

SC reserves orders in contempt case against Prashant Bhushan  
page 10



At least 10 killed in massive explosion in Lebanon's capital  
page 12



Theatre doyen Ebrahim Alkazi passes away at 94  
page 14

Title sponsor Vivo hints at ending its association with the IPL  
page 14

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## NEARBY



DU professor quizzed on Delhi riots, phone seized

NEW DELHI  
The police questioned Delhi University professor Apoorvanand on Monday in connection with the communal riots that broke out in the Capital in February. His cell phone was also seized. A senior police officer confirmed the development.

CITY ▶ PAGE 2

Daily COVID-19 tests fall by 50% in Delhi

NEW DELHI  
With the number of daily COVID-19 tests falling by 50%, the new cases stayed below the 1,000 mark in Delhi for the third consecutive day on Tuesday. As many as 674 fresh cases were reported in the past 24 hours, taking the total of 1,39,156, said a Delhi government health bulletin. Of the total cases, 1,25,226 people have recovered.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

OPPORTUNITIES ▶ PAGE 2

IRS officer Pradeep Singh tops UPSC examination



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI  
Pradeep Singh, a 29-year old Indian Revenue Service officer from Haryana, topped the civil services examination 2019, in his fourth attempt.

He was followed by Jatin Kishore and Pratibha Verma, according to results declared by the Union Public Service Commission on Tuesday. This year, 829 candidates have been selected for various services, including 66 who have been provisionally recommended. The results of 11 candidates have been withheld.

"It was unexpected," said Mr. Singh, adding that while he hoped to crack the examination, he never expected to top it.

A B.Tech graduate from Sonipat's Deenbandhu Chhotu Ram University of Science and Technology, he worked as an Inspector in the Income Tax Department briefly while taking the UPSC exams. His rank in the previous attempt was 260. His father Sukhbir Singh, a farmer and former sarpanch of Tewari village, is his "pillar of strength" and biggest motivation, he said. During the times he felt like quitting as it was difficult to prepare for the exams while working, it was his father who encouraged him not to give up.

Looking ahead, Mr. Singh said he hoped to "work for the poor" and contribute towards the "development of the nation".

The 10% quota for the Economically Weaker Sections was implemented for the first time this year, with 78 candidates selected under that category.

Apart from 304 successful candidates in the general category, there were 251 from the Other Backward Classes, 129 from the Scheduled Castes and 67 from the Scheduled Tribes.

## Ayodhya awaits Modi's launch of Ram temple construction

PM to take part in *bhoomi pujan* ceremony today along with RSS chief Bhagwat

OMAR RASHID  
AVODHYA

Twenty-eight years after Babri Masjid was demolished by *kar sevaks*, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will on Wednesday formally launch the construction of a temple at the spot, where Hindus believe Lord Ram was born.

The Supreme Court in last November permitted the construction of a Ram temple at the site where the Babri Masjid stood till December 6, 1992.

At the market, Setu Lal Agrahari didn't need to think when asked who should get the credit for the construction of the temple.

"Yeh toh Modi ki wajah se bana hai. Jab Modi aye bhaiya, tabhi toh bana (The temple is being constructed due to Modi. Only after [Prime Minister Narendra] Modi came this became possible)," said Mr. Agrahari, as he fried potato cubes in a large pan.

Mr. Agrahari, who sells



On their toes: Police officers busy with security arrangements at Hanuman Garhi temple in Ayodhya on Tuesday. PTI

tikki-chaat in Rikabganj, sees the temple construction as a fulfillment of the BJP and Mr. Modi's poll promise and also praises the efforts of the Vishwa Hindu Parishad, which spearheaded the Ram Janmabhoomi movement. The SC verdict features only as a footnote for him.

Mr. Modi and RSS chief

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8  
HISTORIC DAY: ADVANI ▶ PAGE 9

NATH LEADS PRAYERS ▶ PAGE 9

## Two Indians freed by Taliban return home

They were part of group abducted in 2018

SUHASINI HAIDAR  
NEW DELHI

Two Indians abducted by the Taliban returned to Delhi on Tuesday, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said.

Negotiations were on for one more person, the last of a group kidnapped in 2018, sources told *The Hindu*.

"We thank the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan for their constant and unwavering support in securing the release of the Indians," said the MEA spokesperson, announcing the return of the two men, whom it didn't name and who had been released from captivity on July 31.

**Id ceasefire**  
According to the sources, their release was helped by the Id ceasefire between the

Afghan forces and the Taliban, which included prisoner exchanges. A meeting of "elders" or a "Loya Jirga" called by President Ashraf Ghani on August 7 to advise him on the fate of about 400 Taliban convicted of "heinous crimes" could also prove crucial in securing the release of the last hostage.

The hostages, Prasadi Mahto and Hulas Mahto from Jharkhand and Mantu Singh from Bihar, were part of a group of seven employees of Indian engineering company KEC International (owned by the RP Goenka group) that was developing a power project in Afghanistan's northern Badjan province.

**CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8  
KERALA DOCTOR UNDER SCANNER ▶ PAGE 11**

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 9

## Kashmir under curfew ahead of anniversary

PEERZADA ASHIQ  
SRINAGAR

The Valley wore a deserted look ahead of the first anniversary of withdrawal of J&K's special status, with a strict curfew imposed in Srinagar and other towns in north and south Kashmir.

Additional deployments were made in all pockets where protests are likely. Yellow plastic barricades and coils of concertina wires were spread on all major roads in the city. Security forces used mobile bunkers to block streets in volatile localities.

Nazir Ahmad, a milkman from Pulwama, said he could not drive to the old city in Srinagar to deliver milk due to the barricades. "It was a nightmare to leave home. I had to return halfway," he said.

**CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 9**

Congress leaders back temple work  
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Various Congress leaders on Tuesday came out in support of the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said the ground-breaking ceremony on Wednesday should symbolise "national unity, fraternity and cultural harmony".

Former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath, who held a "Hanuman Chalisa" recital at his residence, said the party's State unit would send 11 silver bricks for the temple.

**CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 9**

## China: don't politicise normal cooperation

ANANTH KRISHNAN  
CHENNAI

China on Tuesday called on India to "avoid politicising normal cooperation" following moves to review ongoing cooperation for language training between Indian un-

## Trump bars H-1B visa holders from federal jobs

'Will not tolerate firing of Americans for cheap foreign labour'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump has signed an executive order preventing federal agencies from contracting or subcontracting foreign workers – mainly those on H-1B visas.

The move comes over a month after the Trump administration on June 23 suspended the H-1B visas, along with other types of foreign work visas, until the end of 2020 to protect American workers in a crucial election year. The new restrictions took effect from June 24.

Mr. Trump's order follows an announcement by the federally-owned Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) that it would outsource 20% of its technology jobs to companies based in foreign countries.

Speaking to reporters after signing the order on Monday, Mr. Trump said TVA's action could cause more than 200 highly-skilled American tech workers in



Tough stance: U.S. President Donald Trump showing a signed executive order on hiring of American workers. AP

'Order based on misperceptions'

The decision by U.S. President Donald Trump to bar federal agencies from hiring foreign workers appears to be based on "misperceptions and misinformation", the National Association of Software and Service Companies said. ▶ PAGE 13

iversities and Chinese government-run programmes.

Following the decision to drop Mandarin from its list of suggested languages under the National Education Policy, the Ministry of Education has put several higher education institutes offering Chinese language training under the scanner.

Confucius Classrooms at seven institutions as well as 54 MoUs between Indian and Chinese institutions, said such cooperation had gone on "for more than 10 years".

**CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8**

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## IN BRIEF

## ₹10L compensation given to worker's kin'

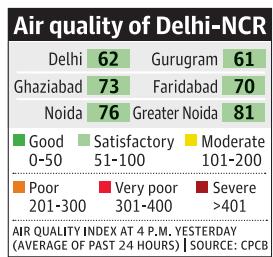
NEW DELHI  
The East Delhi Mayor, Nirmal Jain on Tuesday awarded ₹10 lakh compensation to kin of a sanitation worker, who died due to COVID-19. Pooja, wife of late Manoj Kumar, was given a cheque at the civic body's headquarters. Mr. Jain said the government ought to provide financial assistance of ₹1 cr. as announced by it earlier – and had written to the CM in this regard. In a letter to the government, the Delhi Safai Karamchari union informed that up to 16 sanitation workers had died due to the virus between May and July.

## Goel demands renaming of Babar Road in city

NEW DELHI  
Former Union Minister Vijay Goel on Tuesday demanded the renaming of Babar Road in Bengali Market to '5 August Marg' on the eve of the ceremony related to the Ram temple in Ayodhya on Wednesday. The senior BJP leader said he had also written to Union Home Minister Amit Shah and NDMC Chairman Dharmendra stating that his suggestion was supported by the Bengali Market Residents' Welfare Society and Bengali Market Traders' Association.

## CM thanks Ambassador for praising Delhi Model

NEW DELHI  
Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday thanked South Korean Ambassador Shin Bong-Kil for praising the "Delhi Model" of combatting the COVID pandemic. Mr. Kejriwal said that he was happy that the "Delhi Model" was being recognized across the globe and that all nations needed to join hands to fight and defeat COVID-19.



# DU prof. Apoorvanand quizzed in Delhi riots case; phone seized

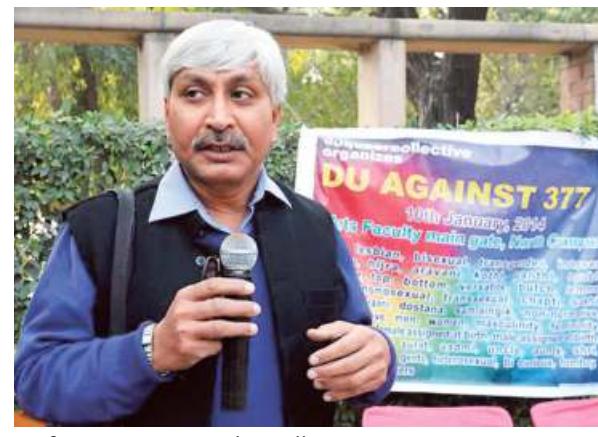
He was quizzed in connection with a case in which Safoora Zargar is an accused

HEMANI BHANDARI  
NEW DELHI

Police have questioned Delhi University Professor Apoorvanand on Monday in connection with communal riots that broke out in the Capital in February. His mobile phone has also been seized. A senior police officer confirmed the development.

In a statement shared online, Mr. Apoorvanand said that he was asked by Special Cell to appear for questioning in connection with FIR number 59. He was questioned for five hours after which police seized his phone. "While cooperating and respecting the right of police authorities to conduct a full, fair and thorough investigation, one can only hope that the probe would focus on the real instigators and perpetrators of the violence against a peaceful citizens' protest and the people of north-east Delhi," he said.

In the statement, he also said that he hopes the investigation doesn't lead to "harassment and victimisation" of protesters and their supporters who "asserted their democratic rights through constitutional means" while stating their dissent against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, National Popula-



Professor Apoorvanand at Delhi University. ■ FILE PHOTO

tion Register (NPR) and National Register of Citizens (NRC). The professor said that it is disturbing for him to see that supporters of the anti-CAA protests are being considered the source of violence.

#### Rioting and conspiracy

Mr. Apoorvanand has been questioned in FIR number 59, the same FIR in which Jamia Coordination Committee media coordinator Safoora Zargar, PhD student Meeran Haider, and an MBA graduate Gulfisha Fatima have been accused of rioting, conspiracy and under sections of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and ar-

The FIR was registered on March 6 based on a complaint by Sub Inspector Arvind Kumar posted in Crime Branch. Former JNU student Umar Khalid and one Danish are named accused in the document.

#### Pre-planned?

The FIR stated that Mr. Kumar was told by an informer that the riots which broke out in Delhi on February 23-25 were pre-planned as part of a conspiracy. He alleged that the riots were planned by Mr. Khalid and his associates, who are members of different organisations. He claimed that Mr. Khalid gave inflammatory speeches at different locations and insti-

gated people to flock streets and block roads, leading to chaos and subsequently riots.

"For the purpose of arranging for people to indulge in violence during the riots, one Danish, a resident of Bhajanpura, was given the responsibility," the FIR stated. It added that because of the same reason, children from minority community studying in different schools were taken home by their parents earlier than usual. "If this conspiracy is investigated deeply, then one can find the rioters as well as investigators involved," he stated in his complaint.

The case was transferred to Special Cell for further investigation.

Mr. Apoorvanand, on May 30, authored a column for a web portal *The Wire* in which he wrote: 'A conspiracy is being hatched in Delhi to create the story of a conspiracy'. The fiction Delhi Police would like us to believe is that there was a conspiracy behind the violence in the north-east part of Delhi in the last days of February - a conspiracy involving those who, in any manner, had participated in the protests against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.'

# Independent inquiry sought into police brutality on Jamia students

Probe should exclude the police, requests senior advocate

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH  
NEW DELHI

incident, which he said should be looked into.

#### A parallel

The senior advocate also cited the landmark judgment of the Supreme Court in the Manipur fake encounter case to argue that the police can't be trusted with the investigation. He said that the protest march towards the Parliament was a political embarrassment for the government, which was why the police beat up the students mercilessly.

Senior advocate Salman Khurshid, representing one of the petitioners, Anshu Kapoor, also sought an independent committee to probe the police brutality. He said that the police should not become a judge in its own cause.

Mr. Khurshid pointed out that since there was a public road dividing the Jamia campus, students had gathered on the road where they were also joined by others. He said the university must provide space for students to protest.

Mr. Gonsalves also called for an independent probe into the incident of setting a bus on fire, claiming that there was evidence to suggest that it was done by the police to support a false narrative that students had indulged in arson. He submitted CDs containing videos related to the

protocol for enforcement agencies to follow while entering universities. In the Jamia violence case, the police had entered the varsity without seeking any prior permission.

Mr. Khurshid also said that the High Court could consider giving compensation to the students who were victims of excessive police force.

During the hearing, senior advocate Indira Jaising, appearing for another petitioner, Vaibhav Misra, also urged for an independent inquiry into the police's misconduct.

Ms. Jaising questioned why the police entered the varsity when the alleged law and order situation which took place according to the police happened outside the campus. When Section 144 was not declared in the area, the question of unlawful assembly doesn't arise, Ms Jaising argued, adding that police must also face trial for their misconduct. "Just because you wear uniform, it doesn't give you a right to blind a student," Ms Jaising said, adding that the brutality shown by police was with the intention of "teaching a lesson to the students with a danda".

As the hearing remained inconclusive, the court posted the case for further hearing on Wednesday.

# IIT-Mumbai to oversee smog tower project in the Capital, Centre tells SC

#### LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Centre on Tuesday informed the Supreme Court that the Indian Institute of Technology (Mumbai) has agreed to oversee the smog tower project in Delhi. The project aims at fighting air pollution.

Appearing before a Bench led by Justice Arun Mishra, Mr. Mehta said the National Buildings Construction Cor-

poration Limited (NBCL) will construct the tower and TATA Projects will carry out the installation work. The court adjourned the case for further hearing next week. In the previous hearing, Mr. Mehta had said the project would be completed in 10 months. On July 29, an indignant SC had threatened contempt action against the IIT-Mumbai after learning that the premier institution opted to pull out of

the project. A week ago, the court had given the Centre seven days to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the IIT-Mumbai to install the smog tower. The Bench had taken a stern view against the Centre when it realised that its January 13 order to install an experimental smog tower at Anand Vihar intersection here has not been complied with even after seven months.

# JNU gets ₹455.02 cr. from HEFA for new infrastructure

Research capability to be increased and special centre for e-learning to come up: V-C

JAIDEEP DEO BHANJ

NEW DELHI

Jawaharlal Nehru University V-C M. Jagadesh Kumar on Tuesday said the university got approval from the Higher Education Funding Agency (HEFA) for ₹455.02 crore for construction of new academic buildings, hostels, research centres and installation of integrated and unified Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system.

JNU said several new schools and special centres had been established at the varsity that called for an urgent need of hostel facilities and researchers. Mr. Kumar said apart from hostels, the funds allotted by HEFA will be utilised for the construction of academic complex buildings for the School of Engineering, Atal Bihari Vajpeyi School of Management

and Entrepreneurship and other projects in the pipeline. Mr. Kumar further added that a new Advanced Instrumentation Research Facility (AIRF) and Advanced Animal Research Facility will shall increase the research capability of the university and also be made available for other institutions of the country as National Facility. "Advanced Animal Research Facility will be useful

for carrying out research on communicable, non-communicable and rare diseases including infectious agents such as COVID-19," he said. The university said approximately 1.3 lakh candidates apply for entrance examination but only 2,000 students get admission every year. It said a special centre for e-learning will be developed to impart education to those who did not get admission.

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The tentative schedule of events is as follows:

Activity	Tentative Dates
On-line registration including Edit/Modification of Application by candidates	05.08.2020 to 26.08.2020
Payment of Application Fees/Intimation Charges (Online)	05.08.2020 to 26.08.2020
Download of call letters for Pre- Exam Training*	September 2020
Conduct of Pre-Exam Training*	21.09.2020 to 26.09.2020
Download of call letters for Online examination – Preliminary	October 2020
Online Examination – Preliminary	03.10.2020, 10.10.2020 and 11.10.2020
Result of Online exam – Preliminary	October/ November 2020
Download of Call letter for Online exam – Main	November 2020
Online Examination – Main	28.11.2020
Declaration of Result – Main	December 2020
Download of call letters for interview	January 2021
Conduct of interview	January / February 2021
Provisional Allotment	April 2021

\*In case it is possible and safe to hold PET

Candidates are advised to regularly keep in touch with the authorised IBPS website [www.ibps.in](http://www.ibps.in) for details and updates. Before registering online candidates are advised to read the detailed notification and follow the instructions mentioned therein.

Mumbai  
Date: 05.08.2020

Director

**SEARCH OF MISSING**

General public is hereby informed that one girl (depicted in the photo), Namely: Dhanna Silvi, D/o: Sh. Raj Perumal, R/o: H.No. 243/A-1, Munirka Village, New Delhi, Aged: 22 years, has been missing since 20.01.2020 from her residence vide FIR No. 329/2020, Dated 15.07.2020 u/s 363 IPC, has been lodged at P.S. Kishangarh, New Delhi. Her physical description is as under:

Height: 4'8" Feet, Complexion: Shallow,

Face: Round, Physique/Buit: Fat, Clothing: Black Colour Legging, Mehroon Colour Sweater and Slipper in her feet.

Any person is having any information/clue about this missing girl, may inform SHO, Kishangarh, New Delhi at E-mail: [ciccbi@cbi.nic.in](mailto:ciccbi@cbi.nic.in) or website: <http://cbi.nic.in> Fax: 011-23011133, Tele No.: 011-23014046 (Direct), 011-23015229, 23015218 extn. 210

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PR/20-21/13

All Corrigendum/Addendum/Amendments/Date of Extension/Clarifications if any to the above e-tenders would appear only on the above mentioned websites.

**SEARCH FOR MISSING GIRL**

General public is hereby informed that this girl namely Sanovar D/o

Manjoor Ahmad R/o H.No. T-43, Gali No. 22, Baljeet Nagar, New Delhi-110008 Age : 14 years, Height : 5', Face : Oval, Complexion : Fair, Build :

Medium, wearing brown colour suit-salwar and plastic sandle in

feet, has been missing since 18.07.2020 at about 04:00 P.M. from her house. In this regard FIR No. 0337 dated 18.07.2020 u/s 363 IPC has been registered at P.S. Patel Nagar, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this missing girl may kindly inform to the following:-

E-mail: [ciccbi@cbi.nic.in](mailto:ciccbi@cbi.nic.in)  
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# ASI's daughter gets third time lucky

Vishakha, who bagged 6th rank in the UPSC exam, credits her mother for success

HEMANI BHANDARI  
NEW DELHI

Vishakha Yadav (26), daughter of a Delhi Police Assistant Sub Inspector Rajkumar Yadav, scored sixth rank in Civil Services Examination 2019. She said she owes her success to mother Sarita Yadav.

A homemaker, Ms. Sarita was by Vishakha's side when she felt low after two failed attempts. She was also beside her during her long nights of preparations. "When I failed in my first attempt, it was a huge setback. Three years of preparing and taking exams knowing that you may not even get through need a huge amount of psychological and emotional support. My mother has been there to pull me out of every dark moment. She would take care of my food, my clothes and everything. All I would do is study," she said.

When she felt like giving up, her mother would say: "I am sitting with you, you study, nothing will happen."



Vishakha Yadav with her parents, Rajkumar Yadav and Sarita Yadav. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

A B.Tech graduate from Delhi Technical University, she quit her highly-paid job in 2017 to prepare for UPSC exams. All her friends, she said, are married or are getting married. But her parents never brought the topic of marriage or job to her.

"They never put pressure on me for getting married or getting a job or do anything else. They gave me complete freedom to build my life," she said.

For close to three years Vishakha abstained from social media, including WhatsApp,

is the first day when I can really relax," she said.

What came as a surprise for Mr. Rajkumar, posted in DCP office in Dwarka, was his daughter's rank. "She was working so hard. So I had a feeling that she will get through. But I didn't know that she will bag the sixth rank," the proud father said.

Mr. Rajkumar said that he barely got time off work to help her in daily struggle. But "her mother did a lot", he admitted. Mr. Rajkumar was at work when Vishakha called and informed him about the results. His joy knew no bounds.

#### Making police proud

Apart from Vishakha, those who cleared UPSC exams and are associated with Delhi Police include 2010 batch Constable Firoj Alam posted in police control room unit, Assistant Commissioners of Police Natasha and Garima, and Navneet Mann - daughter of Inspector Sukhdev Singh Mann.

sApp, and focused on her studies. She took coaching for a year and then spend days immersed in books at a nearby library. It was only a month ago that she started using WhatsApp.

**Day without worry**

Finally, after three years, on Tuesday, she spent a day without worrying about studies and preparations.

"My interview was on March 18 but as usual, I wasn't sure if I will get through. So I started studying for my fourth attempt. It

Mandoli police quarters to serve as 'temporary jail'

NIKHIL M BABU  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government has decided to convert Mandoli Police Housing Complex into a "temporary jail" with a capacity of 1,800 inmates to prevent the spread of COVID-19 virus in city jails.

"The Minister of Home, Government of NCT of Delhi is pleased to declare police quarters in the police housing complex adjoining Mandoli jail, Delhi, as "temporary jail", till further orders, in view of COVID-19 pandemic," a notification issued by the Delhi government on July 31 read.

"New inmates will be first put up at the facility for two weeks before they are moved to the jails to make sure that COVID-19 does not spread in the jails," an official said. Also, inmates already in different jails in the city, who might turn suspected cases of the virus, will be moved to the new facility.

Currently, the complex is functioning as an 850-bed "COVID care centre" and the district officials have been directed to vacate the complex.

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"On Tuesday, The Hindu

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During the serological survey, blood samples of random people from across the city will be taken to check how many per cent of them have developed antibodies against the COVID-19 virus.

The Minister also said that the city is better placed in the fight against COVID-19.

Also, there were 499 containment zones in the city.

**Sero survey**

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**Sero survey**</p

## Timings

DELHI

WEDNESDAY, AUG. 05
RISE 05:46 SET 19:09
RISE 20:34 SET 07:02
THURSDAY, AUG. 06
RISE 05:46 SET 19:09
RISE 21:07 SET 07:58
FRIDAY, AUG. 07
RISE 05:47 SET 19:08
RISE 21:38 SET 08:52

Delhi Weather max min  
Delhi City 36 29  
Safdarjung 36 29  
Palam 37 28Delhi Pali Today  
37°C Marginal drop in day temperature. Easterly winds likely towards evening. Short spell of rain likely at few places.Delhi Pali Tomorrow  
36°C Moderate Easterly winds will prevail, day will be warm and humid with partly cloudy sky. Chances of light rain.© Copyright Skymet Weather 2019  
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THE HINDU

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## Jakhar for action against 'indisciplined' Cong. MPs

PCC chief miffed with Bajwa, Dullo

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

A day after the two Rajya Sabha MPs Partap Singh Bajwa and Shamsheer Singh Dullo, both from the Congress party, sought a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and Enforcement Directorate (ED) probe into the production of illegal liquor in Punjab against the backdrop of the hooch tragedy, Punjab Congress chief Sunil Jakhar on Tuesday said he would be writing to party president Sonia Gandhi to seek action against the duo for their "brazen indiscipline".

Pointing out that Mr. Bajwa and Mr. Dullo had been engaging in such anti-party activities for quite some time by talking against their own party and targeting the Congress government in Punjab, Mr. Jakhar said their attacks had increased after Captain Amarinder Singh announced his decision to contest the 2022 elections. Mr. Jakhar described the attack of the two MPs on

their own government as a "copy-paste job" of what had happened in Rajasthan in January, in the wake of 107 infant deaths over which Mr. Sachin Pilot had flayed his own government.

**'Desperate for power'** Mr. Jakhar described the action of the two MPs, who had on August 3 approached the Punjab Governor to demand a probe by the CBI and ED into the liquor deaths as a "manifestation of their desperate desire to grab the high seat of power by hook or by crook".

"Having probably seen the 2022 polls as their last chance to make it big in the corridors of power, the duo saw their hopes shattered and, out of sheer frustration, were knocking at all possible doors to sneak their way to the top echelons of power," he said, adding that there are strong rumours of the two MPs being in touch with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP).

## AAP holds protest over hooch tragedy in Punjab

No one will be spared if found complicit in the deaths: CM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Tuesday held demonstrations in Punjab against the State government over the hooch tragedy that has so far claimed 111 lives.

AAP leaders and workers led by State party chief Bhagwant Mann, who were marching towards Chief Minister Amarinder Singh's residence to 'gherao' it, were stopped by the police on the way.

The protesters, who sat on a dharna after being stopped by the police, alleged that the State government had completely failed to curb the liquor mafia and the probe into the hooch tragedy should be handed over to the CBI or it be investigated by a sitting High Court judge.

"While the mafia is openly selling poison, the government continues to be in slumber. The mafia is enjoying patronage of the government," alleged Mr. Mann.



AAP workers taking out a protest march against the State government in Amritsar on Tuesday. • AFP

Leader of the Opposition Harpal Singh Cheema said "the spurious liquor case should be investigated by a sitting High Court judge or the CBI, as the State police had time and again proved a complete failure in conducting a free and fair investigation."

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Amarinder Singh said on Tuesday that no one will be spared if found complicit in the hooch deaths. "Some unscrupulous elements took ad-

vantage of the police focus on battling the COVID-19 pandemic to satiate their greed at the cost of the lives of Punjabis," said Capt. Amarinder.

## Opposition flayed

Hitting out at the Opposition for exploiting the tragedy for their petty political interests, the Chief Minister said this was not the time to play politics but to stand by the government in its efforts to eliminate the mafia that was indulging in such acts.

## 'Our Ram is ready to take on the enemy with a smile'

Sculptors readying for tallest statue

ANUJ KUMAR  
GHAZIABAD

As the countdown to the construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya begins, eminent sculptor Ram Sutar and his son Anil Sutar are eager to get a green signal from the Uttar Pradesh government to give a final shape to the statue of Lord Ram which will be erected on the banks of Saryu river.



A replica of the statue at the workshop of the Sutars. •

from China. "It simply depends on the demand. Earlier, there was not much demand for such tall statues. To meet the requirement, we have to increase the capacity of our workshop," he said.

The Ram statue, he said, would be seen holding a bow in one hand and an arrow in another. "The idea is to show him ready to take on the enemy. But there is no attempt to show him in an aggressive form. There would be a pleasing smile on his face, reflecting equanimity which is the hallmark of his personality."

The demand came in the light of news at the time of the unveiling of Sardar Patel's Statue of Unity, also designed by the Sutars, that a large amount of bronze used in the statue was imported

## Hooch tragedy: key player held

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
CHANDIGARH

Punjab Director General of Police Dinkar Gupta on Tuesday said the State police have arrested a Ludhiana-based paint store owner for triggering the chain of events that ultimately resulted in the death of 111 people.

Mr. Gupta said Rajeev Joshi was nabbed late on Monday evening. He has disclosed that he supplied the three drums of methanol that were used to make the spurious alcohol.

## Remote Arunachal corner gets 2G network, awaits power

BSNL sets up tower but stronger solar-powered batteries awaited via IAF sorties when weather clears

RAHUL KARMAKAR  
GUWAHATI

August brought 2G mobile phone network for Vijaynagar, one of the remotest administrative circles in Arunachal Pradesh.

A person needs to walk for six-seven days through tiger territory to reach the location.

But the euphoria for some 4,500 people of the habitation in Changlang district close to the Myanmar border was short-lived. The solar-powered batteries that ran the

sole tower with a coverage radius of 5 km crashed within 48 hours.

Vijaynagar is now awaiting a set of heavy batteries only the Indian Air Force (IAF) can deliver in choppers from eastern Assam's Jorhat town. This, officials said, would depend on the unpredictable weather that "played villain" during the installation operation spanning more than 45 days.

"The network died because of poor battery back-up soon after it reached Vi-

jaynagar on August 1. The IAF needs at least four sorties to bring better, larger batteries that Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) will be providing from Jorhat in Assam," said T. Rumi, Additional Deputy Commissioner, based at nearest town Miao.

## Tiger territory

Vijaynagar is 157.56 km from Miao and one needs to trek through the 1,895 sq. km. Namdapha Tiger Reserve to reach the place.

"The government is trying

to make a road between Miao and Vijaynagar, which still awaits electricity and depends on solar energy," Mr. Rumi told *The Hindu*.

## Temporary setback

The "temporary setback" notwithstanding, district officials acknowledged the 2G mobile connectivity for Vijaynagar as "historic".

Changlang's Deputy Commissioner Devansh Yadav said the place did not have telecom connectivity earlier.

"We did provide satellite

telephone service at Vijaynagar. But there were only five users, including two civilians and the (paramilitary) Assam Rifles unit there. Even the satellite phones stopped working a year ago," a sub-divisional engineer of BSNL said, seeking anonymity.

Inhabited sparsely by the Lishu community, Vijaynagar was "discovered" by the Assam Rifles during an expedition in 1961 led by its Inspector-General A.S. Guraya. He named the valley after his son Vijay.

## Odisha govt. to promote cage fishing

STAFF REPORTER

BHUBANESWAR

With demand and consumption of freshwater fish rising in the State, the Odisha government has decided to start cage fishing in a big way.

The government has come out with a new policy to promote cage culture in medium and large reservoirs. In cage fishing, cages are set up inside a water body and fish are stocked, fed and harvested at appropriate time.

It has invited expression of interest for availing of long-term lease of the cage culture subzones in Hirakud reservoir.

The government has allowed farming of 18 indigenous species for aquaculture by entrepreneurs or companies in the cages.

## ENTERPRISE CONNECT

## SJVN's appreciation to sanitation workers

Sh. Nand Lal Sharma, Chairman and Managing Director of SJVN informed that SJVN has always been responsive to the various issues being faced by society from time to time. In the present context, the society is engulfed with the widespread of COVID-19 pandemic, and as always SJVN is on the forefront in fight against it. All the SJVN employees appreciating the work carried out by these CORONA Warriors, are voluntarily donating their one-day salary to Sanitation Workers (CORONA Warriors) of Municipal Corporation, Shimla. These CORONA warriors are around 1250 in numbers & each warrior will receive an amount of Rs. 5,000/- which translates into Rs. 62,50,000/-.

Sh. Nand Lal Sharma informed that, employees of SJVN have already contributed one day salary to the PM CARES fund and one day salary to HP, CM Relief Fund to combat the Corona challenge. SJVN has also provided a financial support of more than Rs. 2 Crore to the Government of Himachal Pradesh and also has contributed Rs. 25 Crore towards PM CARES Fund.

## FCI starts distribution of food grains under PMGKAY-II

After successful implementation of Prime Minister Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana (PMGKAY) phase-I from April to June 2020, the Government of India extended this scheme for another 5 months from July to November 2020. About 81 crore beneficiaries covered under National Food Security Act (NFS) and Antyodaya Ann Yojana (AY) will be provided 5 Kgs of Rice/wheat in addition to their regular quota of food grains for free of cost under this scheme. The whole cost will be borne by the Government of India. The state governments as well as beneficiaries to this scheme welcomed this step wholeheartedly.

Food Corporation of India (FCI) has already done extensive and detailed logistical planning to ensure that food grain stocks reach every part of the country as per the allocation over these 5 months. This is a huge challenge as it is double the normal allocation and the existing warehousing capacities and transportation systems are based on the regular allocations.

However, FCI is fully geared up for the challenge and its ability to deliver in the most difficult circumstances has already been demonstrated during the lockdown period when new records were set in terms of logistical operations.

All the above successful implementation of PMGKAY is being monitored under the able guidance and leadership of CMD, FCI, Sh. D.V. Prasad Mr. Kumar said that we have

successfully executed the PMGKAY-I and will successfully execute the PMGKAY-II too, with the help of sincere efforts of 323 officials and more than 750 labours of FCI, Delhi Region.

## HUDCO Signs MoU with YEIDA

Shri M. Nagaraj, CMD Housing & Urban Development Corporation (HUDCO) and Dr. Arunvir Singh, CEO, Yamuna Expressway Industrial Development Authority (YEIDA) signed an MoU for providing financial assistance to the tune of over Rs 4000 crore for various projects adjoining the up-coming International Airport at Jewar, Uttar Pradesh. These would include land acquisition, development of industrial estates, electronic city, housing projects and associated infrastructure development on both sides of Yamuna expressway over the next 3 years.

## ICAI expands presence to 53 cities globally, launches 2 new Chapters &amp; 12 new Nodal Points

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) has been playing a prominent role in the international arena by having a focused approach to work for the global accountancy profession. Continuing its efforts to expand its global presence and footprints, the Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) inaugurated its 2 new Chapters and 12 Representative Offices (nodal point) in a virtual event held on July 30, 2020 evening.

ICAI currently has presence of 34 Chapters and 5 Representative Offices globally and in this continuous endeavour of expanding its global footprint, ICAI has launched 2 new Chapters; one in Luxembourg, the 4th Chapter in Europe and another in Fujairah, United Arab of Emirates, adding the 11th Chapter in Middle East region. ICAI, had earlier this month launched 5 Representative Offices at Chicago, Dallas, Houston, New England Region and Washington D.C thereby expanding its global presence to 53 cities of the world.

Speaking at the occasion, Guest of Honour, Shri Santosh Jha, Hon'ble Ambassador of India to European Union congratulated ICAI on taking such an initiative which would further strengthen the relations between India and Europe and reaffirm the support to ICAI and its Luxembourg Chapter to work closely to strengthen the trading ties & investment opportunities. The event was also addressed by Mrs. Devi Gopinath, First Secretary (Political), CA. Atul Kumar Gupta, President ICAI, while addressing the members, mentioned that "The Institute is committed to expand its global presence and has envisioned having its presence in at least 100 locations globally as part of ICAI's vision ICAI@2024. With the launch of the 2 new Chapters and 12 Representative

Offices, ICAI has moved a step ahead in this direction."

## NHPC Scholarships for upcoming sportspersons'

NHPC Limited, under its 'Sports Scholarship scheme for upcoming sportspersons' has announced the awarding of scholarships amounting to Rs 52.64 lakh to 10 promising talented sportspersons covering sporting disciplines of Kabaddi, Football, Boxing, Wrestling and Para sports for the next 3 years. Shri A.K. Singh, CMD, NHPC handed over the first installment payments of Rs 1,08,000/- to the meritorious sportspersons at special function held at NHPC Corporate Office on 29th July 2020.

Speaking on the occasion, Shri A.K. Singh, CMD, NHPC said, "NHPC has introduced NHPC Sports Scholarships for promising young players with a view to encourage talent and create a pool of sportspersons. I am sure that the scholarships will help us in nurturing upcoming sportspersons who can bring laurels for the country."

Shri Ratish Kumar, Director (Projects), Shri N.K. Jain, Director (Personnel), Shri M.K. Mittal, Director (Finance), Shri Y.K. Choubey, Director (Technical) and Shri A.K. Srivastava, CVO from NHPC were also present on the occasion.

Based upon the NHPC Sports policy, the selected players have been placed under 'Elite Scholar' and 'Scholar' categories as per their track record and rankings in their respective sport. The total maximum tenure of the scholarship is of 3 years subject to annual performance review. NHPC has already awarded sports scholarships amounting to Rs 21.24 lakh through installments under this scheme, since 2017-18.

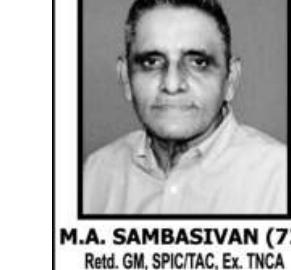
**New Chandigarh to get two 200 ft. Expressways**

The PR-4 road is planned through the city of Mullanpur, Mohali district, Punjab providing improved connectivity between Chandigarh and New Chandigarh. To the East it is an extension of Dakshin Marg (Chandigarh) and to the West it connects to road going to Kurali and in future, plans are to extend this road to the holy city of Anandpur Sahib & Manali. The tender for the 200 ft. road in Chandigarh territory has already been allotted. A total of 17.76 Acres of land has been acquired.

The 8 km stretch of the Airport Road (PR-7) to connect New Chandigarh with Mohali is expected to reduce the distance between the two towns and also ease the traffic congestion in Chandigarh. Traffic from neighboring states heading towards Punjab and the International Airport will be able to directly bypass Chandigarh through this road.

## OBITUARY &amp; REMEMBRANCE

## DEATH



**M.A. SAMBASIVAN (72)**  
Retd. GM, SPICtAC, Ex. TNCA Office Bearer attained Sivalokapraphi at 3:00 AM on 3-8-2020 at Chennai.

**P.V. GOVINDA RAO**  
"A Complete man"  
Fondly remembered by  
**FAMILY MEMBERS**  
VALASARAVAKKAM

**DEATH ANNIVERSARIES**



# Heavy rain in Mumbai: govt. offices closed, HC hearings hit

Landslide on Western Express Highway; healthcare staff struggle to reach hospital

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

Heavy showers in Mumbai and the neighbouring areas crippled normal life and disrupted rail and road traffic on Tuesday, with many essential services workers, like nurses and other medical staff treating COVID-19 patients, finding it difficult to reach hospitals.

Several areas in the city and suburbs have received more than 200 mm rainfall since Monday night. For the second consecutive day, the India Meteorological Department issued a red alert for the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) and some other parts of Maharashtra for Wednesday.

In the morning, local train services, currently being operated only for essential services workers, were suspended on the Harbour Line due to waterlogging on the rail tracks. Some services on the Western and Central Lines were also affected.

Some roads near Byculla, Dadar and Mahalaxmi were inundated and the traffic police had to divert vehicles from those areas.

Several houses in low-lying areas like Kurla, Sion and parts of Bhandup were flooded due to the heavy downpour, according to a civic official.

A landslide on the Western Express Highway in Kanivali affected movement of traffic towards south Mumbai. However, there were no casualties, officials said.

Waterlogging outside the civic-run Nair Hospital in central Mumbai, where several COVID-19 patients from the city are being treated, posed a problem for its medical staff. "Nurses and other medical staff have been struggling to reach the hospital due to waterlogging on the premises and elsewhere," a resident doctor from



Monsoon blues: People wade through a waterlogged road at Null Bazar in south Mumbai on Tuesday after heavy overnight rain. ■ VIVEK BENDRE

## Boat capsizes, two fishermen missing

RAINA ASSAINAR  
MUMBAI

Two fishermen are missing, while 11 were rescued after a fishing boat capsized around 12 km off Gorai beach in north Mumbai on Tuesday afternoon.

According to the police, the boat, *Lucky Star*, had left for fishing at 7 a.m. on August 1, with 13 fishermen on board. "After learning of the alert of heavy rainfall from August 4, they started to return. But around 9 a.m. on Tuesday, the boat capsized some 10 nautical miles from Gorai."

The disaster management department of the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation, fire brigade, coast guard, police, and maritime board, along with a helicopter from the Navy are involved in the rescue operations, Mr. Narkar said.

### Collapse in Vakola

Meanwhile, a residential

er, two of them are still missing," senior police inspector Sanjay Narkar from Gorai police station said. The vessel too has not yet been found, he confirmed. The missing two have been identified as Mangesh Kadam (24) and Satish Jagtap (25), residents of Gorai Koli Wada.

The chawl of two rooms collapsed at Agripada in Vakola around 11.30 a.m. on Tuesday, due to heavy rain. The one plus one structure was near a nullah, and a 26-year-old woman and her two daughters, aged seven and one, were swept away after the chawl came down. Her third daughter Shivanya, aged two, was rescued by locals and admitted to a hospital in Vakola.

The bodies of the woman, Rekha Kakade, and one-year-old Janvi were found by a National Disaster Response Force rescue team in the evening. At the time of going to press, a search was under way to find seven-year-old Shreya.

the hospital said.

The Bombay High Court adjourned its virtual hearings in various cases as many staff members could not

reach the court, an official said. The court will now hear the matters on Wednesday, an official said.

The State government al-

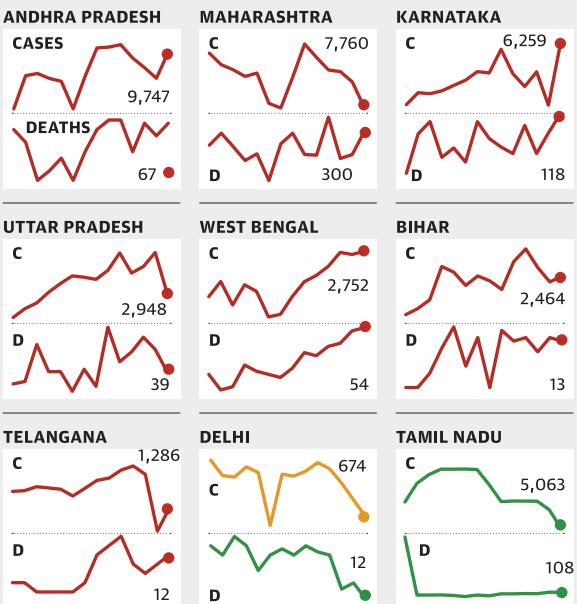
so announced a holiday for all its offices in Mumbai city and suburbs on Tuesday in view of the heavy rainfall in the metropolis.

## Viral tracker

India recorded 51,336 new cases on Tuesday, taking the tally past 19 lakh. The graphs depict new cases and deaths in the last 14 days in select States. If average cases/deaths in the last seven days are higher than the previous seven days, then the cases/deaths are rising —; if they are lower, then dropping —; if they are similar, then flattening — in that State

**'UPTO 78,000 LIVES SAVED'**  
The extended lockdown imposed to curb the COVID-19 outbreak helped save between 37,000 and 78,000 lives, the Union Health Ministry said on Tuesday

**'UPTO 30% RAPID ANTIGEN TESTS'**  
A record daily high of 6,61,892 samples were tested as per latest data. However, the break-up of how many were RT-PCR tests and Rapid Antigen Tests (RAT) was not given. According to ICMR, RAT now made up 25-30% of tests conducted across the country



## Farmers demand solatium for income loss

They say their fields in Satna district have been dug up for a water project

SIDHARTH YADAV  
BHOPAL

Several farmers in at least 300 villages of Satna district are demanding compensation for the loss of crop income as they claim their agricultural fields have either been dug up or lie strewn with construction material for a water supply project for more than a year now.

The Satna-Bansagar Multi-Village Rural Water Supply Scheme, to be completed next year at a cost of ₹1,495.89 crore, plans to bring treated water from the Bansagar Dam on the Son river to 1,019 villages in six blocks of the district. While the State government maintains pipelines are being laid on its land along roads and with the consent of owners in case of small private land patches, farmers rue the construction has left parts of their fields gravely and unfertile, unfit for cultivation.

**'Not cultivable'**

"Workers dug out parts of our field and left boulders around," said Gaurav Mishra, whose family owns five



Dug-up fields in Satna district in Madhya Pradesh. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT.

tional Human Rights Commission demanding compensation.

He says the authority concerned is yet to inform him of action taken in the matter within eight weeks, as directed by the Commission in September last year.

"More than 2,500 farmers are affected," he said.

**'No loss to farmers'**

"The pipelines are being laid five-six feet underground, so there is no loss to farmers," said A.P. Dwivedi, Sub-Divisional Magistrate, Ramnagar, who was directed by the District Magistrate in November last year to submit a report to the Commission in a time-bound way.

He added the pipeline works are being laid on government land along roads, "so there is no question of compensation."

The Madhya Pradesh Bhumiya Pipeline, Cable Avam Duct (Bhumi ki upyoka ke adhikaron ka arjan) Niyan, 2013, provides for compensation for crop and tree loss for the period of laying of underground pipeline, ca-

ble or duct".

"Although there is a law, we have received no orders from the top to compensate farmers in such cases State-wide," said a senior official of the Madhya Pradesh Jal Nigam Maryadit, a State government undertaking, requesting anonymity.

Meanwhile, Ashish Srivastava, the undertaking's Chief General Manager, said it had received no such claims from farmers so far.

"If there is a legitimate claim, we will of course compensate them," he said, adding some farmers encroaching upon government land along roads might be raising the demand now.

"The pipeline works aren't causing any obstruction to farming. And there is no element of coercion," contended M.K. Mudgal, General Manager, Project Implementation Unit, Satna. He further said the project, which began in November 2018, was being funded by the New Development Bank whose guarantee was that government land be used mostly for it.

Haryana to link welfare schemes through 'Parivar Pehchan Patra', says CM

PPP would end corruption, red-tapism

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal on Tuesday distributed 'Parivar Pehchan Patra' to the eligible families and announced that welfare schemes of all departments would be linked with the PPP within next three months.

PPP is an e-governance initiative that will enable the citizens to get the benefit of various Centre and State government schemes at their door-step in a fair and transparent manner, the Chief Minister said in Panchkula.

He said that the State government has decided to celebrate the year 2020 as 'Sushashan Sanakap Varsh' and the integration of schemes of all departments with PPP would not only ensure effective and efficient delivery of services to the people but also put an end to the complaints of corruption and red-tapism in this system.

"The State government is committed to provide good governance in the State and has taken several e-governance initiatives including 'Meri Fasal Mera Byora Yojna'.



Manohar Lal. ■ FILE PHOTO

na', digitalisation of revenue records, Haryana Udyam Memorandum (HUM) Portal and many more," he said.

Mr. Lal said that a separate Citizen Resources Information Department (CRID) has been established to give further momentum to the PPP programme. "The government has launched a campaign to prepare 'Parivar Pehchan Patra' to provide a distinct identity to each family in the State. Out of the available records of 56.20 lakh families in the State, data of 18.19 lakh families have been prepared and these are being provided 'Parivar Pehchan Patras'.

The additional 20 lakh 'Parivar Pehchan Patras' would be distributed by end of August 2020," he said.

## COVID-19 deaths: Punjab reports 20, Haryana 8

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

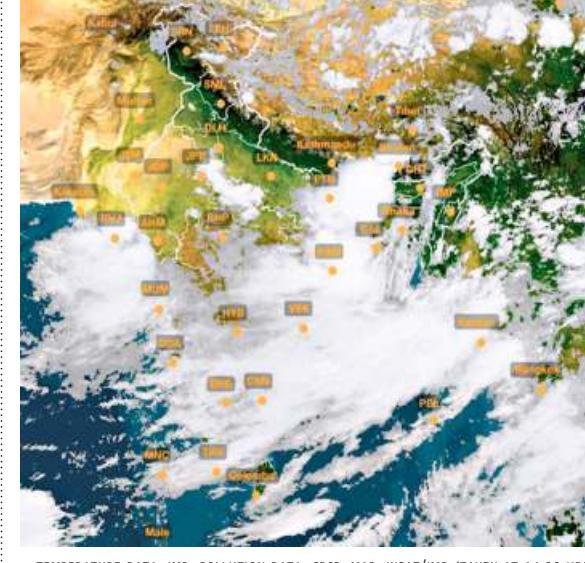
CHANDIGARH

Punjab recorded 488 fresh COVID-19 cases on August 4 and reported 20 more deaths taking the tally to 462, according to an official statement. In Haryana, 623 fresh cases surfaced, taking the tally to 37,796. The State also reported eight deaths, taking the total tally to 448.

The number of positive cases in Punjab has reached 19,015. The major chunk of new cases, 222 and 39, were reported from Ludhiana and Amritsar in Punjab and 169 and 96 from Faridabad and Rohtak districts respectively. Punjab Health department said active cases are 6,062 and 12,491 patients have so far recovered.

## WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD; POLLUTION DATA: CPCB; MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 14.00 HRS)

**Forecast for Wednesday:** Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Assam, Sikkim, West Bengal, east Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Gujarat, west Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Odisha, Telangana, Konkan & Goa, coastal Karnataka, south Interior Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, Kerala and Mahe

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	35.0...	29.2	Kozhikode	10.2...	29.8...	25.6
Ahmedabad	7.8...	35.9...	27.4	Kurnool	—	30.6...	24.5
Aizawl	5...	27.1...	21.2	Lucknow	0.4...	35.4...	27.2
Aligarh	15.8...	35.5...	26.8	Madurai	—	36.4...	27.1
Bengaluru	1.4...	24.4...	21.0	Mangaluru	63...	27.8...	23.4
Bhopal	0.3...	32.3...	25.7	Mumbai	268.6...	27.9...	24.0
Bhubaneswar	19.8...	30.6...	25.5	Mysuru	—	24.9...	20.6
Chandigarh	—	35.3...	28.6	New Delhi	—	36.3...	29.0
Chennai	—	32.9...	27.7	Patna	—	36.7...	26.6
Coimbatore	2...	29.8...	23.6	Port Blair	2.2...	29.5...	25.2
Dehradoon	—	34.5...	24.0	Puducherry	—	34.1...	26.8
Gangtok	0.1...	26.1...	19.1	Pune	7.6...	26.1...	22.6
Goa	—	25.7...	23.7	Rajpur	—	32.3...	24.6
Guwahati	—	37.0...	27.8	Ranchi	4.6...	29.4...	24.0
Hubballi	—	23.0...	22.0	Shillong	—	26.1...	19.5
Hyderabad	0.3...	30.3...	23.7	Shimla	—	25.8...	18.4
Imphal	—	27.8...	22.3	Srinagar	—	32.0...	16.2
Jaipur	34.8...	36.3...	27.0	Thiruvananthapuram	1.4...	29.6...	25.5
Kochi	7.4...	29.0...	22.7	Tiruchi	—	34.3...	27.4
Kohima	2.2...	26.6...	18.4	Vijayawada	2...	31.7...	26.8
Kolkata	19.7...	29.6...	22.8	Visakhapatnam	0.2...	31.6...	27.6

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>x</sub>	CO	PM <sub>2.5</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	CODE
Ahmedabad	21	25	37	...38	...77	...
Bengaluru	11	41	31	—	...50	...
Chennai	.9	20	61	109	—	...
Delhi	17	28	99	...40	...71	...
Hyderabad	.7	35	15	—	...16	...
Kolkata	11	25	16	...91	...96	...
Lucknow	.3	2				



## More of the same

Donald Trump is again resorting to hateful tropes about immigrants stealing jobs

The list of U.S. President Donald Trump's attacks on the inflow of skilled foreign workers into the country continues to expand rapidly, with the latest salvo from the White House seeking to potentially prevent such workers from participating in any federal government contracts indefinitely. The executive order signed by Mr. Trump specifically targets the H-1B visa as one that purportedly results in the loss of jobs to U.S. persons owing to cheap foreign labour. Indian nationals tend to be granted 60-70% or more of visas in this category annually, which implies that the potential impact of this order on IT and ITES firms based in India could be considerable, and produce a ripple effect in the bilateral economic space. Notwithstanding the sense of shock that this order is likely to cause among those in corporate India who invest in the U.S. economy and create jobs there, it should hardly come as a surprise given the steady tightening of the screws on the U.S. immigration paradigm during the final months of the Trump administration. Even in April 2020 the White House announced that it would be suspending the issuance of green cards, effectively halting legal migration into the U.S. In June 2020, the immigration crackdown was extended via an order to stop processing new visas across several skilled worker categories, including H-1B visas. While the latest order avoids the language of an outright ban on foreign workers joining federal government contracts, it calls for a review of contracting and hiring practices by federal agencies, with a focus on foreign temporary workers and U.S. government-related services that were offshored to foreign countries.

To an extent, it is understandable that the weight of performance expectations that rests upon Mr. Trump's shoulders is of immense magnitude. The economy, which was in fine fettle until the COVID-19 pandemic struck, appears to be grinding to a halt, with an expected surge in unemployment numbers to nearly 18 million jobless people. To describe the U.S. government's response to the pandemic crisis as tepid, bumbling, and wrong-headed would be generous. There is a high possibility that voters may punish Mr. Trump on November 3, 2020. However, instead of striking a positive note about finding the U.S.'s greatest source of economic resilience in the diversity of its people, Mr. Trump has steadily retreated deeper into the morass of hateful tropes about immigrants stealing jobs. This may well strike a chord with his core support base of blue-collar workers across middle America who are undeniably in economic pain, but it does little to repair the damage done since 2016 to the fabric of American society. Bitter polarisation is a perennial trait of the political landscape of the U.S., but it has rarely ever been as exacerbated as in the last four years.

## Language of unity

States must be allowed to follow their own language policy

By rejecting the three-language formula advocated in the National Education Policy (NEP 2020), Tamil Nadu Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami has only reiterated the State's unwavering position on an emotive and political issue. Its two-language policy, implemented decades ago after a historic agitation against the imposition of Hindi, remains non-negotiable for almost the entire political class. Opposition from the State had last year forced the Centre to amend the draft NEP and withdraw a proposal to teach Hindi as a third language in schools in non-Hindi speaking States. Yet in the NEP, approved by the Union Cabinet last week, it chose to push for the three-language formula, packaging it as a means to promote multilingualism and "national unity". Though the policy said that no language will be imposed on any State, it has expectedly cut no ice with parties in Tamil Nadu, which have risen in near unison to oppose the proposal. In fact, Mr. Palaniswami, citing "collective sentiments" of the people, noted that the proposal was "saddening and painful" and appealed to the Prime Minister to allow States to follow their own language policy. In a State that resisted multiple attempts to impose Hindi since 1937, political parties are understandably wary of any mandate to impart an additional language in schools. They fear this would eventually pave the way for Hindi to enter the State through the back door. Since 1985, the State has even refused to allow Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalayas to be set up as they teach Hindi.

The two-language policy of Tamil and English, piloted by former Chief Minister C.N. Annadurai in 1968, has thus far worked well in the State. In a liberalised world, more windows to the world are being opened up for those proficient in English, a global link language. The State's significant human resources contribution to the ever-expanding IT sector is also attributed to the English fluency of its recruits as much as to their technical knowledge. There is this counter-argument that Tamil Nadu is depriving students of an opportunity to learn Hindi, touted as a national link language. However, its voluntary learning has never been restricted and the growth over the past decade in the number of CBSE schools, where the language is taught, would bear testimony to this. The patronage for the 102-year-old Dakshina Bharat Hindi Prachar Sabha, based in Chennai, also proves this. In the Sabha's centenary year, Tamil Nadu accounted for 73% of active Hindi *pracharakas* (teachers) in South India. Out of necessity, many in the State have picked up conversational Hindi to engage with the migrant population that feeds the labour needs from factories to hair salons. Only compulsion is met with resistance. India's federal nature and diversity demand that no regional language is given supremacy over another.

# Rekindle Kashmir's lost and real connect

As New Delhi continues to reflect on strategies to win hearts and minds in Kashmir, it would do well to revisit the past



AMITABH MATTOO

In the din as well as the deathly silence to mark a year since the reorganisation of the State of Jammu and Kashmir and the abrogation of its special status, another anniversary – almost a historical vignette today – has, not surprisingly, been forgotten. But it carries today deep poignancy as New Delhi continues to reflect on strategies to win the so-far elusive victory over the hearts and minds of the people, beyond the triumphalism that has accompanied the constitutional integration.

**Foiling 'Operation Gibraltar'**  
It was on August 5, 1965 that two Kashmiri Gujjars helped to thwart one of Pakistan's most devious conspiracies in the Valley. At Darra Kassi, near Gulmarg, Mohammed Din, and Wazir Mohammed at Galuthi in the Mendhar sector, reported the Pakistani infiltration (to, respectively, the Thana at Tangmarg and the headquarters of the infantry brigade at Poonch) that was intended to spark an uprising in Kashmir, as part of its insidious 'Operation Gibraltar' relying on a ready-to-rebel fifth column within the Valley. Nothing of that sort happened, as other Kashmiris too reported on the presence of the infiltrators, who were soon flushed out. In short, 'Operation Gibraltar' failed, as did every

other attempt by Pakistan because of the fundamental belief of Kashmiris in the goodness and greatness of India.

Mostly forgotten and unsung, Din and Mohammed, stood for and reinforced the idea of India in Kashmir, with the courage of their conviction and often at the cost of their lives – like thousands of other Kashmiris over more than the seven decades since Independence. Today is a day to recall and remember some of these Kashmiris; each deserving a fulsome tribute; for ultimately the real test of the decisions made a year ago will be the people.

Consider, for instance, the story of Barumullah's Maqbool Sherwani. It was Sherwani, in 1947, who helped delay the Pakistan-backed tribal invaders march to Srinagar from Baramulla before the arrival of the Indian armed forces. The tribal invaders eventually found him out; tortured him, shot him and crucified him, but not, as I wrote once earlier, before he cried out one last time, "Muslim Sikh Ethad, Zindabad (Victory for the unity of Sikhs, Hindus and Muslims)." This, said Mahatma Gandhi at his prayer meeting, later, "was a martyrdom of which anyone, Hindu, Sikh, Muslim or any other, would be proud."

**A principal with principles**  
But there were other Sherwanis too! In 1965, as the Gujjars discovered the infiltrators, there was one formidable educationist, a legendary principal of the local women's college, Ms. Mehmooda Ali Shah, who faced a minor act of rebellion. She heard that one of her



students had shouted "Pakistan Zindabad!" on the college grounds. Dressed as always in a handloom sari, Ms. Shah (both a Gandhian and a Fellow Traveller) marched down the grounds, with hundreds of students and staff watching her, and confronted the student.

The legendary principal slapped the delinquent student hard, admonished her and went back to her office amidst pindrop silence. For nearly two decades as principal, Ms. Shah exemplified through her personality, and through her word and deed, not just the quest for the empowerment of Kashmiri women but her ability to stand up for the ideas that endeared India to the Kashmiris.

**The power of the Soviet bond**  
At the height of the Cold War, in 1955, when the Anglo-American bloc (it is often conveniently forgotten these days) was arm-twisting New Delhi to hold a plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir, the First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, Nikita Sergeyevich Khrushchev and the Premier Nikolai Bulganin, visited India. Nehru insisted that they

visited Srinagar where they watched the genius, Dina Nath Nadim's opera: 'Bombar Taa Yemberzal (The Narcissus and the Bumble bee)', an allegorical reference to the clash between Imperialism and Socialism. So deeply inspired were they by the visit that Khrushchev and the Soviet Union recognised Jammu and Kashmir as an integral part of India soon thereafter, and continued to cast its veto to block any attempt by the United Nations Security Council to intervene in Kashmir.

If it was Nadir who brought the plight of Kashmir to the world, and the justness of India's cause, it was the extraordinary art of Ghulam Rasool Santosh that revealed Kashmir's unique syncretic culture. Santosh's paintings reflected not just the unity of the cosmos, but also the glories of Sufi and Tantric thought. The larger fusion of the diversity of India within Kashmir's multiple streams is reflected in Santosh's art.

**The Bangladesh war**  
What greater testament to India's rights, freedoms and democracy could be there than the brilliant Editor and later parliamentarian, Shamim Ahmed Shamim. Shamim's satirical prose on the pages of his newspaper, *Aaina* (Mirror) did more for Indian democracy than any speech by an Indian diplomat in the United Nations. It was Shamim's stirring words in the Lok Sabha, in 1972, to Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on the Bangladesh War that found real resonance with the people of the Valley and across the world. "Madam," he said, "leaders have

changed the course of history, but rarely has anyone changed geography."

### Steps needed

By almost common consensus, the most effective police chief in the history of Jammu and Kashmir, was the barely school-educated Kashmiri, Peer Ghulam Hassan Shah, who broke the back of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front and the Kashmiri Al-Fatah. It was his professionalism combined with a huge intelligence network of informers which was able ensure that no Pakistan-inspired operative had a free hand in Kashmir. In the legacy of leaders such as Peer Ghulam Hassan Shah and Ms. Mehmooda lies the future of New Delhi in Kashmir and the future basis of Kashmir's faith in India. Executive decisions and even constitutional amendments are not the challenge; Article 370 had lost much of its potency even before the decisions made last year. The real challenge has remained the emotional integration of Kashmir within the national mainstream. For that to happen, Jammu and Kashmir has to move beyond the control exercised by its Kafkaesque bureaucracy, who rely more on astrology than common sense, and must discover its new generation of leaders, across professions, who will truly be the pillars of a future Naya Kashmir. Clearly, restoration of Statehood and the early conduct of fair elections are essential first steps in that journey.

Amitabh Mattoo is Professor, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University

## Lessons from mediating Ayodhya

Among many learnings about the nature of public disputes is an urgent need to create a centre for moderating dialogue



SIRRAM PANICHU

**O**n March 8 last year, the Supreme Court of India appointed a three-member Mediation Committee to attempt mediation in the Ayodhya Babri Masjid Ram Janambhumi dispute pending before the Court. Justice (retd.) Ibrahim Kalifula, former judge of the Court, Sri Sri Ravishankar and myself were the three members. We immediately commenced the process of having meetings with the many parties to the case, together and separately. The initial time of two months was extended to August 15, 2019, which the Court advanced to July 31, 2019.

### Closure to the issue

All parties could not reach agreement by that time, and the Court started the hearing of the case on August 6. In mid-September, at the request of some parties, the Court permitted resumption of mediation. Around the time of conclusion of arguments in end-October, several parties submitted their agreement on a settlement formula so that the views of other parties be sought under the provisions of the Code of Civil Procedure or the formula be adopted for a broad order under Article 142 of the Constitution of India. The Court delivered judgment in the case on November 9, 2019. It adverted to

the terms of settlement arrived at in the mediation process, but expressed its inability to proceed with the same since all parties had not signed it. It gave the disputed land and adjoining parcels to the Hindus for building the Ram Mandir and allotted five acres elsewhere to the Muslims.

The judgment was bitterly resented and intellectually criticised for favouring the Hindus. But there was also relief that there was closure to this issue and that no more bloodshed took place. Importantly, the Court breathed constitutional protection and longevity to the Protection of Places of Worship Act, 1991, which protects all other places of worship of all religions from conversion; with this, India will be spared repeats of this mandir and masjid mayhem.

### Mediation dynamics

Certainly in the history of mediation this is a most momentous case, given the context, communities, history of violence, ancient archaeology and present ground realities, the interplay between law and logic and emotions and faith, and what the outcome boded for the future of hundreds of millions of people. There are many, many lessons to be learnt from mediating Ayodhya. Some will remain undisclosed owing to the confidentiality which covers the mediation proceedings. Others will emerge perhaps when the time is right, and the manner is appropriate. But for me, the indelible lesson is one concerning a very basic nature of public disputes. Put simply – and sometimes the most important things can be stat-



ed very simply – when conflict starts, there is a movement towards each end of the spectrum. The periphery swells, strident voices command attention, extreme demands are made, and soon it is the combative ones within the combatant sides who call the shots. They benefit ideologically, politically and personally. They fashion the litigation and the courts give them the right to represent their communities. The mediators, on the other hand, behave moderately, can be easily shouted down or shunted out. Fearing charges of being traitors, they toe the line.

Leaving aside the mediation sessions (about which I say nothing here) I have spoken to many people about this dispute – before and after, and apart from, the mediation. Overwhelmingly, they favoured the middle ground, accommodation, compromise, moving on, securing to each side what it needed most, recognising that the non-negotiables were different. When I put it all together, I am left with the inescapable feeling that if strong voices had pushed for moderation and dialogue and harmonious solution, there would have been a countervailing centripetal

movement cancelling out the centrifugal one. And then the following scenario would not be unimaginable.

### Then and now

Sometime in the 1980s, a meeting is facilitated between the senior Shankaracharyas, the accepted representatives of the Hindu faith, and the President of the All India Muslim Personal Law Board, Maulana Ali Miyan, accompanied by the head of the waqf Board and other leading Muslim clerics. They are all under intense public pressure to find a solution; if religious men cannot, hotheads and politicians will have a field day, they are told.

In an atmosphere of respect and confidentiality, these holy men can talk freely and explore multiple options for settlement. Sharing the contested space is desirable, but if the Hindus feel strongly about locating a large Ram temple, the Muslims must hear an apology for the wrongful act of sneaking an idol into the mosque in 1949. And if the language is not of giving up or giving in but to please give to the brother with greater need since he fervently believes that this is the birthplace of the Lord, the response is likely to be commensurate. Maulana Ali Miyan is scholarly and wise, and can give his people a crucial piece of advice. Do not treat this as an ordinary masjid versus mandir dispute. Lord Ram for the Hindus is like Allah for us. We may win legal battles, but we will win no war here. Give it to them generously and we will be the winners. But on one condition – this must be no

precedent. What we really fear is that this is a prelude to other demands. When conveyed to the Hindus, their response can be clear – you need have no fear for the rest. In Kashi and Mathura no doubt the old temples were destroyed by Muslim invaders, but we have built new ones where worship is happening for many years, and we do not want to change that. Ayodhya is different because we do not have a temple for Ram. We will prevail on the government to bring in a law to protect all other places of worship; let this country be free of this spectre of breaking houses of religion. Choose any parcel of land, and it will be yours to build a new mosque. And as a measure of goodwill, other mosques in Ayodhya can be repaired and renovated.

How much better we would have been, my countrymen, if this had been the reality. But learning the lesson for the future, it can be if there is both targeted action and a groundswell, each feeding into the other, which creates the momentum and movement towards the middle platform where both sides can meet to resolve public disputes. An urgent need of our times is to create this centre for moderating dialogue. May it come about soon. It will be the sacred space which the great poet, Jalāl ad-Dīn Rūmī, spoke about: Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and rightdoing, there is a field. I will meet you there.

Sriram Panichu is Senior Advocate and Mediator. The views expressed are personal. E-mail: sripanichu@gmail.com

## 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.

### J&K, a year later

It is a year since the abrogation of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir. New Delhi's intent to establish peace and create economic development (probably even by way of foreign direct investment) in the Valley does not seem to have yielded results. The drive (using a huge military presence) to integrate the Valley with the rest of India has only led to a betrayal of democratic principles and human rights (Editorial page, "A change that hit federalism, inclusion", August 4). There is no doubt that a political amalgamation of Jammu and Kashmir is needed, but there is a greater need for people of the Valley to be trusted as they do have so many links with the rest of the country. The most important thing is

that no investor can express confidence about the situation unless there is lasting peace and order and the people are in consonance with the government. This is the reason, as Tim Marshall puts it in his work, *Prisoners of Geography*, that African nations have hardly seen economic growth. Forced curfews and detention of democratically elected political leaders are not what will work in New Delhi's favour internationally too. CHINMAYA B.I., Harday, Puttur, Karnataka

related activities in the last one year. This is one step that will psychologically assure business and industry. As far as Internet connectivity is concerned, let us remember that there are many parts of the rest of India where there is not even a connection of reliable and decent bandwidth. It is quite understandable that some politicians of yore in Kashmir will have trouble in finding their feet in the new political landscape. There is no indication that the repealing of Article 370 will or has been the panacea for problems in Kashmir, but it has been a step that will give some momentum to the stagnant socio-economic situation in Kashmir. KAPIL SINGH YADAV, Singrauli, Uttar Pradesh

I saw a different Kashmir Valley during my nine-day

tour of districts in November 2019. For most in the Valley, the core issue is about the economy and development. 'Special status' was more for the benefit of certain political families and anger against these politicians was expressed in a number of ways when talking to the common man. When the rest of India has waited for over 70 years for peace in Kashmir, cannot some in the political class in Kashmir wait a few more years for peace to return? DUGGARAJU SRINIVASA RAO, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh

I saw a different Kashmir Valley during my nine-day

paper. But otherwise, it has been disastrous. With most of J&K's politicians and activists in some form or other of detention, the complete absence of a political process; denial of access to Internet and mobile connectivity; stamping out of Kashmiris' civil and democratic rights and new definitions on eligibility for domicile, there has only been a double lockdown. S.S. PAUL, Chakdaha, Nadia, West Bengal

I saw a different Kashmir Valley during my nine-day

I saw a different Kashmir Valley during my nine-day

difference to the situation on the ground. The way to reach out to the people is to restore: 4G Internet, freedom of speech and expression, Statehood, and employment.

SYED RAFAQIT HUSSAIN,

Kupwara, Kashmir

Lead by example

It is indeed unfortunate that a number of top political leaders and celebrities are contracting COVID-19. We wish them a quick recovery. However, we find that a majority have got themselves admitted in top private hospitals.

Does this mean that they themselves have no confidence in the treatment and care extended in general and public hospitals? It sends out a wrong message.

THARCIUS S. FERNANDO, Chennai

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# Violating human rights in the Valley

Unchecked preventive detention and difficulty in accessing information are matters of grave concern



MADAN B. LOKUR

A few human rights concerns have emerged in the Kashmir Valley over the last one year since the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution. Till the time of writing, the national portal of India website [india.gov.in](http://india.gov.in) continued to show this Article as a part of the Constitution! What is the truth?

Unchecked preventive detention – whether in the form of house arrest (admitted or denied) or preventive detention in jail in the Valley or outside the erstwhile State – is a matter of grave concern. So is the difficulty in accessing information whether through normal channels of communication or through electronic means such as the Internet.

## Under house arrest

The concept of house arrest is not specifically mentioned in the criminal manual but the state is empowered to declare a building or house as a sub-jail. Through such declarations, residential accommodations of some political leaders have been converted into sub-jails. The resident of a sub-jail is automatically and undeniably under detention and what is commonly known as house arrest.

When a residential accommodation is declared a sub-jail, the state virtually acquires and takes over the property for its own purposes. The owner of the property is entitled to rent or compensation for the use and occupation of the property. So, in a sense, a person under house arrest without receiving compensation is doubly jeopardised. Compulsory take-over of property even for a limited period has been an issue of great concern in Mizoram where vast tracts of land were taken over by the armed forces to quell an insurgency. Many of these landowners have petitioned for compensation, though with little effect. Residents of the Valley will perhaps face the same problem as the Mizos.

A variation of house arrest was employed during the Emergency when a few tourist resorts close to Delhi were declared as sub-jails and



prominent political leaders incarcerated therein, without taking over their property. In a sense, therefore, some Emergency steps have now been adopted to quell dissent.

## Preventive detention

Preventive detention under the Public Safety Act (PSA) has caused immense hardship to a very large number of persons. Preventive detention is based on a prognosis of future events on the basis of past conduct. Like all preventive detention laws, the PSA is draconian but our Constitution provides important procedural safeguards that must be followed by the state or else the detention order will be quashed. Among them is the fundamental right to be communicated, as soon as may be, the grounds on which the order has been made and the earliest opportunity of making a representation against the order. Decisions of the Supreme Court hold that if there is an unexplained delay of even one or two days in dealing with the representation, the order of preventive detention is vitiated. A challenge to an order of preventive detention can be mounted on these and other procedural grounds. The law regulating the PSA is no different. Many preventive detention orders have been challenged through habeas corpus petitions but unfortunately many of them are still pending in the concerned High Court. This did not happen even during the Emergency. What is the truth behind the delay?

And now a new theory has been advanced by the state. In the case of one political leader, it was stated in an affidavit in the Supreme Court that he had not been preventively de-

tained or kept under house arrest, which means that his residence was not declared a sub-jail. In other words, he was a free person. In that event why was his house swarming with policemen and why was he not free to move around? What is the truth?

A Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court held in the case of *A.K. Roy v. Union of India* (1981) that, "Laws of preventive detention cannot, by the back-door, introduce procedural measures of a punitive kind... The normal rule has to be that the detenu will be kept in detention in a place which is within the environs of his or her ordinary place of residence. If a person ordinarily resides in Delhi to keep him in detention in a far off place like Madras or Calcutta is a punitive measure by itself which, in matters of preventive detention at any rate, is not to be encouraged... Whatever smacks of punishment must be scrupulously avoided in matters of preventive detention." Although the PSA permits a detenu being detained outside the erstwhile State, such detention should ordinarily not be resorted to for a variety of reasons. But unfortunately the view of the Supreme Court has been followed more in the breach in the case of several PSA detainees. One gets the impression that resort to preventive detention is actually as a measure of punishment or conviction without a trial.

There are several other reasons why the incarceration of hundreds of persons in the erstwhile State is a gross human rights violation. What makes the situation worse is that a very large number of children have had to suffer what is euphemistically

called detention for their own good. The welfare and best interests of a child can hardly be decided in a police station without the involvement of the parents of the child.

## Taking a step back

Access to information might not yet be a fundamental right but it is certainly a human right. For the last one year, the residents of the Valley have been deprived of the benefit of 4G Internet. This has had an adverse impact on various aspects of daily life. For students, the joy of learning has become an imposition with 2G Internet. Medical professionals have difficulty in advising and counselling their patients. The right to health is an essential component of the right to life and this has been denied to a large number of patients. Businessmen have suffered, the economy in the Valley has taken a hit and it appears that the powers that be are in no mood to relent. The Supreme Court has twice intervened but with no tangible effect. Orders concerning the Internet were required to be reviewed under the rules by a committee headed by the Cabinet Secretary. The committee has been downgraded and is now headed by the Home Secretary. In other words, rather than a step forward towards access to information, a small step back has been taken.

While it may be that uncontrolled access to Internet could pose a security risk through misuse by terrorists and militants, today's technology is so far advanced that it is possible to block access even in a limited way. For example, thousands of child pornography sites have been successfully blocked in different parts of the world, including India. Therefore, where there is a will to checkmate militants and terrorists through the effective use of technology, it is possible to do so, but taking a short cut by permitting download only by 2G possibly does more harm to a greater number of people than is necessary and is disproportionate.

It is time to introspect and make the human rights of all our citizens an inclusive subject of free and frank discussion. If we keep beating about the bush, its leaves will eventually fall. What happens then?

*Justice (retd.) Madan B. Lokur is a former Supreme Court judge*

# J&K and Ladakh, a year on

The government views the removal of Article 370 as a key vehicle to usher in transformational development in the region



G. KISHAN REDDY

Though Syama Prasad Mukherjee highlighted the implications of Article 370 with the slogan "Ek desh mein do vidhan, do pradhan, do nishan nahi chalega" (We can't have two Constitutions, two Prime Ministers and two flags in one country), it was not until 1979 that the full discriminatory nature of Article 35A came to light. A single-judge Bench quashed the appointment of Dr. Ravinder Maadan as an Assistant Professor at the Government Medical College in Jammu. The court ruled that Dr. Maadan, who had married a non-state subject, was no longer a permanent resident and hence not eligible for government employment. It was only 23 years later, in 2002, that a three-member Bench of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court declared that the daughter of a permanent resident marrying a non-permanent resident will not lose her permanent residency. However, it did not wade into the discriminatory nature of Article 35A and stated it to be an "academic issue". Article 35A was unfair not just to women. It deprived benefits to thousands of descendants of West Pakistan refugees who migrated during that period even though they are Indian citizens. It ensured that the descendants of Dalit Valmikis, brought in from Amritsar and Gurdaspur in Punjab as safai karamcharis in 1957, were ineligible for government jobs and were forced to continue in their designated occupation.

The presence of Article 370 in the Constitution paved the way for various constitutional anomalies. For instance, while Section 377 of the Indian Penal Code was struck down by the Supreme Court, it continued to exist in the Ranbir Penal Code that was followed in the erstwhile State. Similarly, critical legislation passed by the Government of India, such as the Right to Information Act, Right to Education Act and the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, were not applicable to the erstwhile State.

## Transformational development

It was for these reasons, and the Prime Minister's vision of "one nation, one Constitution", that led the government to effectively remove Articles 370 and 35A. The largely bipartisan support received in both Houses of Parliament reinforced the fact that the entire nation spoke as one voice. It has been a year since the government's move. Contrary to

claims of "large-scale unrest" and "international ramifications", the move has not only been peaceful but has also seen overwhelming support from all sections of society and the international community.

The government views the effective removal of Article 370 as a key vehicle to usher in transformational development in the region. Many districts in J&K are now terror-free. Anti-terror operations are being executed in a coordinated manner and are receiving support from local residents. Residents of J&K and Ladakh can now aspire for the same opportunities that residents in other States have. The government's commitment to holistically integrate the region is visible in the new programmes that have been launched. Under the National Saffron Mission, more than 3,500 hectares of land are being rejuvenated for saffron cultivation. Saffron grown in Kashmir now has the coveted geographical indication tag giving it prominence in the export market. The government is also incentivising farmers to introduce ultra-high density plantation of apple and other fruits. Tourism infrastructure is being upgraded in mission mode, and *bijli, sadak, paani* issues are being addressed on a war footing. In a bid to further boost tourism and connectivity, 11 airports in J&K and two in Ladakh are being considered under the UDAN scheme. The health sector has been transformed with the opening of two AIIMS Hospitals and five new medical colleges. The Ayushman Bharat scheme is now available for all residents of J&K. During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Centre provided all the necessary infrastructure and logistical support to the region.

## A confidence-building measure

The government believes that the integration of the Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh will be complete in spirit only when grassroots democracy, as envisaged by the 73rd and 74th Constitution Amendments, are firmly established. The Block Development Council elections in October 2019 saw a record turnout and were free of violence, even though there were calls for boycott and threats of violence. This is an important forerunner to more endeavours being made to strengthen democracy. While the abrogation of the Articles has served as an initial confidence-building measure, a lot more needs to be done. The government will continue to strive under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision of "Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas, Sabka Vishwas" to ensure that the people of the region get all that B.R. Ambedkar envisioned while framing our Constitution.

*G. Kishan Reddy is the Minister of State for Home Affairs and Member of Parliament from Secunderabad*

# The meaning of Gandhi's silence

Gandhi's silence on the 1945 bombings suggests how he transformed a tragedy into spiritual action

RAJEEV KADAMBI

The horrific bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945 did not immediately draw condemnation from leaders across the world. This is not particularly surprising. It was a deeply polarised world, very much in the throes of World War II, and still largely under colonial dominion. Leaders with the global reach and the moral stature capable of speaking out on such an event were in short supply.

But these were not M.K. Gandhi's problems. Widely celebrated by then as a global apostle of non-violence and a critic of Western imperialism, he wielded immeasurable moral force. Yet for months, Gandhi refused to speak about the event.

In September, *The Times* in London sought confirmation of astonishing rumours that he had endorsed the use of the atomic bomb. To this, Gandhi merely stated that he had not made any "public statement on the atomic bomb". To a U.S. correspondent, Gandhi said in October: "The more I think of it, the more I feel that I must not speak on the atomic bomb. I must act if I can." What do we make of this mystifying silence?

## The many possibilities

Was this a tactical silence that waited for events to play out? While this may be an entirely plausible, even prudent, explanation, it does not accord with Gandhi's reasoning at the time. Recall that he felt he "must not speak", but act.

Was Gandhi's compulsory silence about the atomic bomb an analogous form of protest? While it is tempting to draw this conclusion, it would not be accurate. For Gandhi, desisting from speech had a specific meaning that was neither a poetics of revolt nor could it be universalised; it had to be experienced individually.

This leaves open two less commonplace possibilities. Many religious traditions link the abstinen-

ce from sound with divinity. Was Gandhi's silence the activation of a theological silence? This is not the case. Gandhi's form of silence was neither a form of total obedience to a deity nor a way of discovering one's relation with the world.

Was Gandhi's silence a form of



## DATA POINT

### Paradise lost

#### 1. INTERNET SNAPPED

The Internet shutdown in the J&K U.T. between Aug. 4, 2019 and Mar. 4, 2020 was the longest in any democracy. Even after the shutdown ended, only 2G Internet was restored<sup>a</sup>

Two spells of lockdown – the first after J&K was stripped of its statehood and its special constitutional status and the second related to COVID-19 – have left the erstwhile State in disarray. With the tourism industry crippled and 4G Internet still not restored, J&K's economy has suffered. While terrorism considerably dipped, cross-border infiltrations have gone up and more locals are being recruited for terrorist activities. By **The Hindu Data Team**

#### 2. TOURISM HIT

Tourism, which forms 8-10% of J&K's GDP, was in a shambles after the August 5, 2019 lockdown. Less than 50,000 tourists visited the U.T. between Aug. and Dec. 2019.<sup>\*</sup>

#### 3. ECONOMY SHOCK

In the 120 days after Aug. 5, 2019, the 10 districts of the Kashmir Valley suffered a loss of ₹17,879.18 cr. according to the Kashmir Chamber of Commerce & Industry. Here is how the figure was arrived at:

#### 4. STATE OF JOBLESSNESS

The CMIE data show that the unemployment rate (UR) breached the 20% mark in August 2019 after staying below the figure for 30 months

#### 5. LOCKDOWN IMPACT

Terrorism-related deaths hit a low in 2012 after continuously declining from 2001. However, terrorism returned to the Valley since, peaking in 2018.

#### 6. FATALITIES DROP

According to the South Asia Terrorism Portal (SATP), the lockdown and increase in Army presence led to a decrease in terrorism-related deaths. Yet the fatalities post-lockdown were higher compared to the low levels seen in 2012.

#### 7. LOCAL THREAT

Despite the decrease in terrorism-related deaths, the number of local recruits increased. In 2020, until March, 87.5% of the militants killed were locals according to SATP (Table 1). Also, according to data furnished in Parliament, infiltration attempts across the border increased significantly

#### Period

#### Incidents of killings

#### Civilian deaths

#### Personnel deaths

#### Terrorist deaths

#### Period

#### Incidents of killings

#### Civilian deaths

#### Personnel deaths

#### Terrorist deaths

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## FROM PAGE ONE

## Ayodhya awaits launch of Ram temple construction

The *bhoomipujan* event is scheduled to start at 12:45 p.m. Two prominent Muslim names, Iqbal Ansari, the former litigant in the Babri Masjid case, and Mohammad Shareef, who was awarded the Padma Shri for years of performing last rites of unclaimed bodies, have also been invited.

On the eve of the event, Faizabad city was busy with life as usual.

But as one moved north-east towards Ayodhya, less than 8 kms away, the place was quieter, perhaps due to the strict traffic restrictions, COVID-19 fears and the heat; yet a sense of anticipation amid administrative activism pervaded the atmosphere.

In the same market, a much younger Abhishek Kumar, 24, is waiting for customers at his departmental store. Like many locals, Mr. Kumar believes the construction of the temple would boost tourism and business, ending periods of turmoil and uncertainty. Though he has faint memory of the political movement surrounding the temple, Mr. Kumar too credits the Modi government.

Prior to 2014, he says, the temple issue was raised only during elections but the present government "contin-

ued working" even after polls and gave it full attention.

Loudspeakers mounted by the administration on main roads played hymns about Lord Ram.

The facades of buildings on the main roads were painted a bright yellow, while triangular saffron flags bearing the image of Lord Ram and the proposed temple adorned tops of temples, shops, homes and even vehicles. The Ram Ki Paudi, which is used to depict Ayodhya in popular imagery, was decorated with an array of lights and earthen pots placed on the ghat.

Relaxing under a tree, Om Prakash Prajapati, 26, was however, not much enthused. He feels the temple would boost the economy but "only the babas and priests" and the rich would benefit. Mr. Prajapati who drives tourists and pilgrims to the Hanumangarhi temple and makeshift Ram Janmabhoomi temple, says many poor families living in the vicinity of the Ram Ki Paudi were relocated to a colony 1.5 km away by the administration as part of the beautification programme. The sanitation there is poor, he says. "We are unable to eat due to the stench."

## Two Indians freed by Taliban return home

The seven men and their Afghan driver were abducted by a Taliban group in May 2018. It demanded ransom in payment as well as the release of senior Taliban militants. After negotiations, one of the hostages was released in March 2019, while three others were released in a swap for 11 Taliban militants held by the U.S. forces at the Bagram prison in October 2019.

Officials would not confirm the number of prisoners now being discussed for release in exchange of the remaining hostages, but it is understood that nine Taliban prisoners, including some releases facilitated by the U.S., have been freed, while two others, accused of more serious crimes, awaited being freed by the government.

The family members of the three hostages told *The Hindu* that they have not heard of any movement on the release of their loved ones, but are in touch with their State governments as well as KEC officials for updates. Prasadi Mahto and Hulas Mahto belong to two villages in the Bagodar block of Giridih district. Both are sole breadwinners for their families and have three children each. The family members of all four labourers from Jharkhand had also got ₹1 lakh as compensation.

## China: don't politicise normal cooperation

"All Confucius Institutes were established by the Chinese and Indian universities after signing legally binding cooperation agreement in accordance with the principles of mutual respect, friendly consultation, equality and mutual benefit, and on the premise that the Indian side applied voluntariness and met the conditions for running the Institute," said spokesperson Ji Rong.

"The school-running mode of Confucius Institutes has mainly been 'foreign side mainly managing, Chinese side assisting and both sides raising funds jointly'. Over the years, Confucius Institutes have played an important role in promoting Chinese language teaching in India and China-India people-to-people and cultural exchanges. This has been generally re-

gognised by the Indian education community."

"We hope Indian relevant parties can treat Confucius Institutes and China-India higher education cooperation in an objective and fair manner, avoid politicising normal cooperation, and maintain healthy and stable development of China-India people-to-people and cultural exchanges," the statement said.

Separately in Beijing, the Foreign Ministry said in response to reports of India tightening trade restrictions on goods from China that were being re-routed through third countries, that trade cooperation "was mutually beneficial."

"Artificially damaging such cooperation doesn't serve India's own interests," said spokesperson Wang Wenbin. This has been generally re-

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## Karnataka's daily cases touch new high of 6,259

In Telangana, 1,286 test positive as sampling rate is bumped up; Kerala records three deaths; A.P. counts 9,747 fresh cases

**STAFF REPORTER**  
HYDERABAD

Karnataka on Tuesday reported 6,259 new COVID-19 cases, the highest on a single day. Previously, the State recorded a similar number on July 30 when 6,128 people tested positive. The case total now touched 1,45,830 with 110 new deaths, the toll stood at 2,704.

Telangana's COVID-19 cases rose, as more tests were conducted. While 9,443 tests

were done on Sunday and 983 tested positive, on Monday 13,787 tests were offered and 1,286 cases detected. Results of 919 samples were awaited. The death toll touched 563 as 12 more patients passed away. The new cases included 391 from

Greater Hyderabad, 121 from Rangareddy and 101 from Karimnagar district. A total of 68,946 cases were detected from March 2 to August 3. Of these, 18,708 were active cases, 49,675 recovered, and 563 died.

In all, 5,01,025 tests were conducted, a little over 1.03 lakh tests over July 29 - August 3. The daily tests dropped over the past two days, due to "a series of holidays," officials said.

Andhra Pradesh, which witnessed a slight dip in new cases over the past three days again reported close to 10,000 cases and 67 new deaths on Tuesday. The death toll rose to 1,604 and with 9,747 fresh cases, the tally increased to 1,76,333.

Three districts reported more than 1,000 cases each and Guntur reported 12 deaths in a day. New cases

## Getting ready to reopen

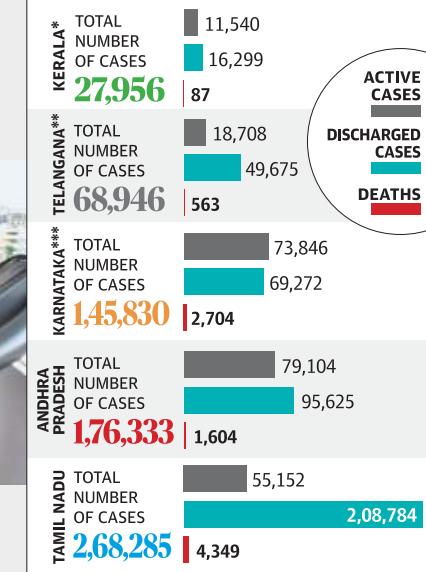
As part of unlock measures, the government has allowed gym and yoga centres across the country to function. The graph shows the spread of the pandemic in the Southern States



**Spick and span:** Maintenance staff cleaning and sanitising equipment at a gym in Vijayawada on Tuesday. ■ K.V.S. GIRI

\*Kerala has a mismatch of 30 cases due to unaccounted deaths, missing persons | \*\*Telangana numbers are as of 8 p.m. on Monday

\*\*\*Karnataka has 8 non-COVID deaths



tests on Monday.

Kerala reported 1,083 new cases and 1,021 recoveries on Tuesday. The cumulative cases rose to 27,956 and 11,540 people were under treatment in hospitals.

Three deaths at Thiruvananthapuram, Kozhikode and Ernakulam were officially added to the toll, which rose to 87. Of 1,083 new cases, 968 were locally acquired infections, including 16 health workers.

In Karnataka, Bengaluru Urban reported 2,035 cases and 30 deaths. The city now touched 63,033 cases. Of 63,846 active cases, 64,246 were in ICUs. Also, 42,458 tests including 29,488 Rapid Antigen Tests were done in the last 24 hours.

(With inputs from Vijayawada, Thiruvananthapuram and Bengaluru bureaus)

## Siddaramaiah too tests positive, hospitalised

He is in the same private hospital as the Karnataka CM

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
BENGALURU

A day after Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa contracted COVID-19, Leader of the Opposition and former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, 73, also tested positive for the infection. He was admitted to Manipal Hospital, where Mr. Yediyurappa too is undergoing treatment, late on Monday, with symptoms.

Mr. Siddaramaiah's 57-year-old wife, Parvathi Sudhara, and son, Yathindra Siddaramaiah, who is also Varuna MLA, have tested negative.

Five other persons who work in his house also tested negative.

Stating that his 73-year-



old father could have contracted the infection possibly during his press conferences in Mandy and Mysuru in the last few days, Dr. Yathindra appealed to all those who had come in contact with him recently to isolate themselves and get tested.

"I am staying in the hospital

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
BENGALURU

Former Karnataka Chief Minister and Leader of the Opposition Siddaramaiah, who has tested positive for COVID-19, participated in two meetings and a protest launched by the Congress against 'Operation Lotus'

on July 27 in Bengaluru.

On July 30, he had visited Mysuru and participated in an interaction programme with journalists, organised by the Mysuru District Journalists' Association.

On July 31, he had addressed a press conference in Mandya.

admitted to the hospital on Sunday night, continued to remain stable. Dr. Ballal said the Chief Minister was responding to treatment. "He is cheerful and attending to his activities," the doctor said.

Hospital chairman Sudarshan Ballal said Mr. Siddaramaiah, who has a history of diabetes, is doing well and is stable.

Mr. Yediyurappa, who was

admitted to the hospital on Sunday night, continued to remain stable. Dr. Ballal said the Chief Minister was responding to treatment. "He is cheerful and attending to his activities," the doctor said.

After learning that Mr. Siddaramaiah had also been admitted for COVID-19, the Chief Minister wished him a speedy recovery.

Bhadralam, East and West Godavari districts. He also participated in many agitations with the CPI(M).

The A.P. Girijana Sangam, Adivasi Sankshema Sangam and leaders of other organisations expressed grief over his demise.

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## CPI(M) leader Sunnam Rajaiyah dies of COVID-19

He served as Bhadrachalam MLA thrice

**STAFF REPORTER**  
VIJAYAWADA

VIJAYAWADA

Former Bhadrachalam MLA and senior Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M) leader and Girijana Sangam leader Sunnam Rajaiyah, 68, died of COVID-19 in the early hours on Tuesday. He died while being shifted from Hyderabad to a COVID-19 hospital in Vijayawada. He is survived by wife, two sons and two daughters.

A native of Sunnamvaari Gudem village, V.R. Puram mandal, in East Godavari district, he served as Bhadrachalam MLA for three terms. He participated in many tribal agitations for protecting tribal lands and their rights in the Agency areas in

northern districts. "It has created an atmosphere of terror. Kerala was in the grip of an unforgiving and cruel police state," he alleged.

The protracted lockdown and heavy police presence on the street appeared to have triggered public resentment in some measure in several places. Traders in Chalai in the capital gathered at the market. They threatened to open shops on August 9 in defiance of a lockdown.

The pandemic hit population deserved care, understanding and empathy, Mr. Chennithala said, but the government imposed hefty fines on people, and arrested and humiliated them for minor infractions.

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## Kerala police enforce epidemic control restrictions

State in the grip of unforgiving and cruel police state, says Opposition leader Ramesh Chennithala



**On duty:** A police officer undergoing antigen test at the IG office in Kochi on Tuesday. ■ THULASI KAKKAT

**G. ANAND**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala Police on Tuesday fanned out across population centres to enforce COVID-19 pandemic control regulations even as growing rumblings of political discontent with the government's decision to grant wide-ranging powers to law enforcement to prosecute citizens who fail to wear masks or maintain physical distance and regulate life and retail trade appeared to get louder by the day.

Leader of the Opposition Ramesh Chennithala told Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in an open letter, "this is a health crisis and not a law and order crisis". Mr. Vijayan had "imposed a police raj on the people to cover up the shortcomings of his government," he said.

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## Historic, emotional day: Advani

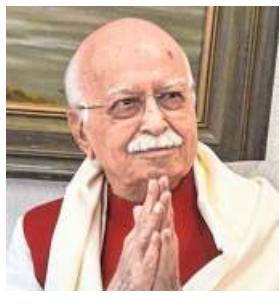
BJP leader's participation still shrouded in confusion

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

On the eve of the *bhoomi puja* (ground breaking) ceremony for a Ram temple in Ayodhya, former Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani, considered one of the protagonists of the Ram temple movement and whose invitation to the ceremony is still shrouded in confusion, released a statement terming the proposed temple as one that would usher in Ram Raja in India and as a representation of a "strong, prosperous, peaceful and harmonious nation" with "justice for all and exclusion of none".

Mr. Advani, who led a Rath Yatra drumming up mass support for the movement in the early 1990s and was arrested in Bihar subsequently, is considered one of the main architects of the movement, but will not be attending the ceremony in person on Wednesday.

Aides were unclear whether he would be attend-



L.K. Advani

ing it via video conference.

In his statement, Mr. Advani said the construction of the temple was like a dream come true for him. "Sometimes, significant dreams in one's life take a long time to fruition, but when they are finally realised, the wait becomes very worthwhile. One such dream close to my heart is getting fulfilled," he said.

Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi is laying the foundation for the construction of the Shri Ram Mandir at Ayodhya, the birthplace of Shri Ram. It is indeed a historical and emotional day,

## People in Valley want Article 370 back: PDP

'They are still deprived of development'

VIJAYA SINGH  
NEW DELHI

A year after he was thrown out of the Rajya Sabha for tearing a copy of the Constitution, Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) MP Nazir Ahmad Laway says people in his constituency are still deprived of development, employment and other benefits promised by the Centre.

Mr. Laway said there was no political activity in the Valley and people tuned up at his house to air their grievances. "Every day, I meet 400 to 500 people in my constituency ... none of the representatives of any other political party venture out," he said.

"Wherever I go, people demand that Article 370 and J&K statehood be restored ... they say they should see development as promised," he said. He said he was seeking a solution within the framework of democracy. "We have to bring change by being a part of the system," he said.

He said he lived in government accommodation after his house in Kulgam in south Kashmir was burnt down in 2016.

Mr. Laway and Mir Mohammad Fayaz, the two MPs from Kashmir Valley re-



PDP MP Nazir Ahmad Laway outside Parliament on August 5 last year.

presenting the PDP in the Rajya Sabha, were marshalled out of the House on August 5, 2019 when Home Minister Amit Shah moved two Bills to revoke the special status of J&K and downsize the State into two Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh.

The two MPs had stormed into the Well of the House in protest against the move.

They were heckled by the BJP MPs who also rushed to the Well after the copy of the Constitution was torn and flung in the air.

Mr. Laway said since his party leader and former J&K Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti was still under detention, he and Mr. Fayaz were not sure about their future.

## Leave Haryana for talks, Cong. tells rebels

Party reaches out to MLAs backing Sachin Pilot, who are in Gurugram hotels

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
JAIPUR

The Congress on Tuesday offered to hold discussions with dissident MLAs, led by the ousted Rajasthan Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot, if they gave up the hospitality of the BJP government in Haryana and the security of Haryana police. The legislators of the Pilot camp have been staying in hotels near Gurugram since the political turmoil in the State started last month.

Congress' national spokesperson, Randeep Surjewala, told reporters outside a resort in Jaisalmer, where the MLAs supporting Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot are staying, that the only condition for talks with the rebel MLAs was that they should leave the Manohar Lal Khattar government's 'suraksha chakra' (protection ring).

"More than 1,000 policemen are deployed for the security of 19 MLAs, when gan-grapes are happening in Haryana and people are being beaten up in Gurugram," Mr. Surjewala said. The legislators should first give up the Haryana police's security and "friendship and hospitality" of the BJP and return home for any dialogue to



Festive cheer: Women celebrating Raksha Bandhan with Ashok Gehlot in Jaisalmer on Monday. ■ PTI

take place, he added.

The Congress has repeatedly accused the BJP of attempting to topple the Ashok Gehlot government, while Mr. Gehlot has charged his former deputy with being involved in the conspiracy with the BJP.

### Fight for self-respect'

Hours after Mr. Surjewala made the remarks, three MLAs supporting Mr. Pilot issued a statement affirming that their fight was about "self-respect" and against the working style of Mr. Gehlot.

The legislators – Hemaram Chaudhary, Ved Prakash Solanki and Indraj Singh – said Mr. Pilot was "humiliated and systematically marginalised" within

the State government and deprived of authority despite holding the post of Deputy CM.

In an attempt to keep his flock of MLAs together, Mr. Gehlot has taken several decisions in the last week to address the grievances of elected representatives as well as the people of their constituencies. In addition to the declaration of public holiday on the World Indigenous People's Day, the Chief Minister has announced 5% reservation for Most Backward Classes (MBCs) in the judicial service.

The public holiday will make an impact in the tribal-dominated areas in southern Rajasthan, where the Bharatiya Tribal Party emerged strong in the 2018 Assembly

## Nath leads prayers, Baghel hails event

Priyanka says it should be an occasion of unity

SANDEEP PHUKAN  
SIDHARTH YADAV  
NEW DELHI/BHOPAL

On the eve of the Ram temple ceremony in Ayodhya, Congress general secretary in charge of Uttar Pradesh, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, on Tuesday said the character of Lord Ram was the thread that connected everyone in the subcontinent, from north to south, east to west.

In a statement in Hindi on Twitter, Ms. Vadra said, "Simplicity, courage, restraint, sacrifice, commitment are the essence of Deenbandhu Rama. Ram is present in everyone. With the message and blessings of Lord Ram and Mother Sita, the *bhoomi pujan* of Ramla's temple should become an occasion for national unity, brotherhood and cultural harmony."

Senior Congress leaders, from former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath to Lok Sabha member Manish Tewari, articulated their support for the temple to counter the narrative that the "Congress is caught in a dilemma". Mr. Nath credited former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi for opening the lock of the earlier temple at the disputed site in 1985.

Earlier, the Congress Working Committee (CWC) had welcomed the Supreme



**Building blocks:** The workshop where stones for the Ram temple are kept. ■ OMAR RASHID

Court order that paved the way for the temple at Ayodhya.

### Visible embrace

The Congress party's visible embrace of the Ram Mandir ceremony, however, is also an attempt to politically counter the ruling BJP that stands to gain in the Hindi-Belt States, such as Uttar Pradesh, M.P., Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Bihar.

Taking a cue from Mr. Nath, Congress workers organised Human Chalisah programmes across Madhya Pradesh.

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel announced plans to develop religious sites such as Chandkhuri, believed to be the maternal home of Lord Ram, Kaushalya Mata temple complex and Turturiya's Valmiki Ashram.

**Hardik Patel to donate ₹21,000 for temple**

AHMEDABAD Hardik Patel, working president of the Gujarat Congress, on Tuesday announced a donation of ₹21,000 from his family for the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya. In a statement on the eve of the *bhoomi pujan* ceremony, he said though he had "immense faith" in religion, he was not a "radical". "I hope the temple will usher in 'Ram Raja' in India and Gujarat," he said.

**'COVID-19 will disappear with Lord Ram's blessings'**

MUMBAI The COVID-19 crisis in the country will disappear with the blessings of Lord Ram, the Shiv Sena said on Tuesday. An editorial in the party mouthpiece, *Saamna*, took a dig at the August 5 ceremony being held amid rising COVID-19 cases. "There is no other golden moment like the one when Prime Minister Modi performs the *bhoomi pujan* at Ayodhya," the party said, adding, "Coronavirus is there, but will disappear with Lord Ram's blessings." PTI

## Kashmir under curfew ahead of anniversary

PDP leader detained, security beefed up in volatile areas

PEERZADA ASHIQ  
SRINAGAR

The Kashmir Valley wore a deserted look ahead of the first anniversary of the revocation of Jammu and Kashmir's (J&K) special status, with a strict curfew imposed in Srinagar and other towns in north and south Kashmir.

Additional deployments were made in all pockets where protests are likely. Yellow plastic barricades and coils of concertina wires were spread on all major streets and roads in the city. Security forces used mobile bunkers to block streets in volatile localities.

Nazir Ahmad, a milkman from Pulwama, said he could not drive to the old city in Srinagar to deliver milk due to the permanent barricades erected by the security forces at multiple places.

"It was a nightmare to leave home. I had to return halfway," he said.

Even ambulances had to wait at the checkpoints before the security forces removed the concertina wires.

This is 'Naya Kashmir',

said Iltija Mufti, daughter of incarcerated PDP president Mehbooba Mufti.

The J&K administration on Monday said there were inputs about possible protests and violence by Pakistan-sponsored groups.

**Highways closed down**

Highways and main markets were closed in the towns of Anantnag, Baramulla, Kulgam, Pulwama and Shopian.

A clampdown was also launched against the PDP leaders, who recently called for observing August 5 as a "black day".

A PDP spokesman said Rouf Bhat, a PDP leader, was detained ahead of the anniversary.

"Bhat has been detained by the police since the party decided to organise peaceful protests on August 5 and observe it as black day.

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**4% reservation for Ladakhi students**

Jammu & Kashmir Chief Secretary B.V.R. Subrahmanyam on Tuesday announced reservation of 4% seats in both engineering and medical colleges here for the students from the Union Territory of Ladakh.

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# Kerala doctor suspected to be among Afghan jail attackers

NIA official says the agency is pursuing leads with other security outfits

VIJAYA SINGH  
NEW DELHI

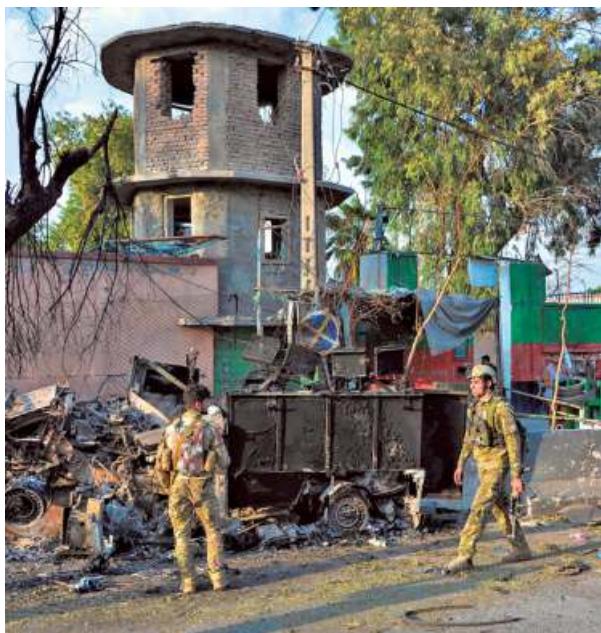
A doctor from Kerala may have been among the Islamic State (IS) terrorists who stormed a prison in eastern Afghanistan's Jalalabad on Sunday.

The suspect was identified as Ijas Kallukettiyil Puriyil (37), a physician from Kasargod in Kerala. A National Investigation Agency (NIA) official said on Tuesday that the agency had no confirmation so far about his involvement in the prison attack, but it was pursuing the leads with other security agencies.

Ijas's photograph, along with those of ten others, was released by the propaganda wing of the ISKP on various social media accounts on Tuesday. At least two more Indians are said to have been part of the group that detonated car bombs at the entrance of the prison gate in Jalalabad on Sunday.

In the photo, Ijas is holding a sophisticated weapon with the typical black IS flag forming the background.

Around 30 persons were



**Shock raid:** Soldiers walking past debris near the main entrance of a prison after a raid in Jalalabad. ■ AFP

killed in the attack. All the eleven attackers are said to have been killed by the Afghanistan security forces.

Ijas left India with his wife Rafeela (29) and son in 2016 to join the Islamic State in Khorasan Province (ISKP). He is wanted by the NIA that

has also issued a red notice against him and Rafeela.

Rafeela is presently lodged in a prison in Afghanistan. She and other Indian women who had joined the ISKP were among thousands of IS fighters and affiliates, including children, who survived

rendered before the Afghanistan authorities in November-December last year.

Rafeela was interrogated by Indian agencies in Kabul last year. She had then claimed that she was paid ₹5,000 by a Pakistani woman while leaving the IS controlled territory in Nangarhar.

## Gurdwara attack

This is the second instance of an Indian being involved in a terror attack in Afghanistan in less than six months.

The March 25 Gurdwara attack in Kabul when an Indian was killed was executed by Muhammed Muhsin, a 29-year-old man from Kerala's Kasargod, who was also killed in the attack. This incident was also claimed by the ISKP.

Both Ijas and Muhsin were part of a group of 21 men and women who left India in 2016 to join the ISKP.

According to an NIA chargesheet filed in 2017, the main suspect, Abdul Rashid, used to conduct "pro-ISIS classes" at the residence of Dr. Ijas in Kasargod.

# Bihar recommends CBI probe into actor's death

Opposition RJD and Congress welcome govt. move

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
PATNA

The Bihar government on Tuesday recommended a CBI investigation into Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death.

On Monday, MLAs cutting across party lines in the Assembly demanded a CBI investigation.

"The State government has recommended the case lodged by K.K. Singh (father of late Sushant Singh Rajput) in death case of late Sushant Singh Rajput, for probe to CBI," Chief Minister Nitish Kumar tweeted on Tuesday.

Earlier, he told presspersons that since the family members of Sushant Singh Rajput wanted a CBI probe, his government had recommended the case to the agency.

Speaking to media, Mr. Kumar also expressed surprise over the Mumbai police "not cooperating" with Bihar police officials who had gone there for investigation into the case.

"It is surprising that none in Mumbai police is even picking up phone calls of the Bihar DGP," he said. On Monday, he said that "whatever Mum-



**ED quizzes actor Rhea's chartered accountant**

NEW DELHI The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Tuesday recorded the statement of a chartered accountant of Bollywood actor Rhea Chakraborty in connection with the Sushant Singh Rajput death case. On Monday, the ED examined Sushant's chartered accountant, Sandeep Sridhar, to get details of the financial transactions related to him and the companies he had set up.

bai police is doing with a Bihar police official is not proper."

Young IPS officer Vinay Ti-

wari, who was sent to Mumbai to lead a four-member Bihar police team for investigation into the case, was said to be "forcibly qua-

ranted" in Mumbai.

BJP MLA and cousin of the deceased actor Neeraj Kumar Singh 'Bablu' told *The Hindu*, "Now as the State government had recommended a CBI inquiry into Sushant Singh Rajput's death case, we believe the truth will come out...we're thankful to the leaders of all polit-

ical parties and the Chief Minister as well for recommending the inquiry to CBI."

Ruling JD(U) leader and party spokesperson Sanjay Singh said, "now those relat-

ed to the case will come out in the open, though Bihar police too were capable but as it was everyone's demand the government recommend a CBI inquiry into the case".

The Opposition RJD and

Congress leaders too wel-

comed the move.

On Monday, Bihar legisla-

tors had raised an unani-

mous demand for a CBI

investigation.

## PIL plea for SIT or CBI probe

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court will, on Wednesday, hear a public interest litigation (PIL) petition seeking a probe into the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput.

Sameet Thakkar, 32, a businessman from Nagpur, has sought a direction for a free, fair and impartial investigation by a special investigation team (SIT) or the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

The PIL petition claims the case involved high-profile people with political and underworld connections. Crucial and material evidence was being compromised with each passing day.

"The Maharashtra government and Mumbai police are occupied with handling issues relating to the global pandemic. Hence it would be appropriate to transfer the investigation to some other agency in the interest of all."

The PIL says there is a deliberate attempt to delay the investigation.

"It has been more than 40 days, but not a single crucial witness has been summoned by the police."

# Ahead of FATF meet, India to highlight Pakistan's inaction

It will cite Pulwama, 26/11 attack and Daniel Pearl cases

DEVESHEK PANDEY  
NEW DELHI

Ahead of the crucial Financial Action Task Force (FATF) meetings in October, when Pakistan's performance in acting against terror-financing infrastructure will be assessed, Indian agencies plan to highlight its inaction in the Pulwama, 26/11 Mumbai attack and Daniel Pearl murder cases.

"The Pakistani establishment has to prove that it is serious about dismantling the terror-funding infrastructure, which is possible only by ensuring that cases against the key figures and organisations involved in raising funds and masterminding terror attacks attain finality and such elements are punished. Given that no such concrete steps are being taken, we need to flag the issue," said a government official.

Indian agencies are sharing details with key FATF members of the Pulwama attack in February 2019, in

which 40 Central Reserve Police Force personnel lost their lives and many were injured.

About a month ago, the National Investigation Agency arrested an alleged Jaish-e-Mohammad conduit for providing shelter and logistical support to those involved in the attack. The agency has so far arrested seven persons in the case.

## Mumbai attacks

Another case pertains to the 26/11 Mumbai attacks carried out by the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) in 2008, in which six U.S. citizens were killed.

"The United States has also repeatedly asked Pakistan to bring four accused persons, Mazhar Iqbal, Sajid Mir, Abu Qahafa and Abdur Rehman Hashim Syed, to justice," said the official.

A case against seven accused, including Zaki-ur-Rehman Lakhvi, has been pending before a Pakistan anti-terror court since 2009.

Top LeT figures like Hafiz Saeed were never arraigned.

The Daniel Pearl abduction and murder case has also not attained finality in terms of action against those involved.

"About 18 years ago, Ahmed Omar Saeed Sheikh and three others were convicted. However, on April 2, the Sindh High Court overturned it and reduced the death sentence to seven years in jail, effectively setting him free. His accomplices, who were sentenced to life, were also acquitted," the official said.

## Hearing deferred

The Sindh government appealed in the Supreme Court, which in July refused to suspend the High Court's judgment and deferred the hearing to September 22.

"The likelihood of bringing in fresh and compelling evidence or highlighting serious flaws in the High Court ruling now appears to be remote," the official said.

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# Pak. map an absurd exercise, says India

It includes J&K and parts of Gujarat

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Pakistan's new political map is an exercise in political absurdity, the External Ministry said after Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan launched it on Tuesday which included the entire Indian territory of Jammu and Kashmir and parts of Gujarat, including Junagadh.

"This is an exercise in political absurdity, laying untenable claims to territories in the Indian State of Gujarat and our Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and of Ladakh. These ridiculous assertions have neither legal validity nor international credibility," a press statement of the Ministry said.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said the document firms up its claims on Sir Creek and the Siachen glacier.

"Our aim is Srinagar," Mr. Qureshi said. The new political map has also removed the reference of Federally



Shah Mahmood Qureshi

Administered Tribal Area and has depicted that area as part of the northwestern province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. It leaves an undefined section towards Ladakh which according to Mr. Qureshi will be resolved in future.

The MEA referred to the map as an expression of Pakistan's 'obsession'. "These ridiculous assertions have neither legal validity nor international credibility. This new effort confirms reality of Pakistan's obsession with territorial aggrandisement supported by cross-border terrorism," it said.

# 24 million may drop out of school due to pandemic: UN

'Girls are likely to be disproportionately affected'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Almost 24 million children are at risk of not returning to school next year due to the economic fallout of COVID-19, according to the United Nations' policy brief on the pandemic's impact on education, released on Tuesday. The educational financing gap is also likely to increase by one third, it said.

More than 1.6 billion learners across the world have been affected by the disruption of the education system, but the pandemic has also served to exacerbate existing disparities, with vulnerable populations in low-income countries taking a harder and longer hit. For example, during the second quarter of 2020, 86% of children at the primary level have been effectively out of school in poor countries, compared to just 20% in highly developed countries.

"UNESCO estimates that 23.8 million additional children and youth [from pre-

primary to tertiary] may drop out or not have access to school next year due to the pandemic's economic impact alone. The number of children not returning to their education after the school closures is likely to be even greater," says the policy brief, adding that girls and young women are likely to be disproportionately affected as school closures make them more vulnerable to child marriage, early pregnancy and gender-based violence.

Even for those who do not drop out of school, learning losses could be severe, especially in the foundational years. "Simulations on developing countries participating in the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) suggest that without remediation, a loss of learning by one-third [equivalent to a three-month school closure] during Grade 3 might result in 72% of students falling so far behind that by Grade 10 they will have dropped out or will not be able to learn anything in school," says the brief.

# Lessons from the DU experience

Implementing the NEP's four-year degree proposal needs a lot of preparation

PRISCILLA JEVARAJ  
NEW DELHI

Six years after Delhi University's (DU) four-year degree experiment ended in ignominy, with the University Grants Commission (UGC) shutting down the programme after vociferous protests from a section of students and faculty, the National Education Policy (NEP) has brought the concept back into the spotlight and recommends its implementation across the country.

For the then DU vice chancellor Dinesh Singh, who had to resign when his brainchild programme was struck down, the NEP is something of a vindication. "The NEP proposal mirrors many aspects of our programme at DU. We had also proposed a holistic, flexible educational experience," he says, noting that he was aiming at wider change than the simple addition of an extra year.

He relates the experience of discovering that top multinational finance companies which interviewed 1,200 students at DU had found only three worth hiring, because students simply did not have basic holistic knowledge to succeed in the real world.

The extra year will help in giving a holistic experience to students, the policy says.

"In that one year that we implemented the four-year degree, DU shot up to around 200 in the global rankings, higher than most IITs. Today, it is around the 800 rank mark," he says.

## Emerging job market

The head of the NEP's drafting committee K. Kasturirangan agrees that Prof. Singh's initiative was a "visionary step" at that time. "We must recognise that a student's knowledge base must be sufficiently flexible to cope with a 21st century job scenario," he says. "At that time in DU, there was concern among students about whether they would gain anything from an extra year, as well as among

teachers objecting to the additional work that would have to be put in to teach a four-year degree."

He hopes that the clear options to exit the programme at all levels with a specific set of knowledge and skills will assuage student concerns. With regard to teachers, he notes that extra work will come not so much in the form of additional teaching hours, but in terms of a changed pedagogy. "Professors need to be able to make connections between multiple disciplines," he says.

Higher Education Secretary Amit Khare agrees that the change needs to go beyond simply tacking an extra year on to the existing system. "Modular courses are being prepared between now and May 2021, which will add value. Right from first to fourth year, there will be a research component. It's not just adding a year, but restructuring from the first to the fourth year," he says.

However, he feels that the biggest change from the stymied DU experiment will be the strength of numbers. "Dinesh Singh was alone in that ecosystem. This time,

we are saying that all the Institutes of Eminence (IoE) together will change. So you have a group of 20 universities who are changing, not just one in the entire country," he said.

## National framework

Even the players that brought about the downfall of the DU initiative six years ago are more enthused because of the countrywide implementation being planned now. "When there was no national framework, we worried that our students would suffer by being the only ones who have to do an extra year. If it's part of a national policy, the issues can be tackled nationally," says Rajib Ray, president of the DU Teachers' Association.

Dr. Ray added that it is yet to be seen if the NEP's implementers are willing to put in the necessary homework, and hold consultations with teachers and other stakeholders before the next academic year.

Prof. Singh agrees that extensive preparation is needed, noting that he took two years to train those teaching first year students alone before introducing the 4-year degree earlier.

# Army to convene selection board for women personnel

Applications for Permanent Commission sought

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

After receiving the formal Government Sanction Letter (GSL) for grant of Permanent Commission (PC) to women officers, the Army headquarters is in the process of convening a special selection board for screening women officers for grant of PC.

"Towards this end, detailed administrative instructions have been issued to all affected women officers, giving out guidelines for submission of applications for consideration by the board," the Army said in a statement on Tuesday.

Women officers who joined the Army through the Women Special Entry Scheme (WSES) and Short Service Commission Women (SSCW), are being considered.

**Submission of papers**  
They have all been instructed to submit their application forms, option certificate and other related documents to the Army headquarters not later than August 31, it stated.

"Specimen formats and



Here to stay: Army officers celebrating the Supreme Court's February order on Permanent Commission. ■ FILE PHOTO



# Fun and functionality

With an attractive design, top-end engine and enjoyable handling, the Hero Xtreme 160R finds the right balance between purpose and pleasure

FIROZE IRANI

The 150-160cc motorcycle segment is best described as one where practicality starts to meet fun. These motorcycles are designed to be machines that can commute, while also having performance-oriented characteristics. Hero gave us a taste of its all-new entrant to this segment, the Xtreme 160R, back in February and we finally got the chance to spend a good amount of time with it.

The first thing you will notice is that the Xtreme 160R looks rather unique. The headlight cluster is quite a complicated piece and the headlight itself is encapsulated in two layers of plastic panels that give the entire unit a Transformer-like face, but without being too aggressive and polarising.

It is from the side that one will really catch sight of the unique styling. The single-piece panels flow all the way from the front, along the sides and right up to the rear panels that house the tail-light.

Moving on to the rear – it is raked quite aggressively, which means it sits as high as the tank, resulting in a sporty stance. Hero has also opted for integrated grab handles instead of conventional



ones. Another thing that does not stick out on this bike is the tail-light; the lens on it has a smoked finish and works rather well with the black bodywork around it. In all, the Hero Xtreme 160R does stand out.

The 160R is Hero's first offering to feature all-LED lighting. While the tail-light and turn indicators are quite bright, the new headlight could use a stronger beam.

While the Xtreme 160R does use fully digital negative LCD instrumentation, it does not display more than what a typical digi-analog unit would. What we missed out on most was a gear-position indicator, but the Xtreme makes up in other areas, with features like a hazard light switch and a side-stand down

engine cut-off function.

#### How does it perform?

Powering the Xtreme 160R is an all-new 163cc, two-valve, single-cylinder engine that makes 15.2hp and 14Nm of torque, putting it right in the middle of its direct rivals. Something you will notice right off the bat about this engine is how refined it is. The engine has been tuned for low and mid-range performance.

The bike is good fun to ride within urban limits, with a tractable nature and a smooth-shifting gearbox that is paired to a light clutch. You get through the first three gears quite quickly, and by the time you hit the taller fourth and fifth gears, the engine begins losing steam. In fourth gear, the 160R will go up to a speedo-indicated 109kph, and in fifth, we saw a top speed of around 115kph.



#### ENGINE SPECS

**DESCRIPTION** 163cc, single-cylinder, air-cooled, fuel-injected

**POWER** 15.2hp at 8500rpm

**TORQUE** 14Nm at 6500rpm

**GEARBOX** 5-speed

#### DIMENSIONS

**WHEELBASE** 1327mm

**KERB WEIGHT** 139.5kg

**SEAT HEIGHT** 790mm

**FUEL CAPACITY** 12 litres

**GROUND CLEARANCE**

167mm

**TYRE (FRONT | REAR)**

100/80 - 17 | 130/70 - R17

**SUSPENSION (FRONT | REAR)**

Telescopic fork |

Monoshock

**BRAKES (FRONT | REAR)**

276mm disc | 220mm disc



#### Sporty stance

The Hero Xtreme 160R strikes a fine balance

\* SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

60kph in 5.77sec, while 100kph arrives in a leisurely 23.36sec. Clearly, Hero is going for punchy city manners along with refinement and efficiency, rather than outright performance, with this bike.

Suspension on the Xtreme 160R is handled by a 37mm telescopic fork and a seven-step preload-adjustable monoshock. The ride quality is absorbent without feeling too soft, and this doesn't change even with a pillion.

The low kerb weight and communicative chassis also makes the 160R fun and flickable. The MRF tyres are among the best you will find in the segment.

The 160 uses a 276mm disc-brake setup (220mm at the rear) that translates to a predictable, precise braking performance. The front brake lever feel is neutral, and braking is neither too sharp nor too sensitive. In our tests, the Xtreme 160R came to a standstill from 60kph in 18.77m.

The tractable engine allows you to carry a gear or two higher than you usually would, which brings down the RPMs and, as a result, the fuel consumption. The Xtreme 160R delivered 52.3kpl on the highway and 44.1kpl in the city.

#### Should I buy one?

The Hero Xtreme 160R is priced very competitively at ₹99,950 (rear drum-brake variant) and ₹1.03 lakh (rear disc-brake variant) – it is the most affordable motorcycle in its segment. And while it is a good-looking motorcycle that is brisk in the city, fun in the corners and light on the pocket, if you want the fastest bike, you will have to look elsewhere.

## AUTO SNIPS



### Fourth-gen Honda City to be sold in two variants

Honda is set to reduce the number of variants on offer with the fourth-gen City, as the company looks to sell the old car alongside the new fifth-gen model. The fourth-gen City is expected to be offered in only two variants – SV and V. Features available on the fifth-gen City V trim that are not on offer with the fourth-gen City V variant include side airbags, traction control, ESC, hill-start assist, projector headlights, a part-digital instrument cluster, adjustable rear headrests and an 8.0-inch touchscreen infotainment system.



### Hyundai Creta bookings cross 55,000

Hyundai has announced that bookings for the new second-generation Creta have crossed the 55,000-unit mark. The carmaker also revealed that it has delivered over 20,000 units of the SUV since its March 2020 launch. The carmaker revealed that 60% of the bookings for the new Creta were for the diesel model. Hyundai claims that the 140hp, 1.4-litre turbo-petrol engine, coupled to a DCT-auto transmission in the SX and SX(O) trims, has been well-received too. It is priced at ₹9.99-17.20 lakh (ex-showroom, Delhi).



### Yamaha launches BS6-compliant FZ 25, FZS 25

Yamaha has launched BS6-compliant version of its 250cc motorcycles – FZ 25 and FZS 25. Priced at ₹1.52 lakh, the BS6 FZ 25 costs about ₹15,000 more than the BS4 model; the FZS 25 is priced at ₹1.57 lakh (ex-showroom, Delhi). The bikes were unveiled in February 2020. Both bikes are powered by a 249cc, single-cylinder fuel-injected engine developing 20.8hp at 8,000rpm and 20.1Nm of torque at 6,000rpm. At 153kg, the FZ 25's kerb weight is up by 1kg over the outgoing model. The FZS 25 weighs 154kg.

## Q AND A WITH HORMAZD



### An SUV for the city

I am looking to buy an SUV that will be entertaining to drive and spacious. My usage is primarily in the city, with the occasional highway trip. I have shortlisted the Mahindra XUV500, Kia Seltos and MG Hector. I like the XUV500, though I am tempted by the features offered on the others. My budget is ₹15-20 lakh. Which one should I go for?

**Madhu**

The XUV500 is a competent car, but if you don't have use of the additional third row of seats, then you would do well to look at a modern alternative like the Kia Seltos. It is a posh offering that ticks all the right boxes – space, comfort, engine, efficiency etc. You could also consider the all-new Hyundai Creta, which is essentially the same car as the Seltos, with a different design, and comes with Hyundai's wider support backing.

### Moving up

My wife is looking to upgrade from her old Santro. We have shortlisted the petrol Hyundai Grand i10 Nios. Is it a good option compared to the Maruti Suzuki Swift? Also, given the traffic in Chandigarh, should we consider buying an AMT?

**Harmeet Singh**

The Nios is a logical upgrade from the Santro. It is a very user-friendly car with light controls and good visibility. The AMT is reasonably smooth and very convenient, especially in bumper-to-bumper traffic. The Swift is more spacious and its engine is superior too, so if her usage is mainly confined to the city and doesn't need that extra bit of cabin space, the Nios is a good buy.

Hormazd Sorabjee is the editor of Autocar India. Mail your feedback and queries to roadshow@thehindu.co.in

CM YK

M ND-NDE

# A fond familiarity

Honda's WR-V facelift has been minimal, retaining positives like space, a well-judged suspension and more...

GAVIN D'SOUZA

Based on the Jazz, the WR-V is the car that fills the role of a compact SUV for Honda in India. For 2020, Honda has rolled out a facelift for its crossover, alongside upgrading its engines to meet BS6 compliance. So just how has the facelift changed the WR-V package?

The WR-V now has a bolder look to it, with new projector LED headlamps connected via a thick band of chrome and prominent horizontal slats in the grille, making it appear larger than before. The fog lamps – also LED units – feature thicker black surrounds. You will also find new designs for the 16-inch alloy wheels and re-profiled tail-lamps, which now feature LED units.

Even less has changed on the inside than it has on the outside with the same smart, angular, all-black dashboard with a few brushed silver trim embellishments. The only change seems to be the seat uphol-



stery, which gets a new embossed pattern that looks a bit sportier.

Space in the back seat has always been a highlight of the WR-V; leg room is fantastic, with a nice angled footrest under the front seats, and though head room is not quite as much as in a compact SUV, it is still rather good. We would have liked a few more creature comforts in the back seat, like a centre armrest, rear AC vents and any form of charging.

The equipment list too has seen little change, and while it is decent, other similarly priced cars have taken the game far ahead. What is new are the aforementioned LED exterior lighting and the front HDMI port that has been replaced by a second USB port.

The 7.0-inch touch-screen does feel a bit

aftermarket, but it has onboard navigation and supports Android Auto and Apple CarPlay. The bigger issue is that the screen is a bit too dull, making it hard to read in sunlight.

The 1.2-litre, four-cylinder petrol engine, has a good amount of pep low down, followed by a rather flat mid-range, and then a resurgence of power past 5,000rpm. This 1.2-litre engine is nowhere near as peppy low down as the City's 1.5, and with the transition to BS6, responses seem to have been blunted a bit. Performance is down, compared to the BS4 version, with 100kph com-

#### HONDA WR-V PETROL SPECIFICATIONS

**ENGINE** 1199cc, 4-cyl

**POWER** 90hp at 6000rpm

**TORQUE** 110Nm at 4800rpm

**GEARBOX** 5-speed manual

**LENGTH** 3999mm

**WIDTH** 1734mm

**HEIGHT** 1601mm

**WHEELBASE** 2555mm

**BOOT CAPACITY** 363 litres

**TANK CAPACITY** 40 litres

**KERB WEIGHT** 1087-1106kg

**TYRE SIZE** 195/60-R16

ing up almost a second slower, and in-gear acceleration times are similarly behind the curve.

The 1.5-litre diesel engine has also returned in BS6 guise, with its headline numbers unchanged –

100hp and 200Nm. What has changed is the ARAI-rated fuel economy, which has dropped by 1.8kpl to 23.7kpl. This is partly because Honda has gone down the Lean NOx Trap route to achieve BS6 emissions standards.

The engine's tractable nature remains. It may not rev as freely or have as strong a kick in the mid-range as some others, but it makes up for that with usability. There have been no changes to the suspension, and the WR-V retains its great ride and handling balance. Bump absorption and body control are both good, even on a rough road. The 2020 Honda WR-V facelift, then, is as minor as it can get. The new front fascia and LED lighting do give it a bit more character, but there really aren't any changes of note. A big omission is an automatic gearbox.

Priced from ₹8.50-10.99 lakh, it might be slightly less expensive than its rivals, but those cars also give you a lot more for your money. That said, the strengths of the WR-V remain the same – space and practicality with the peace of mind of a Honda badge on the nose.



**Space and practicality** The Honda WR-V offers a safe, comfortable ride \* SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



# doesn't discriminate'



DIVYA KALA BHAVANI

Ahead of World's Toughest Race: Eco-Challenge Fiji, climber twins Nungshi and Tashi Malik of Team Khukuri Warriors, and host Bear Grylls talk about the value of stepping out of one's comfort zone

and part of the Team Assist Crew (TAC).

The trailer for Amazon Prime's *World's Toughest Race: Eco-Challenge Fiji* is what we would expect of anything associated with Bear Grylls; this show featuring 66 teams on an 11-day expedition across 671 kilometres of Fiji's rainforests, mountains, ravines, rivers, swamps and more. With the series franchise in its 24th year, it continues to offer a gruelling amalgam of taxing mental and physical pressures, along with moments of positivity.

Leading Team Khukuri Warriors (named after a type of machete associated with Gurkhas in India and Nepal) are 29-year-old twin sisters Nungshi and Tashi Malik who are excited to be representing India and South Asia for the first time. Their team also comprises mountain climbing expert Brandon Fisher from USA, skiing and rafting expert Praveen Singh Rangar, and the twins' father Colonel VS Malik, a retired officer of the Indian Army

into this challenge," she starts, "When we climb a mountain, it's not just for the thrill of it, but for the girls and women being uplifted in our society. This gives us greater strength."

Nungshi tacks on, "Nature doesn't discriminate on gender, and neither is excellence determined by it!"

Sibling strength is incomparable in this complex formula of endurance, wit, spirit, and physical stamina. Tashi recalls crying at times when she felt her sister was not helping and vice versa, a far cry from their climbing ventures, but adds, "In these expeditions, you are trying to survive on your own and then tending to others, and this was a new experience for us. So the emotional strength we talked about just now also played as a weakness because there were times we could not take that."

Nungshi firmly adds, "This was also the first time we were a team in a competitive environment. Though consciously we are trying

to survive, there is this element of making sure the team also survives. Each of us in the team had our own skill-sets. No one made any comments on others. We had to control our temper which was easier with my twin around."

#### Inspiring experiences

Bear Grylls, perched on a cliff edge somewhere in the United Kingdom, is sporting his trademark shades and a cheeky grin. The adventure series holds a special place in his heart. "We've never hosted or put together a show of this scale and ambition before; seeing humans at their physical, emotional and mental limits was so incredible and inspiring. We didn't know if people were able to finish it. And [the Malik sisters] are true inspirations, all about positivity and smiling through the storms. The teamwork aspect – starting and finishing as a team – is unique to *World's Toughest Race*. When a team comes together just right, it's like a team of 20. But when there's sleep deprivation and you're lost, and you blame someone for poor navigation, the team falls apart." He likens this to a tea bag in hot water where strength and vibrancy are revealed.

As the host, Grylls, often has to remind himself to, unlike during a show like *Running Wild*, step back and let the adventurers engage in their own race, which he says adds to the rawness of the show. "We had to let them make mistakes. I watched some teams make catastrophic navigational errors which would just end their

race. But when they're pushed to their limits, you see them come through."

Naturally, with such testing conditions in this terrifying race, the girls had their moments of mental distress. Nungshi admits to being "greenhorns of racing", explaining, "There were moments we felt we had to give up. I, particularly, had reached almost the end of my physical and mental endurance; I remember having this conversation with my father. He was aware I was using a lot of persuasive words and that would mark the end of our race, but he would say 'Remember: boys fall after 72 hours, but girls get stronger,' and that stuck with me for a long time. When the drive is stronger than the fear of risking your life, it gives you rocket extra fuel."

Urging the Malik sisters to dish a little bit more about Grylls that we may not know, and Nungshi responds, "During the race, we saw he has such a soft side to him! He's quite emotional; he had tears in his eyes when he watched us at one of the toughest points of the race because he knew we were absolute rookies. He reiterated that anyone who goes on this kind of adventure is a superhero and he's a great role model, with a great sense of humour."

The timing of *The World's Toughest Race* during the COVID-19 lockdown is "incredible," states Grylls, adding, "We are in a global time of hardship, which requires you at home to work with your team – your family or those you work with – and weather your own 'storms'. *The World's Toughest Race* has you look at courage in big moments, and calm in the crises."

*World's Toughest Race: Eco-Challenge Fiji* streams on Amazon Prime Video from August 14.



**In the wild** Stills featuring Bear Grylls and Team Khukuri Warriors from India (team members Tashi Malik, Nungshi Malik, Brandon Fisher, Praveen Singh Rangar and VS Malik) during the *World's Toughest Race: Eco-Challenge Fiji* • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## HOMING IN

Appreciate the rains with singer-composer **Sanjeev Thomas**. For your weekly **Playlist**, he lists his choice of top five songs to listen to, this monsoon

HARIKUMAR JS



### 'How Deep is Your Love' by Bee Gees

It is one of my all-time favourite songs and I love Bee Gees. They are a band that my dad used to love as well. 'How Deep is Your Love' is a lovely slow-paced, romantic song that I feel perfectly fits the monsoon mood.

### 'Dekho Baarish Ho Rahi Hai' by Anu Malik

An out-and-out rain song. It is a light-hearted romantic number and the lyrics bear a rather humorous undertone in the context of the song.



### 'Pachai Nirame' from Alaiipayuthey

I cannot miss this AR Rahman track. It is a Nature-based song and the visuals offer a riot of colours. So soothing both to the ears and the eyes.

### 'Cherathukal' from Kumbalangi Nights

It is a refreshing tune that has stuck in my mind. Also, the song video reminds me of all things green and my home State of Kerala where the monsoon sets in every year.



### 'Indian Rain' by Colonial Cousins

Another song that pops up in my mind when I think about the monsoon. A beautiful blend of the Western and the Indian.

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

## Change from within

A young medico starts the first international medical students wing in the UK, hoping to carry forward his father's passion to strengthen the medical fraternity

members in the medical profession to guide them through their education and training. Although they could access this support at University, in my experience, it is not as robust as it could be. To bridge this gap, I conceived and established the student wing of BIDA. The aim is to empower students from India and other countries who are pursuing their MBBS in the UK, and provide a platform to guide them during the formative training period. Students who arrive in a foreign country to attend university often experience 'culture shock' and homesickness which can make them anxious and worried. The BIDA Student Wing aims to address this by in-

tegrating them into the UK system and empowering them by organising cricket and other sports tournaments where BIDA student members can play against their colleagues.

#### How has the pandemic affected the medical students?

• The effects of the pandemic have been felt in every part of the world and ours is no different. The need for social distancing will prove to be challenging in terms of the exposure medical students experience to patients during hospital placements. Medical teaching in hospitals forms a major part of the curriculum and is vital to students' learning.



**Support system** Sai Ram Pillarisetti • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

This additional workload plus an already rigorous course will prove to be very challenging and reiterates the need for an organisation like the BIDA Student Wing to help students cope with the pressure.

#### Tell us more about BIDA.

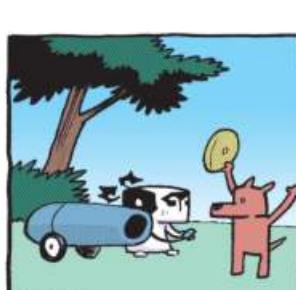
• The British International Doctors Association (BIDA), is the oldest organisation representing international doctors working in the UK. Its membership includes senior doctors of the international medical fraternity who are keen to help mould the future generation. They will support and guide us as we organise training workshops, offer indispensable career advice to students and even help with research opportunities. BIDA was formed with the sole objective of promoting equality and fairness for all doctors working in the UK. BIDA's mission is to achieve equal treatment of all doctors based on their competence and merit irrespective of race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, or country of origin.

The BIDA Student Wing was formed with the purpose of extending these values to the international student doctor community which represents the medical practitioners of the future.

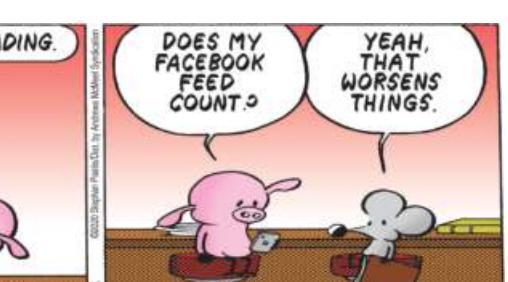
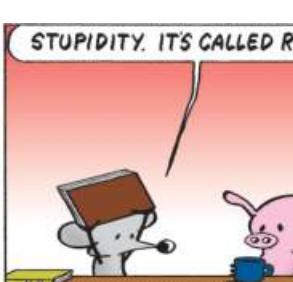
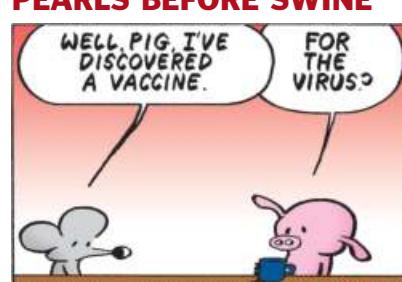
#### How does it feel to be the youngest National Executive Committee member of BIDA in its 45-year history?

• I am deeply grateful to have been selected as member of BIDA's national executive committee; I regularly remind myself of the great responsibility associated with this position. I have been serving on the National Executive Committee since 2018. One of our recent successes was the scrapping of the NHS surcharge fee for immigrant medical staff. BIDA and other like-minded organisations extensively lobbied the Prime Minister (Boris Johnson) and other government ministers and were successful in the government reversing its stance.

## POOCH CAFE



## PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



## HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



## PEANUTS



## TIGER



## CALVIN AND HOBBES



# Rajapaksas aim for victory as Sri Lanka goes to polls today

196 legislators in the 225-member House are to be elected

**MEERA SRINIVASAN**  
COLOMBO  
Over 16 million voters in Sri Lanka will on Wednesday have a chance to elect their representatives to Parliament in the all-island polls that the ruling Rajapaksa administration is aiming to sweep with a two-thirds majority.

Following President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's rise to power last year on a huge mandate, his Sri Lanka Podujana Party (SLPP, or People's Party) is seeking a decisive parliamentary majority to amend the Constitution, especially the 19th Amendment passed during the former government's term that clips the President's executive powers.

The election, which was postponed twice due to the coronavirus pandemic, will see the direct election of 196 legislators – while the remaining 29 will make it through a 'National list' – to the 225-member House. The additional measures to follow health guidelines while holding polls has cost the country's Election Commission an additional LKR 3 billion, raising the total cost of elections to LKR 10 billion, according to officials.

Mr. Gotabaya's elder brother Mahinda Rajapaksa, serving as the Prime Minister in the present caretaker government, is contesting Wednesday's polls as the Prime Ministerial candidate. The Alliance led by SLPP is widely expected to do well in the polls, more so due to the government's efforts in containing COVID19 in the island – 293 active cases as of Tuesday and 11 deaths – and a fragmented political opposition.

Significantly, the two main political parties of Sri



Poll-ready: An official carrying ballot papers in Colombo. • AFP

Lanka – the Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) and the United National Party (UNP) – have been reduced to a rump this election, while the SLPP, launched in 2016 by the Rajapaksas, with a large chunk of the SLFP, is trying to consolidate power in the legislature.

## Weak opposition

The SLFP, under former President Maithripala Sirisena, has realigned with the SLPP, and the UNP, suffered a big split. Its former deputy leader Sajith Premadasa broke away, taking along most former UNP MPs, and is contesting separately from the new Samagi Jana Balawegaya (United People's Front), effectively challenging his former leader and ex-Prime Minister Ranil Wickremesinghe, fighting polls from the UNP.

Although it is not easy for a single party or alliance to secure a two-thirds majority under Sri Lanka's Proportional Representation system of elections, the absence of anti-defection laws allows newly elected MPs from opposition parties to cross over to government. The prospect of a two-thirds majority to the Rajapaksa administrations worries some sections, especially rights activists across the country, who fear that such

## Tamil vote

Meanwhile, the Tamil National Alliance (TNA), which had the largest representation of minority Tamils from the north and east in the last Parliament, is seeking to retrain its presence in Parliament.

Though many voters are disappointed with the lack of adequate development on the ground, contestant and former MP from Jaffna Dharmalingam Sithadthan said the TNA hoped that the people would still give it a good mandate to represent them as a block. "People know that we tried our best to engage with the previous government on constitutional reform. It is not fair to say we failed. It just shows that the Sinhala political leadership is reluctant to devolve more powers," he said.

President Donald Trump has agreed to give China's ByteDance 45 days to negotiate the sale of popular short-video app TikTok to Microsoft,

Mr. Navarro cited Micro-

soft's Bing search engine and Skype platform, saying they "effectively are enablers of Chinese censorship, surveillance and monitoring."

Microsoft has over 6,000

employees in China and offices in Beijing, Shanghai and Suzhou.

While the company has been there for decades, business from China accounts for just over 1% of the company's revenue, Bloomberg reported.

White House trade adviser Peter Navarro suggested on Monday that Microsoft Corp could divest its holdings in China if it were to buy the Chinese owned short-video app TikTok.

"So the question is, is Microsoft going to be compromised?" Mr. Navarro said in an interview with CNN. "Maybe Microsoft could divest its Chinese holdings?"

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## MARKET WATCH

	PRICE	CHANGE
Sensex	37,688	+0.03
US Dollar	75.04	-0.04
Gold	54,830	+0.28
Brent oil	44.42	-1.25

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	314.95	+3.60
Asian Paints	1713.95	+8.45
Axisc Bank	429.15	+11.80
Bajaj Auto	2969.95	+52.50
Bajaj Finserv	6162.00	+58.85
Bajaj Finance	3235.60	+61.10
Bharti Airtel	549.00	+1.65
BPCL	408.55	-9.25
Britannia Ind	3817.60	+41.40
Cipla	713.85	+3.45
Coal India	128.75	+0.35
Dr Reddy's Lab	4634.85	+10.70
Eicher Motors	21015.65	+233.50
GAIL (India)	93.15	-0.95
Grasim Ind	624.65	-8.85
HCL Tech.	692.65	-13.30
HDPC	1781.10	+41.30
HDPC Bank	1041.65	+39.65
HDPC Life	614.15	+11.15
Hero MotoCorp	2706.10	+74.80
Hindustan	162.35	+1.00
Hind Unilever	2197.80	+6.70
ICICI Bank	351.00	+7.75
IndusInd Bank	492.60	+10.45
Bharti Infratel	191.35	+2.15
Infosys	949.85	+7.05
Indian Oil Corp	86.95	+0.75
ITC	193.65	+1.05
JSW Steel	228.10	+7.55
Kotak Bank	1323.95	+15.40
L&T	924.25	+8.35
M&M	602.60	+5.45
Maruti Suzuki	6358.95	+193.75
Nestle India Ltd.	16580.00	+55.20
NTPC	85.60	+0.00
ONGC	76.10	+0.20
PowerGrid Corp	178.25	+0.30
Reliance Ind	2150.60	+141.60
State Bank	191.60	+0.65
Shree Cement	21593.75	+153.50
Sun Pharma	528.95	+9.55
Tata Motors	111.45	+1.60
Tata Steel	372.25	+1.25
TCS	2249.70	+4.45
Tech Mahindra	652.65	+20.95
Titan	1075.20	+2.15
UltraTech Cement	4004.30	+41.25
UPL	461.70	+9.55
Wipro	281.05	+0.50
Zee Entertainment	143.35	+8.40

## EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	74.85	75.17
Euro	88.11	88.49
British Pound	97.56	98.00
Japanese Yen (100)	70.53	70.84
Chinese Yuan	10.72	10.77
Swiss Franc	81.75	82.11
Singapore Dollar	54.39	54.63
Canadian Dollar	55.88	56.13
Malaysian Ringgit	17.74	17.82
Australian Dollar	53.43	53.67

Source: Indian Bank

## IN BRIEF



## IHCL unveils I-ZEST for contactless service

MUMBAI Indian Hotels Company Ltd. (IHCL) has announced the introduction of I-ZEST (IHCL zero-touch service transformation). It is a suite of digital solutions across its Taj, Vivanta and SeleQtions brands of hotels to ensure social distancing for guests and associates, while maintaining secure and seamless services. These digital initiatives will include zero-touch check-ins and check-outs, digital invoicing, online payment options and QR codes to digital menus at restaurants.

## ITC asks govt. to review import duty on paper

CHENNAI ITC Ltd. has urged the Centre to review the current import duty structure and re-examine the existing free trade agreements (FTAs) as well as new pacts under formulation with regard to paper and paperboard industry. "There is clearly a need to review the import duty structure and re-examine the FTAs towards providing a level-playing field to the domestic industry and encouraging commercial farming of wood in India," said Sanjiv Puri, CMD, ITC. "While growth in the industry was subdued during the year, cheap imports of paper and paperboard continue to flood the domestic market," Mr. Puri said.

## TCS, 2 others shortlisted for RBI programme

MUMBAI Tata Consultancy Services and two other vendors have been shortlisted for implementation of Integrated Market Surveillance System (IMSS), according to an RBI document. The RBI has proposed to implement IMSS, which would include capabilities for market surveillance, management information system (MIS) reports, standard and ad hoc reports (through slicing and dicing of data), and compliance monitoring. In its EOI, the RBI had said the department has proposed to implement a robust IMSS for augmenting its surveillance capacities. PTI

# HDFC Bank names Jagdishan successor to Puri as MD & CEO

'Insider' who spent 24 years with lender promises to carry forward rich legacy

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

HDFC Bank on Tuesday named veteran Sashidhar Jagdishan as the new MD and CEO to succeed Aditya Puri.

Mr. Jagdishan, whose appointment was approved by the RBI, would take charge on October 27 and hold office for a period of three years, India's largest private sector bank said in a filing.

Having joined as a manager in the finance function in 1996, Mr. Jagdishan rose to become the bank's chief financial officer in 2008.

## Positive for bank'

"His appointment is positive for the bank as he has 24 years of experience in the bank," said Jaikishan Parmar, research analyst, Angel



Steady state: He brings predictability and the bank will be run in a smooth manner, says an analyst. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Broking. "He brings predictability and there will be a smooth running of the bank. The top management will find it easier to work with him... we have to see his style of functioning in the coming months," he added.

Mr. Jagdishan currently oversees several functions at the group level including finance and is the strategic change agent.

"He has played a critical role in supporting the growth trajectory of the

bank," the bank said in a statement. "He has led the finance function and played a pivotal role in aligning the organisation in achieving the strategic objectives over the years."

Prior to joining HDFC Bank, he worked at Deutsche Bank AG. A science graduate, he is a chartered accountant and also holds a master's degree from the University of Sheffield, U.K..

"I fully recognise that Mr. Puri's are huge shoes to fill," said Mr. Jagdishan. "I'll leave no stone unturned to carry forward the rich legacy."

Mr. Puri, widely credited with building the bank from scratch, retires in October.

The bank's shares gained 3.9%, or ₹39.45, to close at ₹1,041.40 on the BSE.

## 'Worst seems over, agri to blunt COVID-19 impact'

Recovery prospects still fragile: FinMin

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

The worst seems to be over and the agriculture sector will provide a cushion for the coronavirus-hit economy this fiscal as there are prospects of a good monsoon, the finance ministry said in a report on Tuesday.

India is well on the path of recovery from a trough in April, supported by proactive government and central bank policies, the the Economic Affairs Department said in the Macroeconomic Report for July.



intermittent State lockdowns remain," it said.

Noting that the rise in COVID-19 cases and subsequent intermittent lockdowns make recovery prospects fragile, it called for constant monitoring.

"With India unlocking, the worst seems to be over for the economy as high-frequency indicators recovered in June from unprecedented troughs in April; however, risks on account of rising COVID-19 cases and

## July exports near last year's level: Goyal

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Showing signs of significant improvement, the country's exports in July reached almost the level of the corresponding month last year, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Tuesday.

He said several indicators were reflecting that economic activities were reviving in the country.

"Our exports have almost reached last year's July level, with nearly 90% of our export of July 2019 having come back. And, in fact if we were to remove the oil-related exports, where we are largely a small value adder... we are 95% plus on the revival of our exports," he said. Exports fell for the fourth straight month in June, declining 12.4% to \$21.9 billion on weak global demand due to COVID-19.

## Tata Sons chief bats for digital tech adoption

Must harness power of women, SMEs'

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

COVID-19 can be a catalyst for adoption of digital technology that will open up health and education to millions, said N. Chandrasekaran, chairman, Tata Sons.

"This is the promise hidden in the crisis," he said, delivering a lecture.

Highlighting the importance of women and the SME sector, he said, "By opening up a world of opportunities for women and entrepreneurs, we can strengthen our economy and transform the lives of millions."

"Bringing into employment half the 120 million women with secondary education who are not working can add \$480 billion to GDP."

"In their place, we need a new culture of entrepreneurship, those on H-1B visa.



N. Chandrasekaran

"Just as important as large businesses like Tata, if not more so, are small and medium sized businesses. These businesses are the life blood of our community.

"In their place, we need a new culture of entrepreneurship, those on H-1B visa.

## U.S. order on federal hiring based on misperceptions'

Nasscom cites high vacancies in IT to counter move on H-1B

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The decision by U.S. President Donald Trump to bar federal agencies from hiring foreign workers appears to be based on "misperceptions and misinformation", the National Association of Software and Service Companies (NASSCOM) said on Tuesday.

Mr. Trump on Monday signed an executive order on "Aligning Federal Contracting and Hiring Practices with the Interests of American Workers," that prevents federal agencies from contracting or subcontracting foreign workers, including those on H-1B visa.

The association that represents the Indian IT services and ITES industry said the order comes at a time when there is a huge shortage of skills in Science, Technology, Engineering and Management (STEM) in the U.S., that workers on short-term, non-immigrant visas such as H-1B and L-1 help bridge.

Measures to hit recovery "As the world opens up post the COVID-19 induced lockdowns, it is important for the U.S. to be able to access talent critical to the recovery phase. Measures that restrict access to talent will slowdown the recovery phase of

U.S. economy, jobs, innovation and R&D," Nasscom said.

The unemployment rate for computer occupations (those most common amongst H-1B visa holders) declined from 3% in January this year to 2.5% in May, while the unemployment rate for all other occupations grew from 4.1% to 13.5% in the period.

Further, in the 30-day period ending May 13, there were more than 625,000 active job vacancy postings advertised online for jobs in common computer occupations, including those most common to H-1B visa holders, it noted.

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Maruti expects sales to pick up in second half of FY21

Faster growth in rural areas: Bhargava

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD

Insurance regulator IRDAI has exempted life insurance companies from issuing policy document and copy of the proposal form in physical form for policies issued this fiscal (2020-21).

In other words, the companies have been permitted to issue policy documents in electronic format.

However, "if a policyholder insists on hard copy, the same has to be issued without any charges," the regulator said.

IRDAI took the decision in the wake of emerging situation of COVID-19 pandemic and life insurers "expressing difficulties in printing and dispatch of policy documents," said V. Jayanth Kumar, chief general manager, IRDAI.

In his address to shareholders, Maruti Suzuki's MD and CEO Kenichi Ayukawa

## Energy, bank, auto stocks spur Sensex 2% higher

## TV PICKS

**Europa League:** Sony Ten 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 10.30 p.m. & 12.30 a.m. (Thursday)  
**NBA:** Sony Six (SD & HD), 6.30 a.m. & 4 a.m. (Thursday)  
**England vs Pakistan:** 1st Test, Sony Six (SD & HD), 3.30 p.m.

## IN BRIEF



## LA Lakers clinches top spot in Western Conf.

Anthony Davis scored 42 points as Los Angeles Lakers clinched top seed in the Western Conference on Monday with a 116-108 defeat of Utah Jazz in the NBA. The win sealed the top spot in the West for the first time since 2010, when the late Kobe Bryant led the team to the crown.

**The results:** Toronto bt Miami 107-103, Denver bt Oklahoma 121-113 (OT), Indiana bt Washington 111-100, New Orleans bt Memphis 109-99, Philadelphia bt San Antonio 132-130, Lakers bt Utah 116-108. AFP

## Australia calls off T20 series against Windies

Australia's T20 series against the West Indies, scheduled for October, was called off on Tuesday. Cricket Australia said the three-match series, which had been intended as a warm-up to the now-postponed T20 World Cup, could no longer serve that purpose. The series will take place ahead of the rescheduled T20 World Cup, on dates yet to be decided in either 2021 or 2022. Australia is currently struggling with a second wave of coronavirus infections. AFP



## Spain and Real Madrid legend Casillas retires

Spain's World Cup-winning goalkeeper Iker Casillas announced his retirement on Tuesday, after being sidelined for more than a year with a heart problem. Casillas, 39, also won the European Championship twice with his country in a trophy-laden career which included more than 700 games for Real Madrid. "Today is both one of the most important and most difficult days of my sporting life, the time to say goodbye has arrived," he said on Twitter. He played 167 times for the national team, winning trophies in 2008, 2010, 2012 in a golden age for Spanish football.

He lifted five La Liga titles and the Champions League on three occasions during his time at the Santiago Bernabeu. AFP

## Madrid Masters tennis cancelled: organisers

The Madrid Open tennis tournament has been cancelled due to new outbreaks of coronavirus, organisers confirmed on Tuesday, raising doubts around the upcoming US and French Opens. Originally scheduled for May, the postponed Madrid tournament was to take place on the clay courts at Caja Magica between September 12 and 20. AFP

## Deliberate coughing could lead to a red card

A footballer, who deliberately coughs close to another player or match official, can be issued a red card. The International Football Association Board, the game's lawmaker, updated its guidelines while the pandemic perseveres. A referee can only red card a player when they are certain the cough is intentional. A yellow card is also optional. The new rule falls under "using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures". AP

## Vivo set to end IPL association

Chinese firm and BCCI are understood to have agreed to terminate the contract

AMOL KARHADKAR  
SHAYAN ACHARYA  
MUMBAI

The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has been forced into a corner with IPL title sponsor Vivo set to end its association with the T20 league.

Following the border tension with China, Vivo – a Chinese mobile phone manufacturer – and the BCCI have been on the verge of invoking force majeure and mutually agreeing to end the five-season contract after just two editions.

**Conference call**

The Hindu understands that BCCI president Sourav Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah had a conference call with Vivo representatives, with IPL chairman Brijesh Patel in attendance, on Tuesday.



IPL 2020 is set to have a new title sponsor. ■ FILE PHOTO

Both parties are understood to have agreed to amicably terminate the agreement.

The BCCI had refrained from revisiting the IPL sponsorship deal during Sunday's governing council meeting.

This was followed by a public outcry over the league's association with a Chinese company. However, a BCCI insider claimed that Tuesday's meeting was a fallout of Vivo's demand to renegotiate the deal.

"They had reached out to the president and the secretary a while ago and sought a revision of the deal, citing prevailing market conditions and public sentiment.

"Since they were demanding a substantial reduction in sponsorship for the 2020 edition, it was mutually decided to look at options," said the BCCI insider.

It is learnt that Vivo wanted "at least 30% reduction" in the amount for the forthcoming edition, to be played in the UAE from September 19 to November 10.

In 2018, Vivo signed a five-

edition deal worth ₹2,199 crore (approximately ₹440 crore per year) as title sponsor.

If force majeure is invoked, it could absolve both parties from compensating the other for the premature termination of the deal.

While no one from the BCCI was available for an official comment, a Vivo India spokesperson said the company is "not commenting on the matter yet".

## Fresh tender for 2020?

A formal announcement on the separation is expected "very soon" so that the BCCI can invite fresh bids "only for the 2020 edition".

It is understood that a business conglomerate with close ties to an IPL franchise may explore extending its association with the IPL.

■

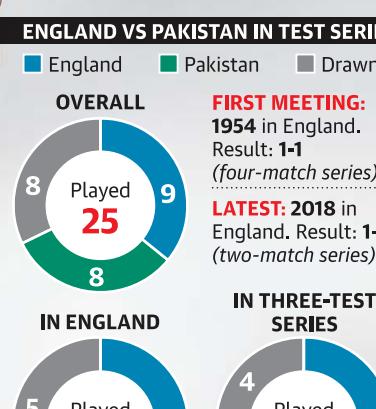
## Everyone is raring to go: Azhar

Pakistan captain says his players are ready for England test



## Battlelines drawn

When Joe Root's England takes on Azhar Ali's Pakistan in a Test series from Wednesday, there will be plenty at stake for both sides. England hasn't tasted success against Pakistan since 2010 while Pakistan hasn't won a series in England since 1996



## 2020 SCHEDULE

Aug. 5-9, Manchester | Aug. 13-17, Southampton | Aug. 21-25, Southampton

COMPILED BY R. NARAYANAN & G. PRASAD



## PAKISTAN IN ENG

REUTERS  
MANCHESTER

Pakistan skipper Azhar Ali said his team was looking forward to the England challenge, having shared the honours in the last two series in England, most recently under current coach Misbah-ul-Haq in 2018.

"We've prepared as best as we could in the time we had."

"The players have put in a lot of effort, and we believe we're ready for the Tests," Azhar said about the three-Test series which begins at Old Trafford on Wednesday.

"Everyone is raring to

go. We have to be on top of our game in all departments against a team like England.

"We need to have a clear mind and a positive attitude that we can win," said Azhar.

## Hit the ground running

Misbah felt that Pakistan must hit the ground running if it has to have any chance against the hosts.

"We're aware that England has a slight advantage, but if we're alert and go 100% in the first Test, that's the only way we can beat England... otherwise we will find ourselves in trouble," said Misbah.

**The teams (from):** England: Joe Root (Capt.), James Anderson, Jofra Archer, Dominic Bess, Stuart Broad, Rory Burns, Jos Buttler (wk), Zak Crawley, Sam Curran, Ollie Pope, Dom Sibley, Ben Stokes, Chris Woakes and Mark Wood.

**Pakistan:** Azhar Ali (Capt.), Babar Azam, Abid Ali, Asad Shafiq, Fawad Alam, Imam-ul-Haq, Kashif Bhatty, Mohammad Abbas, Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Naseem Shah, Sarfaraz Ahmed (wk), Shadab Khan, Shaheen Afridi, Shan Masood, Sohail Khan and Yasir Shah.

**Umpires:** Richard Kettleborough and Richard Illingworth; **TV umpire:** Michael Gough; **Reserve umpire:** Steve O'Shaughnessy; **Match referee:** Chris Broad.

**Match starts at 3.30 p.m. IST.**

**Pakistan's tour of England will be aired live on Sony Six channels from August 5, 3.30 p.m.**

## We have a head start: England skipper Root

Having played high-intensity Test cricket will serve us well'

S. DIPAK RAGAV

After beating the West Indies 2-1, England captain Joe Root feels his side has an advantage going into the first Test against Pakistan.

"Having played some high-intensity Test cricket will serve us well going into the series and will give us a bit of a head start."

"But it is important we don't take it for granted and we are very aware Pakistan is a talented team," Root said on Tuesday.

England will also be wary of the fact that it has lost the first Test in eight out of the last 10 multi-match series and hasn't beaten Pakistan in a series at home or away since 2010. "Our guys are up to speed and familiar with the rhythm of Test cricket and there is no excuse going into this week," Root said, when

We are very aware Pakistan is a talented team

asked about his side's troubles in series openers.

## Pakistan's strengths

Asked to assess Pakistan's strengths, he highlighted the bowling group.

"There are guys with raw pace, a left-arm angle and some young talent we might have not seen before. Then you have wily campaigners like Mohammad Abbas who has done well here."

Root also revealed that the inclement weather on Tuesday meant Ben Stokes couldn't bowl during practice.

A decision on his ability to bowl will be made on Wednesday, but he could once again play just as a batsman, as he did in the last Test against the West Indies.

## Tennis returns as service resumes at Palermo

PALERMO (ITALY)

The stadium announcer at Palermo on Monday wished a warm and welcome return to tennis lovers as the WTA tournament in Italy started five months after the last one, with bottles of hand sanitiser attached to the nets.

When Croatia's Donna Vekic and the Netherlands' Arantxa Rus took to the clay-court late on Monday some 150 days after the sport's hiatus started they were not wearing face masks.

The line judges and umpire were masked and the players had to stand behind a social distancing line to approach them.

Players were told politely to wear their masks during the rest periods and to sanitise their hands from the dispensing bottles attached to the net poles.

There were hand gels in the passages between seats and entry points.

and battled harder in a complicated second game to take a 2-0 lead.

Nepomniachtchi erred early, traded his rook for a bishop but thereafter for nearly 50 moves, Carlsen searched for victory that eventually came after 76 turns. Needing only a draw to close the final with a set to spare, Carlsen attained a better position and split the point in 36 moves.

## Ding makes it

Carlsen's win also helped Ding Liren qualify for the

## Set One:

Carlsen bt Nepomniachtchi 4-2.

■

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

RAKESH RAO  
NEW DELHI

The National Rifle Association of India (NRAI) reversed its decision to hold a coaching

for the Olympic core group at the Dr. Karni Singh Range, Tughlakabad, from August.

"Under the prevailing conditions with respect to

## Title sponsor's 'withdrawal': it was a good toss to lose



## BETWEEN WICKETS

SURESH MENON

pull out of IPL's sponsorship deal with Vivo, a reflection on the politicians.

The IPL has for long been a playground of the politicians. Every year, right on cue, there is some group objecting to it being played. A court case is filed here, a public protest is held there, and patriotism is called into question. A frustrated official once said it was time to rename the IPL. "Call it PIL," he said, following a series of public interest litigations.

It might be the drought in one part of India, the refusal of one venue to accept players from another, or the resurgence of a long-standing river water-sharing issue. The IPL guarantees publicity; it is a platform to exhibit patriotism, nationalism and all those isms that have politicians drooling. Free air time is guaranteed, with the added bonus of appearing like a man with a mission.

The Confederation of All India Traders (motto: 'Small business is big business') jumped into the fray with a letter to the ailing home minister and the foreign minister saying that "the decision of the BCCI to retain Vivo as the title sponsor" runs contrary to the broad policy of the government.

Not to be outdone, the Swadeshi Jagran Manch expressed its displeasure, adding for good measure that if the Chinese company were not removed, it would appeal for a boycott of the event. They presumably meant switching off the television every time the IPL or any of BCCI's sponsors appeared on it.

There is no official government ban on existing Chinese sponsorship. China-linked investments in India's tech start-up sector is around four billion dollars. According to *The Hindu BusinessLine*, companies which have major Chinese investments include Big-

Basket, Byju's, Dream11, Flipkart, Ola, MakeMyTrip, Oyo, Paytm, PolicyBazaar, Quikr, Snapdeal, Swiggy, and Zomato. You can boycott all of them, of course, but without a firm directive from the government – which is entitled to give one regardless of how it affects the economy – that might be a step too far.

The IPL allows authorities to raise a storm without having to face the backlash. It is the ideal vehicle to satisfy those who think with their hearts as well as those who do with their heads. And especially those who don't think at all.

Getting your own back on an adversary you don't trust is understandable, maybe even necessary. But dealing with China must involve an overarching plan, a clear strategy, not mere chest-beating and uncertainties.

Arun Dhumal, BCCI treasurer, put it in perspective when he said, "When you talk emotionally, you tend to leave the rationale behind. We have to understand the difference between supporting a Chinese company for a Chinese cause or taking help from a Chinese company to support India's cause."

There can be other objections to holding the IPL – the COVID-19 risk, for instance, is ever present, and the health of the players and support staff will be a concern at all stages. Are just three venues sufficient to hold 60 matches over 53 days? It is harsh on the pitches and the players.

Unlike in the past, when the IPL was shifted to South Africa (2009) and the UAE (2014), the challenges are of a different kind. So there is an argument there.

But the argument that cricket should be the yardstick by which we measure our national strength is beginning to pall. Patriotism should be made of sterner stuff.

## Marc Marquez to miss Czech MotoGP



Marc Marquez. ■ AFP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE PARIS

Reigning MotoGP world champion Marc Marquez will miss his second straight race after he was ruled out of Sunday's Czech Grand Prix following another operation on his fractured right arm, his team said Tuesday.

"After undergoing a second operation on his injured right arm, Marc Marquez and HRC have decided that the world champion will not ride in the Czech Republic in order for him to recover more," Honda said in a statement. He will be replaced this weekend by German test rider