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NEET on schedule as SC refuses to intervene in various petitions
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Norwegian MP nominates Trump for Nobel Peace Prize
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Busta outlasts an erratic Shapovalov to enter U.S. Open semifinals
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NEARBY



RJD protests against unemployment in Bihar
PATNA
Rashtriya Janata Dal leaders and supporters turned off lights and lit candles and lanterns for nine minutes from 9 p.m. on Wednesday night to raise the issue of unemployment in the State. Party leader Tejashwi Yadav slammed the government for the sorry state of affairs.

NORTH & EAST ► PAGE 4

Restaurants, bars in Delhi start serving liquor again
NEW DELHI

Restaurants and bars in Delhi started serving liquor to customers once again on Wednesday, following a Delhi government order permitting the activity. Business owners remained cautious on the way forward given the low footfall and lack of clarity on extension of the current trial run.

CITY ► PAGE 2

HC grants protection to Alt News co-founder
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday granted protection to journalist and co-founder of fact-checking website Alt News, Mohammed Zubair, against any coercive action from the police in connection with an FIR registered with the Delhi Police Cyber Cell.

CITY ► PAGE 2

Massive Chinese build-up on north bank of Pangong lake

Meeting of ground commanders to resolve stalemate remains inconclusive



Big bird: A Globemaster C17 aircraft of the IAF flying in the skies of Ladakh on Wednesday. ■ ANI

could patrol up to Finger 8.

Several rounds of meetings at the military and diplomatic levels have not yielded any results. China partially retreated to Finger 5 and as per the agreement, Indian troops were pulled back to Finger 2.

'China dominating area'

"China is dominating the ridges and hills in the Chushul area.

For the first time in 45 years, aerial shots were fired along the disputed LAC.

The Indian Army said on Tuesday that Chinese troops fired some rounds in the air on September 7, as they attempted to close in on one of India's forward positions and "intimidate" troops deployed there to dislodge them.

Brigade Commander-level talks were held at Chushul on Wednesday in the wake of Monday's firing incident which, a defence source said, were routine ground-level talks to de-escalate the situation. Both sides agreed to hold another round of

my has been dominating the ridges and hills in the Chushul area.

Corps Commander-level talks, for which the date was yet to be finalised, the source added.

China has repeated its accusations of India firing first.

A Chinese source said that during the talks, both sides agreed that there should not be further incidents of firing.

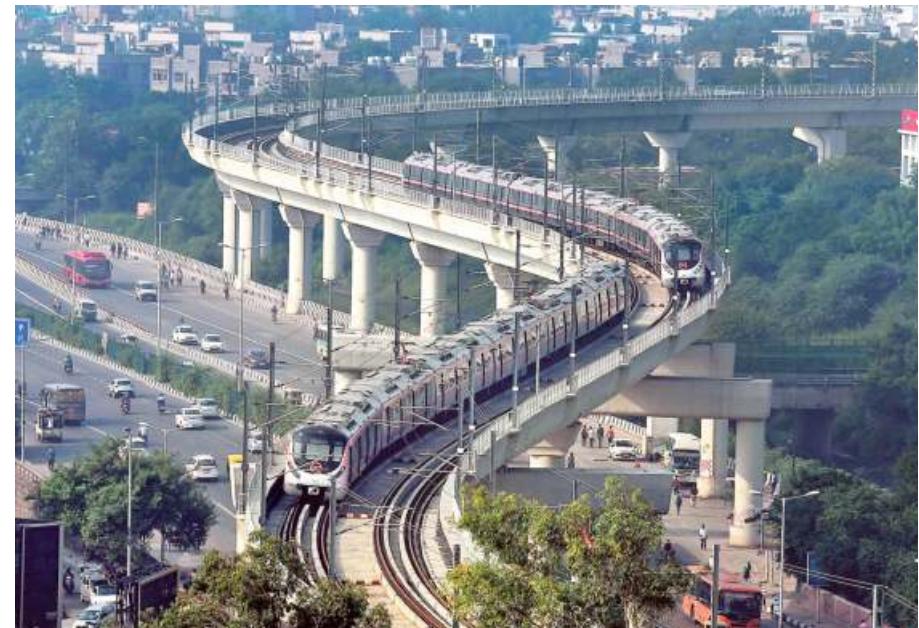
Tensions have been high since August 29, when Chinese troops engaged in "provocative action" trying to change the status quo on the south bank, which forced India to take pre-emptive moves.

India has since occupied the key heights in the area.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

ISRAEL HOPES TENSIONS WILL EASE SOON ► PAGE 9

Back on track



An aerial view of Delhi Metro's Pink Line, which resumed operations after five months, near Anand Vihar interchange station in New Delhi on Wednesday. ■ SANDEEP SAXENA (REPORT ON PAGE 3)

Daily COVID-19 cases hit new high in Capital

4,039 new cases as testing crosses 50K

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

COVID-19 cases over 24 hours registered a new high in Delhi on Wednesday with the government health bulletin putting the number at 4,039, taking the overall tally to 2,01,174. Twenty more deaths were reported, taking the total fatalities to 4,638.

The day also witnessed a new high in COVID-19 tests being done in the Capital since the virus outbreak at 54,517 over 24 hours, a marked improvement on the 20,000 daily tests on average done in July. Testing was even lesser than the previous month when the city reported its earlier high of 3,947.

cases on June 23. This is also the first time the number of tests has crossed the 50,000 mark in Delhi.

The number of containment zones jumped to 1,226, the highest so far.

Though the number of cases has gone up, the positivity rate (percentage of people testing positive for every 100 tests done) was 7.4%, the lowest in September.

Of the total cases, 1,72,763 people have recovered and there are 23,773 active cases.

Out of the total 14,169 beds available for COVID-19 treatment in the city, 8,636 (60.9%) were vacant, according to government data on Wednesday.

DMK opts out, RJD likely to contest RS poll

SANDEEP PHUKAN
NEW DELHI

Rashtriya Janata Dal member Manoj Jha may be the joint Opposition candidate for the Deputy Chairman post of the Rajya Sabha, a senior Congress leader said on Wednesday.

On Tuesday, the Congress, after a meeting of the Parliamentary Strategy Group (PSG) headed by party chief Sonia Gandhi, decided to approach its ally, the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), to put up a candidate but a source claimed that DMK chief M.K. Stalin was reluctant to field one.

DMK's Tiruchi Siva was considered to be a front runner to become the Opposition's joint candidate. However, the Opposition is now looking to field Mr. Jha as the common candidate after the DMK's reluctance to contest.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

17 policemen die of COVID, no relief to kin yet

Delhi govt. had announced ₹1 cr. ex gratia to family of those who succumbed to virus



Pooja, wife of constable Amit Kumar (left), has been waiting for compensation for four months. ■ FILE PHOTO

have to go back [to Mumbai] to earn for them."

Aakash Borghare (28), son of Sub-Inspector Ram Lal Borghare who died on June 3, said they haven't heard anything about the compensation yet. Mr. Aakash, who holds a diploma in electronics, works with a private firm in Panchkula. "My younger brother is a graduate. He has applied for a position in Delhi Police in place of our father. My mother is a housewife. I am supporting them with my salary," he said.

The family of constable Amit Kumar, who was the first Delhi policeman to succumb to COVID-19 on May 5, has been waiting for the compensation for four months. His wife Pooja, five months pregnant, is taking care of their three-year-old son.

"I have made so many calls and met officials in person too. The police department says it has processed the file. I don't know about its status now," said Ms. Pooja's brother Ravi.

To know more, get FREE Counseling or Register

SII pulled up for not pausing vaccine trial

AstraZeneca has placed trials on hold

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

The Drug Controller of India has demanded that the Serum Institute of India (SII), Pune, which is conducting Phase-3 trials on people in India involving U.K.-based AstraZeneca's COVID-19 vaccine candidate, explain why tests have not been paused in India too until safety has been established.

AstraZeneca on late Tuesday put global trials on hold after reports emerged of "severe adverse reaction" in a volunteer being injected with the vaccine, probably in the United Kingdom. The nature of the event was not known.

This pause would prevail, pending a review by a data safety monitoring board, AstraZeneca said in a statement in response to medical news website, Stat News.

Pune-based SII, which is testing a COVID-19 vaccine, said on Wednesday that so far there had been "no issues" with its trials.

"It has been widely reported in the national and international media that sponsor of the aforesaid vaccine, M/s AstraZeneca has paused the ongoing trial as a volunteer developed an unexplained illness....Serum has not informed the Central Licensing Authority regarding pausing the clinical

EPFO for 8.15% interest first, 0.35% by Dec.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Employees Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) on Wednesday recommended that the payout of the 8.5% interest for 2019-2020 would comprise of 8.15% from debt income, with the remaining 0.35% to be remitted to subscribers' accounts by December 31, subject to the sale of exchange-traded funds (ETFs).

"In view of exceptional circumstances arising out of COVID-19, the agenda regarding interest rate was reviewed by the Central Board and it recommended the same rate of 8.5% to the Central Government," the Labour ministry said in a statement after the EPFO's Central Board of Trustees met virtually, chaired by Labour and Employment Minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar.

"It would comprise of 8.15% from debt income and balance 0.35% (capital gain) from the sale of ETFs subject to their redemption by December 31, 2020," it said, adding the Board had recommended capital gains be accounted in income as an "exceptional case".

The Board also approved the enhancement of the maximum assurance benefit under the Employees' Deposit Linked Insurance Scheme to ₹7 lakh from ₹6 lakh.

trial and also not submitted causality analysis of the reported severe adverse event," said a letter signed by Dr.V.G. Somani, Drug Controller General (India), "I [Somani] give you an opportunity to showcase why permission granted to you should not be suspended till patient safety established."

The Hindu has viewed this letter.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

HC stops demolition of house, Kangana lands in Mumbai

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Actor Kangana Ranaut slammed Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray after the Shiv Sena-ruled Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) demolished alleged illegal portions of her bungalow in Bandra on Wednesday.

The 33-year-old actor, who hails from Himachal Pradesh, landed in the city from Chandigarh in the afternoon. She took to Twitter and said, "My office was sud-

denly declared illegal in last 24 hours, they have destroyed everything inside... and now I am getting threats

they will come to my house and break it as well, I am glad my judgement of movie mafia's favourite world's best CM was right."

In a video addressed to the CM, she said: "Uddhav Thackeray, what do you think, you along with film mafia have taken revenge by demolishing my house? Today, you broke my house, tomorrow your arrogance will crumble. Thus is the wheel of time, never constant."

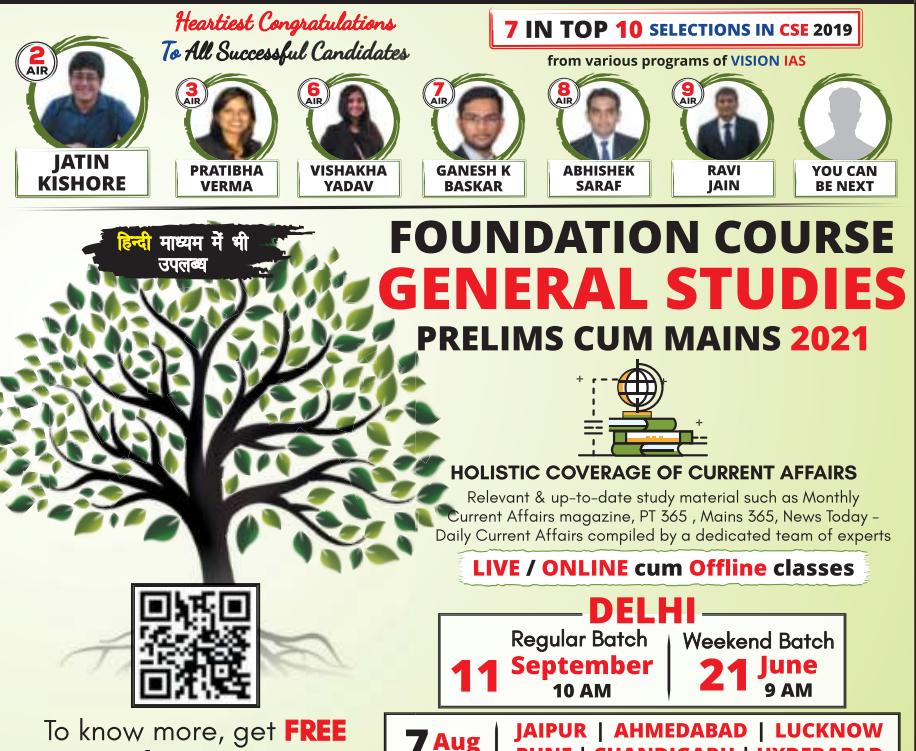
CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

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HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI
Delhi Police has lost 17 of its personnel to COVID-19 in the last four months but none of their families has received the ₹1 crore ex gratia announced by the Delhi government, The Hindu has learnt.

Commissioner of Police S.N. Shrivastava confirmed that the 17 families are still awaiting compensation from the government even though most of their files have been submitted by the police to the Revenue Department. "We have already sent the proposals and I understand that their examination is at an advanced stage. We are awaiting their response. We have been pursuing the proposals that we sent," he said, adding that some of the proposals were recent and the queries raised by the government had been replied to as well.

A Delhi government spokesperson said, "We are yet to receive all the papers from the Delhi police. We have requested them to submit it so

that the compensation can be disbursed at the earliest."

A government order dated May 13 stated that if any person, including sanitation workers, doctors, nurses, paramedics, police personnel and other government officer/official, deployed on COVID-19 duty dies of the infection, he/she shall be paid an ex gratia of ₹1 crore.

Speaking to The Hindu, Pawan Kumar, son of Assistant Sub-Inspector Karambir Singh, said he spoke to officers in the police department about 10 days ago regarding the compensation and was told that the file has already

been processed. Karambir died of complications related to COVID-19 on June 9 after spending a week in hospital. Mr. Pawan said his sister and mother are now dependent on him. He used to work as a helper in the railways in Mumbai and had returned to Delhi because of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The family of constable Amit Kumar, who was the first Delhi policeman to succumb to COVID-19 on May 5, has been waiting for the compensation for four months. His wife Pooja, five months pregnant, is taking care of their three-year-old son.

"I have made so many calls and met officials in person too. The police department says it has processed the file. I don't know about its status now," said Ms. Pooja's brother Ravi.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

IN BRIEF



Panel formed to boost State excise revenue

NEW DELHI Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Wednesday constituted a committee under the chairmanship of the Excise Commissioner to suggest measures for augmenting State excise duty revenue. The panel will also suggest measures for simplifying the liquor pricing mechanism and checking malpractices and evasion of duty in the liquor trade.

Air Quality of Delhi-NCR			
Delhi	105	Gurugram	116
Ghaziabad	124	Faridabad	176
Noida	106	Greater Noida	120
Good	■ Satisfactory	■ Moderate	
0-50	51-100	101-200	
Poor	■ Very Poor	■ Severe	
201-300	301-400	>400	
Air Quality Index at 4 pm yesterday (Average past 24 hours) [Source: CPCB]			

Artisans to get stalls at discounted rates

NEW DELHI Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia on Wednesday announced that the government has decided to provide stalls at a discounted rate to artists and artisans on all campuses of Tourism Department, including Dilli Haat. "Due to the COVID-19 lockdown, artists and artisans who cannot buy expensive stalls will be provided stalls at a very economical rate of ₹500-₹600," he said.

Man arrested with 7 cartridges at IGI Airport

NEW DELHI A 41-year-old man was arrested after seven cartridges were found in his hand baggage during a security check at Terminal-3 of the Delhi Airport here, the police said on Wednesday. The man, identified as Kalathiya Rajeshbhai, a resident of Surat in Gujarat. He works as a labour contractor. PTI

Jawan found dead at Rashtrapati Bhavan

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI A 40-year-old Army jawan was found dead in the barracks of Gorkha Rifles at Rashtrapati Bhavan, the police said on Wednesday.

The deceased was identified as a resident of Tikkayan in Nepal.

The incident was reported around 4 a.m. at South Avenue police station. A colleague saw the deceased and raised an alarm. He was shifted to the Base Hospital in Delhi Cantonment where he was declared brought dead. Additional DCP (New Delhi) Deepak Yadav said a team visited the spot and inquest proceedings have been initiated. On enquiry, it was found that the jawan was suffering from acute lower back pain and high blood pressure, an officer said.

Suicide prevention helpline: Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health, 011-4076 9002, Monday-Saturday (10 a.m.-7.30 p.m.)

Bars in the Capital cheer again

With low footfall and lack of clarity on the trial run, owners remain cautious

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Restaurants and bars in Delhi started serving liquor to customers once again on Wednesday, following a Delhi government order permitting the activity.

While arrangements to ensure social distancing were ensured, business owners remained cautious over the way forward given low footfall and a lack of clarity on the extension of the current trial run, which will last till September 30.

With government guidelines limiting the number of customers allowed to half the capacity of the restaurant, Rahul Singh, owner of the Beer Cafe chain of restaurants, said that business was likely to be proportionately effected. "A clearer idea will emerge only in a few weeks' time," he added.

Focus on rebooting

In the meantime, Mr. Singh said that the focus was on rebooting. "There are 150 things in our checklist," he said, including retraining staff, medical tests, ensuring safety equipment, negotiating rent, servicing equipment, throwing out expired beer, buying new stock, among other aspects.

Apart from the number of customers, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) has also directed that no customer will be



Open again: A bartender serves a drink at a bar in Connaught Place on Wednesday.

• R.V. MOORTHY

served who are standing, and that preventive measures for deadly COVID-19 should be displayed prominently at the bars.

Need for rebates

Among issues restaurants are battling for, Thomas Fenn, co-founder of the Mahabali, stressed on the need for rebates on excise licence fees and fees on alcohol stock already purchased.

Fees for licence is paid on an annual basis but since no alcohol has been served in the months of the lockdown, a rebate is justified, he said.

Additionally, a fee was paid on alcohol stocks at the time of purchase under the

assumption that they would be sold, he said, arguing that there must be a rebate on this too. Mr. Fenn added that there was a need for more clarity from the government regarding the basis on which the trial run would be extended or not, in order to make various business decisions such as restocking.

Abhishek Patel, manager at restobar Limitless, said that sanitising machines were also being set up everywhere. With low footfall on Day 1, Mr. Patel said that they would have to wait and see if the pace picks up.

With regard to concerns about social distancing being hard to follow, especially in the case of inebriated people, Mr. Patel said that regular measures such as cutting people off at an appropriate time would be followed.

However, for Mr. Singh, drunken antics are not a cause for concern. "Responsibility is our hallmark and its both ways, from our side and our patrons."

Senior advocate Colin Gonsalves, appearing for Mr. Zubair, submitted that his client has not been supplied copy of the FIR registered against him in Delhi. "The

Delhi HC grants protection to Alt News co-founder

Police get court notice over plea to quash FIR against scribe

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday granted protection to journalist and co-founder of fact-checking website Alt News, Mohammed Zubair, against any coercive action from the police in connection with an FIR registered with Delhi Police Cyber Cell.

Justice Yogesh Khanna also issued notice to the Delhi police on Mr. Zubair's plea seeking to quash the FIR registered against him in Delhi. It also sought response of the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), on whose complaint the case was registered.

Mr. Zubair, in his petition, claimed that the FIR centred around a tweet he shared on August 6, 2020, where he called out one Jagdish Singh, who he alleged is a "habitual troll" for being an abusive person on social media.

Defending his tweet, which is at the centre of the controversy, Mr. Zubair said he "merely shared an image of Jagdish Singh standing with a minor girl whose face was pixelated and calling Jagdish Singh out on his foul, shameful and abusive behaviour on social media".



Mohammed Zubair •
questing for the same," his petition said.

Multiple FIRs

Mr. Gonsalves said that another FIR on the same issue was registered on September 4 in Raipur, Chhattisgarh. The senior advocate said that multiple FIRs cannot be lodged for the same facts and incident, more so at different places.

Mr. Zubair said he is in the process of challenging the FIR registered in Chhattisgarh separately, but fears that he may be arrested by Delhi Police immediately.

On August 8, Mr. Kanoongo go from his personal Twitter handle had tweeted, "The Commission has taken cognizance of the case of threatening and torturing a girl child through Twitter, necessary communication have been issued to @TwitterIndia and concerned law enforcement authorities for appropriate action".

14 children rescued from traffickers

Victims from Bihar were brought to the Capital on train

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Fourteen children, allegedly trafficked from different districts of Bihar to Delhi, were rescued by the Railway unit of Delhi Police, officials said on Wednesday. Ten people have been arrested.

The rescued children, in the age group of 12-14 years, have been taken to a quarantine centre in Lajpat Nagar, the police said.

The matter came to light after an information was received from an NGO on September 7 about 14 minors being brought to Delhi by Mahananda Express train from different districts of Bihar, a senior police officer said.

A joint operation was launched at the Old Delhi railway station by police along with NGO Bachpan Bachao Andolan, Salam Balak

Ten persons were detained. The rescued children were examined and taken to a quarantine centre

HARENDR K. SINGH
Deputy Commissioner of Police (Railways)

statements before the committee, a case was registered and the 10 accused persons were arrested," he added.

During interrogation, the accused disclosed that the children belong to different districts of Bihar.

Labour shortage

Among those rescued, nine children are from Katihar, two from Begusarai, two from Kishanganj and one from Purnia. They had planned to take them to different places, including four to Azadpur and two to Seelampur in Delhi, two to Faridabad in Haryana and six to Punjab, he said.

Due to shortage of labourers amid the COVID-19 pandemic, the traffickers saw an opportunity to get the children employed in factories and targeted poor families in Bihar, the DCP said.

"They were produced before the Child Welfare Committee through videoconferencing. Based on their

Wage-ing war



A group of daily wage workers wait to be hired at Labour Chowk in north Delhi's Adarsh Nagar on Wednesday. • SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Delhi riots: HC to hear Tahir Hussain's plea challenging ED custody today



Suspended AAP councillor was arrested by the agency on Aug. 20

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Wednesday said it will hear suspended AAP councillor Tahir Hussain's plea, challenging his three days remand to Enforcement Directorate (ED) custody in a money laundering case related to

the Delhi riots, on Thursday.

Justice Yogesh Khanna asked the counsel for Mr. Hussain to place on record the judgments which he was referring to while posting the case for Thursday.

Mr. Hussain has sought setting aside the remand order of September 7 passed by a trial court and a direction to the ED to immediately send him to Tihar jail.

Money laundering

The ED was probing allegations that Mr. Hussain and his accomplices laundered over ₹1.10 crore

funds by using purported shell or dummy companies to fuel the protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act and the riots.

In his plea before the High Court, Mr. Hussain said he was formally arrested by the ED on August 20 from Tihar jail and on August 28, he was remanded in its six-day custody.

The ED again sought extension of Mr. Hussain's custody by nine days and the court on September 7 granted them three days to quiz him with the direction that he be handed over to Ti-

har jail authorities on September 10. His counsel challenged the trial court's extension of remand order on the ground that the 15-day period for grant of police custody has to begin from the date of formal arrest, i.e., August 20 and thus, further extension of police remand is not permissible in law.

"It is held by the Supreme Court in a catena of judgments that 15 days period for grant of police custody has to begin from the date of formal arrest," his petition stated.

'Govt. committed to creating demand for industrial growth'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Industries Minister Satyendar Jain on Wednesday said that the government was fully committed to raising the confidence of people as well as industrialists to create demand for industrial growth in the city.

Mr. Jain was delivering the keynote address at Confederation of Indian Industries' (CII) Delhi Business Week session on catalysing industrial growth.

The government is committed to taking measures for ease of doing business to catalyse industrial growth. The government has taken many steps to build consumer confidence by handling the pandemic and retaining key subsidies on essential services like electricity, water and others," the Minister said.

Suggests moratorium

He also suggested that there may be a moratorium of no or minimal government interference for at least a year to help the industry to get back on its feet. Mr. Jain invited the industrialists to present specific Acts which need attention or amendments to give an impetus to get growth back on track and survive the pandemic.

Consumer confidence

"There is a need to create demand for and by the industry to survive the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic-induced uncertainties and insecurities, the average spend or demand from the consumers had drastically reduced. The need of the hour is to work towards building consumer confidence to avoid long-term downward spiralling effect on the industry," he said.

Government of Jammu & Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER MECHANICAL HOSPITAL AND CENTRAL HEATING DIVISION SRINAGAR
Telefax:- 0194-2496089, Email ID:- xenmhchdk@yahoo.in

Gist of e-tender

NIT No: MHCHD/TS /2020-21/91/e-tendering, Dated:-08.09.2020

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Name of Work	Est. Cost (Rs. in Lacs)	Cost of T/Doc. (In rupees)	Earnest Money (Lacs of Rs)	Time of completion (in months)	Position of AAA/funds
Structural design, drawings and furnishing of BOQs and estimates as per latest JKSSR schedule for multistorey Plant rooms for Housing of Oxygen Plants at various Hospitals of entire Kashmir Valley.	7.00	500	14000	07	Available as communicated by intending Department

- The Tender document Consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in from 08.09.2020(18:55 hrs).
- The bidders shall deposit their bids in electronic format on the above web site from 09.09.2020(10.00 hrs) to 18.09.2020 (13:00 hrs) in two (02) cover.
- The bids uploaded on the website up to due date and time will be opened on 19.09.2020 (12.00 hrs) or any date convenient to the department in the office of Executive Engineer, MHCHD, Srinagar

DIPK-5311/20

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Extension of Interest (EOI) is invited from the reputed SAP Partner firms for "offering services and support for implementation and integration of SAP/ERP modules with web-based end user interface (accessed through PC, Tablet and Mobile) and unified statistical analytics dashboard; maintain all the ERP IT infrastructure, provide warranty and support services for the infrastructure at IITR Data Center and Disaster Recovery site."

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Dy. Registrar (Material Management)

Government of Jammu and Kashmir
OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER PMGSY (JKRRDS) JAMMU

Sub:- Ref:- Extension of date of Notice Inviting Tenders

Timings
DELHI

THURSDAY, SEP. 10	RISE 06:04 SET 18:32
	RISE 23:36 SET 12:57
FRIDAY, SEP. 11	RISE 06:05 SET 18:31
	RISE 00:00 SET 13:53
SATURDAY, SEP. 12	RISE 06:05 SET 18:30
	RISE 00:25 SET 14:49

Delhi Weather	max min
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Safdarjung	36 26
Palam	36 27

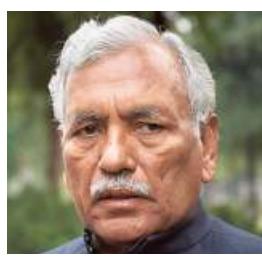
Delhi Palam Today
36°C Dry and warm day with few clouds. Moderate gusty winds likely during day.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
37°C Mainly clear sky with few patchy clouds. Dry and very warm day would prevail.

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THE HINDU
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IN BRIEF



'COVID-19 test a must for MLAs before session'

NEW DELHI
Delhi Assembly Speaker Ram Niwas Goel has directed for COVID-19 testing (RT-PCR) of all MLAs participating in the one-day session of the House on September 14. All the members are required to carry the report of their COVID-19 test done 48 hours before the start of the session, said the Assembly Secretariat in a statement.

11 from Delhi bag CBSE teachers awards

NEW DELHI
Eleven teachers from Delhi have bagged the 'CBSE teachers award' this year for initiatives that ranged from spreading awareness on menstrual health to integrating learning of art education with other subjects. They were among 38 teachers and principals who have been felicitated by the CBSE this year.

Power nap



A ragpicker taking a nap on a humid afternoon along the Ring Road near Delhi University on Wednesday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

BJP delegation seeks DCW's intervention to ensure women's safety at shelter homes

It submits memorandum while accusing Maliwal of inaction

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A Delhi BJP Mahila Morcha delegation submitted a memorandum at the Delhi Commission for Women (DCW) office on Wednesday seeking intervention and action on what it alleged was the "pitiful condition of women" in shelter homes under the Delhi government.

Delhi BJP Mahila Morcha president Poonam Parashar

53,400 travellers avail services on Day 3 of metro resumption

Blue and Pink lines resume operations; three more lines to restart services today

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

With the Delhi Metro's Blue and Pink lines resuming operations on Wednesday, around 53,400 people travelled on the metro network till 8 p.m.

As part of the DMRC's graded resumption of services with staggered timings, currently, only the Yellow, Blue and Pink lines along with the Rapid Metro Gurugram are operational.

The Yellow Line saw a total ridership of 26,900 on Wednesday; Blue Line (22,600); Pink Line (3,900). Noida-Greater Noida Aqua Line saw a ridership of 1,061.

Third phase

From Thursday, the Red Line (Rithala-Shaheed Sthal New Bus Adha), Violet Line (Kashmere Gate-Ballabgarh), and Green Line (Kirti Nagar/Inderlok - Brig. Hoshik Singh) will become operational. This will be the third phase under the Stage 1 resumption of operations.



Commuters at Rajouri Garden metro station after services on the Blue and Pink lines resumed on Wednesday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

ON THE GO

Ridership on Wednesday (till 8 p.m.)	Yellow Line	Blue Line	Pink Line
26,900	22,600	3,900	

• 53,400 total ridership on the three Delhi Metro Rail Corporation lines on Wednesday

Upcoming lines to resume operations:

Sept. 10: → ● Red Line ● Violet Line ● Green Line

Sept. 11: → ● Magenta Line ● Grey Line

Sept. 12: → ● Airport Express Line

The trips will be subsequently increased as the operational timing of services get extended on September 11 and 12 with the opening of other lines," Mr. Dayal said.

Increase in timings

Stage 2 and Stage 3 operations will kick in on September 11 and 12 with operational hours increasing to 12 hours daily on Friday and throughout the day from Saturday.

While guidelines state that metro trains will skip stations falling under containment zones, officials said that none of the currently operational ones fall under the same.

Metro services had remained suspended since March 22 following a nationwide lockdown imposed due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Operations resumed on September 7 with the Yellow Line and Rapid Metro Gurugram being the first corridors to begin services.

CM holds review meeting to assess COVID-19 situation

He instructs officials to provide maximum help to patients

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal held a review meeting on the COVID-19 situation in Delhi on Wednesday and directed the hospitals and authorities to take all preventive measures to contain its spread.

The review meeting was attended by Health Minister Satyendar Jain along with the Chief Secretary and senior officials of the health department and medical superintendents of government hospitals and heads of private labs in Delhi.

Along with directing the authorities to provide every possible help to the hospitals to prevent the spread of infection, Mr. Kejriwal said that just like Delhi was able to control the virus with the collective efforts of two crore people, it will be able to do this again with everyone's support.

The high-level review meeting was held to analyse the COVID-19 situation in Delhi, days after the Chief Minister had directed the Chief Secretary to double the testing and enabling testing without the requirement of a doctor's prescription.

The Chief Minister also directed the Chief Secretary



Arvind Kejriwal

authorities to double the testing and enabling testing without the requirement of a doctor's prescription.

Testing doubled

"Tests have been increased from 20,000 to 40,000 per day. I request everyone to encourage as many people as possible to get tested without any delay. If any hospital is experiencing any issues, they can directly reach me and I will extend all possible help in this regard," he also said.

The government said Delhi has witnessed a "slight increase" in the number of daily COVID-19 cases with the re-starting of various activities since the unlock guidelines have come into force. Along with this, Delhi is also witnessing migration of people from other States in search of jobs and livelihoods, it added.

and officers concerned that all State and Central government SOPs should be strictly enforced and there should be no complacency regarding the same.

Mr. Kejriwal also instructed the heads of the private labs in Delhi to not deny tests for anybody who wants to get tested. He further directed ambulance services that no calls from patients should be refused and they should be transferred to the hospitals if needed as soon as possible.

The Corona App should display all information regarding the number of beds and ventilators well-within time to prevent panic, Mr. Kejriwal asserted.

The government said Delhi has witnessed a "slight increase" in the number of daily COVID-19 cases with the re-starting of various activities since the unlock guidelines have come into force. Along with this, Delhi is also witnessing migration of people from other States in search of jobs and livelihoods, it added.

treatment of critical COVID-19 patients.

Congratulating the people of Delhi, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had tweeted: "They used to say, back in the day – what America does today, India would do tomorrow. Delhi has changed it. Now – what Delhi did yesterday, America does today."

Prescription not required for testing: govt. order

COVID-19 tests to be conducted as per ICMR strategy

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Following the High Court order on Tuesday, the Delhi government on Wednesday issued an order stating that

prescription will not be required from a qualified medical practitioner for COVID-19 testing.

"However, tests will be conducted in accordance with the strategy issued by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and as per orders issued by Govt. of NCT of Delhi from time to

time," the order said.

Plasma therapy

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

Panel seeks details of waterlogged areas in Gurugram

Committee set up to prepare drainage plan to submit report by September 30

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

A ten-member committee constituted to prepare a drainage plan for the city after instances of flooding last month has sought details of waterlogging-prone areas from the respective councillors and residents' welfare associations. The committee will also take suggestions from the local residents. After the points are identified, the committee members, along with the municipal officials and area

councillors, will conduct site visits to assess the feasibility of proposed solutions. The committee also discussed repairing and construction of rainwater harvesting structures and storm water drains and channelising water to nearby ponds, among others, as possible solutions.

Additional Commissioner, Municipal Corporation of Gurugram, Jaspreet Kaur, chaired the meeting. The

committee, comprising five councillors and as many municipal officials, was constituted by Mayor Madhu Azad on September 4. Besides Ms. Kaur, the committee includes Senior Town Planner Sanjeev Mann and Chief Engineer Raman Sharma, among others.

As per the order, the committee can also use voluntary services of experts and engineers having experience in dealing with drainage issues.

Police to focus on crime control; teams to handle COVID-19 norms breach

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A day after Delhi Traffic Police was restricted to fine people for COVID-19 norms violation, Delhi Police on Wednesday ordered all police stations to focus on their primary job, that is crime control.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Headquarters) Chinmoy Biswas issued an order saying that Delhi Police will deploy dedicated teams in each police station to check violations of COVID-19 norms as cases are rising in the city again.

He said all police stations will deploy such team in uniform at one location from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. every day. "In view of the spread of COVID-19 in Delhi, each police station shall detail one dedicated team comprising an upper subordinate and a lower subordinate to report to one location in their respective district to prosecute persons who violate protocols such as not wearing mask, not maintaining social distancing, and spitting etc.," the order said.

Other district police personnel engaged in picket checking, patrol duty and crime control should concentrate on their primary job of crime control and law and order, and not on prosecution for COVID-19 violations, the order said. They shall not be issued the challan book, it said.

"The traffic personnel shall concentrate on regulating the traffic and shall not be assigned the task of prosecuting public persons for violating COVID-19 protocol. The primary attention shall be regulating traffic in view of near normalcy of traffic on the roads. All challan books which are thus required by district/traffic policemen shall be taken back and kept in safe custody under the knowledge of DCPs concerned, he said in the order.

According to a data shared by Delhi Police, until 4 p.m. on September 8, it has issued 2,77,131 challans for not wearing mask, 2,434 for spitting in public places, and 26,116 for violating social distancing.

Under supervision

District Deputy Commissioners of Police have been asked to select one area/location by rotation where frequent violations are noticed and keep it under the supervision of the respective inspector.

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Nation's youth want jobs not apathy, says Priyanka

U.P. Cong. takes part in Oppn. protest

OMAR RASHID
LUCKNOW

The nation's youth want jobs, stated Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Twitter on Wednesday evening moments before her party workers in Uttar Pradesh and Samajwadi Party leaders switched off their lights and lit candles and torches at 9 p.m. for nine minutes to draw the government's attention towards unemployment.

Ms. Vadra said instead of ensuring youth recruitment, dates for examination, notifications for new jobs and proper recruitment process, the government was providing them blank speeches,

sticks and apathy.

"After all, till when," she asked.

While Congress leaders and workers lit candles at the party headquarters, SP workers led a march near the 1090 Powerline crossing in Lucknow with placards following which they were stopped by police.

Akhilesh posts photo

SP chief Akhilesh Yadav posted a picture along with his wife and former MP Dimple Yadav as they held candles and posed with a bicycle, the party symbol.

"Today, the youths have kicked off the countdown of the BJP rule," Mr. Yadav said.

RJD protests against unemployment with candles

Tejashwi headlines party event with nine-minute vigil at 9 p.m., says youth cheated by 'double-engine' Bihar government

AMARNATH TEWARY
PATNA

Rashtriya Janata Dal leaders and supporters turned off lights and lit candles and lanterns for nine minutes from 9 p.m. on Wednesday night to raise the issue of unemployment in the State. Party leader Tejashwi Yadav, on the occasion, slammed the "double-engine" government,

government, blaming it for the sorry state of affairs.

Batons in place of jobs'

"Bihar has the most number of young people in the country and has the highest unemployment rate. There are 4.5 lakh government job vacancies here but the youth have been cheated by this

double-engine government. It keeps promising jobs for them but when they come out on the streets demanding jobs, the Nitish Kumar government rains baton on them," alleged Mr. Yadav.

Bihar's Leader of the Opposition, along with his mother Rabri Devi and elder brother Tej Pratap, stood with lanterns for nine minutes on the terrace of their official residence, 10, Circular Road, with the house staff following suit.

Similar scenes were also witnessed at the RJD party office in Patna and other places across the State.

"Today unemployment has become the biggest issue in Bihar. At 46.61%, it is the



RJD leaders Tejashwi Yadav, Tej Pratap and mother Rabri Devi hold lanterns as mark of protest in Patna on Wednesday. ■PTI

highest in the country. Why has Bihar become the centre of unemployment?" said Mr. Yadav. He alleged that the State government did not provide any employment op-

portunities to the migrant workers who had returned home during the lockdown.

Earlier, on September 5, Mr. Yadav had also launched a portal [Berojgarjhato.co.in](#) and a toll-free number for unemployed youth to register, promising them jobs if his party came to power after the upcoming Assembly elections. The Bihar polls are due in October-November this year and the Election Commission is expected to announce dates by the end of September.

JD(U) jibe at RJD event

Taking a jibe at the RJD event, ruling Janata Dal (United) leaders questioned the need for lighting lamps and

lanterns when "every household in the State has power supply for over 22 hours every day".

"The lantern age in Bihar is over now," quipped party spokesperson Niraj Kumar, hinting at the RJD party symbol. State BJP leaders too slammed the Opposition party. "After Assembly elections, Tejashwi Yadav will search for his employment lantern in hand," said BJP leader Nikhil Anand.

Tejashwi, however, hit back using the JD(U) symbol. "The ruling party may say the time of the lantern has gone but I would like to ask them if the time of the arrow [JD(U) party symbol] has come," he said.

Delhi cab driver murder case transferred

Bulandshahr police to take over probe from Gautam Buddha Nagar counterparts

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GHAZIABAD

The Gautam Buddha Nagar police have transferred the investigation into the murder of a Delhi-based cab driver to their counterparts in Bulandshahr.

Aftab Alam, 45, was allegedly killed by three passengers when he was returning from Bulandshahr to Delhi on Sunday evening. His body was found on the front passenger seat of the car in the Badarpur area of Greater

Noida.

Aftab made the last call to his son Sabir who claimed he could hear a person in the background asking someone to chant "Jai Shri Ram". Police said it was not Alam but a roadside vendor that they were addressing and that there was no communal angle to the murder.

Harish Chandra, DCP, Central Noida, told *The Hindu* on Wednesday that Bulandshahr police should probe the case as the crime happened in an

area under their jurisdiction. "The suspected killers boarded the cab at Bhud Chauraha in Bulandshahr so technically the Bulandshahr police should investigate the murder," he said.

However, Santosh Kumar Singh, SSP, Bulandshahr, said he was yet to receive any official communication in this regard. "It will be too early for me to comment on this matter," he said.

Earlier on Wednesday, the Noida police released a video

of an attendant at a CNG filling station near Dadri toll plaza wherein he purportedly said it was he whom the passengers/suspected killers were addressing on Sunday night.

"In the audio, one could hear a passenger asking somebody what happened to his hand. It was this attendant as he has an injury mark on his hand. He told us they were trying to give him ₹10 more, which he refused," said Mr. Chandra.

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This is for the notice of the public that a political party proposed to be registered under name of "SWAMI KRISHN PARTY". The office of the party is located at : No.17/B, Nanjappa Complex Ground Floor, Kanakapura Road, Basaveshwari, Bengaluru - 560070. This party has submitted application to the Election Commission of India, New Delhi for its registration as Political Party under Section 20A of the Representation of People Act, 1951 - Name/ address of the office bearers of the party are as follows:- President : Manjunatha N S/O Sh. Nagappa, R/o #44/6, 5th Main Road, Kannur Layout, Bangalore-560085, Karnataka. General Secretary : Annappa S/o Sh. Nagendra, Rd #10-434, Idgara Kaloni Arsikere, Hassan, Distr-573103, Karnataka. Treasurer : Nagamuni S/o Nagappa, R/o #3423, Arsikere (Balabagh), Arsikere, Hassan-573103, Karnataka. If anyone has any objection to the registration of "SWAMI KRISHN PARTY" they may send their objection with reasons thereof, to the Secretary (Political Party), Election Commission of India, Nirvachan Sadak, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001 within 30 days of the publication of this notice.

PUBLIC NOTICE

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I, Joma Joseph spouse of JC-772234M, Sub Joseph K J Resident of Karukaparampil House, Ramankary P.O., Alappuzha Distt., Kerala State, Pin-689595 have changed my name from Joma Joseph to Jomma Joseph Vide Affidavit No. H-141026 Dated 7 Jul 2020 before Executive Magistrate 1st Class, Jammu.

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DEATH



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M.A. (English), M.A. (Hindi), M.A. (Sanskrit), Sahitya Ratna, Pravesh, Kovid, Dip. in Gandhian Thought, PG Dip. in Teaching Eng. PG Dip. in Translation, Cert. in Bengali, Diploma in French, Fellow Principal & Professor of English, Family Office - Bearers: Principals' Association, Madura Kumarji University, Women's Voluntary Service, Ramnand Dist; Sarvodaya Sangh, Ramnand Dist; Sarvodaya Sangh, Ramnand Dist; Hindi Pracharak Carnatic music vocalist & vainika Beloved and remembered in our hearts, minds, and souls

N. A. Ashok - 099624 93292

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Mr. G. Jaya Ramudu (49 Yrs)

Senior Supervisor - Printing

The Hindu, Vijayawada

Passed away on 08-09-2020.

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U.P. suspends IPS officer over corruption, extortion charges

A businessman had alleged 'threat' from Mahoba SP

OMAR RASHID

LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government on Wednesday suspended an IPS officer, Mahoba SP Mani Lal Patidar, on charges of extortion and corruption.

The government action comes a day after a businessman,

Indrakanth Tripathi, was

found shot in the neck in his car.

A few days ago, Mr. Tripathi,

dealing in explosives' trade in the mining-rich Bundelkhand district, had alleged that Mr. Patidar was threatening to kill him.

Mr. Patidar was suspended on charges of corruption and tarnishing the image of the State government leading to question marks on its credibility, a government spokesperson said. He is accused of extorting money from drivers transporting *gitti* (loose rock) and harassing the vehicle owners if they did not pay up.

In a letter to Chief Minister

Yogi Adityanath on September 5, Mr. Tripathi from Kannabai area had urged him to intervene and provide security.

Mr. Tripathi alleged that the officer had demanded ₹6 lakh per month from him as 'extortion' and threatened to lodge false cases against him if he did not pay.

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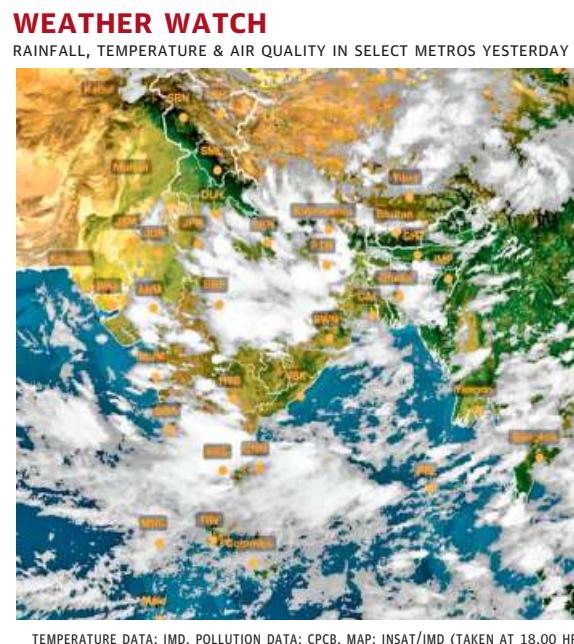
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Forecast for Thursday: Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, Sikkim, West Bengal, Chhattisgarh, central Maharashtra, Konkan & Goa, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Rayalseema, south & north interior Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Andaman & Nicobar Islands

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	... 36.2	27.3	25.5	Kozhikode	2.5... 31.6...	25.5	21.9
Ahmedabad	... 34.0	26.6	25.1	Kurnool	13.8... 35.0...	25.1	21.2
Aizawl	... 29.8	21.2	20.0	Lucknow	... 37.4...	24.0	20.0
Allahabad	... 37.1	27.8	25.3	Madurai	4... 33.6...	25.3	23.0
Bengaluru	61... 30.6	20.7	18.0	Mangaluru	... 31.7...	24.0	20.0
Bhopal	... 34.5	25.4	24.0	Mumbai	... 33.3...	26.6	24.0
Bhubaneswar	16.7... 34.9	24.0	21.9	Mysuru	0.5... 30.7...	21.9	21.9
Chandigarh	... 35.8	25.9	25.5	New Delhi	... 35.6...	26.1	25.5
Chennai	... 33.7	26.7	25.5	Patna	11.7...	25.4	24.0
Coimbatore	... 32.8	24.6	23.5	Pond Blair	4.5... 30.8...	25.0	24.0
Dehradoon	10.8... 33.7	22.9	21.7	Puducherry	0.6... 32.2...	26.2	24.0
Gangtok	50.8... 21.2	17.8	16.0	Pune	46... 32.9...	22.4	21.7
Goa	0.4... 32.0	25.3	24.8	Raipur	25.3... 32.8...	26.6	25.5
Guwahati	... 35.1	25.0	24.0	Ranchi	... 31.7...	24.0	23.0
Hubballi	... 28.0	22.0	21.0	Shillong	0.4... 24.6...	17.3	17.3
Hyderabad	... 34.0	24.0	23.0	Shimla	... 27.3...	18.4	18.0
Imphal	... 31.3	19.7	18.0	Srinagar	... 29.7...	13.6	13.0
Jaipur	... 35.2	25.2	24.0	Thiruvananthapuram	143.8... 28.6...	22.4	22.0
Kochi	13... 29.4	24.8	23.5	Tiruchi	0.6... 33.5...	24.8	24.0
Kohima	... 24.2	19.2	18.0	Vijayawada	... 36.2...	27.0	26.0
Kolkata	... 30.4	27.1	25.5	Visakhapatnam	... 34.3...	28.6	27.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	14... 49	30	45	60	...	GREEN
Bengaluru	... 21	31	34	45	...	GREEN
Chennai	... 4	17	162	ORANGE
Delhi	6	33	15	129	175	RED
Hyderabad	5	51	11	46	62	GREEN
Kolkata	8... 44	69	33	50	...	GREEN
Lucknow	6	32	41	180	129	ORANGE
Mumbai	15... 15	2	39	156	...	RED
Pune	40... 16	54	32	33	...	GREEN
Visakhapatnam	9... 30	15	34	51	...	GREEN

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

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

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

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

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

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Charkhi Dadri, Haryana recorded an unhealthy quality index (AQI) score of 202 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Aizawl, Mizoram recorded a healthy AQI score of 18

form of lockdown is not a solution at the moment as it will severely cripple a beleaguered economy. He said, "This call for a curfew is not a viable solution. The economy is already in the doldrums. Instead, the focus must be on bolstering the medical infrastructure of these districts." Mr. Raje said the Maharashtra government should set up a jumbo

Opinion divided

The call to observe the curfew has divided citizens, the business class and politicians. While expressing concern over the spike in cases, Sambhaji Raje, the Bharatiya Janata Party's Rajya Sabha MP from Kolhapur, said any

form of lockdown is not a solution at the moment as it will severely cripple a beleaguered economy. He said, "This call for a curfew is not a viable solution. The economy is already in the doldrums. Instead, the focus must be on bolstering the medical infrastructure of these districts." Mr. Raje said the Maharashtra government should set up a jumbo

COVID-19 facility in Kolhapur on the lines of the ones in Mumbai and Pune.

In Sangli, a number of traders associations have urged the district administration to impose a lockdown instead of merely appealing to the public to observe a curfew. "Given the violation of COVID-19 regulations by several citizens, we seek a complete shutdown in

mething similar when the foundation of the College was laid on January 8, 1877.

It created a buzz and historical evidence was asked for. Shafey Kidwai, Chairman Department of Journalism and Mass Communication, provided the proof. "The Gazette of January 12, 1877, gives a graphic account of the ceremony. It is the primary source which said Kunwar Lutuf Khan, a member of MAO Funds Committee, presented a bottle carrying the scroll enlisting the details of how Madarastul Uloom (the precursor of MAO College) came into being along with gold, silver, and copper coins to Viceroy (Lord Lytton), who put it inside a cavity of the foundation stone specially created for it."

He added the word 'time capsule' was not used and the time of its extraction was not mentioned.

Rhea Chakraborty moves court again to seek bail

Falsely implicated in drugs case: plea

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

Actress Rhea Chakraborty, who has been arrested by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) in a drugs case linked to actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death, moved a bail application before a sessions court on Wednesday. This is Ms. Chakraborty's second attempt to seek release after a magistrate court on Tuesday denied her bail.

In the fresh plea, filed by her lawyer Satish Maneshinde, the 28-year-old actress claimed to be "innocent". "She has not committed any crime whatsoever and has been falsely implicated in the case," said the plea. The court will hear the bail application on Thursday.

Ms. Chakraborty was arrested by the NCB on Tuesday after three days of questioning by the central agency. Shortly after her arrest, she was sent to judicial

custody till September 22 by a local court. On Wednesday, she was shifted from the agency's office in south Mumbai to Byculla jail.

The other accused arrested by the NCB, including the actress's brother Showik Chakraborty, Rajput's house manager Samuel Miranda, his personal staff member Dipesh Sawant, and suspected drug peddlers Zaid Vilatra and Abdul Basit Parihar, were sent to 14-day judicial custody by the sessions court, special public prosecutor Atul Sarpande said.

Mr. Showik Chakraborty and Mr. Sawant have applied for bail and their pleas will also be heard on Thursday, he said. The NCB on Tuesday said it did not want Ms. Chakraborty's custody as it had already questioned her for three days.

She was produced before the additional chief judicial magistrate through video link on Tuesday.

Jewellery firm dupes bank of ₹174 cr.

CBI on lookout for director of Vadodara-based company

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

AHMEDABAD

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) has lodged an FIR against a Vadodara-based jewellery firm and its director for allegedly cheating the Bank of Baroda to the tune of ₹173.63 crore.

The FIR was lodged on

Tuesday by the CBI at its ACB-Gandhinagar office against Shree Mukt Jewellers Baroda Private Limited, its promoter-cum-director

Harsh Soni and unknown persons. As per the bank's complaint, Mr. Soni is absconding. In its complaint to the CBI, the bank accused the company, its director and others of "criminal conspiracy, criminal misconduct, cheating, forgery and diversion of public funds".

An internal investigation by the bank revealed that two of these suppliers were

having common directors while two were registered on same address. One of the suppliers, M/s P Gold Pvt Ltd, was into real estate business and not gold, according to the FIR.

"But it failed to repay the dues and the account became NPA (non-performing asset) in February 2016 and was declared as a wilful defaulter by the bank in 2018. The outstanding balance as on March 31, 2019, is ₹173.63 crore," the FIR said.

Suspecting a fraud, the bank conducted a forensic audit and learnt that "all the three suppliers with whom the company entered into transactions of buying gold and ornaments are related to each other".

An internal investigation by the bank revealed that two of these suppliers were

621 new COVID-19 cases in Goa

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

PANAJI

Goa recorded 621 new COVID-19 cases on Wednesday, taking its total case tally to 22,251. The coastal State also reported six more fatalities, pushing the death toll to 262.

An official from the State Health Department said that a total of 281 patients were discharged from hospitals on Wednesday, taking the total number of recoveries to 17,156.

As many as 2,608 swab samples were tested in the State in the past 24 hours, of which 1,502 were negative, 621 were positive and 485 reports are awaited, the official added. A total of 2,17,48 samples have been tested till date.

10-day Janata curfew in Sangli, Kolhapur districts from Friday

Kolhapur seeing average daily rise of 800 COVID-19 cases; surge of 550 cases in Sangli

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE

PUNE

As COVID-19 cases continue to mount at an alarming rate in western Maharashtra, authorities in Kolhapur and Sangli districts – the new virus hotbeds in the State's sugar heartland – have appealed to people to observe a 10-day Janata curfew beginning Friday.

After conferring with District Collector Daulat Desai, businessmen and traders affiliated to the Kolhapur Chamber of Commerce and Industries (KCCI) said they will be observing a complete shutdown from September 11 to 16, in a bid to reduce the spread of the virus.

While the city's Laxmipuri grain market will remain closed for 10 days to discourage the assembly of traders and customers, industrial units in the urban pockets of Kolhapur will remain functional. Sources said industrial units could not afford to shut down again as they had already observed a strict seven-day lockdown in July.

"The shrine received an income of ₹115.16 crore from March 17 to August 31, as against ₹289.55 crore it received in the corresponding period last year. This means the income has dipped by



Sharp spike: Women walk on a busy road in Pune, the first district in the country to cross two lakh COVID-19 cases. ■ FILE PHOTO

Income dips by ₹174 cr. at Shirdi Saibaba temple

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SHIRDI

COVID-19-induced lockdowns have affected the income of Saibaba temple in Shirdi, which has also recorded more than 800 deaths so far. Sangli's tally has exceeded 21,000, of which nearly 9,000 are active. Over 600 deaths have also been reported till date.

At ₹49.39 crore, the maximum income was generated through the interest earned on fixed deposits. Cash donations stood at ₹18.32 lakh. "The trust received ₹11.47 crore as online donations compared to ₹1.89 crore it had received through online mode between March 17 and August 31, 2019," the CEO said.

"Aanganwadi and ASHA workers as well as teachers constitute the ground force of this strategy. Around 100 teams will be doing door-to-door surveys in the most-affected villages in the first part of this containment plan using pulse oximeters and thermal guns," said Ayush Prasad, CEO, Pune Zilla Parishad. He said 15,000 people were screened on Tuesdays in Junnar taluk.

"More than 1,000 suspected cases were screened today at Manchar, of which 209 tested positive," he said.

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Digital disconnect

Poor access to the Internet in many States must be bridged urgently to help e-learners

The full report of the NSO's survey of 'Household Social Consumption on Education in India', for July 2017-June 2018, highlights the poor state of computer and Internet access in several States. The disparities are glaring among different economic strata as well. The digital chasm that separates the privileged from the deprived remains unbridged years after the broadband policy of 2004, and its effects are painfully evident during the pandemic as students struggle to log on to online classes. While some poorly connected States may have improved since the survey period, the gaps are so stark that any development could only be modest. Only in Delhi, Himachal Pradesh and Kerala did the survey find Internet access exceeding 50% for urban and rural households taken together, while Punjab, Haryana and Uttarakhand exceeded 40%, unimpressive numbers still. Large States – Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka – had access below 20%. In today's milieu, net access is critical, considering that even where mobile phones and laptops are available – some States provide them under student welfare programmes – they cannot be meaningfully used in its absence. If net connectivity is 5% to 10% in rural Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Telangana, Karnataka and West Bengal, only a slim minority can hope to do any academic work. Many remote locations have reliability problems and power deficits, making it a challenge to keep gadgets operational even offline.

Prime Minister Modi has acknowledged the digital divide by announcing in his Independence Day address that all villages would be connected with optical fibre cable in 1,000 days. This target, reflecting enhanced ambition, follows the one set in 2011 to link panchayats through a national optical fibre network – to raise administrative capacities through information infrastructure. Evidently, successive governments have dropped the ball. States have not shown the alacrity to make a big leap either, and the deficit has now dealt a blow to students. To make up for lost time, connectivity for education must be prioritised. Mapping the needs of each district based on the NSO data will help identify areas where children do need equipment and connectivity. Such efforts have been launched globally in the wake of COVID-19, some in partnership with the telecom sector to leverage its capacity for surveys and mapping. Some companies in India have made the valuable suggestion that their used desktop computers could be refurbished and donated, for which governments need to open a programme. On the network technology front, a new gigabit speed 'wireless fibre' standard is being viewed in developed countries as a leapfrog option to link inaccessible areas; it involves high capacity spectrum (E and V bands), and is commercially not contentious. The government needs to look at all possibilities and go into overdrive to bridge the digital divide.

A necessary pause

Vaccines take time to develop; the first to roll out might not necessarily be the best

The global clamour for a COVID-19 vaccine has whipped up unrealistic expectations that one is just around the corner. It is thus a reality check when biopharma company AstraZeneca, piloting its vaccine candidate, AZD1222 – there were large Phase-3 trials this month – said it was voluntarily putting the multi-national trial on hold. This was after a 'serious adverse event' in a volunteer, which a data safety monitoring board will now examine. The company's move was first reported by an independent medical news site, underlining the critical role that independent scrutiny plays in one of the greatest global crises. Without a specific cure, the vaccine quest has become more than just a search along the pathway that research and pharma companies have traditionally taken. There are demands that probable vaccines be put into a pipeline for accelerated approval to yield political dividends too.

U.S. President Trump has 'demanded' that a vaccine be available before voting day in November. India had its moment of vaccine controversy when the ICMR harried trialists to expedite testing of Bharat Biotech's Covaxin by August 15. Russia, which is to commence its Sputnik V's Phase-3 testing, has launched a publicity blitz. Just before reports of the trial pause, AstraZeneca and eight companies developing vaccines signed a pledge that they would not approach regulatory authorities, such as the U.S. FDA, until they had safety and efficacy data from a Phase-3 trial. Overall, the road to a vaccine has become an arena for marketing and jingoism. AZD1222 has already been tested in Phase-1 and Phase-2 trials, where the data on its safety and ability to induce a relevant response by the immune system were evaluated and independent peer-review had deemed it fit to be tested in larger populations. A Phase-3 trial is the most daunting one. In the case of a vaccine, there is the additional burden of proof that it cannot sicken the healthy and the odds of adverse reactions greatly increase when a piece of virus is injected into thousands of volunteers. Vaccine trials take years of development precisely because of the chances of unexpected complications and to expect a vaccine, which has cleared accelerated Phase-1/2 trials, to inexorably clear Phase-3, flies in the face of evidence from the history of vaccine development. Developed at Oxford, AZD1222 was evolved on an adenovirus platform not used in a commercially approved vaccine in humans. They have however been used in an experimental Ebola vaccine. India and the world will gain from a vaccine that has been critically and transparently evaluated and not one that crosses a chimerical finish line first.

Realism and the undemarcated border

Missteps by India and China in the past rather than modern-day territorial expansion have resulted in the stalemate



MUKUL SANWAL

The "deep conversation" with China that External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar has indicated must be informed by the past but should be based on the changed global context as festering problems left over from colonialism tend to get re-framed (West Asia is an example), as new trade-offs emerge, and leadership matters.

As civilizational states, neighbours and rising powers, India and China have a unique continuing process of diplomatic engagement, even as their militaries face off against each other, which is very different to the international relations theory developed in the West to explain something that had never happened before, the 200 year global colonial and post-colonial world and inapplicable to differences arising from colonial ambiguity.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's assertion that 'this is the age of development', and former Generals of the Leh-based Corps pointing to the undemarcated border, suggesting a 'practical' boundary along the Karakoram watershed reframes the national interest. Combined with the recent shift by China from Line of Actual Control (LAC) to Claim Line, a new national debate on demarcating the border is needed.

Diplomatic positions
The origin of different interpretations of the boundary is poorly surveyed ancient maps of uninhabited areas, visited only by traders and nomads, with even passes at an altitude above 13,000 feet.

Commerce dominated economic activity and several trade routes converged on Leh. With settled agriculture limited to strips along the Indus in the west, Aksai Chin was a kind of no-man's land, as there was no need for an administration.

With the Treaty of Amritsar, in 1846, the British granted Gulab Singh Kashmir without specifying its eastern boundary in Aksai Chin. According to Article 2 of the Treaty, the boundary was to be "defined by a separate engagement after survey". The first one, the Johnson-Ardagh Line surveyed in 1865, ran along the Kunlun Mountain, included Aksai Chin in Kashmir and was not communicated to China. Another survey, the McCartney-McDonald Line, ran closer to the Karakoram Range, treating the Indus watershed as the border. The later survey, officially sent by the British to China in 1899, was not followed up, and the border remained 'undefined'.

The dispute continues to be which watershed defines the boundary. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, according to the official transcript of the boundary talks with Premier Chou-en-lai [Zhou Enlai] in April 1960, argued that 'it is true that the boundary is not marked on the ground; but if delimitation can take place by definition of high mountain areas and watershed and if it is a normally accepted principle of demarcation, then it is precisely defined in the past', his reference was to the Kun Lun range. Premier Chou's position was 'we do not recognise the McMahon line but that we were willing to take a realistic view with Burma and India. It is easy to see that the national boundary between China and India is the Karakoram watershed. This extends from Klik Pass, passes through the Karakoram Pass to Kongka Pass. Broadly speaking, rivers and streams to the south and west of



this belong to India while those to the north and east of it are on China's side'. Both sides could only agree there was no demarcation on the ground.

Ghosts of old

Three missteps by both countries have resulted in the current stalemate. First, two civilizational states establishing their identity were ill-advised by poorly informed experts. India issued new maps in 1954 removing the 'undemarcated territory' tag and China in 1957 also showed Aksai Chin with the only traffic artery between Tibet and Xinjiang in its new map. A cartographic ambiguity was converted into clashing sovereignty, with unwarranted inherent notions of 'concession' and 'aggression'.

Second, further reliance placed on experts to assist the diplomatic process in reconciling records and customs obfuscated the political nature of the settlement. In 1960, the history and tradition of the area were to be examined by a joint expert group which could not produce an agreed report as earlier maps considered basin boundaries, and not who had exercised control over territory. These deliberations only confirmed that trust, the essential element of a negotiation, was missing.

Third, despite the system of engagement from 1993 for "meaningful and mutually acceptable adjustments to their respective

positions on the boundary question", militaries remain tasked with defending borders where 'grey areas' and maximum restraint in 'face to face' situations have inherent limitations. Infrastructure development increases the potential for action and then reflection, and that process has outlived its utility. The Special Representatives of India and China, set up to resolve the boundary issue and diplomats have had to step in on border management.

The missteps extended into the operational sphere. China constructed its strategic highway unhindered, as regular patrolling till all the border passes was not undertaken between 1954 and 1959, when clash took place near the Kongka Pass, south of the Galwan valley, galvanising hectic diplomatic activity. On the Chinese side also, in 1960, their experts showed Indian experts a new map of the Chinese-claimed 'traditional customary line' which was at points well to the west of the alignment of the same area which Premier Chou en-lai had earlier described to Jawaharlal Nehru.

Then, as now, public opinion had a disproportionate role and a furore arose when the term territory "administered" by India was used. The Soviet Union (Russia), as in the case of the Galwan face-off, resorted to quiet diplomacy, with a tilt towards India impacting on the disengagement.

Re-framing differences

The context is no longer newly independent countries unsure of themselves, but neighbours confident in their national power seeking 'accommodation'. Lt. General P.J.S. Pannu, who commanded the Leh-based Corps, has advocated a boundary settlement laying stress on the difficulties in holding ground 'divided by this history', with military clashes inevitable as the LAC is not marked on the

ground (<https://bit.ly/35jNEfj>). Lt. General N.S. Brar, a former chief of staff of the Leh-based Corps, has advocated a 'sober handling of national security issues' by 'accepting Chou-en-lai's proposal as 'a practical and honourable accommodation with China' (<https://bit.ly/32e242h>). National security is more than the military posture.

Wedded to the questionable line of 1865, on the Kunlun Range, India has not claimed the more legitimate line of 1899 on the Karakoram watershed (communicated by the British to the Chinese) and which China has accepted as the boundary with Pakistan, and fully covers our patrolling points and strategic heights we now occupy. This translates to the Indus watershed lying within India, with the area to its east in China, including its strategic highway G219.

Another new development is the guidance from the Modi-Xi summit, held in Wuhan in 2018, that the boundary question should be considered from the 'strategic perspective of India-China relations'. The debate should really be whether the Wuhan Spirit, expected to create conditions for the Asian century, Asia with two poles, is still relevant. This marks a shift from India's earlier stand agreeing with China that problems left over from history be left for another generation.

There are indications that Jawaharlal Nehru was inclined towards negotiation but feared his Home Minister, Govind Ballabh Pant, would play the national card to oust him. Prime Minister Modi is secure, within the party and the national trust in him. He should audit the past, explain colonial ambiguity, establish the Himalayan watershed as border, and take a giant step for the \$5-trillion economy.

Mukul Sanwal is a former civil servant and UN diplomat

In blockchain voting, leave out the general election

The idea of further digitising India's electoral infrastructure is problematic and could hinder free and fair polls



KARAN SAINI

The Election Commission of India has for a while now been toying with the idea of further digitising the electoral infrastructure of the country. In furtherance of this, the Election Commission had, last month, held an online conference in collaboration with the Tamil Nadu e-Governance Agency ("TNeGA") and IIT Madras (<https://bit.ly/35k4nIQ>), through which they explored the possibility of using blockchain technology for the purpose of enabling remote elections. While this exploration is still only in the nascent stages, there are several concerns that must be considered at the offset with utmost caution.

Rise in new applications

A blockchain is a distributed ledger of information which is replicated across various nodes on a "peer-to-peer" network for the purpose of ensuring integrity and verifiability of data stored on the ledger. Blockchain ledgers have traditionally been used as supporting structures for cryptocurrencies, such as Bitcoin and Ethereum; however, their use in non-cryptocurrency applications too has seen a steady rise, with some solutions allowing individuals and companies to draft legally-binding "smart contracts," enabling detailed monitoring of supply chain networks, and sever-

al projects focused on enabling remote voting and elections.

Arguments in favour of remote voting are plenty. In the way the envisioned system has been described, 'remote voting' would appear to benefit internal migrants and seasonal workers, who account for roughly 51 million of the populace (Census 2011), and who have, as a matter of record, faced considerable difficulties in exercising their democratic right of voting. The envisioned solution might also be useful for some remotely-stationed members of the Indian armed forces, though it should be noted that, for the most part, vote casting has not been an issue for those serving in even the remotest of places including the Siachen Glacier, which, given its altitude, is considered to be the 'highest battleground' on the planet.

Key issues, security concerns

The problems with the blockchain-based remote voting systems are manifold. At an earlier event held by the Election Commission, then Senior Deputy Election Commissioner Sandeep Saxena, explained that electors would still have to physically reach a designated venue in order to cast their vote, adding that systems would use "white-listed IP devices on dedicated internet lines", and that the system would make use of the biometric attributes of electors.

Digitisation and interconnectivity introduce additional points of failure external to the processes which exist in the present day. The system envisioned by the Election Commission is perhaps only slightly more acceptable than a fully re-



mote, app-based voting system (which face a litany of issues of their own, and which have so far only been deployed in a few low-level elections in the West). The systems used in such low-stakes elections have suffered several blunders too, some of which could have been catastrophic if they had gone undetected.

Blockchain solutions rely heavily on the proper implementation of cryptographic protocols. If any shortcomings exist in an implementation, it might stand to potentially unmask the identity and voting preferences of electors, or worse yet, allow an individual to cast a vote as someone else.

In Russia, during the vote on the recent controversial constitutional amendment ushered in by Russian President Vladimir Putin, citizens were able to cast their vote online.

While the voting process was still under way, a Russian media outlet reported that it was possible to access and decrypt the votes stored on the blockchain due to a flaw in cryptographic implementation, which could have been used to unmask the votes cast by electors.

The requirement of physical presence and biometric authenti-

cation may not necessarily make a remote voting system invulnerable to attacks either. An attacker may be able to clone the biometric attributes required for authenticating as another individual and cast a vote on their behalf. Physical implants or software backdoors placed on an individual system could allow attackers to collect and deduce voting choices of individuals.

Further, while the provisioning of a dedicated line may make the infrastructure less prone to outages, it may also make it increasingly prone to targeted Denial-of-Service attacks (where an attacker would be in a position to block traffic from the system, effectively preventing, or at the very least delaying the registration of votes).

More attack scenarios that the system might be vulnerable to will slowly become evident when additional details about the hypothesised system are disclosed.

Apart from lingering security issues, digitised systems may also stand to exclude and disenfranchise certain individuals due to flaws in interdependent platforms, flaws in system design, as well as general failures caused by external factors.

Naturally, the more levers that are involved in the operation of a system, the more prone it is to malfunction.

Other solutions

If the only problem that is to be solved is the one of ballot portability, then perhaps technological solutions which involve setting up entirely new, untested voting infrastructure may not be the answer. Political engagement could per-

haps be improved by introducing and improving upon other methods, such as postal ballots or proxy voting. Another proposed solution to this issue includes the creation of a 'One Nation, One Voter ID' system, though it is unclear whether such a radical (and costly) exercise would be required at all for the mere purpose of allowing individuals to vote out of their home State.

An obsession

India can characteristically be described as a country obsessed with technologically advanced solutions. If a solution uses technology, the general consensus is that it must work. However, this optimism for technological solutions poses a threat and could stand to hinder free and fair elections in the future, if unchecked. It is important to lay stress on the point that further digitisation, in itself, does not make processes more robust. Any solution to electoral problems must be software independent and fault tolerant, where failure or tampering of one mechanism – or several – would not affect the integrity or transparency of the overall process.

Even if the Election Commission is able to design a system which is proven to be satisfactorily secure in the face of attacks, where tampering could be detected, and where the integrity of the ballot is verifiable by electors, use of such a system could perhaps only be justified for lower level elections, and not for something as significant and politically binding as the general election.

Karan Saini is an independent security researcher from New Delhi

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.

India and the world

Though the continuing volatile situation in West Asia and growing turbulence in South Asia and the Indo-Pacific being stirred by China are matters of concern, it is the growing trade war between the U.S. and China which will have a long-term impact on the international order (Editorial page, "What is in NAM and India's alignment", September 9). The immediate consequence has been the coming together of Russia and China and the belligerent attitude of

China. Given the flux in the international order and

China's aggressive postures on the Line of Actual Control, India has to move with great caution in forging alliances. While the current level of strategic partnership with U.S. and other Quad countries has produced its dynamics, India needs to look at Russia and also improve its relations with the countries in its neighbourhood. With economic interests becoming dominant in international equations, it is imperative that India concentrates on making its

economy stronger and forging wide-ranging partnerships.

KOSARAJU CHANDRAMOULI,
Hyderabad

During the Nehru-Gandhi era, the foreign policy was based on "one world". When we are celebrating 75 years of the UN, we should recollect the contribution made by India (Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit) in the formative years of the UN and the key role India played in passing a resolution against apartheid. But are we a leader today or do we have any trusted

neighbour or friends?

There has definitely been a sea change in our foreign policy since then. Though foreign policy is guided by national interests, and now, our close ties with the U.S., India should not let down its long-trusted friends.

JAMES ARPUTHARAJ WILLIAMS,
Bengaluru

Untold story
Kesavananda Bharati's case, the most celebrated judgment of the Supreme Court of India till date, was the first in a batch of writ petitions which challenged land reform laws in various

States ("Kesavananda Bharati – the petitioner who saved democracy, but lost his case in Supreme Court", September 7). All the writ petitions on the same point were clubbed together and the case had come to be known as 'Kesavananda Bharati's case' as it was the first writ petition on that point.

It is hardly a known fact that Nani Palkhivala was not engaged by the seer; the eminent jurist represented some other writ petitioner. Nani Palkhivala, who had already established himself as a legal luminary at that

time, reached acme and international fame after saving Indian democracy by ensuring that Parliament had power to amend any part of the Constitution but not

FROM PAGE ONE

Chinese build-up on north bank of Pangong

On Tuesday, some pictures of the Chinese troops deployed on the south bank surfaced. They showed the soldiers carrying spears, rods and clubs.

The official said the issue was raised with the Chinese commander. "The Chinese say that the rods and spears are for construction work to build temporary sheds on their side of the LAC. But it is evident that such tools serve no such purpose," the official pointed out.

In the past fortnight, three top officials – Army Chief Gen. M.M Naravane; Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) Director General S.S. Deswal; and Secretary, Border Management, Sanjeeva Kumar, visited Ladakh.

On Wednesday, China's State media reported that the PLA was "mobilising forces, including bombers, air defence troops, artillery, armoured vehicles, paratroopers, special forces and infantry units from different parts of the country to the bordering plateau region" after the latest tensions.

Bombers mobilised
Bombers and transport aircraft from the Central Theatre Command, which is responsible for Beijing and

surrounding provinces, and an air defence brigade from the Eastern Theatre Command, which is focused on Taiwan and Japan, have been mobilised to the Tibetan plateau and linked up with the Western Theatre Command, which covers Tibet, Xinjiang and the India border.

The Central Theatre Command said in a statement that it had deployed H-6 bombers and Y-20 large transport aircraft to the Tibetan plateau for training missions as part of the mobilisation.

The Eastern Theatre Command had mobilised an air defence brigade to the northwest and "held live-fire confrontational drills with anti-aircraft guns and missiles", State broadcaster China Central Television (CCTV) reported. It said the military was conducting "long-distance manoeuvres, deployment exercises and live-fire drills" last week.

The Communist Party-run *Global Times* said the manoeuvres were taking place "after India crossed the LAC near the southern bank of the Pangong Tso Lake and near the Reqin Mountain pass on August 31".

(With inputs from Ananth Krishnan, Dinakar Peri and Suhasini Haidar)

SII pulled up for not pausing vaccine trial

Last month, SII began Phase-2/Phase-3 trials to compare the safety and immunogenicity of its vaccine candidate COVISHIELD (SII-ChAdOx1), with the Oxford vaccine (Oxford/AZ-ChAdOx1).

Both vaccines are similar in structure and the early-human-trial data of Oxford/AZ-ChAdOx1 from studies in the U.K. was used to approve Phase-2 and Phase-3 trials in India, Renu Swarup, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology told *The Hindu*.

According to information on India's clinical trial registry, where all human trials of vaccine and drugs must be registered, 1,600 adults would be enrolled in the study. Of these, 400 participants will be part of an immunogenicity cohort and will be randomly assigned either COVISHIELD or Ox-

ford/AZ-ChAdOx1 nCoV-19, respectively. The remaining 1,200 participants from the safety cohort will be randomly assigned in a 3:1 ratio to receive either COVISHIELD or a placebo, respectively. Immunogenicity is to test if a vaccine can coax the immune system to launch a protective response that can shield against future infection.

Regarding the show-cause notice issued by the DCGI, SII, told *The Hindu*, "We are going by the DCGI's direction and, so far, were not told to pause the trials. If the DCGI has any safety concerns, we will follow their instructions and abide by the standard protocols."

Earlier in the day, the SII had tweeted that Indian trials were continuing and the company "faced no issues at all".

HC stops demolition, Kangana in Mumbai

Meanwhile, the actor received relief from the Bombay High Court, which stayed the demolition. The court said, "From the notice, it is clear beyond any doubt that the works which are 'unauthorised' have not come up overnight. However, all of a sudden, the Corporation appears to have overnight woken up from its slumber, issued Notice to the Petitioner (Ms. Ranaut), that too when she is out of the State, directing her to respond within 24 hours, and not granting her any further time, despite written request, and proceeding to demolish the said premises upon completion of 24 hours."

"Though the manner in which the MCGM (BMC) has proceeded to commence demolition work of the said

premises, prima facie does not appear to be bonafide and smacks of malafide. If the MCGM would act with similar swiftness qua the numerous unauthorized constructions in this City, the City would be a completely different place to live in," the court said in its order. The court has directed the civic body to file an affidavit and is to hear the matter at 3 p.m. on Thursday.

Leader of the Opposition in the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Devendra Fadnavis defended Ms. Ranaut and tweeted a video in Hindi that said: "If those who talk against us are stopped and attacked and that too with the support of the State government ... this has never happened in the history of Maharashtra. It is important to call out what is wrong."

DMK opts out, RJD likely to contest RS poll

"We may lose but we will definitely contest the election and will file the nomination on Friday," said a senior Congress leader.

The Opposition parties will have a meeting on Thursday to finalise the candidate. The process of choosing a new Deputy Chairman got delayed because of COVID-19 and now the last date for filing nomination is September 11. Election to the post will take

place on September 14 when the monsoon session of Parliament gets underway.

The post had fallen vacant after Janata Dal (United) member Harivansh had finished his term in April. However, the JD(U) MP has now been re-elected as a Rajya Sabha member from Bihar and filed his nomination for the Deputy Chairman post for second term on Wednesday.

Kerala cases rise to new high after Onam drop

A.P. incidence holds steady at over 10,000; Karnataka back in 9,000-plus cases zone; nearly 2,500 test positive in Telangana

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala's COVID-19 cases rose sharply after the Onam lull. With testing rising to 45,949 samples in 24 hours, 3,402 new cases were reported on Wednesday, a new high for the State. Cumulative cases were expected to touch one lakh soon, and active cases stood at 24,549.

COVID-19

The death toll rose to 384, with the passing away of 12 more people between August 21 and September 6, and the data now added to "provisional" COVID deaths.

Six deaths were reported from Thiruvananthapuram, four from Kasaragod and one each from Ernakulam and Thrissur.

Nearly 95% of new cases on Wednesday – 3,223 of 3,402 – were locally acquired

infections. Also, 88 more health workers were found infected on Wednesday. In August alone, over 1,000 healthcare workers were affected, in private and public hospitals.

Thiruvananthapuram had the highest incidence at 531 cases.

Andhra Pradesh again reported over 10,000 infections - 10,418 – and 74 new deaths on Wednesday. The State updated its count to 5,27,512 infections and 97,271 active patients. The State tested 71,692 fresh samples.

For every million people, 80,688 persons were tested with 9,879 per million testing positive. The overall positivity rate was 12.24%.

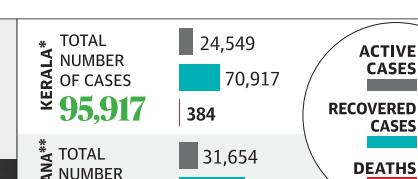
Data show 0.99% of the State's 5.34 crore population had been infected since March 12. Three districts reported over 1,000 new cases; East Godavari topped districts with the highest

Testing times

Entrance exams have begun in some States adhering to safety protocol. The graphs show the spread of COVID-19 in the southern States



Safety protocol: Students after appearing for the Engineering, Agriculture and Medical Common Entrance Test (TS EAMCET-2020) in Hyderabad, on Wednesday. ■ NAGARA GOPAL



*Kerala has a mismatch of 67 cases due to unaccounted deaths, missing persons. **Telangana numbers are as of 8 p.m. on Tuesday

***Karnataka has 19 non-COVID-19 deaths

incidence. East Godavari reported 1,399 cases, Prakasam 1,271 cases and West Godavari 1,134 cases.

Telangana's new case ad-

ditions stood at 2,479 on Tuesday. Of 62,649 samples tested on September 8, results of 2,430 samples were awaited. There were ten

more deaths. There were 31,654 active cases.

Karnataka's daily cases were also in the 9,000-plus territory on Wednesday, af-

ter recording 5,773 and 7,866 cases on two days.

In fresh incidence, 9,540 cases were recorded. With 128 new deaths, the toll rose to 6,808. With a Case Fatality Rate of 1.6%, Karnataka had the third highest death toll after Maharashtra and Tamil Nadu.

T.N. cases
Another 5,584 persons tested positive for COVID-19 in Tamil Nadu on Wednesday.

Of the new cases, Chennai reported 993 cases, while Coimbatore recorded 445 cases. Presently, 49,203 persons were under treatment in the State.

As many as 6,516 persons were discharged after treatment, making the total number to 4,23,231. The State recorded 78 more deaths, taking the toll to 8,090.

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

Drug case accused helped gold smugglers, claims ED

Agency questions Bineesh Kodiyeri for over 10 hours

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI

Investigations by the Narcotics Control Bureau have revealed that the accused in the Bangalore drugs case assisted the accused in the diplomatic baggage gold smuggling case, Enforcement Directorate (ED) has informed a trial court.

In a separate development, the ED officials interrogated Bineesh Kodiyeri, son of CPI(M) State secretary Kodiyeri Balakrishnan, in connection with the diplomatic baggage gold smuggling case and the recent Bangalore drugs seizure for more than 10 hours on Wednesday.

The agency submitted before the Economic Offences Court that it was interrogating a high-profile individual in connection with the gold smuggling and

Bineesh Kodiyeri arriving at the office of the Enforcement Directorate in Kochi on Wednesday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

drug cases. It was in its application seeking the extension of the remand of Swapna Suresh and others in the money laundering case that the agency made the revelation.

The agency informed the court that more than 20 persons who were involved in the gold smuggling case was to be interrogated regarding the

money laundering case registered by it. The Narcotics Control Bureau has requested the ED to share the information in the gold smuggling case with it, the agency submitted.

Mr. Bineesh appeared at the Kochi office at around 10 a.m. on a notice from the agency. The agency is probing whether Mr. Bineesh was involved in aiding the accused in both the cases.



Final journey: The elephant being taken away. ■ K. K. MUSTAFAH

Elephant succumbs to blast wounds in Kerala

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PALAKKAD

A full-grown rogue elephant found injured at Sholayur in Attappady's Agali forest range in Kerala three weeks ago died on Wednesday.

The tuskless male elephant succumbed to deep wounds it suffered in the mouth and pharynx appa-

rently after chomping on an explosive. Forest officers suspected that the animal suffered the wound in the Tamil Nadu region. The elephant, which used to cross the Tamil Nadu-Kerala border frequently, was nicknamed 'bulldozer'. The animal had razed down at least two dozen tribal huts.

The movable assets are in the form of fixed deposits maintained with the State Bank of India's Sudhamanagar branch in Bengaluru.

FIR registered
The action has been taken on the basis of a First Information Report (FIR) registered at the Ashoknagar police station in Bengaluru

against the CSITA, following a complaint lodged by the Defence Ministry.

It was alleged that the CSITA dishonestly entered into an arrangement with the Bangalore Metro Rail Corporation Limited (BMRCL), a Karnataka government undertaking, for transfer of the title of defence land measuring about 7,427 square metres.

The land in question was earlier leased to the All Saints' Church. A part of the precinct, where the All Saints Church is located, was transferred to the BMRCL against a compensation of ₹59.29 crore in 2019.

The BMRCL acquired the

land through the Karnataka Industrial Areas Development Board.

Proprietary right
An ED probe revealed that the title of the land belonged to the Defence Ministry and it was only leased out to the All Saints' Church for conducting religious affairs. No proprietary right of the land had been transferred.

"The CSITA illegally transferred the land belonging to the Defence authorities to the BMRCL. The compensation for the land was required to be transferred to the Consolidated Fund of India, as the rightful owner of the land was the Defence Ministry," said an official.

Rain lashes Bengaluru, many areas flooded

Residents affected as water enters several homes; lakes and drains overflow

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

When Jacob Francis, a resident of Sai Layout, Vaddarpalya, near Hennur Bande, woke up around 3 a.m. on Wednesday, he was surprised to see four inches of water inside his house. As heavy rains continued to lash outside, the water level inside his house rose.

Similar scenes played out in many parts of Bengaluru, including Anugraha Layout, Poojappa Layout, Geddahalli, Telecom Layout, HBR 5th Block. More than four cross roads were flooded and

rainwater entered several homes in Telecom Layout. According to a resident, this is because around 400 metres of the retaining wall

of the stormwater drain was yet to be constructed. Following heavy rains, the drain overflowed and flooded the roads.

The heavy rains also resulted in lakes overflowing. Many thoroughfares within Manyata Tech Park near Hebbal were flooded, after the drains linking the Rache-nahalli, Nagawara and Hebbal lakes overflowed.

The control rooms of the Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike were flooded with complaints. BBMP Commissioner N. Manjunath Prasad said Mahadevapura, East, Dasarahalli and Yelahanka zones were most affected. Over 16 wards recorded more than 100 mm of rainfall.

SC allows interim bail to anti-CAA protesters

21 were accused of violence last year

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday allowed interim bail to 21 anti-Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) protesters accused of violence in Mangaluru district in December last year.

A Bench led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde referred to an earlier Karnataka High Court observation that "it was not possible to *prima facie* determine the presence of the accused persons at the

spot." At the same time, the court made it clear that the High Court's observation would not be treated as a "final finding of fact" during trial. "...The observations of the High Court on question of fact and law are obviously made *prima facie* and shall not affect the trial," the Supreme Court noted.

They would have to report to the nearest police station every alternative Monday and should not participate in any violent activities/meetings.



Nature's fury: A man moving a gas cylinder in a waterlogged area of Hennur in Bengaluru.

rainwater entered several homes in Telecom Layout. According to a resident, this is because around 400 metres of the retaining wall

of the stormwater drain was yet to be constructed. Following heavy rains, the drain overflowed and flooded the roads.</p

IN BRIEF

**Omar to vacate Srinagar govt. accommodation**

SRINAGAR

Former Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister and National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah on Wednesday wrote to the administration of the Union Territory, announcing his decision to shift from his official residence on Gupkar Road within 10 weeks. "I now find myself in unauthorised occupation of this accommodation as no attempt has been made to regularise the allotment to me on security or other grounds," he wrote.

2 CRPF jawans injured in Anantnag grenade blast

SRINAGAR

Two CRPF personnel were injured in a grenade attack by militants in south Kashmir's Anantnag on Wednesday evening. An official said militants hurled the grenade towards a CRPF patrol in Anantnag's Lal Chowk commercial area. "Two CRPF personnel were injured and were shifted to the hospital," the official said.

5 CPI (Maoist) cadre killed in Odisha firing

BHUBANESWAR

Five CPI (Maoist) cadre were killed in an exchange of fire in the bordering areas of Kalahandi and Kandhamal districts in Odisha on Wednesday. Four women and one man were killed in the operation launched by the Kalahandi police on Tuesday. The Special Operation Group, a special anti-Naxal force, and the District Voluntary Force, a special constabulary unit of the State police, had participated in the operation. One SOG jawan was reported to be injured.

Republican Party leader seeks FIR against Arnab

MUMBAI

Siddharth Kamble of the Republican Party of India has written to the police seeking an FIR to be registered against journalist Arnab Goswami for spreading rumours and making provocative statements with intent to cause breach of peace and tranquillity in the guise of covering the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput. The letter was sent to the Khadak police station requesting that Mr. Goswami be booked under various sections on public peace.

Cong. renews campaign for Deputy Speaker's post

It has been lying vacant for 15 months

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

With the Rajya Sabha poised to elect the Deputy Chairman, the Congress renewed its campaign seeking the Deputy Speaker's position in the Lok Sabha. Congress's floor leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, in a letter to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, urged him to adhere to the constitutional mandate.

The Lok Sabha has not had a Deputy Speaker for the last 15 months. Instead, a panel of MPs has been assisting the Speaker. In contrast, within a couple of months after the vacancy arose, the process of electing the Deputy Chairman has begun in the Rajya Sabha. Former Deputy Chairman and JD(U) MP Harivansh filed his nomination papers on Wednesday.

Crucial meeting for Jaishankar

Foreign Minister is likely to engage his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar met his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov on Wednesday in Moscow. The meeting is expected to lay the ground for further engagements scheduled for Thursday on the sidelines of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO).

Following his meeting with Mr. Lavrov, he said, "Pleasure to meet Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, this time in person. Excellent talks that reflect our special and privileged strategic partnership. Value our exchanges on the international situation."

The pandemic had prevented physical meeting among diplomats and the SCO summit and the bilateralals are the first such interactions of the Foreign Ministers of the grouping in this circumstance.

Mr. Jaishankar is scheduled to participate in the Council of Foreign Ministers of SCO on Thursday. A state-

**Strategic ties:** External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar with his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ment from the Russian Foreign Ministry said the meeting will begin shortly after midday. On the sidelines of the meeting, he is likely to engage his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi for a discussion on the tense situation in LAC.

JD(U) looks to Mahadalit votes

It may play up SC ruling on sub-categorisation during the Bihar election

NISTULA HEBBAR

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court's ruling in late August that Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) do not constitute a homogenous group and may be considered for sub-categorisation by the States for the purpose of reservations is likely to play a role in the coming Bihar Assembly polls.

The ruling, by a five-judge Bench led by now retired judge Arun Mishra, is being seen by the Janata Dal(U) as an endorsement of the Nitish Kumar government's policies of Mahadalit sub-categorisation. The order has created grounds for revisiting earlier judgements on treating SCs as a homogeneous category, and the sanctity of the Presidential List.

Bihar Minister Sanjay Jha said the top court's ruling endorsed Mr. Kumar's more than a decade-long policy of sub-categorisation of Mahadalits among Dalits.

"This ruling recognises

Affairs Xiao Lijian said Mr. Wang's agenda in the coming few days includes both bilateral and multilateral engagements.

That apart, a separate meeting of the Russia, India and China grouping is also expected on Thursday where Eastern Ladakh is likely to figure prominently.

Russian engagements with India and China have indicated that Moscow is playing a subtle role in controlling the situation along the LAC.

However, Russian officials based in Delhi have maintained that Moscow is building positive circumstances to resolve international disputes.

Mr. Jaishankar, who held talks in Tehran on Tuesday during a stop over to Moscow, is on a four-day visit to the Russian capital for the SCO ministerial and bilateralals.

Earlier on Wednesday, he met his Tajikistan and Kyrgyz counterparts Sirojiddin Muhibiddin and Chingiz Aladarbekov.

Court stays Maratha quota, sends plea to Statute Bench

Reservation will not apply in the State for 2020-21

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

A three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court on Wednesday referred a group of petitions challenging the Maratha reservation law to a Constitution Bench.

The Bench led by Justice L. Nageswara Rao found merit in the arguments made by senior lawyers that a larger Bench should examine the issue of reservation for the Maratha community. Chief Justice S.A. Bobde will constitute the Bench.

However, Russian officials based in Delhi have maintained that Moscow is building positive circumstances to resolve international disputes.

Mr. Jaishankar, who held talks in Tehran on Tuesday during a stop over to Moscow, is on a four-day visit to the Russian capital for the SCO ministerial and bilateralals.

Earlier on Wednesday, he met his Tajikistan and Kyrgyz counterparts Sirojiddin Muhibiddin and Chingiz Aladarbekov.

The court said the Maratha quota, meanwhile, will not apply for admissions and appointments made in the State for 2020-21. However, the postgraduate admissions which have already been made will be left unaltered.

The court gave the petitioners the liberty to seek an early hearing.

The three-judge Bench led by Justice Rao had re-



Justice S.A. Bobde

served orders on pleas to refer the case to a larger Bench. Some of the senior lawyers had even sought the formation of an 11-judge Bench to re-consider the judicial law of 50% cap on reservations in appointments and admissions.

The appeals challenging the Maratha quota law contend that the statute provides 12 to 13% quota for the community in Maharashtra. This has breached the 50% cap declared by a nine-judge Bench of the apex court in 1992. The court heard detailed arguments of senior advocates like Kapil Sibal,

Mukul Rohatgi and Gopal Sankaranarayanan for various parties in the case. Mr. Sibal had reasoned that 28 States had already granted reservation exceeding 50% to their respective Backward Classes. Lawyers had submitted that the court should take into consideration recent developments like the 10% quota for economically weaker sections introduced through the 103rd Constitutional Amendment.

The petitioners have claimed that the Maharashtra government has passed the quota law to make a mockery of the rule of law. They accused the State of using its constitutional powers arbitrarily for political gains.

They said the Act overstepped the constitutional limitations contained in the 102nd Amendment to the Constitution. The Amendment said reservation can be granted only if a particular community is named in the Presidential list.

Arms found in vehicle in south Kashmir

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

SRINAGAR

Arms and ammunition were recovered from a vehicle near the Jawahar Tunnel in south Kashmir, connecting the Kashmir valley with Jammu, on Wednesday.

"Based on a credible input, the Kulgam police established a joint check-point with the Army's 9 Rashtriya Rifles and the CRPF. The driver and another person have been arrested following the search of the vehicle carrying arms," a police spokesman said.

The arms and ammunition recovered included an AK rifle, one M4 Carbine, six Chinese pistols and a large cache of bullets. The arrested persons were identified as Bilal Ahmad Kutty and Shahnawaz Ahmad Mir, both from Shopian.

A special team has been constituted to investigate the matter.

**Poll fervour:** The JD(U) says the ruling gives heft to party chief Nitish Kumar's policy of Dalit sub-categorisation. ■ PTI

what Nitish Kumar has been saying all this while on sub-categorisation and uneven access to resources within the reserved categories. The Mahadalit community associates itself with Nitish Kumar ji as he was the first to highlight their plight vis a vis reservations," he stated.

The JD(U) will be playing up the sub-categorisation ruling during the polls and consider it one of the triumphs of the social policy followed by Mr. Kumar's government.

Mr. Jha pointed out that apart from sub-categorisation, Mr. Kumar was also instrumental in making a Mahadalit Chief Minister – a reference to Jiten Ram Manjhi of the Hindustani Awam Morch (HAM), which recently rejoined the National Democratic Alliance (NDA).

The sub-categorisation ruling comes at an interesting point in seat adjustment talks within the NDA, with the Ram Vilas Paswan-led Lok Jan Shakti Party (LJP), which claims the support of

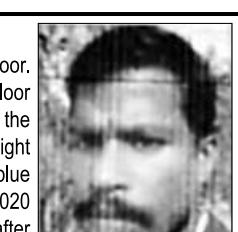
Dalit communities in the State, champing at the bit within the alliance in the run-up to polls.

LJP's view

LJP parliamentary board leader Chirag Paswan has written a letter to Mr. Kumar, protesting what he termed the undermining of the Dalit community under the latter's government. This evoked a sharp reaction from JD(U) general secretary K.C. Tyagi. He said Mr. Kumar's government did not require a certificate on Dalit welfare from "anyone".

While Mr. Jha did not comment on the LJP's recent statements questioning aspects of Mr. Kumar's leadership, others in the JD(U) said the latter's support base among Mahadalits was a sore point.

"The Tola Sewak scheme and the special provisions for Mahadalits are important contributions of this government to social justice," said Mr. Jha.

**MISSING**

Udayakumar age 30, S/o Murukaya, Door. No.422, Madhagadi Palakurichi Keezhvaloor Taluk, Nagapattinam, Tamilnadu who is the brother of the complainant having 5.5 ft height skelt body black complexion, wearing blue lungi with blue turban missing from 05.01.2020 @11.00hrs from Nilakal parking ground after Sabarimala darsan. A case was registered at Pampa Police Station in this regard as Cr.No/23/2020, U/s 57 of KP Act and investigation has been continuing. If any information obtained about the missing person, Please inform the same to any of the following phone numbers.

**Inspector of police Pampa police Station - 9497987049
Pampa Police Station - 0475 203412
1349/F2/2020/I&PRD**

**MISSING**

Sajayan, Saritha Bhavan, Edavattom, Kalluvathukkal was missing from 10.02.2020 onwards from his home. In this regard a crime has been registered in Parippally Police station as Crime No. 1487/2020 U/s 57 A of KP Act. Identification Marks - Fair, Height-170 CM. If there is any information about him please inform to the nearest police station or contact with the below phone number.

**Parippally Police Station - 0474-2572065
Inspector SHO - 9497947128
Police Sub Inspector - 9497980201
1356/F2/2020/I&PRD
Inspector SHO, Parippally Police Station**



KARNATAKA INDUSTRIAL AREAS DEVELOPMENT BOARD

(A Government of Karnataka Undertaking)

49, East Wing, 4th & 5th Floor, Khanija Bhawan, Race Course Road, Bengaluru - 560 001. Phone No.: 080-22265383, Website : www.kiadbi.in

No.: IADB/ENGG/ETND-EP-28/4725/2020-21 Date : 09-09-2020

SHORT TERM NOTICE INVITING TENDER

(Through GOK e-Procurement Portal Only)

Item rate Tender under Two Cover System are invited as per the Karnataka Transparency in Public Procurement Act 1999 and Rules 2000 through electronic procurement from Class-I & above Contractors (Electrical) registered in KPWD & KCEI Super Grade Licence who have got adequate financial resources & sufficient past experience for the work of **Providing Basic Electrical Infrastructure Facilities and Providing Pumpset to Borewells at Kaduthini 1st & 2nd Phase Industrial Area, Ballari District**.

Last date for submission of bids is : 22-09-2020 upto 04.00 pm

Applicants May Download Bidding Documents from the e-Procurement Portal <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>.

Sd/-

Chief Engineer

Israel in trade talks with India, China

The country hopes for border tensions to be sorted out peacefully, says official



Over the mountains: An IAF fighter in Leh on Wednesday. ■ ANI

ic division in the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, told journalists at a special briefing when asked about the four-month stand-off between Indian and Chinese troops at the Line of Actual Control (LAC). "We hope all tensions will be sorted out peacefully and the situation will [ease] soon," he said.

Last month, the Israeli Foreign Ministry inaugurated its first "Asia-Pacific Day," hosting 11 Asian countries, including India, at a special event, with a view to increasing trade and investment with the 'East' as a key priority for post COVID-19 economic recovery.

China, Hong Kong and In-

dia are Israel's biggest trading partners in Asia.

Since both China and India established full diplomatic ties with Israel in 1992, China's trade has increased from \$50 million to \$15 billion, while India's trade has grown from \$200 million to about \$5 billion.

"Our most advanced negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement are with [South] Korea at present," Mr. Cohen said, listing the agreements being discussed.

"We hope this will be completed soon, and then in 2021, we will finalise agreements with China and Vietnam," he noted.

While India and Israel's talks were not in an "advanced stage" yet they were discussing lower tariffs on about 200 products that were "of importance" to both countries.

PM misled nation on COVID-19 fight, he alleges

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

In the fourth and final part of the video series on the Indian economy, former Congress president Rahul Gandhi said Prime Minister Narendra Modi "misled the

country" by saying that the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic would be won in 21 days. Instead, in those 21 days, the "backbone of the unorganised sector was broken", Mr. Gandhi alleged. The lockdown, which was imposed without prior notice, was the "third attack" on the unorganised sector, he said. The government did not heed the Congress's repeated ad-

vice that there was a crying need to implement a cash transfer scheme for the poor. "We suggested that for small and medium businesses, you should prepare a package but the government did nothing," he stated.

No relief: Chidambaram

On these lines, senior Congress leader and former Union Finance Minister P. Chidambaram, in a series of

tweets, asked whether the PM Garib Kalyan Yoj

Assam MLA takes hospitals to court

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The Leader of the Opposition in the Assam Assembly and senior Congress MLA, Debabrata Saikia, has gone to court against hospitals refusing to treat patients if they do not produce COVID-19 negative report.

The Gauhati High Court has fixed October 19 as the date of hearing.

Mr. Saikia said in his petition that many hospitals in Assam had been turning away critically ill patients and accident victims due to non-production of COVID-19 certificate. This was despite a Union Health and Family Welfare Ministry communication on April 28 to all States and Union Territories that anyone needing essential critical care should not be denied such services, he said.

Kabir Kala Manch artist in NIA custody

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) court on Wednesday remanded Pune-based cultural group Kabir Kala Manch artist Jyoti Jagtap to NIA custody till September 11 in the Bhima Koregaon violence case.

Ms. Jagtap from Kondhwa was arrested on September 8 by the NIA and was represented by advocate Susan Abraham in court on Wednesday. Special Public Prosecutor Prakash Shetty appeared for the NIA and sought her remand on the ground that she was named in the original FIR on January 8, 2018 and since then the police had been searching for her.

Mr. Shetty told *The Hindu*, "She has received training in arms in the forests by the absconding accused, Milind Teltumbde. All the accused are spreading Maoist ideologies and activities in urban areas."

Centre asks States to conduct free virus test for migrants

It also tells them to maintain a database of all workers moving out

DAMINI NATH
NEW DELHI

The States and the Union Territories have been advised by the Union Labour and Employment Ministry to organise free COVID-19 testing for migrant workers as well as to maintain a database of all workers moving out of their States.

The Ministry on Tuesday released its guidelines to the States "for the welfare of migrant workers returning to destination States in the backdrop of COVID-19".

The 18-point advisory says that the States and the UTs may nominate a State-level nodal officer as well as district/block/tehsil-wise nodal officers for migrant workers.

"The government(s) of the State of origin and destination State should ensure screening and testing of migrant workers as per the protocol devised by the Ministry of Health and family Welfare in respect of COVID-19. Further, the migrant worker



Safety first: Migrant workers undergoing temperature check at a construction site in Chennai. ■ B. JOTHI RAMALINGAM

should not be put to any financial burden on account of testing and any treatment/quarantine required to be undertaken by them," it says.

'Give masks, sanitisers'

The States and the UTs were asked to provide face masks, hand sanitisers and soaps to the workers when screening

them before they leave for their destination States.

"A proper database of migrant workers is a preliminary step to identify and protect the vulnerable among them," the guidelines say. The States of origin should collect the data and share with the destination States.

All migrant workers should be enrolled in the

Central and State governments' welfare schemes. Building and other construction workers' welfare boards in the States should be "advised to incur the expenditure on account of payment of the premium for insurance schemes" for construction workers. The States should make sure there was no adverse impact on the education of the workers' children.

The guidelines come as workers are returning to cities after having left in the wake of the lockdown implemented in March.

Chandan Kumar, national coordinator of the Working People's Charter, which works to highlight the concerns of the unorganised sector, said the guidelines seemed to be "ad hoc". "I'm very sure that the States are not prepared. Neither do the States have the capacity nor the human and financial resources to implement the advisory," he added.

Plasma therapy didn't help COVID-19 patients: ICMR

India's largest trial covered 39 hospitals, over 400 patients

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Convalescent plasma (CP) therapy failed to benefit COVID-19 patients, the largest trial conducted across 39 hospitals in India and spearheaded by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) found.

The trial spanning April-July enrolled 464 hospitalised patients with "moderate" COVID-19 and administered convalescent plasma — antibodies derived from plasma filtered from the blood of those who have recovered from COVID-19 — on some of them.

Last week, ICMR Director General Balram Bhargava had said that the trial had been completed and results were expected soon.

The idea was that such antibodies would neutralise replicating viruses and check the growth of the infection.

However, in the 235 patients that received the plasma along with the "best standard of care" (called the intervention arm) and the 229 patients that received only the "standard of care" (called the control arm), there was not a significant difference in the proportion of those who did not progress to severe illness over 28 days, nor did the trial save a significant fraction of patients from death.

"Thirty-four patients (13.6%) died in the intervention arm and 31 (14.6%) in the control arm," the report noted.

No reduction in deaths

"CP was not associated with reduction in mortality or progression to severe COVID-19. This trial has high generalisability and approximates real-life setting of CP therapy in settings with limited laboratory capacity," the authors concluded. The findings were reported in preprint repository MedRxiv, meaning that the report has not yet been peer-reviewed in a medical journal.

The PLACID trial, as it is called, was an open-label



Eager to help: People queuing up at a plasma donation screening camp in Dharavi, Mumbai. ■ VIVEK BENDRE

(patients know the nature of treatment they are getting), parallel-arm, Phase 2, multi-centre, randomised, controlled trial conducted in 39 tertiary care hospitals across India. Of these, 29 were teaching public hospitals and 10 were private hospitals spread across 14 States and Union Territories, and representing 25 cities.

The results from the study mirror previous international findings from CP that failed to find a measurable benefit.

These findings are sobering compared to claims by political parties of CP being a lifesaver. Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has said that plasma therapy was a "crucial" prong in Delhi's fight against COVID-19. U.S. President Donald Trump too had praised plasma therapy.

The head of the United States' medical regulator, the Food and Drug Administration, apologised for hyping the benefits of CP after the organisation approved the use of it as a treatment under the emergency use authorisation.

Frantic rush

ICMR guidelines currently leave it to medical practitioners to administer CP in

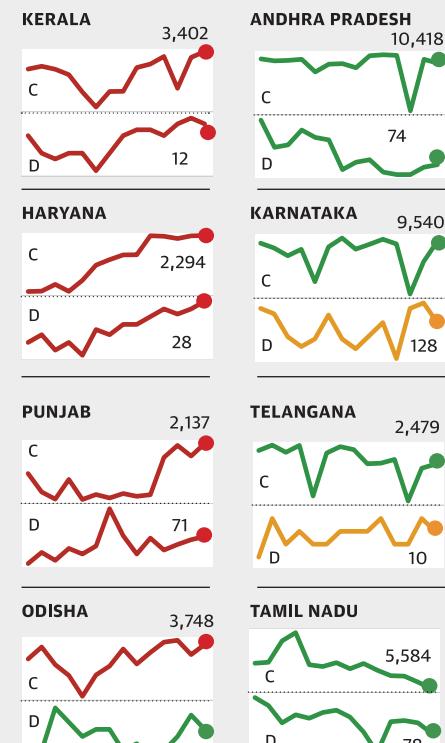
case of moderately ill COVID-19 patients. The initial promise of the therapy had led to a frantic rush in many hospitals where patients were asked to source, using their own means, CP from those who had recovered from COVID-19.

The study's authors said that the use of CP appeared to mitigate shortness of breath and fatigue among patients, and did correspond to a "higher negative conversion of viral RNA", but ultimately did not improve outcomes over the period of evaluation.

"Use of CP as a treatment modality for COVID-19 has received authorisation for off-label use in India. This authorisation has been paralleled by questionable practices such as calls for donors on social media, and the sale of CP on the black market with exorbitant price tags in India. CP is a safe therapeutic modality, plasmapheresis, plasma storage and Nab (neutralising antibody) measurement are all resource-intensive processes, with limited number of institutes in the country having the capacity to undertake these activities in a quality-assured manner," the authors underscored.



Fever check: A woman getting her temperature checked before entering a hospital in Jammu on Wednesday. ■ AP



FIGURES ON THE GRAPHS DEPICT NEW CASES AND DEATHS RECORDED IN THE RESPECTIVE STATES ON WEDNESDAY

Airfare refund for lockdown cancellations

Centre clarifies after SC raises query on proposal

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday asked the government to clarify whether its proposal to refund air tickets is confined to flight bookings made during the lockdown.

A Bench led by Justice Ashok Bhushan asked the Ministry of Civil Aviation to respond to doubts raised by senior advocate Sanjay

Hegde whether the proposal also encompassed air bookings made prior to the lockdown for journeys during the pandemic freeze.

Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta assured the court there was "no catch" in the proposal mooted by the Ministry. "It includes flights cancelled during the lockdown," Mr. Mehta submitted while agreeing to clarify.

The law officer said "tickets will have to be refunded".

The bone of contention is a line in the proposal which

says "for all the other cases, the airlines shall make all endeavours to refund the collected amount to the passenger within 15 days".

The Solicitor-General said the proposal "essentially takes care of the interests of the passengers as well as ensures that airlines do not suffer immediately".

The proposal recommends immediate refund of air tickets. It also allows airlines to open credit shells in the name of passengers. Passengers can use the credit shell to fly any route. The credit is transferable. If the credit is not used, the ticket amount has to be mandatorily returned to passenger by March 31, 2021.

TAMIL NADU TRANSMISSION CORPORATION LTD.

NOTICE INVITING TENDERS (E-TENDERING PROCESS)

Sl. No	Tender Inviting Authority	Specification No.	Total
1	CE/P&C	1034	1

For details of works/Procurement/Due date of submission/opening, viewing and downloading of e-tenders, please visit websites: www.tntantraco.gov.in www.tenders.tn.gov.in www.tntenders.gov.in/nicgep/app

DIPR/3353/Tender/2020

RITES LIMITED (A Govt. of India Enterprise)

Regional Project Office - Secunderabad

CIN No. L74899DL1974G0100727

Notice Inviting e-Tenders

The General Manager (Projects), RPO-Secunderabad, RITES Ltd. on behalf of the Client TS GENCO invites online percentage rate bids on two packet system for the following work: NIT No. RITES/SIC/BTPS/PSC Track Sleepers/Manuguru/2020 dated 09.09.2020 Name of work:- "Manufacturing, supply, transportation and stacking of different types of Pre-stressed Concrete monolithic block BG 60 Kg Sleepers for construction on Railway siding and Marshalling yard for Bhadrak Thermal Power Station (BTPS-4X270 MW), TS GENCO, Manuguru, Bhadrak-Kothagudem Dist, Telangana State". Estimated Cost ₹ 13,23,34,028.25, Earnest Money: ₹ 27,46,685/-, Period of Completion: 06 months, Last date & time of submission of bid: 15:00 Hrs on 05.10.2020. The bid forms and other details can be obtained from the website [https://tenders.gov.in/eprocure/app](http://tenders.gov.in/eprocure/app)

Addendum/Corrigendum, if any, shall be hosted online only

GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU

ARULMIGU SUBRAMANIASWAMY THIRUKOIL, TIRUCHENDUR

Fasli 1430 Re Auction / Tender Notion (2nd Call)

R.C.No.1575/2020/C2 dt.07.09.2020

The License items viz., Collection of broken Coconuts, Collection of Human Hair at tonsuring place, Sale of Pooja Materials such as Coconut and Banana, Betel nut, Star Running of Cool drinks, Star, Running of Weighing Scale, Collection of Cattle dung, Collection of birds given in sacrifice, and Sale of Tender Coconuts at Arulmigu Subramaniaswamy Thirukoil, Tiruchendur will be let out in public auction / tender as detailed below.

Date of Public Re-Auction / Tender: 24.09.2020 time 12:00 Noon.

The deposit and security deposit amount in respect of each item should be remitted by means of Demand Draft or Bankers Cheque obtained after 10.09.2020 in the favour of "Executive Officer, Arulmigu Subramaniaswamy Thirukoil, Tiruchendur" payable at Tiruchendur.

The detailed conditions regarding Public Re-Auction / tender may be ascertained in person during office working hours. The details may also be known from accessing www.tnhrco.org website.

Fit Person

DIPR/3377/Tender/2020

Executive officer

E-Mail: servbpr2004@yahoo.com ; താഴെയുള്ള പേരിൽ നാമം ചേർക്കുക, സ്കോളർഷിപ്പ്, പോ-എഞ്ചിനീയർ എന്നീ പദവിയിൽ നിന്നും നിര്ബന്ധമില്ല.

Tel/FAX: 0680-2404287

At-Ambapura, Po-Engineering School

Near Income Tax Office, Berhampur-760011

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER RURAL WORKS CIRCLE, BERHAMPUR

NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING THROUGH e-Procurement

Bid Identification No. Online Tender/07-2020-21/BPR

Identification No.	Name of work	No. of Works	Approx. Estimated Cost (In lakh)	Class of Contractor	Period of Completion
Online Tender / 07-2020-21/BPR	Road Works under RIDF	04 Nos	From Rs. 261.89 Lakhs to Rs.494.38 Lakhs	"B" Class, "A" Class & Special Class as applicable	09 (Nine) & 11 (Eleven) Calendar Month as provided

Procurement Officer

Online Tender /07-2020-21/BPR

From 21.09.2020

To 07.10.2020

upto 3:00 P.M.

(i) EMD / Bid Security, Cost of Bid document is to be transferred through On-line as per the procedure mentioned in the DTCN.

(ii) Non-submission of the information/documents through online by the bidder as per the items mentioned in the eligible criteria of the DTCN will also liable for rejection of his tender.

Further details & Corrigendum if any can be seen from the website: - www.tendersodisha.gov.in

Superintending Engineer, R.W.Circle, Berhampur

OIPR-25071/11/0006/2021

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NEET on schedule as SC refuses to intervene

Problems will not die by changing dates, says court

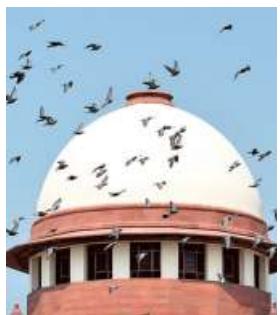
LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) for admission to the undergraduate medical course will be held on schedule on September 13, with the Supreme Court on Wednesday refusing to intervene in various petitions seeking its postponement to providing facilities for candidates.

One of the petitions, represented by advocate Shoeb Alam, even sought the use of admit cards as curfew passes in the COVID-19 containment zones. He said a "slight nudge" from the court would go a long way to ensure the safety of lakhs of candidates across the country.

Senior advocate K.T.S. Tulsi urged the court to postpone the exam, saying the virus infection count was steadily climbing and had reached 90,000 a day.

Senior advocate Arvind Datar said States such as Bihar had only two exam centres. Aspirants had to



journey miles, exposing themselves and others to infection.

But the court said it would not be possible for the authorities to conduct NEET, which requires to be held simultaneously across the country, on different dates in different States.

'Precautions taken'

"The authorities have taken all precautions," the Bench said.

The court reasoned that problems would not die by changing dates. Whatever date was fixed, there might be some difficulty.

Mr. Alam said his petitioner was not seeking a quash-

ing of the NEET but only for facilities to be provided to students.

Mr. Datar sought a postponement by three weeks, but the court declined.

The court recently heard a review plea filed jointly by Ministers from six non-BJP-ruled States against the conduct of the JEE Mains and the NEET-UG amid the pandemic. The JEE was conducted between September 1 and 6.

On August 17, the court refused to entertain a petition by students to postpone the NEET and the JEE citing the pandemic after recording the exam authorities' assurance that all necessary precautions will be taken to keep safe the candidates, who run into lakhs.

"Education should be opened up. COVID-19 may continue for a year more. Are you going to wait for another year. Do you know what is the loss to the country and the career peril to the students?" the court had asked the petitioners.

Citing the example of res-

Govt. will ease problems of poor: PM

Modi interacts with street vendors, who got loans through PM SVANidhi

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said the government was working on a new digital transaction platform for street vendors in the wake of the pandemic.

Mr. Modi addressed street vendors in Madhya Pradesh who got loans through the PM Street Vendors AtmaNirbhar Nidhi (PM SVANidhi), a micro credit scheme launched by the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry in June.

Under the scheme, street vendors badly hit by the pandemic and lockdown can get loans up to ₹10,000 to restart their work.

The Prime Minister also interacted with three of the beneficiaries via videoconferencing.

He said whenever there was a crisis, it was the poor who bore the brunt, which is why the government was focused on easing their problems now.

As customers preferred digital transactions over cash due to the pandemic, street vendors should move towards digital transactions.

Citing the example of res-



Long-distance call: Narendra Modi speaking to Chagan Lal in Indore. •PTI

taurants that take orders and deliver through apps, the Prime Minister noted that street food vendors could also carry out their business online.

The government would come up with a platform for street vendors to transact digitally.

Under the PM SVANidhi scheme, which is part of the Centre's AtmaNirbhar Bharat package, he said street vendors had access to easy capital.

"The scheme helps one get rid of interest completely. Under this scheme, interest rebate of up to 7% is being given anyway. A new beginning has been made in collaboration with banks and digital payment facilitators to ensure that our street

vendors do not lag behind in digital shopkeeping," he stated.

Chat with beneficiaries

Earlier in the event, Mr. Modi spoke to three beneficiaries from Madhya Pradesh, which accounts for 4.5 lakh of the total 10 lakh registrations for the scheme. Since its launch on June 1, just over 1 lakh loans have been disbursed.

Chagan Lal, who makes and sells brooms in Indore, told the Prime Minister: "After the lockdown, my business was completely destroyed. Since our work depends on us going from lane to lane and we could not move out during the lockdown, I had to face many problems." He said he

took loans from family members to be able to make ends meet. Now, with the ₹10,000 loan, he repaid the previous loans and bought materials to restart his work.

Mr. Modi remarked that he spotted a plastic water bottle near Mr. Chagan Lal's pushcart and advised him to replace it with an earthen pot. He also urged Mr. Lal to recycle the "pipe" portion of the brooms.

Archana Sharma, who runs a food stall in Gwalior, said her business stopped during the lockdown, but she was able to restart using the ₹10,000 loan.

Dalchand Kushwaha, a vegetable vendor in Raisen, told the Prime Minister that his income had taken a hit during the lockdown.

Plea for 'legal entity' status to animals

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday questioned a petition seeking "legal entity" status to the entire animal kingdom.

Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde said the status involved giving animals a "legal personality". This means bestowing on animals, by judicial direction, the capacity to sue and be sued in courts of law.

"Animals already have the protection of the law. There are laws like the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act, etc. But making them a legal entity is giving them the capacity to sue and be sued ... How is that possible?" Chief Justice Bobde asked petitioner-advocate Devesh Saxena in a virtual court hearing.

Mr. Saxena made an impassioned plea that animals are considered "property."

"We will look into this point on punishment not being enough of a deterrent against hurting animals," the CJI addressed Mr. Saxena.

Indo-Pacific trilateral dialogue held

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

With a focus on enhancing cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region, India, Australia and France on Wednesday held the first trilateral dialogue where they discussed "economic and geostrategic challenges and cooperation" in the region, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic and domestic responses to it.

"The three countries also had an exchange on the priorities, challenges and trends in regional and global multilateral institutions, including the best ways to strengthen and reform multilateralism," the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said in a statement here.

The three sides expressed their shared will "to successfully conclude concrete cooperation projects in the maritime sector and those promoting global commons (climate, environment and biodiversity, health)," France added.

French Defence Minister Florence Parly is visiting India on Thursday.

She will join Defence Minister Rajnath Singh for the formal induction ceremony of Rafale fighter jets into the Indian Air Force at Ambala. She is also scheduled to meet National Security Adviser Ajit Doval.

'One in three high schoolers gets private coaching'

The fees make up for almost 20% of their total cost of education, says NSO report on education

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

One in five students in India supplements school education with private coaching, including almost one in three at the secondary school level or Classes 9 and 10.

Private coaching fees make up almost 20% of the total cost of education for those in secondary and higher secondary school. In some States, such as West Bengal, students actually spend more on private coaching than on their regular school, according to the National Statistical Organisation's (NSO) latest report on education.

Like regular schools, such coaching and tuition classes have also been closed during

Adding to class hours

One in 10 students at the pre-primary level availed private coaching, according to NSO's latest report

Grade	Students taking private coaching (%)
Pre-primary	11.6
Primary	16.4
Upper-primary	21.9
Secondary	30.2
Higher-secondary	27.5
Diploma and certificate below graduate level	7.3
All	19.8

More than 30% of students in secondary grades supplemented their school education with private tuitions

the COVID-19 pandemic, although many have been conducting online coaching classes instead. From September 21, schools will be partially reopened on a voluntary basis for Class 9 to 12

students, with the Health Ministry issuing guidelines on Tuesday. It remains to be seen how many of these students, who have now missed six months of classroom lessons, will continue to de-

pend on coaching classes to bridge the gap.

In the 75th round of the National Sample Survey, conducted between June 2017 and July 2018, households were surveyed on consumption related to education. The final report, which was published recently, shows that 19.8% of students at all levels – from pre-primary to graduate students – take some form of private coaching. Among Class 9 and 10 students, starting to prepare for the crucial board exams and admission tests, more than 30% do so.

Among these secondary school students, those from the cities and upper castes are able to access private coaching at far higher levels. More than 52% of urban up-

per caste boys take coaching, in comparison to just 13.7% of rural boys and girls from scheduled tribe communities.

Such coaching comes at a cost. The average annual expenditure on education for secondary school students is ₹9,013, of which ₹4,078 goes towards regular school fees. About ₹1,632, or just over 18%, goes towards private coaching. In higher secondary school, students spend more than ₹2,500, also about 18% of the total expenditure, on private coaching.

Some States in eastern India seem to spend more on private coaching than the rest of the country. In West Bengal, students at all levels spend an average of ₹3,769 on private coaching.

Advocate's petition

The apex court had sought the amicus report on the basis of a petition filed by advocate Ashwini Upadhyay highlighting the criminalisation of politics.

The cases against the legislators include that of corruption, money laundering, damage to public property, defamation and cheating.

Gen. Rawat acknowledged that the current Indian military fleet "comprises fair share of vintage platforms".

amicus curiae files report in SC



In a large number of cases, even charges have not been framed

SUPREME COURT

and obstruction of orders promulgated by public servants.

"There are 413 cases in respect of offences, which are punishable with imprisonment for life, out of which in 174 cases sitting MPs/ MLAs are accused", the court said.

The trial of 352 cases had been stayed by High Courts and the apex court. A large number of cases were pending in various special courts exclusively set up to try criminal cases registered against politicians, it said.

The report was filed on Tuesday by the apex court's amicus curiae and senior advocate Vijay Hansaria, assisted by advocate Sneha Kalita, after collating information received from High Courts about the cases pending against legislators in courts within their jurisdiction.

"In large number of cases, even charges have not been framed, including those punishable with imprisonment for life," it said.

Cases were pending in special courts in Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and West Bengal.

Uttar Pradesh tops the chart. There are 217 pending cases against lawmakers, of which sitting legislators are accused in 446 such matters. Of the 531 cases in Bihar, 256 are against sitting legislators.

Defence exports increased 700% in 3 years: Rawat

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

In the past three years, the country witnessed a "staggering" 700% growth in defence exports – from ₹1,521 crore in 2016-17 to ₹10,745 crore in 2018-19, an all-time high and 19th in the list of defence exporters in 2019, according to Chief of Defence Staff Gen. Bipin Rawat.

"We must move out of the constant threat of sanctions of dependency on individual

nations for military requirements," he said, talking of the huge defence imports, at a webinar by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry on catalysing defence exports, on August 21.

"India is the third largest spender on defence around the world. It's time to have a hard look at the distribution of our budget expenditure. We must carry out a realistic analysis of our expenditure. A series of measures had

been taken since 2014 to boost exports, including simplified defence industrial licensing, relaxation of export control and grant of No Objection Certificates, Gen. Rawat pointed out.

MEA move

Specific incentives were introduced under the foreign trade policy. The Ministry of External Affairs has facilitated a Line of Credit for foreign countries to import de-

fence products. "Where feasible, defence exports can also be financed through the Exim Bank," he observed.

Defence attaches in Indian missions were empowered to promote defence exports, which would also strengthen defence diplomacy, he stated.

Gen. Rawat acknowledged that the current Indian military fleet "comprises fair share of vintage platforms".

SUDOKU

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★★

Solution to puzzle 13036

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Hotels and restaurants are now offering customised subscription meal plans for people under home quarantine

NIVEDITA GANGULY

Subashini Reddy was at her wits' end when a call from her parents in Chennai confirmed her fears. They had tested positive for COVID-19 and were under home quarantine. Being in the UK, Subashini could do little to support them. Till she found the quarantine meal option from Chennai-based Roo's Food Concepts. In minutes, she booked a week-long meal package for her parents, customised to their needs. Hotels and restaurants across the country are now delivering quarantine meals, much to the relief of those under home quarantine.

What's cooking?

In June, Gayathri Nandakumar and Rahul Ravi, who run the subscription-based food service Roo's Food Concepts in Chennai, started receiving a flood of queries for quarantine meals, a majority of those were for 15-day meal packages. "We realised that there is a demand for home-cooked food. Good nutrition is crucial for health, particularly in times when the immune system needs to fight back. So we decided to start our quarantine meal packages," says Gayathri.

While they offer breakfast, lunch and dinner, customers also have the option of subscribing to one meal per day for a 14-day period. Meals include Kerala rice, millets, quinoa, cauliflower rice, aviyal and zucchini roast. There are also non-vegetarian options with chicken, mutton and fish.

According to Gayathri, their quarantine breakfast option is popular with children. "Kids are known to be fussy eaters especially



Healthy and convenient
(Clockwise) A contact-less quarantine meal placed outside the door; a food delivery person on his way; staff of Hotel Rockdale preparing the boxes; lunch box of Roo's Food Concepts

■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK, KR DEEPAK AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

when they are down with an illness. Keeping that in mind, we use natural colouring elements like pudina, beetroot and turmeric to make dishes like a simple idli look attractive," says Gayathri. Roo's Food Concepts now delivers an average of 50 quarantine lunch and 50 dinner orders at the doorsteps of customers every day. "We customise these quarantine meals as well," she adds.

Keeping it simple

In Bengaluru, Divya Prabhakar and Vishal Shetty of Oota Company are on their toes every morning catering to the 80-odd quarantine meal orders pouring in from across the city. They call it Lock-

down Lunchbox. "I received a call in July from a friend, who along with her whole family tested positive and wanted to subscribe to meals for 10 days. That is when I started offering the quarantine meal options," says Divya.

Oota Company has two kinds of subscription options – five or 10 days. One can opt for lunch or dinner or both. The meal consists of a vegetarian menu with a curry, a dry dish, homemade curd, rasam and rice, chapati or ragi mudde. Packed and sealed in plastic boxes, the meal is home-delivered through Dunzo. "We have received a lot of orders from NRI clients whose parents or relatives are in the city and under home quaran-

tine. We also give an option to customise food according to the requirements," says Divya.

The kitchen at Visakhapatnam's Hotel Rockdale has been working round the clock for the past three weeks, ever since it rolled out its quarantine meal services. "We are delivering nearly 150 meals per day," says Satish Varanasi, the food and beverages manager of the hotel. Contact-less delivery and a nutritious menu are the highlights of these meals.

The restaurant provides a combination of idli-vada, tomato rice, upma, ragi malt for breakfast, while its lunch and dinner menus consist of phulka, steamed rice, dal and curd rice along with a ve-

getarian or non-vegetarian curry depending on the package. "We have a team of four chefs who come up with a different menu daily and have a dedicated staff to package the food," says Satish.

Active meals is what Hotel Mihnerva in Vijayawada likes to call their quarantine food package. General manager E Nagesh says, "Our food is low in carbohydrates and high in protein. We have relied on native ingredients like different varieties of millets and seasonal vegetables. With each meal we provided rasam with either garlic, munakkaya (drumstick) or pepper," he says. Nagesh adds, "We have also tied up with hospitals for food delivery for patients and it has worked well for us."

(With inputs from Prabalika M Borah)

Glitch in the crowd?

Imagine a Sim having a better chance of attending the football Premier League than you do. We get into why CGI fans are a thing of the present and, potentially, the future for sports

DIVYA KALA BHAVANI

'And the crowd goes wild!' Well, not really.

Whether you were watching this year's Coppa Italia or even Major League Baseball, you may have noticed the fans in the stands were unusually animated – pun intended. Yes, 2020 has been the year of CGI fans being the new ticket-holders for sport events you most definitely want to attend in that tightlocked bio-bubble. No more hilarious rival fan fights in the stadium for all the world to see; COVID-19 has cleared out festive venues, stadiums, theatres and more areas where hundreds would have communed to celebrate.

CGI fans are digitally rendered people – yes, like Sims – which fill out a scale of space. Early forms of CGI crowd simulations have been used for crisis training and other crowd-oriented demos by scientific testing facilities with a flow-based approach where the crowd is treated as a whole entity rather than individual CGI characters. This concept of CGI crowds, though, dates back to the 1980s in the form of behavioural animation.

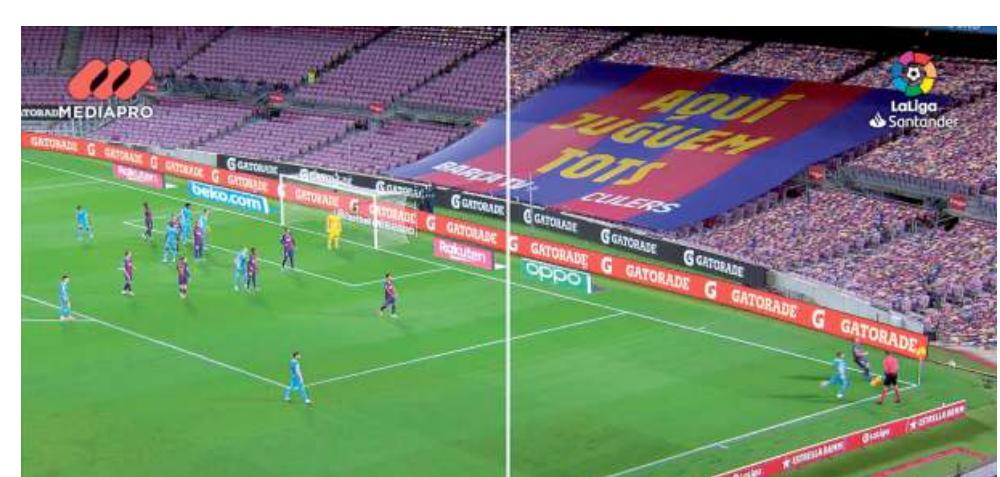
The process sees animators rendering one anthropomorphic figure, then duplicating them with custom-coded variables – hair colour,

clothing, and body language being key ones – so that there is variety in a given space. And with the advent of Artificial Intelligence and the development of algorithmic power, technologists are able to separate crowds according to loyalty, letting them 'cheer' for their teams or 'heckle' for the opposing team, making for a more immersive viewing experience for the fans watching the event via a screen.

While baseball is not exactly on India's sports radar as much as another certain bat-and-ball sport, broadcaster Fox Sports was one of the first to scale out CGI fans at Major League Baseball in August; detailed avatars included families, couples, and collegegoers with beers and/or snacks in hand. But the faces were not discernible.

Close to the real thing

Production houses and broadcasters are the gateway for making CGI fans a thing of 'reality' for the fans at home. Often enhancing sports experiences using Augmented Reality, London-based OZ Sports is one of the champions for tech-powered sports. "The idea is to protect the integrity and experience of the game, by turning the attention away from the empty stadium, and instead replacing it closer to the latest developments in e-sports," says CEO Gudjonsson over email.



GET DOWN TO BUSINESS

Virtual advertising boards are a thing of the future too, avers Jonathan Roberts of Vizrt Global Sports. After all, sports attracts a lot of business for sponsors of any scale. "These [virtual boards] replace the physical advertising around the perimeter of stadiums and sports fields, delivering far more flexibility and enlarging the sales window to attract more sponsors," he says.

make the game more interesting, and as close to reality as possible. These are times to explore and experiment, to make sports even more appealing and to bring it closer to the latest developments in e-sports," says CEO Gudjonsson over email.

Year of adaptation

Jonathan Roberts, senior vice president of Vizrt Global Sports and Virtual Advertising, says, "2020 for Vizrt's Sports solutions has been the year of adaptation. When it became clear to us in February and March that there was a

chance that crowds would not be allowed into stadiums in the foreseeable future, we had to see how this would affect our business and whether we could adapt any of our technology to help our customers during this time. When the Virtual Fan overlay solution was suggested and we realised that this would be a huge benefit to the sporting world, we diverted all our resources to making it successful. This crisis has helped us to innovate."

Two major sporting events are ahead for us in September: football championship Premier League and, of course, the Indian Premier League. Premier League and Sky Sports are reportedly exploring the potential for CGI fans while IPL is unlikely to take on this additional measure. But other technologies are touted to be a part of games.

Recently in May, OZ Sports announced OZ Arena, a way for people at home to include themselves in a sports event, through AR. While not exactly CGI, it does leverage the same core technologies (AI, visual effects, sound immersion) to help bring the fans 'closer' to the fun.

Whistle podu, IPL is back

This weekend on Instagram, @thehindumetropius, we celebrate the gentleman's game with some music on the side.

Saturday, September 12, 7.30 pm: He's everywhere! Sid Sriram, who has been the most sought-after singer in recent times. In what promises to be a musical evening, Sid will take us through his journey and how he balances the different musical worlds that he inhabits.



Sunday, September 13, 6 pm: What's IPL 2020 going to be like? Who has the best chance of winning it this time? To discuss these and more, we are going to have former Indian wicket-keeper and cricket expert Deep Dasgupta joining us live on our Instagram. But first, take our IPL quiz on Saturday to relive the thrill of the years past.

Get a front row view

Tarun Tahiliani to present a collection that reflects 25 years of his journey in fashion, live on Instagram

SANGEETHA DEVI DUNDOO

At 8 pm, tonight, designer Tarun Tahiliani will present 'Infinite', a collection that embodies his 25-year journey in the world of fashion and touches upon the theme 'My Identity, My Pride'. The event will stream live on Instagram (@taruntahiliani; @blenderspridefashiontour) and mark the 15th year of Blenders Pride Fashion Tour (BPFT).

In July, the designer unveiled the bridal collection 'Pieces of You' through an Insta live event. This will be his second digital showcase. "This is the only way to present during the pandemic," says Tahiliani, who is glad that everyone tuning into the show will get a front seat view without clamouring for invites.

The digital streaming of a fashion showcase, Tahiliani explains, makes it possible to engage viewers with better focus on minute detailing on the garments.

The show will

also explore the idea of 'India modern', reflecting on where we stand between embracing a mix of old and new. As the video plays in the background, models will walk the ramp presenting 25 ensembles. To emphasise that the clothes are made to flatter real women, there will be a few women in their 40s and a lady in her 70s on the ramp.

Expect to see lightweight sari gowns, chikankari on pants, jewelled tights, tulle skirts and more. It will be a non-bridal, women-centric collection.



Celebrating India

Elaborating on the theme 'My Identity, My Pride', Tahiliani recalled growing up in South Bombay, studying in an anglicised environment and being drawn to all things 'foreign'. After he became a designer, a friend gifted him a book on Indian weaves and crafts. He was fascinated and travelled to weaving clusters, from Lucknow to Kutch and beyond, looking at an India that he never knew existed. He has continued to employ craftspeople from different parts of the country and uses the craft techniques for clothing that befits contemporary Indian women.

Moving on to discuss the state of flux in the fashion and textiles sector during the pandemic, Tahiliani admits that it is mostly the brides and their immediate family that come to shop: "Fashion is not a priority at a time when 90,000 new COVID-19 cases are being reported in a day. But, with all the time for reflection, I hope people make sustainable choices and buy clothes that last."



CM YK

Virtual cheers Some renders of the CGI crowds used for La Liga and for Major League Baseball

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

chance that crowds would not be allowed into stadiums in the foreseeable future, we had to see how this would affect our business and whether we could adapt any of our technology to help our customers during this time. When the Virtual Fan overlay solution was suggested and we realised that this would be a huge benefit to the sporting world, we diverted all our resources to making it successful. This crisis has helped us to innovate."

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U.S. to reduce troops in Iraq to 3,000

Military says it will continue 'advising and assisting' in fighting the 'final elements of IS'

ERIC SCHMITT
WASHINGTON

The U.S. is cutting troop levels in Iraq roughly in half, to 3,000 forces, the top U.S. commander in West Asia said on Wednesday, in a long-expected move that will help fulfil President Donald Trump's goal of reducing the Pentagon's overseas deployments.

The decision to reduce the 5,200 troops now in Iraq comes three weeks after Mr. Trump met with Mustafa al-Kadhimi, the Iraqi Prime Minister, in Washington, in part to finalise details of the drawdown, which will happen this month.

Fight against IS

"This reduced footprint allows us to continue advising and assisting our Iraqi partners in rooting out the final remnants of ISIS in Iraq and ensuring its enduring defeat," Gen. Kenneth F. McKenzie Jr., the head of the military's Central Command, said in remarks in



Repositioning forces: A U.S. soldier walking past a drone at the Ain al-Asad airbase in Anbar. • AFP

increased ability to operate independently."

Drawing down to 3,000 troops would bring U.S. force levels in Iraq roughly back to where they were in 2015, when the U.S. was in the early phase of its campaign against the Islamic State, which captured one-third of the country.

The move allows Mr. Trump to tell voters he is fulfilling a campaign promise to bring home the troops.

But the cuts are relatively modest and pale in comparison to the much larger reductions from when U.S. force levels in the country peaked at more than 150,000 service members at

the height of the Iraq War.

In a meeting with journalists after the White House gathering, Mr. Kadhimy reaffirmed the need for U.S. military assistance to help fight remnants of the Islamic State.

Threat from militias

The Pentagon is reluctant to keep more than the absolute minimum of troops in Iraq because they have been attacked by Iranian-backed militias. An attack on an Iraqi base in March killed three soldiers of the U.S.-led military coalition there, two of them Americans, and wounded 14.

Since then, the U.S. has consolidated its troops on fewer bases, a repositioning that Gen. McKenzie acknowledged last month had diverted resources from fighting the Islamic State. Separately, the training mission has been suspended for the past several months because of concerns about the coronavirus. • NY TIMES

Norwegian MP nominates Trump for Nobel Peace Prize

Far-right Tybring-Gjedde is backing him for UAE-Israel peace agreement

ASSOCIATED PRESS
COPENHAGEN

A far-right Norwegian lawmaker said Wednesday that he has nominated U.S. President Donald Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize for his efforts in the Middle East.

Christian Tybring-Gjedde, a member of the Norwegian Parliament for the far-right Progress Party, said Mr. Trump should be considered because of his work "for a peace agreement between the United Arab Emirates and Israel which opens up

for possible peace in the Middle East."

Israel and the UAE agreed last month to a historic deal normalising relations and are scheduled to sign it at a White House ceremony on September 15.

"No matter how Trump acts at home and what he says at press conferences, he has absolutely a chance at getting the Nobel Peace Prize," Mr. Tybring-Gjedde, told.

Nominations must be sent to the Norwegian Nobel



Donald Trump

Committee by February 1, meaning the deadline to nominate people for this year's peace prize has passed.

Mr. Tybring-Gjedde was one of two Norwegian lawmakers who nominated Mr. Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize in 2018 for his efforts to bring reconciliation between North and South Korea. Any lawmaker serving in a national legislature can nominate someone for the Nobel Peace Prize.

Thank you!
President Trump revelled in his nomination for the 2021 Nobel Peace Prize.

"Thank you!" he said in a flurry of tweets and retweets celebrating the nomination.

Former U.S. President Ba-

rack Obama was awarded the prize in 2009 only months into his first term, a move many felt was premature. The Norwegian committee said it honoured Obama for his commitment to "seek the peace and security of a world without nuclear weapons."

Last year, Mr. Trump predicted that he would win the Nobel Prize "for a lot of things if they gave it out fairly, which they don't."

The Norwegian Nobel Committee doesn't publicly comment on nominees. Under its rules, the information is required to be kept secret for 50 years.

Afghan V-P Saleh sustains minor injuries in Kabul blast

10 people were killed in attack on his convoy

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
KABUL

Afghanistan's Vice-President Amrullah Saleh sustained minor injuries on Wednesday when an explosion targeted his convoy and killed at least 10 people, as government-backed negotiators and the Taliban prepared to meet in Doha for long-delayed peace talks.

The attack in the capital Kabul was quickly condemned as an attempt to frustrate the peace process, with top Afghan and foreign officials calling for an end to violence so negotiations between the two warring sides can proceed.

In a video posted on Facebook soon after the explosion, Mr. Saleh, an outspoken Taliban critic, said he had been travelling to his office when his convoy was attacked.

"I am fine but some of my guards have been wounded. My son, who was

wounded. My son, who was in the car with me, and I are both fine," Mr. Saleh said, with bandages on his left hand. "I have some burns on my face and hand. The blast was strong."

The Interior Ministry said the bomb was placed on a hand cart and detonated remotely when Saleh's convoy passed by.

The Taliban, who have pledged not to launch attacks in urban areas under a deal with the United States, denied responsibility.

President Ashraf Ghani, who met Saleh soon after Wednesday's blast, condemned what he said was a "terrorist attack" on his first deputy.

"The terrorists and their foreign backers cannot undermine the people's strong faith in peace, democracy and the bright future of our



Narrow escape: Afghan men standing near a vehicle damaged in the blast in Kabul on Wednesday. • REUTERS

were killed, and 15, including a number of the first VP's bodyguards, were wounded," Tareq Arian, spokesman to the ministry, told reporters at the scene.

Mr. Saleh, the senior of Afghanistan's two Vice-Presidents, survived an assassination attempt last year ahead of presidential elections.

At least 20 people – most of them civilians – were killed and 50 others wounded when a suicide attacker and gunmen targeted Mr. Saleh's Kabul office at that time.

"There are some elements within the Taliban who don't care if the talks fail," said Kabul-based political analyst Atta Noori.

The Taliban have been emboldened by a deal with Washington in February that paved the way for the withdrawal of foreign forces and the release of 5,000 militants in a prisoner exchange.

"They know that the Afghan government is wearing out, with the international community losing interest in them and paying more attention to the Taliban," Mr. Noori said.

"In short, Taliban want their emirate at any cost and also want no resistance against them."

Australian spy agency targeted Chinese scribes

2 foreign correspondents flee China

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BEIJING

Beijing claimed on Wednesday that Australia's intelligence agency questioned foreign correspondents working for Chinese state-run media, seizing computers and mobile phones in raids apparently linked to a billowing spy scandal.

The accusation, the latest scrap in a diplomatic falling-out that spans security, trade and media freedoms, follows an investigation by Beijing into Australian journalists based in China.

The last two foreign correspondents working for Australian media in China, Bill Birtles and Michael Smith, fled on Monday fearing arrest, while another – Cheng Lei, who worked as an anchor for Chinese state TV – is being detained un-

der "national security" laws.

On Wednesday, a spokesman for China's Foreign Ministry added a new layer to the intrigue, saying Australia-based journalists from Xinhua, China News Service and the China Media group were the target of raids by local intelligence agents in late June.

Four journalists were "interrogated... on the grounds of a possible breach of Australia's anti-foreign interference laws," Mr. Zhao Lijian told reporters in Beijing.

They were questioned and had their phones, computers and even their children's tablets confiscated.

"Australia's actions cause serious damage to the physical and mental health of the journalists and their families," he added.

Inclined to hold early election: Lukashenko

He says it's too premature to set a date

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MINSK

Belarus leader Alexander Lukashenko, who has faced the biggest protests of his 26-year rule after disputed presidential polls, said on Wednesday that he did not rule out calling early elections but it was too soon to set a date.

Unprecedented demonstrations broke out after Mr. Lukashenko claimed to have defeated political novice Svetlana Tikhanovskaya and won re-election with 80% of the vote in the August 9 ballot.

In an interview with Russian state media, Mr. Lukashenko said: "I am inclined to conduct an early presidential election. I do not rule this out."

"I am saying this for the first time," he noted.



Alexander Lukashenko

The Opposition has urged Mr. Lukashenko to acknowledge defeat and step down so that fresh elections can be held according to international standards.

His security services have hit back with waves of arrests and deadly violence against protesters and a campaign of intimidation and expulsions against opposition leaders.

In an interview with Russian state media, Mr. Lukashenko said: "I am inclined to conduct an early presidential election. I do not rule this out."

"I am saying this for the first time," he noted.

ELSEWHERE



Pope sports a mask in public for the first time

VATICAN CITY

Pope Francis was seen on Wednesday for the first time wearing a face mask as he attended traditional general audience. However, the Pope quickly removed the mask as he emerged from the car. While meeting the devotees, the pontiff shunned his usual practice of shaking hands and kissing babies. • AFP

Greece's main migrant camp gutted in blaze

LESBOS ISLAND

Greece's largest migrant camp on the island of Lesbos was gutted by a huge fire on Wednesday, leaving over 12,000 asylum seekers homeless, with reports that the blaze was started by migrants revolting against COVID-19 isolation rules. • AFP

CMYK

Sri Lankan tea kicks up storm in Lebanon

Tea donated for blast victims was distributed to families of presidential guards

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BEIRUT

Lebanon's President Michel Aoun has come under fire after it emerged that tea donated by Sri Lanka for victims of the Beirut blast was distributed instead to families of his presidential guards.

Cracks see it as yet another example of official corruption in a country reeling from the August 4 explosion that killed more than 190 people, wounded thousands and ravaged central Beirut.

Sri Lanka, many of whose expat community in Lebanon work as housemaids, was one of several nations that rushed to show support in the wake of Lebanon's worst peace-time disaster.

The President's office on August 24 released a picture of Mr. Aoun receiving the Sri Lankan Ambassador, and quoted her as saying Colom-

bo had "donated 1,675 kg of Ceylon tea to those affected by the Beirut blast".

After Lebanese media and social media asked what happened to the donation, it issued a second statement on Tuesday.

A gift of Ceylon tea?
The presidency said Mr. Aoun had written to his

Colombian counterpart to thank him for "a gift of Ceylon tea that had been received by the Army... and distributed to the families of soldiers in the presidential guard".

Social media erupted in criticism, with the hashtags "tea thief" and "Ceylon tea" trending on Twitter.

"The tea was sent to the Lebanese, particularly those affected by the explosion. Of course it wasn't a present for those who don't need it," wrote Paula Yacoubian, a former MP who resigned after the blast many blame on official neglect.

"Distributing the aid to your entourage is shameful," she wrote.

Another user quipped: "The excuse that it was a present for the president is even worse than the sin itself."

Beside the tea controver-

sies, social media users have also been up in arms over the fate of 12 tonnes of fish that Mauritania sent in mid-August.

It was talking to several associations preparing meals for those in need "to cook it and distribute it to those affected by the port blast".

On Twitter, yet another user made light of the food aid controversy.

"The presidential palace,

or the palace of the people, invites you to a free lunch on Sunday," she wrote.

"Open buffet on Mauritanian fish, and open bar on Ceylon tea."



Michel Aoun

Kim calls for urgent steps after typhoon ravages east

Maysak destroyed houses, paralysed transport in N. Korea

ASSOCIATED PRESS
SEOUL

North Korean leader Kim Jong-un called for urgent efforts to rebuild thousands of homes and other structures destroyed by a typhoon that slammed the country's eastern region last week, state media said on Wednesday.

Mr. Kim during the Workers' Party meeting on Tuesday also said the damage from Typhoon Maysak has forced the country to reconsider unspecified year-end projects, the North's official Korean Central News Agency said.

The storm has inflicted further pain on an economy already ravaged by U.S.-led sanctions over Mr. Kim's nuclear weapons program, border closures amid the

COVID-19 pandemic and unusually heavy summer flooding that likely worsened the country's chronic food shortages.

KCNA said Maysak left "severe damage" in the eastern town of Komdok, destroying or flooding more than 2,000 homes and dozens of public buildings and

paralysing transport systems. More than 60 km of roads in the region were "washed away," while 59 bridges collapsed. Several miles of railroads were damaged in mining areas, the report said.

Mr. Kim described the recovery efforts at Komdok a national priority.

Relief measures: North Korea's leader Kim Jong-un in Pyongyang on Tuesday. • REUTERS

COVID-19 pandemic and unusually heavy summer flooding that likely worsened the country's chronic food shortages.

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CMYK

AN-ND-E

MARKET WATCH

	09-09-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	38,194	-0.45
US Dollar	73.55	0.07
Gold	52,149	0.31
Brent oil	39.99	1.32

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	343.85	-1.75
Asian Paints	1979.05	18.70
Axis Bank	431.25	-13.10
Bajaj Auto	2910.15	8.40
Bajaj Finserv	6026.80	-207.45
Bajaj Finance	3422.85	-77.15
Bharti Airtel	504.25	6.15
BPCL	405.95	-6.15
Britannia Ind	3738.30	6.70
Cipla	727.55	19.35
Coal India	126.95	-3.00
Dr Reddys Lab	4429.45	80.65
Eicher Motors	2176.95	15.45
GAIL (India)	91.05	-3.50
Grasim Ind	687.10	10.00
HCL Tech.	721.95	-3.95
HDFC	1760.75	-16.55
HDFC Bank	1096.50	-15.95
HDFC Life	585.70	3.85
Hero MotoCorp	2904.00	40.80
Hindalco	182.80	2.55
Hind Unilever	2132.25	-10.00
ICICI Bank	367.60	-8.10
IndusInd Bank	604.60	4.20
Bharti Infralet	210.45	-2.55
Infosys	927.75	-11.55
Indian Oil Corp	80.55	-2.20
ITC	183.80	-4.35
JSW Steel	286.85	5.70
Kotak Bank	1326.15	-24.55
L&T	909.50	-7.20
M&M	613.90	5.30
Maruti Suzuki	7215.25	-8.75
Nestle India Ltd.	16312.50	186.00
NTPC	90.40	-0.25
ONGC	72.70	-1.75
PowerGrid Corp	175.25	0.35
Reliance Ind	2161.35	54.25
State Bank	194.85	-9.20
Shree Cement	19401.50	45.65
Sun Pharma	509.30	7.40
Tata Motors	140.10	-2.20
Tata Steel	417.40	12.30
TCS	2327.65	-20.55
Tech Mahindra	753.35	1.10
Titan	1161.10	-1.45
UltraTech Cement	3835.60	11.85
UPL	494.55	7.55
Wipro	282.85	0.30
Zee Entertainment	221.55	7.80

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	73.33	73.65
Euro	86.35	86.73
British Pound	94.96	95.37
Japanese Yen (100)	69.13	69.45
Chinese Yuan	10.71	10.76
Swiss Franc	79.90	80.25
Singapore Dollar	53.55	53.79
Canadian Dollar	55.46	55.70
Malaysian Ringgit	17.56	17.66
Australian Dollar	53.07	53.30

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



Royal Enfield's assembly unit opens in Argentina

CHENNAI Royal Enfield and Grupo Simpa have set up a completely knocked down (CKD) unit in Argentina to make motorcycles. "To cater to the growing demand, we have been pursuing plans to set up local assembly units in the Asia Pacific and South America. In the first of these, we are announcing the first CKD assembly plant in Argentina," said Vinod K. Dasari, CEO, Royal Enfield.

Equity MFs see outflow for second month in row

NEW DELHI Equity mutual funds (MFs) witnessed an outflow of ₹4,000 crore in August, making it the second consecutive monthly withdrawal, primarily on profit-bookings by investors. Besides, investors also pulled out ₹3,907 crore from debt MFs which saw a staggering inflow of ₹91,392 crore in July, data from the Association of Mutual Funds (AMFI) in India showed on Wednesday. PTI

Cyient in manufacturing pact with Agapte

HYDERABAD Cyient has entered into a manufacturing partnership with Agapte to make certain key components for the latter's hematology analyser. Agapte, whose corporate office is in Ermakulam, Kerala, has indigenously designed and developed a three-part hematology analyser 'Mispa Count X'. Cyient said the components will be manufactured at its DLM facility in Mysuru.

Happiest Minds' IPO subscribed 151 times

NEW DELHI The initial public offering of IT services firm Happiest Minds Technologies garnered massive response from investors as it was subscribed 151 times on the last day of bidding on Wednesday. According to data available with the NSE, the ₹702-crore IPO received bids for over 3.51 crore shares against the issue size of 2.33 crore shares. It raised ₹316 crore from anchor investors. PTI

Retail auto sales fall 27% in Aug'

Overall demand not back to pre-COVID-19 levels as banks wary of funding: FADA

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Retail automobile sales continued to decline in August, with overall sales witnessing 26.8% contraction year-on-year to more than 11.88 lakh units, the Federation of Automobile Dealers Association (FADA) said.

However, the pace of decline showed some improvement from the preceding month. Tractors continued to be the only segment showing a positive retail sales trend with a growth of 27.8%. ■ V. RAJU



Silver lining: Tractors continued to be the only segment with a positive retail sales trend with a growth of 27.8%. ■ V. RAJU

bled 57.4% to 26,536 units, while three-wheeler sales were down 69.5% to 16,857 units. In July 2020, the total retail sales had fallen 36.3% year-on-year to about 11.42 lakh units – with PV sales down 25.2% to over 1.57 lakh units, two-wheeler sales down 37.5% to 8,74 units and CV sales down 72.2% to 19,292 units, according to FADA's data.

Noting that the PV seg-

ment saw a single-digit decline after five months, newly elected FADA president Vinkesh Gulati said, "Customers who were sitting on the fence, finally concluded their purchase during ongoing festivals of Janmashtami and Ganesh Chaturthi. Entry-level PVs were in high demand as personal mobility is being preferred with the current pandemic showing no signs of reduction."

He added that while the rural market was already showing revival signs, urban centres, for the first time, had also shown initial signs of a demand pull-back.

Overall demand is still not back to pre-COVID-19 levels as banks and NBFCs continue to have a cautious approach towards funding, which is negatively impacting the CV segment.

Mr. Gulati said that while OEMs were dispatching vehicles to dealers with a purpose of stocking-up inventory for the upcoming festival season, retail sales were still at 70-75% levels despite the low base of last year.

"FADA advises extreme caution to all OEMs and our dealer fraternity to avoid excessive inventory build-up thus leading to unmanageable interest cost which could further result in dealership closures," Mr. Gulati said.

Conducted in August and covering 166 firms, the survey by FICCI and Dhruva Advisors said weak demand continued to remain the key bottleneck as almost 68% have reported this as their biggest challenge; 41% have said sales in August were less than 50% from a year earlier. Another 21%, reported sales between 50%-75% of the August 2019 figures.

"Reviving the economy requires sustained effort, es-



Sangita Reddy

specially when, in the first quarter, our GDP suffered a major blow," said Sangita Reddy, president, FICCI.

"In the absence of a major fiscal push on the demand side, we could end up being stuck in a quagmire of a low demand and low-income cycle. If we have to return to the positive growth trajectory, the time for bold and decisive action is now."

The sharp GDP contrac-

tion was a matter of great concern and clearly underlined the need for a major stimulus to energise and strengthen demand in the economy, said FICCI. In June, only 25% of firms had reported that unlocking of the economy had a positive impact on their order books, while in August, 44% reported an improvement post opening up of the economy.

Survey participants also suggested measures on supporting demand, including additional cash transfers to migrant workers, the poor and farmers; temporary cut in GST rates; increase in government procurement; front-ending infrastructure projects and part funding of wages as had been done in other nations to ensure employment was sustained.

'GDP contraction raising flags over lenders' asset quality'

Corporate loan risks, however, have declined, says Moody's

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Asset quality risks for banks are rising amid the country's economic contraction, even though risks from corporate loans have decreased from the previous credit cycle, Moody's Investors Service said in a new report.

'Not immune'

"Corporates will not be immune [to risks] from the ongoing economic contraction caused by the coronavirus outbreak," Srikant Vadlamani, vice-president and senior credit officer at Moody's



said. "Near-term stress at corporates is already visible in the very weak performance in the quarter ending June 2020," he added.

"However, risks from corporate loans have decreased from 2012-19, when a large amount of corporate

loans were impaired. With exposures to most corporates with weak financial health already recognised as NPLs, currently performing loans are better placed to withstand stress," he said.

"Lending in the past few years has been concentrated among stronger [firms] amid an overall slowdown in capital expenditure, while banks have also become more conservative".

"Job losses, declines in income and disruptions to business will strain the finances of retail and SME borrowers significantly," the report said.

SC admits appeal in Ricoh matter

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday admitted an appeal filed by investor Kalraj Dharamshi and Rekha Jhunjhunwala, consortium against a National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) decision

setting aside their takeover bid for IT peripherals and services firm, Ricoh India.

Ordering that status quo be maintained in the matter, a Bench of Justices S. Abdul Nazeer and B.R. Gavai issued notice to Kotak Investment Advisors Limited, which has to respond in four weeks.

BPCL stake sale is 'event risk', too little data: Fitch

'No light on bidders and valuation'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Fitch Ratings on Wednesday said the potential privatisation of BPCL was an "event risk" as there was little information about bidders, valuation, and the potential transaction structure.

The rating agency affirmed Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd's (BPCL) long-term foreign-currency issuer default rating (IDR) at 'BBB-'.

"Fitch equalises BPCL's rating with that of its largest shareholder, the India sovereign (BBB-/Negative)... due

to the strong likelihood of government support," it said.

"We continue to treat the potential divestment of BPCL as an event risk, as there is little information about bidders, valuation, and the potential transaction structure, especially as BPCL owns assets across many verticals and bidders may not be interested in all of them," Fitch said.

The deadline of September 30 for the submission of expressions of interest has been extended thrice since the initial announcement in November 2019.

DRL prices Remdesivir at ₹5,400 a vial

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Dr. Reddy's Laboratories has unveiled Gilead Sciences' Remdesivir, an investigational drug used in COVID-19 treatment, under the Reddy's brand in India at ₹5,400 per 100mg vial.

This follows a licensing pact under which Gilead has granted DRL right to register, manufacture and sell Remdesivir in 127 countries, including India. The Drugs Controller General of India has approved Remdesivir for restricted emergency use in COVID-19 patients hospitalised with severe symptoms.

The launch reaffirms our commitment to bringing in critical medicine for patients suffering from COVID-19 in India," M.V. Ramana, CEO, Branded Markets (India and Emerging Markets), DRL, said.

"The figures are quite alarming and the industry needs immediate measures for survival," they added.

Travel and tourism may lose ₹5 lakh crore: study

'Sector needs urgent steps for revival'



streams due to the shutdown and slowdown will last till October, current trends indicate only 30% occupancy in hotels till the start of the next year as opposed to an average annual occupancy of 68%.

However, it added these are the worst-case scenarios. The industry accounts for 9.2% of India's GDP and

TV PICKS

US Open: SS Select 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 12.30 a.m. (Friday)
NBA: Sony Six (SD & HD), 6.30 a.m.
Tour de France: Eurosport (SD & HD), 3.10 p.m.
PGA Tour: Eurosport (SD & HD), 1.30 a.m.

IN BRIEF



Semenya loses appeal against CAS ruling

GENEVA Double Olympic 800 metres champion Caster Semenya has lost her appeal to the Swiss Federal Tribunal (SFT) to set aside a 2019 Court of Arbitration (CAS) ruling that female athletes with high natural testosterone levels must take medication to reduce it. REUTERS

Heat ousts Bucks to make Eastern Conf. final

ORLANDO Miami Heat punched its ticket to the NBA Eastern Conference finals, with a 4-1 series win, after beating top-seeded Milwaukee 103-94 on Tuesday.

The results (semifinals): EC: Miami Heat 103 bt Milwaukee Bucks 94 (Middleton 23).
Heat win 4-1. WC: LA Lakers 112 James 36, Davis 26) bt Houston Rockets 102 (Harden 33, Westbrook 30). Lakers 2-1. AFP

Kevin De Bruyne named PFA Player of the Year

LONDON Kevin De Bruyne has become the first Manchester City player to capture the Professional Footballers' Association award for Player of the Year. AP

Tour de France: Ewan posts an exciting win

POITIERS (FRANCE) Australian Caleb Ewan claimed his second victory in this year's Tour de France when he prevailed in a tightly-contested sprint to win the 11th stage, a 167.5-km ride from Chatelaillon-Plage on Wednesday. REUTERS

Carreno Busta outduels Shapovalov

Meets Zverev in semifinals; Osaka and Brady set up a last-four showdown

US OPEN

REUTERS
NEW YORK

Pablo Carreno Busta outlasted an erratic Denis Shapovalov 3-6, 7-6(5), 6-4, 0-6, 6-3 on Tuesday in a seesaw battle lasting over four hours to advance to his second U.S. Open semifinal.

Spain's Carreno Busta, who will be eyeing a place in his maiden Grand Slam final, will face fifth seeded Alexander Zverev in the last four after the German rallied to take down Borna Coric 1-6, 7-6(5), 7-6(1), 6-3 earlier on Tuesday.

The oldest of the men's quarterfinalists at 29, the Spaniard had looked down and out when his Canadian opponent served him a bagel in the fourth set. However, after getting some treatment to his lower back, the 2017 semifinalist Carreno Busta fought back gamely to seal the deciding set in a match that went past 1 a.m. here.

THE RESULTS

Quarterfinals: Men: 20-Pablo Carreno Busta (Esp) bt 12-Denis Shapovalov (Can) 3-6, 7-6(7/5), 7-6(4), 0-6, 6-3; 5-Alexander Zverev (Ger) bt 27-Borna Coric (Cro) 1-6, 7-6(5), 7-6(1), 6-3.

Women: 28-Jennifer Brady (USA) bt 23-Yulia Putintseva (Kaz) 6-3, 6-2; 4-Naomi Osaka (Jpn) bt Shelby Rogers (USA) 6-3, 6-4.

Ganguly in Dubai to oversee preparations



Sourav Ganguly. ■ FILE PHOTO

Operating Procedure while flying amid the pandemic.

He will be in quarantine for the next six days and is expected to be in the UAE till September 23.

Day Nine in numbers

1 Zverev is the first male German semifinalist at the US Open since Boris Becker in 1995

1 First Grand Slam semifinal for American Brady. Best result before this: fourth round (Australian Open and US Open 2017)

2 Carreno Busta's second semifinal at US Open (previous: 2017). Best result outside New York: quarterfinal (French Open 2017)

FALLEN SEEDS
MEN:
12-Shapovalov;
27-Coric
WOMEN:
23-Putintseva

THURSDAY'S PICKS

Semifinals: WOMEN: 4-Osaka vs. 28-Brady | 3-Serena / Pironkova vs. 16-Mertens / Azarenka

SHAPOVALOV, ON WHETHER IT'S NERVE-RACKING TO PLAY IN THE BUSINESS END OF A MAJOR

QUOTESIDE

I'm positive [4-3 H2H] against Roger [Federer], beaten Novak [Djokovic] on multiple occasions. But she's a multiple Grand Slam champion, she's respected, but her opinion right now does not matter to me

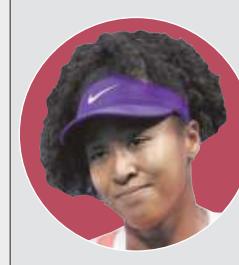
ZVEREV, ON NAVARATNOVA'S COMMENT THAT HE WON'T BEAT TOP PLAYERS IF HE PLAYS LIKE HE DID AGAINST CORIC

CARRENO BUSTA

I don't think most of the players have been in this situation often. Maybe Dominic [Thiem] and Daniil [Medvedev]. It's anybody's Slam and it's definitely causing a lot of nervous matches

SHAPOVALOV, ON WHETHER IT'S NERVE-RACKING TO PLAY IN THE BUSINESS END OF A MAJOR

TO PLAY IN THE BUSINESS END OF A MAJOR



I don't feel like the favourite weirdly. Because there are no fans. I just feel like I'm going into a match with a really talented player, which is all of my previous matches anyway

OSAKA, ON WHETHER SHE FEELS LIKE THE FAVOURITE TO WIN THE TITLE



Australia manages to win final T20I

AUS IN ENG

REUTERS
SOUTHAMPTON

Former India all-rounder Yuvraj Singh has decided to come out of retirement, giving in to a request from Puneet Bali, the Punjab Cricket Association secretary, more than a year after he called it quits.

Yuvraj has agreed to resume at least in the T20 format. "I was done with domestic cricket but I also couldn't ignore Mr. Bali's request," Yuvraj was quoted as saying by Cricbuzz.

Bali told PTI that Yuvraj has written to BCCI in this regard.

Mitchell Marsh (39 n.o.) plundered 13 off paceman Mark Wood's final over to ease Australian nerves and put it firmly back in the driving seat. In the end it was reasonably comfortable for Australia with Marsh striking the winning single off Chris Jordan.

Meanwhile, Jason Roy has been added to England's squad for the ODI series starting on Friday.

The scores: England 145/6 in 20 overs (Jonny Bairstow 55, Adam Zampa 2/34) lost to Australia 146/5 in 19.3 overs (Mitchell Marsh 39 n.o., Aaron Finch 39, Adil Rashid 3/21).

England wins series 2-1.



Vikas Krishan. ■ FILE PHOTO

few months of 2021 before returning to the amateur fold.

Experience
Boxing Federation of India's high performance director Santiago Nieva, who recommended' Vikas' training in the USA, said: "It will be a very good experience for Vikas. He has been in the National team for so many years and it is a good time for him to go and do a little bit different."

"After he comes back, we will focus on the camps and different tournaments for the Olympic-style boxing ahead of the Tokyo Games."

SAI approves Vikas' training in USA

The boxer will receive financial assistance for the visit

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

Olympics-bound boxer Vikas Krishan, who is planning to compete in some professional bouts before returning to the amateur fold for the Tokyo Games, has got a shot in the arm with the Sports Authority of India (SAI) approving his request to train in the USA "as part of his preparations for the Olympics".

The 28-year-old, who has booked an Olympic quota place in the 69kg category, will travel to the USA later this week along with coach Ron Simms. They will train at Alexandria Boxing Club in Virginia till November 30.

Vikas, who is a part of the Target Olympic Podium Scheme (TOPS), has been approved a financial assistance of ₹17.5 lakh for the visit, said a statement from the SAI on Wednesday.

In an earlier interaction with *The Hindu*, Simms – who is employed with the Inspire Institute of Sport (IIS) that also supports the boxer – had said that Vikas planned to fight some professional bouts in the first

France reprises WC win over Croatia

NATIONS LEAGUE

REUTERS
PARIS

France earned a roller-coaster 4-2 home win over Croatia in a top-tier Nations League A Group 3 match on Tuesday with a carbon copy result of their memorable 2018 World Cup final clash.

Ronaldo rattled home a superb first-half free kick to become only the second

male player to score 100 international goals as Portugal outclassed Sweden 2-0.

Important results:
League A: Group 2: Denmark 0 drew with England 0, Belgium 5 (Witsel 13, Batshuayi 17, 69, Mertens 50, Doku 80) bt Iceland 1 (Fridjonsson 11).

Group 3: Sweden 0 lost to Portugal 2 (Ronaldo 45+1,72), France 4 (Griezmann 43, Luka Modric 45+1,og, Upamecano 65, Giroud 77-pen) bt Croatia 2 (Lorren 17, Brekalo 55).

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