, she is vegan and grows her own food, so we have focussed on vegan diets this month. She has also helped bust myths about women weightlifting," says Upasana.

Samantha joined Upasana in the kitchen to cook recipes recommended by dietitians. Since Samantha is from Chennai, the recipes they featured were Tamil staples, given a healthy twist: oats and carrot *idli*, and *thakkali sadam*. "I don't find regular *idlis* easy to digest but not nutritional enough, so we switched to oats or millets instead. Similarly, we use brown rice for the *thakkali sadam* and made desserts using *sabja* and tulsi seeds, all of which are native to this area."

Upasana, who frequents Chennai, acknowledges that there are many commonalities between Tamil and Telugu cuisines, but says, "Tamil tiffins win hands down, but no one can beat the Nizami *biryani*."

The one good thing that came out of the pandemic, she adds, "is that people started understanding the value of their health a lot more. We are no longer taking it for granted."

As for her family, she says that the time she and Ram Charan take out to exercise is their 'me-time'. "His routine is much more demanding and I can't keep up with that. But yes, we always go on walks together."



**Own your body** Upasana Kamineni loops in Samantha Akkineni for her wellness platform ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## 'Agassi is my favourite opponent'

In a three-minute interview, tennis player Leander Paes chats about his journey and how the sporting world is bringing happiness, in these testing times

GAUTAM SUNDER

One of the most decorated sportsmen in the country and greatest doubles players in the history of tennis, Leander Paes has seen it all in a career that goes as far back as three decades.

But in the wake of the pandemic, which put a halt to all sporting events until recently, Paes' last season as a professional tennis player (he had earlier announced

that he would retire in 2020) has been cut short. It remains to be seen if he will extend his career for a bit longer to give it a fitting finale.

For now, the multiple Grand Slam winner is just happy to welcome tennis back into everyone's lives.

"Sport brings communities and people across the country and the globe together. Tennis, as a sport, has a natural social distancing, so it is great to see the sport back in action. I still feel that professional sports like boxing and wrestling that involve close proximity will take a while to resume."

"Having said that, it is fantastic to see how the basketball and football leagues have been coordinated. For example, the La Liga, the Premier League or the NBA has done a terrific job of finishing last season and starting against this season. They have done that



## The Heart is a Lonely Hunter by Carson McCullers

The author was 23 years old when she wrote this brilliant novel about a deaf man's encounters in a mill town in the US state of Georgia. Maybe less effort than you need to put into the great short stories of Mahasweta Devi, because she often wrote about aborigines and the Indian middle class dreams only of America.

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

**Rethinking sport** A file photo of Leander Paes ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

by ensuring the players stay in a bubble," he adds.

Paes admits that while sport is a great vehicle to bring happiness to people, it does feel a bit strange to play at an empty stadium.

Calling Andre Agassi his all-time favourite opponent on court, Paes says that their style has always matched up against each other over decades. "He is a baseliner with some of the best returns and passing shots in the history, while I am a classic serve-and-volley player. Besides that, Andre's father was an Olympic boxer while my father was an Olympic champion in field hockey. So we have always recognised the pedigree we come from."

Leander Paes and Marat Safin appeared recently on Sony Ten Chai

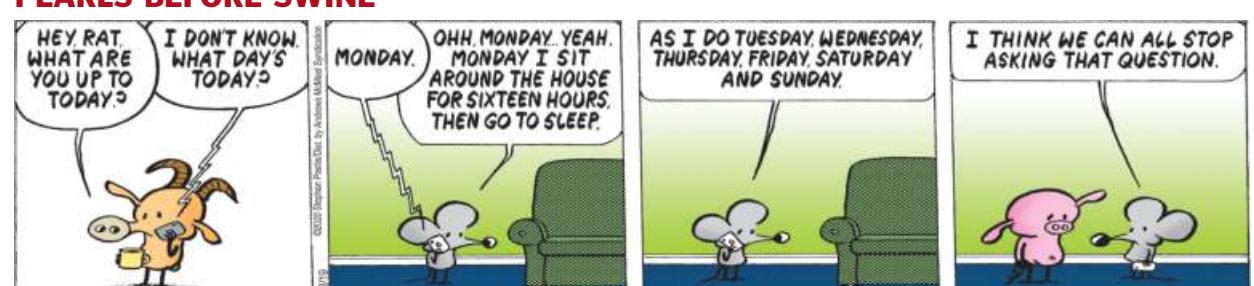
## PEANUTS



## CALVIN AND HOBBES



## PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



## HOMING IN



During trying times, Denmark-based Indian poet, novelist and academic **Tabish Khair** reads literature because it is a cure for him. It is not refuge and, therefore, his **Reading List** for the week obviously does not include Albert Camus's *The Plague*, but...

SOMA BASU

## King Lear by William Shakespeare

Obviously there is more drama in this; there is betrayal, hope, fury, dejection, an interesting cocktail. There is a challenge hurled at the skies, and just when nice people in the audience prepare to clap at a happy ending, why, in walks

King Lear with the dead body of his innocent daughter. Had Shakespeare not placed his play in the pagan past, he might have had to answer to the Church for insinuating that God may not exist.



## Dead Souls by Nikolai Gogol

If you don't have the patience for long reads, pick up this small classic by Nikolai Gogol. We Indians would instantly identify with his *Dead Souls*. It is a moving story about how the dead are cultivated for profit. You will understand the global economy; and you will also understand the TRP game. Everything is conveyed indirectly in this book because the best understanding comes when it is slanted.



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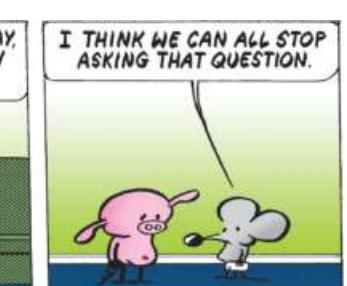
## POOCHE CAFE



## HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



## TIGER



A MODEL IS EASY TO PUT TOGETHER IF YOU FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS

I'M HAVING TROUBLE SLEEPING AT NIGHT, SO I GOT A COUPLE OF SHEEP.

TWO SHEEP AREN'T ENOUGH FOR COUNTING TO HELP YOU FALL ASLEEP.

THEY'RE NOT FOR COUNTING.

THEY'RE NOT FOR COUNTING.</p

# Trump slams 'anti-American radicals'

U.S. President accuses Democrats of 'destroying the American way of life' in rallies in Michigan, Wisconsin

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
JANESVILLE

President Donald Trump stepped up attacks on the Democratic Party on Saturday as he accused the "left" of trying to "destroy the American way of life" in a late re-election pitch to voters in Michigan and Wisconsin – two Midwestern states that were instrumental to his 2016 victory but may now be slipping from his grasp.

In back-to-back rallies, Mr. Trump accused the "left" of wanting to "erase American history" and "purge American values." He claimed, with no basis, that Democratic rival Joe Biden would put communities at risk.

#### Battleground surveys

Mr. Trump offered the dark message as he faces headwinds not only in national polling, which shows Mr. Biden leading, but also in key battleground surveys. His comments come after his campaign, with far less cash than Mr. Biden's, largely retreated from TV advertising in the Midwest, shifting much of its money to Sun Belt states such as Florida, North Carolina, Arizona and Georgia, as well as Pennsylvania.



**United front:** Demonstrators on Pennsylvania Avenue during the Women's March in Washington on Saturday. ■ AP

vania. As he tries to energise his base and keep on-the-fence voters from turning against him, Mr. Trump sought to paint Democrats as "anti-American radicals" and said moderates had "a moral duty" to join the Republican Party.

"The Democrat Party you once knew doesn't exist," he said.

It was the same on issue after issue, as he claimed in hyperbolic terms that Mr. Biden's election would spur "the single biggest depression in the history of our country" and "turn Michigan into a refugee camp."

Addressing the coronavirus crisis, Mr. Trump warned that Mr. Biden would "shut down the country, delay the vaccine and prolong the pandemic." Public health experts say the nation would be in far better shape had Mr. Trump's administration taken more aggressive action early on.

And while he repeatedly predicted victory, Mr. Trump seemed to grapple throughout the day with the prospect that he could indeed lose in November.

In Michigan, he quipped that, in January, he "better damn well be President. In

## Anti-Trump women's rallies organised across U.S.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
WASHINGTON

Thousands took to the streets across the U.S. for women's marches on Saturday, many wearing pink protest hats while issuing fervent calls against President Donald Trump and his conservative Supreme Court pick Amy Coney Barrett.

Wisconsin, he wondered how he would process a loss.

"Can you imagine if I lose? I will have lost to the worst candidate in the history of American politics," he said. "What do I do?"

Mr. Trump has continued to hold rallies despite the threat of the coronavirus, which hospitalised him for several days earlier this month.

Wisconsin broke the record for new positive virus cases on Friday – the third time that's happened in a week. The state also hit record highs for daily deaths and hospitalisations this past

week. But there was little evidence of concern among the thousands of supporters Mr. Trump drew in both states, where audience members stood closely together in the cold, mostly without masks.

Mr. Trump continued to call on Michigan Governor Gretchen Whitmer to roll back restrictions that remain in place to try to halt the spread of the virus, prompting the crowd to break into a "Lock her up!" chant. The same chant also broke out after he mentioned his 2016 Democratic rival Hillary Clinton and Minnesota Representative Ilhan Omar.

# China passes law to safeguard national security, sensitive tech

It allows Beijing to act against nations that abuse export controls

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
BEIJING

China has passed a new law restricting sensitive exports to protect national security, a move that adds to policy tools it could wield against the U.S. as tensions – especially in technology – continue to rise.

The law, which China's top legislature passed on Saturday, comes into effect on December 1 and allows Beijing to "take reciprocal measures" against countries that abuse export controls and pose a threat to national security.

Technical data related to items covered will also be subject to export controls, according to the published text of the law.

Beijing's measure gives it more room to hit back in U.S. President Donald Trump's war on Chinese tech firms, with the White House moving against popular platforms and major companies – including apps TikTok and WeChat, tech giant Huawei and chipmaker Semiconductor Manufacturing International Corp.



A truck transporting shipping containers at a dockyard in Qingdao, China. ■ AP

"timely manner".

Foreign individuals and groups can also be found liable for violating export control rules.

The economic relationship between Beijing and Washington has been roiled by Mr. Trump's unprecedented campaign of tariffs, threats of bans and sanctions on Chinese tech firms.

#### 'Unreliable entities list'

With Mr. Trump facing a tough re-election campaign ahead of polls next month, U.S. officials have described measures against China as national security safeguards – prompting a backlash from Beijing.

In September, China launched a long-expected "unreliable entities list", widely seen as a weapon to retaliate against the US which has used its own "entity list" to shut Huawei out of the U.S. market.

The month before that, China's Commerce Ministry stepped up rules on technologies restricted for export, adding "civilian use" to the list.

## Iran hails lifting of UN arms embargo

Tehran can now buy 'necessary arms'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
TEHRAN

Iran said a longstanding UN embargo on arms sales to and from the Islamic republic expired on Sunday in line with a 2015 landmark nuclear deal with world powers from which Washington has withdrawn.

Tehran, which could now purchase weapons from Russia, China and elsewhere, has hailed the development as a diplomatic victory over the U.S., which had tried to maintain an indefinite freeze on arms sales.

"As of today, all restrictions on the transfer of arms, related activities and financial services to and from the Islamic Republic of Iran... are all automatically terminated," the Foreign Ministry said in a statement.

The embargo on the sale of conventional arms to Iran was due to start expiring progressively from Sunday, October 18, under the terms of the UN resolution.

"As of today, the Islamic Republic may procure any necessary arms and equipment from any source without any legal restrictions, and solely based on its defensive needs," the Ministry added in the statement.

U.S. President Donald Trump withdrew his country from the nuclear deal in 2018 and has unilaterally begun reimposing sanctions on Iran. But Washington suffered a setback in August when it failed to win support from the UN Security



Javad Zarif

Council to indefinitely extend the arms embargo.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif said Sunday marked the "normalisation of Iran's defense cooperation with the world".

**Momentous day**

It was "a momentous day for the international community," the Iranian Ministry said on Sunday, adding the world had stood with Tehran "in defiance of the U.S. regime's efforts".

But it stressed that "unconventional arms, weapons of mass destruction and a buying spree of conventional arms have no place in Iran's defense doctrine".

Meanwhile, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said that arms sales to Iran would breach UN resolutions and result in sanctions.

"The U.S. is prepared to use its domestic authorities to sanction any individual or entity that materially contributes to the supply, sale, or transfer of conventional arms to or from Iran," Mr. Pompeo said.

## Armenia, Azerbaijan report truce violations

Ceasefire came into force at midnight on Saturday; both accuse each other of using artillery fire

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
YEREVAN

Despite a second attempt at a ceasefire, Armenia and Azerbaijan traded accusations on Sunday of violating the new truce in their conflict over the separatist region of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The latest truce, which was announced on Saturday and took force at midnight, came after a week-old Russian-brokered ceasefire

failed to halt heavy fighting between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces that broke out in Nagorno-Karabakh on September 27. The fighting and shelling has killed hundreds of people – both combatants and civilians – and marks the biggest escalation of a decades-old conflict over the region in more than a quarter-century.

The recent fighting, involving heavy artillery, rock-

ets and drones, has continued despite repeated calls for cessation of hostilities coming from around the globe. The escalation of fighting raises the spectre of a wider conflict that could draw in Russia and Turkey and threaten Caspian Sea energy exports.

Armenian military officials on Sunday reported artillery shelling and missile strikes by Azerbaijani forces

in the conflict zone overnight.

Azerbaijan's Defence Ministry, in turn, maintained that Armenian forces used mortars and artillery in the conflict zone overnight despite the cease-fire and in the morning attempted attacks in several directions.

The Ministry accused Armenia of using large-caliber weapons to attack the positions of the Azerbaijani army in two regions north of Nagorno-Karabakh along the border between the two countries, a claim Armenian military officials denied.

The Azerbaijani military also said it downed an Armenian Su-25 warplane "attempting to inflict air-strikes," but Armenian Defense Ministry spokesman Shushan Stepanian dismissed the statement as untrue.

#### Bolivians vote in election in hope of stability

LA PAZ

Bolivians began voting on Sunday in a presidential election many hope can restore stability to a nation that was plunged into turmoil after a fraught and eventually voided vote last year.

Front-runners in the election are Luis Arce, who champions a return to the socialist and pro-indigenous policies of former President Evo Morales, and Carlos Mesa, a centrist. REUTERS

## For young Rohingya brides, marriage means a deadly crossing

Young women from Bangladesh, promised to men they don't know yet, are making dangerous trips to Malaysia to join them



**Perilous journey:** Rohingya refugees after reaching Chittagong in Indonesia on September 7. ■ AP

boarded the fishing boat in Bangladesh with hopes that human traffickers would ferry her to Malaysia for an arranged marriage, Ms. Haresa, who goes by one name, and almost 300 other Rohingya refugees found sanctuary in Indonesia last month. Her sister, 21, died two days

after the boat landed. Banished from their homes in Myanmar and crammed into refugee settlements in neighboring Bangladesh, thousands of Rohingya have taken the perilous boat crossing to Malaysia, where many from the persecuted minority group toil as

undocumented workers. Hundreds have died along the way.

Most of those now undertaking the trip, like Ms. Haresa, are girls and young women from refugee camps in Bangladesh whose parents have promised them in marriage to Rohingya men in Malaysia. Two-thirds of those who landed in Indonesia last month with Ms. Haresa were women.

Amira Bibi and her family escaped their native Rakhine state, in Myanmar's far west, as the military torched hundreds of Rohingya villages three years ago. The fourth of nine siblings, she said she knew her place in life.

"My parents are getting old and my brothers are with their own families," she said. "How long are my parents

going to bear the burden of me?"

Through the matchmaking of a cousin in Malaysia who works as a grass-cutter, Ms. Bibi's parents found a fiancé for her. She asked for details about the man but none were provided, apart from his name, she said.

After surviving more than six months at sea in a failed attempt to reach him, Ms. Bibi spoke from Indonesia with her fiancé a country away. The phone call lasted two minutes. "He sounded young," she said. That is the extent of what she knows about him. Ms. Bibi initially told staff from the United Nations refugee agency that she was 15 years old, but later amended her age to 18.

Fishermen in Aceh, on the tip of the Indonesian island

of Sumatra, are among the few who have welcomed the Rohingya. A battered trawler with around 100 refugees landed in June, followed by the larger boat on Sept. 7.

"The question is how Southeast Asia as a region responds to this humanitarian crisis on its doorstep," said Indrika Ratwatte, director for Asia and the Pacific for the U.N. refugee agency.

The Bangladeshi government has threatened to relocate thousands of Rohingya from the camps to a cyclone-prone islet in the Bay of Bengal. The island was uninhabited until the Navy forced about 300 Rohingya – many of them women and children – to shelter there this summer, when their bid to sail to Malaysia ended after months at sea. ■ NY TIMES

## Israel and Bahrain to formalise diplomatic ties

U.S.-Israeli team heads to Manama

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
MANAMA

Jordan.

A flurry of diplomacy between some of Washington's key regional allies has handed U.S. President Donald Trump a key foreign policy win as he campaigns for re-election ahead of polls in November.

"Bahrain and Israel will sign a joint communiqué on the establishment of diplomatic, peaceful and friendly relations, as well as a number of memorandums of understanding in areas of mutual benefit," according to a joint statement.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin and Mr. Trump's special assistant for international negotiations, Avi Berkowitz, joined the Israeli delegation's flight to Manama.

CM YK

## ASK US



K. NITYA KALYANI

## All eggs in one basket

**Q.** I am a 41-year-old from Chennai and have bought a medical insurance policy named iHealth for myself recently from ICICI Lombard General Insurance Company Ltd. In addition to my health insurance, I have also taken two-wheeler and accident insurance policies from ICICI Lombard. Likewise, I am paying premium for two unit-linked insurance policies with SBI Life Insurance Company for the past three years (one is a pension policy and the other, a life insurance policy) and also have selected SBI as the fund manager in Tier I of my NPS account.

I would like to know what the advantages and disadvantages of enrolling with a single insurer for various insurance products are?

SETHURAMAN H

**A.** Congratulations on being a believer in insurance for so many of your needs and for your several and diversified investment options.

The core decision you have to make when buying insurance is whether a product suits your requirements, about which you should have clarity.

The choice of an insurance company should be a natural progression of this. Having said this, if you have several policies with the same insurer for whatever reason, you become a priority customer and the relationship gets stronger to your benefit.

Administration of policies becomes easier in case of change of address, for example, as you have to get in touch only with one person in the organisation, usually. Across life and general insurance, this synergy will work if you have gone through the same intermediary because the entities, even if they belong to the same business group, are entirely different. Of course, the intermediary can simply be the bank that also belongs to the same group!

Coming to the disadvantages, should the business group face difficulties, then all your products will also be at risk and administrative and procedural issues can get bogged down and complicated.

But your benefits and rights as a policyholder will be safeguarded even if your insurer fails because Indian insurance regulations ensure that another insurer will be given the responsibility.

## Starting health insurance policy

**Q.** My father is 60 years old. Is it possible to start a new health insurance policy with full claim from now?

T. K. P. THAMARA

**A.** The short answer to that is 'No.' There will be a blanket 30-day waiting period for any claim under a new policy except hospitalisation because of an accident.

At his age, a pre-underwriting medical examination will be necessary and all hospitalisation policies exclude pre-existing conditions for three or four years.

In addition, some treatments and procedures will be payable after two years and this differs from policy to policy.

(The writer is a business journalist specialising in insurance & corporate history)

Readers can send in queries on personal finance and investing to moneys@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.

# Pause before you plunge

To avoid overheated markets, an investor may pick passive index funds and raise equity allocation on corrections

ANAND SRINIVASAN

Worldwide stock prices and the underlying fundamentals of the stocks have never been as disconnected as they are today.

Certain large companies have crossed \$1 trillion in valuations in the American markets. The term centibillionaire (someone who has a net worth of \$100 billion) has become common usage in the pink press.

The main reason for such euphoria has been the infusion of huge amounts of liquidity into global markets by all central banks, including our own Reserve Bank of India. The developed world has borrowed heavily and been very generous in giving stimulus to businesses so that the fall in economic activity can be cushioned.

India remains the only large nation which has not given a substantial direct stimulus.

The conventional wisdom was this money would make its way through the economy and reach those who deserved it, such as small and medium enterprises. However, despite the huge liquidity, banks in India and globally have become risk-averse and are not making fresh loans.

## Bond ETF purchases

The Federal Reserve, in an unconventional action, has been buying bond ETFs and at times, junk bond ETFs to prop up the credit markets. Thus, it was natural for the excess money to cross the ocean and reach Indian shores.

The money has been chasing quality Indian stocks and this has created a narrow top in the Indian equities markets. Price action in a handful of stocks is driving the value of the index.



More than 60% of investments in India have been in one company which is primarily a provider of telecom services. The market would like to believe that it has reincarnated as the next tech wonder. The same company is now selling a minority stake in its retail business for astronomical valuations.

## Offsetting NPAs

A handful of private sector banks have raised equity capital to offset a probable rise in non-performing assets. However, despite the huge liquidity, banks in India and globally have become risk-averse and are not making fresh loans.

around 15 to 18 times earnings. The current EPS of the Nifty is in between 348 and 350.

If one were to look at the index returns for the last three years, the return on investment has been very poor and nothing to write home about. The one-year return was 3.76%, 2-year return was 13.96% and the 3-year return 16.4%\*.

This is the reason why, after a big rally from the lows of March, retail investors are continuously pulling money out of the Indian stock markets.

As data from AMFI has shown us, there are two ways that a stock price can rise: a continuous increase in the earnings of the company and its subsidiaries; an expansion in

the price-earnings ratio of the stock.

The latter means that the new investor is willing to pay a higher price for stocks whose earnings have not increased.

## Triple whammy

This is largely due to the triple whammy of demonetisation, a faulty GST and finally a global pandemic.

Let us assume the worst is behind us and corporate earnings will bounce back.

A 30% increase in profit will translate to an EPS of 450. Even then, the price-earnings multiple will be almost 28 times earnings and will have no upside left for investors to benefit from.

With any meaningful appre-

ciation of stocks thus ruled out, any global event can send the price of equities tumbling down. The truth is, we do not know when the pandemic will end or a vaccine will be ready.

Hence, a sharp rebound in profits of index stocks is an unlikely event. I have mentioned a narrow top. Here is the evidence.\*\*

1. Reliance Industries 14.9%
  2. Infosys 7.62%
  3. TCS 5.4%
  4. HDFC Bank 9.67%
- Total 37.6%

That is, these four stocks above have contributed to a weight of 37.6% of the index.

1. Hindustan Unilever 3.81%
2. HDFC 6.43%
3. ICICI 5.05%

If you add 3 more stocks totalling to 15.3%, the contribution of the 7 stocks crosses 50% of the weight of the index.

The balance 43 stocks contribute the remaining. This is why no active fund manager has been able to beat the Nifty thanks to the SEBI ruling which does not allow the fund manager to invest 10% in a single stock. The feeling in the market that it is less risky to invest today is erroneous.

As American investor Howard Marks has pointed out, the higher the price levels, the greater the risk.

There seems to be a mob psychology of fear of missing out on a good thing.

"People should like something less when its price rises, but in investing they often like it more," he had said.

This is primarily driven by envy and greed when one believes his neighbour or colleague has made quick money while he himself has missed out. One should remember that the legendary Sir Isaac Newton lost his fortune in the South Sea bubble and said: "I can calculate the motions of heavenly bodies but not the madness of the people."

If at all one has to take exposure to equity, it is better to buy passive index funds and increase allocations as the market corrects but one must again remember Mr. Mark's quotation, "Investment success doesn't come from 'buying good things,' but rather from 'buying things well.'

\*Yahoo Finance

\*\*NSE indices, 2020

(The author is a financial consultant and can be reached at anand.s.srinivasan@gmail.com)

## THINK INVESTOR

## Can you achieve the right balance in hybrid funds?

Investor must go for a goal-based portfolio that earns interest from bonds and capital appreciation from equity investments



Hybrid funds seem to offer good returns and tax efficiency, but they are not what they seem to be. ■GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

**VENKATESH BANGARUSWAMY**  
Should you consider investing in hybrid funds for your goal-based portfolios? In this article, we discuss two factors that are often cited as advantages of investing in such funds. We urge you to consider the following arguments before you decide on investing in such funds.

## Asset allocation

A hybrid fund is one that invests in both equity and bonds. So, such funds ought to help investors with their asset allocation decision. This refers to how you allocate your annual savings between equity and bond investments.

Suppose you are unsure of the proportion of equity and bond investments to have in your portfolio. By investing in a hybrid fund, you could outsource your asset allocation decision to the manager of the fund, so the argument goes.

The issue is that each goal

you pursue requires different asset allocation. For instance, the asset allocation for your child's education portfolio must be different from your retirement portfolio. Hybrid funds cannot consider your individual goal requirement as it is a collective investment vehicle.

Now, hybrid funds range from equity-oriented funds that may have above 65% in equity to debt-oriented funds that are predominantly invested in bonds. Therefore, you ought to decide on the proportion of equity and bonds you want in your portfolio to select an appropriate hybrid fund. But if you can figure that out, you would have arrived at your asset allocation requirement! Then, you could just as well consider investing separately in equity funds and bonds.

**Tax efficiency**  
But hybrid funds offer tax efficiency, the argument goes.

Based on current tax laws, a hybrid fund that holds 65% or more in equity is considered as an equity fund. So, if you redeem your units in such hybrid funds after a holding period of more than 12 months, you have to pay long-term capital gains tax of 10%. If a hybrid fund holds less than 65% in equity, you have to pay 20% capital gains tax with indexation if you sell your units after a holding period of more than 36 months.

Now, suppose you invest 70% in equity funds and 30% in

bond funds separately, you have to pay 10% capital gains tax on your equity investment and 20% on your long-term bond investments. However, if you invest in a hybrid fund with the same asset allocation, you will pay only 10% on your total investment.

The above argument is valid if you want to invest in bond funds to meet your bond allocation. Or, if you are willing to assume market risk on your bond investments just to save taxes. Should you?

## Conclusion

You will pay higher taxes on your bond investments if you invest in bank fixed deposits instead of investing in bond funds or in hybrid funds. But higher taxes are a trade-off for stable returns. Your fixed deposits and recurring deposits will provide a steady stream of income returns compounded through the time horizon for your life goal. Whereas your bond funds

or bond portion of your hybrid funds are marked-to-market through net asset value. You, therefore, expose your bond investments to price fluctuations (and perhaps capital loss) in an attempt to earn higher return.

It is preferable to have a goal-based portfolio that earns interest income from bond investments and capital appreciation from equity investments.

The above discussion is not meant to discourage you from investing in hybrid funds. Rather, the objective is to urge you to consider these factors before investing in such funds.

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

## LOOSE CHANGE

RAVIKANTH



"Why, that's true, sir! In fact, the machine was in working condition for full twenty six hours over the past seven days!"

## Life insurance term plan premium

Male: 30 Years, Sum Insured- ₹1 crore, Cover up to- 70 Years			
Insurance company	Plan name	Maximum cover Up to (Years)	Annual premium ₹(Male)
Aditya Birla Capital	Life Shield Plan	80	12,998
Aegon Life	iTerm Insurance Plan	100	9,114
Bajaj Allianz	Smart Protect Goal	85	10911
Bharti AXA	Premier Protect Plan	75	11092**
Canara HSBC OBC	iSelect+ Term Plan	99	9,284
Exide Life Insurance	Smart Term Plan	75	12411*
Future Generali	Flexi Online Term Plan	75	9,427
HDFC Life	Click2Protect Plus	85	12,601
ICICI Prudential	iProtect Smart	99	15628
India First Life	e-Term Plan	80	8,260
Kotak Life Insurance	Kotak e-Term Plan	75	9,558
Max Life Insurance	Smart Term Plan Plus	80	11,800
PNB Met Life	Mera Term Plan	99	10,148
Reliance Nippon Life	Digi Term	80	11,012
SBI Life	eShield	80	15,070
TATA AIA Life	Maha Raksha Supreme	100	12,980

## Health insurance premium

Insurer name	Key features	Plan names	Premium ₹
Care Health	Day Care Treatments Family Floater option Health Checkups Pre and Post Hospitalisation Coverage	NCB Super Premium Care Care with unlimited recharge NCB Super Premium with UAR	9,092 8,265 8,885 9,712
Max Bupa Health	Day Care Treatments Hospitalization at Home Family Floater option Alternate Medicine	Health Reassure Health Pulse Enhanced Health Companion Go Active	9,590 10,696 9,862 11,747
Star Health	Family Floater option Restoration of cover Wellness Benefits	Medi Classic Star Comprehensive Young Star Gold Plan Young Star Silver Plan	9,661 11,476 8,389 7,133
HDFC Ergo Health	Family Floater option Restoration of cover Pre and Post Hospitalisation Coverage	Optima Restore Easy Health Individual Standard	11,575 10,094
HDFC Ergo General	Hospitalization at Home Hospital Room Eligibility Alternate Medicine	Easy Health Individual Exclusive Easy Health Individual Premium Health wallet	12,670 15,692 22,908
Aditya Birla Health	Hospitalization at Home Hospital Room Eligibility Alternate Medicine	My:health Suralsha Gold Smart My:health Suralsha Silver My:health Suralsha Silver with Rebound & ECB	13,886 12,231 12,765
Digit Healthcare Plus	Day Care Treatments Family Floater Option	Activ assure Diamond Activ Health Enhance	7,919 9,801

# Kings rule after incredible finish

Win the second Super Over after the first ends in a tie against Mumbai Indians



**Joy unbound:** The Kings XI squad celebrates the fantastic victory. Right: Rahul was at his scintillating best again. ■ BCCI/IPL

## IPL 2020

### SPORTS BUREAU

If two Super Overs in a day weren't enough to fill the IPL fans' appetite, outstanding exhibitions of executing yorkers by Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami meant Mumbai Indians and Kings XI Punjab created a first – a second Super Over after the first one was tied with both teams scoring five runs each.

Trent Boult, who bowled an exceptional last over in regulation time that resulted in a tie, was then taken to the cleaners by Chris Gayle and Mayank as the duo scored 15 runs off just four balls.

**Back on track**  
The nail-biting win meant KXIP has kept its IPL campaign afloat.

The drama in the last four overs - two Super Over face-offs - overshadowed the heroics of a few individuals in the first 40 overs.

Quinton de Kock anchored the MI innings after Rohit Sharma elected to bat.

Innings scan	
MI	KXIP
49	Dots 44
15	Fours 14
9	Sixes 8
43/3	PP 51/1
8.80	RR 8.80

lution time resulting in MI's total swelling to 176 for six, conceded just 11 runs. Jordan had Mayank Agarwal to thank for saving four runs with a stunning leap off the last ball of the over.

Trent Boult, who bowled an exceptional last over in regulation time that resulted in a tie, was then taken to the cleaners by Chris Gayle and Mayank as the duo scored 15 runs off just four balls.

**Scoreboard**

#### MUMBAI INDIANS

Rohit Sharma b Arshdeep 9 (8b, 2x4), Quinton de Kock c Mayank b Jordan 53 (43b, 3x4, 3x6), Suryakumar Yadav c M. Ashwin b Shami 0 (4b), Ishan Kishan c M. Ashwin b Arshdeep 7 (7b, 1x4), Krunal Pandya c Hooda b Bishnoi 34 (30b, 4x4, 1x6), Hardik Pandya c Pooran b Shami 8 (4b, 1x6), Kieron Pollard (not out) 34 (12b, 1x4, 4x6), Nathan Coulter-Nile (not out) 24 (12b, 4x4), Extras (b-4, lb-2, w-1); Total (for six wkts. in 20 overs): 176.

#### FALL OF WICKETS

1-23 (Rohit, 2.5 overs), 2-24 (Suryakumar, 3.3), 3-38 (Ishan, 5.1), 4-96 (Krunal, 13.5), 5-116 (Hardik, 15.3), 6-119 (de Kock, 16.3).

#### KINGS XI BOWLING

Maxwell 4-0-24-0, Shami 4-0-30-2, Arshdeep 3-0-35-2, Jordan 3-0-32-1, M. Ashwin 3-0-28-0, Hooda 1-0-9-0, Bishnoi 2-0-12-1

#### FALL OF WICKETS

1-33 (Mayank, 3.3), 2-75 (Gayle, 9.1), 3-108 (Pooran, 12.5), 4-115 (Maxwell, 13.3), 5-153 (Rahul, 17.3), 6-176 (Jordan, 19.6).

#### MUMBAI INDIANS BOWLING

Bout 4-0-48-0, Krunal 2-0-12-0, Bumrah 4-0-24-3, Coulter-Nile 4-0-33-0, Pollard 2-0-26-0, Rahul Chahar 4-0-33-2.

#### Toss: MI; MoM: Rahul.

Match tied. KXIP won in the second Super Over after the first one was also tied.

Krunal Pandya came to the fore in resurrecting the innings after KXIP struck thrice in the PowerPlay. And Pollard's cameo (34 n.o., 12b, 1x4, 4x6) resulted in MI setting up a formidable total.

Bumrah then got rid of

three KXIP batsmen. Still, Rahul's umpteenth effort of leading from the front, aided by Deepak Hooda's finishing act, had bottom-placed KXIP within touching distance of upsetting the defending champion. It eventually did!

**Scoreboard**

#### KINGS XI PUNJAB

K.L. Rahul b Bumrah 77 (51b, 7x4, 3x6), Mayank Agarwal b Bumrah 11 (10b, 1x4), Chris Gayle c Boutl b Rahul Chahar 24 (21b, 1x4, 2x6), Nicholas Pooran c Coulter-Nile b Bumrah 24 (12b, 2x4, 2x6), Glenn Maxwell c Rohit b Rahul Chahar 0 (2b), Deepak Hooda (not out) 23 (16b, 1x4, 1x6), Chris Jordan run out 13 (8b, 2x4); Extras (w-4); Total (for six wkts. in 20 overs): 163.

#### FALL OF WICKETS

1-33 (Mayank, 3.3), 2-75 (Gayle, 9.1), 3-108 (Pooran, 12.5), 4-115 (Maxwell, 13.3), 5-153 (Rahul, 17.3), 6-176 (Jordan, 19.6).

#### MUMBAI INDIANS BOWLING

Bout 4-0-48-0, Krunal 2-0-12-0, Bumrah 4-0-24-3, Coulter-Nile 4-0-33-0, Pollard 2-0-26-0, Rahul Chahar 4-0-33-2.

#### Toss: MI; MoM: Rahul.

Match tied. KXIP won in the second Super Over after the first one was also tied.

# Ferguson delivers for KKR in Super Over

Kiwi speedster, playing his first match of the season, brings cheer to the Kolkata camp

## IPL 2020

### SPORTS BUREAU

Two wickets from Lockie Ferguson helped Kolkata Knight Riders snatch a thrilling Super Over victory over Sunrisers Hyderabad at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi on Sunday. The Kiwi pacer nipped off David Warner and Abdul Samad in three deliveries, leaving KKR with just three runs to chase.

Earlier, KKR had the upper hand with SRH needing 18 to win off the final over. Warner swung the momentum SRH's way with a hat-trick of fours off Andre Russell.

With four required off two, Russell pulled it back, conceding just three and stretching the match to a Super Over.

Chasing 164, Jonny Bairstow (36, 28b, 7x4) and Kane Williamson (29, 19b, 4x4, 1x6) gave SRH a flying start. The side cruised to 58 for no loss in PowerPlay, before Ferguson had Williamson caught off his first ball.

Priyam Garg, Bairstow and Manish Pandey then fell in quick succession before Pat Cummins accounted for Vijay Shankar. Warner's unbeaten 33-ball 47 (5x4) ensured the teams finished on an even keel.

Put in to bat, KKR scored just 15 off the first three overs before Rahul Tripathi switched gears, hitting T. Natarajan for a six and a four in the fourth over.

Shubman Gill (36, 37b, 5x4) broke the shackles with three back-to-back boundaries off Basil Thampi.

However, Natarajan provided SRH the break-

#### Innings scan

KKR	Dots	SRH
42	47	42
16	18	16
5	2	5
48/1	PP 58/0	48/1
8.15	RR 8.15	8.15



**Double delight:** Ferguson's superb bowling pegged Sunrisers back. ■ BCCI/IPL

## Next assignment

### SRH: Oct. 22 vs. RR

Dubai, 7.30 p.m. IST

### KKR: Oct. 21 vs. RCB

Abu Dhabi, 7.30 p.m. IST

## IPL's Super Overs

The MI-KXIP match was the fourth one that needed a Tie-breaker in IPL 2020. The complete list of Super Overs in the IPL

TEAMS	WINNER	YEAR
KKR vs. RR	RR	2009
CSK vs. KXIP	KXIP	2010
SRH vs. RCB	SRH	2013
RCB vs. Delhi Daredevils	RCB	2013
KKR vs. RR	RR	2014
RR vs. KXIP	KXIP	2015
Gujarat Lions vs. MI	MI	2017
DC vs. KKR	DC	2019
MI vs. SRH	MI	2019
DC vs. KXIP	DC	2020
RCB vs. MI	RCB	2020
SRH vs. KKR	KKR	2020
MI vs. KXIP	KXIP	2020

Note: The MI-KXIP game went into a second Super Over after the first too was tied.

## Scoreboard

#### KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS

Shubman Gill c Garg b Rashid 36 (37b, 5x4), Rahul Tripathi b Natarajan 23 (16b, 2x4, 1x6), Nitish Rana c Garg b Vijay Shankar 29 (20b, 3x4, 1x6), Andre Russell c Vijay Shankar b Natarajan 9 (11b, 1x4), Eoin Morgan c Pandey b Thampi 34 (23b, 3x4, 1x6), Dinesh Karthik (not out) 29 (14b, 2x4, 2x6); Extras (lb-2, nb-1): 3; Total (for five wkts. in 20 overs): 163.

#### FALL OF WICKETS

1-48 (Tripathi, 5.6 overs), 2-87 (Gill, 11.4), 3-88 (Rana, 12.1), 4-105 (Shankar, 11.4), 5-163 (Morgan, 19.6).

#### SUNRISE BOWLING

Sandeep 4-0-27-0, Thampi 4-0-46-1, Natarajan 4-0-40-2, Vijay Shankar 4-0-20-1, Rashid 4-0-28-1.

#### SUNRISES HYDERABAD

Jonny Bairstow c Russell b Varun 36 (28b, 5x4), Kane Williamson c Rana b Ferguson 29 (19b, 4x4, 1x6), Priyam Garg b Ferguson 29 (19b, 4x4, 1x6), Andre Russell c Ferguson 29 (19b, 4x4, 1x6), Eoin Morgan c Pandey b Ferguson 6 (7b), Vijay Shankar c Gill b Cummings 7 (10b), Abdul Samad c Gill b Mavi 23 (15b, 2x4, 1x6), Rashid

Khan (not out) 1 (2b); Extras (lb-7, w-2, nb-1): 10; Total (for six wkts. in 20 overs): 163.

#### FALL OF WICKETS

1-57 (Williamson, 6.1), 2-70 (Garg, 8.4), 3-70 (Bairstow, 9.2), 4-82 (Pandey, 11.3), 5-109 (Vijay Shankar, 15.2), 6-146 (Samad, 18.6).

#### KNIGHT RIDERS BOWLING

Cummins 4-0-28-1, Mavi 3-0-34-1, Varun 4-0-32-1, Russell 2-0-29-0, Ferguson 4-0-15-3, Kuldeep 3-0-18-0.

**Toss:** SRH; **MoM:** Ferguson.

Match tied. KKR won in Super Over.

## Narine's action cleared

Dhoni's men and Smith's outfit need to win to remain in the race for the playoffs

### Y.B. SARANGI KOLKATA

IPL's Suspect Bowling Action Committee has cleared Kolkata Knight Riders spinner Sunil Narine, the IPL said in a statement on Sunday.

Narine was reported for "suspected illegal bowling action" during KKR's match against Kings XI Punjab in Abu Dhabi on October 10. Following the report, Narine was placed on the Suspect Action Warning List.

After reviewing footage of Narine's bowling action "with the naked eye", the committee concluded "the elbow-bend appears to be within the range of permissible limits."

## Struggling Super Kings and Royals in a battle for survival



Steve Smith. ■ BCCI/IPL

in the same boat, Chennai Super Kings (CSK) and Rajasthan Royals (RR) lock horns here on Monday with the knowledge that any more slip-ups could dash their slim play-off hopes.

With just five matches remaining for both the teams, the road ahead is definitely going to be tricky.

## TV PICKS

Premier League: SS Select 2 (SD &amp; HD), 10 p.m.

## IN BRIEF



## Alex Rins wins Aragon MotoGP, Mir takes lead

Alex Rins held off compatriot Alex Marquez to win the Aragon MotoGP on Sunday with another Spaniard Joan Mir finishing third to take the championship lead from Fabio Quartararo. It was Rins' maiden race win. AFP

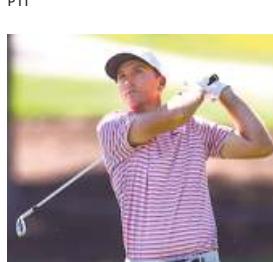


Alexander Zverev ended his 17-month wait for a title by drawing on the pain of his U.S. Open final defeat to beat Felix Auger-Aliassime 6-3, 6-3 and win the Cologne Indoors on Sunday. AFP



SC East Bengal on Sunday announced the signing of striker Jeje Lalpekhlua ahead of the upcoming Indian Super League season. The 29-year-old was a free agent after leaving Chennaiyin FC earlier this year. The club also announced the signing of Scottish defender Danny Fox and German midfielder Ville Matti Steinmann from Wigan Athletic and Wellington Phoenix FC respectively. PTI

**Shubhankar gains some ground, Chawrasia slides**  
ST. ANDREWS (SCOTLAND)  
S.S.P. Chawrasia returned four-over 76 to drop to tied 51st from tied 18th at the 2020 Scottish Championship here. Shubhankar Sharma shot two-under 70 to rise to T-43. Matt Wallace carded a brilliant bogey-free 66 to open up a three-shot lead heading into the final round. PTI



Russell Henley fired a five-under 67 for a three-stroke lead after Saturday's third round at the CJ Cup. The 31-year-old American is 15-under 201 after 54 holes. Compatriots Xander Schauffele, Talor Gooch, Lanto Griffin and Jason Kokrak shared second on 204 with Australian Jason Day, England's Tyrrell Hatton and American Justin Thomas sharing sixth on 206. AFP

**Raphael Augusto parts way with Bengaluru FC**  
BENGALURU  
Mid-fielder Raphael Augusto and Bengaluru FC have parted ways after mutually agreeing to terminate their contract. The announcement made on the club's Twitter handle cited personal reasons. The Brazilian, who signed a two-year deal at the start of last season, started nine of the first 10 games of the ISL campaign but was laid low by a knee injury since the beginning of 2020.

## Manmeet gets past Junaid

NEW DELHI  
Manmeet Bhatia got past Junaid Ahmed 32-16, 22-32, 25-16, 35-24 in the Suresh Sharma memorial Delhi State 6-Red snooker championship. The results: Avinash Kumar bt Subodh Garg 33-31, 33-18, 48-11; Manmeet Bhatia bt Junaid Ahmed 32-16, 22-32, 25-16, 35-24; Sanchit Gupta bt Mayank Rana 28-19, 52-0, 42-20.

## AB greatest of all time: Katich

RCB head coach lauds the 'freak' for his masterclass against Royals

## IPL 2020

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

Royal Challengers Bangalore's head coach Simon Katich described A.B. de Villiers as a "freak" who single-handedly won the game against Rajasthan Royals on Saturday.

"He is a freak, isn't he? That's why he is the greatest of all time. What we saw was another masterclass, we have seen a number of them already in this tournament."

"He had one here against Mumbai, and obviously the other day he got 73 off 33," said Katich during the press conference.

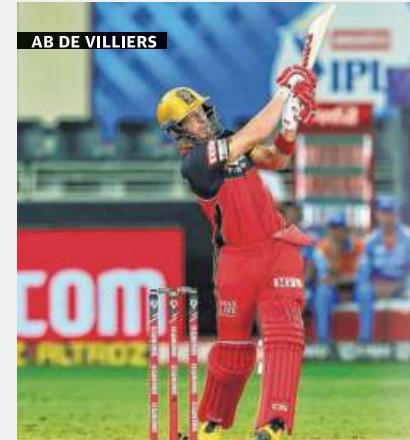
The coach also said that they learned from their mistake in the last game and ensured that de Villiers batted at his usual No. 4 spot. The South African star had come in at No. 6 against KXIP on Thursday.

"We certainly made sure that he batted in his right position today [Saturday]. We certainly learnt from our mistake and he was wonderful."

"The reason we won was I think he was magnificent, Chris Morris was brilliant,

## Maximum impact

Mr 360 continues to swing matches with some incredible knocks. A close view of the 36-year-old's IPL journey



AB DE VILLIERS

	SEASON	INNS	RUNS	HS	STRIKE RATE
2008	6	95	26 n.o.	96.93	
2009	13	465	105 n.o.	130.98	
2010	7	111	45	93.27	
2011	13	312	65	128.39	
2012	13	319	64 n.o.	161.11	
2013	14	360	64	164.38	
2014	13	395	89 n.o.	158.63	
2015	14	513	133 n.o.	175.08	
2016	16	687	129 n.o.	168.79	
2017	9	216	89 n.o.	132.51	
2018	11	480	90 n.o.	174.54	
2019	13	442	82 n.o.	154.00	
2020*	9	285	73 n.o.	190.00	

MATCHES	INNS	N.O.	RUNS	HS	AVG.	STRIKE RATE	50s/100s	45/6s
163	151	36	4,680	133 n.o.	40.69	153.14	37/3	378/231

Delhi Daredevils (2008 to 2010), RCB (from 2011)

\* Stats up to the RR-RCB match on Oct. 17

COMPILED BY R. NARAYANAN AND G. PRASAD

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