



Former Rajasthan  
CM Vasundhara Raje  
meets BJP chief Nadda  
page 9



Bollywood actor  
Rhea Chakraborty  
appears before ED  
page 10



Trump's order targets  
Chinese internet giants  
TikTok, WeChat  
page 13

Yasir & Co. restrict  
England to 219, give  
Pakistan 107-run lead  
page 15

PRINTED AT • CHENNAI • COIMBATORE • BENGALURU • HYDERABAD • MADURAI • NOIDA • VISAKHAPATNAM • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • KOCHI • VIJAYAWADA • MANGALURU • TIRUCHIRAPPALLI • KOLKATA • HUBBALLI • MOHALI • MALAPPURAM • MUMBAI • TIRUPATI • LUCKNOW • CUTTACK • PATNA

## NEARBY



Delhi govt. launches  
Electric Vehicle Policy

NEW DELHI  
The Delhi government on Friday launched its Electric Vehicle Policy, which aims to boost the city's economy, reduce pollution levels and generate employment in the transport sector. It also includes incentives for the purchase of electric vehicles.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

'Sexual assault victim's  
condition still critical'

NEW DELHI  
A 12-year-old girl, who was sexually assaulted and has suffered severe head injuries, will need another surgery and her condition continues to remain critical, sources at AIIMS said. They said her platelet count is low and she is being treated at the neurosurgery ICU.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

Hooch tragedy: two key  
absconders arrested

CHANDIGARH  
Punjab police on Friday arrested two key absconders in the hooch tragedy while adding murder charges to the FIRs against all prime accused in the case. With the arrest of father-son duo, the total number of arrests has gone up to 54.

NORTH & EAST ▶ PAGE 4

Natural disasters plague Kerala again, as torrential rain wreaks havoc in both high ranges and the coast

## 18 killed as landslip buries tea workers' quarters in Idukki

Rescue at remote estate hampered by incessant rain, hilly terrain; 52 still missing

GIJI K. RAMAN  
IDUKKI

At least 18 persons were killed and 52 others are missing after a series of landslips at the Nayamakkad tea estate at Pettimudy, near Rajamala in Idukki district, late on Thursday.

Four *layams* (housing lines of tea garden workers) were buried under debris as a hill nearly 3 km away from the housing lines, located in a landlocked valley, slid down. Most of the victims were asleep and were trapped under the debris.

Twelve of the 82 residents escaped, according to official figures. Three injured workers were admitted to the Tata General Hospital at Munnar. One seriously injured woman, Palaniyamma, was admitted to the Kolencherry Medical College.

### Access difficult

Forest Department officials who started the rescue operations were joined by teams from the NDRF and the Fire and Rescue services. The area, which housed about 15 line quarters, was water-



Search for life: Rescue workers scouring the landslip-hit area in Idukki, Kerala, on Friday. ■ ANI

logged, which made rescue difficult. Incessant rain, uprooted trees and boulders on the narrow road from Rajamala to Pettimudy hampered access to the site of the landslip.

The Nayamakkad estate is located about 30 km from Munnar, adjacent to the Era-

vikulam National Park (ENP), and can be accessed through the national park. Since the park is closed and the bridge at Periyavaram was washed away in a flash flood, the area has been inaccessible.

Residents said they heard a loud noise with huge rocks and mud falling over one of

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## 15 killed as AI flight skids off Calicut airport runway

Plane was trying to land at table-top airport amid heavy rain

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOZHIKODE

At least 15 persons, including the pilot and co-pilot, were killed and 153 injured when a Vande Bharat mission flight from Dubai overshot the runway at Calicut International Airport, broke into two parts and fell into a deep gorge around 8 p.m. on Friday.

The injured passengers were shifted to hospitals in nearby Kondotty and various hospitals in Malappuram and Kozhikode districts.

The condition of many passengers at the Kozhikode Government Medical College Hospital and the MIMS Hospital is said to be critical.

Rescue operations were led by the disaster management team, police and fire and rescue personnel from both Kozhikode and Malappuram districts. More than a dozen ambulances from Kozhikode were sent to the airport.

An NDRF team also reached the site to assist with the rescue operation.

The Boeing aircraft, carrying 189 passengers and six crew, attempted to land



In pieces: The wreckage of the Air India aircraft that overshot the runway at the Calicut International Airport on Friday. ■ PTI

amidst heavy tailwinds and rain on the table-top runway. It failed to hold on the runway due to poor weather conditions, and skidded for more than 75 m.

The accident was similar to the fatal crash of another Air India Express aircraft that overshot the Mangalore International Airport 10 years ago.

Following the accident, the airport was closed and flights diverted. The Directorate General of Civil Aviation has ordered a detailed inquiry into the matter.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## India registers highest daily cases currently

+ Death tally crosses 42,500 with surges in Maharashtra, T.N. and Karnataka

THE HINDU DATA TEAM  
CHENNAI

Confirmed cases and deaths from COVID-19 crossed the 60,000 and 900 mark respectively for the second consecutive day in India, with 60,833 infections and 928 fatalities recorded on Friday. Maharashtra (10,483 cases and 300 deaths), Andhra Pradesh (10,171 and 89), Karnataka (6,670 and 101), Tamil Nadu (5,880 and 119) and Uttar Pradesh (4,404 and 63) contributed to the bulk of these.

The total cases have now gone up to 20,86,123 and the

death toll is now 42,577. 68.22% of those infected have recovered. Data from Tripura was unavailable at the time of going to press.

Cases in India are doubling every 24 days. The seven day rolling average for new cases – 55,105 – is a close second to that of the U.S. at 55,510. As many as 896 people have died on an average daily in the last week in India, a figure that is third to the U.S.'s 1,150 and Brazil's 1,033. Close to 2.27 crore samples have been tested.

TIE-UP FOR VACCINE ▶ PAGE 10

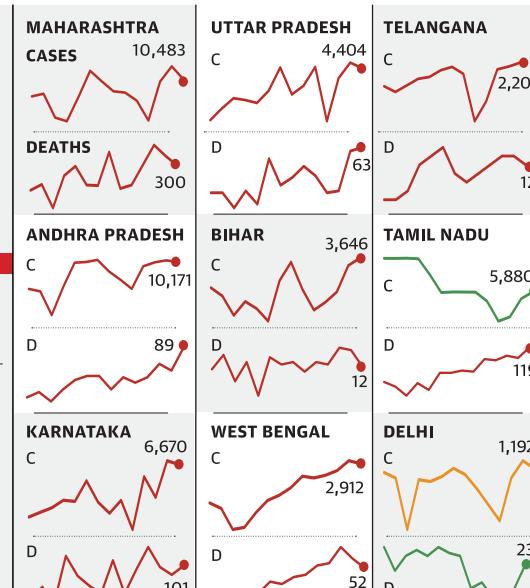
### Viral tracker

With 60,833 COVID-19 cases recorded on Friday, India's tally stood at 20,86,123. Between July 31 and August 1, the country registered 55,105 cases daily on average, the second-highest in the world after the U.S. (55,510)

#### NEW CASES AND DEATHS

**CASES** 60,833 **7 DAY-CHANGE** +10.1%  
**DEATHS** 928 **7 DAY-CHANGE** +8.3%

The graphs depict the new cases and deaths in the last 14 days in select States. The States are classified based on where cases/deaths are rising —; dropping —; or showing a mixed trend —.



Yogi Adityanath



No inauguration ritual in Islam: Trust

OMAR RASHID  
LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will be invited to inaugurate the public utility facilities coming up next to the mosque in Dhannipur village in Ayodhya. But there will be no ritual for laying the foundation stone of the religious structure itself, the Trust mandated to construct the mosque has said.

Mr. Adityanath would be invited as the head of Uttar Pradesh.

"I am hopeful he will come and even contribute [funds] towards it," Athar Hussain, secretary of the Indo-Islamic Cultural Foundation, told *The Hindu* on Friday.

However, there were no plans to invite Mr. Adityanath for the inauguration of the mosque because, as per Islamic tradition, there was no question of having such a ritual, said Mr. Hussain.

**Advice of scholars**  
There was no precedent for a ritual for laying the foundation stone of a mosque in any of the four Islamic schools of jurisprudence,

"Shabbir Sir helped me build a strong foundation not only in geography but also in GS and prelims. Thanks for being there, Sir."

- Gunjan Singh - AIR 16 (UPSC CSE 2019)

"We define a teacher as a friend, philosopher, and guide. He has been all three to me and more. I owe a lot of my success to him."

- Satyam AIR 169 (UPSC CSE 2019)

After getting associated with Shabbir Sir, I got the right direction for my preparation strategy. He has been much more than a teacher to me."

- Ajay Jain - AIR 12 (UPSC CSE 2019)

"Shabbir Sir helped me build a strong foundation not only in geography but also in GS and prelims. Thanks for being there, Sir."

- Gunjan Singh - AIR 16 (UPSC CSE 2019)

"We define a teacher as a friend, philosopher, and guide. He has been all three to me and more. I owe a lot of my success to him."

- Satyam AIR 169 (UPSC CSE 2019)

After getting associated with Shabbir Sir, I got the right direction for my preparation strategy. He has been much more than a teacher to me."

- Ajay Jain - AIR 12 (UPSC CSE 2019)

"Shabbir Sir helped me build a strong foundation not only in geography but also in GS and prelims. Thanks for being there, Sir."

- Gunjan Singh - AIR 16 (UPSC CSE 2019)

"We define a teacher as a friend, philosopher, and guide. He has been all three to me and more. I owe a lot of my success to him."

- Satyam AIR 169 (UPSC CSE 2019)

After getting associated with Shabbir Sir, I got the right direction for my preparation strategy. He has been much more than a teacher to me."

- Ajay Jain - AIR 12 (UPSC CSE 2019)

"Shabbir Sir helped me build a strong foundation not only in geography but also in GS and prelims. Thanks for being there, Sir."

- Gunjan Singh - AIR 16 (UPSC CSE 2019)

"We define a teacher as a friend, philosopher, and guide. He has been all three to me and more. I owe a lot of my success to him."

- Satyam AIR 169 (UPSC CSE 2019)

After getting associated with Shabbir Sir, I got the right direction for my preparation strategy. He has been much more than a teacher to me."

- Ajay Jain - AIR 12 (UPSC CSE 2019)

"Shabbir Sir helped me build a strong foundation not only in geography but also in GS and prelims. Thanks for being there, Sir."

- Gunjan Singh - AIR 16 (UPSC CSE 2019)

"We define a teacher as a friend, philosopher, and guide. He has been all three to me and more. I owe a lot of my success to him."

- Satyam AIR 169 (UPSC CSE 2019)

After getting associated with Shabbir Sir, I got the right direction for my preparation strategy. He has been much more than a teacher to me."

- Ajay Jain - AIR 12 (UPSC CSE 2019)

"Shabbir Sir helped me build a strong foundation not only in geography but also in GS and prelims. Thanks for being there, Sir."

- Gunjan Singh - AIR 16 (UPSC CSE 2019)

"We define a teacher as a friend, philosopher, and guide. He has been all three to me and more. I owe a lot of my success to him."

- Satyam AIR 169 (UPSC CSE 2019)

After getting associated with Shabbir Sir, I got the right direction for my preparation strategy. He has been much more than a teacher to me."

- Ajay Jain - AIR 12 (UPSC CSE 2019)

"Shabbir Sir helped me build a strong foundation not only in geography but also in GS and prelims. Thanks for being there, Sir."

- Gunjan Singh - AIR 16 (UPSC CSE 2019)

"We define a teacher as a friend, philosopher, and guide. He has been all three to me and more. I owe a lot of my success to him."

- Satyam AIR 169 (UPSC CSE 2019)

After getting associated with Shabbir Sir, I got the right direction for my preparation strategy. He has been much more than a teacher to me."

- Ajay Jain - AIR 12 (UPSC CSE 2019)

"Shabbir Sir helped me build a strong foundation not only in geography but also in GS and prelims. Thanks for being there, Sir."

- Gunjan Singh - AIR 16 (UPSC CSE 2019)

"We define a teacher as a friend, philosopher, and guide. He has been all three to me and more. I owe a lot of my success to him."

- Satyam AIR 169 (UPSC CSE 2019)

After getting associated with Shabbir Sir, I got the right direction for my preparation strategy. He has been much more than a teacher to me."

- Ajay Jain - AIR 12 (UPSC CSE 2019)

"Shabbir Sir helped me build a strong foundation not only in geography but also in GS and prelims. Thanks for being there, Sir."

- Gunjan Singh - AIR 16 (UPSC CSE 2019)

"We define a teacher as a friend, philosopher, and guide. He has been all three to me and more. I owe a lot of my success to him."

## IN BRIEF

## Former Congress leaders join BJP

NEW DELHI  
Former Minister of State, Uttarakhand and former national vice-president of Kisan Congress Ramkumar Walia, former national general-secretary of Kisan Congress Sanjay Kumar, and chairman at Digambar Jain Samaj (Delhi) P.D. Jain joined the BJP at a ceremony held at the party's State office here on Friday.

## Discom launches AC replacement scheme

NEW DELHI  
Electricity discom BSES launched a scheme extending energy efficient air conditioning replacement for its consumers, a company spokesperson said on Friday. Under this scheme, consumers will get to exchange their old ACs with new energy efficient five-star rated ACs at a discount of about 64%, the official said.

## Blending cultures, bridging gaps and breeding success

The Residential Coaching Academy at Jamia has been imparting life lessons to candidates apart from helping them crack the civil services code

JAIDEEP DEO BHANJ  
NEW DELHI



Nadia Beig (left) celebrating with her family in Kupwara, Kashmir. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

When Nadia Beig from Kupwara in Kashmir was felicitated at a function organised by the Indian Army for scoring 97% in her Class X board examination, the chief guest asked her what she wanted to be when she grew up. Without hesitating, she said she wanted to be an IAS officer. Only that she did not know what an IAS officer did.

"Ironically, I did not know back then what an IAS officer does and only found out when I left Kashmir and came to study at Jamia Millia Islamia on my brother's advice. But once I found out, I was determined to crack the examination," said Ms. Beig. Securing rank no 350, she is among the 30 students and six women candidates who cracked the civil

services examination from the Residential Coaching Academy (RCA) at Jamia Millia Islamia.

Speaking about her achievement, Ms. Beig said: "The RCA was the best thing that could happen to me as it was not possible to stay in Kashmir and prepare for the examination as even newspapers reach one day late."

interacting with them has shaped his personality. "I came from a town in Rajasthan's Chittorgarh district and understand the problems rural India face. But living with students from Manipur, Kerala and Kashmir, I understood the diversity of the problems and challenges the country faces and how issues are unique to a region," he said.

## Serious group

Mr. Ahmed added that the RCA is different from other coaching centres as it has an entrance examination and only those who are serious about the examination are admitted here. "At a private coaching institute, anybody who can pay the fee is in your class and not everybody has the required dedication. I graduated from IIT - Kanpur after studying de-

sign and was the only person from my class that did not sit for placements and gave up on a job. This is how serious I was about serving the nation," said Mr. Ahmed.

For Dhiman Chakma from Tripura, getting into the RCA that offers free coaching was important as he could not afford coaching classes and was doing self-study. "What I liked most about the place is its liberal atmosphere and that there are no restrictions... The environment is very conducive to studying," Mr. Chakma said. He added that there are a lot of people from weaker sections of society and staying together helps them relate to their common struggle.

He feels that there is a trend that applicants from larger cities mostly get higher ranks as an information gap exists bet-

ween people from small towns and larger cities. "The RCA helps bridge the gap between aspirants from bigger cities and someone like me who comes from Tripura by exposing us to a lot of information," said Mr. Chakma.

Ruchi Bindal, the RCA top-per who bagged the 39th rank, said that although she joined the institute only for her mains preparation and was not a resident, meeting people from such diverse socio-economic backgrounds gave her a new perspective on life. About her preparations, she said solving one paper a day gave her the required confidence to clear the examination.

But Ms. Beig realised that the euphoria and accolades that come with success in cracking one of the toughest

exams in the country has its pitfalls. She was shocked to find that fake Twitter accounts were created in her name, from which opinions linking her with groups she is not associated with were tweeted. Needless to say, she was heavily trolled.

"I have been feeling depressed over the past two days. Since the results have come out, some people are trying to destroy my image online. I am worried that it will impact my career in the future. I have created a Twitter handle and have asked for it to be verified. But there are people trying to play mischief," Ms. Beig complained. Back in Kupwara nearly a year, she said her home is peaceful and people have accepted the change and are looking forward to a new future.

## SKILL DEVELOPMENT &amp; INDUSTRIAL TRAINING

DEPARTMENT, HARYANA  
Kaushal Bhawan, IP-2, Sector-3, Panchkula  
Email ID spicell.haryana@gmail.com Ph.: 0172-5229202, 9813647741

## Extension of Last date for Call for application from industry Clusters to implement the Industry Apprenticeship initiative (IAI)

Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MoSDE), Govt. of India through Directorate General of Training (DGT) has announced the selection of Industry Clusters for Industry Apprenticeship Initiative (IAI) under the second phase of Skills Strengthening for Industrial Value Enhancement (STRIVE) a project jointly funded by Govt. of India and World Bank. It is an initiative to empower and capacitate MSEs to participate in formal apprenticeship system through a cluster approach.

Applications are hereby invited form all the eligible and Interested Industry Cluster (IC) / Industry Association (IA) registered as Society/ Trust / Section 8 Company (having legal capacity to sign contracts on behalf of its members) for execution of the project during the project period with a maximum funding of Rs. One Crore per IC from Govt. of India. The applications are to be submitted on the prescribed format which can be downloaded from the website www.dgt.gov.in and www.itiharyana.gov.in. Application forms with all prescribed attachments is required to be mailed by applicant industry clusters to email id:- strivedusters@mail.com on or before last date. Applications must be submitted through this mail only with subject clearly mentioning as "IC application Haryana". Once application is emailed, no further changes will be permitted. Applicants failing in submitting applications with subject line and all prescribed attachments will not be considered for evaluation by the State Cluster Evaluation Committee. Queries related to application submission will be addressed by Sh. Vishal Sodhi, Assistant Director (Projects), through email:- spicell.haryana@gmail.com and on contact no. 98163-47741.

The eligibility criteria and application formats can be downloaded from https://dgt.gov.in/downloadguidelines-strive and video Tutorial for how to prepare application form with fill specimen application is also available at website i.e. https://dgt.gov.in/Strive. Last date of sending applications through email has been extended upto 31st August, 2020.

PRDH-82142

Director General

## Special CP's order to team probing riot cases caused no prejudice: HC

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH  
NEW DELHI

all the Investigating Officers and teams that are probing the cases related to the northeast Delhi riots to exercise caution while making arrests.

Justice Suresh Kumar Kait, however, observed that in future, "in issuing any letter/order in such type of situation, the officer concerned shall

take due care". The court also suggested the investigating officers in the riots cases "not to be influenced" by any instructions issued by senior officers which is not recognised under the law.

The court made the remarks while hearing a joint petition.

GOVERNMENT OF HARYANA TENDER NOTICE					
Sr. No.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP./AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE	CLOSING DATE (TIME)	AMOUNT / END (APPROX.) IN RUPEES
1	GMDA, GURUGRAM	OPERATION AND MAINTENANCE OF WATER SUPPLY, GURUGRAM "DESILTING OF SSS TANK NO. 1 (INCLUDING EXCAVATION / REMOVAL OF SLUSH AND DISPOSED OF WITHIN 2 KM FROM WTP BASAL, AND ALL OTHER WORKS CONTINGENT THERETO," (400 RECALL) + 1 OTHER WORK	06.08.2020	26.08.2020	286.16 LACS
2	GMDA, GURUGRAM	REFLECTORLESS MOTORIZED ELECTRONIC TOTAL STATION (ETS) RECALLED	05.08.2020	24.08.2020	END 24100/-
3	GMDA, GURUGRAM	CONSTRUCTION OF KABADDI PRACTICE HALISHED OF SIZE 20 X 20 MTRS IN TAU DEV LAL STADIUM, SECTOR 38, GURUGRAM	07.08.2020	21.08.2020	17.71 LACS

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION KINDLY VISIT : [www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in](http://www.haryanaeprocurement.gov.in) or [www.etenders.hry.nic.in](http://www.etenders.hry.nic.in)

Samvad- 82146

## 12-year-old who was sexually assaulted in critical condition

Victim's platelet count low, will need another surgery

SAURABH TRIVEDI  
NEW DELHI

A 12-year-old girl, who was sexually assaulted and has suffered severe head injuries, will need another surgery and her condition continues to remain critical, sources at the AIIMS hospital here said.

The source said her platelet count is low and she is being treated at the neurosurgery ICU of the hospital.

On Thursday, the Delhi Police arrested the accused Krishan. He told the police that he had entered the girl's house on Tuesday with the intention of theft.

The gate of the house was partially open and he had entered the premises. He took a suitcase and was leaving the house when the girl saw him and raised an alarm. The accused took a sewing machine and threw it on the girl. The girl tried to fight back, but the accused stabbed her with a scissor several times and fled from the spot, a senior police officer said.

Later, he got bail in the case.

**₹2 lakh compensation**  
Delhi Commission for Women chairperson Swati Malwal said that following an application moved by the Delhi State Legal Services Authority, a lower court on Friday granted a compensation of ₹2 lakh to the victim's family.

**BJP leader meets kin**  
BJP State president Adesh Gupta met the family members of the victim. After seeking information about her condition from the Medical Superintendent, Mr. Gupta termed the incident a "shame to mankind".

(With inputs from Shinjini Ghosh and Jatin Anand)

## HC lays down new guidelines for DU open book exams

Duration extended to 3 hours

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH  
NEW DELHI

The High Court took into account the technical difficulties faced by DU's final-year students and laid down fresh guidelines on Friday, to be followed by the varsity to conduct its online Open Book Exam (OBE). The examinations have been scheduled to begin on August 10.

Justice Prathiba M. Singh directed DU to make the question papers available to all students via the university portal and email. The court also ordered that students should be given three hours to complete the papers instead of the two hours that was decided by DU earlier. Additionally, students would be given one more hour to scan the answer sheets and upload them.

"The maximum marks for the papers and the time given will be the same as that of the physical exam..." Justice Singh said. Students under Persons With Disabilities (PWD) category will be given one additional hour.

The DUTA president, Rajib Ray, expressed disappointment over the High Court's decision to allow the conduct of open book exams on Friday. "Any form of online or blended exam is discriminatory, unjust and lacks sanity," Mr. Ray said.

The court said that students would also have the option of scanning the answer sheets page-by-page or question-wise before uploading them on the DU portal within the 7MB limit. Students can also convert their answer sheets into PDF files either question-wise or in entirety and e-mail the same to the central email address at obescript@exam.du.ac.in or to the respective college or department email. All students will receive an acknowledgement receipt once their answer sheets have been uploaded.

## Non-COVID cremations at Punjabi Bagh facility

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Punjabi Bagh crematorium, which was earlier reserved for COVID-19 casualties, will once again allow non-COVID cremations, a senior South Delhi Municipal Corporation official said on Friday.

The Hindu had earlier reported that the NGO, which runs the facility, had appealed to the civic body to allow them to cremate non-COVID bodies as the number of COVID cremations had reduced.

## HPPWD TENDER

Sealed item rate tender on the prescribed form, terms and conditions mentioned in form-6&8 are hereby invited for the following works by the Executive Engineer, Electrical Division No.II,HPPWD Shimla-171 003 from the firms/contractors enlisted with PWD (Electrical) , so as to reach in the office of the XEN (1)Tender documents consisting of plans classes of work to be done and set of terms and conditions of contract to be complied with by the contractor/firms whose tender may be accepted and other necessary documents can be seen in the office of the XEN between hours of 11.00 AM to 4.00 PM except on Sundays and public holidays. (2) The firm /contractor who are not registered under H. P. General Sale tax Act, 1968 and have not cleared all the dues on account of sale tax shall not be issued the tender documents (3) The contractor who has no registration certificate with Excise and taxation department of HP will not be issued the tender documents (4) Tenders placed in sealed envelope with name of work and due date written on the envelope will be received by the XEN and will be opened by him or his authorized representative in his office in the presence of contractors, present if any. (5) The earnest money in the shape of NSC/Time deposit account/saving account in any of the post offices of HP duly pledged in favour of XEN must accompany with the tender in the separate envelope. The tenders without earnest money will summarily be rejected. (6) In case of holiday, the tenders shall be sold/received and opened on the next working day.(7) Tenders of contractors who quote two or more than two rates for any item of work shall be rejected. (8) The competent authority on behalf of Governor of H. P reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders received without assigning any reason. (9) Tender forms shall be sold to only those contractors who deposit earnest money in any of the prescribed modes simultaneously at the time of sale of tender documents.

(i) Last date of receipt of application: 27.08.2019 Up to 1.00 P.M  
(ii) Date of sale of tenders:- 27.08.2020 Up to 2 PM to 5.00 PM  
(iii) Last date of receipt of bids:- 29.08.2020 Up to 10.30 A.M  
(iv) Date of bid opening:- 29.08.2020 AT 11.30 A.M

**Work No. (1)** AMC of 2Nos.passenger cum bed elevator of Kone Make installed in block-A in hospital at IGMC Shimla for the year 2020-2021. (w.e.f. 01.08.2020 to 31.07.2021) Estimated cost Rs.3,00,000/-Earnest money Rs.6000/-Time: 1 year. Cost of form Rs. 350/NR

**Work No.(2)** Providing display system in new OPD block building at IGMC Shimla (level 2188 to 2194)Estimated cost Rs.4,95,500/- Earnest money Rs.10,000/-Time: 6 months. Cost of form Rs. 350/-NR

**Work No.(3)** Providing Wi-fi system in new OPD block building at IGMC Shimla(level 2188 to 2194) Estimated cost Rs.4,85,850/-Earnest money Rs.10,000/-time: 6 months.Cost of form Rs.350/NR

**Work No.(4)** Providing ground/street light in the campus of Govt.polytechnic college at Rohru Distt.Shimla.Estimtated cost Rs.2,82,000/-Earnest money Rs.5700/-Time:6 months.Cost of form Rs.350/NR

**Work No.(5)** Providing special repair in Degree college at Sanjalui,(Replacement of burnt electric panel FTL fitting and damaged street light)Estimated cost Rs.3,35,474/-Earnest money Rs.6800/-Time:6 months. Cost of form Rs. 350/-NR

**Work No.(6)** Replacement of old/damaged /outdated fittings and accessories with energy efficient LED fitting in HPPWFD rest house at Pooh Distt.Kinnar. Estimated cost Rs.4,00,279/- Earnest money Rs.8100/-Time:6 months. Cost of form Rs.350/-NR

**Work No.(7)** Providing street lighting in newly building of PHC level-II at Devgarh Tehsil Kotkhat Distt.shimla. Estimated cost Rs.1,93,300/-Earnest money Rs.3900/-Time: 6 months. Cost of form Rs.350/NR

**Work (8)** Providing kitchen hood exhaust system in mental health research and rehabilitation centre at Shimla. Estimated cost Rs.2,17,181/- Earnest money Rs.400/-Time: 6 months. Cost of form Rs.350/NR

**Work No.(9)** AMC of 1No.passenger cum bed elevators installed in Govt. Dental college block-B Bldg. at Shimla for the year 2020-2021(w. e. f. 25.09.2020 to 24.09.2021)Estimated cost Rs. 1,56,420/-Earnest money Rs. 3200/-Time:1 year. Cost of form Rs. 350/NR.

Note: Work appearing at Sr. No.1,2,3&9 will be issued to only those contractors/firms who have already executed similar nature of work, proof of which should be attached with the application.

Executive Engineer,  
Elect. Division No. II  
HPPWD Shimla-2



## WRONG PARKING WILL BE FINED

## PARK ONLY AT AN AUTHORISED OR MULTI-LEVEL PARKING

- Improper parking causes congestion and traffic blockage
- It could lead to accidents too
- Improper parking is punishable under Section 122/177 of MVA

## Amended Motor Vehicle Act 2019

Penalties compounded by Delhi Traffic Police


Timings  
DELHI

SATURDAY, AUG. 08
RISE 05:47 SET 19:07
RISE 22:08 SET 09:45
SUNDAY, AUG. 09
RISE 05:48 SET 19:06
RISE 22:37 SET 10:36
MONDAY, AUG. 10
RISE 05:48 SET 19:05
RISE 23:08 SET 11:29

Delhi Weather max min  
Delhi City 36 28  
Safdarjung 36 28  
Palam 37 28

Delhi Palam Today  
36°C Very warm and humid day with light wind. Light rain and thunderstorm likely at some places.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow  
35°C Few spells of rain and thundershower with gusty winds may affect the area.

© Copyright Skymet Weather 2019  
All rights reserved.

THE HINDU  
DISCLAIMER: Readers are requested to verify and make appropriate enquiries to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any advertisement or notice appearing to any published in this newspaper. THG PUBLISHING PVT LTD, the Publisher & Owner of this newspaper, does not vouch for the truth, accuracy, completeness or otherwise of any advertiser or for any of the advertiser's products and/or services. In event can the Owner, Publisher, Printer, Editor, Director, Employees or the staff of the said company be held responsible/liable in any manner whatsoever for any claims and damages for advertisements in this newspaper.

IN BRIEF

DMRC told to seek help from govt. to repay loan

NEW DELHI  
The Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs has asked the DMRC to approach the Delhi government for financial assistance in repaying the loan it had taken for various projects from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). DMRC spokesperson Anuj Dayal said that the communication is being processed and the Delhi government has not been approached yet. While the DMRC has so far got a loan of ₹35,198 crore from JICA, for financial year 2020-21, it is required to pay ₹1,242 crore, including interest.



Arvind Kejriwal addresses an online media briefing in New Delhi on Friday. ■ TWITTER

# Govt. launches Electric Vehicle Policy to boost economy, reduce pollution

Kejriwal says it will make Delhi a world leader in the field of electric vehicles

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government on Friday launched its ambitious Electric Vehicle Policy, which aims to boost the city's economy, reduce pollution levels and generate employment in the transport sector. It also includes various incentives for the promotion of the purchase of electric vehicles in the city.

While announcing the launch of the policy at a digital briefing here on Friday, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said that the policy would make Delhi "a world leader" in the field of electric vehicles and that it was one of the most progressive EV policies in the world.

"After working hard in the last two-three years and holding discussions with consumers and experts, we have prepared the electric vehicle policy in Delhi. The policy has been notified today in the morning," he announced.

"China is considered in the first position when discussions on electric vehicles

duction" as evidenced by clear skies and clean breezes.

CM Arvind Kejriwal said, "We have held several discussions on the policy in the last 2.5 years. We held consultations, called experts from across the country, studied the electric vehicle policies of nations all over the globe and took all the good points for the creation of our policy," he said.

"But there may be some lags in the policy as nothing is perfect. This policy shows the intent of the Delhi government; that we want to go in a better direction. Right now, this policy is for three years, after which it will be reviewed. If required, we will reframe and change this policy from time to time," he also said.

Mr. Kejriwal said that there were two objectives behind launching the EV Policy: as another step to kick-start the city's economy and to combat pollution.

In the last five years, he said, pollution levels in Delhi had reduced by 25%, but these need to be reduced further. During the pandemic, PM10 and PM2.5 levels had witnessed "a drastic re-

duction" as evidenced by clear skies and clean breezes.

Delhi government would also provide a subsidy of up to ₹30,000 on the purchase of two-wheelers, autorickshaws, e-rickshaws, freight vehicles, each, and of ₹1.5 lakh on cars.

These, he said, would be in addition to the incentives under the Central government's 'FAME India' Phase 2.

The Delhi government would also provide scrapping incentives in a first across the country, he said.

The government would also offer low interest rates for the purchase of electric commercial vehicles, waive off registration fees and road tax on newly registered electric vehicles and aim to create a network of charging stations in the city.

## 200 charging stations

"Our target is to create 200 charging stations in the next one year in Delhi. Our aim is to create one charging station every 3 km. We hope that at least 5 lakh electric vehicles in Delhi will be registered in the next five years," he also said.

## Govt. job portal has more jobs than applicants: Rai

9 lakh out of 22 lakh jobs still available while no. of applicants stands at 8.64 lakh

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The number of applicants on the Delhi government's 'Rozgar Bazaar' job portal is lower than the number of vacancies still available on it, Labour and Employment Minister Gopal Rai said here on Friday.

Currently, he said, more than 9 lakh jobs were availa-

ble while the number of applicants was 8.64 lakh on the portal on which as many as 22 lakh jobs were posted by different employers. Of these, he said, 3.5 lakh were cancelled due to duplication, while some were found fake.

"We have formed a task force to analyse job posts. We noticed that there are du-

plications and fake job posts. After a thorough study, we have cancelled nearly 3.5 lakh such posts. Till today, nearly 10 lakh vacancies have been closed by employers, which mean they have received the required number of people," he said.

"Nearly 12.57 lakh people had their first-time interac-

tion regarding job through this portal. I want to appeal to the youth to register here. We are also aware that many workers will not have access to the internet. I will request the youth to help such people... From next week, the Delhi government will launch a poster campaign to reach out to more people," he added.

# Vajiram & Ravi

## Institute for Civil Services Examination

We are happy & proud to announce that over 350+ students have been selected in the CSE 2019 and 5 candidates in the top 10 (1, 4, 6, 8 & 9) ranks and 17 candidates in the top 30 and 27 candidates in the top 50.



Pradeep Singh  
AIR 01



Himanshu Jain  
AIR 04



Vishakha Yadav  
AIR 06



Abhishek Saraf  
AIR 08



Ravi Jain  
AIR 09



Nupur Goel  
AIR 11



Raunak Agarwal  
AIR 13



Anmol Jain  
AIR 14



Gunjan Singh  
AIR 16



Swati Sharma  
AIR 17



Lavish Ordia  
AIR 18



Shrestha Anupam  
AIR 19



Nidhi Bansal  
AIR 23



Abhishek Jain  
AIR 24



Pradeep Singh  
AIR 26



Chandra Jyoti Singh  
AIR 28



Pari Bishnoi  
AIR 30

CLASSES FOR NEXT YEAR'S CSE WILL COMMENCE AS SOON AS GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS PERMIT IT.

## VAJIRAM AND RAVI IAS STUDY CENTRE LLP

Delhi Address: 9-B, Bada Bazar Marg, Old Rajinder Nagar, New Delhi-110060; Phone: 011-4100 7400, 4100 7500  
Chennai Address: No. 43, 2nd Floor, Haddows Road, Nungambakkam, Chennai - 600006; Phone: 044-43302121

[www.vajiramandravi.com](http://www.vajiramandravi.com)

City records 1,193 fresh cases; COVID-19 tally reaches 1,42,723

Delhi currently has 10,409 active cases, 477 containment zones

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Virus spread

COVID-19

Total number of COVID-19 cases

1,42,723

Delhi

Total deaths

4,082

New cases in the past 24 hours

1,193

Eid and Raksha Bandhan, 5,612 RT-PCR tests and 17,773 rapid antigen tests were conducted. The total number of tests conducted in Delhi stands at 11,43,703.

The bulletin added that there are currently 477 containment zones in the city and 5,367 patients are in home isolation. Out of 13,571 beds available for COVID-19 patients, 10,502 are vacant.

the city.

After a significant reduction in the number of test during the weekend on ac-

## Parents raise concern over Gurugram schools' queries during admission

Guardians term questions 'intrusive', approach 'classist'

ASHOK KUMAR  
GURUGRAM

leged "classist" approach of the educational institutes.

One of the parents, initiating the discussion on the platform, pointed out how Kunskapskolan school during the registration for admission of her child sought to know details about the genetic and family background; pregnancy; identification data, including passport details, and weird "beauty-contest type" questions. She said the questions at the time of the registration.

A group of parents on a social media platform, discussing the admission process in city's different schools recently, have expressed serious concerns over the nature of queries. The queries being made during registration were largely seen as "intrusive" and showed the al-

amounted to "supporting the practice".

Another woman said Shiv Nadar school went to the extent of asking the educational qualification of grandparents?

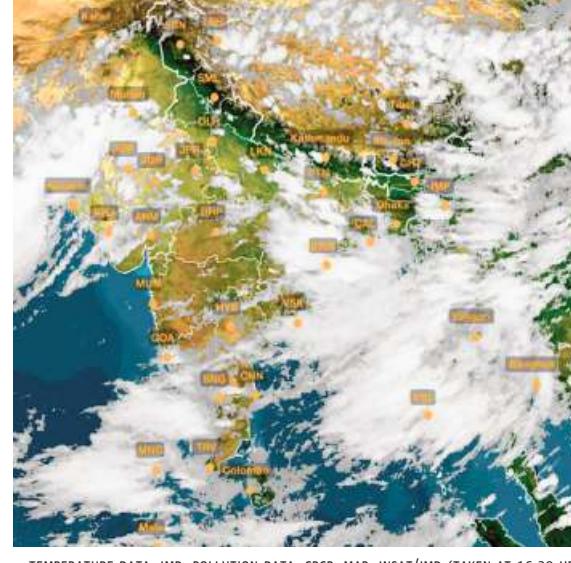
Shiv Nadar, in an official statement, said that it was "to help us leverage their experience in our teaching/learning process". An official from Kunskapskolan school said theirs was an "inclusive" school catering to students with diverse neuro needs and details about birth history, APGAR scores and other information helped the professionals at school acknowledge the specific needs of the child for effective support.

Tripti Singh, administrator, 'Gurgaon Parents for Better Education', a Facebook forum, said many of these queries were not in "good taste" and amounted to violation of privacy.



**WEATHER WATCH**

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

**Forecast for Saturday:** Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at a few/ isolated places over Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Delhi, sub-Himalayan West Bengal, Sikkim, Assam, Meghalaya, Bihar, Odisha, central Maharashtra, Konkan & Goa, coastal Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Kerala and Andaman & Nicobar Islands

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	3.2	36.3	27.0	Kozhikode	17.7	27.2	26.0
Ahmedabad	3.1	32.2	26.8	Kurnool	—	33.1	23.1
Aizawl	—	25.8	18.9	Lucknow	0.4	35.4	27.2
Allahabad	15.8	35.4	26.8	Madurai	0.3	38.6	25.5
Bengaluru	1.3	27.2	21.4	Mangaluru	2.3	29.9	25.2
Bhopal	0.6	29.4	24.6	Mumbai	301.8	—	24.8
Bhubaneswar	25	34.2	26.2	Mysuru	12	28.0	19.8
Chandigarh	2.2	38.2	28.6	New Delhi	—	35.7	27.6
Chennai	—	36.0	27.6	Patna	7.6	34.2	26.7
Coimbatore	4	30.8	22.8	Port Blair	—	28.6	25.3
Dehradoon	9.3	32.8	26.0	Puducherry	—	37.0	26.8
Gangtok	7.4	22.2	19.0	Pune	8.3	28.4	22.7
Goa	11.7	30.8	25.3	Raipur	—	32.8	25.0
Guwahati	—	36.8	27.0	Ranchi	13.2	31.0	23.4
Hubballi	—	25.0	22.0	Shillong	0.1	25.6	20.0
Hyderabad	—	30.8	23.2	Shimla	—	27.2	22.3
Imphal	1.2	32.7	22.6	Srinagar	—	35.4	20.9
Jaipur	1.8	32.1	25.6	Thiruvananthapuram	49.4	—	28.2
Kochi	13.8	26.2	24.4	Tiruchi	—	36.5	26.4
Kohima	0.8	24.2	19.2	Vijayawada	—	36.6	28.0
Kolkata	74.2	31.3	26.4	Visakhapatnam	—	30.7	28.8

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

**Pollutants in the air you are breathing**

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>x</sub>	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	17	38	.40	.43	.64	■■■■■
Bengaluru	—	18	.23	.31	.77	■■■■■
Chennai	.4	13	.10	.71	—	■■■■■
Delhi	9	49	.73	.64	.42	■■■■■
Hyderabad	.6	46	.18	.20	—	■■■■■
Kolkata	.9	15	.15	.44	.63	■■■■■
Lucknow	.3	21	.41	.57	.76	■■■■■
Mumbai	.59	15	.15	.18	.29	■■■■■
Pune	.16	.6	.47	.14	.15	■■■■■
Visakhapatnam	13	.34	.46	.88	—	■■■■■

**Yesterday**

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Nanded, Gulbarga recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 258 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Shillong, Meghalaya recorded a healthy AQI score of 9

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

**SO<sub>2</sub>:** Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

**NO<sub>x</sub>:** Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

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

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

# 5,561 relocated in Kolhapur; some relief as showers ease

Panchganga continues to flow above danger mark; 95 barrages, dams submerged

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE  
PUNE

Despite the intensity of showers over Kolhapur district in western Maharashtra lessening on Friday, the district administration evacuated more than 5,000 people from 23 villages as the Panchganga river continued to flow above the danger level.

"A total 5,561 people, along with 1,132 animals from low-lying areas, have been shifted to safer zones. Most of those evacuated are from Karvir and Gaganbawda tehsils, both of which have received heavy rain throughout the week," Kolhapur Collector Daulat Desai said.

The Panchganga flows at 44.9 feet, above its danger mark of 43 feet. As many as 95 barrages and dams are still submerged by the rising river water level.

"The Panchganga has risen by 2.5 feet owing to rain in the last 24 hours. So, while the intensity of the showers was noticeably less on Friday, several parts of the district are still half-submerged and the threat of a flood persists," an official said.

Gaganbawda tehsil has received 148 mm rainfall over the past 24 hours – markedly lesser than the 243 mm rain the tehsil had received between Wednesday and Thursday. Likewise, Radhanagar and the township of Ajara received comparatively less rain, recording 76.83 mm and 104.67 mm, respectively, as opposed to the 145 mm rain that the two areas had been experiencing for the past week.

Despite this relief, the landscape at several villages across the district was reminiscent of the 2019 deluge



**Duty call:** Maharashtra State Electricity Board officials repairing a power line in Bujawade village in Chandgad taluk as rising water level of the Panchganga disrupted electricity in some villages. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

that devastated Kolhapur and Sangli districts.

While the waters of the Panchganga spilled over bridges, arterial roads and

byways, several sugarcane fields, small temples and establishments were half-submerged.

At some places, State elec-

tricity board officials were seen repairing power lines after the rain disrupted power supply in a number of villages. Water levels rose particularly at several points in Shirol taluk, most notably at Nrusinhawadi (which has a famous temple dedicated to Lord Dattatreya), Arjunwad and Shirdhon village, among other places.

A team of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) jawans is already stationed at Shirol taluk. "Currently, four NDRF teams are present in the district. If the need arises, we will ask for two more teams. I again urge people not to be complacent and venture out just because the rain has given a temporary break," Mr. Desai said.

## NMIA project: Dungi flooded yet again

RAINA ASSAINAR  
NAVI MUMBAI

Dungi village that was affected by the Navi Mumbai International Airport (NMIA) project has been flooded yet again due to the diversion of the Ulwe river. The diversion, which was part of the pre-development works for the NMIA project, was finished in June 2019, following which Dungi was flooded for the first time last year.

### Rehabilitation

"After protests and follow-ups, the City and Industrial Development Corporation (CIDCO) agreed to rehabilitate us. Till the time the process got over, we were asked to shift to rental places and were promised rental money. But all that we got last year was rental money for

four months. Later, we came back to our village," Adesh Naik, a Dungi villager, said.

This year, villagers again raised their voice for rehabilitation. The CIDCO, through a videoconference in June, tried to allay villagers' fear of flooding during monsoon. In order to shift them to safety, the CIDCO asked them to submit the required documents and get the land allotted as per the package, following which they would be eligible to receive 11 months' rent and move to another house.

### Many ineligible

But with many villagers found to be not eligible for the package as per the criteria set by the CIDCO, the villagers refused to move out. "The villagers demanded

that either they all move out or none to which the CIDCO has complied. We had a meeting on Thursday and it was communicated to them that they should move out to a rented place and rent amount for four months would be provided to them. The villagers have not yet replied," Amit Sanap, Panvel tehsildar, said.

Mr. Naik said no one rents out a space for just four months. "How can we keep moving out every year for four months and then come back to our village. The CIDCO should give us rental money for 18 months as it was promised earlier and also consider making every villager eligible for the package. We are daily wagers and our lives are affected by the river diversion," he said.

## Sushant case plea: will wait for SC orders, says HC

Apex court will hear the matter on August 18



Sushant Singh Rajput

passed on August 5 by the Supreme Court, it appears that a proceeding connected with the unnatural death of the actor, perusal of such order, reveals that a status report has been called from the State of Maharashtra in regard to the stage of investigation by the Mumbai Police."

Anil Singh, additional solicitor general representing the Union of India, said on acceptance of the request of Rajput's father the CBI has already registered an FIR, inter alia, under Section 306 (abetment to suicide) of the Indian Penal Code.

The court said the Supreme Court will hear the matter on August 18, and adjourned the hearing to August 21.

"People feel that evidences are being destroyed in this matter.

Therefore to show that the State government is not involved in hiding anything, two police officers must be suspended and Mr. Singh should be sent on a forced leave till the probe comes to a certain stage," he said in his letter to Mr. Thackeray.

Mr. Bhatkhalkar, who represents Kandivali Assembly constituency, said if the CM failed to take any decision on the three police personnel, he must take a note that since Mr. Singh is from the Indian Police Service, he would approach the Union Home Minister.

Reacting strongly, Maharashtra Congress leader Sachin Sawant said the politics played by BJP leaders for the sake of the Bihar polls just shows that the party is anti-Maharashtra. "The BJP is a blot on the State's political culture," he said.

## Air India to resume service

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) MLA Atul Bhatkhalkar on Friday warned Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray that he would approach Union Home Minister Amit Shah if Mr. Thackeray failed to send Mumbai Police Commissioner Paramvir Singh on a forced leave, alleging that he was guilty of 'dereliction of duty' in Sushant Singh Rajput case.'

Claiming that Mr. Singh had failed in his duty as the Mumbai Police did not file an FIR even 50 days after the death of Rajput and sought information about his manager Disha Salian's suicide after 50 days, Mr. Bhatkhalkar said investigating officers and Mr. Singh had been negligent.

Reacting strongly, Maharashtra Congress leader Sachin Sawant said the politics played by BJP leaders for the sake of the Bihar polls just shows that the party is anti-Maharashtra. "The BJP is a blot on the State's political culture," he said.

erate three days a week.

Flight AI 669 to be operated with an AI319 aircraft on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays will depart from Mumbai at 12 p.m. and reach Bhubaneswar at 2.25 p.m. The return flight AI 670 will leave Bhubaneswar at 3.25 p.m. and arrive at Mumbai at 5.35 p.m. on the same days.

**Stay ahead with the No.1 English daily in Kerala.**

*The Hindu is read by a majority of the state's consumers wielding high spending potential. As Malayalees gear up for Onam, join hands with us to ensure that your brands have a 22% higher reach among 18-45-year-old readers.*

**THE HINDU**

*Write to onam@thehindu.co.in to get the best advertising deals for your brand.*

## Project proposals must include drone survey report, says State wildlife board

Board to declare Sonneratia alba as State mangrove tree

ALOK DESHPANDE  
MUMBAI

The Maharashtra government on Friday made drone survey and environmental impact assessment reports mandatory for projects seeking the approval of the State Board for Wildlife (SBWL).

Chairing the SBWL's 15th meeting, the first in the past two years, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said his government does not limit development to just new constructions. "The government is committed to forests, animals and conservation. Any project brought before the



Uddhav Thackeray

board must have the drone survey report. Only projects with detailed photographs and reports will



## Alert amid uncertainty

The RBI holds interest rates citing concerns about inflation outlook

The RBI has prudently decided to keep its powder dry for now, citing the "extreme uncertainty" that characterises the current outlook for inflation and economic activity. Observing that the "unprecedented shock" from the pandemic has left the economy stressed, the RBI said that while the monetary policy committee recognised the primacy of supporting a recovery, it was necessarily mindful of its inflation targeting mandate. The picture on prices is clouded by many uncertainties. While the provisional June CPI inflation reading of 6.1% had edged over the upper bound of the mandated medium-term goal of 4% plus/minus 2%, a spike in food prices as well as cost push pressures from higher transport fuel and raw material prices were combining to obscure the inflation outlook. Vowing to ensure that the policy stance remains 'accommodative' for as long as needed to revive growth, Governor Shaktikanta Das emphasised that the RBI was ready to act on rates once a durable reduction in inflation was sighted. For now, however, the projections remain less than encouraging. The latest round of households' expectations of price gains in an RBI survey shows that consumers expect inflation to remain elevated in the near term – a finding that the RBI's assessment broadly backs.

The prognosis on the economy is also worrisome. While the RBI expects the rural economy to turn in a robust recovery on the back of a strong showing by agriculture, a deterioration in consumer sentiment in the central bank's July survey undermines the prospects for a more broadbased revival in domestic demand. Additionally, external demand faces headwinds from a world economy in recession and as global trade shrinks. Forecasting a contraction in real GDP in the current fiscal year, the RBI rather optimistically posits that an early containment of the pandemic may impart an upside surprise to its outlook. Interestingly, its analysis of the macro-economic environment skirts the potential challenges that heightened tensions with China, one of India's largest trading partners and, in recent years, a source of inbound foreign capital, could pose to the economy. The central bank has therefore opted to focus its energies on trying to untangle the kinks hindering the flow of credit amid more than adequate liquidity, wary lenders and severely stressed borrowers. The restructuring, resolution and enhanced gold loan proposals mooted by the RBI acknowledge the sheer scale of the pandemic's devastation on the finances of firms and households. The onus now is on Governor Das to ensure that the stability of the financial sector is safeguarded even as loan terms are reset to protect otherwise viable businesses. Any harm to financial stability risks undermining the economy as a whole.

## Consolidating control

Opposition disarray helps the Rajapaksa tighten their hold on power in Sri Lanka

The Rajapaksa have consolidated their hold on power, garnering a near two-thirds majority in Sri Lanka's Parliament. The victory was expected, but it is not often, under the proportional representation system, that a party reaches that milestone. The SLPP, founded four years ago by former President Mahinda Rajapaksa, has won 145 seats, and with the help of minority allies, will reach the coveted 150 mark in a House of 225. The party may now have the numbers to amend the Constitution and undo the two-term limit and other curbs on presidential powers imposed by the 19th Amendment passed by a predecessor regime. The reasons behind this landslide are clear. Majoritarian nationalism, the party's trump card, was boosted by the unprecedented disarray in the Opposition ranks. The people, yearning for development and debt relief, appear not to have forgotten the failings of the four-year rule of Maitripala Sirisena and Ranil Wickremesinghe – rivals who had come together in 2015 on a promise of good governance to defeat Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa. That regime was marked by incessant squabbling, allegations of corruption and a marked failure to boost the weakening economy. Its crowning failure was the inability to act on advance intelligence about the Easter bombings that left more than 250 dead. The UNP suffered a massive split, as a large section broke away under the leadership of Sajith Premadasa, leaving its leader and former PM Wickremesinghe waging a weak and, ultimately, losing battle. He failed to retain his own seat, and his party was able to win just a solitary seat.

As a result, Sri Lanka witnesses a peculiar legislature in which its two major post-Independence parties, the UNP and the SLFP have next to no presence. The lone SLFP candidate to win was a Tamil candidate in Jaffna. That Sri Lanka, armed with an impressive public health infrastructure and backed by a well-enforced lockdown, contained the coronavirus spread, was another point in favour of President Gotabaya. Former President Sirisena managed to retain his seat, if not his relevance, by fighting on an SLPP ticket. The Tamil minority appears to have imparted some realism into its otherwise fiercely nationalistic voting pattern. It has not wholly backed the TNA, its main representative for years, but instead voted for alternative parties, in what is a clear setback to the TNA. The results may reflect growing backing for a development plan rather than harping on an elusive political solution to their national question. Now that it has even greater control, the ruling SLPP should work towards fulfilling the people's economic and developmental aspirations instead of seeking to undo the gains from the 19th Amendment. It must also address concerns about creeping militarisation and guard against the return to an era of democratic deficit that the country sought to overcome in 2015.

## Interpreting the Sri Lankan mandate

The SLPP struck a chord projecting political stability and capitalising on failures of the previous coalition government



JAYADEVA UYANGODA

**T**he results of Sri Lanka's parliamentary election held on Wednesday show a seismic shift in the country's electoral map as well as the balance of political power.

The near two-thirds parliamentary majority, easily achieved by the Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP – Sri Lanka People's Front) by reducing all Opposition parties into insignificance, has only one parallel from the past – the electoral victory with a 5/6th parliamentary majority in July 1977 scored by the United National Party (UNP), then led by J.R. Jayewardene.

### Key trends

The SLPP has won 145 seats in the 225-member Parliament while the United National Party (UNP), the former ruling party, has suffered the most humiliating of defeats, retaining just one parliamentary seat. The Samagi Jana Balavagaya, (SJB–United People's Movement), a breakaway part from the UNP and formed only a few months ago, has come in second with 54 seats, thanks to the system of Proportional Representation.

The SLPP's comfortable win was not unexpected. What has come to be seen as a 'victory beyond all expectations', as the SLPP's spokesperson has quickly admitted, seems to have been also made possible by large-scale absenteeism by the UNP voters at almost every electorate. Meanwhile, the overall electoral turnout of 71% is comparatively low in Sri Lanka's very high standards of voter participation at any election.

There are two other notable trends in the electoral outcome. The first is the decline of the ethnic minority representation as independent political entities. The Illankai Tamil Arasu Kadchi (ITAK), the main and most vocal

minority party in Sri Lanka's Parliament, has lost its electoral strength, coming down to 10 from the 16 seats in the previous Parliament. Six seats from the Northern and Eastern provinces have been secured by smaller Tamil parties, two of which are aligned with the SLPP.

The fragmentation of Tamil political representation is mirrored by the decline of Muslim representation as well. Muslim parties have managed to retain just two seats for their community in the districts they contested alone. There can be a few more minority MPs affiliated to the SJB.

The second is the fact that the two big parties in the new parliament, the SLPP and SJB, are of very recent origin, and they have been formed by breakaway sections of the two main traditional parties.

### The decisive factors

There are four factors that seem to have made this dramatic shift in Sri Lanka's political landscape, led by the SLPP, possible.

The first is the dismal failure of the previous coalition government, which came to power in January 2015 by defeating President Mahinda Rajapaksa.

The Yaha Paalanaya ('Good Governance') coalition, jointly led by Ranil Wickremesinghe and Maithripala Sirisena, achieved a surprising victory in the Presidential election in January 2015. Its promise of democratic revival, promoting peace and reconciliation, establishing corruption-free governance, and ending the habits of rule through excessive concentration of power evoked a sympathetic response from the electorate. However, in power, the Wickremesinghe-Sirisena regime's record of governance has been one of utter passivity towards fully realising those noble goals.

The return to corruption in no time, disunity within the ruling coalition, hostile factionalism, power struggles between the President and the Prime Minister, and the resultant crippling of the administrative and national security ap-



paratus, also gave a particularly bad name to the very idea of 'governance by democracy'.

The regime had also failed to defend and sustain the gain of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, its most important political achievement. The Amendment had drastically reduced the arbitrary powers of the President and restored Sri Lanka's parliamentary democracy as well as the system of checks and balances on the Executive and legislative authority.

This failure also gave the SLPP one of its most effective electoral slogans with potentially lasting and far-reaching political consequences – a radically new political alternative for Sri Lanka with a strong leader, a strong government, a strong administration with military efficiency, with just one strong centre of power with no checks and balances.

The landslide victory of the SLPP at the Presidential election held in November last year and the parliamentary election four days ago can thus be seen also as a crushing punishment delivered by the voters to the UNP and its leadership. The voters have obviously not forgiven the UNP leadership for its letting them down so badly during the four-and-a-half years of its irresponsible, quarrelsome and ineffective governance.

There are also other major reasons for the voters to be so powerfully attracted to the SLPP. A relatively new political party formed in 2016 by the powerful Rajapaksa family, the SLPP in its programme, ideology and reform agenda has an enormously attractive 'populist' dimension. Its slogan for a

strong state led by a strong leader has been couched in Sinhala-Buddhist patriotic symbolism and discourse. This indeed constitutes its core appeal to voters across all social classes in Sinhalese society.

The SLPP's rhetoric of economic and anti-western nationalism, alongwith with the promise of bringing back elements of the welfare state, always had an appeal among the poor and middle classes who had been left out by the neo-liberal reform policies so ardently pursued by the UNP-wing of the previous government.

Amidst widespread social discontent caused by a sluggish economy trapped in debt crisis, a campaign built on the virtues of developmentalist populism, national security and political stability obviously had much allure over a return to weak democratic governance.

### Pandemic handling, drug war

Meanwhile, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's efficient handling of the public health challenge caused by the COVID-19 pandemic seems to have convinced the vast majority of the Sri Lankan electorate that a new form of efficient government, with open participation of the military and personally handled by the President himself, would be the model of a new political experiment worth giving a chance.

Two months of a relentless war against the dreaded drug barons, with massive media publicity given for sensational discoveries, raids and arrests, gave the President's camp not only a decisive electoral edge over the entire Opposition. It also showed that Sri Lanka is ready to follow the global trend in new populist politics of romanticising law and order regimes that promise to instil a new sense of security to citizens which the old-style liberal democracies have of late failed.

The last, and perhaps the most important, point of the SLPP's electoral promise of radical reform package-in-waiting is its subtle suggestion that Sri Lankan citizens are in urgent need of a

post-democratic political order in which national security, law and order, political stability, regime continuity, economic prosperity, and religio-moral regeneration are given utmost priority.

### Shift in party system

Finally, the parliamentary election results also indicate a dramatic shift in Sri Lanka's established political party system. Two grand old parties – the UNP and the SLFP – have been literally wiped out from Parliament and the SLPP, a new populist party, has emerged as the single dominant party.

The UNP has irretrievably lost its familiar role as the main parliamentary Opposition party, and its place has now been taken over by the SJP, led by Sajith Premadasa, who broke away from the UNP only a couple of months ago. Only an effective and assertive SJP can prevent Sri Lanka from becoming a dominant one-party system.

The SLPP has so far been careful not to spell out its constitutional and legislative reform programmes. Yet, it has given enough indications that there would be major constitutional changes aimed at bringing back a fully-fledged presidential constitutional system and offering an administrative role to the military. The existing balance of power between the Executive and the Legislature is likely to be altered too, in favour of the former.

Amidst the inevitable euphoria after such a massive victory, the SLPP government will have a truly challenging time ahead. Sooner than later, the impending economic and social crises of unprecedented proportions, sharpened by the likely global economic collapse caused by the pandemic, may force the government leaders to review many of their plans that were probably forged well before the epidemic began. In this challenging context, Sri Lankan citizens need a humane government, not merely a strong one.

Jayadeva Uyangoda is Emeritus Professor of Political Science, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

## A campaign in Kerala to subvert an alternative path

The Opposition's move against the Left aims to destabilise the only non-neo-liberal way of development in India



S. RAMACHANDRAN PILLAI

**T**he Left Democratic Front (LDF) government in Kerala is entering its fifth year. Its policy effort over the last four years has been to strengthen and widen the historic achievements of the State in the social sectors, and to use them as a foundation for major growth in agricultural and industrial production.

In doing so it has had more than its fair share of challenges. Unexpected natural crises – Cyclone Ockhi in 2017, followed by two consecutive years of extreme rainfall events in 2018 and 2019, resulting in floods and mudslides across Kerala – and the Nipah epidemic were followed by the health and economic crises caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Growth amidst constraints

A bitter campaign unleashed by the Opposition Congress and Bharatiya Janata Party to discredit the LDF government has become widespread. The real purpose of this campaign is to undermine the achievements of public action under the leadership of the Left. With just a year left before elections to the Kerala Assembly, the Opposition is seeking to subvert the only genuine alternative to neo-liberal policies being attempted – within the constraints imposed by the Indian state.

The LDF government inherited a legacy of stagnant revenues and rising revenue and fiscal deficits. As per the provisions of the Constitution, the division of powers and finances between the Centre and States have created great asymmetry between the revenue-earning capacities of States and their expenditure obligations. With the intensification of a neo-liberal economic programme since 1991, implementing an alternative economic vision at the State-level has become very difficult indeed.

The unhelpful attitude of the central government in cutting down the borrowing limits of the State, and delayed receipt of compensation for loss from the implementation of Goods and Service Tax, further hindered the economic development of Kerala.

Despite these challenges the LDF government has sought to ensure adequate investments in all sectors such that the gains reach everyone, and these efforts have shown positive results. The State's economy is growing at 7.2% now compared to the 4.9% during the previous government.

**Pro-people policies**  
Let us briefly look at the progress Kerala has made in the last four years in the five important sectors of agriculture, public sector industry, social security, school education and infrastructure.

The LDF government has pushed ahead with modernising Kerala's agriculture to ensure growth through scientific farming. The ₹3,860 crore Subhiksha Keralam programme, which is the main component of the post-COVID-19 package of recovery projects, aims to broaden and intensify food production, and involves agriculture, animal resources, dairy, fisheries, the development of water resources, cooperation and value-addition through industrial production.

Social security and welfare pensions paid to more than 58.5 lakh people are a distinct feature of livelihood provision in Kerala. In addition, the "Housing for All" scheme, implemented through the Livelihood Inclusion and Financial Empowerment (LIFE) Mission has seen the construction and delivery of more than 2.5 lakh houses.

Kerala is the only State where



there has been a significant movement, comprising five lakh new entrants, of school pupils from the private to the public sector.

The State government has succeeded in initiating infrastructural projects costing about ₹50,000 crore through the Kerala Infrastructure Investment Fund Board (KIIFB). The hill highway with an investment of ₹3,500 crore is under progress, the work on the coastal highway has started, the work on the high-speed railway network will soon start, the national waterways is in its final stages, and the GAIL pipeline has become a reality.

These projects need new forms of technical expertise. Agencies that provide technical consultancy are selected through transparent procedures, they are given narrow terms of reference, and their advice is evaluated by the government for its relevance and suitability to the State's needs.

This standard international and national practice, and has, indeed,

been the practice of successive Governments in the State as well.

of international smuggling is a Central Government subject under the Union List in the Constitution. The Chief Minister correctly requested the central government to initiate a comprehensive probe into the incident and offered the assistance of the State.

The investigation has thus far not found any link between the LDF and the criminals. When a contract employee in a project of a State organisation, who is under investigation for involvement in the smuggling ring, was suspected of fabricating records regarding her educational qualifications she was immediately removed, and police action has been initiated into the allegations. A senior officer entrusted with the oversight of the particular department that employed her was suspended pending an investigation. The Chief Minister has gone on record that no person who is found guilty will be shielded.

The people of Kerala will certainly realise the hidden agenda of the Opposition and will support the only non-neo-liberal path of social and economic development in the country.

Indeed, transparency is a governance value that the LDF observes in practice, as Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's daily press conference has proven. He presents a detailed report on the COVID-19 situation in the State, and then takes questions from the media, even the most tendentious and aggressive of them.

The attempt to link the government with a gold smuggling ring in Trivandrum International Airport is the latest attempt to discredit the government. It is basic knowledge that customs and the crime

to read more letters online, scan the QR code

outstanding leaders have their share of stumbles and missteps. However painful it may be, let us admit to ourselves that Gandhiji's decision not to speak out against a war crime was an aberration in an otherwise enviable record of relentlessly experimenting with truth and practising what he preached.

V.N. MUKUNDARAJAN, Thiruvananthapuram

## 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.

**An invisible crisis**  
It is disheartening to know that many face hunger even now in this day and age, (Editorial page, "Invisible humanitarian crisis in India", August 7). "Poverty is the worst form of violence," observed Mahatma Gandhi. The government, irrespective of the party, should ensure that eradication of poverty remains a key agenda and that welfare schemes reach the impoverished. The

media in India needs to focus on such vital issues even if it does not "peep up the pages". It was Nelson Mandela who said, "Poverty is not an accident. Like slavery and apartheid it is manmade..." and "Like slavery and apartheid, poverty is not natural. It is man-made and it can be overcome and eradicated by the action of human beings."

B. KARTHIGA, Thiruvananthapuram

■ The article gives a pathetic picture of poverty in India. It is tragically true that poverty has affected even the middle class in India. As a septuagenarian who had dreamt of a prosperous India, I feel hurt and disappointed to find that we trail even Bangladesh and Pakistan in the Global Hunger Report 2019. Instead of alleviating the poverty and sufferings of the poor, our leaders are busy in playing political musical chairs and mudslinging. There is even time for them in the midst of a pandemic, to lay the foundation of a temple. May the gods open the eyes, minds and hearts of our leaders to be aware of the state of poor Indians.

GEORGE MATHAI, Kochi

**Gandhi on Hiroshima**  
Our inability to comprehend Gandhiji's moral ambivalence in the face of a monstrous crime against humanity such as America's nuclear bombing of the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki has made us take refuge in grand theorising and ethical rationalising (OpEd page, "The meaning of Gandhi's silence", August 7). We only can speculate on the motives for his "tactical" silence, such as adding a spiritual dimension to it, when we refuse to accept that the life journeys of

To read more letters online, scan the QR code

# The return of the Maoists

With members of the banned CPI (Maoist) regrouping in parts of Telangana, the State administration faces an old and familiar challenge. **S. Harpal Singh** reports on the recent skirmishes between Maoists and the police and the efforts of the government to tackle the threat

**O**n July 14, the sound of gunshots sliced through the calm night of Tokkiguda, a hamlet of just nine huts of the Gond Adivasis. The exchange of fire took place between a small squad of three Maoists and a special party of the Telangana police who were on their trail. Jumping into the thick vegetation of the adjoining valley, the Maoists managed to escape under the cover of darkness.

It was after a long day of conducting search operations in the hamlets, which fall under the Mangi Gram Panchayat of Tiriyani mandal in Kumuram Bheem Asifabad district, that the police had reached Tokkiguda at about 10.30 p.m. They had knocked on the door of the house of the village headman, Kova Ananth Rao, to inform him of their presence.

"The police were surprised to see three armed Maoists escaping through the rear exit of the hut into the darkness," recalled a police officer. "The Maoists fired a couple of shots at the police while fleeing and the police fired back."

Around 9 a.m. the next day, another exchange of fire took place between armed Maoists and the police in the dense forest of Mallepallithogu in Karlagudem mandal of Bhadrakoti-Kothagudem district, some 70 km from Bhadrachalam town. About a dozen Maoists again escaped, taking advantage of the torrential downpour that day. However, their lying up position (the spot where they held regular meetings in the forests) was discovered by the police.

"The extremists will take a lot of time to recover from this loss," said Bhadrakoti-Kothagudem Superintendent of Police Sunil Dutt on the discovery of the lying up position. "We recovered 10 kit bags and other material from the spot which is close to the border with Sukma in Chhattisgarh."

## Attempts to revitalise the outfit

Both the incidents occurred about five months after the Communist Party of India (Maoist) began fresh attempts to revitalise the organisation in parts of Telangana from where it had retreated over a decade ago. According to senior police officers in the State, the Maoists are determined to prove their relevance in the region. Sources said Maoist leaders operating in the Dandakaranya forests are under tremendous pressure to prove their mettle on their home turf in Telangana where socio-economic and political conditions have changed drastically over the last few years.

It was in 2018 that the CPI (Maoist) replaced Muppala Lakshman Rao alias Ganapathi with Nambala Keshava Rao alias Basavaraj as General Secretary of the organisation's Central Committee. Basavaraj brought in a few organisational and operational changes: he reconstituted the Telangana State Committee and a dozen Area Committees and entrusted them with the task of reconsolidating their position in rural areas.

The recast State Committee is headed by Central Committee member Pulluri Prasad Rao. Haribhusan alias Jagan has been nominated as Secretary and spokesperson. The other members are Bandi Prakash alias Prabhat, Bade Chokka Rao alias Damodar, Mylarapu Adellu alias Bhaskar, Sambaiah, and Kankanal Raji Reddy, according to the police.

Sources said that the Maoists have been barred by the leadership from carrying out violent activities in Telangana lest they attract the attention of the security forces. So far, they have restricted themselves to reviving links with old contacts and recruiting rural youth in areas where they are present, barring Khammam district before it was bifurcated into Bhadrakoti-Kothagudem and Khammam.

All activities of the underground outfit are concentrated in the forest areas in the eastern side of the State comprising the former undivided districts of Adilabad, Karimnagar, Warangal and Khammam. These areas border the left-wing extremism-affected areas in what is popularly known as Dandakaranya comprising Maharashtra's Gadchiroli district and parts of Chandrapur district, as well as parts of Chhattisgarh.

The re-organisation efforts have been in the works for a while following the many blows to the outfit over a decade ago. By 2007, following a clampdown on Maoist activity after the re-imposition of a ban on the CPI (Maoist) and other splinter extremist organisations across united Andhra Pradesh, violent activities began to decline in the districts of Adilabad, Karimnagar and Warangal. However, Khammam, with its lush forests and proximity to Chhattisgarh, gave tactical advantage to the Maoists and had become a hotbed of Maoist activity.

Out of a total of 41 murders by Maoists recorded between 2007 and 2013, 33 were in Khammam alone. Ten more killings were recorded between 2014 and 2019 besides 24 incidents of exchanges of fire. Adilabad remained largely peaceful during the entire period re-



The Kumuram Bheem Asifabad district police keep ration bags to be distributed among the Kolam tribe people of Pangri habitation in Tiriyani mandal. Below: Special police patrol the forests in Kumuram Bheem Asifabad district. ■ S. HARPAL SINGH



porting just one murder (of Athram Ballar Sha, a Gond tribal from Khaiguda of Tiriyani mandal in the present district of Kumuram Bheem Asifabad, in October 2015).

Among the north Telangana districts, the former undivided district of Adilabad occupied a special status in the history of left-wing extremism in the country. It was in Adilabad that the Maoists, then known as the CPI (Marxist-Leninist) People's War Group, had, for the first time in the history of left-wing extremism, ambushed a police party in the forest of Allampalli in present-day Kadem mandal of Nirmal district in August 1987. Ten policemen, including two Sub-Inspectors, were killed. The extremists also carried out a landmine blast in Singapur in the same mandal in February 1988 killing seven policemen, including one Sub-Inspector.

As many as 65 policemen including one Inspector, one jailor, and seven Sub-Inspectors were killed during the extremist movement in undivided Adilabad. The movement too suffered great losses in the district from 1980: 138 leaders and cadres were killed in 'encounters', including top Maoists such as Central Committee member Cherukuri Rajkumar alias Azad, who was killed in the Sarkepalli forests of Wankidi mandal in Kumuram Bheem Asifabad district on July 2, 2010; and 381 cadres and commanders surrendered.

But the dense forests in this area offer safety for those on the run. This is perhaps why the Maoists are trying to make it more conducive for their cadres to operate now.

**Keeping an eye on the Maoists**  
It was in February-March 2020 that Maoist dalams or squads are assumed to have crossed over into Telangana through rivers and forests. They came into the districts of Kumuram Bheem Asifabad, Mancherial, Peddapalli,

Jayashankar-Bhupalpally, Mahabubabad, Mulugu and Bhadrakoti-Kothagudem. Sources in the intelligence department said this movement of armed Maoists into Telangana is very large in terms of the area they are mandated by their leadership to "regain" by earning the support of the Adivasis.

On being alerted about the movement of the Maoists, the police launched operations to flush them out of the forests and prevent violence. "We haven't succeeded so far but we are determined to push the extremists back to where they came from or get them to surrender to the authorities," a source in the police said.

Some retired police officers, veterans from the anti-Naxal campaign before 2007, attributed the difficulty in tracking down the extremists to the lack of knowledge of the terrain among the new officers. They also pointed out that the informer network remains weak. If it is strengthened, that would make a big difference, they said.

After reviewing the situation in the wake of the two incidents of exchange of fire, Director General of Police M. Mahender Reddy said a positive result would be achieved soon. He told the media that as many as 500 policemen, including units from the specialist force to take on the Maoists, the Greyhounds, have been deployed to flush out the five extremists from Tiriyani. The ratio of policemen to Maoists is 100:1, he said.

In the former district of Adilabad, where there are reports of movements of the extremists, the dalmam is led by an experienced leader, 55-year-old Adilabad District Committee Secretary Adellu, who carries a reward of ₹20 lakh on his head. Adellu is from Pochera village

in Boath mandal of Adilabad district. He is said to be conversant in local dialects and knows the jungle passages like the back of his hand.

"The dalmam had consisted of some 12 armed Maoists when it crossed Pranhita in Kumuram Bheem Asifabad district in March. It is left with just five members now; the others are presumed to have gone back to Chhattisgarh after failing to withstand the heat of our operations," said Adilabad District Superintendent of Police Vishnu S. Warrier, who also holds the charge of Superintendent of Police of Kumuram Bheem Asifabad and Nirmal districts.

The Maoists are camping in select villages and discussing tribal issues like the Forest Rights Act, the impact of the Supreme Court order scrapping Government Order 3 issued by the undivided Andhra Pradesh government in 2000 making provision for 100% reservations in some categories of government jobs in Scheduled Areas, and the Adivasi-Lambada conflict on the issue of tenability of Scheduled Tribe status of the Lambadas. The discussions are apparently aimed at influencing the minds of young tribals and eventually recruiting some of them," a source in the intelligence department said.

The extremists claimed that they are observing a self-imposed restraint on the use of violence. Jagan, their spokesperson, issued a statement that the Maoists were visiting villages to educate the rural poor about the pandemic.

Warrier scoffed at this. "It was the police which used the lockdown period for strengthening ties with the rural folk by supplying them with essentials," he said. "This is in addition to the coordination we are forging between the vil-

lagers and different departments to bring in speedy development."

The distribution of relief material aimed at improving relations with the people is part of the strategy of the State police to make policing more people-friendly. Also, by visiting villages located inside the forests, the department has kept an eye on the movements of suspected Maoist sympathisers.

## A brief history

In 2004, the Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy government in Andhra Pradesh observed an informal ceasefire agreement with the Maoists. However, that got scrapped in 2005 following the killing of MLA Chittam Narsi Reddy and 10 others in erstwhile Mahabubnagar district. According to a senior police officer, the PWG had committed a blunder by agreeing to a ceasefire. The decision haunted the organisation even after Telangana was created, he said. "They had thought that the few months of talks with the government would give them time and space to strengthen the organisation. But it was the other way around.

The Maoists got exposed and offered an opportunity to the police to photograph and profile their top leaders and cadres. The authorities were placed at an advantage with regard to understanding the strengths and weaknesses of the PWG which, by then, had merged with other groups to become the CPI (Maoist)," the officer said.

The Maoists suffered heavy casualties in the period following the end of the ceasefire and retreated into Dandakaranya in 2008. They had that territory earmarked as an alternate centre in anticipation of facing the heat in Andhra Pradesh that would require them to evacuate the State in a hurry. That's when they developed a rapport with the Adivasi communities living in the dense forests.

"That such a need would arise some day had become clear to the Maoists. They had done some intense research in 2003-2004 which was titled 'Social Investigation of North Telangana'. They selected undivided Warangal district as their case study. The study revealed that exploitation and oppression of the poor by landlords was no more a phenomenon troubling the rural poor, and that the welfare programmes of the government had percolated into rural areas," a source in the intelligence wing of the police department said.

"The return of the Congress party to form the government in Andhra Pradesh in 2004 under Rajasekhara Reddy saw more welfare activities taking place. There was increased participation of the rural poor in development activi-

ties," said a top Maoist who had later surrendered. "Roads and mobile communications saw a lot of improvement, and poor people, including women, got representation in administration thanks to implementation of the 50% reservation quota for women in local bodies," he said.

"Instead of Maoists, caste organisations took the lead in dispute resolution in rural areas, while youngsters studied hoping to get government employment. This had a great impact on the recruitment process of the banned organisation which drew its cadres mostly from villagers who were disgruntled on failing to access government welfare programmes or were discriminated against, and the students," a source in intelligence department said.

The former extremist said: "The failure to evoke any response in the villages was one of the main reasons for the outfit to withdraw from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. The other reason was that the police had acquired the required skills to track us down. That was causing great harm to the movement."

The bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh did not alter the positions taken by the two new governments. The police in both the States believed that those Maoists who had left the place were bound to return.

It was because of this belief that the Greyhounds in both the States entered Chhattisgarh or Gadchiroli in Maharashtra every now and then to cooperate with the police forces in chasing or eliminating Maoists. The Mangi dalmam commander Athram Shoban alias Charles was killed in an 'encounter' in Gadchiroli in June 2004. He belonged to the Tiriyani mandal and was an accused in the murder of Athram Ballar Sha in October the previous year. His death removed a key link between the local poor and the Maoists.

Has the scenario changed in Telangana? Are the Adivasis no longer exploited? "The Adivasis continue to be exploited by corrupt elements in the administration," said an Adivasi headman in Sirikonda mandal of Adilabad district as he dwelt upon the issue of revival of the Maoist organisation.

Athram Bheem Rao, a Kolam tribal headman of Pangri in Tiriyani mandal, said: "The Maoists will not find support here as we want peace and development."

The Adivasis are in the right frame of mind, said Warrier. "We do not want any of them helping the Maoists, even unwillingly, and inviting trouble," he said.

S. Harpal Singh is a freelance journalist



## FROM PAGE ONE

## 18 killed in massive landslip in Idukki

A resident of one of other housing lines said water gushed into the lines followed by heaps of mud. "There were some 30 houses in those four lines and a club," he said. "We were able to rescue four people and two families came out on their own... We could not inform the police as there was none around and with no network, we could not even contact our relatives in Tamil Nadu," he said.

M.V.G. Kannan, Munnar DFO, said, "The bridge over the Periyavarai has now been repaired for emergency operations and BSNL connectivity, though patchy, has been restored."

Bad weather and lack of road accessibility have hampered rescue operations, Devikulam sub-collector S. Premkiran said. M. Mohandass, member of the nearby Luckham ward of the Munnar Grama Panchayat, said the area had never witnessed landslips.

## 15 killed as AI flight skids off Calicut airport runway

The Civil Aviation Ministry said the flight IX 1344 operated by B737 aircraft from Dubai overshot runway at Kozhikode at 7.41 p.m. "No fire reported at the time of landing," it noted.

Messages and condolences poured following the accident. Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted: "Pained by the plane accident in Kozhikode. My thoughts are with those who lost their loved ones. .. Spoke to Kerala CM @vijayanpinarayi JI regarding the situation."

Wayanad MP and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi tweeted: "I'm shocked to hear about the crash landing of an Air India Express flight, coming from Dubai, at Kozhikode, Kerala..."

and none thought it would ever occur there.

The victims have been identified as Gandhiraj, 48; Sivakami, 38; Vishal, 12; Ramakshmi, 40; Murukan, 46; Mayil Swamy, 48; Kannan, 40; Annadurai, 44; Rajeswari, 43; Kausalya, 25; Thapasiyamal, 42; Sindhu, 13; Nidhish, 25; Panirselvom, 50; Ganesan, 40. Two of the deceased are yet to be identified.

Health Minister K. K. Shylaja said a special mobile medical team and 15 ambulances were sent to the accident spot.

Mr. Mohandass said the landslide was eerily similar to the one at Kavalappara in Malappuram last year when the area had remained inaccessible and the outer world only came to know about the massive disaster next morning. The State government has declared a financial assistance of ₹5 lakh each to the families of the landslip victims.

## 15 killed as AI flight skids off Calicut airport runway

The Civil Aviation Ministry said the flight IX 1344 operated by B737 aircraft from Dubai overshot runway at Kozhikode at 7.41 p.m. "No fire reported at the time of landing," it noted.

Messages and condolences poured following the accident. Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted: "Pained by the plane accident in Kozhikode. My thoughts are with those who lost their loved ones. .. Spoke to Kerala CM @vijayanpinarayi JI regarding the situation."

Wayanad MP and Congress leader Rahul Gandhi tweeted: "I'm shocked to hear about the crash landing of an Air India Express flight, coming from Dubai, at Kozhikode, Kerala..."

pray that all the passengers have survived this terrible ordeal. My thoughts are with the crew, the passengers and their families and friends at this time."

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan expressed shock over the accident. CMO sources said Chief Minister spoke to the Prime Minister and the latter assured him all help and assistance from the Centre.

Mr. Vijayan informed him that rescue operations were in full swing, the sources said. The Chief Minister has deputed State Minister A.C. Moideen to coordinate rescue operations. An IG of police has been deputed to oversee the rescue operations.

(With inputs from PTI)

## 'Will close marines' case after hefty compensation'

"We will get the best compensation from them," Solicitor General Tushar Mehta assured the court. The court ordered the Centre to implead the victims' families in the case within a week.

"We want to hear them. You [Centre] find where they are and you bring the families here," Chief Justice Bobde, speaking for the Bench, directed the Centre.

Marines Salvatore Girone and Massimiliano Latorre were detailed on Italian ship 'Enrica Lexie' when they allegedly shot the fishermen, thinking they were "pirates".

The marines, who are in Italy now, will face criminal investigation there. India is entitled to compensation for the loss of life. Its freedom and right of navigation was violated by the marines, the tribunal held.

**Centre's application**  
The hearing was based on an application filed by the Centre informing the Su-

preme Court that it has decided to "accept and abide" by an international tribunal's award that the Marines enjoy immunity from prosecution in India. The government said India was bound by the award of the arbitral tribunal formed under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS). It said the tribunal award was "final and without appeal".

Senior advocate K.N. Balagopal argued for Kerala, saying: "The award passed by the Permanent Court of Arbitration is in conflict with the Supreme Court judgment in 2013. This verdict upheld the authority of the Union of India to prosecute the Marines. So, an international award which is in conflict with a domestic law, notwithstanding India's ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Seas, can be implemented only if it is made into law under Article 253 of the Constitution".

The marines, who are in Italy now, will face criminal investigation there. India is entitled to compensation for the loss of life. Its freedom and right of navigation was violated by the marines, the tribunal held.

**Centre's application**  
The hearing was based on an application filed by the Centre informing the Su-

## 'Will invite Yogi to open facilities near mosque'

"If you ask me as a CM, then I have no inhibitions towards any sect, faith or community. If you ask me as a Yogi, I will definitely not go. I will not go because I am a Hindu," Mr. Adityanath said. He had the full right to express and practise his method of worship as a Hindu, he added.

When pressed further by the interviewer, Mr. Adityanath sarcastically said: "The day they invite me, the secularism of many people will come under threat."

The construction of the

mosque in Dhananjpur village, 25 km west of the site where the Babri Masjid stood, is yet to take off nine months after the Supreme Court verdict in the Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi title suit.

Apart from the mosque, the Trust will also construct a centre showcasing Indo-Islamic culture of several centuries, a centre for research and study of Indo-Islamic culture, a charitable hospital, a public library and other public utilities on the five-acre land.

CM YK

## Karnataka and A.P. face challenge of fatalities

Andhra Pradesh toll of 89 deaths a new high; Karnataka's one-day toll is 101; Telangana again records over 2,000 cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD

Telangana registered 2,207 new cases of COVID-19 on Thursday, a new high that took the total number of positive cases to 75,257. Twelve patients died and the total for fatalities was 601. The total active cases on Thursday were 21,417 with 1,136 more people declared recovered, adding up to a total of 53,239

## COVID-19

recoveries.

The government bulletin issued on Friday said 23,495 samples were collected on Thursday, and total samples stood at 5.66 lakh.

Kerala on Friday reported 1,251 new cases. Of these, 1,080 were locally acquired infections, and 73 had no epidemiological link. The number of health-care workers affected were 18.

While the cumulative case burden touched 31,700, there were 12,411 patients in hospitals. Till date, 19,151 persons had recovered.

Five more deaths, from Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam, Alappuzha, Malappuram and Kannur, were added to the State's official toll by the Health Department on Friday, taking it to 102.

Thiruvananthapuram district reported 289 cases on Friday, all except two being locally acquired infections.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said that containment measures had been strengthened and police were implementing regulations, but it would take 10 days for any change to be visible.

Andhra Pradesh's tally passed the two-lakh mark on Friday, and the State witnessed the biggest spike of 89 deaths in a day. There was an addition of 10,171 cases. It became the only State to witness one-lakh infections in 11 days.

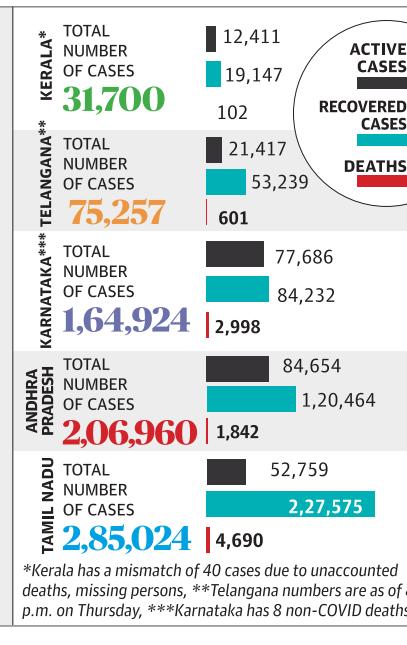
The overall tally was 2,06,960 and the death toll 1,842. East Godavari (28,850 cases), Kurnool (24,679),

## Disregard for norms

Though the government is taking tough measures to stem the spread of the virus, some people are blatantly ignoring the COVID-19 protocols. The graph shows the spread of the pandemic in the southern States



Risking lives: In spite of it being declared a containment zone, S.P. Road in Bengaluru was crowded on Friday. ■ V. SREENIVASA MURTHY



were conducted in a 24-hour period.

**Chennai cases below 1,000**

As another 5,880 persons tested positive for COVID-19 in Tamil Nadu on Friday, Chennai's daily count cases fell below 1,000 for the first time since mid-June. The city recorded 984 fresh cases, taking its overall tally to 1,07,109. For the fifth consecutive day, the death of 119 persons was recorded, taking the toll to 4,690.

Tamil Nadu's overall tally climbed to 2,85,024 of which 52,759 persons were under treatment. A total of 6,488 persons were discharged. As of date, 2,27,575 persons were discharged.

Another 67,352 samples were tested, making up a total of 30,88,066 samples.

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

## Minor assaulted at Hyderabad care home

Donor to facility among three arrested

SWATHI VADLAMUDI  
HYDERABAD

In a shocking incident which has come to light after a week's delay, a minor orphan girl was found to have been sexually assaulted by a benefactor of the protection home in which she stayed in the city.

Over 50 children present in the home have been rescued and shifted to four different homes in the district after the incident, sources said.

According to details shared by reliable sources, the 14-year-old victim was staying at Maruti Orphanage in Deepitri Nagar, where she had been admitted in 2015 after her parents died.

After the COVID-19 outbreak in March, the girl was taken home by her uncle.

Later, on persistent questioning, the girl told a female relative that a donor of the home in which she had stayed sexually assaulted her repeatedly after giving her soft drink laced with drugs. She said the caretaker of the home too was involved in the assault.

The girl's aunt reported this to the Bowenpally Police Station where a zero FIR was registered on July 31.

Three persons, including donor Venugopal, and caretakers of the home Vijaya and Jayadeep have been arrested and sent for remand.

"This is obscenity which you are spreading... Clearly what you are doing is obscenity," Justice Mishra insisted during a virtual court

hearing on Friday.

He asked why Ms. Fathima did all this. "You may be an activist. Are you aware of what may be happening to these growing up children? What impression will they get of the entire culture of this country?", he said.

Mr. Sankaranarayanan urged the court to look at the larger context. He said the investigation was over and police have already raided her home.

"Why should my liberty be at stake," the senior lawyer asked.

The court, however, dismissed her appeal.

## High Court order

Ms. Fathima had moved the Supreme Court against a Kerala High Court order denying her anticipatory bail in

cases concerning an edited video on social media allegedly of her minor children painting on her semi-nude body.

Ms. Fathima had raised

two questions of law concerning the application of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act and the provisions of the Information Technology law against her.

She said the cases against her violated her fundamental right of life, liberty and dignity under Article 21 of the Constitution.

She asked "whether female nudity (even when not visible) per se constitutes obscenity?" and "whether children painting on their mother's body can be concluded to be 'sexual gratification' and 'child abuse' under

these stringent laws?"

The petition said "there can probably be nobody except a pervert who would be aroused to sexual desire by seeing the nature of the work."

In addition, the petitioner's message accompanying the uploaded edited video makes it clear that she intended to normalise the female form for her children and not allow the distorted ideas of sexualisation to pervade their minds".

Goddesses in Kerala are frequently depicted in idols and murals with bare breasts. When one prays at the temple, the feeling is not of sexual arousal but one of divinity", the petition said, citing several other instances to explain the social context in Kerala.

## Food Vision 2050 Prize for Naandi Foundation

Its Arakunomics model was applied in Araku and Wardha

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD

The Rockefeller Foundation has selected Hyderabad-based non-profit, Naandi Foundation, as one of the 'Top 10 Visionaries' in the world for the Food Vision 2050 Prize, announced in New York on Thursday. The recognition fetches Naandi a prize money of \$200,000.

The award recognised the application of the Arakunomics model in regions of Araku, Wardha and New Delhi, leading to the Food Vision 2050 that follows an "ABCDFGH" framework centring on: Agriculture, Biology, Compost, Decentralised decision-making, Entrepreneurs, Families, Global Markets, and 'Head-

be releasing immediately \$1,50,000 and the balance \$50,000 after a three-month accelerator programme that is intended to help Naandi realise its vision.

Naandi's vision titled "Arakunomics" was based on work with tribal farmers in Araku for nearly 20 years. It is a new integrated economic model that ensures profits for farmers, quality for consumers through regenerative agriculture. The model is a tribute to the tribal farmers of Araku region for the world-class coffee produced and launched in 2017, as well as for the high carbon landscape transformation they did in over 955 villages, thereby planting 25 million trees.

stands', or turning current approaches on their head.

Naandi competed with over 1,300 entries in a two-level contest that was spread

## HC quashes case against nine foreign nationals

Tablighi Jamaat members told to leave

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU

The High Court of Karnataka has quashed the criminal cases registered against nine foreign nationals belonging to the Tablighi Jamaat on the condition that they immediately leave the country and give an undertaking that they will not visit India again in the next 10 years. They also have to pay a fine that may be levied by the competent authority.

Though the court prima facie found that the tourist visa, under which they were allowed to enter India, did not allow them to indulge in activities permitted under the missionary visa, it allowed them to leave the country by adopting a similar concession given by the Madras High Court.

Justice Krishna S. Dixit passed the order on petitions filed by Farhan Hussain and three others from South Africa, Ibrahim Jassy and two others from Cambodia, Rejo from Indonesia, and Saleh Imran Ahmed from the United States.

The petitioners were engaged in religious activities in Tumakuru after attending the Tablighi Jamaat meet in

However, the court declined to quash the criminal cases registered in Tumakuru against three Indian nationals who had assisted the Tablighi Jamaat members.

## IN BRIEF



# Can 4G Net be restored in J&K, asks SC

It points out that the former L-G had recommended it while in office

**LEGAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday asked the Union government to explain whether 4G Internet could be restored in select areas of Jammu and Kashmir where there was no trouble, saying even former Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor (L-G) G.C. Murmu had recommended it while in office.

Mr. Murmu recently resigned from office.

"The L-G has said that there is no difficulty in restoring 4G. You have to give an explanation for that," Justice R. Subhash Reddy, one of the three judges on the Bench headed by Justice N.V. Ramana, addressed the government side.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta apprised the court of Mr. Murmu's departure from office and said a detailed response would be filed on the issue. "In your response, do not go strictly by whether or not contempt is there. You should also say whether 4G can be restored in areas [which posed no security challenge]," Justice Reddy re-

marked. The court posted the case for August 11.

#### Contempt petition

The court is hearing a contempt petition filed by Foundation for Media Professionals, an NGO, that a high-powered special committee was not formed in compliance with a judgment of the top court on May 11 to review the need to continue with the "blanket restrictions" on 4G Internet access in J&K, especially amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the last hearing on July 28, the Centre told the Supreme Court that it would "verify" reports in the media quoting Mr. Murmu saying 4G Internet speed should be restored in the Valley. Mr. Murmu's reported recommendation caused a stir as the Centre had been maintaining, and even filed an affidavit in the court, that the situation was not ripe to restore high-speed Internet owing to heightened terror activities. It had agreed to review the situation again after two months.

The Centre has already in-



**Blocked out:** People using social media on their mobile phones amid 4G Internet curbs in Srinagar on March 5. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

formed the court that a special committee chaired by Union Home Secretary Ajay Kumar Bhalla met twice on the need to review the restrictions placed on 4G Internet connection in J&K, but deferred its decision on the issue considering the "startling situation" of continued terror attacks in the Valley.

On May 11, the Supreme Court, acting on a writ petition filed by Foundation for Media Professionals, directed the Centre and J&K to constitute a special committee with the Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, as Chairperson followed by the

Secretary, Department of Communications, and the Chief Secretary, Union Territory of J&K.

In its contempt petition and a separate application filed in June, the Foundation said that nearly a month had passed since the court judgment.

There was no record in the public domain on the formation of a special committee "to consider the necessity and proportionality of the ongoing blanket mobile Internet speed restrictions in the entire Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir" as directed by the court, it said.

**Manoj Sinha takes oath as L-G of J&K**

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**  
SRINAGAR

The Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) administration will soon initiate direct dialogue with the people to end the situation of uncertainty and the menace of terrorism, the Union Territory's new Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha said on Friday soon after being sworn in.

The 61-year-old, who was administered the oath of office by Jammu and Kashmir High Court Chief Justice Gita Mittal at a simple function at the Raj Bhawan, also said he wants to accelerate development in the Union Territory.

"August 5 is a very important day in the history of Jammu and Kashmir. After years of isolation, Jammu and Kashmir joined the national mainstream. I have been told that many works which could not be completed in years have been completed in the past one year," Mr. Sinha said after taking oath. "I want to accelerate that development," he said.



Narendra Modi

# NEP lays the foundation for a 'New India', says Modi

PM emphasises shift from rote learning and 'herd mentality'

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 laid the foundation for a 'New India' of the 21st century, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday, emphasising the shift from rote learning and "herd mentality" to creative and innovative thinking.

Addressing a conclave on Transformational Reforms in Higher Education under the NEP, he said there had been no major changes in the education system for many years, resulting in the promotion of a "herd mentality" in Indian society instead of the values of curiosity and imagination. "So far, the focus has been on 'what to think'. The NEP emphasises a shift in approach to focus on 'how to think' instead," he said.

"In these times, there is no dearth of information and content, which is available on every mobile phone. But it is important that we know which information is necessary," he stated and called for modes of teaching based on inquiry, discovery and analysis, which would encourage students to participate in the classroom learning process out of their own interest.

The conclave is being hosted by the Education Ministry and the University Grants Commission (UGC).

#### Mission mode

The NEP would be implemented in a "mission mode", said Education Minister Ramesh Pokhrayal Nishank.

Higher Education Secre-

tary Amit Khare said similar webinars would be held in every State over the next two months so that the process of implementation was decentralised. By September-end, there would be a complete strategy for State-wise implementation, he added.

The NEP's focus on employability and vocational education will start being implemented immediately through undergraduate degrees with embedded internships and apprenticeships. The UGC released guidelines for such degree programmes at the conclave, saying that a minimum of one semester could be spent at the workplace.

Mr. Modi also welcomed the "healthy debate" that was on across the country over various aspects of the NEP. On using the mother tongue as the medium of instruction until Class 5, he said the approach was necessary to make global citizens who were rooted in their culture.

## MLA seeks river data from China

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
GUWAHATI

A Congress MLA in Arunachal Pradesh has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking a reminder to Beijing for the resumption of the sharing of hydrological data on rivers originating in Tibet.

Ninong Ering, a former Lok Sabha member, representing the Pasighat West Assembly constituency now, said the river-related information from China stopped coming two years ago. The lack of data has prevented people downstream in India from taking timely action for avoiding disasters, he said.

## 700 sent to quarantine after test for Army porters

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
GUWAHATI

The authorities of Namsai district in Arunachal Pradesh have issued a notice to some 700 local youths who had participated in an Army recruitment rally for porters to be home quarantined for two weeks after several soldiers tested positive for COVID-19.

The Army often takes in porters for about six months to carry essentials and equipment to and from forward posts in the high altitudes across the Himalayan belt. Each porter is "treated like a soldier" during his tenure.

The 700 applicants from Namsai and adjoining districts took part in the recruitment rally at the Government Higher Secondary School in Mahadevpur on August 2 and 3. On Thursday, 54 personnel of an Army camp in the district tested COVID-19 positive. Some of these personnel were involved with the rally. "Considering the possibility of the virus having been transmitted to the aspirants who participated in the recruitment rally, the Namsai district administration has asked all the aspirants or participants of the rally to remain in strict home quarantine for at least 14 days," an official said, adding that the notice was issued on August 6.

"During home quarantine period, if any symptoms of COVID-19 such as fever, cough, body pain, loss of smell and taste, etc., are noticed or felt, such person(s) shall immediately report to the nearest public health centre or the district surveillance officer for undergoing testing," the order said.

## Plea to probe Cong. link with China dismissed

SC says petitioners can approach HC

**LEGAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday refused to entertain a petition seeking a National Investigation Agency (NIA) probe into an alleged agreement between the Indian National Congress and the Communist Party of China to exchange high-value information.

Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde called the averments in the petition "absurd in law".

"It is absurd or something unheard in law... You are saying that China has entered into an agreement with a political party and

not the government. How can a political party enter into an agreement with China?" Chief Justice Bobde asked senior lawyer Mahesh Jethmalani, appearing for PIL petitioners Shekhar Jha and journalist Savio Rodrigues. Chief Justice Bobde said the petitioners could tell the petitioners to "withdraw the petition with liberty to approach the High Court."

At the outset, Mr. Jethmalani alleged that it was an "agreement between a political party of this country with the only political party in that country." The Bench said a fresh petition could be filed if that was the case.

"That single statement

## Chidambaram takes a dig at Rajnath

'Defence Ministry has acknowledged that there were Chinese incursions'

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

Former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram on Friday took a dig at Defence Minister Rajnath Singh over a Ministry of Defence (MOD) document that gave details about Chinese aggression.

"Someone is out to get Mr. Rajnath Singh out of the Defence Ministry! Otherwise, why would the Defence Ministry website put out the truth about the Chinese aggression and occupation of Indian territory?" asked Mr. Chidambaram in a series of tweets about the MOD document that has been removed from the website.

"That single statement



P. Chidambaram

damaged Mr. Rajnath Singh (people ask, did the Ministry and the Army fail to act on the intelligence inputs and allowed the Chinese to bring troops and equipment and cross the LAC?). That statement also exposed the PM's famous declaration that "no one intruded into Indian ter-

ritory and no one is occupying Indian territory. I suspect there is a Chinese mole in the Defence Ministry!" he tweeted.

#### Chinese companies

Meanwhile, at the party's official press briefing, spokesperson Pawan Khera alleged that the BJP had used the services of three Chinese companies – UC Web Mobile, Gamma Gaana Limited (TenCent of China) and ShareIt Technology – in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. The companies had links with the Chinese People's Liberation Army (PLA) and were now being banned by the Centre, the Congress said.

"When it comes to China, what exactly are your compulsions? Why do you close your eyes and slip into silent mode amidst brazen incursions by China in Ladakh? Why did your party take the help of China in the Lok Sabha elections?" asked Mr. Khera. The charge came on a day when BJP president J.P. Nadda attacked the Congress for links with the Chinese government and the Communist Party.

"Respected Nadda ji, Spreading lies is your speciality and misrepresentation is your style... Stop your bundle of lies," Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala tweeted.

## Vasundhara meets Nadda

Meeting comes a week before Assembly session

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

Former Rajasthan Chief Minister Vasundhara Raje has met Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) national president J.P. Nadda a week before the convening of the Rajasthan Assembly, at a time when Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot's government is facing internal strife.

Sources confirmed that Ms. Raje met Mr. Nadda and BJP general secretary (organisation) on Thursday and Friday and discussed the situation in the State.

Ms. Raje has so far maintained a diplomatic silence over the internal revolt in the Congress, and accusations by the latter that the BJP was in cahoots with rebel Congress leader, Sachin Pilot, to destabilise the Geh-



**Taking stock:** BJP national president J.P. Nadda with former Rajasthan CM Vasundhara Raje. ■ FILE PHOTO

lot government.

Senior leaders of the party said Ms. Raje and Mr. Nadda discussed affairs related to the State politics and that the exercise was aimed at being on the same page as far as party moves were concerned.

#### Organic occurrence

State leaders played down the meeting. "Ms. Raje is a national vice president of the BJP and her meeting with the party president is an organic occurrence," State BJP chief Satish Poonia

## India to take part in Kavkaz 2020 in Russia

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

In a resumption of bilateral and multilateral military exercises which were deferred due to COVID-19, India will take part in the Russian Kavkaz 2020 strategic command-post exercise next month. The invitees also include China and Pakistan, apart from other member-states of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation.

The invitation comes amid the ongoing standoff with China along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Eastern Ladakh. A small tri-service contingent will take part in the exercise to be held in Astrakhan, a defence source said. "The Indian contingent includes 150 Army personnel and smaller number of personnel from the Navy and Air Force," the source stated.



One of the injured persons being taken to a hospital in Kozhikode. ■ PTI

runway there is only 75 metre of safety area, when that should be at least 150 metres," says aviation safety expert Mohan Ranganathan, who prepared the as part of the Civil Aviation Safety Advisory Committee.

"There has been no effort on the part of AAI to rectify the safety infringements... The runway strip is just half the minimum width laid

down. This fact was known to the DGCA... Have they considered the danger involved? Has the DGCA or airlines laid down any operational restrictions or special procedures," Mr. Ranganathan highlighted in a letter to then Secretary, Ministry of Civil Aviation, Naseem Zaidi. It added that landing in wet and tailwind conditions could be a safety hazard. He also adds that it is important to clean the runway of rubber which gets deposited after every flight. The failure to do so can lead to aircraft losing control.

Significantly, the DGCA had ordered a safety audit of airports earlier this year after several airports saw instances of aircraft overshooting the runway or skidding during heavy rains.

## Rahul attacks BJP, tweaks 2014 poll slogan

Flays Centre for rising COVID-19 cases

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

As COVID-19 cases crossed the 20-lakh mark, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Friday slammed the Centre on its handling of the pandemic.

He retweeted his July 17 tweet, in which he predicted 2 million cases by August 10, with a fresh comment. "20 lakh ka aankha paar, Gayaab hain Modi Sarkar [20-lakh figure has been crossed and the Modi government has dis-

## Congress remains in a fix over its leadership question

As Sonia completes a year as party chief, no clarity on who will take the reins

**SANDEEP PHUKAN**  
NEW DELHI

As Sonia Gandhi completes a year as the interim president of the Congress on August 10, there is still no clarity on the way forward with regard to appointing a full-time president.

If the party extends Ms. Gandhi's tenure for sometime, as is likely, it will have to officially inform the Election Commission of India (ECI) and subsequently get it endorsed by the Congress Working Committee (CWC).



Sonia Gandhi will complete a year as interim president on August 10.

is now caught between the Sachin Pilot-led rebellion in Rajasthan and the ongoing pandemic.

**Rahul's position**  
Though there is a growing clamour among a section of

party leaders for Rahul Gandhi to take over as the party president once again, he has not shown any urgency to get back to his earlier position.

#### NEWS ANALYSIS

Interestingly, Ms. Gandhi was brought in as the interim president not only because the party couldn't arrive at a consensus over a non-Gandhi leader, but also because only a leader from the family was expected to hold together the different factions. However, subsequent events have challenged this notion as young leaders – from Anand Sharma, Manish Tewari, Shashi Tharoor and Milind Deora – and the MP was forced to retract his position.

Even before the party could tame the dissidence in Rajasthan, it is growing in another Congress-ruled State – Punjab. Punjab Congress chief Sunil Jakhar has now asked for disciplinary action against two Rajya Sabha members – Samsher Singh Dullo and Partap Singh Bajwa – for seeking a CBI and ED inquiry against illegal distilleries in the State.

The party needs to get back to the drawing board with regard to the leadership question and consider suggestions from leaders like Mr. Tewari, who have advocated elections for the top post if the Gandhis are not inclined.

## IN BRIEF



## West Bengal sees 2,912 COVID-19 cases

KOLKATA West Bengal on Friday recorded 2,912 cases, taking the total to 89,666. With 52 more deaths in the past 24 hours, the death toll rose to 1,954. Kolkata recorded 20 deaths, taking the toll in the city to 907. Fourteen people died in North 24 Parganas district and eight in Howrah district. The active cases in the State climbed to 24,652.

## Maharashtra adds 10,483 cases; 10,906 discharged

PUNE Maharashtra reported a big surge of 10,483 Covid-19 cases on Friday to take the State's total case tally to 4,90,262. A high fatality surge of 300 deaths saw the total toll rise to 17,092. However, the number of recoveries exceeded the case surge, with as many as 10,906 patients being discharged.

## Two held for hoisting saffron flag on mosque

GAZIABAD The Meerut police have arrested two alleged members of Bajrang Dal in connection with the hoisting of a saffron flag on a minaret of a mosque in the city, an official release said. According to the SP (City), based on a complaint with a video clip they received, an FIR against four persons was registered and two youngsters were detained.

## Travel curbs eased for some foreign nationals

NEW DELHI The Union Home Ministry has allowed foreign nationals from the U.S., the U.K., Germany and France to travel to India on "business, medical and employment" visas under the air bubble scheme. This is the first time that the government has clearly spelt out who can fly into India.

## Tie-up promises vaccine for India

Serum Institute of India enters into a partnership with Gavi, Gates Foundation

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Serum Institute of India (SII) has announced that it has entered into a new partnership with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to accelerate the manufacture and delivery of up to 100 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines for India and low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

"Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, via its strategic investment fund, will provide at-risk funding of US\$150 million to Gavi, which will be used to support the SII to manufacture potential vaccine candidates, and for future procurement of vaccines for low- and middle-income countries," noted a statement issued by SII.

It said the collaboration would provide upfront capital to SII to help them in-



Scaling up: Technicians at the assembly line for a COVID-19 vaccine at Serum Institute in Pune in this file photo. ■ NYT

crease the manufacturing capacity now so that, once a vaccine, or vaccines, gain(s) regulatory approval and World Health Organisation (WHO) pre-qualification, doses could be produced at scale for distribution to India and LMICs, as early as the first half of 2021.

"The funding will support at-risk manufacturing by SII for candidate vaccines from AstraZeneca and Novavax, which will be available for

procurement if they are successful in attaining full licensure and WHO pre-qualification. SII has set a ceiling price of US\$ 3 per dose. The arrangement also provides an option to secure additional doses," noted the release.

It quoted SII CEO Adar Poonawalla as saying that they had partnered with Gavi and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to advance the manufacturing and delivery of up to 100 million doses.

es of COVID-19 vaccines for India and LMICs in 2021.

"SII has earlier partnered with Gavi and pharmaceutical companies to manufacture vaccines that protect against meningitis, severe diarrhea, pneumonia and measles. The current deal now builds on a MoU between AstraZeneca and Gavi, announced in June, which will guarantee 300 million doses of AstraZeneca's candidate vaccine to the wider COVAX facility, to be supplied upon licensure or pre-qualification. These two deals can help guarantee access to early doses for the most vulnerable on a truly global scale," said the company.

"CBI has taken over the investigation into the Patna case (based on a complaint of abetment to suicide filed by Rajput's father)," Solicitor General Tushar Mehta informed the three-judge Bench led by the CJI.

"Good. And we are told that CBI has filed an FIR," Chief Justice Bobde responded to Mr. Mehta.

The exchange happened during the hearing of a PIL filed by a law student seeking a CBI probe into the death. The court dismissed the PIL, saying the law student is a "total stranger" to the cause and Mr. Rajput's father, K.K. Singh, is pursuing the case.

However, the hearing on Friday coincided with the Bihar government filing an affidavit to justify the decision of its police to register the case against another Bollywood actor, Rhea Chakraborty, and her family members. The State's affidavit was filed in response to a separate plea by Ms. Chakraborty to transfer the case from Patna to Mumbai.

In an affidavit, Bihar said though Rajput died in Mumbai, his father suffered the consequence in Patna. It said an offence can be tried either at the place where it has been committed or where the consequence ensues.

## TJ coverage: SC to wait for NBA, PCI responses

Pleas pushing court timelines irks CJI

## LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India (CJI) Sharad A. Bobde on Friday voiced his exasperation at petitioners expecting the Supreme Court to work against the clock.

The top judge was responding to a plea that the court should intervene and direct the government, without any further delay, to take action against certain sections of the media who communalised the incident of a Tablighi Jamaat congregation during lockdown by linking it to a spike in the spread of COVID-19.

Senior advocate Dushyant Dave, for petitioners, said over two months have passed since the reportage of the events in March. No action has been forthcoming from the government.

"We are increasingly seeing petitioners trying to bind us to these timelines... Should we go on and give a wrong direction because of a timeline?" CJI Bobde asked.

The Bench then decided to wait for responses from the National Broadcasters Association (NBA) and the Press Council of India (PCI) before passing "orders".

## Health Ministry lists out 16 districts for high mortality

They have been urged to follow norms

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Sixteen districts in four States – Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Telangana – are a cause of concern, said the Union Health Ministry on Friday, after confirming that these areas were reporting COVID-19 mortality higher than the national and States' average.

A meeting was held with officials of the areas to analyse the factors driving the high mortality in these districts and devise ways and means to reduce the mortality," said the Ministry. Areas including Ahmedabad and Surat in Gujarat; Belagavi, Bengaluru urban, Kalaburagi and Udupi in Karnataka; Chennai, Kancheepuram, Ranipet, Theni, Tiruvallur, Tiruchirappalli, Thoothukudi and Virudhunagar in Tamil Nadu; Hyderabad and Medchal Malkajgiri in Telangana have been shortlisted by the Ministry "because, apart from the higher case mortality, these districts account for 17% of India's active cases, high daily new cases, low tests per million, and high confirmation percentage," said a senior Health Ministry official.

## Probe dominance of online advertising platforms: report

'Measures must also be taken to address misinformation'

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

A report examining the future of news in India has recommended that the Competition Commission of India investigate the dominance of online advertising platforms.

The report, prepared by the Vidhi Centre for Legal Policy, stated, "The advertisement-revenue model for digital news may be displaying indications of market failure. To orient the market for digital news towards the public good, the role and practices of online advertising platforms must be systematically studied by a spe-

cialised authority." The report also favoured the enactment of "light-touch measures" to address misinformation.

It said, "The entire chain of misinformation needs to be addressed in order to effectively tackle the crisis of misinformation." The report suggests a range of legislative, co-regulatory and voluntary measures, which provide an integrated framework to prevent the spread of misinformation and enhance reader literacy.

Calling for the imposition of "appropriate responsibilities" on digital news entities, the report added, "The legal

## 'Digital detox' for student as bail condition

## STAFF REPORTER

BHOPAL

The Gwalior Bench of the Madhya Pradesh High Court has granted bail to a college student on the condition that he removes himself from social media for two months for "digital detoxification" and continues preparing for a competitive examination.

Justice Anand Pathak on August 4 directed Harendra Tyagi, an 18-year-old agriculture science student, to "not be present on any social media platform for two months for digital detoxification".

The lawyer for the accused Sushant Tiwari said he would mend his ways to become a better citizen.

## No free grain in July for 40% of PMGKAY beneficiaries

Only 6% of free chana due in July has been distributed

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Almost four out of ten people dependent on free food from the Centre did not receive their July allocation under a special scheme to help tide over the COVID-19 crisis, Food Minister Ram Vilas Paswan told journalists on Friday, blaming States for their failure to distribute the free grains and pulses.

In fact, as many as 11 States and Union Territories did not carry out any distribution at all under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) in July, the first month of the extended scheme. In the first



Ram Vilas Paswan

phase, from April to June, about 95% of the 81 crore beneficiaries received their grain allocation. In July, that dropped to just 61%, according to an official statement. Only 6% of the free chana has been distributed.

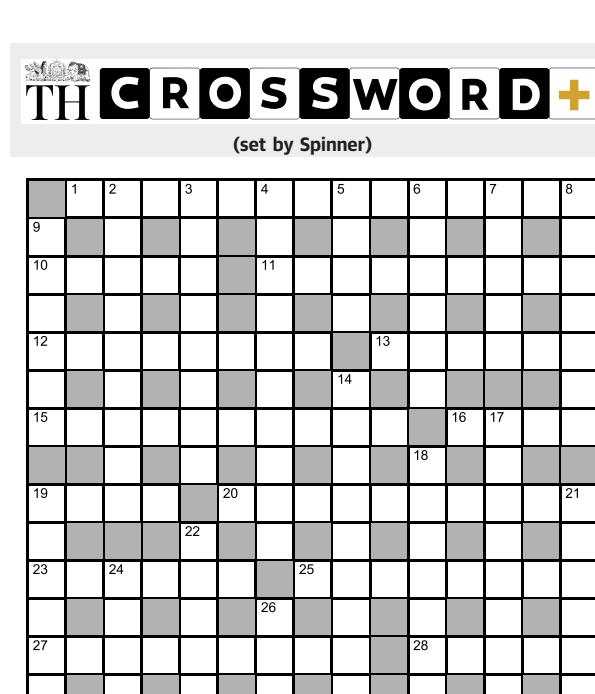
## Restart hot cooked meals at anganwadis

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The government must resume provision of hot-cooked meals and ensure implementation of anganwadi services such as growth monitoring and community management of acutely malnourished children either within the day care centres or at the houses of the beneficiaries, urged the Right to Food Campaign in a memorandum to Minister for Women and Child Development Smriti Irani.

It has also sought a revision of the food package offered via anganwadis and recommended a "comprehensive package of cooked food and dry rations."



## ACROSS

- 1 Perhops, will might be restored by a real, virus-conquering team (9,5)
- 10 Killed one essentially in the midst of wrong deed (5)
- 11 Perpetrators of bloody crimes? (9)
- 12 Laser, taser, maser – a friend, how you would preface her! (8)
- 13 Tenant fees selectively withheld, in retrospect (6)
- 15 Things that fly around heart of outer space, lacking volume? (10)

(set by Spinner)

- There is no lockdown for your brain!  
Try solving a puzzle today!  
@ <https://rgo.page.link/jjpTn>
- 16 Rewrite stock, losing crores (4)  
19 Bird disease in America killing one half (4)  
20 More amicable farmer takes money with hesitation (10)  
23 Dismiss cop shielded by absurd lie following deaths, firstly (6)  
25 Contract unclear on time of completion after delayed start (8)  
27 Questionably chose path of unsportsmanlike conduct (5,4)  
28 It's about settler's reflection giving rise to stories (5)  
29 Use all creative moves that you possess, for instance? (8,6)
- DOWN
- 2 Set about receiving opinion (9)  
3 Depressed from revolting, independent writer quits (8)  
4 Any online broadcast gets money? Not really! (2,4,4)  
5 Thrilled by genre of music that's ahead of time (4)  
6 Assessed and rejected model for nothing (6)  
7 Registered applications for schemes (5)  
8 Group's competitive advantage becoming fishy (7)  
9 Last month, a backtracking head of government beat a hasty retreat (6)  
14 Engineer elicits aid for castle building (10)  
17 Ones responsible for imprisonment are instead violent, having no empathy at heart (9)  
18 Element's important part of glass architectural form (8)  
19 It breaks down swollen boil, releasing liquid (7)  
21 Partly, judicature has heralded change (6)  
22 In return, stop sedition cases, dictator! (6)  
24 Talk someone into accepting wife's amazing (5)  
26 Indian god's weapon (4)

## SUDOKU

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

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★

## Solution to puzzle 13008

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

## Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

## FAITH

## Swaroopaa and vritti jnana

The atma chaitanya jnana that destroys ignorance is shown to be distinct,



## Instapick

**Celebrity Covid Calender:** Thanks to actor Reese Witherspoon, a 2020 mood meme has taken the internet by storm. With scenes from her movies and shows like *Legally Blonde* and *Big Little Lies*, the grid of nine images shows a progressive disbelief at what this year has thrown at us. Mindy Kaling, Kerry Washington, Mark Ruffalo and Billy Ray Cyrus, among others, joined in the fun.



## Talking point

**National Handloom Day:** Celebrated every year on August 7, the day is usually marked with events across weaver communities. News of the Central Government abolishing the All India Handloom and Craft Boards came as a blow. These advisory bodies were a forum to present their issues to the authorities; without them, it remains to be seen how the industry communicates with the powers that be.

### YARN IT!

# Keep off my grass!

When there is no love lost between neighbours

:: JANE DE SUZA

You will agree that this behaviour of our neighbouring countries – inching into our hallways, finger by finger – is distinctly unneighbourly. It reminds me of my own neighbour.

'Don't mind...' she said one day. I wondered if I should not mind that she accidentally poisoned my cat or that she backed into my car? Not mind what travesty she had already committed or what she was going to unleash? She put an end to my wondering. 'The drilling for our new cabinets may continue till one o'clock. In the night, I hope you don't mind.'

Being a docile sort, I invited her in, frothing over with many reasons why she should please (and I inserted a 'please' thrice) not bore holes into our common wall. 'My baby will be asleep. My mother-in-law is sick. I have ringing in my ears already. My cat needs its beauty sleep.'

'Oh, your cat!' she simpered. 'Such a sweet thing. I keep feeding

it milk when I see it outside on the landing.'

I began to melt. Here she was full of the milk of human kindness towards my un-poisoned cat (how could I have ever entertained that baseless thought?) even as I refused her a bit of drilling.

She leaned in. 'You know my carpenter is very hard-working. He can make the cheapest furniture for you. Save your family some money.'

How could I ever have misunderstood this large-hearted neighbour with her generous offers. My own carpenter charges an arm and a leg. For an armchair's leg.

In fact, she'd been making regular inroads into my home, bearing cheap toys for my kids, a baby monitor because she said, 'This monitor has an app to put your baby to

sleep. Not that she disturbs me – just a little noise across the wall. What are neighbours for, after all?'

'I thought the walls were thick, impenetrable,' I said.

'My dear, nothing stops me. I am interested in everyone's domestic concerns. I hear everything you say, that baby monitor... You know that argument you were having with your husband last night? I am

totally on your side.'

'Thank you, that is very kind of you.'

'Too kind. That is my fault, dear. I share my things with the whole world.' She sneezed. 'See now, this carpenter will break down the old cabinet and all that extra rotting wood – where will we dump it? You can keep it for some future use, it's coming cheap after all...'

■ ILLUSTRATION: SREEJITH R KUMAR

I gulped while she said, 'I hope you don't mind.'

The next morning, I knocked on her door. 'Good morning,' I wished her cheerfully. 'Truly, no one appreciated your kindness. Someone who obviously spent half the night awake with the drilling noise, was so sleep-deprived this morning that they backed into your car. The headlights – smashed! Being a good neighbour, I came to tell you. I hope you don't mind.'

Where Jane De Suza, author of *Flyaway Boy*, pokes her nose into our perfect lives.

## Pick of the week

**Concerts, stand-up and other online events you just can't miss.**

**The event preview and calendar will resume in a few weeks.**



### Dress up

### Books and bats

### Nadaswaram beats

### Now streaming

### Dish it out

### Talking pictures

### #LockdownWithWeekend

Travel writers who have put their plans on hold now use watercolours, Madhubani art and more to satisfy their wanderlust

## Travel: why write when you can illustrate?

:: CHAITALI PATEL

In a Covid-free world, Shikha Chitrak Desai might have been sitting on the sundeck of a cruise ship on the River Nile. Now forced to stay indoors, she feeds her wanderlust by sketching and painting select travel experiences from around the world. 2020 has been no ordinary year for the travel writer. Art, it appears, has come to the rescue. For some, it was discovering a latent talent and for others, it was rekindling a passion that had taken a backseat. Social media has allowed these freshly-minted artists to find appreciation for their work, with opportunities to sell their original work and create customised pieces on request.



### Akanksha Dureja

@madhubaniandmore  
Dureja's Madhubani drawings are a quirky take on the traditional art form. Using acrylic and gouache colours, she depicts scenes from the Alappuzha snake boat races, the Eiffel Tower and the tulip fields of Netherlands.



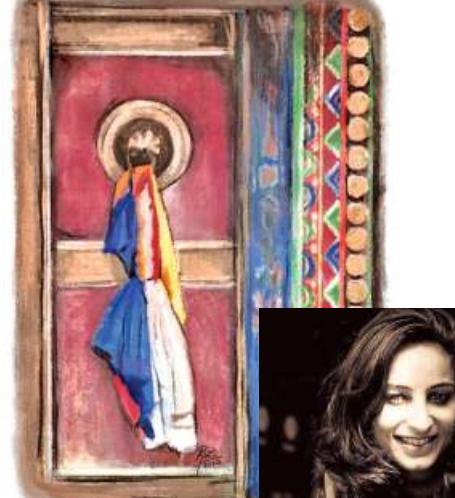
### Shikha Chitrak Desai

@soulsearchingjourneys  
A travel writer by profession, Desai's paintings are a mix of pen and watercolours. From fiery red trees during fall in Japan to more muted browns and dull greys in a scene from Hampi, her work is varied and detailed.

### Kalpana Sunder

@kalpanasunder

This independent journalist, who has travelled to 60 countries, is particularly fond of Van Gogh's style. Her watercolours feature everything from the candy-coloured buildings in Nyhavn, Copenhagen, to the portrait of a man from Nagaland wearing traditional finery. Available on Etsy.



### Ritu Saini

@ruthstudios\_rs

The Singapore-based graphic designer and blogger says, "I use Adobe Fresco and Canvas, as well as watercolours, oils and dry media brushes to paint." Her latest is a series showcasing Tibetan prayer flags from across the Himalayas.



### Kalpana Sunder

@kalpanasunder

This independent journalist, who has travelled to 60 countries, is particularly fond of Van Gogh's style. Her watercolours feature everything from the candy-coloured buildings in Nyhavn, Copenhagen, to the portrait of a man from Nagaland wearing traditional finery. Available on Etsy.



## The anatomy of a fundraiser

Backed by Bollywood star Kareena Kapoor Khan, the Baradari project has been designed to aid weaver and embroiderer communities

■ ROSELLA STEPHEN

One of the first items to go was Abraham & Thakore's gold foil jacket at ₹21,900. Rohit Bal's black printed anarkali at ₹37,500 also found a happy owner in under a minute. As festive lehengas, saris and kurta-sharara sets continue to fly off the digital shelves at Ensembleindia.com, it is clear that the Baradari project has stepped up things in the fundraiser department.

With the lockdown and May's cyclone Amphan in West Bengal, many craftsmen, embroiderers, weavers and artisans have lost their homes and looms, or have unsold inventory and need immediate financial help. The last few months have seen a few charity initiatives take shape, and individual designers have been aiding their craftsmen with dry rations or raw materials. But Baradari, founded by fashion journalist Namrata Zakaria and backed by Bollywood star Kareena Kapoor Khan, with Tina Tahiliani Parikh of Ensemble helping with execution and Pareena Thapar with communications, has got off to a flying start.



Weaver Rabindra Nath Das, a sari by Tarun Tahiliani and Kareena Kapoor Khan

While Zakaria got more than a 100 big names in Indian fashion on board – from Sabyasachi Mukherjee to Tarun Tahiliani, Abu Jani and Sandeep Khosla, Manish Malhotra and Rahul Mishra – she reveals that generous donations began coming in even before the start of the sale on August 7. As for participating designers, each has contributed two signature pieces, following the 'timeless' theme and a minimum price point set between ₹20,000 and ₹25,000.

Paramparik Karigar, an association of craftsmen, will help disburse the funds. "As far as transparency is concerned, the money trail is a rather simple one," explains Parikh, adding, "All sales proceeds will be transferred to Paramparik Karigar after we pay the GST on them. The tax exemption certificates will be passed on to the designers." Meanwhile, Khan's interviews on social media and in print seem to have galvanised fans into action. "If there is anything this lockdown has shown us, it is how unequal we are as a society. Baradari is about giving everyone a fair chance," she concludes.

The sale is till August 15 at ensembleindia.com. Read the entire article and an interview with Tina Tahiliani online at weekend.thehindu.com

## TRIBUTE

# A man who lived his ART AND CRAFT

How Ebrahim Alkazi's work coexisted with his family life

AMAL ALLANA

A hushed silence enveloped our home. Beethoven, Stravinsky, Begum Akhtar, Ravi Shankar - the gramophone playing 45s winds on. My father, absorbed in the music, eyes shut, a notebook and a well-sharpened pencil are neatly placed in front of him, aligned at a perfect 90-degree angle to the corner of the table! His body, in the pose of Rodin's Thinker, is relaxed, but at the same time suffused with a contained energy.

Daylight breaks with its soft, pink light, the sound of the sea and the sparrows melt away to be overtaken by the cacophony of BEST buses. He has been awake since at least 5 a.m., reading, and has already made himself a pot of tea. In a few moments he will offer a fresh cup to my mother, in bed, a small luxury that she appreciates without fail.

I observe the ritual through drowsy, half-closed eyes, while the servants begin to shuffle noiselessly about their chores. My gaze shifts, and is caught by an African mask, then moves to Husain's sensuous yet stately Blue Nude. It hovers on a bronze Shiv/Parvati immobilized forever in their ecstatic embrace, and finally comes to rest on a seated Bodhisattva Padmapani, graceful in his *tribhangi*, eyes down, looking inward, in meditation.

The whiteness of our studio flat, without walls to divide it into rooms, takes on the air of a temple or sanctuary, conceived, designed and appointed by my father in such a way as to encourage one to look within, to meditate, to contemplate -- a space for thought.

The simple, austere lines of the furniture, modern, yet functional, sparsely yet aesthetically



E. Alkazi (Clockwise from above) With Amal Allana at Cop Shiva's exhibition My Life is My Message, Art Heritage, New Delhi, 2013; with Amal Allana at Art Heritage Gallery, New Delhi; with Roshen Alkazi and Amal Alkazi, 1952 ■ E. ALKAZI PERSONAL ARCHIVES; ART HERITAGE PHOTO ARCHIVES



shape the space into areas for sleeping, eating, studying and socialising. This loose definition of space speaks of an attitude, a philosophy, where all daily activities are seen as part of an integral whole. There are no sharp distinctions between our private and social lives, just as there is no strong definition separating work from leisure. All work is seen as pleasurable and fulfilling, and so we ate, drank, did theatre, put up exhibitions, or went on picnics with the same degree and intensity of enjoyment.

Our home doubled as my father's workspace and so all his activities - discussions, rehearsals, the recording of music for his plays, the preparation of posters, the mounting of slides for his many talks - were done in full view of the family. He actively involved us in all. Thus, we imbibed and developed a love for art, architecture, dance, music, theatre, literature, poetry in a natural way - he awakened our sensibilities to space, light, form, colour, move-

ment, rhythm, and texture.

"Come here I want to show you something..."

My father's eyes twinkle with excitement as he magically reveals a box from behind his back, wrapped in white muslin. Unwrapping it very carefully, as if it were a fragile piece of glass, he gently lifts each art work out, and arranges them in neat rows on the mirror topped coffee table. This whole process is done slowly, meticulously, in complete silence, creating an aura of reverence and awe we should adopt towards these unique creations. His intentness evokes a similar response from us, so we just wait and watch, and are very still.

**EBRAHIM ALKAZI | 1925 - 2020**

In practically a whisper he says, "You will not believe it, but I discovered these beautiful watercolours in this tiny little ramshackle shop, and I was so thrilled that I felt we must look after them and cherish them. Aren't they exquisite?"

He proceeds to point out a few interesting details in each image: a bird perched on a branch, a man smoking a *beedi*. This way he arouses our interest; his idea is to awaken our curiosity. He wants us to look, to notice things hidden, half seen, tucked away.

I don't believe that as children or even as adults, he ever talked about art in conceptual or academic terms, but always referred to art as related to life, as an expression of the human condition.

As he once said: "A student can learn more by listening to the song of a bird, watching the *mochi* ply his craft, or a weaver work his loom, than by listening dumbly to an old bore who has the presumption to believe that he is paid only to mouth his platitudes."

The writer is Ebrahim Alkazi's daughter and is working on his biography

## Remembering Elk

Ebrahim Alkazi's life, as seen from the best seat in the theatre

PRADIP KRISHEN

In 1972, my first wife, Sonu, enrolled in the NSD for the Direction course. I was teaching at Delhi Uni where my classes gave over in the morning, so when I drove my scooter back after classes I had to find something to do until it was time for Sonu to come home with me. More often than not she was in rehearsals at the NSD and I spent many evenings sitting somewhere at the back, watching Elk directing his troops.

It's hard to convey what an avid *mahaul* for theatre Elk created in Delhi in the 1970s. It took time to build up, but by 1974 or so, there were queues around the block when a new NSD play was announced. Even the sweaty little studio productions on the third floor of Rabindra Bhawan were packed out. Everyone curried favour with Mr. Gandhi, the man at the counter who took advance bookings for NSD plays. Delhi had seen none of this madkeen interest in theatre before.



At the exhibition of photos of his theatre costumes at the Triveni Gallery, Delhi, 2008 ■ V K KRISHNAN

wavering cry of anguish that must still echo in the walls of the Purana Qila.

Alkazi was particularly good at crowd scenes - crowds made up of all the 'other students' in the NSD from Set Design, Make-up and Script Writing, and sometimes the carpenters, too. It was magical to see how Elk gave shape to a crowd, weaving it into the fabric of a play so that it felt like an intrinsic character. Some of the plays he chose to enact were poorly written, and Elk had the ability - and the license - to rip and rework them until they soared. He was a genius at lighting and stage design, and this aspect alone could dignify a middling good play and lift it to great heights.

I forgot when it was that Alkazi walked away from theatre. Was it 1981? It was whispered about like a giant sulk: 'If you don't appreciate me, I'm going'. But who knows what exactly happened in the background? Whatever it was that prompted Elk to walk away, Delhi's theatre quickly collapsed into mediocrity and hasn't recovered.

I don't want to speculate about why he left. I met him in London in the winter of 1981,

when he invited me to write a booklet about cinema for a Festival of India at Oxford's MOMA. Elk had walked out of a government committee for the Festival of India in London and set up his own breakaway, alternate Festival at Oxford. He probably thought, 'I'll show them!' but it didn't turn out well. GOI used its clout to prevent all the films he wanted shown from leaving India's shores, and MOMA's India Festival fizzled into an inconse-

quential event that not even the great man could dignify.

This may have been the last time Elk had anything to do with government. I can imagine how frustrating it might have been. At the best of times Elk didn't suffer fools gladly and he must have cut a lonely figure in *sarkari* committees. It was from here on that he went ahead with his photo archive work, never looking back.

Last year I wandered almost by accident into a small exhibition at Triveni celebrating Elk's years as an artist in London in the late 1940s and '50s. It was called 'Opening Lines' and I was so excited I circled back again two days later. It was a powerful tribute to Elk's individuality and exceptional talent.

I wonder if Elk made a big mistake in giving up his independent-artist-status to head the NSD? It was undoubtedly an act of big-hearted generosity and idealism on his part, and it must be said, also showed exceptional vision by the *sarkari* art establishment of the day - unthinkable in today's vitiated scene. I don't doubt how much Elk meant to theatre and gave to it in India, but purely from his individual standpoint, was it a colossal miscalculation on his part?

I don't know the answer. What I do know is that they don't make them like him any more. Elk was an artist of the world, with an unshackling breadth and brilliance that is difficult to find in any of his contemporaries. + Goodbye, great Man!

The writer is the author of books about trees and has spent the last 15 years restoring degraded landscapes in the desert

## FOOD SPOT

## A culinary mosaic



The menu from this home-style cooking place has something for everyone

RAHUL VERMA

One little corner of Connaught Place used to be a great favourite of mine. There was a wonderful Greek restaurant there (more than 15 years ago), and I still fondly remember its dolmas. Then that shut, but to my utter joy, a restaurant came up in its place which had a wide spectrum of food from the states, including from the northeast. All good things come to an end, so that restaurant - called Mosaic - shut, too.

Did I say all good things come to an end? Not always. After many ups and downs, and several restaurants here and there, the deft hand behind Mosaic is now wielding the spatula again. My friend Sohail had alerted me to the fact that a new outfit called Culinary Connections by Utpala Mukherjee (Ph: 9811157989 and 9350155045) was delivering food. I had a look at the menu and found some of my old favourites there. So, I promptly called up and placed a modest order.

We asked for a full roast chicken with onion sauce, mashed potatoes, and glazed vegetables (half, Rs 450), shepherd's pie (Rs 400), *dhokar dalna* (₹175), *muttar*

*Done just right* Roast chicken, shepherd's pie ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

A very happy meal later, I had a chat with the chef. An Assamese, she grew up in

CMYK



*puri* with *alur dum* (₹150), and *patishapta* (₹150). We got a discount, and the bill (with delivery charges) came to ₹1,225.

I enjoyed the roast, which came with a delicious sauce. The chicken was neither too dry, nor underdone, and the dripping from the roast had been cooked with onions and some secret ingredients, Mukherjee says. It didn't come with mashed potatoes but whole, browned potatoes, which went superbly with the roast that was perfect.

The shepherd's pie was excellent, too - though somewhat different from the way I cook it. It had bits of chopped carrots in it (the traditional recipe does have carrots) and the flavour of the Worcestershire sauce was strong.

We asked for a full roast chicken with onion sauce, mashed potatoes, and glazed vegetables (half, Rs 450), shepherd's pie (Rs 400), *dhokar dalna* (₹175), *muttar*

*Done just right* Roast chicken, shepherd's pie ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The food is umda, indeed.

The writer is a seasoned food critic

## FILM REVIEW

## Classism in Indian education

While making some pertinent commentary on access, privilege, and language, *Pareeksha* dodders under the weight of archaic melodrama

KENNETH ROSARIO

The recently unveiled National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 recommends using the mother tongue or local language as the medium of instruction in a child's early education, wherever possible. The policy has its supporters and critics with valid arguments on both sides. Does local language enhance the quality of education or is English a language of upward mobility?

In Prakash Jha's *Pareeksha*, we see a glimpse of this discussion play out in the life of a cycle rickshaw driver Buchi (Adil Hussain), who transports kids of wealthy households to a private school, Sapphire, in Jharkhand. He assumes English education in a CBSE school to be the sole escape out of poverty for his family, and resorts to petty theft in order to enrol his only son, Bulbul (Bulbul Jha), in Sapphire.

Against the backdrop of NEP, the film finds a compelling (and unintended) relevance, as Bulbul, a clever and precocious kid, struggles to assimilate into an English speaking environment. He has a much better grasp over physics, chemistry, and maths - subjects he learnt in a Hindi-medium government school - than his classmates in Sapphire, but falls behind with his inability to speak English adequately. Through a highly dramatised narrative, the film brings forth the fundamental conflicts between class, language and education in India, and makes

some pertinent observations.

At the heart of the film is a story of an underdog and *Pareeksha* goes all out to desperately evoke sympathies. We see the mother, Radhika (Priyanka Bose), working overtime in a utensil factory and Buchi slipping further into the world of theft to pay their son's exorbitant fees.

Hussain constantly has a frail and dejected body language, at times whimpering with hands folded and head bowed down. It's hard not to feel bad for Buchi, but one wishes the character had some agency or complexity. Bose balances out her weakness with moments of strength, and is compelling as the emotionally stronger parent. Jha as Bulbul is easy to root for, as a fairly mature kid with aspirations and dignity.

The film is well-intended but half-way through becomes unnecessarily melo-

dramatic with the introduction of SP Kailash Anand (Sanjay Suri), a good Samaritan who worked his way up from poverty.

Once his character enters the scenario, the film loses its appeal of observational storytelling and becomes weepy, hammering in the value of education repeatedly.

The film opens with the sound of the *azaan* blending into temple bells. It's a harmonious setting and poverty isn't maudlin. The first half

has a few subtle audio-visual motifs like these, which help us peek into contemporary Jharkhand. But the second half of the film is repetitive and feels staged in comparison to the first.

Even though the film showcases class inequalities in Jharkhand and how it impacts education and literary, there is a nagging elimination of the role of the caste and gender divide in education.

While caste is never truly addressed, let alone as explicitly as class, the role of gender is also largely brushed aside. Granted a film can't address all aspects of society, and *Pareeksha* makes a few pertinent observations in the area it chooses to address, but it fails to bring other inherent complexities and contradictions one can't overlook. There is always a possibility to dig deeper and explore beyond the most obvious binaries.

CMYK

# Rajapaksas win super majority in Sri Lanka parliamentary poll

SLPP secures nearly 60% of the total vote; critics worry about consequences

MEERA SRINIVASAN  
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's ruling party secured a two-thirds majority in the recent parliamentary elections, Friday's results showed, giving the Rajapaksa brothers the power they sought to amend the Constitution.

The Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP) obtained nearly 60% of the total votes polled, almost equaling the Rajapaksa-led front's biggest mandate yet in 2010, when it peaked in popularity on the heels of ending the civil war.

Coming less than a year after President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's ascent to power, the huge victory heralds the brothers' likely power consolidation, as they helm the country's two most powerful offices.

The President's elder brother Mahinda Rajapaksa, 74, polled over 5,00,000 votes in his constituency – Kurunegala district in North Western Province – and will be sworn in as Prime Minister on Sunday at the Kelaniya Raja Maha Vihara, a famed Buddhist temple near Colombo. The SLPP, one of Sri Lanka's newest parties founded by the Rajapaksas, won 145 seats in the 225-member legislature. With the assured support of at least five allies, the party can easily reach the 150-seat mark needed for two-thirds support, which is a political feat in Sri Lanka's proportional representation system of election.

**'Prove us wrong'**  
However, the prospect of such a super majority has already sparked concern



Huge mandate: Mahinda and Gotabaya Rajapaksa, right, in Colombo in an August 2019 photo. • AP

among sceptics and Opposition forces.

"2/3 majority! Expecting the worst – hoping for the best. Prove us wrong, Mr. President," tweeted Mangala Samaraweera, a prominent Minister in the former government, who opted out of the political race, after his party suffered a split ahead of this election.

The "root causes" of the evils facing Sri Lanka, he said, could be traced to periods when governments held a two-thirds majority in the House, citing precedents in 1956, 1977 and 2010, while urging the President to learn from "past mistakes".

#### Likely casualties

Even before the polls, the Rajapaksas vowed to change the 19th Amendment to the Constitution, a 2015 legislation – introduced during the former government's tenure – that sought to trim the President's executive powers and strengthen independent institutions.

In a recent interview to

the local *Daily FT* newspaper ahead of elections, Basil Rajapaksa, another Rajapaksa sibling and the architect of their camp's poll campaigns and victories, referred to the 13th Amendment as "the first biggest blow" to the Sri Lankan Constitution. "A Constitution needs pillars and frameworks. Unfortunately in the current situation these have been changed from time to time... we are definitely dedicated to a new Constitution," he said, tying it to the mandate their party might get.

Speaking of the SLPP's future role, he said he would like to model it on the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) in India, the "best two" examples, and "how they act".

While Sri Lankans wait to see how the ambitious party fares while in power, rights and democratic freedoms have already come under greater focus after President Gotabaya Rajapaksa assumed office. Recently, 10 international human rights organisations – including Amnesty International, Forum Asia and South Asians for Human Rights – issued a joint statement urging the Sri Lankan government to end "targeted arrests, intimidation and threats" of lawyers, activists, human rights defenders and journalists.

Following his big win, PM Mahinda Rajapaksa on Friday thanked supporters for "placing their trust" on President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and himself. "We will ensure #Ilka will not stand disappointed during our tenure," he said in a tweet.

# Tamils deliver clear message to leaders

TNA's tally comes down to 10 from 16; four candidates aligned with SLPP win

MEERA SRINIVASAN  
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka's northern Tamils, who delivered a clear message to President Gotabaya Rajapaksa in the November presidential election by emphatically voting against him, gave a different, yet very strong message to their own Tamil leadership in the recent general election.

The Tamil National Alliance (TNA), the main grouping representing Tamils of the north and east, with 16 seats in the last Parliament, secured only 10 seats in Wednesday's parliamentary poll, as disillusioned voters decided to give others, including smaller Tamil nationalist parties, a chance.

The All Ceylon Tamil Congress (ACTO), led by Gajendrakumar Ponnambalam, won two seats, while former

Northern Province Chief Minister C.V. Wigneswaran, who broke away from the TNA, won one seat in Jaffna.

The split in votes was not unexpected, given the fragmented political landscape in the north and east. But significantly, the Tamil voters chose at least four candidates from parties aligned to the ruling Sri Lanka Podujana Peramuna (SLPP), including Eelam People's Democratic Party (EPDP) leader Douglas Devananda, Angajan Ramanathan of the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and Sivanesathurai Chandranathan or 'Pillayan' of the Tamil Makkal Viduthalai Pulikal (TMVP).

"In the north-east as a whole, there is a clear shift towards parties aligned to the government in Colombo. We must take note of that," said TNA spokesman M.A.

Sumanthiran, addressing a press conference in Jaffna on Friday.

Blaming the TNA for this shift, Mr. Wigneswaran, who was Chief Minister of the TNA-led Northern Provincial Council for five years, said it was the Alliance's failures that led people to politicians linked to national parties.

#### A decade's wait

People's waning faith in the TNA comes after a decade's wait for a political solution,

which the former government backed by the Alliance promised but failed to deliver. Many found its initiatives on accountability unconvincing, efforts at a constitutional settlement half-hearted and programmes for economic recovery slow.

Further, with post war development efforts by successive governments at the

Centre proving inadequate or thoughtless, the war-affected Tamils' economic distress grew over the decade – seen in stifling debts, lack of housing, prevalent joblessness and neglected livelihoods. Observers note that a growing discontent perhaps steered voters towards parties aligned to the Centre, that distributed aid and jobs through carefully cultivated patronage networks.

Going by the voters' mandate for the TNA and the rest, it is hard to conclude that they chose economic priorities over political rights. But clearly, in their divided vote, they have reminded their political leadership that rhetoric without action or policy without targeted programmes cannot help them cope with the aftermath of a brutal war.

# 'Probe will determine what caused blast'

Lebanon President says external interference has not yet been ruled out

REUTERS  
BEIRUT

Lebanon's President said on Friday that an investigation into the biggest blast in Beirut's history would examine whether it was caused by a bomb or other external interference, as residents tried to rebuild their shattered lives after the explosion.

The search for those missing has intensified, as rescuers sifted rubble in a race to find anyone still alive after Tuesday's blast that killed 154, smashed up a swathe of the city and sent seismic shockwaves around the region. "The cause has not been determined yet. There is a possibility of external interference through a rocket or bomb or other act," said



Rescue efforts: A rescue team surveying the site of the explosion in the port of Beirut, Lebanon, on Friday • AP

President Michel Aoun.

He said it would also consider whether the explosion was due to negligence or an accident. He previously said highly explosive material had been stored in unsafe

conditions for years at the port. A source has said an initial probe blamed negligence related to storage of the explosive material.

The United States has previously said it has not ruled

out an attack. Israel, which has fought several wars with Lebanon, has also previously denied it had any role.

#### Protest in Beirut

Security forces fired teargas at a furious crowd in Beirut late on Thursday, as anger boiled over at the ruling elite, who have presided over a nation that faced economic collapse even before the deadly port blast that injured 5,000 people.

Lebanese Red Cross Secretary General George Kettenah told local radio VDL that three more bodies had been found in the search, while the Health Minister said on Friday the death toll had climbed to 154. Dozens are still unaccounted for.

# U.S. sanctions Hong Kong leader Lam

10 others also targeted in major step against security law

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
WASHINGTON

The U.S. on Friday slapped sanctions on Hong Kong's leader Carrie Lam and 10 other senior figures, in a major new step against China's clampdown in the semi-autonomous city.

In the most significant U.S. action since China imposed a tough security law, Ms. Lam and the other leaders of the Asian financial hub will have any assets in the U.S. blocked.

The move also criminalises any U.S. financial transactions with them.

"The United States stands with the people of Hong Kong and we will use our tools and authorities to target those undermining their autonomy," said Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin.

#### Violation of promise

Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said the U.S. was acting because Beijing had violated its promise of autonomy that

it made to Hong Kong before Britain handed back the territory in 1997.

The Treasury Department said that Ms. Lam, as Chief Executive of Hong Kong, "is directly responsible for implementing Beijing's policies of suppression of freedom and democratic processes."

Other sanctioned officials include Chris Tang, Commissioner of the Hong Kong Police Force, and Luo Huining, Director of the Liaison Office, China's office in the city.

# ALAGAPPA UNIVERSITY

[A State University Accredited with A+ Grade by NAAC (CGPA:3.64) in the Third Cycle,  
Graded as Category-I University and Granted Autonomy by MHRD-UGC,  
2020: QS India Rank-24, QS ASIA Rank-222, MHRD - NIRF, 2020 Rank (University) : 36]  
KARAIKUDI - 630 003, TAMIL NADU, INDIA

Applications are invited for admission to the following programmes offered in the University Departments and Constituent Colleges for the Academic Year 2020-2021. Last date for Online submission of applications is extended up to 17.08.2020.

M.A.Tamil	M.P.Ed.
M.P.A in Music (Vocal) - Part Time	M.Ed. Special Education (Visual Impairment) 2 years
M.P.A Bharathanatyam - Part Time	M.Sc. Yoga
M.S.W. (Master of Social Work)	M.Voc. Fashion Technology
M.A. Economics	M.Voc. Software Development
M.A. History	M.B.A. (Logistics Management)
M.Lib.I.Sc. (2 Years)	M.B.A. (International Business)
M.A. Public Administration	M.B.A. (Corporate Secretarship)
M.A. Journalism and Mass Communication	M.B.A. (Banking & Insurance)
M.A. Theatre and Film Studies	M.B.A. (Tourism Management)
M.A. Sociology	M.B.A. (Disaster Management)
M.Sc. Nanoscience & Technology	B.P.A. Bharathanatyam (4 years) – Part Time
M.Sc. Chemistry (Sp) Nanoscience & Technology	B.P.A Music (4 years) – Part Time
M.Sc. Energy Science	B.Ed. Special Education (Intellectual Disability)
M.Sc. Computer Science	B.Ed. Special Education (Visual Impairment)
M.Sc. Information Technology	B.P.Ed. (2 years)
M.Sc. Zoology	B.Sc. Yoga
M.Sc. Material Science	PG Diploma in Fashion Designing
M.Sc. Botany	PG Diploma in Big Data Analytics
M.Sc. Marine Biology (5 Year Integrated)	D.P.Ed. (2 years)
M.Sc. Fisheries Science	Diploma in Tamil Culture
M.Sc. Psychology	Diploma in Folk Dance & Music
M.Ed.	

Candidates can apply through online in the University website <https://alagappauniversity.ac.in/admission20>  
For more details, visit our website [www.alagappauniversity.ac.in](http://www.alagappauniversity.ac.in) or contact (+91) 4565 223111, Email: [alagappauniversityadmission@gmail.com](mailto:alagappauniversityadmission@gmail.com)

Prof. H. GURUMALLESH PRABU, Ph.D.  
REGISTRAR

# TAMIL NADU VETERINARY AND ANIMAL SCIENCES UNIVERSITY

Office of ICAR-NAHEP-IDP of TANUVAS,  
Madras Veterinary College, Veppery, Chennai – 600 007.

#### NOTICE FOR REQUEST FOR BIDS (RFB)

Bids are requested for the procurement of "High-end microscope with large digital display – 16 nos" under ICAR-NAHEP-IDP of TANUVAS scheme. The bidding document may be downloaded free of cost from [www.tanuvas.ac.in](http://www.tanuvas.ac.in), [idptanuvas.com](http://idptanuvas.com) and [nahep.icar.gov.in](http://nahep.icar.gov.in).

Starting date for downloading bids	:	10.08.2020, 10:00 AM
Last date for downloading bids	:	10.09.2020, 5:00 PM
Last date for submission of bids	:	11.09.2020, 3:30 PM
Date of opening of bids	:	11.09.2020, 4:00 PM

Questions to be addressed by mail to [idp@tanuvas.org.in](mailto:idp@tanuvas.org.in)

Professor and Head & IDP Coordinator,  
MVC, TANUVAS, Chennai – 600 007.

## ELSEWHERE



### At 95, Mahathir to launch political party

KUALA LUMPUR  
Malaysia's Mahathir Mohamad, 95, said on Friday that he was setting up a new party as he seeks to take on the government, months after his administration collapsed. Mr. Mohamad, the world's oldest leader until his resignation in February, first entered Parliament as an MP in 1964 and had two stints as Prime Minister. AFP

**China sentences another Canadian to death**  
BEIJING  
China sentenced another Canadian to death on drugs charges on Friday, the second in two days to be handed the punishment. The Foshan Intermediate People's Court in the country's southern Guangdong province said Ye Jianhui had been sentenced and would have all his assets confiscated. AFP

## 'Loya Jirga' to decide on prisoner release begins

Taliban wants 400 fighters to be freed

SUHASINI HAIDAR  
NEW DELHI

As Afghanistan began a three-day 'Loya Jirga' to decide on freeing about 400 Taliban fighters convicted for "serious crimes" including murder and abductions, India said it would support the Ashraf Ghani government on the issue, and that the government has been briefed on plans for intra-Afghan negotiations.

The 'Loya Jirga', or grand assembly of more than 3,000 representatives from around the country, has been convened after Mr. Ghani refused to release the men, an announcement that threatened to derail intra-Afghan talks, tentatively scheduled for August 10 in Doha. The Jirga was called after some heavy lifting from the U.S. pushing the Ghani government for a compromise.

"The Loya Jirga is a highly respected traditional con-

### NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT & PANCHAYATI RAJ (An Organisation of the Ministry of Rural Development, Govt. of India) Rajendranagar, Hyderabad - 500030.

#### RECRUITMENT NOTIFICATION

Applications are invited from qualified and experienced persons for the following positions:

##### Name of the Post

##### No.of Positions

1 Director (Administration & HR), DDU-GKY 1

## MARKET WATCH

	07-08-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	38,041	0.04
US Dollar	74.93	0.00
Gold	57,008	0.74
Brent oil	44.61	-1.70

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	326.65	2.85
Asian Paints	1806.25	78.70
Axisc Bank	433.30	0.30
Bajaj Auto	3001.70	9.90
Bajaj Finserv	6467.15	171.45
Bajaj Finance	3464.30	119.10
Bharti Airtel	560.80	5.50
BPCL	419.75	10.20
Britannia Ind	3934.80	77.15
Cipla	728.65	-2.45
Coal India	129.75	0.90
Dr Reddys Lab	4573.50	-9.55
Eicher Motors	21807.35	126.05
GAIL (India)	96.90	1.25
Grasim Ind	636.55	2.35
HCL Tech.	690.30	-14.60
HDFC	1777.70	-6.05
HDFC Bank	1043.85	3.15
HDFC Life	606.95	0.05
Hero MotoCorp	2706.20	1.75
Hindustan	177.60	-0.40
Hind Unilever	2210.55	-9.90
ICICI Bank	357.95	-0.80
IndusInd Bank	509.00	14.10
Bharti Infratel	192.60	1.05
Infosys	950.90	-19.95
Indian Oil Corp	86.40	-0.80
ITC	196.05	0.70
JSW Steel	240.20	0.70
Kotak Bank	1342.50	2.40
L.T.	915.65	-6.50
M&M	600.45	-9.20
Maruti Suzuki	6679.00	123.25
Nestle India Ltd.	16788.60	111.45
NTPC	85.80	-0.35
ONGC	78.65	0.60
PowerGrid Corp	175.95	0.05
Reliance Ind	2146.45	12.35
State Bank	190.65	-0.30
Shree Cement	21910.10	187.25
Sun Pharma	525.95	-6.30
Tata Motors	119.10	2.30
Tata Steel	404.05	3.60
TCS	2295.35	-12.75
Tech Mahindra	662.45	2.10
Titan	1091.05	-29.10
UltraTech Cement	4004.25	-24.10
UPL	480.30	16.40
Wipro	277.40	-2.25
Zee Entertainment	150.10	1.35

## EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar.....	74.73	75.05
Euro.....	88.32	88.70
British Pound	97.70	98.12
Japanese Yen (100).....	70.72	71.04
Chinese Yuan.....	10.74	10.79
Swiss Franc.....	81.75	82.10
Singapore Dollar.....	54.51	54.75
Canadian Dollar.....	55.96	56.20
Malaysian Ringgit.....	17.84	17.93
Australian Dollar.....	53.82	54.05

Source: Indian Bank

## IN BRIEF

## Business confidence index drops 40%: survey

NEW DELHI

NCAER's Business Confidence Index (BCI), an indicator of the business sentiment across the Indian industry, stood at 46.4 in the first quarter of 2020-21, a drop of 40% from its level of 77.4 in the previous quarter, according to a survey by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER). "This is the lowest the BCI has ever fallen in the history of 113 rounds of the NCAER Business Expectations Survey (BES)," it said on Friday. PTI

# M&M drops U.S. capital plan after loss

Aborts \$500 mn investment amid ₹98-cr. Q1 group loss; seeks investor in Mahindra Electric

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) on Friday reported a first-quarter consolidated loss of ₹98 crore and said it had dropped plans to invest \$500 million in the U.S. with its unit Mahindra Automotive North America (MANA) exiting a race to supply small delivery trucks to the United States Postal Service (USPS) – a deal estimated at \$6.3 billion.

"MANA, among four short-listed players, has decided not to bid considering prevailing conditions," said Anish Saha, deputy MD and



**Braking hard:** The investment in MANA was subject to winning the USPS bid. M&M exited due to 'prevailing conditions'. - AFP

## Franklin Templeton's shut schemes net ₹4,280 crore

Debt funds' AUM stand at ₹25,000 cr.

S'PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund's six schemes have received ₹4,280 crore from maturities, pre-payments and coupon payments since the announcement of their closure in April.

The amount has been received without the ability to efficiently monetise assets, Franklin Templeton Asset Management (India) president Sanjay Sapre wrote in a letter to investors.

The schemes will endeavour to accelerate monetisation post the successful completion of the e-voting

exercise and the unit-holder meets, he added.

"From April 24 till July 31, 2020, the schemes have received ₹4,280 crore from maturities, pre-payments, and coupons," he said.

Of the total amount, the schemes received ₹1,005 crore in July alone.

Franklin Templeton shut six debt mutual fund schemes on April 23, citing redemption pressure and lack of liquidity in the bond market.

These schemes together have an estimated ₹25,000 crore as assets under management (AUM), which is the member-secretary of the committee.

## Debt recast may neither help ailing MSMEs nor lenders'

Viability's meaning changed due to COVID-19: industry body

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

The RBI's move to allow restructuring of advances for 'viable' MSMEs may fail to achieve the intended objective of supporting viable but ailing MSMEs while avoiding an increase in NPAs at banks as the very meaning of 'viable' has undergone a change in the last four months due

to the impact of COVID-19, an umbrella body comprising 30 industry groups said on Friday.

Observing that many MSMEs had struggled even before March in the wake of the economic slowdown, K.E. Raghunathan, convenor Consortium of Indian Associations (CIA) said the cut-off date should ideally be De-

cember 31, 2019. "Otherwise, restructuring will not actually reduce NPA growth at all. It will make healthier enterprises become weak."

The CIA has made several suggestions including allowing borrowers to settle their loans without any pre-payment charges or interest. This would help both banks and entrepreneurs, he said.

## Kia unveils compact SUV Sonet

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Kia Motors on Friday globally unveiled its compact SUV 'Sonet', which will be introduced in India ahead of the upcoming festive season.

Sonet will compete with Maruti Suzuki's Vitara Brezza, Tata Motors' Nexon, Hyundai's Venue and soon to be launched Urban Cruiser by Toyota Kirloskar Motor.

## Daimler arm drives into used CV segment

Firm to restart second shift at plant

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHENNAI

"BharatBenz Exchange will supplement its existing new vehicle sales model by offering an exchange platform where customers can exchange their used vehicles of any brand for new BharatBenz vehicles," said Satyakam Arya, MD and CEO, DICV. "Initially, DICV will accept only trucks in the medium and heavy CV segment and Bharat Benz brands," he added.

The firm will also restart the second shift at its Oregadam plant from next week, said a top official.

## Minspace REIT rises 10% on BSE debut

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

Minspace Business Parks REIT made its market debut on Friday and closed with a premium of over 10% against its issue price of ₹275 per unit.

The units listed at ₹304, reflecting a gain of 10.54% from the issue price on the BSE. During the day, it touched ₹308.90, surging 12.32%. It closed at ₹303.87, up 10.49%.

## INTERVIEW | SUBRAM NATARAJAN

### Watson Assistant 'speaks' for ICMR

The AI engine helps boost response time during COVID-19'

K. BHARAT KUMAR

How do you predict demand for a consumable product during uncertain times such as now, with the COVID-19 pandemic? Using Artificial Intelligence (AI) is one way to do it. Subram Natarajan, chief technology officer, IBM India, says AI technology has come a long way in the past two decades. With computing power and storage becoming unlimited, adoption of AI at scale is gathering pace. Excerpts:

What has led to AI suddenly gaining attention in the recent past?

■ AI has been around for decades, but has come of age by means of how we deploy it and we are seeing early results. The pandemic helped accelerate the adoption to a scale that we have not imagined. The first major introduction of AI as a conversational engine happened years ago in one of the game shows – Jeopardy. The challenge was to formulate a question for a given answer. The game touched upon various topics, from economics to IT to literature to arts.

Watson – one of the AI engines for IBM – was aimed at understanding human speech, make sense out of it, gain an understanding of the intent behind it, and then come up with a response that complied with the rules of the game.

Can you elaborate on the work you're doing with ICMR?

AI has been around for decades. The pandemic helped accelerate the adoption to a scale we have not imagined



When COVID happened, the Indian Council of Medical Research began using our Watson virtual agent, also called as the Watson Assistant. While the deployment in ICMR is highly impactful, this could extend to any call centre – be it for a bank or a telecom company. The Watson Assistant understands what you're asking, the intent behind it and can come up with the right kind of response.

Following ICMR, some State governments have wanted such assistance. The AP government has already introduced Watson Assistant in their citizen services.

Has data quality improved? ■ Yes. More than 60% of the time data teams are just working on making the data available for the AI and ML. When you fail to do this, you get into a bad data situation; therefore the AI that results is going to be poor quality.

How have you helped Parle predict demand during the pandemic?

■ With COVID coming in, influencing factors went haywire. It was a new normal, so we needed post-COVID data.

Data seeding post-COVID and intelligence coming out of the system is far more accurate than one can think. Parle has used this very effectively, especially for goods with a short shelf life.

### KSEB KERALA STATE ELECTRICITY BOARD LTD - E-TENDER NOTICE

Office of the Chief Engineer, Generation & PED - Moolamattam  
Tender ID: 2020\_KSEB\_372784 "Rebuilding , Erection , Testing and Commissioning of Generator Turbine shaft of 55 MW Unit # 2 machine at Sabarigiri HEP, Moozhiyar \*PAC : Rs.7,85,74,070/- \*Last Date : 07-09-2020, 4.30 PM.  
Visit [www.etenders.kerala.gov.in](http://www.etenders.kerala.gov.in) & [www.kseb.in](http://www.kseb.in)  
Ref. PR/MC1/E 220/E-Tender/2020

### SOUTHERN RAILWAY (CONSTRUCTION ORGANISATION)

E-TENDER NOTICE No. SG-CNMTP-2020-2-SA-IBS Dt. 05.08.2020  
For and on behalf of The President of India, The Executive Signal and Telecommunication Engineer, Construction and Metropolitan Transport Project, Southern Railway, Ground Floor, GC building, McNichols Road, Chetpet, Chennai – 31, invites e-tenders for the following work:  
Name of the work : Provision of Electronic Interlocking Signalling arrangements (Both Indoor & Outdoor) for Intermediate Block Signals (IBS) between Omalur and Mecheri Road stations and at Omalur station on Salem Division in connection with Omalur – Mettur Dam Doubling.  
Approximate Cash value : ₹555.60 lakhs  
Earnest Money Deposit (Rupees) : ₹4,27,800/-  
Period of Completion : Six months  
Date and time of Closing of bidding : 27.08.2020 at 14.00 hrs  
Date and time of Opening of Tender : 27.08.2020 at 14.30 hrs  
For further details refer Website address : [www.ireps.gov.in](http://ireps.gov.in)  
For further details, contact office at this Address : The Executive Signal and Telecommunication Engineer, Construction and Metropolitan Transport Project, Southern Railway, Ground Floor, GC building, McNichols Road, Chetpet, Chennai – 31  
Payment of Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) and Tender Document Cost (TDC) in respect of e-tendering shall be accepted through net banking or payment gateway only.

Executive Signal and Telecom Engineer,  
Construction and Metropolitan Transport Project, Chennai – 31  
Follow us on : [twitter.com/GMSRailway](https://twitter.com/GMSRailway)

### GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH GVVV & VWS Department

TV PICKS

**Formula One:** Qualifying, SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 6.20 p.m.  
**UEFA Champions League:** Sony Ten 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 12.30 a.m. (Saturday)  
**England vs Pakistan:** Sony Six (SD & HD), 3.30 p.m.  
**NBA:** Sony Six (SD & HD), 6.30 a.m. & 4 a.m. (Sunday)  
**LPGA Marathon Classic:** Eurosport (SD & HD), 1.30 a.m. (Sunday)

IN BRIEF



Bucks clinch Eastern top-seeding for playoffs

MIAMI  
Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 33 points as Milwaukee Bucks rallied from a 23-point deficit to defeat Miami Heat 130-116 and clinch the top-seeding in the NBA Eastern Conference.  
**Other results:** LA Clippers bt Dallas Mavericks 126-111; Houston Rockets bt LA Lakers 113-97; Phoenix Suns bt Indiana Pacers 114-99; Portland Trail Blazers bt Denver Nuggets 125-115; Sacramento Kings bt New Orleans Pelicans 140-125. AFP

Shubhankar in danger of missing the cut

HERTFORDSHIRE  
Shubhankar Sharma carded an even-par 71 in the opening round, an effort that placed him tied 110th and in danger of missing the cut at the 2020 English Championship here. Seven players, with a seven under-64, shared the lead. PTI



Ko, Kang share Marathon Classic first-round lead

WASHINGTON  
World No. 2 Danielle Kang and New Zealand's Lydia Ko each fired a seven-under 64 on Thursday to share the lead after the opening round of the LPGA Marathon Classic. American Megan Khang was one stroke off the pace. AFP

London plans elite-only, new-route marathon

LONDON  
The pandemic-delayed London Marathon will be staged on October 4 using a different route than usual and only elite runners participating. There will be a looped 26.2-mile course featuring 19.8 laps. AP



Svitolina and Bertens withdraw from US Open

PARIS  
Elina Svitolina and Kiki Bertens, ranked fifth and seventh in the WTA rankings, withdrew from the US Open on Friday, joining other senior players in pulling out because of concerns about coronavirus. Former champions Andy Murray and Kim Clijsters have been handed wild cards for the tournament beginning on August 31. AFP

Perez tests positive for COVID-19 again

SILVERSTONE  
Sergio Perez will miss a second Formula One race at Silverstone this week after again testing positive for the coronavirus. The Mexican driver had hoped to return after spending seven days in quarantine, but his Racing Point team said on Friday he had tested positive. AP

Racing Point penalised after Renault complaint

SILVERSTONE  
Formula One team Racing Point will be docked 15 points after a complaint from Renault that it had copied elements from Mercedes' world championship-winning 2019 car was upheld, the FIA said on Friday. Racing Point will lose 7.5 points for each of its two cars participating in the 2020 season. Racing Point has also been fined €200,000 euros per car. Racing Point may appeal the penalty. AFP

# Yasir has England in a bind

Leg-spinner's four-for gives Pakistan a 107-run lead over the host

PAKISTAN IN ENG.

REUTERS  
MANCHESTER

Leg-spinner Yasir Shah took four wickets as Pakistan bowled England out for 219 in its first innings to seize control of the first Test at tea on day three at Old Trafford on Friday.

Prodigious turn

Yasir (four for 66) was the stand-out performer as he produced prodigious turn on a wearing wicket that will have him licking his lips for more when England bats last.

The host resumed the day on 92 for four and Ollie Pope (62) looked relatively assured as he moved to his fifth Test half-century.

But the threat from the Pakistani seamers was ever-present and 17-year-old Naqeeb Shah got a delivery to rise sharply off a length that



**Spectacular:** Shafiq takes off to snare Bess off Yasir. ■ AFP

caught Pope's bat and provided a catch for Shadab Khan in the gully.

Yasir bowled Jos Buttler (38) between bat and pad, caught the edge of Dom Bess (1) for a fine catch at slip by Asad Shafiq, before a skidding delivery castled Woakes (19).

Only a late cameo from Broad (29 not out) saw En-

gland past 200, with the second leg-spinner in the Pakistan side, Shadab (two for 13), wrapping up the innings.

**Pakistan 87 for four**

■ Pakistan was 87 for four in 31 overs with Shafiq (21) and Rizwan (16) at the crease.

gland past 200, with the second leg-spinner in the Pakistan side, Shadab (two for 13), wrapping up the innings.

**Fall of wickets:** 1-4, 2-12, 3-12, 4-62, 5-127, 6-159, 7-161, 8-170, 9-197.

**Pakistan bowling:** Afzali 18-4-51, Abbas 15-6-33-2, Naseem 16-4-44-1, Yasir 18-2-66-4, Shadab 3-0-13-2.

**Pakistan - 2nd innings:** Shan Masood c Buttler b Broad 0, Abid Ali (batting) 15, Azhar Ali (batting) 0; Extras (b-4, nb-1): 5; Total (for one wkt. in nine overs, at tea): 20.

**Fall of wicket:** 1-6.

**England bowling:** Anderson 5-2-14-0, Broad 4-3-2-1.

SCOREBOARD

**Pakistan - 1st innings:** 326.

**England - 1st innings:** Rory Burns lbw b Afridi 4, Dom Sibley lbw b Abbas 8, Joe Root c Rizwan b Yasir 14, Ben Stokes b Abbas 0, Ollie Pope c Shadab b Naseem 62, Jos Buttler b Yasir 38, Chris Woakes b Yasir 19, Dom Bess c Shafiq b Yasir 1, Jofra Archer c Rizwan b Shadab 16, Stuart Broad (not out) 29, James Anderson lbw b Shadab 7; Extras (b-8, lb-4, nb-8, w-1): 21; Total (in 70.3 overs): 219.

**Fall of wickets:** 1-4, 2-12, 3-12,

4-62, 5-127, 6-159, 7-161, 8-170, 9-197.

**Pakistan bowling:** Afzali 18-4-51, Abbas 15-6-33-2, Naseem 16-4-44-1, Yasir 18-2-66-4, Shadab 3-0-13-2.

**Pakistan - 2nd innings:** Shan

Masood c Buttler b Broad 0,

Abid Ali (batting) 15, Azhar Ali (batting) 0; Extras (b-4, nb-1): 5; Total (for one wkt. in nine overs, at tea): 20.

**Fall of wicket:** 1-6.

**England bowling:** Anderson 5-2-14-0, Broad 4-3-2-1.

# India keeps 2021 T20 WC; 2022 edition in Australia

Women's ODI WC postponed to 2022

AMOL KARHADKAR

MUMBAI

The International Cricket

Council (ICC) has retained

India as the host of the 2021

T20 World Cup and reas-

signed the deferred 2020

edition to Australia in 2022.

While finalising these deci-

sions on Friday, the ICC

Board also postponed the

Women's ODI World Cup

from early 2021 to 2022.

Doubts over India hosting

the 2021 event arose on July

20 when the ICC, while

postponing the 2020 T20

World Cup to 2022 because

of the pandemic, didn't

specify the venues for the

2021 and 2022 editions. Aus-

tralia was scheduled to stage

the 2020 competition in

October-November.

India was awarded the

2021 tournament, but its

host status was threatened

after it did not meet the first

deadline for securing tax ex-

emptions from the Central government. As of now, India still retains hosting rights, with the ICC extending the deadline to December 31.

"The decisions were taken by the IBC (commercial subsidiary of ICC) following an extensive contingency planning exercise which has taken into account the health, cricket and commercial impact of COVID-19 around the world," the ICC said in a statement.

It is learnt that the decision to postpone the Women's World Cup was more due to commercial reasons, with the ICC and its broadcasting partner preferring to save costs in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic. However, ICC chief executive Manu Sawhney cited a lack of game-time for cricketers as the primary cause for the deferment.

Home series against England put off to 2021

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

India's limited-overs home series against England, scheduled for later this year, has been postponed to early next year, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) confirmed on Friday.

"BCCI and ECB [England and Wales Cricket Board] are in consultation with a view to confirming the 2021 schedules for an all-formats England men's tour to India to run from late January to late March and for India's Test tour to England due in the summer of 2021," the BCCI said in a statement.

India was slated to host England for three ODIs and as many T20Is in late September and early October and five Tests early next year, according to the previous Future Tours Programme.

Manpreet, four others test positive

UTHRA GANESAN

NEW DELHI

Five players of the men's hockey team, including captain Manpreet Singh, have tested positive for COVID-19 at the Sports Authority of India Centre in Bengaluru.

The teams, both men and women, had reported back for the national camp on Monday after a 45-day break. Besides Manpreet, Surender Kumar, Jaskaran Singh, Varun Kumar and goalkeeper Krishan Bahadur Pathak have tested positive.

All five had travelled together from their hometowns and are likely to have contracted the virus en route. Interestingly, Manpreet had celebrated his birthday last month with a few friends and teammates, including Varun. All players are in quarantine at the SAI Centre since arrival as part of the State and SAI protocol.

# Barcelona hopes for redemption

Faces Napoli in the second leg after a 1-1 draw in the first

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

REUTERS

BARCELONA

Barcelona will hope to overcome the disappointment of failing to retain the LaLiga crown as it takes on Napoli in the second leg of the round of 16 of the Champions League at the Nou Camp on Saturday.

With the tie on a knife-edge after a 1-1 draw back in February, Barca will be without midfield duo Sergio Busquets and Arturo Vidal but will have Antoine Griez-

mann and Frenkie de Jong, plus defenders Clement Lenglet and Ronald Araujo back.

Ousmane Dembele, however, is still out despite returning to training after six months away.

Lionel Messi and defender Nelson Semedo, meanwhile, would be conditioned by the knowledge that a yellow card would see them suspended from the quarter-finals if the team progresses to the last eight.

Bayern Munich, up 3-0 against Chelsea, will be without winger Kingsley Coman.

"We cannot be too relaxed despite our advantage from the first leg," he said.

# Jimenez puts Wolves in last eight

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE PARIS

Raul Jimenez scored the only goal from the penalty spot in the ninth minute as Wolves survived a series of scares to edge Olympiakos 1-0 for a 2-1 aggregate win in the Europa League on Thursday.

SHIV SAHAY SINGH KOLKATA

A recent study by TRAFFIC India on the seizure and mortality of 'common leopards' (*Panthera pardus fusca*) revealed that of the total of 747 leopard deaths between 2015-2019 in India, 596 were linked to illegal wildlife trade and activities related to poaching.

TRAFFIC is a leading wildlife trade monitoring network across the world and the paper has been authored by Saket Badola, head of the TRAFFIC India office, and Astha Gautam.

"These records indicated that 140 leopards were killed by poachers and their carcasses were recovered from the forest areas, whereas body parts belonging to the equivalent of 456 leopards were seized during various operations by law enforcement agencies during the study period," said the re-

port published in the latest edition of TRAFFIC India's newsletter.

The paper titled "SPOT-

TED" in Illegal Wildlife Trade: A Peek into Ongoing Poaching and Illegal Trade of Leopards in India" also said

that the highest numbers of poaching incidents were reported from the States of Ut-

tarakhand and Maharashtra.

During the period 2015 to

2019, there were more than

140 cases of seizures of leo-

pard body parts in Uttarak-

hand, and about 19 incidents where the deaths of these cats could be directly linked to poaching. More than 40 cases of seizure of leopard body parts and 16 cases of poaching were recorded from Maharashtra between 2015 to 2019.

