

on Sunday



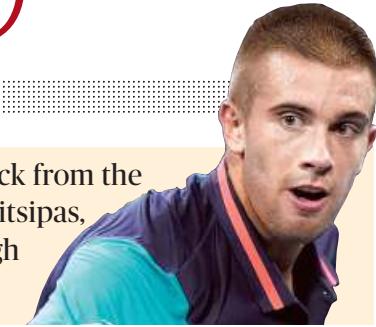
Races set to resume at Bangalore Turf Club after six months  
page 6



Railways to run 80 additional trains from September 12  
page 7



Flames being contained on oil tanker off Sri Lankan coast  
page 8



Coric battles back from the brink to stun Tsitsipas, Djokovic through  
page 14

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## NEARBY



Kejriwal attributes rise in cases to increased testing  
NEW DELHI  
Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday said the COVID-19 situation in Delhi is "under control" and attributed the rise in the number of cases to an increase in the number of tests, which has gone up to 40,000 per day.  
CITY ▶ PAGE 3

## Disclosure for public good, Ramani tells court

NEW DELHI  
Journalist Priya Ramani told a Delhi court on Saturday that her remarks alleging sexual harassment by former Union Minister M.J. Akbar were her truth, which she disclosed in "good faith" for the "public good" and therefore did not amount to defamation.  
CITY ▶ PAGE 3

## 8 Odisha workers on way to Surat die in accident

Bhubaneswar  
Eight migrant labourers from Odisha died in a road accident near Raipur in Chhattisgarh early on Saturday. The workers were on their way to Surat for work in textile units. The victims were among a group of 67 workers from Ganjam district who were returning to work in Gujarat.  
NEWS ▶ PAGE 8

CLASSIFIEDS ▶ PAGE 4  
MAGAZINE ▶ 8 PAGES

# Border actions violate bilateral agreements, Rajnath tells China

His counterpart Gen. Wei says China would not give up 'an inch of its territory'

ANANTH KRISHNAN  
DINAKAR PERI  
NEW DELHI



Striking a pose: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh with his Chinese and Russian counterparts, Wei Fenghe, left, and Sergei Shoigu, in Moscow on Friday. ■ AP

months, including in the Galwan Valley, the Ministry stated.

### Wei sought meeting

The two Ministers met on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) late on Friday evening. In the meeting that lasted more than two hours, they had "frank and in-depth discussions" about the border developments as well as on India-China relations.

The meeting, sought by the Chinese side, is the first between the Defence Ministers since the stand-off began in early May along the disputed boundary in eastern Ladakh and comes in the midst of a major escalation

on the south bank of Pangong Tso (lake) last week.

Mr. Singh further said the current situation should be handled responsibly and neither side should take any action that could either complicate the situation or escalate matters in the border areas.

"The Chinese Defence Minister suggested that both sides should maintain communication at all levels including between the two Ministers," the Ministry said.

Both Ministers agreed to resolve the ongoing situation and outstanding issues in the border areas peacefully through dialogue.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 6

## 5 'abducted' by PLA in Arunachal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

China's People's Liberation Army (PLA) has reportedly abducted five people from Upper Subansiri district of Arunachal Pradesh.

Officials said no one has lodged any formal complaint with the police or the armed forces that guard the LAC. But they said there had been instances of the PLA having "abducted" and released people – usually hunters who venture deep into the jungles straddling parts of the vague boundary – in the past.

"We came to know from social media that five people belonging to the Tagin community were abducted by the PLA from a jungle near Nacho when they were out hunting. The families of the missing people have not lodged any formal complaint," Upper Subansiri SP Kuni Bagra said.

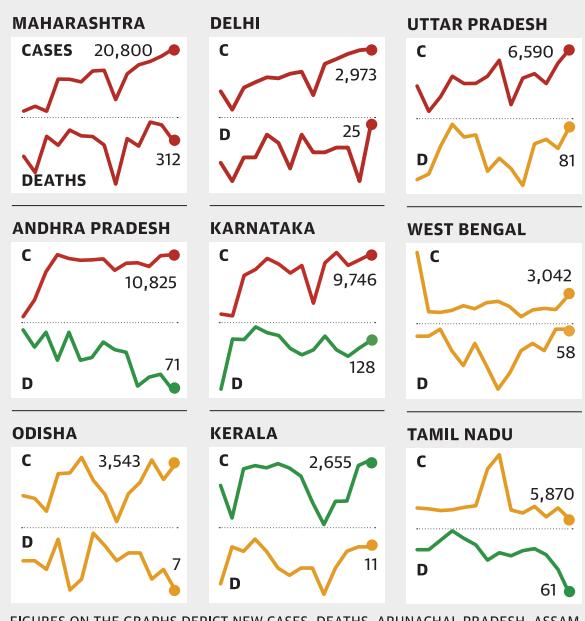
CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 6

# Ministry clears COVID-19 tests without prescription

India second in world in overall case tally, overtakes Brazil

### Viral tracker

With 84,385 cases recorded on Saturday, India's COVID-19 tally stood at 41,04,497. As many as 1,019 new deaths were registered on the day. The graphs depict new cases and deaths in the last 14 days across select States which are classified based on where cases or deaths are rising ■; falling ■; or showing a mixed trend ■■■■■



FIGURES ON THE GRAPHS DEPICT NEW CASES, DEATHS. ARUNACHAL PRADESH, ASSAM, JHARKHAND, MEGHALAYA & LADAKH U.T. DID NOT RELEASE DATA AS OF 10.15 P.M.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry on Saturday issued an updated advisory for COVID-19 testing simplifying the process and giving more flexibility to State authorities to facilitate greater ease of testing.

"For the first time, along with more simplified modalities, the updated guidelines provide for 'on demand' testing to ensure higher levels of testing," a release issued by the Ministry said.

A totally new section, "Testing on Demand", has been added in the advisory which does away with pre-scription by a registered medical practitioner although the State governments have the freedom to decide on the simplified modalities," the Ministry said.

Saturday saw 84,385 confirmed cases and 1,019 deaths till 10.15 p.m., with data yet to come from Assam, Jharkhand, Arunachal Pradesh, Ladakh and Meghalaya. This marked the fourth straight day when more than 80,000 infections were identified.

CONFIRMATORY TEST ▶ PAGE 8

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CM YK

MYNA



WIRE-TAILED SWALLOW



LAUGHING DOVE



KINGFISHER

# Bird paradise amid urban jungle



PEACOCK



EURASIAN HOPOE



COUCAL

The city forest near New Ashok Nagar metro station is home to various species of beautiful birds. The roughly 10 hectares of green oasis located along the Hindon Cut near the Yamuna was inaugurated in August 2007 by then Chief Minister Sheila Dikshit. It was among the nine new city forests that were developed in 2007-08, adding to the existing 13 city forests, as per the Delhi Forest Department website.



BLACK KITE



GREEN BEE-EATERS

PHOTOS BY V.V. KRISHNAN



SHIKRA



GREY HORNBILL



SUNBIRD



SWALLOWTAIL BUTTERFLY

'British' man arrested for duping women

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 38-year-old man was arrested for allegedly duping several women by posing as a British citizen, on the pretext of marriage, the police said on Saturday.

DCP (South) Atul Thakur said that the accused has been identified as Vishal alias Mohit Tokas, a resident of Munirka.

The police said that a woman lodged a complaint and stated that she was checking a suitable match on a divorce matrimonial website. A person, claiming to be a British citizen, contacted her and subsequently promised to marry her. He convinced the victim that he needed money and after getting the amount, he would marry her. He contacted her over WhatsApp only, the police said.

Under the policy, a minimum of 70% contiguous land in a particular sector has to be pooled together before it is eligible for expansion

## 10 sectors qualify for development under DDA policy

A minimum of 70% contiguous land in a particular sector has to be pooled together before it is eligible for expansion

SHINJINI GHOSH  
NEW DELHI

Over 18 months after a web portal for the land pooling policy was launched, 10 sectors in three zones under the Land Pooling Policy (LPP) have accumulated the requisite amount of land required to qualify for development purposes.

The land pooling policy, received the Centre's nod in October 2018 and the online portal for expression of willingness regarding participation in the policy was launched in February last year. Comprising 95 villages, there are a total of 109 sectors, across five sectors under the policy.

Under the policy, a minimum of 70% contiguous land in a particular sector is required to be pooled before it can qualify for development purposes.

According to the latest data provided by the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), the urban body has accumulated around 6,575 hectares of land. Currently, a few sectors in three zones – N, P-II

and L are likely to be qualified for development under the policy. The corresponding areas are around Najafgarh, Alipur and the Bawana Industrial Area, officials said.

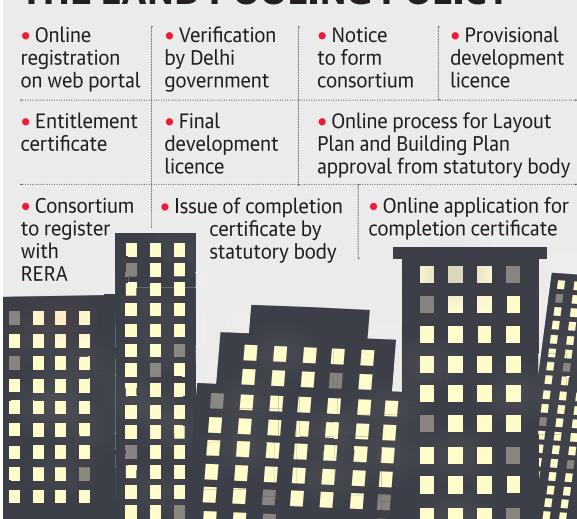
The Delhi government, meanwhile, has verified around 1,371 applications required for development purposes.

"Based on the in-house exercise of mapping of pooled land on the GIS platform, the applications registered on the DDA portal are being scrutinised by the DDA. The ownership of the land details submitted by the applicants under the portal is to be verified by the Delhi government revenue department," a senior DDA official said.

**Formation of consortium**  
A draft document for formation of consortium has also been prepared by the land-owning agency in a bid to guide stakeholders for the next step.

"Once the consortium is formed, they have to upload an implementation plan, upload the contract agreement and pay the processing

### STEPS INVOLVED UNDER THE LAND POOLING POLICY



fees. The draft guidelines have been issued so that landowners can complete the background work by the time the government completes the verification process," an official said.

While 6,481 hectares got pooled by February 15 this year, the period between

March 11 and April 24 saw around 94 hectares getting accumulated.

Senior DDA officials attributed the slump in registrations to the nationwide COVID-19 lockdown. "Even though the process is completely online, not everyone participating in the policy

are technology savvy. Sometimes, villagers require help to register their land or complete the formalities. Due to the lockdown, this was not possible and hence, there was a slow period. But the DDA is planning to launch the next window by this month and expecting a better response," a senior official said.

Once the next window is opened, the urban body is expecting another 10 sectors to qualify for the policy, taking the total to 20 sectors.

### Homebuyers complain

Even as the urban body maintained that the process is progressing, homebuyers, who have been paying for the last several years in the hope of owning an address in Delhi, complained of the policy being "slowly implemented".

"There has been no work whatsoever on the ground. It is only paperwork and files which has been continuing since the policy got approved. There is a massive delay in execution of the policy."

"Before investing, they should check whether the final development licence has been issued by the DDA and whether the RERA registration is available," an official said.

Man who beat up, robbed pilot booked under MCOCA

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 22-year-old youth, arrested for assaulting and robbing a pilot of a private airline at gunpoint near the IIT flyover, has been booked under the Maharashtra Control of Organized Crime Act (MCOCA), the police said on Saturday.

The police said that P. Silva, a history-sheeter and resident of Madangir, was found involved in over 12 cases of theft, robbery, snatching and Arms Act.

"Even from inside the jail, he was allegedly controlling his 'Thak Thak' gang to carry out criminal activities in Delhi," DCP (South) Atul Thakur said, adding that it has also come to notice that Silva used the money from criminal activities to acquire benami properties.

On June 2, Silva and his accomplices robbed and assaulted the pilot when he was on his way to the airport.

### HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

The Executive Engineer HPPWD Division Hamirpur Distt. Hamirpur H.P on behalf of Governor of H.P invites the item rate bids, in electronic tendering system from the eligible class for the works as detailed in the table.

Sr. No	Name of Work	Estimated cost (Rs.)	Starting Date for downloading Bid	EMD (Rs.)	Deadline for Submission of Bid
1	C/O link road from Bouri to Harizan Basti (Dhiman) Balu in G.P. Tal Km. 0/0 to 0/600, (SH- C/O RCC 900mm dia hume pipe culvert at Km. 0/158 with wing walls, M/T in Km. 0/0 to 0/360 & P/L 80mm thick interlocking concrete block & U-Shape drain at RD. 0/090 to 0/150 under SCSP Head.	8,08,136/-	18.09.2020	16200/-	25.09.2020
2	C/O approach road to Chief Engineer residence (H2) HPPWD Hamirpur, (SH- C/O Cement concrete pavement)	7,79,066/-	18.09.2020	15600/-	25.09.2020

The bidders are advised to note other details of tenders from the department website [www.hptenders.gov.in](http://www.hptenders.gov.in).

### OFFICE THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER PWD (R&B) ELECTRIC DIVISION JAMMU

#### NOTICE INVITING TENDER

e-NIT No.EDJ/52 of 2020-21 Dated 03-09-2020

For and on the behalf of the Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir e-tenders are invited on item rate basis from approved and eligible contractors/agencies registered with Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir for each of the following works:-

S. No	Name of Work	Name of Division	Cost of document (in ₹)	Earnest Money (in ₹)	Time allowed for completion	Time and date of opening of tender	Class of Contractor
1	Stage Contract for Maintenance of Air Conditioners/Drinking Water Coolers etc. installed at Jammu and Srinagar Houses at 5 Pathri Raji Road, Chankaypuri, 7 Akbar Road, New Delhi, Amritsar, Chandigarh and Jammu for the financial year 2020-21 w.e.f. 31/03/2020	PWD (R&B) Electric Division, Jammu	600	10000/-	Upto ending March 2021	12-09-2020 At or after (2 : 00 PM)	OEM/ Registered Authorised Distributor/ Dealers of OEM

The bidding documents 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 <http://jkttenders.gov.in> as per below schedule:

1 Date of Issue of Tender Notice	03-09-2020
2 Period of downloading of bidding documents	From 04-09-2020 to 11-09-2020, 4:00 P.M.

DIP/J-4138/20  
Sd/-Executive Engineer  
PWD (R&B) Electric Division,Jammu

## Lawyer held for manhandling police officers

Three others also arrested for incident on Saket Court premises

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

An advocate allegedly manhandled two police officers in a drunken state in Saket Court premises on Friday night for allegedly checking men before they entered the court. The police said that the accused has been arrested.

A senior police officer said that a PCR call was received regarding a quarrel at Gate No. 2 of Saket Court around

9.30 p.m. When the police reached the spot, they were informed that two officers have been roughed up by a drunk man who was later identified as Chinmaya Sejwal (27), a lawyer.

### Argument with guards

The police said that a car with three occupants tried to enter the court complex around 8.30 p.m. and were stopped by the guards for checking. When the driver of the vehicle started arguing with the guards, they called Constable Hitesh who was on duty. "The occupants of the car said that they had to meet an advocate

in the lawyer's chambers. The car was then allowed to proceed after verification and the guard was told to record the details," the officer said.

Later, the car returned in

which all accused, identified as Chinmaya, Anuj, Vinay and Honey, the police said. The three men pointed towards Constable Hitesh and told Mr. Sejwal that he had stopped them. Mr. Sejwal came out and hit the officer who tried to pacify him.

When the accused didn't stop, the Constable called Assistant Sub-Inspector Kailash who also tried to pacify Mr. Sejwal but he pushed the of-

ficer. "The ASI's spectacles were broken and his mobile phone also fell which was then picked up by the accused who fled the spot along with his associates" the officer said.

The police officers were medically examined and CCTV footage was retrieved. Based on Mr. Hitesh's statement, a case under relevant sections was registered.

Anuj and Honey were arrested, the police said, adding that Mr. Sejwal and his accomplice Honey have been arrested earlier this year as well for allegedly beating two persons in Lado Sarai.

Timings

DELHI

SUNDAY, SEP. 06	
RISE 06:02	SET 18:37
RISE 21:08	SET 09:22
MONDAY, SEP. 07	
RISE 06:03	SET 18:36
RISE 21:40	SET 10:13
TUESDAY, SEP. 08	
RISE 06:03	SET 18:34
RISE 22:14	SET 11:07

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	37	26
Safdarjung	37	26
Palam	36	27

**Delhi Palam Today**  
34°C Light rain with partly cloudy to cloudy sky and light wind would affect the area.

**Delhi Palam Tomorrow**  
34°C Light winds and comfortable morning and warm day. Light rain expected at some area.

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**IN BRIEF**

**Noida records highest single-day spike in cases**

**NOIDA**  
Uttar Pradesh's Gautam Buddha Nagar on Saturday recorded its highest single-day spike of 213 fresh COVID-19 cases, pushing the tally to 8,686, official data showed. The number of active cases reached 1,299, up from 1,188 on Friday, 1,163 on Thursday, 1,114 on Wednesday, 1,067 on Tuesday, 1,055 on Monday and 1,009 on Sunday, according to data released by the Uttar Pradesh Health Department for a 24-hour period.

**NGT rap over industrial activities in U.P. societies**

**NEW DELHI**  
The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has pulled up the Uttar Pradesh government for failing to curb industrial activities in residential areas while observing that the rule of law had to be followed by authorities.

## Riots: court raps officer in constable murder case

Judge calls it gross negligence on his part for failing to file replies to bail pleas

**PRESS TRUST OF INDIA**

A court here on Saturday pulled up a Delhi Police investigating officer for failing to file replies to bail applications in a case related to the alleged murder of a head constable during the Febrary riots, saying he was dealing with an important matter in a "very callous" way.

Communal clashes had broken out in north-east Delhi on February 24 after violence between citizenship area.

law supporters and protesters spiralled out of control, leaving at least 53 people dead and around 200 injured.

**Ratan Lal killing**  
The court was hearing separate bail applications of Sahil, Adil, Mohd Furqan and Imran Ansari, who are accused in the case related to the alleged murder of Head Constable Ratan Lal during the violence in Dayalpur area.

Adil had filed his bail application on July 3, Sahil and Furqan on July 23 and Ansari on August 27.

Additional Sessions Judge Vinod Yadav said the replies to the bail pleas have not been filed by the investigating officer (IO), despite an undertaking from him on the last date of hearing.

"The reply in the matter has not been filed by the IO despite the undertaking on the last date of hearing. This is a gross negligence on part

of the IO. This is such an important matter for the Crime Branch and the same is being dealt with by the IO in a very callous and indolent manner. Today, seven matters were kept for two entire sessions," the court said.

"The IO should have been watchful that already enough time has elapsed in the matter. The bail application has been pending for a fairly long time," it said.

The court has put up the matter for September 14.

During the MeToo movement, Ms. Ramani in 2018 accused Mr. Akbar of sexual misconduct around 20 years ago when he was a journalist. Mr. Akbar resigned as Union Minister on October 17, 2018.

Senior advocate Rebecca John, appearing for Ms. Ramani, told the court on Saturday that as per law it is not defamation to make an imputation on the character of another when it is made in good faith for the protection of his/her or other's interest. She added that Ms. Ramani's alleged defamatory tweets were "her truth".

The next hearing is on September 8.

## Iconic eatery battles massive slump in business, unable to pay salaries for months

**Sales in most branches of Indian Coffee House down by up to 60%; Delhi Society asks NDMC to waive rent, says govt. should step in to save chain**

**NIKHIL M BABU**  
NEW DELHI

Wearing a white turban and uniform, 48-year-old Ranveer Singh holds a round steel tray full of Indian Coffee House signature crockery.

It is 2 p.m. in Connaught Place. A major part of the famous restaurant remains locked and only four tables have customers.

"Business is badly hit because of which we have not received salaries since March. I have not been able to pay rent for the last three months and have taken out ₹50,000 in loan since the lockdown. I will have to take more this month," Mr. Singh told *The Hindu*.

Due to COVID-19 and staggered lifting of curbs, business at the iconic Indian Coffee House in different cities have been hit badly and salaries of employees of

at least eight branches in five cities of north India under The Indian Coffee House Workers' Co-operative Society Ltd., Delhi, (Delhi Society) have not been paid for the past five months.

Like Mr. Singh, many workers said they have borrowed or taken money from their provident fund to meet their expenses.

The deputy general manager (DGM) of Delhi Society said sales of all their eight branches were down by about 60% and Delhi by 70%.

"The situation is same in other States as well. We have kept the salary of five months pending and whenever funds are available, we will pay the employees. I talk to Indian Coffee House societies in Kerala and Madhya Pradesh and they are also going

through a tough time. The government should help us," said DGM Devender Negi.

The Delhi Society, founded on October 27, 1957, has written to the New Delhi Municipal Council to waive the rent of ₹1.19 lakh per month for the lockdown period of their Connaught Place branch. However, the NDMC has not agreed to this, said the Society.

Mr. Singh, who has been working at the ICH for the past 22 years, said this is the first time that they were not getting salaries. "I have two

children – one in Class 10 and another in Class 6 – and I am not even in a position to pay their school fees, which will be around ₹10,000 for three months. Almost everyone else is in a similar position," he said.

Bharat Joshi, 34, who has been working at the ICH for the 14 years, said he has exhausted his savings. "I get ration from the government, but there are other expenses also. How will we meet them?" he asked.

President of the Delhi Society, Dinesh Singh Gusain, said: "I have taken ₹50,000 from my PF fund as I was not getting my salary. Now, I will have to take money again from my PF."

Flipping through the pages of the account's book of the ICH in Connaught Place, the branch manager, Bhuvanesh Kumar, said:

"Today, till 2 p.m., we have only had a business of around ₹1,000. Before the pandemic, we used to have a sale of around ₹25,000-₹30,000/day. We are giving advance salary to many workers. But the business is too low even for it."

After reopening on June 8, there was a revenue of ₹33,836 in June, ₹53,956 in July and about ₹80,000 in August, the records showed.

"Earlier, we used to have a business of around ₹9 lakh-12 lakh a month. The government should help us. The business is less than even the rent," he added.

A letter written to the NDMC by the Society on August 9 read, "During the lockdown period due to COVID-19, the Indian Coffee House was totally closed from 22/03/2020 to 08/06/2020 and during this period

the NDMC has not given any permission to enter the premises of the building. The Society shall be highly thankful to you, if on humanitarian grounds you will not demand the licence fee for the period."

An NDMC official said that they do not have any provision to waive rent.

**"Will meet CM"**  
"We are planning to meet Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and request him to help," Mr. Kumar said.

Almost all employees, including the manager and the DGM said that the government should help, as ICH is no ordinary restaurant chain. "Many political leaders used to come to ICH. In the 80s, when I was a waiter, I had served [L.K.] Advani ji when he visited here," Mr. Kumar said.

## City records 70-day high in new cases

Over 38,000 tests done in a single day

**STAFF REPORTER**

NEW DELHI

On the day when Delhi conducted a record number of COVID-19 tests, the city witnessed the highest number of new cases in over 70 days.

On Saturday, the city reported 2,973 cases in the past 24 hours, according to a Delhi government health bulletin. The tally now stands at 1,88,193.

On June 26, the city had reported 3,460 new cases.

**Record testing**

A total of 38,895 COVID-19 tests were also done in the city in the past 24 hours, which is the highest number of tests conducted in a day since the outbreak began.

Also, 25 more deaths have been reported, taking the death toll to 4,538.

Of the total cases, 1,63,785 people have recovered and there are 19,870 active cases.

Saturday also witnessed an increase in other parameters: number of active cases, positive people under home isolation, and people admitted at hospitals.

The number of new cases

**Virus spread**

Total number of COVID-19 cases	Total deaths
<b>1,88,193</b>	<b>4,538</b>
New cases in the past 24 hours	New deaths
<b>2,973</b>	<b>25</b>

SOURCE: DELHI GOVERNMENT HEALTH BULLETIN

is still less compared to June.

On June 23, daily new cases touched almost 4,000 – highest so far, and since then it had been dropping.

The number of active cases in the city on Saturday was the highest in about two months. On July 1, there were 27,007 active cases, which fell to 9,897 on August 4. But since then the number of active cases has been above the 10,000 mark.

The number of positive people under home isolation was 10,514 on Saturday and is the highest in over 50 days.

The number of containment zones in the city has reached 976.

## Kejriwal attributes rise in cases to increased COVID-19 testing

CM claims daily death rate in city not only lowest in country but across the world

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday said that the COVID-19 situation in Delhi is "under control" and attributed the rise in the number of cases in the Capital to an increase in the number of tests.

"A week back we were conducting 18,000-20,000 tests per day, and we have suddenly doubled the tests to around 40,000 per day. You can consider this our biggest counter-attack against Corona. We have tried to explain things to all those who were opposing the double testing in Delhi, and all of them have joined hands with us," he added.

**'Follow guidelines'**

"I have been witnessing since the last few days that some people in Delhi are being complacent. They do not wear masks when going out or follow social distancing in public places. This is not right. We have to go to work, earn a living, run the economy, and look after our family, but we should not be care-



People undergoing rapid antigen testing for COVID-19 in north Delhi's Jahangirpuri on Saturday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

less," he said.

"Yesterday [Friday], Delhi witnessed 2,914 COVID-19 cases. I have spoken to many experts in the last few days, some say it is a second wave but others disagree. But if we keep all these technical things aside, I have inspected the situation, the preparations, and all the data related to the virus in the last few days. When the situation worsened in June, we made you aware that cases might be on a rise till July 31 and we were prepared to tackle the situation. All I want to say is

that there is no need to worry. The situation is under control," he said at a digital briefing.

Assuring citizens that there was no dearth of beds in city hospitals, Mr. Kejriwal said: "There are 14,000 beds available out of which 5,000 are occupied. Around 1,600-1,700 beds are occupied by residents of States other than Delhi, which means that only 3,000-3,300 patients belong to Delhi."

Citizens from across India come here for treatment, which is "a matter of pride", added Mr. Kejriwal.

## Anti-dengue campaign starts today

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**

NEW DELHI

The Delhi government will relaunch the "10 Hafta 10 Baje 10 Minute" anti-dengue campaign from Sunday. The 10-week mass awareness campaign is aimed at reducing the cases of dengue and chikungunya here.

The campaign will continue every Sunday and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will kickstart it at 10 a.m. by inspecting his own residence for stagnant clean water, which can lead to the breeding of mosquitoes.

Last year, the government had said that the campaign had garnered the support of many celebrities as well as officials of the government and other autonomous bodies.

Under the initiative, the citizens must inspect their homes for any possible sources of stagnant clean water.

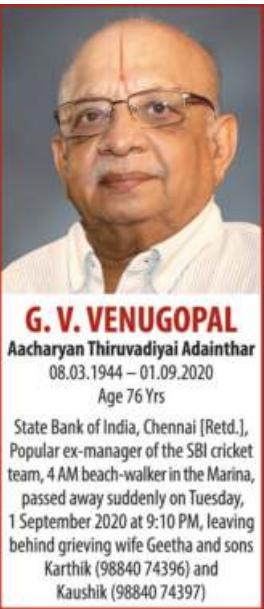
Mr. Kejriwal had appealed to the Ministers, MLAs, and the citizens to begin the mega-campaign from their own homes and spend 10 minutes every Sunday to make sure there is no stagnant water in their homes.

## Police manhandled me and my friend for no reason, alleges 18-year-old girl

DCP denies allegations, says couple assaulted man in park

OBITUARY &  
REMEMBRANCE

## DEATH

**G.V. VENUGOPAL**

Aacharyan Thiruvadiyai Adaintha

08.03.1944 – 01.09.2020

Age 76 Yrs

State Bank of India, Chennai [Retd.], Popular ex-manager of the SBI cricket team, 4 AM beach-walker in the Marina, passed away suddenly on Tuesday, 1 September 2020 at 9:10 PM, leaving behind grieving wife Geetha and sons Karthik (98840 74396) and Kaushik (98840 74397)

## DEATH

**SAD DEMISE**

He attained the lotus feet of his Masters at 4.09 am on Saturday, 05.09.2020.

He will be deeply missed and fondly remembered by all of us and by members of his spiritual family.

He is survived by his wife, two sons, daughters-in-law and four grandchildren.

In Fond Memory: Samvit &amp; Suresh, Members of the Heartfulness family

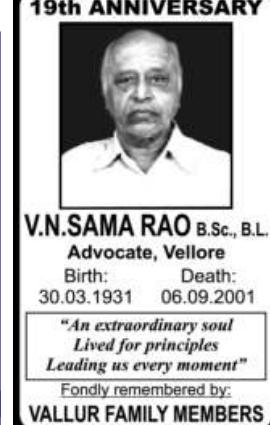
Ph: 9176672413

9825014075 / 9840928094

We mourn the passing of our dear

Shri C RAJAGOPALAN

## DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

**19th ANNIVERSARY****V.N.SAMA RAO** B.Sc., B.L.

Advocate, Vellore

Birth: 30.03.1931 Death: 06.09.2001

"An extraordinary soul  
Lived for principles  
Leading us every moment"

Fondly remembered by:

VALLUR FAMILY MEMBERS

In memory of your loved ones

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DONATE EYES-GIFT SIGHT

Kamal Nath demands  
CBI probe into rice 'scam'

## SIDHARTH YADAV

BHOJPAL

Former Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath on Saturday demanded a Central Bureau of Investigation probe into the supply of substandard rice to fair price shops reportedly State-wide.

Taking to Twitter, Mr. Nath said, "The rice scam is not just limited to Balaghat and Mandla districts. This stretches to several districts and is connected to the higher-ups."

He asked the government to expand the scope of the inquiry beyond the two districts, despite the State go-

vernment claiming it was already inspecting stocks and had even withheld rice pending inquiry.

"By restricting the inquiry to the two districts, there is an attempt to suppress the scam," alleged Mr. Nath.

Mr. Nath's statement comes two days after Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan, who directed the Economic Offences Wing to investigate the matter in the two districts, had said the previous Congress government took no action while substandard rice was reportedly procured from millers in Balaghat district in February.

Rajasthan initiates  
austerity measures

CM, Ministers to forego week's salary

## MOHAMMED IQBAL

JAIPUR

The Congress government in Rajasthan has started taking austerity measures in view

of a massive decline in revenue collections amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The cost cutting will apply on all government departments and institutions and involve restrictions on new purchases, travel, official banquets and opening of new offices.

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot and his Cabinet colleagues will forego one week's salary every month.

Senior government officers will go without salary for two days and other employees for one day each month.

Mr. Gehlot has ordered a 30% reduction in the expenditure on government offices, travel, computer, stationery, etc. The government has also suspended leave encashment and restricted the spending on petrol and diesel. No new offices will be established. The official meetings will be held through videoconferencing as far as possible.

Former Assam  
CM Mahanta  
hospitalised

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI

Former Assam CM Prafulla Kumar Mahanta was admitted to a private hospital in Guwahati on Friday evening after complaining of "very high pressure".

"He had a few meetings amid tremendous heat and was very exhausted after returning on Friday. He felt uneasy after what the doctors said was a bout of very high pressure," said an aide Dhruba Sarma.

Doctors at the hospital said Mr. Mahanta has been put in ICU because of a mild neurological problem.

## CLASSIFIEDS

thehinduads.com

## MATRIMONIAL

## BRIDEGROOMS WANTED

INDEX OF  
MATRIMONIAL

## BRIDEGROOMS WANTED

## BRIDES WANTED

## BRIDES &amp; GROOMS WANTED

Classification common  
for Brides, Bridgrooms,  
Brides & Grooms

## Assamese

## Awadhi

## Bengali

## Bhojpuri

## Bihari

## Chhattisgarhi

## English

## Gujarati

## Haryanvi

## Hindi

## Kannada

## Kashmiri

## Konkani

## Malayalam

## Manipuri

## Marathi

## Marwari

## Nepali

## Oriya

## Parsi

## Punjabi

## Saurashtra

## Sindhi

## Tamil

## Telugu

## Tulu

## Urdu

## MARRIAGE BUREAUS

## WEDDING ARRANGEMENTS

## COMPUTER / INFO.TECH.

BALIJA 29, Thulani, MBA, MNC Veg fair &amp; good looking seeks professionally qualified groom CT

9941348103

## COSMOPOLITAN

## RC Pillai Fair Girl 35/164cm BE MNC

Blore Seeks RC BOY Clean habits

Cast No Bar Good Earnings India Abroad, PH 949704701, 9602094701

Contact: 9497039037

## PUNJABI

## SM for Punjabi Beautiful Girl, 5'5"-2

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Contact: 7299743021

## TAMIL

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Blore Seeks RC BOY Clean habits

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Good Looking 03-04-1986 born

152 cm / Msc M.Phil , working as

Assistant Professor in a Reputed

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Suitable Alliance, Employed /

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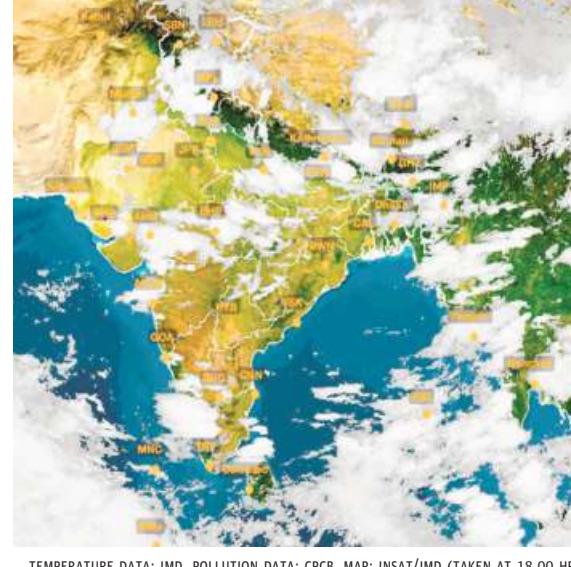
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## HINDU SC PR 24/56 BE MNC

**WEATHER WATCH**

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD; POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 18.00 HRS)

**Forecast for Sunday:** Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Sikkim, Assam, Meghalaya, Uttarakhand, Odisha, central Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Kerala. Thunderstorm accompanied by lightning likely at isolated places over Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand and Vidarbha

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	...-36.7	27.6	...	Kozhikode	0.2...	33.0...	26.0
Ahmedabad	-35.2...	26.3	...	Kurnool	2.4...	35.6...	24.8
Aizawl	-29.8...	21.3	...	Lucknow	-36.3...	26.1	...
Allahabad	-36.0...	23.0	...	Madurai	1.9...	34.0...	24.6
Bengaluru	-29.2...	22.3	...	Mangaluru	0.4...	32.6...	24.6
Bhopal	-34.5...	24.2	...	Mumbai	6.9...	33.6...	25.4
Bhubaneswar	-35.1...	25.6	...	Mysuru	-30.5...	21.8	...
Chandigarh	-35.5...	26.3	...	New Delhi	0.8...	36.8...	26.4
Chennai	0.3...	34.0	27.2	Patna	-36.4...	27.3	...
Coimbatore	0.2...	33.2...	24.4	Pondicherry	-32.8...	26.4	...
Dehradoon	0.2...	34.4...	23.7	Pune	-34.7...	22.5	...
Gangtok	28...	20.3...	18.0	Raipur	29.2...	33.0...	25.8
Goa	0.7...	32.0...	26.1	Ranchi	-34.0...	24.5	...
Guwahati	6.2...	35.0...	24.9	Shillong	-26.6...	17.6	...
Hubballi	-31.0...	22.0	...	Shimla	0.8...	26.4...	19.2
Hyderabad	-33.2...	24.0	...	Srinagar	0.8...	27.9...	16.7
Imphal	-31.3...	21.3	...	Thiruvananthapuram	-16.7...	31.6...	24.8
Jaipur	-33.6...	24.4	...	Tiruchi	4.7...	33.3...	24.8
Kochi	4.8...	31.2...	25.4	Vijayawada	-34.9...	27.0	...
Kohima	-24.2...	19.0	...	Visakhapatnam	-33.4...	27.4	...
Kolkata	0.9...	34.7...	27.6	(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)			

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

**Pollutants in the air you are breathing**

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Bengaluru, Uttar Pradesh recorded an average air quality index (AQI) score of 268 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Kozhikode, Kerala recorded a healthy AQI score of 23

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

**SO:** 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:** 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

+ Make Sharad Pawar chief after merging NCP with Cong.: Athawale

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

Observing that Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi are not keen on donning the mantle of Congress president, Union Minister Ramdas Athawale on Saturday suggested the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) be merged with the grand old party and Sharad Pawar be made the new chief of the merged entity.

The Republican Party of India (A) president also said that such a decision should be taken jointly by the Congress and Mr. Pawar.

"Currently, Rahul and Sonia Gandhi are not keen on becoming the Congress president. It is my instruction to the Congress of getting merged with the NCP and making Sharad Pawar the party president. The decision should be jointly taken by Mr. Pawar and the Congress," Mr. Athawale said.

The suggestion comes



Ramas Athawale

against the backdrop of a leadership churn in the Congress, with a group of leaders demanding "full-time and active leadership".

In a Congress Working Committee meeting last month, party leaders urged Ms. Gandhi to continue as its interim chief till an All India Congress Committee session can be convened. They authorised her to effect necessary organisational changes to deal with the challenges facing the party.

## 'Neighbour Katta' enables kids in hamlet to study amid lockdown

Teachers send exercises on cell phones, students meet in small groups and complete tasks while observing physical distancing

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

AURANGABAD

Amid the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic and the lockdown, teachers at a hamlet in Maharashtra's Aurangabad district have devised a method of distance learning to make the local schoolchildren study the syllabus and do their homework by following physical distancing.

Teachers of a Zilla Parishad-run primary school in Dattawadi, a settlement of 165 people located near the world-famous Ajanta caves, have named this initiative 'Neighbour Katta'.

'Katta' in Marathi means a place where people meet

and talk informally.

Under the initiative, the teachers send the list of curricular exercises on the mobile phones of the students' parents. And the children have to complete the given tasks daily during the specified school hours by coming together in small groups by maintaining social distancing.

Each group comprises children of different classes living in the vicinity, so that seniors can guide the juniors.

The photos of the completed homework are then sent in a WhatsApp group to the teachers, who accordingly ask the students to carry out



Under the initiative, students have to send photos of their work to teachers on WhatsApp. • PHOTO FOR REPRESENTATION

corrections.

School headmaster Bapu Bawiskar said, "There are only 19 students in our primary school. After the school was shut due to the

lockdown, we decided to form 'Neighbour Katta'. Its implementation started on April 9. We formed groups of around three children of different classes. We send a list of homework

through SMS on the phones of their parents as most of them do not have smartphones," he said.

Mr. Bawiskar said they also formed a WhatsApp group consisting of some parents. "We get the photos of the homework done by students in that group. As a teacher, I check their work. Out of the four hours of school held daily this way, two-and-a-half hours are dedicated to studying lessons," he said.

The rest of the school time is reserved for activities like jumping, running, learning or making different sounds to make their study exciting,

Mr. Bawiskar said.

"There is 100% attendance," he said, adding that the students have completed around 75% of the syllabus of the first semester.

Vijay Dutonde, block education officer of Aurangabad Zilla Parishad, said, "This concept of online education has helped children in continuing their education by maintaining physical distancing."

Mr. Bawiskar said that the 'Neighbour Katta' initiative has found a place in the '30 most inspiring ideas of change 2020' organised by Design for Change and the United Nations Children's Fund.

and criminal conspiracy, of the NDPS Act. On August 28, an NCB team apprehended Mr. Lakhani, 21, with 46 gm of marijuana. In a statement, he said he purchased the drug from Mr. Arora. He was taken into custody and 13 gm of marijuana was recovered. The premises of Mr. Vilantra was searched and ₹9,55,750, \$2081, 180 UK pounds and 15 UAE dirhams were recovered on September 1.

### In custody: Actor Rhea Chakraborty's brother Showik after a court hearing in Mumbai on Saturday. • PTI

Mr. Parihar disclosed the name of Mr. Ebrahim as a supplier of the charas/hashish and the NCB recovered 0.5 gm of dark brown coloured substance purported to be hashish/charas. Based on the disclosure of Mr. Parihar, the NCB summoned Mr. Chakraborty and sought his and Mr. Miranda's custody for seven days. The magistrate court remanded Mr. Ebrahim as per instructions from Mr. Chakraborty. (With inputs from Devesh K. Pandey)

The NCB's remand appli-

cation said, "There are instances where Mr. Parihar has facilitated drugs and has been in contact with Mr. Miranda and Mr. Chakraborty. He is an active member of the drug syndicate connected with high-profile personalities and drug suppliers. He used to pay and receive money via credit cards, cash and payment gateways."

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Video of Basid Ali tied to a tree, surrounded by people, went viral

**OMAR RASHID**

LUCKNOW

A 32-year-old man accused of stealing iron plates from a government office died in Bareilly district after he was tied to a tree and thrashed by a mob, the police said on Saturday.

A case of murder was registered against seven named accused while two were arrested, said the police. A footage of Basid Ali, tied to the tree and surrounded by a mob of youths who allegedly thrashed him, was also shared widely on social media. The police said Basid was an alcoholic and even into drugs.

SP Rural Bareilly Sansar Singh said Basid was a drug abuser and in a state of intox-

ication had gone to the government tubewell section of the Irrigation Department where he stole an iron fan and a plate. As he left the colony, some locals raised an alarm following which two guards from the Department caught him, said the police.

**Spotted by guards'** Prabhakar, assistant engineer at the tubewell department, said he had received information that a rag-picker was taking away pump set from the compound and was spotted by the guards.

Someone in the crowd called the police emergency services vehicle which took an injured Basid to the police station. Visuals showed Basid, his neck in an awkward,

seated on a bench in the police station after being assaulted.

The tubewell department officials did not want to take further action against him saying they had recovered their items and that he lived in their neighbourhood, said Mr. Singh.

Basid's side also said they didn't want to pursue the matter and left, said the officer. "They took him home at around 2 p.m. At around 3.30 p.m., it is said he died," said Mr. Singh.

Several social-media users asked why Basid was not taken to a hospital by the police. "When he was brought here, he didn't have any serious or visible injuries," said the officer.

## Akhilesh Gundecha steps down from Dhrupad Sansthan

Students have accused him of different forms of 'misconduct'

**SIDDHARTH YADAV**

BHOPAL

The Dhrupad Sansthan here has said it has launched an inquiry into allegations of sexual misconduct against Akhilesh Gundecha, a pakhawaj player and a music teacher, who had voluntarily refused himself from all activities of the organisation which promotes the ancient style of Hindustani classical music.

In a statement issued on September 3, the organisation's chairman Umakant Gundecha, said, "We have instituted an internal committee for prevention and redressal of all issues." The committee will look into complaints brought to its notice and

"strive to deliver justice without prejudice".

Former students have also levelled similar charges, on Facebook, against late Ramakant Gundecha, part of the Gundecha Brothers duo with Mr. Umakant. He died last year.

Stating that they had been "prisoners of this silence" for fear of reprisals, the post claimed the brothers weren't afraid to sexually harass them during one-on-one classes and told many students to oblige them if they wanted a career in music. It claimed the organisation was tainted by the "psychological, physical and sexual assault; by the abuses of power of Ramakant and Akhilesh Gundecha", and "today they found the strength to break the silence".

## A portrait of the actor as a young man



**Remembering the romantic hero:** Artist Ranjit Dahiya pays tribute to late Bollywood actor Rishi Kapoor on his 68th birth anniversary by recreating a still from his superhit movie, Bobby, on a wall in Bandra on Saturday. • VIVEK BENDRE

## G.B. Pant National Institute of Himalayan Environment (NIHE)

Kosi-Katarmal, Almora - 263 643, Uttarakhand

### TENDER NOTICE No. GBPNIHE/Vehical Hiring/LRC/2020-21/11

E-tenders are invited on behalf of the Director, GBPNIHE, Kosi-Katarmal, Almora from eligible reputed and registered firms/suppliers for hiring of Vehical (6 Seater) at GBPNIHE, Mini Secretariat, council complex Leh. The last date of submission of online tender is 24.09.2020 at 3.00 P.M. The documents shall be submitted online at website <https://moefcc.euniwizade.com>.

The full details are available in the Institute Website <http://gbpihed.gov.in> and <http://gbpihed.in>.

Administrative Officer

Email: [ao@gbpihed.nic.in](mailto:ao@gbpihed.nic.in)

## SEARCH FOR MISSING/KIDNAPPED

General public is hereby informed that one person namely **Mohd. Zakir S/o Mohd. Jamruddin**, R/o: Vill Bhaihai, PS: Mes, Distt. Saharsa, Bihar, has been missing/kidnapped

## FROM PAGE ONE

## 'Border actions violate bilateral agreements'

Chinese state-run Xinhua news agency quoted Gen. Wei as saying that "recently the relations between the two countries and the two militaries have been seriously affected by the border issue" and it was "very important for the two defence ministers to have a face-to-face and candid exchange of views on relevant issues".

Gen. Wei reiterated China's stand in the talks, echoing several statements last week where Beijing blamed India for the latest tensions.

Gen. Wei said: "The cause and truth of the current ten-

sion on the China-India border are very clear, and the responsibility lies entirely with the Indian side. Not an inch of China's territory can be lost. The Chinese military has the resolve, capability and confidence to safeguard national sovereignty and territorial integrity."

He added that the two sides should earnestly implement the important consensus reached by President Xi Jinping and Prime Minister Modi and stay committed to resolving the issue through dialogue and consultation.

## Five 'abducted' by PLA in Arunachal

"We are trying to verify the fact and are in touch with the Army since there have been past instances of the PLA capturing locals from the LAC and releasing them," he added.

Army officials said they have no information about the missing persons.

But Nacho resident Prakash Ringling said his brother Prasad Ringling and the four others were working as porter for the Army along the LAC and were abducted by PLA personnel from Se-ra-7 on the international border.

"He is a student and had returned home due to the COVID-19 restrictions. He took up the job of an Army

porter for sustenance. I request the State government and the Army to help bring the boys back," Mr. Ringling said.

Nacho, about 130 km from district headquarters Daporijo, is a village with less than 400 people but has a police station. Mr. Baraga said the officer in charge of the police station had been asked to find out the details.

District officials said the PLA had caught a person, also a hunter from the Tagin community, from near the LAC more than two months ago. He was released a month later after meetings between Army officials of the two countries.

## Many hands ensure green fields for tribal villages in Odisha

+ Traditional systems sustain communities

SATYASUNDAR BARIK  
BHUBANESWAR

Eight years ago when Minda Kadarka, a tribal woman from Odisha's Rayagada district, lost her husband, she had very little money to rely on. However, her field was not left barren nor was her granary empty.

Ms. Kadarka, 55, has no need to ask for help. Her fellow villagers have helped till her land, sow and harvest the paddy and make the grain available to her every year in Udrubali village under Kalyansinghpur block – all without demanding any wages.

Such altruism may sound strange to most, but among the tribal communities of Odisha, the tradition of taking everyone along is still strong and sustained.

"What if she cannot work or she is a single woman? We cannot leave her to die of starvation. By putting in extra labour, all villagers have ensured that Ms. Kadarka's field is tilled every season and she has access to grain," said Bhaskar Rao Kadarka, another resident of Udrubali, a tiny hamlet of just 13 families of the Kondh tribe.

The concept of labour cooperatives is still in vogue in almost all tribal communities, including the Dongria Kondh, Juanga, Lanja Saura, Saura, Didayi, Paudi Bhuyan and Kandh in Odisha.

However, not many are aware of these resilient traditions. When the Odisha State Tribal Museum recently screened a short film focusing on labour cooperatives of the Dongria Kondh, their structures and functioning, it left everyone awestruck.

The Dongria Kondh, a particularly vulnerable tribal group, who live in the State's Niyamgiri Hill range rising to 4,500 ft above sea level, practice at least 10 types of cooperative labour sharing within the community. "Here farming [on the steep hill slopes] requires more labour which a single family cannot provide. The

**United effort:** People from the Dongria Kondh community working on a paddy field in Rayagada district. ■ BISWARANJAN ROUTH

before, they have evolved an indigenous system to engage the labour available in the community to accom-

## SPECIAL

plish the farming tasks of all the families of the village," said Trilochan Sahoo, a leading researcher on tribal societies.

Community members come together to reduce costs as well as ensuring dignity to all members. Through the cooperative, adolescent boys and girls, men, women and the elderly contribute equally in terms of labour towards the village's fields and orchards.

In the *sahabati* system, all Dongria households of the village work in turns for a day on the land of one villager.

In a variation, under the *pundabati* system, 10 to 15 members of the community are called upon when fewer workers are required in the fields.

Members of the village are also organised into specialised groups depending on the nature of the work. The *daasibati* is a cooperative of younger, unmarried girls from the village who are called upon to take up less strenuous but tedious work such as weeding, fencing of fields, cleaning or harvesting of crops. Their counterparts, the *dhangabati*, young bachelors are required to take up work such as felling trees, hoeing, carrying logs and digging pits. Under *datarubati*, older men help each other for a share of liquor.

## Karnataka, A.P. lead in deaths, new cases

Fresh positives again exceed 10,000 in A.P.; day's toll in Karnataka 128; Kerala, Telangana together add over 5,000 cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD

Eleven more people died of COVID-19 in Telangana on Friday, taking the toll to 877, while total cases rose to 1,38,395 as 2,511 samples tested positive for the virus. The State administration said 62,132 more samples had been tested.

There were 305 cases

## COVID-19

from Greater Hyderabad, 184 from Rangareddy, 170 from Nalgonda, 150 from Karimnagar, 142 from Khammam and 134 from Medchal Malajigir.

Kerala's COVID-19 daily cases shot up again to touch 2,655 on Saturday, as testing covered 40,162 samples.

The case burden was 84,759 and active cases, 21,800

new infections.

Testing in Andhra Pradesh crossed the 40-lakh mark at 40,35,317 samples, including 69,623 in the past day, with a positivity rate of 12.08%.

The State COVID-19 dashboard showed that nearly half of the tests were conducted in Kurnool, East Godavari, Guntur, Krishna and Chittoor districts. East Godavari had the highest positivity rate at 16.44%.

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Testing in Andhra Pradesh crossed the 40-lakh mark at 40,35,317 samples, including 69,623 in the past day, with a positivity rate of 12.08%.

The State COVID-19 dashboard showed that nearly half of the tests were conducted in Kurnool, East Godavari, Guntur, Krishna and Chittoor districts. East Godavari had the highest positivity rate at 16.44%.

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## CDS remarks 'unwarranted', CPI tells PM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The remarks of the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) on the India-U.S.-Australia-Japan quadrilateral are "unwarranted" and run counter to India's stated position, CPI MP Binoy Viswam said in a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday. He also asked the PM to clarify the CDS' comments and lay out the country's position.

On Thursday, CDS General Bipin Rawat had said India believes that Quad engagement was a good mechanism to ensure there is "no fear of any nation singularly trying to dominate the oceans".

## Cong. to frame Parliament strategy

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Parliamentary Strategy Group of the Congress will meet virtually on Tuesday to decide the party's strategy for the monsoon session of Parliament that gets under way on September 14. Party president Sonia Gandhi, former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Rahul Gandhi are likely to join the meeting.

On Thursday, Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad chaired a meeting where it was decided to take up issues such restoration of the Question Hour, border crisis, COVID-19 cases, migrant workers, job losses and the contraction in the economy.

# India shares a robust defence system with both U.S., Russia'

Seismic changes in geopolitics being shaped by 'nation first' approach, says CDS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI



Gen. Bipin Rawat

India values its emerging relationship with the U.S. and cherishes its traditional relationship with Russia, the Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS), General Bipin Rawat, said on Saturday while stating that seismic changes were being witnessed in geopolitics shaped by a "nation first" approach and geo-economics".

"With both these powers, we share a mature and robust defence and security framework," he said at a webinar.

(IB), Line of Control (LoC) or the Line of Actual Control (LAC) alone," but in the strategic space of the "extended neighbourhood" and the "strategic frontier".

### Military modernisation

On the ongoing military modernisation, Gen. Rawat said keeping in mind the macroeconomic parameters and socioeconomic requirements, "we have to work through the budgetary constraints by finding the best solutions through new acquisitions and optimisation or upgradation of legacy systems".

"The creation of the Department of Military Affairs (DMA) headed by the CDS, having a central staffing scheme along with amendments to Government of India business rules, in effect, admits the military into the central edifice of the government," Gen. Rawat said.

Robust interaction between the CDS, the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) and the political executive, the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS), must ensure single-point military advice, strategic direction and resource optimisation, he.

# Rajnath to meet Iranian Defence Minister Hatami

First visit by an Indian Minister post Soleimani's killing

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is scheduled to meet the Iranian Defence Minister during a refuelling stop on his return journey from Russia.

"Leaving Moscow for Tehran. I shall be meeting the Defence Minister of Iran, Brigadier General Amir Hatami," Mr. Singh said on Twitter on Saturday.

A defence source said Mr. Singh's aircraft will make a refuelling halt in Iran. The Minister was on a three-day visit to Russia for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' meeting, in which Iran is an Observer. He also held a bilateral meeting with Major General Kurbanov Bakhtiyor Major General Qasem Soleimani by the U.S. in January.



Direct talks: Rajnath Singh in a meeting with top officials of Uzbekistan on Saturday. ■ PTI

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This is the first visit by an Indian Minister to Iran since the killing of Islamic Revolutionary Guard commander Major General Qasem Soleimani by the U.S. in January.

## Army rescues three Chinese citizens in north Sikkim

They lost their way in the plateau area at 17,500 ft. altitude

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Three Chinese citizens who lost their way in the plateau area of north Sikkim at an altitude of 17,500 feet were given a helping hand earlier this week, the Army said on Saturday.

"Realising the danger to the lives of the Chinese citizens – two men and one woman – in sub-zero temperatures, the soldiers immediately reached out and provided medical assistance including oxygen, food and warm clothes to protect them from the vagaries of extreme altitude and harsh climatic conditions," the Army said.



Timely help: The Army providing medical assistance and essentials to the three Chinese citizens in Sikkim. ■ ANI

The incident occurred on Thursday. The troops also gave them guidance to reach

their destination, after which they moved back, said the Army.

## Brief nation on talks with China: Cong.

Party asks Centre about the outcome of 'repeated discussions' on border row

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh should inform the nation about the outcome of "repeated talks" with China over the border row in Ladakh, the Congress said on Saturday.

The Congress's chief spokesperson, Randeep Surjewala, said it was the *rajdhama* of the Prime Minister and the Defence Minister to take the nation into confidence on such an important issue. "What is the conversation about; what is happening? Will Prime Minister Modi and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh take the country into confidence," Mr. Surjewala asked in a video post on Twitter.



Dizzy heights: A fighter jet of the Indian Air Force flying in Leh on Saturday. ■ ANI

The Congress's questions came a day after Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and his Chinese counterpart, Gen. Wei Fenghe, met in Moscow on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers' meeting, on "de-escalating" border tensions in eastern Ladakh.

"The important part is what is the outcome of the repeated conversations with the Chinese counterparts by our government... How will we ensure that Chinese transgressions are defeated," Mr. Surjewala added.

Listing the various levels

at which talks have been held with the Chinese – from the Foreign Ministers' level and Corps Commanders level to the Defence Ministers' discussions – Mr. Surjewala asked the government what the outcome of these talks was.

### Shringla's comment

The Congress leader also referred to Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla's remarks on the situation being "unprecedented" at the India-China border and his comment that "We've never had this sort of a situation since 1962."

Mr. Surjewala said, "We hope Prime Minister Modi and the Defence Minister will come forward and take the nation into confidence."

## Soldier killed, two injured in Pak. firing in Kupwara

Two bodies recovered from a river in Gurez sector

PEERZADA ASHIQ  
SRINAGAR

An Army soldier was killed and two others were injured in Pakistani firing in Kupwara. An official said Pakistan resorted to "unprovoked firing and mortar shelling" along the Line of Control (LoC) in Kupwara's Nowgam Sector on Saturday.

"Pakistan initiated an unprovoked ceasefire violation in Nowgam Sector by firing mortars and other weapons... One soldier laid down his life in the line of duty. Two soldiers sustained injuries and have been evacuated to 92 Base Hospital. Their condition is stable," the Srinagar-based Army spokesman



On the alert: Security personnel near the encounter site in Baramulla district on Friday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

said. The deceased soldier was identified as gunner Bapinder Singh.

This is the third such encounter in the past two days. Three militants were killed in Baramulla on Friday.

In a separate incident in Bandipora, two bodies were

recovered from a river in the Gurez sector. "Arms and ammunition was recovered from them," police said. Police suspect they may be missing youth from south Kashmir and may have gone to Pakistan Occupied Kashmir for arms training.

## 80 additional trains from September 12

Clone or duplicate trains will be run to eliminate waiting lists, says Railway Board Chairman

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Railways will start running 80 additional trains to cater to demand on popular routes from September 12. They are in addition to the 230 special passenger trains to be run from September 10.

Railway Board Chairman V.K. Yadav, recently appointed as the first CEO of the Board, told presspersons that they were planning to run "clone or duplicate trains" on popular routes to eliminate waiting lists.

"Eighty new special trains or 40 pairs of trains will start operations from September 12. Reservations will begin from September 10... after notifying these trains we will continue to monitor the occupancy and wherever we feel that waiting list is for a longer duration of time, there is a demand for that particular train, we will be running a clone train. These will run ahead of the existing trains, so that passengers can book a ticket in it," Mr.



Big plans: Railway staff taking up maintenance work at the Vijayawada railway station on Saturday. ■ K.V.S. GIRI

Yadav said.

The routes where the new trains will come up include Gorakhpur-Delhi Humsafar express, Bhagalpur-Delhi Vikramshila express, Prayagraj-New Delhi Humsafar express, Bengaluru-Mysuru Express, Chennai-Chhaphra

express, Howrah-Tiruchirappalli Express, Indore-Howrah express, New Delhi-Varanasi Vande Bharat Express, Lucknow-New Delhi Shatabdi Express, Chennai-New Delhi Express and Puri-Ahmedabad express.

The timings will be those of the regular trains. Stops will be restricted and will be taken into consideration after discussions with the respective State governments.

### Exams for vacancies

The Chairman also announced starting computer-based tests for the 1.4 lakh notified vacancies from December 15, 2020. They included 35,208 vacancies for non-technical popular categories (NTPC) such as guards, office and commer-

cial clerks, 1,663 for isolated and ministerial categories such as stenos and 1,03,769 for Level 1 track maintainers and pointsmen.

The Railway Recruitment Board had received over 2.4 crore applications. "Scrutiny of the applications had been completed but the process of further examination had got delayed due to pandemic-related restrictions," Mr. Yadav said.

With the experience of conducting JEE and NEET, it was felt that the Railways too can start the process, he said.

On reports of delay in the bullet train project, Mr. Yadav said the project was progressing well. There has been some setback due to land acquisition related issues and COVID-19.

## Rahul flays Centre over jobs circular

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Saturday hit out at the Central government over recruitment to government jobs, accusing it of following the philosophy of "minimum government, maximum privatisation".

The Congress also demanded the withdrawal of the September 4 circular of the Finance Ministry that puts a freeze on creating new government posts without the approval of the Expenditure Department.

"Modi government's thinking – Minimum Govt Maximum Privatisation'. The COVID-19 pandemic is just an excuse and the intention is to make government offices 'free' of permanent staff. Rob the future of the youth and promote friends," Mr. Gandhi tweeted. Party leader Rajeev Shukla asked the government to create more jobs as private jobs were shrinking because of the pandemic.

## Court orders removal of PM's name from civil suit

Case relates to the 2002 riots

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
AHMEDABAD

A local court in Gujarat on Saturday directed that the name of Narendra Modi, who was the then Chief Minister of the State, be removed, along with former IPS officers K. Chakravarthy, Amitabh Pathak and Ashok Narayan, whose names were also mentioned as defendants in the civil suit filed by the relatives of SC/ST people.

The civil suit was filed in 2004 by Sameema Dawood, a British national, and others, against Mr. Modi, then minister of State for Home Gordhan Zadaphia, and 12 others.

In the riots, British nationals Saeed Dawood, Shaheed Dawood and Mohammed Aswat were killed by a mob on NH8 on February 28, 2002 while they were returning from Rajastan. Three of them were killed on the spot, while the body of the fourth was never found. In 2015, a special designated trial court acquitted all the six accused for want of evidence.

## Tejaswi and Nitish spar over jobs claim

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
PATNA

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A day after Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar decided to provide government jobs to the next kin of any SC/ST person killed in the State, Leader of the Opposition and RJD leader Tejaswi Yadav on Saturday said the move, "was like encouraging murder of SC/ST people".

## KERALA WATER AUTHORITY - e-TENDER NOTICE

Tender No: 53-56/2020-21/KWA/PHC/D2/TVM Jaljeewan Mission-Thiruvananthapuram District-Providing Functional house hold tap connection and allied works in Kattakkada, Maranalloor,Kunnathukal and Vilavoorkkal Panchayat in Thiruvananthapuram District. EMD: ₹5,00,000 for tender no. 53, ₹2,00,000/- Each for tender nos 54 to 56. Tender fee: ₹ 15,000/- for tender no. 53, ₹10,000/- Each for tender nos 54 to 56. Last Date for submitting Tender: 28.09.2020, 03:00 pm.

Phone : 0471-2322303.

Website : [www.kwa.kerala.gov.in](http://www.kwa.kerala.gov.in), [www.etenders.kerala.gov.in](http://www.etenders.kerala.gov.in)

Superintending Engineer, PH Circle, Thiruvananthapuram

Sd/- Director, PH Circle, Thiruvananthapuram



Office of The Superintending Engineer,  
PHED, Circle Jhalawar

Notice Inviting Bid No.02/2020-21 (Item No. 1 & 2)

Bids for Parallel Rate Contract of PLJ/J and commissioning of Internal distribution network and providing Functional House Water connection from already laid/New distribution pipe line to property line, including all material and all labour/unskilled/unqualified labour/jurisdiction of PHED Project Division I Jhalawar & PHED Project Div II Jhalawar (Item no 1 & Item no.2) with 12 months defect liability period are invited from interested bidders up to 15.09.2020, 18.00 Hours. Others Particulars of the bid may be visited on the <http://eproc.rajasthan.gov.in>, <http://sppr.rajasthan.gov.in> and <http://rwajwater.gov.in> departmental website.

(I) UBN No: PHE2021WSOB04736 & (II) UBN No: PHE2021WSOB04452

(P.K. Bagla)  
Superintending Engineer,  
PHED, Circle Jhalawar

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## IN BRIEF



AAP spreading false info on COVID-19: Punjab CM

**CHANDIGARH**  
Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Saturday appealed to the people of the State to get themselves tested for COVID-19 as the oximeters the Aam Aadmi Party is offering them are no substitute for testing. "These oximeters will not tell you if you have COVID-19 or not, they just measure the oxygen level in the body," he said.

## Former SP MLA held in land grabbing case

**BALRAMPUR (U.P.)**  
Former SP MLA Arif Anwar Hashmi was on Saturday arrested in connection with a land grabbing case, the police said. A case was registered in connection with the construction of a school on government land in 2018 by tampering with records. The charges against Mr. Hashmi were found to be true during a probe by the District Magistrate, Superintendent of Police Dev Ranjan Verma said. The former Utraula MLA was arrested from the party office in Sadullah Nagar. PTI

## Hooda hits out at State govt. over low ranking

**CHANDIGARH**  
The Congress in Haryana hit out at the ruling BJP-JP government after the State's ranking in 'ease of doing annual business' in 2019 dropped to 16th position, according to the data released by the Centre. Leader of the Opposition Bhupinder Singh Hooda said the drop in the ranking has exposed the failure of the State government.

## Odia MP accused of domestic violence

**BHUBANESWAR**  
Varsha Priyadarshini, a prominent actress in the Odia film industry, has accused Anubhab Mohanty – her husband and Biju Janata Dal (BJD) Deputy Chief Whip in the Lok Sabha – of domestic violence. Ms. Priyadarshini moved the Sub Divisional Judicial Magistrate, Cuttack alleging that she was subjected to mental and physical torture at the hands of Mr. Mohanty. She sought a compensation of ₹13 crore for loss of earnings as an actress and ₹2 crore for medical expenses.

**CROSSWORD**  
Now, enjoy *The Hindu's* iconic cryptic puzzle on Sundays as well. In its exclusively digital avatar, your favourite 15x15 cryptic puzzle retains all of its intrinsic elegance, and comes fully equipped with annotations and other interactive benefits. Visit [crossword.thehindu.com](http://crossword.thehindu.com) and try it out now!

## Cut the chain now, says Centre

Maharashtra, A.P. and Karnataka told to step up efforts to combat COVID-19

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Centre has asked Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka to focus on undertaking aggressive measures to break the chain of COVID-19 transmission and to ensure that mortality is kept below 1%.

The States, on Saturday, have been advised to proactively ensure higher testing, effective clinical management to lower fatality, and save lives along with efficient monitoring at various levels.

"Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka account for about 46% of active cases reported nationally in the last 24 hours. Maharashtra alone accounts for 35% of all deaths reported in the last 24 hours," said a release issued by the Ministry.

It added that these three



Back to work: Migrant workers, returning from their home towns, wait to get tested in Thane on Saturday. •PTI

States account for 52% of all COVID-19 deaths reported across the country in the last 24 hours with Maharashtra alone accounting for 35% of all deaths reported in the last 24 hours," said a release issued by the Ministry.

In Maharashtra, Pune, Nagpur, Kolhapur, Sangli, Nashik, Ahmednagar, Rai-

gad, Jalgaon, Solapur, Satara and Palghar were highlighted on need for effective containment and contact tracing," said the Ministry.

Prakasam and Chittoor districts in A.P., and Koppal, Mysuru, Davanagere and Bellari in Karnataka were highlighted as districts of

concern. According to the release in cumulative terms, five States account for more than 60% of the total active cases in the country. Maharashtra contributes the most to the active case load amounting to almost 25%, followed by Andhra Pradesh (12.06%), Karnataka (11.71%), Uttar Pradesh (6.92%) and Tamil Nadu which stands at 6.0%.

Of these, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka account for nearly 49% of the active case and more than 57% of COVID-19 deaths. "Of the total deaths in the country, 70% are recorded in just five States of Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Delhi and Andhra Pradesh. Maharashtra alone accounts for 37.33% of the total deaths," said the Ministry release.

## 'Single confirmatory test enough'

Health Ministry says repetition not needed for discharge after recovery

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

A senior official of the Union Health Ministry said on Saturday that as per the revised advisory a single RT-PCR/ TrueNat/CBNAAT/ Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) test was to be considered confirmatory, without any repeat testing.

"No retesting is recommended prior to discharge from a COVID-19 facility after clinical recovery, including for transfer from a COVID area/facility to a non-COVID area/facility," he said. He added that if symptoms developed following a negative RAT test, a repeat RAT or RT-PCR should be done.

As per the new addition, testing will be provided to all individuals undertaking travel to countries/Indian States mandating a negative COVID-19 test at the point of



Staying safe: Mothers, who test positive for COVID-19, have been told to take precautions during baby care. •K.R. DEEPAK

entry and also to all individuals who wish to get themselves tested. "Tracking and contact tracing mechanisms should be ensured by the testing laboratories by notifying the public health authorities," the Ministry says.

Home quarantine for 14

days is recommended for all individuals before undergoing elective surgery to minimise chances of infection before the procedure. The Ministry states that no emergency procedure (including deliveries) should be delayed for lack of a COVID-19 test.

However, samples could be sent for testing under specific conditions.

"Pregnant women should not be referred for lack of testing facility. All arrangements should be made to collect and transfer samples to testing facilities. Mothers, who test positive for COVID-19, should be advised to wear a mask and undertake frequent hand-washing while handling their baby for 14 days," the Ministry said.

In hospital settings, RT-PCR or TrueNat or CBNAAT, RAT – can be used for patients of Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI), all symptomatic (ILI symptoms) patients presenting in a healthcare setting and asymptomatic high-risk patients who are hospitalised or seeking immediate hospitalization.

## India only nation not to gain from lockdown'

Chidambaram says cases will spike

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

As the number of COVID-19 cases crossed the 40 lakh mark on Friday, former Union Finance Minister P. Chidambaram on Saturday said the country may touch the 65 lakh mark by September-end.

In a series of tweets, he took a dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi's statement of winning the battle in 21 days, and claimed that India was the only country that could not gain from the lockdown.

"By end September, the number may touch 65 lakh,"



the Congress leader said. "PM Modi who promised that we will defeat coronavirus in 21 days must explain why India failed when other countries seem to have succeeded," Mr. Chidambaram added.

Spokesman Rohit Kansal said this unique programme had received tremendous respect from the people when 4,000 Gazetted Officers visited each and every panchayat last year.

"The flagship programme has generated huge interest, affection and respect among people and the administration

has decided another version in the form of Phase-III," Mr. Kansal said.

The Phase-I of B2V was an introductory and interactive programme to understand the people's grievances and demands. Phase-II focused on the devolution of powers to panchayats and tried to understand how they are functioning and what the grievances and demands are. "Phase-III has been designed in the format for grievance redressal," he said.

Mr. Kansal said the three pillars would be the redressal of grievances (Jan Sunvayee), public service delivery (Adhikar Abhiyan) and delivery of development at the

panchayat level (Unat Gram Abhiyan).

"Yam-e-Block would be observed for three consecutive weeks at pre-designated location or at block headquarters on every Wednesday with coordination from officers. Grievances would be listened to and would be sorted out on the spot or the following week or the next. Many would be tried to be disposed of on the spot," Mr. Kansal said.

All Deputy Commissioners and SPs will visit every block over three weeks. "This will be the month of progress of grievances and development on public grievances," he said.



Anxious wait: Kashmiris queue up to register their names to test for COVID-19 in Srinagar on Saturday. •AP

## 8 Odisha workers en route to Surat die in road accident

They were being ferried to work in textile units

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BHUBANESWAR

Eight migrant labourers from Odisha died in a road accident near Raipur in Chhattisgarh early on Saturday. The workers were on their way to Surat for work in textile units.

The victims were among a group of 67 workers from Ganjam district who were returning to work in Gujarat after months of being idle after having returned to Odisha due to the COVID-19 lockdown. A Surat-based employer is said to have sent a bus to transport the skilled workers back to his textile units.

The accident took place when the bus was trying to overtake another vehicle. While seven men died on the spot, one died later in hospital. As many as 59 labourers were safe and under care of the Raipur administration.

Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik expressed deep grief at the death of the workers from his home district of Ganjam and announced an ex-gratia of ₹2 lakh each to the families of the deceased from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. He also said the State would bear the cost of treatment of the injured.

**Medical care**  
Odisha's Labour Minister Sushant Singh has been sent to Raipur to coordinate with the Chhattisgarh authorities on medical care for the injured and to oversee the return of the victims' bodies to their respective villages.

Director General of Police Abhay also got in touch with his counterpart in Chhattisgarh to ensure that the injured did not face any problems. An Odisha police team led by Sub Divisional Police Officer of Padampur

rushed to Raipur for assistance.

Following the pandemic-induced lockdown in March, over four lakh people, most of them migrant workers employed in Gujarat, returned to Ganjam. More than two lakh people from the district are employed in the apparel industries of Surat alone.

Towards the end of May and early June, the workers began receiving calls to return from their employers through labour agents. In July, employers started sending buses to transport workers back to their respective villages.

The labourers, too, had by then run out of savings and were unable to support their families without a source of income.

By August, the frequency of buses from Surat to ferry workers back to the textile units rose dramatically.

## Rajapaksa thanks defence teams for fighting fire on ship

India and Sri Lanka engaged in control measures

MEERA SRINIVASAN  
COLOMBO

Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Saturday thanked Indian and Sri Lankan Naval personnel for their ongoing efforts in dousing the fire onboard oil tanker MT New Diamond. The vessel went ablaze off Sri Lanka's east coast three days ago, following an engine room explosion.

"Thank you! to the #SLNavy, the #SLAForce, the #SLPA and the Indian Defense Forces for their efforts in controlling the fires in MT New Diamond. I greatly appreciate your contribution in conserving Marine biodiversity by preventing a disastrous situation out in the ocean," he said in a tweet.

The vessel, classified as a very large crude carrier (VLCC), is about 330 metres long. Carrying 2,70,000 metric tonnes of crude oil, it



In the deep: A view of the MT New Diamond, off the eastern coast of Sri Lanka. •AP

was headed to a port in Kuwait, officials said.

Amid fears of a likely oil spill, at least nine vessels from the two countries, besides tugboats and aircraft, have been deployed into action.

"The flames are being contained and the vessel has been towed further away

## SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

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

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A-NDE



# Auto parts makers urged to cut imports

Gadkari tells ACMA to look for substitutes; no rationale to import components like gear boxes: Kant

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI  
Stating that India's auto sector had the potential to be the top global manufacturing hub, Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari on Saturday asked domestic automobile component makers to develop products locally and reduce dependence on imports.

"I request you, don't encourage imports. Try to take the initiative to find out the alternative, or how can we make import substitutes in India," Mr. Gadkari said, addressing the annual session of the Automotive Component Manufacturers Association of India (ACMA).

"We can make the Indian automobile industry, within five years, a number one automobile manufacturing hub in the world," he added.

Addressing a separate session, Kenichi Ayukawa, MD and CEO of Maruti Suzuki and the new SIAM president, asked component makers to



Road ahead: The scrappage policy is also at a very advanced stage of inter-ministerial discussions, says Mr. Kant. ■REUTERS

try and increase production while taking all safety precautions and ensure that there was no compromise on quality and safety. Mr. Ayukawa added that many companies in China were either relocating or adding plants in other countries to cover geopolitical risks. "We should bring those investments to India or tie-up with them to produce in India,"

Mr. Ayukawa said, adding that he would make efforts to organise business exploration meetings with Japanese manufacturers to boost 'Make in India'.

"Similarly, we could do with other countries like Europe or Korea or U.S.A.," he said. The SIAM sourcing group had identified four categories of components where imports should be

converted to local – electronics, some grades of steel, tooling and EV components. Hero MotoCorp CEO Pawan Munjal said the pandemic presented an opportunity for the Indian automobile and components sector to become a global hub. Suzuki Motor Corp. Chairman Osamu Suzuki, said the group's companies in India – Maruti Suzuki, Suzuki Motor Gujarat and Suzuki Motorcycle India – would make their best efforts to restore production and sales to pre-COVID-19 levels.

Noting that the auto industry appeared to be reviving faster than expected, likely due to pent-up demand and people now preferring personal mobility over public transportation, Suzuki Motor CEO Toshihiro Suzuki said the size of India's passenger vehicle market was unlikely to grow to 10 million units per annum by 2030 as estimated earlier. The target, while achiev-

able, may now need a few more years, he added.

#### Incentive scheme

Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant said a lot of groundwork had been done on a production-linked incentive (PLI) scheme for auto and component makers, and the scrappage policy was also at a "very advanced stage" of inter-ministerial discussions.

"We at Niti Aayog have done a lot of spadework (on the PLI scheme). The department of heavy industries has actually interacted with the automobile and auto component manufacturers. We would push this (scheme) in a very big way," he said. Pointing out that India relied on imports for low-tech components like gear boxes, tubes and steering wheels, Mr. Kant said, "I do not see any technological impediment for localisation of these components. There is no rationale for importing these components."

#### PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

# Foreign investors take our reform stand seriously: FM

Minister cites inflow of FDI between April-July as evidence



Atmanirbhar Bharat is not to make India inward-looking, but to build on its strengths, the FM says. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHAKAR

Ms. Sitharaman said Atmanirbhar Bharat is not for making India inward-looking, but to build on its strengths, one of the ways in which the country can become more competitive.

In the States' ease of doing business rankings released on Saturday, Andhra Pradesh retained the top position followed by U.P. and Telangana at the second and third spots, respectively.

## UPASI seeks steps to revive coffee sector

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

COIMBATORE  
The United Planters' Association of Southern India (UPASI) has urged the Centre to take measures to revive the coffee sector.

Observing that the government had resumed export benefits under the Merchandise Exports from India Scheme (MEIS) from September 1, UPASI president AL RM. Nagappan said the scheme, however, came with certain caps that would have serious implications for plantation commodities. While MEIS was cut early this year to 3%, from 5%, for plantation commodity exports, for instant coffee it was pared from 7% to 5%, he pointed out.

Further, Rule 7 B(1) of the Income Tax Rules should be repealed as it dissuades coffee growers from getting into value addition as any grower who processes his coffee is subject to tax to the extent of 25% of such income.

## Kerala CM stresses on govt. role in big projects

Vijayan cites CIAL's success as example

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

KOCHI  
Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan has said that big projects like the building and running of airports can effectively be carried out under the aegis of the government as underlined by the success of the Cochin International Airport. The CIAL model emphasised the relevance of public-private participation in infrastructure development, he added.

Stating that it was a misapprehension that complex projects like the development of airport infrastructure have to be fully entrusted with the private sector, Mr. Vijayan told shareholders at a virtual annual general meeting of CIAL, that this PPP venture demonstrated that the participation of the government in such projects could be effective in delivering professionalism.

Noting that infrastructure projects are implemented by acquiring the land and

mindshare of common people, he said they ought not to be privatised.

The CIAL model was inclusive and addressed people's issues too.

Observing that there were 7,000 people working at the airport when the current board took charge in 2016, Mr. Vijayan said that number had grown to 12,000 in March and was still growing. CIAL had invested about ₹2,000 crore in the capacity-enhancement projects of the airport and was not collecting user development fee from the passengers, he added.

Observing that there were 7,000 people working at the airport when the current board took charge in 2016, Mr. Vijayan said that number had grown to 12,000 in March and was still growing. CIAL had invested about ₹2,000 crore in the capacity-enhancement projects of the airport and was not collecting user development fee from the passengers, he added.

Observing that the industry had seen a really bad period in April and May, followed by some pent-up demand in June and July, he said there was now an expectation of

## Auto dealers eye festival demand with caution

Retailers also stocking up due to supply chain uncertainties

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA

NEW DELHI

Notwithstanding the fact that retail automobile sales do not yet reflect the buoyancy seen in wholesales, automobile dealers are building up inventory in anticipation of some demand recovery in the festive period amid an uncertain supply chain, said Vinkesh Gulati, President, Federation of Automobile Dealers Associations (FADA).

"Dealers are building inventory for the festive season... this is a normal process every year," Mr. Gulati said on Saturday. "Although we are seeing positive figures for wholesale sales... it is not that good a picture on the registration or the retail customer side," he added.

Noting that the industry had seen a really bad period in April and May, followed by some pent-up demand in June and July, he said there was now an expectation of

some "postponed demand" emerging in September, October and November.

Observing that inventory at this point was not an issue, he said dealers were also still wary of supply chain uncertainties and hence stocking up.

"We have been in tough times since October-November 2018. We were expecting that after that one-and-a-half years of de-growth, this festive season would be a time when we will start seeing the uptake or the growth in the

market," Mr. Gulati said. "But now with COVID-19, I don't feel that sort of growth will happen, and may be extended by six months or a year depending on how things go further," he added.

For dealers, viability was

currently the biggest concern.

"We are not talking of profitability; if it comes at least you are earning something... as an association, we are working on 2-3 parameters including talking to manufacturers to increase the margins," he said.

## Reserve Bank revises audit norms for banks

Move to improve risk management

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

The RBI on Saturday came up with revised long format audit report (LFAR) norms with a view to improving the efficacy of internal audit and risk management systems.

The LFAR, which applies to statutory central auditors (SCA) and branch auditors of banks, has been updated keeping in view the large scale changes in the size, complexities, business model and risks in banking operations, the RBI said.

The revised LFAR format will be put into operation for the period covering 2020-21 and onwards, the central bank said.

"The overall objective of the LFAR should be to identify and assess the gaps and vulnerable areas in the business operations, risk management, compliance and operational risk areas, 'capital adequacy' and 'going concern and liquidity risk assessment', among others.

provide their observations," the RBI said.

While issuing the revised norms, the RBI asked the banks to ensure timely receipt of the LFAR from auditors.

The RBI further said that the LFAR should be placed before the Audit Committee of Board and Local Advisory Board of the bank indicating the action taken or proposed to be taken for rectification of the irregularities.

Under the new norms, the banks would be required to send a copy of the LFAR and the relative agenda note, together with the Board's views or directions, to the Reserve Bank within 60 days of submission of the LFAR by the statutory auditors.

The overall objective of the LFAR should be to identify and assess the gaps and vulnerable areas in the business operations, risk management, compliance and operational risk areas, 'capital adequacy' and 'going concern and liquidity risk assessment', among others.

INTERVIEW | M.K. BHATTACHARYA

## 'Government needs to encourage spending'

Positive impact on balance sheet only on demand pick-up; no supply-side constraint: Indian Bank ED

N. ANAND

*The nationwide lockdown in view of the COVID-19 pandemic coincided with the amalgamation of Indian Bank with Allahabad Bank. Indian Bank Executive Director M.K. Bhattacharya details how the lender managed to serve customers despite the challenges. Edited excerpts:*

How did Indian Bank manage to service customers during the lockdown period?

■ As the COVID-19 pandemic panned out, our bank took all safeguards. Business Continuity Plan (BCP) and Work from Home (WFH) were ensured by Indian Bank during this pandemic situation, enabling smooth functioning of branches and ATMs.

A COVID-19 task force committee was formed to oversee the functioning of branches, business correspondents, offsite ATMs and Bunch Note Acceptors. Besides these, Indian Bank took various technology-driven initiatives and ensured that 90% of branches and 92% of ATMs remained functioning through the period. About 30% employees worked from home and 45% from various branches and offices, while the rest were quarantined.

Indian Bank was the first to launch COVID emergency loans for corporates, MSMEs, agriculturists, self-help groups and pensioners

among others. The services of Business Correspondents were also utilised and as a special case, they have been taken care of through special allowance, insurance and provision of PPEs.

Do you think that the worst is over?

■ With India unlocking, the worst seems to be easing out as high-frequency indicators recovered in June 2020 from the unprecedented troughs in April 2020 (Monthly Economic Report - July '20). However, the increase in COVID-19 cases and subsequent intermittent lockdowns make the recovery prospects fragile and call for constant and dynamic monitoring. The country's economic recovery is crucially linked to how the infection curve evolves across the States.

Job losses and salary cuts, along with rising prices of essentials took a toll on the purchasing power of Indian households.

Reduced requirement for goods and services during the lockdown, along with weakening of consumer sentiments due to uncertainty and financial risk arising out of the pandemic made households go slow on discretionary consumption. Due to low demand, corporates also showed subdued interest to invest. However, in the second quarter of FY21 green

shoots are visible and I personally feel that fourth quarter will see the normalcy.

What has been the credit offtake with regard to MSMEs and retail?

■ MSMEs is one of the worst-affected sectors due to the impact of COVID-19. To address the issues, the Centre has taken many focussed steps, driving the financial sector to provide the required liquidity support and relief such as emergency credit line, subordinate debt scheme for stressed sector and PM SVANidhi scheme for street vendors. RBI has also come out with relief measures. As per Finance Ministry reports, banks have sanctioned loans of about ₹1.23 lakh crore under the ₹3 lakh crore Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme for the MSME sector.

In view of phase wise unlocking, retail demand is slowly picking up as more and more business starts functioning. Partial revival is felt in the vehicle loan category as social distancing becomes the new normal and customers may prefer purchase of own vehicles over public transport.

MSMEs have been complaining that they did not get funds on time. Your views?

■ Indian Bank identified eligible MSME borrowers from its database and they were approached by the bank officials to avail the facilities.

The approach has changed from the customer approaching

the bank to the bank [now] reaching out to the customer.

Unless the customer opts out or does not fit into the scheme, there are few chances that they will be denied the benefits. Further, the bank also engaged Banking Correspondents to pick-up applications and engage them with the clients for other facilities.

What percentage of MSME and retail customers availed moratorium?

■ For Indian Bank, about 4% of MSME borrowers and 8% of retail borrowers availed the moratorium as on June 2020.

Moratorium has ended. Will it have an impact on your balance sheet?

■ Along with the moratorium, if the lockdown due to COVID-19 is lifted, the initiatives and measures taken by the Centre and RBI will trigger an upward movement as far as demand is concerned.

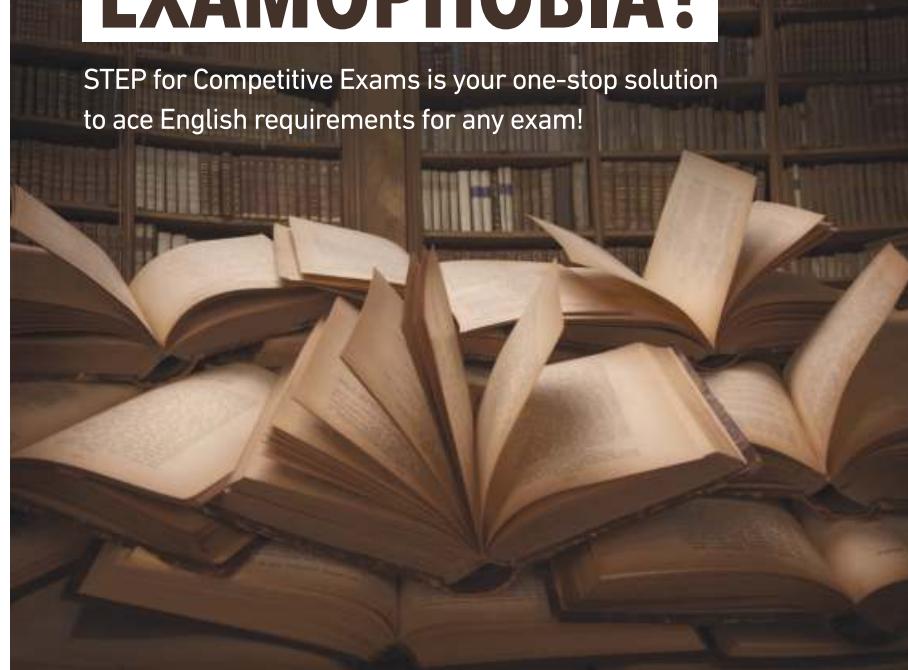
Positive impact on the balance sheet will result only if there is a demand pick up as there is no supply side constraint. For this, apart from lifting the lockdown, government should encourage spending. Although the higher growth in the agriculture sector in the first quarter of FY21 and consequent rural demand may support the domestic economy, it may not be sufficient to compensate the decline in urban demand and growth.



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## SNAPSHOTS

**Triple star fury**

Stars form with surrounding discs of gas and dust. In the case of a triple or binary star, studies show there can be tidal forces ripping apart the protoplanetary disc. Recent observations on nearby young triple star system, GW Orionis, showed signs of multiple rings as well as warping of part of the disc due to disc tearing.

**Pollution and bees**

A study conducted in Bengaluru and published in *PNAS* looked at the impact of pollution on Asian giant honey bee, finding direct correlation between pollution levels and differences in flower visitation behaviour, heart rate, haemocyte levels and survival of the bees. This has important implications for preserving ecosystems.

**Protecting the heart**

Scar tissue that forms after myocardial infarction can interfere with functioning of normal tissue. A study on mice published in *Cell* finds that collagen V regulates scar formation, and absence of collagen V results in larger scars. This finding can be used to build a feedback mechanism to treat heart injuries and prevent tissue dysfunction.

**Gendered body clock**

The circadian rhythm, or day-night cycles that constitute the body's internal clock, is different for men and women, a study published in *Science* finds. Women have higher peaks of activity during the earlier parts of the day than men, the study finds. Women are also more resilient to shifts in daylight - for example, in shift work.

**Question Corner**

Bird brains - not quite small

**Do many small birds have big brains?**

Many small birds have larger relative brain sizes. This helps them survive harsh seasonal changes and unpredictable habitats.

Using a global sample of 2,062 species, two researchers from Germany and the U.S. showed that some birds cope with extreme winter conditions by investing in large brains. This helped them in better planning and developing new, innovative survival strategies. Others with smaller brains invested in traits like large body sizes and high reproductive output. The resident birds in the higher latitudes of Earth exhibited these two alternative strategies for coping with environmental fluctuations. The study (*Nature Communications*, August 2019) was able to highlight how climate

# No correlation between Ct values and COVID-19 severity

Cycle threshold values can depend on how the sample was collected and even the technical competence of the person performing the test

**R. PRASAD**

Currently in India, RT-PCR tests can tell if a person is infected with novel coronavirus or not. It does not reveal the amount of virus (viral load in scientific parlance) present in the person. But there is an indirect way of knowing this.

The PCR test amplifies the genetic material from coronavirus through multiple cycles. Since coronavirus has RNA, it is first converted into DNA, and each cycle of amplification doubles the amount of DNA. If there is just one DNA molecule to start with, the amount of DNA after 30 cycles of amplification will be  $2^{30}$  (raised to 30) times, or one billion molecules. If there is more genetic material to begin with, then fewer cycles of amplification would be sufficient to detect the DNA.

**Lack of studies**

"There are no studies to show correlation of disease severity and Ct value. A low Ct value indicates higher viral load, and this may be correlated to a person being more able to transmit the virus (infectious). I must caution that transmission depends on many other factors, so there is no direct correlation," virologist Dr. Shahid Jameel, CEO of DBT-Wellcome Trust India Al-



**Inaccurate indicator:** The RT-PCR test presently being conducted is qualitative in nature and may only give a rough estimate of viral load. ■ GETTY IMAGES

lance says in email to *The Hindu*.

"In my view, there is a relationship between cycle threshold value and the probability of shedding infectious virus, the lower the number the higher the likelihood. But there is no real evidence-based established number where you can say, above 30 [Ct value], you will definitely not be infectious. That said, by [Ct value] 35

you will be unlikely to be infectious," Dr. Gagandeep Kang, Professor of Microbiology at CMC Vellore says in an email to *The Hindu*.

A paper published in the *European Journal of Clinical Microbiology & Infectious Diseases* says: "Patients with Ct above 33-34 are not contagious and thus can be discharged from hospital care or strict confinement for non-hospitalised patients."

In a July 27 letter to the Chief Secretary of Karnataka, Dr. Balram Bhargava, Director-General of ICMR, says that there are "no reliable studies to definitively prove a direct correlation between disease severity/infectiousness and Ct values."

**Relative measure**

Unlike measurements made using a blood sample, real-time RT-PCR is not an absolute

but only a relative measure of viral load. "RT-PCR test presently being conducted is qualitative in nature. Ct values may give only a rough estimate of viral load," Dr. Bhargava says.

The Ct values can vary depending on how the sample has been collected. Often, a poorly collected nasopharyngeal or oropharyngeal swab can have very high Ct values, thus leading to incorrect conclusions about infectiousness or disease severity.

"Ct values are also determined by technical competence of the person performing the test, calibration of equipment and analytical skills of the interpreters," Dr. Bhargava notes. There have been uncountable instances when people have tested positive one day and negative the next day and again tested positive another day.

The Ct values can also vary depending on the kind of specimens collected from the same person. For instance, nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal samples collected from the same person can have different viral loads, making Ct value a less reliable measure to assess a person's infectiousness or disease severity. Also, the amount of virus present in nasopharyngeal and oropharyngeal samples can vary when collected at different times even on a single day.

**False security**

Patients in early symptomatic phase may have relatively less viral load and hence have high Ct value, which may subsequently change.

"In such cases, high Ct values will give a false sense of security," Dr. Bhargava says. "Viral loads will increase with time and then go down. It would be a sort of bell-shaped curve," elaborates Dr. Jameel.

Besides the amount of virus present in a person, disease severity depends on host factors. "Some patients with low viral load may suffer from very severe disease due to triggering of the immunological responses. Hence high Ct values [reflecting low viral load] may give a false sense of security," the Dr. Bhargava adds.

## Inhaling polluted air can lead to brain damage

Mice exposed to dirty air formed amyloid deposits and tangles in the brains

**SHUBASHREE DESIKAN**

New research on mice shows that continually inhaling dirty air could be bad not just for the lungs but could also damage the brain tissue. In the study, led by Richard N. Zare of Stanford University, eight male mice were exposed to polluted air, and eight controls were exposed to filtered air. Afterwards, on examining the brain tissues of the 16 mice, the researchers found that the mice that inhaled dirty air had developed amyloid deposits, neurofibrillary tangles and plaques, while those that had inhaled filtered air showed no such developments. The study was conducted at the chemistry department of Fudan University of Shanghai, China, and the results are presented in a paper that has been accepted for publication in the journal *Talanta Open*.

**Damaged brains**

While the whole experiment lasted two years, the mice were exposed to dirty air six days a week, eight hours a



**Even design:** In the study, eight male mice were exposed to polluted air and eight controls to filtered air. ■ SAIRA HAMEED

day, for 24 weeks (six months). The researchers used a number of different analytical techniques to examine different tissues. "Of course, the lungs... were quite different - but I had not expected to find what my postdoc, Dr. Saira Hameed,

observed, namely damage to the brains of all the mice exposed to dirty air but essentially no damage in the brains of mice exposed to clean air," says Prof. Zare, who is with the Department of Chemistry of Stanford University, California, in an

email to *The Hindu*. As for the concentration of PM2.5 that made up the dirty air for the experiment, Jinzhao Zhao, from Department of Environmental Health, School of Public Health, Fudan University, says, "We used 70 microgram per cubic metre to perform the study." This is about twice the average value of PM2.5 seen in Shanghai.

**Dirty air and clean air**  
"The exposure system we used in this study could filter the ambient PM2.5 [which was then given to the controls]. The composition of filtered air is similar with the outdoor air from which PM2.5 has been filtered," says Dr Zhao, who is an author of the study, in an email to *The Hindu*. "However, the system cannot completely filter the PM2.5, so a little PM2.5 still exists in the filtered air."

The brains of mice exposed to dirty air showed tangles and plaques as well as neurofibrillary inflammations. "In addition, we made a chemical analysis, and we

found upregulation (concentration increase) in ceramide and sulphatides," Prof. Zare explained.

**Alzheimer's disease**

Earlier studies have shown that ceramide is directly involved in the aggregation of amyloid beta and the progression of Alzheimer's disease. Sulphated galactosyl ceramide, also known as sulphatides (ST), are found in abundance at the myelin sheath of brain cells.

"We found upregulation of sulphatide in the brain tissues from dirty air compared to the filtered air, suggesting damages in the myelin sheath and blood-brain function dysfunction as a result of particulate matter exposure," says Prof. Zare. "This hypothesis is supported by previous reports that have shown that the expression levels of sulphatides are associated with the physiological activity of the blood-brain barrier, and increased concentration of sulphatide has impact on myelin sheath at early stages of HIV-1 infection."

**building ACE2, according to an international research team led by Alan Faiz of Australia's University of Technology Sydney. But while it is known that the coronavirus uses ACE2 to break into cells, there is as yet no proven link between higher expression of the genes and the severity of COVID-19 infection, Faiz said. The study report, posted as a preprint on medRxiv, has yet to be certified by peer review.**

**Paleolithic study:** Kathleen Johnson carries her caving gear across a river, exiting a cave in Laos. ■ UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

## A single person spreads coronavirus to 23 others in a bus ride

Unlock 4 guidelines, by allowing metrorail service, may worsen risk of infections

**R. PRASAD**

With the Central government issuing the Unlock 4 guidelines that will allow many activities that attract large crowds to gather outside the containment zones, including the operation of metro rail services from September 7, there is heightened risk of a surge in coronavirus cases. Metro rail coaches with sealed windows, closed doors and air-conditioning seem particularly prone to spreading the virus.

**Air-conditioned bus**

In the third week of January, a single person travelling in an air-conditioned bus along with 67 others in Zhejiang province in eastern China on a 100-minute round trip spread the virus to 23 people. At the same time, 60 passengers travelling in another bus to the same venue and where no one was infected did not report any cases. In both buses, air conditioners were in recirculation mode. In addition to 128 bus passengers, another set of 44 people attended a worship event. Besides the 23 passengers of the bus, seven who attended the worship event and were in close contact with the index patient during the event also got in-



**Risky travel:** Sealed windows, closed doors, air-conditioning seem particularly prone to spreading the virus. ■ M. PRABHU

fected. That just seven people who did not travel by the same bus got infected could be because the worship was an outdoor event.

According to a paper published in *JAMA Internal Medicine*, the travel duration to and from the temple was 50 minutes each way. All the passengers, including the index patient, were seated in their own seats both during the onward and return journey. None of the event participants wore masks during the rides and when worshiping.

Two days before travelling in the bus, the index patient, aged over 60 years, had come in close contact with 10 individuals, four of whom had travel histories to Hubei

province. The index patient was asymptomatic during the bus trip but developed symptoms the same day after returning from the temple. The index patient also infected the spouse and child.

**Aerosol transmission**  
"Through detailed epidemiologic analysis, airborne transmission within a bus with recycled air seems likely to have contributed to a COVID-19 outbreak," the authors who are physicians with the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention write. That passengers seated close to the index patient, including the one seated next to him did not have statistically higher risk com-

pared with those sitting further away including in the very last row, seven rows behind the index patient, suggests that more close contact or respiratory droplets, airborne transmission through aerosols would have caused the virus spread.

The study adds to the existing body of evidence that suggests a possible spread by tiny particles airborne for a longer time and not just through large respiratory droplets.

"Our finding of potential airborne transmission has important public health significance... future efforts at prevention and control should consider the potential for airborne spread of COVID-19," the authors write.

Also, the fact that the index patient was asymptomatic during the bus journey suggests "individuals with infection may be able to shed virus by breathing", as reported by few other studies.

The World Health Organization on July 9 acknowledged that novel coronavirus can be airborne in closed settings and spread from one person to another. It also acknowledged that people without symptoms can spread the virus.

Mineral deposits of caves in Vietnam, point to the end of the Green Sahara

**ASWATHI PACHA**

About 4,000 to 5,000 years ago, a severe drought crippled countries of Southeast Asia forcing a shift in human settlement patterns of the area. Researchers have now told the story behind this mega-drought.

By studying the mineral deposits of caves in Vietnam they point to a connection between the end of the Green Sahara and this mega-drought.

**Rock samples**

The team collected stalagmite samples from the caves in Laos and examined the oxygen, carbon isotopes and trace metals. They also conducted different modelling and paleoclimate experiments. The data suggested that during this period the Sahara started losing its vegetation. The reduced plant growth led to increased airborne dust which cooled the Indian Ocean, shifted the atmospheric circulation patterns and caused a condition similar to today's El Niño events.

This ultimately led to a large reduction in monsoon moisture across Southeast Asia that lasted more than 1,000 years, says Kathleen Johnson in a release. She is an associate professor of Earth system science at the University of California and one of the corresponding authors of the paper published in *Nature Communications*.

Previous studies have shown that this demise of the Green Sahara also caused the collapse of the Akkadian Empire of Mesopotamia and the de-urbanisation of the Indus Valley Civilization.

This mega-drought period also brought about many lifestyle changes in the mainland Southeast Asian countries of Myanmar, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam. The first appearance of cultivated cereals - millet in central Thailand and rice in northeast Thailand were during this period. It also introduced the nucleated village agrarian lifeway. Studies of ancient DNA sequencing of human genomes have also pointed to population changes in mainland Southeast Asia about 4,000 years ago leading to some emigration in the region.

**Decades long puzzle**  
"Archaeologists and anthropologists have been studying this event for decades now, in terms of societal adaptations and upheavals, but its exact cause has eluded the scientific community," said lead author Michael Griffiths in a release. "Results from this work could help us better understand, to varying degrees, the observed societal shifts across many parts of the tropics and extratropics." He is a professor of environmental science at William Paterson University, New Jersey.

**Question Corner**

**Woodpecker (*Dinopium benghalense*). ■ GETTY IMAGES**

plays an important role in shaping the global distribution of brain size in birds.

They also found that large-brained species typically required long, costly periods of parental care, limiting ability to raise a large number of young. Small-brained species are able to produce large numbers of offspring either frequently or slowly. Small brain, slow reproductive output strategy was common in stable tropical regions but was not in high-latitude.

It was earlier shown that large-brained birds subsequently colonised variable environments. Thus, corvids, owls and woodpeckers could colonise highly variable environments.

Readers may send their questions to questioncorner@thehindu.co.in



## The 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment

After the Rajapaksas' emphatic return to power, why has the spotlight fallen on this key legislation?

MEERA SRINIVASAN

**The story so far:** After the Rajapaksas' win in the November 2019 presidential polls and the August 2020 general election, the spotlight has fallen on two key legislations in Sri Lanka's Constitution. One, the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment, that was passed in 2015 to curb powers of the Executive President, while strengthening Parliament and independent commissions. The Rajapaksa government has already drafted and gazetted the 20<sup>th</sup> Amendment. The other legislation under sharp focus is the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment passed in 1987, which mandates a measure of power devolution to the provincial councils established to govern the island's nine provinces.

### What is the legislation?

It is an outcome of the Indo-Lanka Accord of July 1987, signed by the then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi and President J.R. Jayawardene, in an attempt to resolve Sri Lanka's ethnic conflict that had aggravated into a full-fledged civil war, between the armed forces and the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, which led the struggle for Tamils' self-determination and sought a separate state. The 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment, which led to the creation of Provincial Councils, assured a power sharing arrangement to enable all nine provinces in the country, including Sinhala majority areas, to self-govern. Subjects such as education, health, agriculture, housing, land and police are devolved to the provincial administrations, but because of restrictions on financial powers and overriding powers given to the President, the provincial administrations have not made much headway. In particular, the provisions relating to police and land have never been implemented. Initially, the north and eastern provinces were merged and had a North-Eastern Provincial Council, but the two were de-merged in 2007 following a Supreme Court verdict.

**Most of the Tamil polity does not find the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment sufficient in its ambit or substance. But some see it as an important starting point, something to build upon**

**Why is it contentious?** The 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment carries considerable baggage from the country's civil war years. It was opposed vociferously by both Sinhala nationalist parties and the LTTE. The former thought it was too much power to share, while the Tigers deemed it too little. A large section of the Sinhala polity,

including the leftist-nationalist Janatha Vimukthi Peramuna (JVP) which led an armed insurrection opposing it, saw the Accord and the consequent legislation as an imprint of Indian intervention. Though signed by the powerful President Jayawardene, it was widely perceived as an imposition by a neighbour wielding hegemonic influence. The Tamil polity, especially its dominant nationalist strain, does not find the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment sufficient in its ambit or substance. However, some including the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) – which chiefly represented the Tamils of the north and east in Parliament in the post-war era until its setback in the recent polls – see it as an important starting point, something to build upon.

### Why is the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment significant?

Till date, the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment represents the only constitutional provision on the settlement of the long-pending Tamil question. In addition to assuring a measure of devolution, it is considered part of the few significant gains since the 1980s, in the face of growing Sinhala-Buddhist majoritarianism from the time Sri Lanka became independent in 1948.

**Who wants it abolished and why?** From influential Cabinet ministers in the current government to state ministers, including a former naval officer who has been assigned the Provincial Councils & Local Government portfolio, many have openly called for the abolition of provincial councils after the new government took charge. They deem the councils "white elephants", and argue that in a small country the provinces could be effectively controlled by the Centre. The opposition camp also includes those fundamentally opposed to sharing any political power with the Tamil minority. All the same, all political camps that vehemently oppose the system have themselves contested in provincial council elections. The councils have over time also helped national parties strengthen their grassroots presence and organisational structures.

**What is the stand of the Rajapaksas?** Neither President Gotabaya Rajapaksa nor Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa has commented on the Amendment so far. During Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa's two terms as President, for a decade from 2005, he gave several assurances to implement the 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment and go even beyond its provisions, popularly referred to as his promise of "13 plus". The conduct of the historic Northern Provincial Election in 2013 was a welcome step, but his government was reluctant to part with land and police powers. New Delhi's scepticism about past assurances is also no secret – the U.S. Embassy cables accessed by *The Hindu* through WikiLeaks in 2011 affirmed this. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has referenced the Amendment more than once, especially during high-level bilateral visits, but observers in Sri Lanka wonder how far India can go on the Tamil question, amid growing geopolitical insecurities.

## What is the GST compensation due to States?

Why is the Centre asking them to borrow from the market to make up the shortfall? What are the options?

SURESH SESHADRI

**The story so far:** The 41<sup>st</sup> meeting of the GST Council was held on August 27 with the singular agenda of finding a solution to the question of how best to ensure that the compensation payable to the States as part of the implementation of the Goods and Services Tax continues to be paid. The background for the meeting was the fact that the Centre and the States were cognisant of the substantial impact on GST collections from the last fiscal year's economic slowdown and more recently the lockdowns and COVID-19-related curbs that have severely shrunk the economy. At the meeting, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman stated that the GST Compensation Fund was projected to face a shortfall of about ₹2.35 lakh crore at the end of the current financial year and suggested two borrowing options that the States could choose from to bridge the shortfall.

### What is the GST compensation?

The Constitution (One Hundred and First Amendment) Act, 2016, was the law which created the mechanism for levying a nationwide GST. Written into this law was a provision to compensate the States for loss of revenue arising out of implementation of the GST. The adoption of the GST was made possible by the States ceding almost all their powers to impose local-level indirect taxes and agreeing to let the prevailing multiplicity of imposts be subsumed under the GST. While the States would receive the SGST (State GST) component of the GST, and a share of the IGST (Integrated GST), it was agreed that revenue shortfalls arising from the transition to the new indirect taxes regime would be made good from a pooled GST Compensation Fund for a period of five years that is set to end in 2022. This corpus in turn is funded through a compensation cess that is levied on so-called 'demerit' goods. The computation of the shortfall – the mechanism for which is spelt out in Section 7 of the GST (Compensation to States) Act, 2017 – is done annually by projecting a revenue assumption based on 14% compounded growth from the base year's (2015-2016) revenue and calculating the difference between that figure and the actual GST collections in that year. For the 2020-21 fiscal year, the revenue shortfall has been anticipated at ₹3 lakh crore, with the Compensation Fund expected to have only about ₹65,000 crore through cess accruals and balance to pay the compensation to the States.



### How are the borrowing options supposed to work?

Asserting that it is under no obligation to make good any shortfall in the GST and that it is up to the GST Council to devise a solution, the Union government has proposed that the States borrow directly from the market by issuing debt under a special window coordinated by the Ministry of Finance. The Centre has also contended that of the projected shortfall of about ₹2.35 lakh crore, only ₹97,000 crore is the deficit arising out of GST implementation, with the balance ₹1.38 lakh crore attributable to an 'act of God' (the COVID-19 pandemic) that is independent of implementation of the new indirect tax regime.

Accordingly, Option 1 entails the States selling

debt securities in the market to raise the ₹97,000 crore. The Centre will "endeavour" to keep the interest cost on these borrowings "at or close to" the yield on G-Sec (bonds issued by the Government of India), and in the event of the cost being higher, bear a part of the difference through a subsidy. This additional borrowing by the States will not be accounted for as a part of the State's debt for purposes of its overall debt calculation,

and the repayment of the principal and interest on these borrowings will be done from the Compensation Fund by extending the period of cess collections beyond 2022. Under Option 2, the States can sell debt in the market to raise the entire ₹2.35 lakh crore shortfall but with the terms of the borrowing being far less favourable. Crucially, here the interest cost would have to be borne by them with only the principal being serviced by the Compensation Fund.

### Why is there an impasse on this issue?

Several States, including West Bengal, Kerala, Punjab and Tamil Nadu, have rejected the options and made clear that the onus is on the Centre to borrow from the market to make good any shortfall in the Compensation Fund. Tamil Nadu, in a letter to the Prime Minister, stressed that the States had agreed to the implementation of the GST only on the basis of the "unequivocal commitment given by the Government of India to compensate the States for any revenue loss". Observing that States had not only suffered severe losses in revenue in the wake of the pandemic but had also been at the forefront of the battle to prevent the spread of the disease, Tamil Nadu said any delay in ensuring the compensation payments would compromise essential capital spending by the States to restart the economy effectively. These States dismiss the Centre's contention that any additional borrowing by it would have deleterious macro-economic consequences and point out that global credit rating agencies essentially monitor the overall general government deficit and borrowing levels.

## Why was a new group of tennis players formed?

How does this affect the ATP, which handles the men's Tour? Have other top players joined Djokovic-led association?

N. SUDARSHAN

**The story so far:** On August 29, a player group led by World No.1 Novak Djokovic and former top-30 player Vasek Pospisil announced the formation of Professional Tennis Players Association (PTPA) to represent the interests of male players (top-500 in singles and top-200 in doubles). The body is outside the structure of the Association of Tennis Professionals (ATP), the principal organisation responsible for the men's Tour and tasked with protecting player interests. Djokovic resigned as head of the ATP Player Council, along with members Pospisil, John Isner and Sam Querrey.

### What triggered the move?

In a document shared with fellow players, Djokovic and Pospisil listed revenue sharing, disciplinary actions, pensions and amenities at tournaments as the issues the players-only body would address. The most significant of these is the long-standing call for tournaments to commit a greater percentage of revenue as prize money. For example, according to a *New York Times* report, the 2018 US Open payout of \$57.24 million was just about 14% of the tournament revenue, a figure the players thought as too low in comparison with other professional sports like basketball and American football.

Djokovic and Pospisil believe that the ATP is unsuited to raise this issue. For them, the fact that the seven-member ATP board comprises three player representatives and an equal number of tournament representatives (apart from the chairman) is an inherent sign of conflict of interest. In March 2019, the then ATP president and chief executive, Chris Kermode, was voted out, with Djokovic saying that Kermode "had way too many things off the court". Later in October, a new regime under Andrea Gaudenzi took shape, but Pospisil, while resigning, said it was very difficult under the current structure to represent his peers well. A perceived



communication breakdown during the COVID-19 pandemic was another sticking point.

### What is the ATP's stance?

The ATP believes that PTPA is "not in the best interests of the players, tournaments and the Tour", even as it recognised "dissatisfaction from certain player factions". Though Djokovic has described PTPA as a complementary association and not a "union, calling for boycotts and parallel tours", the ATP sees it as antithetical.

Two-time Major finalist Kevin Anderson, the new ATP Player Council president, expressed the fear that tournaments could also go their own way and the rupture would damage the sport. "A lot of players reference the NBA, but that's a different model," the South African told *Beyond the Baseline*

podcast. "Unlike in the NBA, we are independent contractors not employees, and have our own player rights when it comes to partnerships."

"But whatever the structure, you still have to find a middle ground. In tennis we have an inherent middle ground because of the way it's structured. Players may sometimes feel hard done by, but it's important to recognise the protections we have, like fixed draw sizes, mandatory doubles etc. A tournament can well say we don't need 32-member draws but just 16. So, if you break apart the structure, nobody knows how the cards are going to fall," Anderson added.

### What are the views of other big players?

Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal, both members of the Player Council, are opposed to PTPA. The duo questioned the timing – in the middle of a global pandemic – and called for "unity, not separation". The four Grand Slams, the International Tennis Federation and the Women's Tennis Association (WTA) released a joint statement expressing their disapproval. Three-time Major champion Andy Murray didn't join, flagging the absence of women and asking for the new ATP management to be given more time. Pospisil later claimed that there was an active dialogue with the women's side and pointed to the "separate movement started last year which had support from over 70 of the top-100 men and women," also led by himself and Djokovic. Serena Williams was non-committal, calling herself "always Team Djokovic" but that she "can't really have an opinion without understanding more deeply".

### What next for PTPA?

According to Djokovic, the next step was to "create a structure legally with bylaws", for which Pospisil has been consulting the law firm Norton Rose Fulbright. "It's a long-term project," Djokovic added. "We're happy that we are here."

## Is COVID-19 setting off a bradykinin storm in the body?

Why are some patients showing a rapid accumulation of fluid in the lungs? What have scientists found out?

RAMYA KANNAN

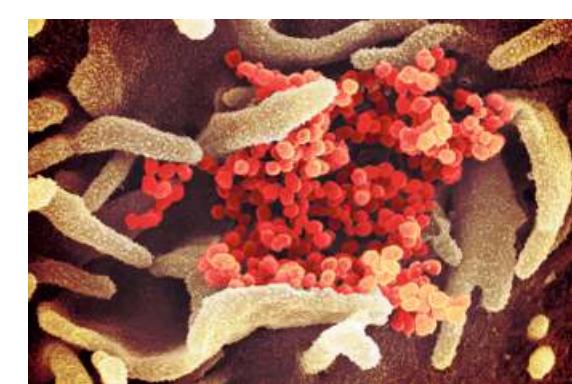
**The story so far:** Scientists are still trying to understand the causes for the rapid deterioration in some patients with COVID-19. While the cytokine storm is able to explain certain aspects of what goes wrong, doctors treating patients are often foiled by the severity with which the SARS-CoV-2 virus seems to affect some people. A supercomputer's recent analysis of data on the contents collected earlier from the lungs of patients with the COVID-19 infection has shown that a phenomenon called a 'bradykinin storm' might explain how the virus works in the body, including some of the more puzzling extreme events.

### How has this explanation emerged?

This plausible explanation has emerged from the data analytics work that a team of scientists led by Dan Jacobson at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory (ORNL) in the U.S. have been doing employing the super computer Summit. In a paper published in July in *eLife*, a peer reviewed journal, Michael R. Garvin et al advance the bradykinin hypothesis as a means of explaining some of the more deadly effects the virus has on the human body.

### What is the bradykinin hypothesis?

Bradykinin is a compound that is related to pain sensation and lowering blood pressure in the human body. According to the researchers, "SARS-CoV-2 uses a human enzyme called ACE2 like a 'Trojan Horse' to sneak into the cells of



its host. ACE2 lowers blood pressure in the human body and works against another enzyme known as ACE (which has the opposite effect)." The analyses further found that the virus caused the levels of ACE to fall in the lungs, and consequently pushed up the levels of ACE2. As a chain reaction, this increases the levels of the molecule bradykinin in the cells, causing a bradykinin storm. Bradykinin causes the blood vessels to expand and become leaky, leading to swelling of the surrounding tissue.

In addition, the levels of a substance called hyaluronic acid, which can absorb more than 1,000 times its own weight in water to form a hydrogel, increased. "In effect, the bradykinin storm-induced leakage of fluid into the lungs combined with the excess hyaluronic acid would

likely result in a Jello-like substance that is preventing oxygen uptake and carbon dioxide in the lungs of severely affected COVID-19 patients," the researchers explain. This rapid accumulation of fluid in the lungs of patients sometimes makes even the most sophisticated intensive care, including ventilators, futile. Meanwhile, *The Scientist* reported that Frank van de Veerdonk, an infectious disease specialist at the Radboud University Medical Centre in the Netherlands, and his group independently came up with a hypothesis that a dysregulated bradykinin system was leading to leaky blood vessels in the lungs and perhaps causing excess fluid to build up.

### Is more confirmation needed?

*The Scientist* brought in Josef Penninger, director of the Life Sciences Institute at the University of British Columbia in Vancouver, to weigh in on this question. "It does make a lot of sense," he told the magazine. He went on to add that further confirmation was needed, in terms of actually measuring the proteins. The magazine also reported the efforts of van de Veerdonk to set up mass spectrometry to measure kinins in the plasma.

### What follows confirmation of this hypothesis?

Jacobson and other scientists have advocated targeting the bradykinin pathway to evolve more therapeutic interventions to offset the severe effects of COVID-19. Repurposing of available drugs, subject to the outcome of clinical trials, has also been suggested.

SPECIAL FRONTIER FORCE

# Blooded in battle and fighting in the shadows

LAC tensions have turned the spotlight on the elite force that played pivotal roles in the past, from liberating Bangladesh to the Kargil war

ANANTH KRISHNAN

**O**n November 14, the Special Frontier Force (SFF) will turn 58. For an organisation that has served India for close to six decades and played some pivotal roles in key moments of Indian history, from liberating Bangladesh to fighting in the Kargil war, the SFF has scrupulously stayed out of the headlines. Until recently.

The death of an SFF soldier on August 30, who was deployed along the recently tense Line of Actual Control (LAC) that separates India and China, has now shed the spotlight on the SFF and its predominantly Tibetan soldiers. Company Leader Nyima Tenzin was killed in an accidental mine blast when he stepped over a vintage 1962 minefield during patrolling in Ladakh, according to Army sources.

His untimely death, and the deployment of the SFF amid the recent tensions with China, has not only brought unexpected attention to the highly trained and elite force, but also emerged as a source of pride for India's Tibetan community, as underlined by a video from September 4 that showed Tibetans in Shimla gathering, singing, and tying their traditional *khatas* (white scarves) to a departing convoy as they waved goodbye to SFF personnel headed for the Ladakh front.

The limelight is certainly unusual for an elite outfit trained to working in the shadows. And it's in the shadows where the SFF has mostly operated since its creation in 1962. The SFF's antecedents, in fact, even predate 1962.

This is a story that goes back to the mid-1950s, when Tibetan resistance fighters began crossing over into India starting with the 1956 uprising. More fighters would follow, in the wake of the failed uprising three years later and the Dalai Lama's exile to India.

**The story of SFF's origin goes back to the mid-1950s, when Tibetan resistance fighters began crossing over into India starting with the 1956 uprising against China**

The 6,000 or so fighters who remained in India would be given a new opportunity in 1962, when then Intelligence Bureau chief B.N. Mullik put forward the idea of setting up a training centre for Tibetan fighters. Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru turned to Major General Sujan Singh Uban, who had earlier commanded the 22 Mountain Regiment and was a Second World War veteran.

**First challenge**

The first challenge was finding a base, recalls his son Inspector General (IG) Gurdip Singh Uban (retd), who was then a Second Lieutenant, aged 22, and decided to help out his father. "We hired a taxi from Delhi and drove to Chakrata [Uttarakhand] where my father knew was an old Gurkha training centre that was lying vacant," he told *The Hindu*. "It had all the wherewithal – barracks, he recalled, and not because

training grounds, and most importantly, it had training areas such as rock climbing and was at a height of 7,000 feet. And there the story began."

The unit was raised on November 14, 1962 – on Nehru's birthday. Exactly a week later, China would announce its "unilateral ceasefire", so the unit would see no action in the war. In any case, they were hardly ready for action.

Mr. Uban said his father first called the outfit Establishment 22, named after his old Mountain Regiment that he was particularly fond of. The 'two-twos', as they would be known, would be all paratroopers – an elite unit capable of high-altitude warfare, special operations, and fighting behind enemy lines. They would report to the Cabinet Secretariat, and were not part of the Army. A women's wing was also created. He recalled the passion of the first cohort. "What really struck me was both the anger and shame, of what happened to Tibet and the Dalai Lama, who was a god for them," he said. "And also their incredible athleticism. I think Tibetans are blessed with genetics, which is why the PLA was always afraid they couldn't compete with them."

In 1967, Establishment 22 was expanded and renamed the Special Frontier Force. Mr. Uban revealed the story behind the name. "Special, because they were Special Forces [Commandos]. We used the word 'frontier' because my family belonged to the Hazara district of the then North West Frontier Province of undivided India," he recalled, and not because

of any intent to limit where they would be deployed.

They would finally see action in the 1971 war. They were deployed in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, and fought with extraordinary valour. More than 50 would lay down their lives, a sacrifice

that was, given the secrecy of the outfit, never given its due recognition.

**Fearless fighters**

Mr. Uban would follow in his father's footsteps, also serving as Inspector General of the SFF and leading them in

battle, this time in Kargil in 1999 at heights of 14,000 feet in sub-zero temperatures, for which he would receive a letter of commendation from then Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. "Having been in battle with the SFF," he said, "there is one thing I

learnt – they are fearless and never, ever hesitate." Their recent deployment along the LAC has, in a break from the past, brought the SFF into the public attention. "Earlier, the thinking was when you have a secret weapon like this, you don't flout it," he said. "This time, it's a great distinction. Earlier they were used in a covert manner, but now, it's against China. So we are sending a clear message, even to the people in Tibet."

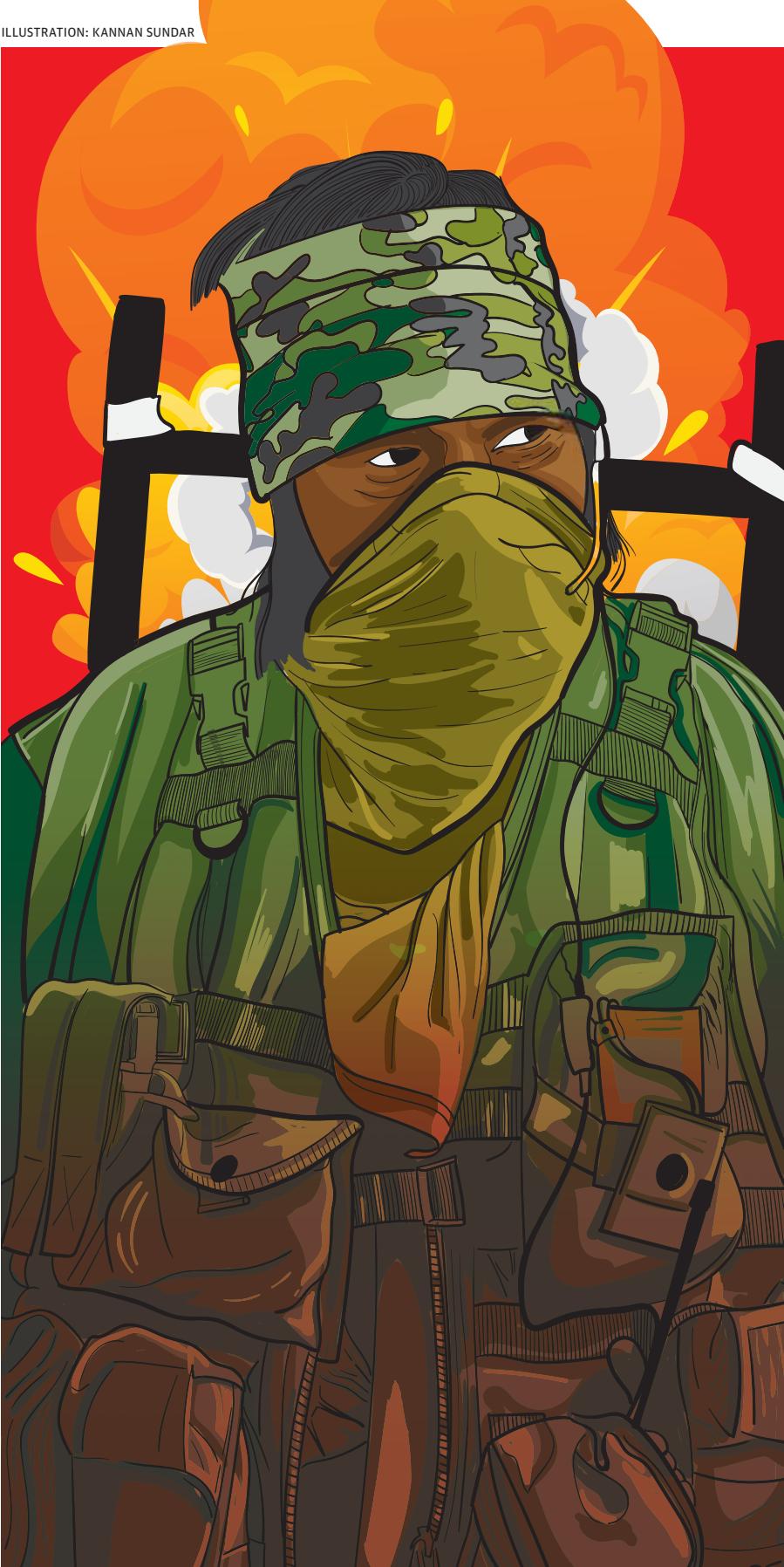
Jayadeva Ranade, former Additional Secretary in the Cabinet Secretariat, said the SFF has been a force "blooded in battle", but one that has always operated in the shadows. "The Chinese were not even aware of the SFF for 30-40 years," he said. "I think this time, the leak was done deliberately to send the signal to Tibetans inside Tibet, that your brethren are fighting for you."

"The PLA has been trying hard to recruit Tibetans in the Army and in militia outfits," added Tibetologist Claude Arpi. "The message will reach Tibet that the SFF have already taken that step."

Mr. Arpi said the new attention on the SFF holds implications both inside Tibet and for the Tibetan community in India. "Perhaps if Nyima Tenzin's death had not been reported, we would not have known so much," he added. "What is interesting for me is how people in the diaspora and refugee community are showing their patriotism, as you saw in the videos from Shilma."

The SFF is now in its third generation, but its story is only beginning. Mr. Arpi said their new position in the limelight might provide the opportunity for the SFF's warriors to get long overdue recognition from the government. Ultimately, he said, they should be integrated with the Army.

They are, as always, eager to serve, as one of their favoured battle songs notes: "The Chinese snatched Tibet from us, and kicked us out from our home; Even then, India kept us like their own... Our young martyrs have no sadness whatsoever; Whether it is Kargil or Bangladesh; We will not lose our strength; Whenever opportunities arise; We will play with our lives."



INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

# The transnational arm of law

U.S. sanctions against ICC officials are seen as a setback to multilateralism

SUHASINI HAIDAR

Rarely does a court dispensing justice find itself at the receiving end of punishments. Yet, in a statement this week, the U.S. did in fact announce sanctions, including asset freezes and visa bans against two officials of the International Criminal Court (ICC) at the Hague. The officials were ICC prosecutor Fatou Bensouda, and the ICC's head of jurisdiction, Complementary, and Cooperation Division, Phakiso Mochochi (who was sanctioned for having materially assisted Prosecutor Bensouda), for an investigation into alleged war crimes by U.S. forces and the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) in Afghanistan since 2003. Announcing the decision, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo called the ICC a "thoroughly broken and corrupted institution", threatening that the U.S. will not "tolerate [the ICC's] illegitimate attempts to subject Americans to its jurisdiction". In particular, Mr. Pompeo pointed out that the U.S. had never ratified the "Rome Statute", which created the ICC in 1998, and thus was not subject to its rulings.

The investigation that Ms. Bensouda began in 2017 asked for permission to investigate war crimes, extrajudicial killings, torture and targeting of civilian populations by the Taliban, Afghan forces, U.S. forces and other international militaries



posted in Afghanistan after the fall of the Taliban. In her pre-trial submissions, Ms. Bensouda said there was "reasonable basis to believe that, since May 2003, members of the U.S. armed forces and the CIA have committed the war crimes of torture and cruel treatment, outrages upon personal dignity, and rape and other forms of sexual violence pursuant to a policy approved by the U.S. authorities," adding that the findings were based on the U.S. Department of Defense and Senate Intelligence committees' own findings over the years.

**Blow to global order**

The U.S. decision has been criticised by the UN, the EU, 10 members of the UN Security Council, including the U.K. and France, as well as several international human rights agencies, all of which have called for the sanctions to be reversed. According to them, the U.S.'s action was a setback to the

international rules-based multilateral order, and the decision to sanction anybody assisting the ICC will deter victims of violence in Afghanistan from speaking out. Some pointed out that the U.S.'s unilateral sanctions would encourage other regimes accused of war crimes to flout the ICC's rulings. The Rome Statute has been signed by 139 countries, and 123 have ratified it through their Parliaments and internal process. Although the U.S. was part of the founding movement to build the ICC to try cases of genocide and war crime, especially after the courts in Rwanda failed, it decided not to ratify the Statute in 2002. Countries like Russia, China and India, however, were never in favour of the Rome Statute or the ICC, and never signed on.

For India, the decision was based on a number of principles. To start with, the ICC is a criminal court, unlike the International Court

ALEXEI NAVALNY

# The man who stood up to Putin

Kremlin's most prominent critic is in a coma after a chemical attack in Siberia

GARIMELLA SUBRAMANIAM

**T**he sordid episode of poisoning Alexei Navalny on August 20 in Siberia, which left him comatose in a Berlin hospital, is not the first time Russia's most prominent opposition politician has come under a chemical attack. The German government has said toxicology tests showed Mr. Navalny was poisoned with a nerve agent from the Novichok family, which was used in a 2018 attack in Britain on an ex-Soviet spy. The Kremlin has denied any involvement.

The charismatic and combative Mr. Navalny, a lawyer by training, had once professed extreme nationalist views and hostility towards immigrants, leading to his expulsion from the liberal Yabloko party. The persona of the anti-corruption crusader that many Russians will more readily recall is that of a firebrand blogger-turned-politician, who has unrelentingly exposed corporate fraud in Russia's state-owned energy companies and taken on the Kremlin establishment.

Born on June 4, 1976 in Butyn in Moscow Oblast, Navalny grew up in Omsk, some 100 km south-west of Moscow. He rose to prominence when he led large-scale protests against Mr. Putin's return to the presidency in 2012, after serving as Prime minister in the foregoing four years and as President in the preceding eight years. Amid high dra-

ma before the snap 2013 Moscow mayoral elections, he was released within hours of the pronouncement of a five-year conviction for embezzlement; the abrupt U-turn was ascribed to the Kremlin's intervention. From February 2014, Mr. Navalny was placed under house arrest for several months and denied Internet access during investigations into another case of fraud that ended in a suspended conviction. His announcement to challenge Mr. Putin for the presidential poll was marked by a 2017 social media expose against then Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev's amassing of lucrative assets. The revelations channelled popular anger in a country reeling under rapidly declining living standards following a slump in oil prices and pension reforms.

In mass demonstrations in some 100 cities, thousands demanded President

that his conviction fell outside the definition of fraud.

Mr. Navalny's latest campaign strategy was on display during the polls in September 2019 to various local councils, when candidates from his Russia of the Future party were barred from contesting. The smart vote system he devised, the electronic platform to enable tactical voting, encouraged citizens to reject Mr. Putin's United Russia party candidates, even if that meant backing other pro-Kremlin parties or the communists.

To devastating effect, United Russia lost nearly half its seats in Moscow and other cities. Mr. Navalny's recent travels in Siberia, amid pervasive official surveillance, was to replicate this approach in regional polls this September, and very likely to extend to the 2021 parliamentary elections.

The silencing of Mr. Navalny has heightened speculation about Moscow hardening its stance towards the opposition, especially in the backdrop of the unrest in the province of Khabarovsk Krai for greater autonomy. Moreover, President Putin's recent statement on deployment of the security services should the situation warrant in the ongoing uprising in neighbouring Belarus is a clear sign that the Kremlin cannot allow any unrest in its backyard to deteriorate into instability. When he is back in action, Mr. Navalny may encounter a far more hostile environment than in the past.



## TV PICKS

**NBA:** Sony Six (SD & HD), 6.30 a.m. & 4 a.m. (Monday)  
**Tour de France:** Eurosport (SD & HD), 4.45 p.m.  
**England v Australia:** 2nd T20I, Sony Six (SD & HD), 6.30 p.m.  
**Italian GP:** SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 6.40 p.m.  
**UEFA Nations League:** Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 6.30 p.m. & 9.30 p.m.; Sony Ten 1, 2 (SD & HD), 12.30 a.m. (Monday)  
**US Open:** SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 8.30 p.m.; SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 9.30 p.m.

## IN BRIEF



Tvesa lies sixth, Diksha T38 in Switzerland

PLUMSERBERG

Tvesa Malik overcame a double bogey start to put herself in contention for her first professional title outside the country with a second straight 69 that took her to tied sixth at the Flumserberg Ladies Open on Friday. She is three behind leader Stina Resen, who was nine-under for 36 holes. Diksha Dagar (73, 74) was tied 38th. PTI



Rahm, Johnson share opening day lead

WASHINGTON

Jon Rahm fired a five-under 65 to match World No. 1 Dustin Johnson for the lead after Friday's opening round of the US PGA Tour Championship. Johnson, who shot a 67, began on 10-under by virtue of his season points lead. Rahm was next on eight-under with third-ranked American Justin Thomas on seven-under and other rivals starting up to 10 strokes adrift in the staggered start system. AFP



Heat's late surge pushes Bucks to the brink

MIAMI

Jimmy Butler powered Miami Heat to a 115-100 victory over Milwaukee Bucks on Friday that pushed the top-seeded Bucks to the brink of elimination in the NBA playoffs.

**The results (semifinals): EC:** Miami Heat 115 (Butler 30, Adebayo 20) bt Milwaukee Bucks 100 (Lopez 22, Antetokounmpo 21) **Heat 3-0, WC:** Houston Rockets 112 (Harden 36, Westbrook 24) bt LA Lakers 97 (Davis 25, James 20) **Rockets 1-0.** AFP



Farah, Hassan set World marks in one-hour event

BRUSSELS

Four-time Olympic champion Mo Farah set a World record in the rarely run one-hour event at Friday's Diamond League meeting here. Farah ran 21.30km over the 60 minutes at the King Baudouin Stadium. AFP

# Tenacious Coric pulls a fast one on Tsitsipas

Djokovic too good for Struff; teenager Kostyuk stretches Osaka; Bopanna-Shapovalov pair advances

## Day Five in numbers

### QUOTE SIDE

We are dealing with COVID. It would be great if we are just fighting against one thing and not so many things at the same time

KVITOVÁ, ON WHETHER TENNIS SHOULD RAISE MORE AWARENESS ABOUT SOCIAL ISSUES



This is probably the saddest and funniest at the same time thing that has ever happened in my career!

TSITSIPAS, AFTER HIS LOSS TO CORIC, DURING WHICH HE SQUANDERED SIX MATCH POINTS

Only the fifth time Osaka has entered the second week of a Major. Has gone on to win the title in two of the previous four

11 Number of players aged 22-and-under who reached the third round, the best at a Major since Wimbledon 2005 (13)

13 Djokovic's 13th consecutive fourth-round appearance in New York after falling in the third round in both 2005 and 2006

FALLEN SEEDS  
MEN: 4-Tsitsipas; 19-Fritz; 23-Evans; 26-Krajinovic; 28-Struff; 32-Manarino  
WOMEN: 21-Alexandrova; 24-Linette

I was trying to get to the people that are in the highest positions in New York... trying to get to the governor of New York  
DJOKOVIC, AFTER MANARINO WAS NEARLY WITHDRAWN FROM THE US OPEN FOLLOWING A CHANGE IN COVID-19 PROTOCOL

MEN:  
1-Djokovic vs. 20-Carreno Busta  
5-Zverev vs. Fokina  
7-Goffin vs. Rogers  
17-Kerber vs. 28-Brady

SUNDAY'S PICKS

BORNA CORIC



Novak Djokovic sailed into the last 16 of the US Open on Friday as off-court intrigue forced the delay of a men's singles match over issues linked to coronavirus.

Djokovic outclassed Germany's Jan-Lennard Struff 6-3, 6-3, 6-1 in a routine victory for the World No. 1, who is chasing an 18th Grand Slam singles title.

### Off-court drama

Far from routine was a last-minute attempt by New York health officials to prevent France's Adrian Manarino from playing his last-32 encounter against German fifth seed Alexander Zverev.

The intervention led to a back and forth between tournament organisers and the State government and resulted in the match, which Zverev won 6-7(4), 6-4, 6-2, starting over three hours late.

Earlier, Japan's Naomi Osaka battled into the last 16 of the women's draw. The two-time Grand Slam winner required three sets and two

Coric saves six match-points in the fourth set before going on to win the four-hour 36-minute thriller

hours and 33 minutes to dispatch 18-year-old Ukrainian Marta Kostyuk in an early game at Arthur Ashe Stadium. The Japanese fourth seed, who threw her racquet in frustration after losing the second set tie-break, prevailed 6-3, 6-7(4), 6-2 against the World No. 137.

Germany's 17th seed Angelique Kerber also progressed to the fourth round, making light work of American Ann Li 6-3, 6-4.

Kerber, the 2016 US Open champion, will go up against Jennifer Brady for a quarter-final spot after the American 28th seed knocked out France's Caroline Garcia 6-3, 6-3. Garcia had provided the biggest upset of the tournament on Wednesday when she eliminated top seed Karolina Pliskova.

They will next play sixth seeds Kevin Krawietz and Andreas Mies.

Bopanna is the lone surviving Indian player in the tournament after the exits of Sumit Nagal and Divij Sharan.

stun fourth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas in a four-hour 36-minute late-night thriller.

Coric appeared to be heading for certain defeat after Tsitsipas, leading by two sets to one, opened up a 5-1 lead in the fourth.

But Coric rallied superbly, saving six match-points and fighting back to take the set 7-5 to force a decider.

### Clinching the tie-break

Tsitsipas went a break up once more in the fifth but couldn't press home the advantage as Coric forced a tie-break before clinching a 6-7(2), 6-4, 6-2, 7-5, 7-6(1).

**Women:** 28-Jennifer Brady (USA) bt Caroline Garcia (Fra) 6-3, 6-3; 17-Angelique Kerber (Ger) bt Ann Li (USA) 6-3, 6-4; 23-Yulia Putintseva (Kaz) bt Aliaksandra Sasnovich (Blr) 3-6, 6-2, 6-1; 8-Petra Martic (Cro) bt Varvara Gracheva (Rus) 6-3, 6-3; 4-Naomi Osaka (Jpn) bt Marta Kostyuk (Ukr) 6-3, 6-7(4), 6-2; 14-Anett Kontaveit (Est) bt 24-Magda Linette (Pol) 6-3, 6-2; 8-Shelby Rogers (USA) bt Madison Brengle (USA) 6-2, 6-4; 6-Petra Kvitova (Cze) bt Jessica Pegula (USA) 6-4, 6-3.

**Second round:** Iga Swiatek (Pol) bt Sachia Vickery (USA) 6-7(5), 6-3, 6-4; 16-Elise Mertens (Bel) bt Sara Sorribes (Esp) 6-3, 7-5; Caty McNally (USA) bt 21-Ekataterina Alexandrova (Rus) 4-6, 6-3, 7-6(2).

## 'Key for Nagal to improve his serve'

Bopanna also feels he will benefit from playing big matches



Rohan Bopanna.

and practising with these guys, Sumit will start understanding ... how to sustain a good level of game for three to four hours," said Bopanna.

**Impressed**  
The 2017 French Open mixed doubles champion was impressed with the quality of tennis Nagal played.

"In the fifth game of the first set, when Thiem was serving, Sumit kept trying to push Dominic to hit harder and harder. Thiem started missing a few balls.

**The key**  
The key is to constantly hit the ball deep. Anytime you give these top guys a short ball, they are so good at attacking it and controlling the point," said Bopanna.

With Nagal poised to jump into the top-100, Bopanna is confident the young man has better days ahead.

ble turnaround for Sumit to play so well against second seed Thiem in the second round of the US Open, after having lost in the first qualifying round of the Australian Open and then winning a solitary game against Marin Cilic in the Davis Cup earlier this year.

"I think, playing at this level a few more times, playing big matches like these

before falling to Adil Rashid. That sparked a collapse as the visitors lost four wickets for nine runs. A target of 15 off six balls became five off one. But Marcus Stoinis, having hit a six off Curran earlier in the over, couldn't hit another.

**The scores:** England 162/7 in 20 overs (Malan 66, Buttler 44, Agar 2/32, Richardson 2/13, Maxwell 2/14) bt Australia 160/6 in 20 overs (Finch 46, Warner 58, Archer 2/33, Rashid 2/29).  
**Second T20I:** Sept. 6 (Sunday), 6.45 p.m. (IST).

Tom Curran, who kept his nerve in the final over, gets a pat from Eoin Morgan. AP

## IPL schedule to be out today: Patel

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
NEW DELHI

The much-awaited Indian Premier League (IPL) schedule will be released on Sunday, chairman Brijesh Patel said on Saturday.

All eight teams are currently awaiting the release of fixtures but due to different quarantine rules in Dubai and Abu Dhabi, IPL's operations team took time to finalise the schedule.

"The IPL schedule will be released on Sunday," Patel said.

It is expected that defending champion Mumbai Indians and runner-up Chennai Super Kings will be pitted against each other in the first game of the 13th edition of the tournament on September 19.

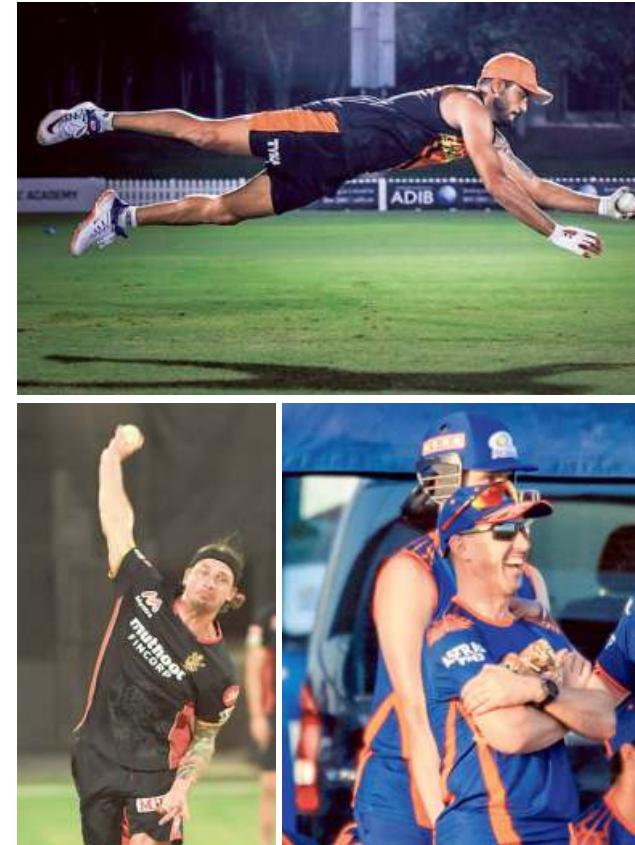
The upcoming 53-day edition is by far the longest in the history of the league and the number of double-headers is expected to be reduced this year.

With Nagal poised to

jump into the top-100, Bopanna is confident the young man has better days ahead.

But Ferraris' troubles went from bad to worse as both cars failed to qualify inside the top-10 at the team's home circuit for the first

## Prepping in style



**Sneak peek:** Shots from the IPL training camps as the players prepare in earnest. TWITTER

## England pulls off an incredible win

Australia implodes from within striking distance



Tom Curran, who kept his nerve in the final over, gets a pat from Eoin Morgan. AP

## Hamilton zooms to pole again

Ferrari fails to make top-10 at home for first time since 1984

### ITALIAN GP

ASSOCIATED PRESS  
MONZA

Formula One champion Lewis Hamilton set a track record at the Italian Grand Prix as he clinched a record-extending 94th pole position, nudging Mercedes teammate Valtteri Bottas into second place by just 0.069 seconds on Saturday.

But Ferraris' troubles went from bad to worse as both cars failed to qualify inside the top-10 at the team's home circuit for the first



Lewis Hamilton. GETTY IMAGES

time since 1984, with Sebastian Vettel not even making it out of Q1.

### The starting grid:

- Row 1: Hamilton (Mercedes); Bottas (Mercedes).
- 2: Sainz (McLaren); Perez (Racing Point).
- 3: Verstappen (Red Bull); Norris (McLaren).
- 4: Ricciardo (Renault); Stroll (Racing Point).
- 5: Albon (Red Bull); Gasly (Alpha Tauri).
- 6: Kyat (Alpha Tauri); Ocon (Renault).
- 7: Leclerc (Ferrari); Raikkonen (Alfa Romeo); Grosjean (Haas).
- 8: Vettel (Ferrari); Giovinazzi (Alfa Romeo).
- 9: Russell (Williams); Latifi (Williams).

## Bergwijn leads Netherlands past Poland

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
LONDON

Steven Bergwijn ensured the Netherlands did not feel the absence of recently departed coach Ronald Koeman to beat Poland 1-0 in the Nations League, while Italy's record-winning run came to an end in a 1-1 draw with Bosnia and Herzegovina on Friday.

The Tottenham winger netted his first international goal by tapping home from close range on the hour mark to give caretaker boss Dwight Lodeweges the perfect start.

Also in League A Group 1, Italy extended its two-year unbeaten run but a run of 11 straight wins came to an end in Florence. Edin Dzeko put the visitors in front before Stefano Sensi levelled 10 minutes later.

### The results:

**League A: Group 1:** Italy 1 (Sensi 67) drew with Bosnia & Herzegovina 1 (Dzeko 57); the Netherlands 1 (Bergwijn 62) bt Poland 0.

**League B: Group 1:** Romania 1 (Puscas 25) drew with Northern Ireland 1 (Whittle 86); Norway 1 (Haaland 67) lost to Austria 2 (Gregoritsch 35, Saitz 55).

**Group 2:** Scotland 1 (Christie 45+1-pen) drew with Israel 1 (Zahavi 74); Slovakia 1 (Schranz 89) lost to Czech Republic 3 (Cousfal 49, Dockal 54-pen, Krmenick 87).

**League C: Group 4:** Lithuania 0 lost to Kazakhstan 2 (Zainutdinov 4, Kuat 87); Belarus 0 lost to Albania 2 (Cikalleshi 23, Bare 79).

## Ian Bell calls it quits

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
LONDON

Stylish England batsman Ian Bell on Saturday announced he will retire from all forms of cricket at the end of the 2020 domestic season. The five-time Ashes winner has spent his entire career with Warwickshire.

Bell has scored 7727 runs, including 22 hundreds, at an average of 42.69 in 118 Test matches while in the ODIs, he has 5,416 runs in 161 matches.