

G BJP workers gave us 20 passes. We have come here only to listen to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. If he can come amid the pandemic, so can we. It is an honour to be here

—ASHOK SINGH TOMAR, 42
Chandni Chowk resident



G I came here from Kanpur to listen to Modi. But I could only hear him from a distance. I am a big fan of his ever since he was Chief Minister of Gujarat. I am very grateful to him for everything he does for the nation

—HEMANT GUPTA, 36
Medical equipment supplier



G I am a commandant in the East Coast Guard and came here to respect my National Flag. But I am disappointed as I was not allowed inside. I took an e-rickshaw and a bus to reach Mori Gate and then walked from there to attend the celebrations

—RAJAN BHASKAR, 60
East Delhi resident



G We have been coming here for many years to set up a first-aid kiosk. We are not scared of COVID-19 as we know we will defeat it. We have sanitizers, PPE kits, and other emergency equipment

—ANKUR SHARMA, 40
Liaison officer, Red Cross Society, St. John Ambulance



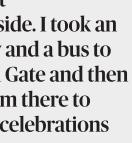
G I have come all the way from Mathura to listen to Modi but the policemen didn't even let us go near Red Fort

—ATUL GAUTAM, 18
Unemployed youth



G I am a commandant in the East Coast Guard and came here to respect my National Flag. But I am disappointed as I was not allowed inside. I took an e-rickshaw and a bus to reach Mori Gate and then walked from there to attend the celebrations

—RAJAN BHASKAR, 60
East Delhi resident



Around 500 NCC students replace schoolchildren on I-Day celebration

Most of them said they had come only to listen to Prime Minister Modi's speech

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

Scores of schoolchildren sitting in Tricolour clothes in front of the ramparts of Red Fort add to the Independence Day celebrations every year, but they were absent this time around due to the COVID-19 outbreak. However, around 500 National Cadet Corps (NCC) students attended the 74th I-Day, and were happy to do so despite the health risks.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi during his speech said he missed the schoolchildren. "Chhote chhote balak mere saamne nazar nahin aa raha... Corona ne sabko roka hua hai (I can't see the small children...Corona has stopped everyone)," he said.

The young cadets, wearing green track pants, orange tee-shirts and white caps sat at a distance from each other. Their motivation to attend the celebration was Mr. Modi.

A Class 9 student of a government school in Dilshad Garden, Tushar, said his NCC teacher had asked the students if they were interested in attending the August 15 celebration. "I asked my parents if I could attend the event and they agreed. I got a chance to see PM Modi," the 14-year-old said.

Sitting behind him was Amit Kumar, another 14-year-old, who said: "We came at 4.30 a.m. My motivation to



NCC students at Independence Day celebrations at Red Fort on Saturday. ■ HEMANI BHANDARI

be part of this event was to be able to learn something — a drill or two, parade and of course see Modiji," he said.

The students were not disappointed that they could not get to shake hands with the PM. "Such is the situation. He waved at us and that is enough for us," said Amit.

A golden opportunity

For many young adults, it was a golden opportunity which they could not pass up.

"Humse chhote bacche aate picchle saal tak, is saal humain bhi mauka mila hai. Pata nahin dobara kabhi"

he said.

All through the event, the Prime Minister gave the mask a miss and loosely wrapped his neck scarf around his face whenever required. While there were murmurs about the absence of a mask, most attendees, including the kids, supported the PM.

Farhan Siddiqui, a 13-year-old NCC member, said: "Whatever he does is right. He propagates to wear a mask for our safety but he is a hero who believes in swadeshi and mask is a foreign concept... maybe that is why he didn't wear one," he said.

Abhishek Yadav, 21-year-old Indraprastha University student and member of NCC, said he attended the celebration as senior wing members were invited for the first time.

"We were asked because not many children were willing to attend the celebration and we felt like it was our responsibility to come. If we didn't turn up, who would?"

'AAP will distribute oximeters in villages'

Kejriwal appeals to people to donate devices to the party

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

AAP chief Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday said the party will distribute oximeters in villages across the country so that people, who are having fever or breathing issues due to the virus, can check their oxygen levels.

"We are planning to give an oximeter to one person in every village across the country. The person will have the responsibility of the village. In the village, pamphlets will be distributed and if anyone has fever or breathing issues, then this person will take the oximeter to his house. If the oxygen levels are less, then the person can be taken to a hospital," Mr. Kejriwal said during a video address to Aam Aadmi Party workers.

"I appeal to people to donate as many oximeters to AAP. We will also try to open oxygen testing centres in as many villages as possible," he added.

He appealed to all AAP State and district incharges and coordinators to open such centres in villages. Mr.



Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal at the Independence Day celebration in New Delhi on Saturday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Kejriwal said he will not be celebrating his birthday on Sunday and asked people to send him wishes from their homes instead of visiting his house in the capital. "But I want a gift from you — people who can donate oximeters, please do so..." he said.

A few days back, we heard that our 20 soldiers were martyred on the Indo-China border," Mr. Kejriwal said during his address. "Many a time, we do not realise the value of our freedom when we live our lives with our families, attend our jobs, and move freely. Some people have lost their lives for the freedom that we have today. Let's come together and pay our tributes and respect for them," he added.

'No idol immersion during Ganeshotsav'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Immersion of idols will not be allowed in public places in the city during Ganeshotsav due to COVID-19, and the government will not set up any artificial ponds for the same as it did in previous years, said officials.

"Idol immersions shall not be allowed during the forthcoming Ganeshotsav in any public place, including the Yamuna or any other water body, public place, ponds, ghats etc. The ritual may be performed within home premises in a bucket or container," read an order issued by the Delhi Pollution Control Committee.

Violation of directions can lead to imprisonment of upto five years or a fine upto to ₹1 lakh or both.

"Last year, we had created about 500 artificial ponds for the purpose, but this year it will not be done to avoid people gathering at these spots," a Delhi government official said.

The government will monitor the situation and later take a call on whether idol immersion will be allowed during Durga Puja.

Noida authority told to remove encroachment

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Uttar Pradesh Pollution Control Board to take action against violation of environmental norms by illegal dairy farms in a residential colony in Ghaziabad.



Pollution board told to act against illegal dairy farms

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The BJP, on the occasion of the 74th Independence Day, pledged to make the nation 'Atmanirbhar' and urged citizens to join Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Vocal For Local initiative.

Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta said the party had initiated the 'Gandagi Delhi Chhodo' sanitation campaign with the Municipal Corporations of Delhi on the lines of Mr. Modi's 'Bharat Gandagi Chhodo' initiative.

by stopping polluting activities and recovering compensation from polluters, apart from any other statutory action. Beyond issuing notice, there is no information about any other action."

The directions came when the green panel was hearing a plea moved by petitioner Ved Prakash Aggarwal who sought directions against illegal dairy farms operating in residential areas.

According to the applicant, operation of such dairies was resulting in degradation of environment and causing harm to the public health," the Bench had observed, while noting the allegations made in the plea.

In a report submitted by the civic body, authorities informed the NGT that the "matter should be dealt with by the development authorities [Awasi Vikas Parishad]."

'Blatant violation'

Earlier, the NGT had observed, "It is clear that there is blatant violation of law which needs to be checked

Air quality of Delhi-NCR	
Delhi	67
Gurugram	58
Ghaziabad	63
Faridabad	78
Noida	62
Greater Noida	70
Good	51-100
Satisfactory	101-200
Moderate	201-300
Poor	301-400
Very poor	>401

AIR QUALITY INDEX AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY (AVERAGE OF PAST 24 HOURS) | SOURCE: CPCB

on the college website. The Prospectus data for admission to BFA (Bachelor of Fine Arts) and Diploma for Hearing & Speech Impaired will be available on the College Website "http://colart.delhi.govt.nic.in". The Application Form will be available on the website from Monday, 17th August 2020 to Saturday, 22nd August 2020. The filled up Application Form for BFA, along with required Fees and supporting documents, duly completed, should be uploaded through the same URL as mentioned/accessible on the College Website-Admission Portal. Latest by Saturday, 29th August 2020.

Details regarding Qualifications, Intake Seats, Online Aptitude Test - General Knowledge of Fine Arts for all specializations, Centers for conduct of entrance examination, Fees, Courses and Reservations are included in the Prospectus Data which is available on the College Website "http://colart.delhi.govt.nic.in".

The Application Form for BFA will be released from Monday, 17th August 2020 to Saturday, 22nd August 2020. The filled up Application Form for BFA, along with required Fees and supporting documents, duly completed, should be uploaded through the same URL as mentioned/accessible on the College Website-Admission Portal. Latest by Saturday, 29th August 2020.

The Applications are advised to regularly check the College Website-Admission Portal for all details/contents on the online Admission Procedure for the Academic Year 2020-21.

4. All reservations shall be as per the Delhi Government Policy and will be subject to any change amendment made by the Delhi Government (GNCTD).

For MFA (Master of Fine Arts) and Post Diploma for Hearing & Speech Impaired in the College of Art, New Delhi, a separate advertisement will be released in respect of all specializations (Applied Art, Painting, Print Making, Sculpture and Visual Communication) in the month of September 2020.

Note: 1. Only for the Academic Session 2020-21 due to the prevailing conditions of COVID-19. Admissions to Undergraduate (BFA) courses are merit-based (that is, based on marks scored in Class 12 Board examinations) and marks obtained in the entrance test. The Admissions Entrance test will be held on 2nd October 2020. No practical examination (Still-life and Composition) will be conducted in the campus for any specialization.

2. For (H&S)-Impaired & Speech Impaired Candidates) Diploma Courses; entrance examination will be conducted in the campus (College Premises) on 07th September 2020 at 10:30 am as no theory subject examination is implemented for these category candidates. Hence in respect of Diploma for Hearing & Speech Impaired (DFA); the requisite entrance test will be conducted in the campus (College Premises) on 07th September 2020. All subjects are implemented for entrance examination for the DFA. No practical examination (Still-life and Composition) will be conducted in the campus for any specialization.

3. The Applicants are advised to regularly check the College Website-Admission Portal for all details/contents on the online Admission Procedure for the Academic Year 2020-21.

4. All reservations shall be as per the Delhi Government Policy and will be subject to any change amendment made by the Delhi Government (GNCTD).

For MFA (Master of Fine Arts) and Post Diploma for Hearing & Speech Impaired in the College of Art, New Delhi, a separate advertisement will be released in respect of all specializations (Applied Art, Painting, Print Making, Sculpture and Visual Communication) in the month of September 2020.

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Timings

DELHI

SUNDAY, AUG. 16
RISE 05:52 SET 19:00
RISE 02:38 SET 17:02
MONDAY, AUG. 17
RISE 05:52 SET 18:59
RISE 03:38 SET 17:55
TUESDAY, AUG. 18
RISE 05:53 SET 18:58
RISE 04:41 SET 18:43

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	35	26
Safdarjung	35	26
Palam	35	27

Delhi Palam Today
34°C Light rain and thunder-storm with cloudy sky would affect the area.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
35°C A few spells of light rain and thunder-storm would occur at some places with cloudy sky.

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THE HINDU

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IN BRIEF

3 children hurt as porch falls on them in Noida

NOIDA Three children were injured after a porch of a fourth-floor flat fell on them in Noida on Saturday. One child has been discharged after first-aid, but the other two are still in the hospital.

HC restricts its functioning till August 31

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI The Delhi High Court decided on Saturday to restrict its functioning, as well as that of the district courts in the city, only to urgent matters till August 31 in view of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The Administrative and

Social distancing takes precedence on I-Day

Only 100 VVIPs allowed to sit on the ramparts of Red Fort

SAURABH TRIVEDI

NEW DELHI

Amid multilayered security and mandatory adherence to social distancing guidelines, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday hoisted the National Flag at the ramparts of Red Fort.

However, unlike previous Independence Day celebrations, during which he used to break security protocols and meet schoolchildren, Mr. Modi this time waved his hand towards COVID-19 warriors and NCC cadets from inside the car while leaving Red Fort in his cavalcade.

Following strict social distancing norms and avoiding the gathering of crowds, entry to Red Fort was only by invitation. Only 100 VVIPs were allowed to sit on the ramparts. The remaining VVIPs and diplomats were accommodated on the right side of the fort. The left side of the fort was reserved for corona warriors and NCC cadets.

The chairs for guests were placed five feet apart and security personnel deployed inside the enclosure were instructed to ensure guests maintained social distancing and wore masks. A kit that contained a white towel, water bottle, hand gloves, sani-



A man in a PPE suit checks the temperature of attendees at Red Fort on Saturday. ■ AP

tizer and mask was kept on each chair for the guests.

Thermal screening

The guests, mainly VVIPs and senior defence officers, were allowed entry only after thermal screening and hand sanitisation at entry point. The event was restricted for the general public.

To meet any emergency situation or in case any guest had COVID-19 symptoms, four medical booths were set up around the premises.

A senior police officer said the venue was sanitised early in the morning and all security personnel were briefed to maintain a high level of hygiene while dealing with

guests. The security personnel at frisking points were instructed not to touch the guests and an extended handheld metal detector was used to avoid close contact.

The members of the guard of honour had been put under quarantine ahead of the celebrations.

A senior police officer said that Delhi Police had made multilayered arrangements in connection with the celebrations. All agencies worked in close coordination with each other to cater to all kinds of threat inputs.

SWAT teams and Parakram vans had been strategically stationed. Delhi's borders were also sealed.

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THE HINDU

India's National Newspaper

HC restricts its functioning till August 31

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI The Delhi High Court decided on Saturday to restrict its functioning, as well as that of the district courts in the city, only to urgent matters till August 31 in view of the COVID-19 outbreak.

The Administrative and

General Supervision Committee of the HC, headed by Chief Justice D.N. Patel, also directed that subject to complete availability of public transport and the situation in Delhi remaining stable, a plan be evolved for gradual opening of physical courts from September 1 onwards.

"To begin with, on experimental basis, around one-fourth of the courts can resume physical functioning on a rotational basis while the rest can continue taking up matters through video-conferencing," read an office order issued by Registrar General Manoj Jain.

The two-day summit on the Unacademy platform groomed aspirants to crack the defence exams and gave them a glimpse into life in the armed forces

A career in the armed forces has a charm of its own. The adventures and opportunities it promises, tales of bravery of the men and women in uniform, the opportunity to serve the nation, and the thrill of being in the line of action are just a few of the attractions. However, what not everyone realises is just how vital the armed forces are to a nation. Highlighting this was former Vice President of India M Hamid Ansari during his talk at Unacademy Command, a virtual conclave for defence exams aspirants.

"The armed forces are an integral part of the nation-building process," said Mr Ansari. "They safeguard not just the country's territorial extent but also its integrity."

Organised in association with The Hindu Group, Unacademy Command was a two-day virtual conclave on the Unacademy platform, that



"Discipline is very important in the armed forces. It is a quality that should be imbibed by civilians as well if we are to progress."

- Shri M. Hamid Ansari
Former Vice President of India



"During the Kargil war we faced several challenges, right from intelligence failure, treacherous terrain, surveillance failure, shortage of weapons and ammunition and sanctions imposed by Western countries due to nuclear weapons testing. Despite this, we were determined to win the war. And it was the junior leadership that got us victory because of excellent implementation at their level."

- Gen. V.P. Malik PVSM, AVSM (Retired)
Former Chief of the Indian Army



"Being in the Army calls for the right attitude and grit. When I was posted to Leh, the Kargil war broke out.

We were in the thick of the action and there were so many brave men who fought to the very end to safeguard the country."

- Capt. Yashika Hatwal Tyagi
Kargil War Veteran, Leadership Trainer, Life Coach



"The amputated leg was the least of my problems; it was all the other injuries that I had sustained that took longer to heal. However, I had decided to not let my injuries hold me back. I began to channel my energies towards sports and began to set new goals for myself. So, don't make excuses to justify failure. Manage personal setbacks and find a way to forge ahead."

- Major D P Singh
Kargil War Veteran & Indian Blade Runner



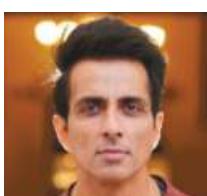
"A career in the armed forces is a way of life with its challenges, infinite opportunities, unending adventures, and call for daring. No other career will offer you the kind of honour and pride, leadership skills, quality of life and personal satisfaction like the Army."

- Lt. Gen. Asit Mistry AVSM, SM, VSM Comdt. NDA and Col. of the Maratha Light Infantry



"The Army encourages a role model style of leadership. I believe this translates well into everyday life as well. If you conduct yourself as a role model in your day-to-day life, you will always make the right choices. Even corporates draw upon the military way of life... take for instance the OODA cycle which is today implemented in most corporate training modules. It prepares you to make critical decisions."

- Gul Panag
Actor, Entrepreneur and Thought Leader



"At the beginning of the lockdown when I saw people struggling to get to their homes, I knew I had to do something. I had no idea how to help them get home, but I learnt along the way. The first batch of people I helped were 350 migrant workers from Karnataka. Today, I have helped over 1.5 lakh people get home. While I had no clue about the procedures to be followed initially, doors began to open as I began to work towards it. This shows that one can do anything if one makes up one's mind."

- Sonu Sood,
Actor & Humanitarian



"The military is the noblest profession there is. Outside of Utopia, the idealistic conditions that we look for exist in the armed forces. During my career in the Army I have rubbed shoulders with the best of men and we have always striven to accomplish the mission assigned: the welfare of our motherland."

- Lt. Gen. H S Panag PVSM, AVSM (Retired)
Defence Analyst

the most, said Major D P Singh, who lost a leg and sustained several injuries in the Kargil war. However, not one to be bogged down by these setbacks, he decided to find a way to set new goals and succeed regardless. After gaining the distinction of becoming India's first blade runner, last year he went on to become the first war veteran to skydive. Talking about his journey, he said, "It is okay to take a moment to sit down and deal with your emotions. But don't use it as a crutch to hold you back. You have to get up and take charge of your arena, your goal."

While the prospect of appearing for the defence exams and then clearing the SSB interview might seem daunting, Group Captain Rajesh Kumar Pandey, who is now an Unacademy educator, guided aspirants through what it really takes to make the cut in the selection process. "What the SSB is really testing one for is one's personality and whether it is suited for life in the armed forces. Nearly 70% of the questions revolve around a candidate's life and hobbies, the rest test the candidate on their awareness levels and subject knowledge."

The fact that life in a defence family also imbibes in you a sense of discipline and camaraderie was reiterated by actors Gul Panag and Ranvijay Singh. "Growing up in a defence family, there was a great balance. Life in the army teaches you to treat people in an equal manner. Discipline and physical fitness are a way of life. Everybody in the Army becomes your family and you understand the value of life," said Ranvijay.

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Bhadoli police arrest Gyanpur MLA

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BHADOHI (U.P.)

A Bhadoli police team on Saturday arrested Gyanpur MLA Vijay Mishra, detained by the Madhya Pradesh police in Agar Malwa for the lawmaker's alleged involvement in a case of criminal intimidation and wrongful confinement, said a senior officer.

Bhadoli SP Ram Badan Singh said after arresting the MLA, his district police team, led by Dy. SP Kalu Singh, produced him in a court at Agar Malwa and is bringing him here on transit remand. Vijay Mishra, his wife Ramlal Mishra, a U.P. MLC, and son Vishnu Mishra were booked on a complaint by his relative under various IPC sections on August 4. The Nishad Party MLA would be produced before a court here on Sunday, the SP added.

Political crisis casts shadow on I-Day celebrations in Rajasthan

Ashok Gehlot reiterates his charge against Centre; Sachin Pilot absent from function

MOHAMMED IQBAL
JAIPUR

The recent political crisis in Rajasthan cast its shadow on the celebrations marking the 74th Independence Day here on Saturday, with Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot reiterating his charge that the BJP-led government at the Centre was weakening the democracy and the BJP leaders were misusing constitutional institutions to topple the governments in the Opposition-ruled States.

Unfurling the Tricolour at different places in Jaipur, including Sawai Man Singh Stadium where the State-level function was organised, Mr. Gehlot called for keeping democracy intact and said the "divisive forces", which had conspired to destabilise his



Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot at Sawai Man Singh Stadium in Jaipur on Saturday. ■ ROHIT JAIN PARAS

government, had faced a "resounding defeat".

Congress leader Sachin Pilot was conspicuous by his absence in Jaipur on the Independence Day as he left for New Delhi after attending a special Assembly session.

The Congress MLAs supporting Mr. Gehlot left for their respective constituencies and participated in the Independence Day functions.

Mr. Gehlot hoisted the national flag first at his official residence and later at the Pradesha Congress Committee headquarters, Badi Chaurap in the Walled City, State Secretariat and Sawai Man Singh Stadium. He said

though the governments would keep changing, everyone had the responsibility to ensure the existence of a robust democratic system.

Separate functions

Governor Kalraj Mishra unfurled the Tricolour at Raj Bhavan and launched a plantation drive in the State's universities. He planted a night jasmine sapling in the Raj Bhavan garden.

Rajasthan High Court's Chief Justice Indrajit Mahanty hoisted the national flag at the Jaipur Bench of the Court, while Speaker C.P. Joshi unfurled the Tricolour on the State Assembly premises in the presence of Assembly Secretary Pramil Kumar Mathur and senior officials.

'Punjab will be at forefront of fighting enemies'

Amarinder says nation has to be prepared given continuing tensions on the border

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

Mohali
Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Saturday said that with tensions at the borders continuing, India has to be prepared to deal with any eventuality.

The Chief Minister, in his Independence Day address here, said Punjab would always be at the forefront of fighting the enemy at the borders. "While Pakistan continues to resort to firing every day, China talks about friendship but remains a danger to our nation," he said.



Punjab CM Amarinder Singh in Mohali on Saturday. ■ PTI

India had always given Pakistan a befitting response, which was the only way to deal with them, he said. He added that China also need-

ed to be handled with the same iron hand.

Capt. Amarinder also announced a slew of welfare measures, including facilita-

tion of another 6 lakh jobs for the youth over the next two years, of which one lakh will be in the government sector.

While reiterating his government's commitment to provide incentives for the industry to attract more investment to the State, he said ₹63,000 crore worth of investment had already been realised on the ground, with potential for 2 lakh jobs.

He also announced debt relief of ₹520 crore to landless farmers and workers, and a new land leasing law.

The Odisha government is not likely to open schools in the month of September in the wake of sharp rise in COVID-19 cases in the State.

The way COVID-19 cases are increasing, there is little chance of situation becoming normal in September,

School and Mass Education Minister Sameer Ranjan Dash said while speaking to the media after unfurling the Tricolor at Jaipur.

The State government is contemplating to launch a

Kafeel Khan's detention extended

Decision based on reports by NSA panel and Aligarh DM'

ANUJ KUMAR
GAZIABAD

The Uttar Pradesh government has extended Kafeel Khan's detention under the National Security Act, 1980, by three more months.

The order signed by Vinay Kumar, Deputy Secretary, Home (Security) Department, said the decision was being taken on the basis of reports submitted by the NSA advisory board and the District Magistrate of Aligarh. There were "sufficient grounds" for his continued detention, the order said in Hindi.

Dr. Khan is lodged in Mathura jail since February this year for an alleged provocative speech made at Aligarh Muslim University on December 12, 2019, against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the National Register of Citizens. Initially booked under Section 153A of the IPC, Dr. Khan was ar-



Kafeel Khan ■ FILE PHOTO

ested from Mumbai on January 29 and brought to Aligarh. Later, Sections 153B and 505(2) were added to the FIR. He was granted bail on February 10 by an Aligarh court but on February 13, the U.P. government slapped the NSA on him.

His lawyer Ali Ghazi said on Saturday that the order was received by Dr. Khan's family on Friday. He emphasised that the order had come after the Supreme Court on August 11 asked the

Allahabad HC, where a habeas corpus petition against his detention was pending, to dispose the matter in 15 days.

A look at the order shows that it was passed on August 4 and despatched on August 10.

The Allahabad HC last heard the matter on August 5 and asked the U.P. government to respond within 10 working days.

"The matter is now listed for August 19 in the HC," said Mr. Ghazi. He said no prima facie case had been made out against his client and the government was misusing its powers.

Meanwhile, in a video clip released by Dr. Khan's wife Shabista on Saturday, she wondered how a doctor who worked for the poor could be a danger to society. "On Independence Day, I want to ask if we are truly independent?"

Odisha to send teachers to students' villages

State govt. may not reopen schools in September due to rising COVID-19 cases

STAFF REPORTER

Bhubaneswar

The Odisha government is not likely to open schools in the month of September in the wake of sharp rise in CO-

VID-19 cases in the State. new programme 'Siksha Sampark Yojana', under which the teachers will visit villages of the students fac-

ing cellular connectivity prob-

lems.

"Teachers would find out ways to impart teaching to a small group of students, preferably two days in a week," said Mr. Dash.

Earlier, the Minister said

only 22 lakh out of the 60 lakh children in the State were availing e-education due to unavailability of mobile connectivity.

He said the government

would soon come out with revised syllabus in a week as considerable time has been lost due to the pandemic.

Odisha on Saturday regis-

tered its highest single day

COVID-19 spike by report-

ing 2,496 cases. The State's tally

jumped to 57,126 cases. Nine

persons died of COVID-19,

taking the State's death toll

to 330 on Saturday.

There has been a steady

rise in the cases across all

districts in the month of Au-

gust.

The State government,

however, said it was increas-

ing per day tests to nearly 50,000. On August 14, it conducted 47,887 tests - highest in a day so far.

Positivity rate falling

The government claimed the positivity rate was coming down sharply. On July 21, 10,000 tests were conducted and 1,078 samples were found to be positive. So, the positivity rate was 10.78%. Over the next three weeks, the tests were increased by five times to close to 50,000, whereas positivity rate came down to around 5.2%.

thehinduads.com

MATRIMONIAL

BRIDEGROOMS WANTED

INDEX OF MATRIMONIAL

BRIDEGROOMS WANTED BRIDES WANTED BRIDES & GROOMS WANTED

Classification common for Brides, Bridegrooms, Brides & Grooms

Assamese

Awadh

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

COSMOPOLITAN

CHRISTIAN, MBA - KJ Somaiya, Project Manager, 23, Lpa, Born 1984, 5'11" 52 kgs. Tamil, Nadar, Mumbai Based Business Family. Good looking & sweet-natured, Wheatish. Both siblings Ivy League. Looking for educated, well qualified prof. settled match. Caste/ Religion no bar - Email profile eligiblebride@gmail.com 9881649471

DOCTOR

CHENNAI BASED CSI Christian partners (Goldsmith Community) from a well established and reputed family seek a Christian Doctor. Groom with MS/MD for their only daughter ME, MBA/17/62m fair and working. Send the detailed profile with photo to arsd.paul@gmail.com or contact 9941619947

CHRISTIAN, MBA - KJ Somaiya, Project Manager, 23, Lpa, Born 1984, 5'11" 52 kgs. Tamil, Nadar, Mumbai Based Business Family. Good looking & sweet-natured, Wheatish. Both siblings Ivy League. Looking for educated, well qualified prof. settled match. Caste/ Religion no bar - Email profile eligiblebride@gmail.com 9881649471

CSI CHRISTIAN SC (adi dravidia), 36, ME (structural engg) working in MNC, bangalore, seeks suitable groom. Contact 9443239400/ 9591243480

CHRISTIAN PARENTS from a well es-tablished family seek a Christian groom for their daughter 39, completed masters degree in the UK, and working in Singapore. Email parents with details and recent photograph: stt.csse@gmail.com

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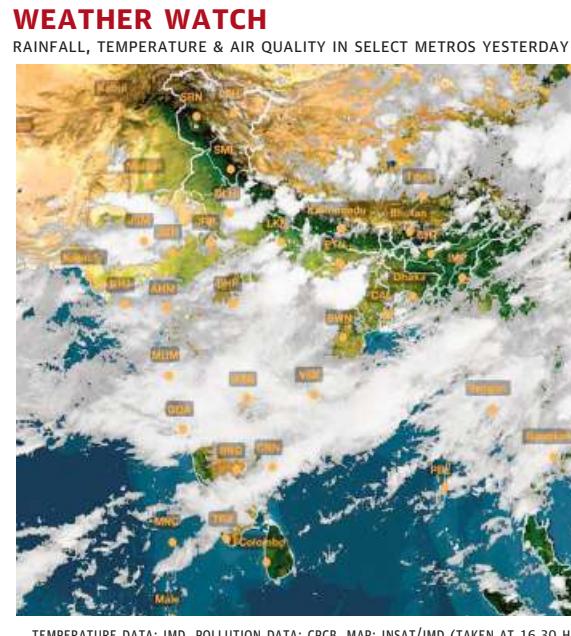
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TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD; POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 16.30 HRS)

Forecast for Sunday: Moderate to severe thunderstorms accompanied by lightning likely at isolated places over Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Rajasthan, coastal Andhra Pradesh and Telangana; Heavy to very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places Goa, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, Gujarat and ghat areas of central Maharashtra

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	39.3	32.0	25.5	Kozhikode	4.2	32.0	26.2
Ahmedabad	0.1	31.0	25.6	Kurnool	3	26.6	22.4
Aizawl	6	26.0	20.1	Lucknow	0.4	35.0	27.2
Allahabad	15.8	35.1	26.8	Madurai	—	40.0	26.4
Bengaluru	—	26.0	20.4	Mangalore	1	30.0	24.1
Bhopal	0.1	30.3	23.6	Mumbai	40.2	27.0	25.5
Bhubaneswar	107.3	28.0	24.6	Mysuru	—	27.0	20.8
Chandigarh	—	32.0	26.0	New Delhi	2.8	34.4	27.2
Chennai	—	32.0	25.6	Patna	—	35.0	28.2
Coimbatore	—	32.0	23.4	Port Blair	—	30.7	26.8
Dehradun	2	33.0	23.0	Puducherry	—	35.0	26.8
Gangtok	6.3	22.2	18.0	Pune	21.4	25.0	22.1
Goa	12.6	27.4	24.8	Raipur	0.7	27.2	24.4
Guwahati	4.2	32.0	24.2	Ranchi	8.6	31.2	24.1
Hubballi	—	24.0	22.0	Shillong	33.6	26.5	18.5
Hyderabad	22.8	25.0	21.1	Shimla	7.1	30.4	20.4
Imphal	0.2	29.0	23.1	Srinagar	—	34.0	21.3
Jaipur	102.7	33.0	24.6	Thiruvananthapuram	—	30.9	25.3
Kochi	1.8	30.6	25.2	Tiruchi	—	35.0	26.8
Kohima	11.6	26.0	19.0	Vijayawada	—	27	26.2
Kolkata	6	31.7	27.3	Visakhapatnam	4	25.9	23.6

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	CODE
Ahmedabad	12	56	57	44	103	■■■■■
Bengaluru	10	27	43	—	92	■■■■■
Chennai	0.4	13	74	65	—	■■■■■
Delhi	19	32	62	73	90	■■■■■
Hyderabad	.6	44	39	16	24	■■■■■
Kolkata	2	18	68	14	27	■■■■■
Lucknow	8	39	46	74	94	■■■■■
Mumbai	59	12	3	29	40	■■■■■
Pune	12	4	50	11	12	■■■■■
Visakhapatnam	11	30	19	33	37	■■■■■

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

SO₂: Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.NO_x: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

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

PM_{2.5} & PM₁₀: Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease.**Yesterday**

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Balabaghari, Haryana, recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 124 indicating a moderate level of pollution. In contrast, Raigarh, Madhya Pradesh, recorded a healthy AQI score of 10

Focus on e-learning'

The Chief Minister said schools could not be reopened due to the COVID-19 threat, but the government took steps to see education is being imparted to students through Google for Education initiative. "Maharashtra has become the first State to take such a step in the country," he added.

Mr. Thackeray said 66,300 industrial units have resumed operations after the government set in motion the process of unlocking. He said over 16 lakh workers have returned to their workplaces. "The government has signed MoUs worth around

₹16,000 crore with investors from 12 countries and more agreements worth ₹8,000 crore will be inked. The government also launched 'Mahajobs' portal to ensure that locals, Marathi people get employment," he added.

Mr. Thackeray said the government will lay emphasis on providing proper health-care facilities in both urban and remote areas in the State. He hailed COVID-19 warriors such as doctors,

UDDHAV THACKERAY
Chief Minister

nurses, and police personnel and praised the officers who have been chosen for the President's Medal.

He thanked the people for observing restraint during

The government has signed MoUs worth around ₹16,000 crore with investors from 12 countries

festivals of all religions during the lockdown, which was imposed in March to contain the spread of COVID-19.

'Townships along e-way'

Mr. Thackeray said work on Hindu Hrudaysamrat Balashab Thackeray Maharashtra Samruddhi Mahamarg, which will connect Mumbai to Nagpur in Vidarbha, has been fast-tracked, and townships will be set up at 24 places along the expressway.

Rise in COVID-19 cases in rural areas worrying, says Health Minister

Liquid oxygen plant being set up in Jalna

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

JALNA

State Health Minister Rajesh Tope on Saturday expressed concern over the rise in COVID-19 cases in rural areas of the State due to the influx of migrants from Mumbai.

Speaking at an Independence Day function at the Collectorate, the minister said despite the rise in infections, the recovery rate in the State was high.

While the COVID-19 case tally in Jalna had reached 3,000, more than 2,000 patients had recovered from the infection, said Mr. Tope, who is also the guardian mi-

nister of the district.

Felicitating frontline workers, he urged citizens to cooperate with doctors and the administration in the fight against COVID-19.

A liquid oxygen plant is being set up at the COVID-19 hospital in Jalna, he said, adding that the State Health Department was providing proper facilities for the treatment of patients.

MLA Kailash Gorantyal, District Collector Ravindra Binwade, Jalna chief executive officer Nima Arora and District Superintendent of Police S. Chaitanya attended the event.

Increase testing: Desai

'Enhance contact tracing in Aurangabad'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

AURANGABAD

With COVID-19 spreading to over 300 villages in Aurangabad district, Maharashtra Industries Minister Subhash Desai has instructed authorities to increase testing in rural areas of the State.

Mr. Desai, who is also the district's guardian minister, gave the instructions during a COVID-19 review meeting held at the district collector's office on Friday.

Mr. Desai also asked officials to enhance contact tracing of patients. "At least 15 contacts of a positive patient should be traced. Besides, people should be tested before they enter villages," he said.

The number of fever clinics in the rural parts of the district should be increased, Mr. Desai said.

"Use antigen kits if required. Patients in rural areas should be treated at the local level only so that the stress on Aurangabad city is reduced," he said.

The number of novel coronavirus cases in Aurangabad climbed to 18,259 after 292 people tested positive on Friday, officials said.

The death toll in the district has risen to 576, with four more patients succumbing to the virus. As many as 220 patients were discharged on Friday. The number of active cases in Aurangabad is now 4,209.

+ HC orders Nagpur University to pay ₹5 lakh to Shoma Sen

Court not satisfied with varsity's explanation for denying benefits

SONAM SAIGAL

MUMBAI

The Nagpur Bench of the Bombay High Court on Thursday directed Nagpur University to pay a sum of ₹5 lakh to professor Shoma Sen, the former head of its English department, towards her retirement benefits within a week.

A Division Bench of Justices R.K. Deshpande and N.B. Suryawanshi was hearing a petition filed by Ms. Sen's husband, Tushar Bhattacharya, through advocate Prakash Meghe. The plea was filed on behalf of Ms. Sen, who is lodged at Byculla women's prison since her arrest on June 6, 2018, for her alleged involvement in the Bhima-Koregaon case.

'Eligible for pension' The plea said the university had to pay Ms. Sen's gratuity and Provident Fund (PF) after she retired on July 31, 2018. The plea also said Ms. Sen was eligible for pension



Shoma Sen

after 20 years of employment and she had completed 31 years of service.

On August 12, a day before the matter came up for hearing before the Bench, the university issued orders directing the payment of provisional pension to Ms. Sen. Earlier, the varsity took a stand that benefits cannot be released to the professor owing to the criminal charges filed against her under provisions of the Indian Penal Code and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act.

The court posted the petition for further hearing after four weeks.

Need campaign like Quit India against COVID-19: Vijay Rupani

'Gujarat govt. committed to make amends for slow development'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

GANDHINAGAR

Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani on Saturday called for a mass awareness campaign on the lines of the Quit India Movement against the British to drive out the novel coronavirus from the State and the country.

Speaking at the Independence Day function at Swarnim Park in Gandhinagar, he said while the pandemic had slowed down the pace of development in the State, his government was committed to make up for it. "To achieve independence and

drive out the British, the entire country resonated with the slogan of Quit India. As a result, the British left the country and we got freedom. Likewise, let's start a mass awareness campaign to free the country and Gujarat of coronavirus," he said.

Mr. Rupani also spoke about the initiatives taken by his government to help people tide over the current crisis. "It is our strength that despite earthquake, flood, cyclone, Gujarat and its people have changed crises into opportunities. Our development arc has slowed, but we

are committed to make it up," he said.

The State government has managed to bring down the COVID-19 case fatality rate to 2.1% and increase the recovery rate to 78%, he said.

Due to its effort to deal with the pandemic, the State government has received positive feedback from the Supreme Court, World Health Organisation and Niti Aayog, Mr. Rupani said.

The government has announced a ₹14,000 crore package for small businesses, farmers and fisherfolk to revive the economy, he said.

'Will frame policies for grassroots development'

Policymakers will visit villages: Goa CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

PANJAI

Goa Chief Minister Pramod Sawant on Saturday said that a team of policymakers would visit all the gram panchayats in the State from October to frame policies for grassroots development.

Mr. Sawant said different departments of the State government and various colleges will adopt villages to ensure that development happens at the grassroots level in the real sense.

Mr. Sawant made the statement while addressing the Independence Day function after unfurling the national flag at the Old Secretariat building in Panaji.

Drive from October 2

"A team of policymakers would start visiting all the 192 village panchayats and 13 municipalities in the State from October 2 to design appropriate policies for grassroots development," he said, adding that all government schemes would be linked to these centres.

On COVID-19, he said the pandemic has affected the economic condition of the country and the State. "But we are working to save the State from the economic crisis. Bodies like the Economic Revival Committee have been formed for the purpose," he added.

State departments, including the Directorate of

FROM PAGE ONE



Celebration time: People gathered at Rajpath in New Delhi on the occasion of Independence Day. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

Jawans have risen to challenges on borders'

"Now we can do seven lakh tests a day and are in a position to export personal protection equipment, where once we used to import," he said.

He said the lynchpin of economic revival lay not just in technical innovation, rational tax structures but also the ₹10-lakh crore infrastructure package announced earlier by the government that would look at transport and infrastructure in a multi-modal way. He also announced optical fibre connectivity for all villages in India in the next 1,000 days as education and other services had gone digital during the pandemic.

Prime Minister Modi referred to the violent face-off between India and China in Eastern Ladakh stating that "whether it was the LAC or the LoC, whenever anyone has tried to violate the territorial integrity of the country our jawans have answered the challenge in the same language as it was issued". The significance of mentioning the Line of Control (LoC or the border with Pakistan) and the LAC (Line of Actual Control, border with China) in the same breath was not missed by anyone. He made a pitch for not just good relations with South Asian neighbours but also the wider neighbourhood beyond the immediate. "West Asian countries with whom we have deep ties owing to energy security but also because many of our people live and work in these countries have been our long term friends and I

want to thank them for the care they took of our people during the pandemic. ASEAN countries are also tied to us through cultural and trade ties and we are increasing our maritime cooperation," he said.

Connectivity, he said, was an issue that was both economic and security related and announced that Lakshadweep would get optical fibre connectivity in the next 1,000 days. "Over 173 districts are on the coastline or a border with another country. The NCC will be raising a voluntary cadet force of nearly a lakh young people in these areas." He said 1,300 islands come under Indian territory and developing some of them would be a priority.

Referring to the recent *bhoomipojan* for Ram Temple in Ayodhya, Prime Minister Modi said "the calm and sense of harmony displayed by the people across the country was unprecedented" and that it was this spirit that would lead to the development of the country.

The major chunk of the speech was related to the concept of self-reliance as articulated by his government, which, Prime Minister Modi said was not just "Make in India" but to also "Make for the World". He mentioned that for this leveraging of human resources was important, especially, the women. He announced that his government would be reconsidering the mandated minimum age of marriage for women.

pitals. A total of 27,779 persons had recovered.

The Health department added seven more deaths to the COVID-19 toll, attributing three earlier deaths at Thiruvananthapuram, two at Ernakulam and one each at Kollam and Kasaragod to the virus. Total deaths were 146.

Among new cases, nearly 90% - 1,444 - were locally ac-

quired infections, including 31 health care workers. In 112 cases, no epidemiological link was available.

At 362, Malappuram district overtook Thiruvananthapuram again with the maximum number of new cases. Nineteen of 31 health-care workers tested positive in Malappuram. Thiruvananthapuram reported 321 cases. The State tested 32,108 samples in 24 hours.

Cases emerged in large numbers in the Poojappura Central Prison in Thiruvananthapuram, as 53 more prisoners tested positive; in five days, 217 inmates were diagnosed. Two assistant prison officers and a doctor working in a jail hospital tested positive.

Karnataka on Saturday reported 8,818 new cases, the highest in a single day. Positive cases stood at 21,992. Of new cases, 3,495 were from Bengaluru. Eight other

Youth held for Bengaluru violence dies

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

A man arrested for his alleged involvement in the riots at D.J. Halli and K.G. Halli, who was lodged at Parappana Agrahara Central Prison for two days, died hours after an abdomen surgery at Bowring and Lady Curzon Hospital in the city on Saturday evening.

While three youths from the adjoining areas in east Bengaluru had died in police firing, this is the fourth death of a person related to the violence that broke out late on Tuesday night, when a mob went on a rampage over a derogatory social media post.

The deceased has been identified as Sayyad Naideem, 24, a resident of K.G. Halli.

He had also tested positive for COVID-19 on Friday.

A.P. govt. deputes special teams to identify breaches

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
DOWLESWARAM (EAST GODAVARI)
Andhra Pradesh officials of the Godavari Head Works Division issued the first flood warning for the river this season, as the discharge of flood water crossed 10 lakh cusecs at Sir Arthur Cotton Barrage at Dowleswaram in East Godavari district at 12.30 p.m. on Saturday.

"Special teams of officials will be deputed along the river banks to identify breaches. This year, movement of fishing boats into the Godavari has been stopped when the discharge of flood water crossed 5 lakh cusecs at Sir Arthur Cotton Barrage at Dowleswaram," said Executive Engineer R. Mohana Rao.

All the roads connecting Chintoor Agency with Chhattisgarh, Odisha and Telanga-

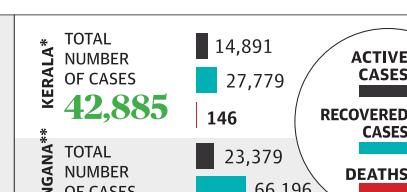
Muted celebrations

Despite the pandemic, States across the country celebrated Independence Day keeping in mind social distancing norms. The graphs show the spread of COVID-19 in the southern States



Masked affair: Railway Protection Force personnel conducting a march-past during Independence Day celebrations in Secunderabad on Saturday.

■ G. RAMAKRISHNA



*Kerala has a mismatch of 69 cases due to unaccounted deaths, missing persons, **Telangana numbers are as of 8 p.m. on Friday, ***Karnataka has 8 non-COVID-19 deaths

more tested positive on Friday had 90,259 cases. On Friday, 21,239 tests were done. There were 394 cases from Greater Hyderabad. Of the total, 65.9% cases were among people from 21-50 years of age.

Tamil Nadu cases

For the 17th consecutive day, Tamil Nadu added more than 5,000 new cases of COVID-19, taking the overall tally to 3,32,105 on Saturday. Moreover, 127 more persons died, the highest toll to be recorded by the Health department. A total of 5,860 persons tested positive in the State. Another 5,236 persons were discharged after treatment. So far, a total of 2,72,251 persons were discharged, while 54,213 persons were under treatment. The State's toll rose to 5,641.

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

districts saw more than 200 new positive cases. The number of statewide deaths stood at 114. Of the total 81,276 active cases, 716 were in ICU. Also, 54,806 tests were con-

ducted, 29,075 tests being of RT-PCR type.

The 87 new deaths and 8,732 new infections in Andhra Pradesh on Saturday raised the toll to 2,562 and

the tally to 2,81,817, the Health department said. In the past day, 53,712 samples were tested. Active cases were 88,138. Telangana, where 1,863

Flood warning issued for Godavari



No-go zone: A damaged road in East Godavari Agency being barricaded. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

na had been blocked on Saturday morning with flood water inundating a network of roads at Chatti area, Agency to the three States.

In Telangana, a flood alert has been sounded in the riverside villages as the waters inched closer to the second warning level of 48 feet at Bhadrachalam, following heavy downpour in the catchment areas of the river for the third consecutive day

flooded disrupting movement between Chintoor and the three States.

In Khammam district, all the major rivers including the Munneru, Wyra and Akeru were in spate.

on Saturday. The first warning level of 43 feet was reached at 3.50 a.m. on Saturday.

A toll-free helpline number 1077 was launched in Telangana to attend to rain-related incidents.

Enact law to bar criminals from polls: HC

Stressing need to cleanse system, Madras HC asks Centre to respond in 2 weeks

MOHAMED IMRANULLAH S.
CHENNAI

The Madras High Court has directed the Centre to explain in two weeks as to why it should not enact a law prohibiting people with criminal background from contesting in parliamentary, Assembly and local body elections.

Justices N. Kirubakaran and V.M. Velumani issued the direction after taking note of media reports of "persons with criminal background becoming policy makers in many parts of the country". They said such practice "has to be prevented and the system has to be cleansed".

Passing an interim order on a *habeas corpus* petition (HCP), the judges said: "This is possible only if the top

leaders of our political parties are firm in not admitting criminals in their parties. The leaders should have a vision for decriminalisation of politics".

Pending cases

The Bench pointed out that an analysis of the 2019 Lok Sabha election winners by the Association for Democratic Reforms, a non-governmental organisation, revealed that 43% (233 out of 539 Members of Parliament) had declared criminal cases pending against them. Further, 29% (159 MPs) of the legislators were facing serious criminal cases.

Therefore, the Central government has to come out with a comprehensive legislation to prohibit persons with criminal background from contesting elections,

the Bench said.

Authoring the order, Justice Kirubakaran observed: "Indian democracy should not be tainted by criminals. It is seen that some of the criminal elements are also floating political parties on their own with the support of their religion or communities and the same is required to be prohibited".

The observations were made while dealing with the HCP to quash a preventive detention order passed against Jana alias A. Janarthan, who is facing as many as 19 criminal cases including charges of murder, attempt to murder, and dacoity in Puducherry.

Though the cases were pending as early as in 2009, investigation had not been completed in most of the cases. "This would speak about his clout with political

parties especially ruling parties and police. But for political interference, police would have filed charge sheets," the court said.

"Many murders are committed cruelly by throwing country-made bombs. In three cases, registered against the present detenu, he and other accused had used country-made bombs. In 2018, former Speaker of Puducherry Sivakumar was murdered by a gang in same fashion," the Bench added.

Active gangs

After impleading the Director General of Police as one of the respondents to the HCP *suo motu*, the judges directed him to submit in two weeks, the details of rowdy gangs active in Puducherry.

The judges also wanted to know similar countrywide data from the Centre.

Move to cut train routes irks Kerala

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala has asked the Railways to withdraw its move to short-terminate some trains.

In a letter to the Union Railway Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday, State Minister for Public Works and Railways G. Sudhakaran said unilateral decisions such as the short-termination of the Mumbai-bound Janathini Janatha Express at Pune would cause hardship to many.

Similarly, the move to short-terminate the Silchar-Thiruvananthapuram Aronai Express at Coimbatore will affect hundreds of migrant workers. He also drew attention to the move to short-terminate the Palakkad-Tiruchendur Express at Madurai.

The agency submitted that Mr. Sivasankar needed to be interrogated further.

ED questions Sivasankar in gold smuggling case

Links with key accused being probed

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOCHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) started interrogating M. Sivasankar, former Principal Secretary to Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, here on Saturday in connection with its money laundering probe into the alleged large-scale smuggling of gold through air cargo shipments addressed to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) consulate in Kerala.

Mr. Sivasankar arrived at the office of the ED here around 3.45 p.m. The ED is pursuing the financial trial in the case. It had informed the Principal Sessions Court, Ernakulam, on Friday that Swapna Suresh, one of the key accused in the diplomatic gold smuggling case, held discussions

with Mr. Sivasankar at UAE when the State machinery was there from October 17 to 21 in 2018 seeking assistance for the flood relief operations. The ED had revealed these details while seeking the extension of the custody of the accused. It is revealed that Ms. Suresh had considerable influence in the office of the Chief Minister, it said.

The agency submitted that Mr. Sivasankar needed to be interrogated further.

KCR unfurls Tricolour at Pragati Bhavan

Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao hoisted the national flag at a simple ceremony at his camp office in tune with the government's decision to keep the Independence Day celebrations a low key affair. He also paid floral tributes at the martyrs column of army personnel at Parade grounds. Later, Mr. Rao awarded the Dasaradhi award of State government for literature for 2020 to Tirunagar Ramanujam.

Idols from U.S. galleries handed over to India

Artefacts were given to officials at a ceremony in New York to mark India's Independence Day

R. SIVARAMAN
CHENNAI

The U.S. authorities have formally handed over to India a set of priceless antique pieces, including a limestone relief of Shiva and Parvati, a marble Apsara, and some other idols.

The artefacts were handed over to Indian officials at a ceremony to mark the Indian Independence Day festivities in New York.

They were reportedly stolen and smuggled out of the country at different times.

Maitreya Gallery, all of which are situated in the United States. This is the first time the American law enforcement agencies have disclosed the names of the gal-

leries and individuals in possession of the artefacts, and their valuation.

Launching 'Operation Hidden Idol' in 2012, the U.S. Immigration and Customs

Enforcement's Homeland Security had unearthed a treasure of 2,622 objects valued at \$108 million from the business and storage facilities of Subash Kapoor. The authorities secured the cooperation of Kapoor's former associates and seized documents, which, on investigation, led to a network of antiquities smugglers.

Following this, the U.S. authorities began seizing many antique pieces from auction houses and art galleries across the country. Over 200 of them were returned to India in June 2016, while many are yet to be

handed over due to pending legal formalities.

The restitution includes the marble Apsara ceiling panel depicting a celestial goddess figure dated to the 10th century, valued at \$500,000; and a stone relief of Shiva and Parvati standing next to each other with halos behind them, dated to the 8th century. The red sandstone relief of a couple from the region of Mathura in India, belonging to somewhere between the 1st and 2nd century was valued at about \$100,000. They were seized from Nancy Weiner Gallery, Christie's in New York, and the

Historic return: The artefacts were reportedly smuggled out of the country at different times. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

CMYK



Kerala plans to operate buses to Karnataka during Onam

Passengers will have to get passes by registering on portal

S. ANIL RADHAKRISHNAN
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) will operate inter-State services to Karnataka and back from August 25 to September 9 to clear the rush during the forthcoming Onam festival.

The inter-State service will be using the Super Class buses in the fleet of the State transport undertaking for the first time since the pandemic-induced lockdown</



Govt. may review the age of marriage: PM

Effort to prevent malnutrition among women

JAGRITI CHANDRA

NEW DELHI

The government may take a relook at the age of marriage of women in its bid to fight malnutrition, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said in his Independence Day speech.

"We have formed a committee to ensure that daughters no longer suffer from malnutrition and they are married off at the right age. As soon as the report is submitted, appropriate decisions will be taken about the age of marriage of daughters," he said.

This follows from Nirmala Sitharaman's Budget Speech on February 1, 2020, when a task force was proposed to look into the "age of a girl entering motherhood" in order to lower maternal mortality rates and improve nutrition levels.

In June, the government announced a 10-member panel headed by Jaya Jaitly and comprising Secretaries from the Ministries of Human Resource Development, Women and Child Development, and Health and Family Welfare, among others. The committee has missed its July 31 deadline to finalise its report and give recommendations.



Confident stride: Tri-Services personnel taking part in the Independence Day parade. • PTI

"This is a really important direction and a welcome recognition at the highest levels in the government about the links between the health of mothers and babies when a girl is married too early and has a child before the age of 20 years.

The challenges are not straightforward though as reasons for early marriage vary across the country," says Purnima Menon, senior research fellow, at the International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI).

Stunting in children

A study conducted by IFPRI and published last year in *The Lancet Child and Adolescent Health* showed that children born to adolescent

mothers (10-19 years) were 5 percentage points more likely to be stunted (shorter for their age) than those born to young adults (20-24 years), and 11 percentage points more stunted than children born to adult mothers. Children born to adolescent mothers also had 10 percentage points higher prevalence of low weight as adult mothers.

It also highlighted other factors, such as lower education among teenage mothers and their poor economic status, which had the strongest links with a child's height and weight measurements. It recommended that "increasing age at first marriage, age at first birth, and girl's education are a promising approach to also improve

maternal and child nutrition".

However, activists appealed that the issue must be addressed by empowering girls as poverty and lack of safety are the main drivers of early marriage.

Focus on empowerment

The National Coalition Advocating for Adolescent Concerns on behalf of 21 NGOs in its submission to the Task Force last month asserted that increasing the legal age of marriage for girls will only "artificially expand the numbers of married persons deemed underage and criminalise them and render underage married girls without legal protection. Instead, transformative, well re-

sourced measures that increase girls' access to education and health, create enabling opportunities and place girl's empowerment at the centre will not just delay marriage but lead to a long term, positive health and education outcomes".

It also underlined that the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006 instead of curbing child marriages, has only played as a weapon in the hands of parents to punish their daughters for elopement and is used in conjunction with other laws to punish boys in self-arranged marriages.

It has called for the need for awareness about safe sex, access to reproductive health information, improving access to education, and retaining girls in the education system so that they are able to transition from elementary to secondary education, and beyond which can then delay marriage.

"While legal enactment to prevent child marriages is necessary, we must simultaneously work towards keeping girls in school, invest in economic and social empowerment of women and girls, as well as targeted social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) campaigns to put an end to this harmful practice," said Poonam Muttreja of the Population Foundation of India.

cobar Islands and Lakshadweep. Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan said,

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

"Based on the initial learnings, we will gradually work in partnership with the States to launch the NDHM. I seek the whole-hearted support, inputs and cooperation of doctors, healthcare facilities, citizens and State governments to adopt this game-changing scheme."

On Saturday, as part of his Independence Day address, Prime Minister Narendra Modi unveiled the NDHM.

"Every Indian will get a Health ID card. Every time you visit a doctor or a pharmacy, everything will be logged in this card. From the doctor's appointment to the medication, everything will be available in your health profile," he said.

The National Health Authority (NHA), the attached office of the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare which runs the Ayushman Bharat Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana, would "design, build, roll-out and implement the NDHM," the Health Ministry said.

The scheme would first be tested in the Union Territories of Chandigarh, Ladakh, Dadra and Nagar Haveli and Daman and Diu, Puducherry, Andaman & Ni-

Digital Health Mission will liberate citizens'

A central repository of records: Ministry

Prime Minister continues 'safa' tradition

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Continuing his tradition of donning flamboyant and colourful turbans, Prime Minister Narendra Modi sported a saffron and cream headgear with a long tail at the 74th Independence Day celebrations held here on Saturday.

Mr. Modi paired the 'safa' with a half-sleeve kurta and a fitted churidar. He also wore a white scarf with a saffron border that he used to cover his mouth and nose in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Last year, Mr. Modi had sported a multi-coloured turban as he gave his sixth Independence Day speech, after returning to power for a second term.

For his maiden Independence Day in 2014, he had opted for a bright-red Jodhpuri bandhej turban with green at the tail.

Protect India's sovereignty: Sonia

She accuses government of standing against the nation's democratic values

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The real tribute to Colonel Santosh Babu and 20 soldiers who were killed in the clashes with Chinese troops at the Line of Actual Control on June 15 would be to guard India's sovereignty and to foil the Chinese incursions, Congress president Sonia Gandhi said on Saturday.

Earlier in the day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, speaking from the ramparts of the Red Fort, had said, "Whether it was the LAC or the LoC (Line of Control), whenever anyone has tried to violate the territorial integrity of the country, our jawans have answered the challenge in the same language as it was issued." He did not directly refer to China in the speech.

In a statement in Hindi, Ms. Gandhi offered tributes to the soldiers and urged the government to give them the due respect. "The real tribute to these soldiers would

be to protect India's sovereignty and to foil the Chinese incursions."

Democracy in danger' She accused the government of standing against Indian democratic and constitutional values. Ms. Gandhi said, "Today, every countryman needs to look within and think, 'what does freedom mean?' Are they free today to write, to speak, to ask questions, to disagree, to seek accountability?"

As a responsible Opposition, she said, the Congress would work towards keeping India's democratic freedom

intact. "India's democratic structure has often come under stress in the last 74 years of independence, but every time it has been tested, it has only emerged stronger," Ms. Gandhi said. It was once again in danger, since the government of the day saw itself in conflict with established values and norms. "This is an hour of crisis for the Indian democracy."

Ms. Gandhi, however, expressed confidence about overcoming the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic downturn.

Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPI(M)] general

secretary Sitaram Yechury, speaking at a webinar, said Mr. Modi had talked about constructing a new India in his Independence Day address. "This new India is a negation of the India established by our Constitution," Mr. Yechury said.

He added that while on August 15 India may have got freedom, "we saw [on] August 5th an assault on our Constitutional values", in a reference to the end of Kashmir's special status, and the PM's participation in the Ram temple ceremony at Ayodhya.

Communist Party of India (CPI) general secretary D. Raja said Mr. Modi's speech was "packed with rhetoric and empty promises".

"He spoke about a self-reliant India, however, his policies are contrary to it. The Prime Minister and his government have been systematically privatising all public sector units," Mr. Raja said.

Prime Minister of Nepal K.P. Sharma Oli on Saturday called up Prime Minister Narendra Modi and held a discussion, sources in Nepal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said.

A Nepalese official statement declared that Mr. Oli sought "meaningful bilateral cooperation" with India.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said that anti-COVID-19 cooperation was discussed during the phone call. "The leaders expressed mutual solidarity in the context of the efforts being made to minimise the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in both countries. Prime Minister offered India's continued support to Nepal in this regard," the MEA said in a press statement.

Mr. Oli's phone call comes after months of tension between the two sides over the Kalapani territorial dispute.

Mr. Oli had earlier greeted Mr. Modi on his social media accounts on the occasion of Independence Day. "Congratulations and greetings to Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi ji, the Government and people of India on the happy occasion of the 74th Independence Day. Best wishes for more progress and prosperity of the people of India," said Mr. Oli in a post on one of his official social media handles.

Boosting dialogue Sources in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Nepal said Mr. Oli praised India's official policy on South Asia. "Prime Minister Oli appreciated Prime Minister Modi's renewed priority to neighbourhood as spelled out in today's Independence Day address," a statement from Nepal's Ministry of Foreign Affairs said. The Nepalese leader also congratulated India on the recent election to a non-permanent seat at the UN Security Council.

Nepal issued a map in response, which depicted the region as part of Nepalese sovereign territory and urged India to convene Foreign Secretary-level dialogue to address Nepal's concerns. The phone call is expected to boost the upcoming "oversight mechanism" level dialogue which is planned for next week.

The discussion between the Foreign Secretary of Nepal, Shankar Bairagi, and Indian Ambassador to Kathmandu, Vinay Mohan Kwatra, will focus on bilateral development projects and other issues like border security and COVID-19 management. However, the Kalapani issue is unlikely to be part of this initiative.

The high-level contact came after nearly nine months of tension and war of words after India asserted control over the Kalapani-Lipekhal-Limpiyadhura region of Pithoragarh which is claimed by Nepal.

Nepal issued a map in res-

Mamata reaches out to West Bengal Governor

Words of CM important: Dhankhar

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA

In an attempt to break the ice between the State government and the Raj Bhavan and Trinamool Congress government has reached a new low.

Working together

Later in the day, while paying homage to Mahatma Gandhi at Gandhi Ghat Barrackpore, Mr. Dhankhar said Centre and State's two wheels of governance should be in unison. The Governor reminded public servants and government officials to follow prescribed code of conduct, maintain political neutrality and work according to the law.

In a significant statement, he said, "Never go beyond your limitations whatever be the temptations. This applies to me as well as our Chief Minister," Mr. Dhankhar added.

Responding to questions by journalists the Governor said it would be wrong to presume that the Governor and Chief Minister are going in opposite directions.

"For me the most important words are the words of the elected Chief Minister," he added.

Ms. Banerjee's visit assumes significance coming as it does when



Sense of pride: ITBP personnel celebrating the 74th Independence Day on the banks of the Pangong lake in Ladakh. • PTI

Mixed reaction to PM's remark on J&K poll

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks during his Independence Day address that elections would be held in J&K only after delimitation, evoked mixed reactions from political parties in the Union Territory.

The Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) expressed concern over the conditional re-

sumption of the electoral process.

"PM's speech is a special gift for J&K on I-Day.

Democracy must wait till

complete Muslim political and administrative disem-

powerment. Isn't that what

the PM meant in his address

to the nation?" former legislator and PDP leader Fir-

New era of normalcy: L-G

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha on Saturday said the dilution of Articles 370 and 35(A) was "imperative to make J&K a developed and dignified Union Territory".

In a first, Prime Minister

Narendra Modi's I-Day

speech was televised live on

big screens set up at several spots here.

Mobile Internet service

was snapped till noon "as a

precautionary measure".

dous Tak said.

People's Democratic

Front (PDF) chief Hakeem

Yaseen welcomed the state-

were imperative to end socio-political uncertainty and bring peace and normalcy in troubled J&K. The Governor's rule was no substitute to a civilian government. At present, the administration was running on the whims of bureaucrats without any political directive," Mr. Yaseen said.

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ment of Mr. Modi.

"Result-oriented measures for restoration of political and election process

transparency in governance, empowering grassroots democracy, people's welfare, accelerated development and creation of employment opportunities.

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ment of Mr. Modi.</p

IN BRIEF



Heavy rain continues to lash parts of Gujarat

AHMEDABAD Parts of Gujarat continue to be battered by heavy rain, leaving low-lying areas marooned. Authorities were forced to shift people from waterlogged neighbourhoods to safer places in Surat and Vadodara. More than 3,000 people were shifted in parts of South Gujarat and the Saurashtra region. In Devbhumi Dwarka district, two persons were feared drowned while one was rescued when they tried to cross a swollen river. Over a dozen NDRF teams have been deployed in affected districts.

Pilgrimage to Vaishno Devi to resume today

JAMMU Pilgrimage to the cave temple of Vaishno Devi in the Trikuta Hills of Jammu and Kashmir will resume from Sunday after remaining suspended for nearly five months in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, officials said on Saturday. The yatra was suspended on March 18. Ramesh Kumar, the chief executive officer of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Shrine Board (SMVSB), said that in the first week of the pilgrimage there shall be a cap of 2,000 devotees each day, of which 1,900 would be from Jammu and Kashmir and the remaining 100 from outside. Only online registration is allowed. PTI

Flood hits Assam again, toll climbs to 112

GUWAHATI The flood situation in Assam improved only marginally on Saturday after a fresh wave affected 29,603 people and killed two people in Lakhimpur district, to take the death tally to 112 since May 22. Officials of the Assam State Disaster Management Authority said 13,382 people remain affected in three districts – Baksa, Dhemaji and Lakhimpur.

Govt. think tank flags chemical industry's infra shortcomings

'It lacks the technology to compete with China in pharma ingredients'

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

A key government think tank has flagged the lack of infrastructure in the chemical industry in the country as a barrier to competing with China.

"India does not have the technology, plants and infrastructure to manufacture (key) chemicals in a cost effective and less polluting manner ... manufacturers are unable to meet the price at which they are produced by China ... solvent and chemicals manufacturing costs in India are over 15% more than China," stated a report by the Technology Information Forecasting and Assessment Council (TIFAC), a Union Science Ministry



Falling short: India depends almost entirely on China for chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine. ■ AFP

think tank.

It is almost "entirely dependent" on China for chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine (HCQ), the report added. The latter drug was earlier touted as a promising antiviral for COVID-19.

The report was commissioned in March, around the time the pandemic had started

ed to accelerate in the country. The report underlined that India had nearly stopped manufacturing several key active pharmaceutical ingredients (API).

Fall in share

Citing another report by KPMG, the TIFAC study said that the share of Indian bulk

drugs and intermediates in the total pharmaceutical export mix reduced to 20% in 2018 from 42% in 2008.

"India has given up the manufacturing of APIs for ascorbic acid, aspartame and antibiotics like rifampicin, doxycycline, tazobactam acid and even steroids. Production of intermediates such as atorvastatin, chloroquine, gabapentin, ciprofloxacin, cephalosporins, immunosuppressants have also been stopped," it noted.

India depends on China for 67% of chemical intermediates and API that it needs to manufacture drugs and export. The United States and Italy are the other countries that India depends on for API.

Air India says 57 pilots had 'resigned'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Air India on Saturday clarified that 57 of its pilots, "seeking greener pastures", had resigned from the airline "citing financial constraints".

The pilots include permanent and contractual employees, it said in response to a report published in *The Hindu* on Saturday. "Some of the pilots later on had withdrawn their resignations. Air India no longer requires the services of these pilots and has now accepted their resignations. Moreover, some of these pilots [14] have filed writ petitions ... seeking a direction to Air India to accept the withdrawal of their resignations. This matter is sub judice," the statement said.

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Biden blasts Trump for 'abhorrent lie'

President had cited an article to insinuate that Kamala Harris was not qualified to be Vice-President

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WASHINGTON

White House hopeful Joe Biden on Friday levelled fierce criticism at Donald Trump, with his campaign saying the President has resorted to "abhorrent" lies about Democrat Kamala Harris's eligibility to be Vice-President.

Mr. Biden named Ms. Harris, a woman of colour who was born in the United States and is constitutionally eligible to be both Vice-President and President, as his running mate on Tuesday. She quickly faced attacks that Democrats deemed racist.

"I heard it today that she doesn't meet the requirements," Mr. Trump said on Thursday, citing an article by a conservative law professor that questioned the immigration status of Ms. Harris's parents at the time of her birth.

Born in the U.S.

Ms. Harris, 55, was born in Oakland, California, to a mother from India and a father from Jamaica.

Mr. Trump "has sought to fuel racism and tear our nation apart," Biden spokesman Andrew Bates said in a statement, referring to the



Joining hands: Kamala Harris and her husband, Douglas Emhoff, right, clapping for Joe Biden and his wife, Jill Biden, after a campaign event in Wilmington on Wednesday. •AP

"grotesque, racist birther movement" led by Mr. Trump that promoted the lie that Barack Obama, the nation's first black President, was not born in the United States.

"So it's unsurprising, but no less abhorrent, that as Trump makes a fool of himself straining to distract the American people from the horrific toll of his failed [COVID-19] response that his campaign and their allies would resort to wretched, demonstrably false lies in their pathetic desperation."

The conservative professor's article cited by Mr.

Trump followed claims shared thousands of times on Facebook that Ms. Harris could not become President because her parents hailed from abroad.

Article 2 of the U.S. Constitution states that "no person except a natural born citizen, or a citizen of the United States" shall be eligible for the presidency. Section 2 of the 14th Amendment says "all persons born or naturalized in the United States" are U.S. citizens.

Mr. Trump grudgingly acknowledged late in his 2016 presidential campaign that Mr. Obama was Ameri-

can-born. Since then, Mr. Trump has faced accusations of racism, and has embraced other conspiracies.

USPS sends warning

Meanwhile, the U.S. Postal Service has sent letters to most States warning that millions of ballots cast by mail for November's presidential election may not arrive in time to be counted, U.S. media reports said.

The letters, dated July 29 and delivered to election officials in 46 States and in Washington DC, said that even if voters meet their State deadlines, the Postal

Service could not guarantee delivery in time, *The Washington Post* said on Friday.

They warn that "certain deadlines for requesting and casting mail-in ballots are incongruous with the Postal Service's delivery standards," according to several letters posted on the USPS website following an information request by the newspaper.

This mismatch creates a risk that ballots requested near the deadline under State law will not be returned by mail in time to be counted under your laws as we understand them."

Former President Barack

Obama has criticised Mr.

Trump's "attempts to undermine the election," tweeting on Friday that the administration was "more concerned with suppressing the vote than suppressing a virus."

"If you're in a State

where you have the option to vote early, do that now," he said on Twitter.

Despite the warning let-

ters, the USPS said it was "well prepared and has ample capacity to deliver America's election mail," in a statement quoted by CNN.

Afghan women's rights activist wounded in attack

She is part of the team that will hold talks with the Taliban

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

KABUL

Trailblazing Afghan women's rights campaigner Fawzia Koofi, a member of the negotiating team that will hold peace talks with the Taliban, has been wounded in a gun attack near Kabul, officials said on Saturday.

Gunmen opened fire on Ms. Koofi, 45, and her sister on Friday when they were returning from a meeting in the province of Parwan near the capital, said Interior Ministry spokesman Tariq Ariani.

Ms. Koofi, a former Member of Parliament and strong critic of the Taliban, was shot in her right hand, he said, adding that she was in a stable condition.

The Taliban denied that it was involved in the attack on Ms. Koofi.

Strong condemnation

The attack drew strong condemnation from Afghanistan's President Ashraf Ghani – who described it as a "cowardly attack", according to his spokesman Sediq Seddiqi. Abdullah Abdullah, who heads the national reconciliation council, called on Afghan authorities to bring "the perpetrators of the attack to justice".

The chief of Afghanistan's Independent Human Rights Commission, Shaharzad Akbar, also condemned the "horrific attack".

"Worrying pattern of targeted attacks that can negatively impact confidence in peace process," she wrote on Twitter.

In recent months, there have been gun attacks against human rights activists and prosecutors in Ka-



Firm and resolute: Afghan women's rights campaigner and politician Fawzia Koofi in Moscow in February 2019. •AP

bul. Ms. Koofi survived a bid on her life in 2010, when gunmen fired at her as she was returning to the capital after an International Women's Day event. She was among the few women in a pan-Afghan delegation that held several rounds of unofficial dialogue with the Taliban in 2019.

That dialogue came alongside separate negotiations between the Islamist militants and the United States in Qatar which finally led to the signing of an agreement between the two in February this year.

Threats from militants

At the time, Ms. Koofi told how she had received threats previously from militants just for wearing nail polish.

Ms. Koofi is now one of four women negotiators in the Afghan team that will hold direct talks with the Taliban in the coming days. "I think this time we are going for serious talks," she told this week.

"There is a sense of pride... but in the meantime, it's a lot of stress. You

have to really make sure that you are perfect in many ways."

Education interrupted

Ms. Koofi, a widow and mother of two daughters, was the first girl in her family to attend school. Her education was interrupted when she was forced out of medical college in 1996 as the Taliban stormed to power.

It was only after the U.S.-led invasion in 2001 that she rose to prominence as a politician and in 2005, became the first woman to serve as the Deputy Speaker of Afghanistan's Parliament.

The talks with the Taliban are expected within days, aimed at ending the conflict that has ravaged Afghanistan for almost two decades.

Afghan authorities are currently releasing from jails some 400 Taliban militants, fulfilling a key demand from the insurgent group for any talks. But the release has raised widespread international concern as some of those militants are accused of killing scores of people including foreigners in deadly attacks.

'UAE's deal with Israel has made it a legitimate target'

Iran's ultraconservative newspaper calls the agreement 'a betrayal of the Palestinian cause'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

TEHRAN

An ultraconservative Iranian newspaper said on Saturday that the United Arab Emirates' decision to normalise ties with Israel has made it a "legitimate target" for pro-Tehran forces.

U.S. President Donald Trump announced the deal between Israel and the UAE on Thursday, in a move wel-

comed by allies of the United States and Israel but denounced by Iran, Turkey and the Palestinians.

The *Kayhan* daily, considered to be the mouthpiece of ultraconservatives in Iran, said the agreement was a "betrayal" of the Palestinian cause.

"The UAE's great betrayal of the Palestinian people and its signing of an agreement to normalise rela-

tions with the Zionist regime, if it has only one result, it will be to turn this small, rich country heavily dependent on security into a legitimate and easy target for the resistance," *Kayhan* said.

The deal reached with the UAE is only the third such accord Israel has struck with the

As part of the agreement, Israel pledged to suspend an-

nexation of Palestinian lands, although Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu stressed that did not mean it was abandoning plans to one day annex the Jordan Valley and Jewish settlements across West Bank.

Iran's government has strongly condemned the agreement. The move was an act of "strategic stupidity from Abu Dhabi and Tel Aviv

which will undoubtedly strengthen the resistance axis in the region," the Foreign Ministry said on Friday.

The UAE downgraded ties with Iran in 2016. But their relations had appeared to be on the mend in recent months, with Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif holding rare talks with his UAE counterpart only last week.

Japanese Ministers visit controversial war shrine

Prime Minister Abe sends cash offering

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

TOKYO

Four Japanese Cabinet Ministers paid their respects on Saturday at a war shrine seen by neighbouring countries as a symbol of Tokyo's past militarism, in the first such visit since 2016.

Nationalist Prime Minister Shinzo Abe sent a ritual cash offering to the Yasukuni Shrine in central Tokyo to mark Saturday's 75th anniversary of Japan's surrender in Second World War but was not expected to visit in person, local media said.

Yasukuni honours 2.5 million war dead, mostly Japanese, who perished in the country's wars since the late 19th century. But it also en-

shires senior military and political figures convicted of war crimes by an international tribunal after the war.

Noble sacrifices' Education Minister Koichi Hagiuda, one of the four Ministers to visit the shrine, said he did so to pay tribute to the war dead.

"I paid respects... to the souls of those who nobly sacrificed themselves during the war," Mr. Hagiuda told reporters.

Mr. Abe last visited the shrine in December 2013 to mark his first year in power, sparking fury in Beijing and Seoul and earning a rare diplomatic rebuke from close ally the United States.

As protests surge, Lukashenko speaks to Putin

Statements contain reference to a 'union state' between the two countries

REUTERS

MINSK/MOSCOW

The leaders of Russia and Belarus agreed on Saturday that the problems in Belarus would be resolved soon, the Kremlin said, as tens of thousands took to the streets in Minsk once again to urge President Alexander Lukashenko to quit.

Accused of rigging last Sunday's election, Mr. Lukashenko had earlier issued an appeal to Russian President Vladimir Putin as the Belarus leader grapples with the biggest challenge to his 26-year rule and the threat of new Western sanctions.

Ties between the two traditional allies had been under strain before the election, as Russia scaled back the subsidies that propped

up Mr. Lukashenko's government. Russia sees Belarus as a strategic buffer against NATO and the EU.

Statements by both sides contained a pointed reference to a "union state" between the two countries. Mr.

Lukashenko has previously rejected calls by Moscow for closer economic and political ties as an assault on his country's sovereignty. "Both sides expressed confidence that all the problems that have arisen will be resolved

soon," a Kremlin statement said after the two spoke by phone.

EU to impose sanctions

The European Union is gearing up to impose new sanctions on Belarus in response to a violent crackdown in which at least two protesters have been killed and thousands detained.

On a visit to neighbouring Poland, U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo said Washington was monitoring the situation closely. Tens of thousands took to the streets of the Belarusian capital on Saturday. Crowds gathered to lay flowers where one of the protesters was killed this week, waving flags and chanting "go away" and "Lukashenko is a murderer".

Trump issues order against ByteDance

Firm's hold over karaoke app targeted

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

SAN FRANCISCO

U.S. President Donald Trump late on Friday lashed out anew at ByteDance, issuing a fresh executive order stating that the Chinese Internet giant must sell its interest in the Musical.ly app it bought and merged with TikTok. The order builds on sweeping restrictions issued last week by Mr. Trump that TikTok and WeChat end all operations in the U.S., his latest explosive moves aimed at countering China's rising global power.

ByteDance bought karaoke video app Musical.ly from a Chinese rival about three years ago in a deal valued at nearly a billion dol-

lars. It was incorporated into TikTok, which became a global sensation.

Mr. Trump's order contends that there is "credible evidence" leading him to believe that ByteDance's take-over of Musical.ly threatens to impair the national security of the United States."

The order set to take effect in 90 days retroactively prohibits the acquisition and bars ByteDance from having any interest in Musical.ly. Mr. Trump ordered that any sale of interest in Musical.ly in the U.S. had to be signed off on by the Committee on Foreign Investment, which is to be given access to ByteDance books.

How queer women powered the U.S. suffrage movement

For these campaigners, the freedom to choose whom and how they loved was tied deeply to the idea of voting rights

MAYA SALAM

In 1920, suffragist Molly Dewson sat down to write a letter of congratulations to Maud Wood Park, who had just been chosen as the first president of the League of Women Voters, formed in anticipation of the passage of the 19th Amendment to help millions of women carry out their newfound right as voters.

"Partner and I have been bursting with pride and satisfaction," she wrote. Dewson didn't need to specify who "partner" was. Park already knew that Dewson was in a committed relationship with Polly Porter, whom she had met a decade earlier. The couple then settled down at a farm in Massachusetts.

Dewson "made every political decision, career decision based on how it would affect her relationship with Polly Porter," said Susan Ware, a historian. Dewson was far from the only suffragist who had romantic relationships with

women. Many of the women who fought for representation were rebels living non-normative, queer lives.

"These kinds of non-heteronormative relationships were just part and parcel of the suffrage movement," Ms. Ware said.

"It's not like we are having to dig and turn up like two or three women. They're everywhere." Including among the highest echelons of the movement.

Thriving subculture

In her diary, Alice Dunbar-Nelson, an African-American writer and a suffrage field organiser, described "a thriving lesbian and bisexual culture among black suffragists and clubwomen," Wendy Rouse, a historian and associate professor at San Jose State University, wrote in an article published on the website of the Women's Suffrage Centennial Commission.

In those entries, Dunbar-Nelson wrote about the romantic and sexual experiences she had with men and women both while she was single and while she was married.

Carrie Chapman Catt, a president of the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA), settled down with Mary Garrett Hay, a prominent suffragist in New York, after the death of Catt's second husband. Catt asked that she be buried alongside Hay (instead of either of her husbands),

which she was, at Woodlawn Cemetery in the Bronx. When the history of the 19th Amendment is taught in classrooms, suffragists are often depicted as boring, chaste and dowdy, and their campaign is rarely framed as a major social and political movement. But as greater attention is starting to be paid to suffrage history, and to the roles of black and brown women, the narrative that is emerging is much more va-

ried. This broader, more accurate picture is also increasing our understanding of queerness in the movement.

Playing it down

The societal expectation that middle- and upper-class white women would marry men created a smokescreen of sorts. "I think that the world outside didn't speculate about the possibilities of a sexual relationship between women," said Lillian Faderman, a scholar of LGBTQ history.

In a way, this smoke screen extended to detractors of the movement, known as anti-suffragists.

This oversight was in

ICICI Bank garners ₹15,000 cr. from QIP

Monetary Authority of Singapore, funds under Morgan Stanley and Societe Generale pick up stakes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The country's second-largest private sector lender ICICI Bank on Saturday said it had completed the allotment of equity shares under its qualified institutional placement (QIP) and raised about ₹15,000 crore to fund its business growth and meet regulatory capital requirement.

Investors were allocated 41.89 crore shares at an issue price of ₹358 per equity share, the lender said in a statement.

"The issue price represents a 1.9% premium to the floor price determined based on the pricing formula as prescribed under Regulation 176(1) of the SEBI ICDR Regulations and a discount of 1.5% to the closing price of the bank's equity shares on



Beefing up: The proceeds will help strengthen ICICI's capital and aid competitive positioning. ■ SHANKER CHAKRAVARTY

the BSE/NSE prior to the launch of the issue," it said.

Earlier, the bank had set a floor price at ₹351.36 per share for its QIP. The issue opened on August 10 and

6,476,416,208 equity shares of face value ₹2 each to ₹13,790,821,242 consisting of 6,895,410,621 equity shares of face value ₹2 each," it said.

During the share sale, Monetary Authority of Singapore picked up 4.6 crore shares, representing 11.06% of the QIP size.

Other prominent investors included Morgan Stanley Investment Funds' Global Opportunity Fund and Societe Generale-ODI picking up 7.31% and 5.55%, respectively.

"The proceeds of the issue will be used towards strengthening the capital adequacy ratio of the bank, improving the bank's competitive positioning and/or general corporate requirements," it said. The bank said it was well-positioned to serve the

market and benefit from the opportunities that would arise going forward.

Lenders prepare

ICICI Bank has joined a group of lenders, including the largest mortgage lender HDFC which raised ₹14,000 crore last week, and peers Axis Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank that have raised capital as the system braces for a loan impairment impact due to the COVID-19 crisis.

The Reserve Bank of India has been asking banks to shore up capital, expecting a surge in the bad asset pile because of the economic impact of the pandemic.

ICICI Bank had set aside ₹5,500 crore as provisions for possible reverses on the loan book in the quarter ended June.

Mahindra unveils new Thar sport utility vehicle

Bookings for vehicle to start Oct. 2

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Mahindra & Mahindra Ltd (M&M) on Saturday unveiled its Thar sport utility vehicle (SUV) in a modern avatar to attract new-age buyers and SUV fans from all age groups.

The all-new Thar has been developed on a completely new platform and is equipped with a powerful 2.2-litre diesel engine and 2-litre petrol engine, besides other modern features.

To come in multiple configurations, the vehicle has been entirely designed and developed at the company's design studio in Mahindra Research Valley in Chennai and all the components are sourced from within India,



making it a 'truly Indian' product, said Pawan Goenka, MD, M&M.

"This is the Thar in modern avatar. It is an embodiment of Atmanirbhar Bharat," he said.

The vehicle will be introduced in the market on October 2 and bookings would open on the same day, the automaker said.

Decoding SC verdict on daughter's right

SANJAY VIJAYAKUMAR
CHENNAI

The Supreme Court held daughters, like sons, have an equal birthright to inherit coparcenary property and the 2005 amendment made to the Hindu Succession Act of 1956 will have a retrospective effect. Rishabh Shroff, partner, Cyril Amarchand Mangaldas, explains the verdict's implications:

What was the 2005 amendment about?

■ The amendment was to confer equal status to sons and daughters of coparceners. Prior to this, coparcenary rights were granted only to sons of a coparcener.

Who is a coparcener?

■ A coparcener is one who acquires rights to their fath-

er's property upon birth and can claim a partition of the coparcenary at any time.

What are the conditions for applicability of the verdict?

■ This would be applicable subject to the condition the coparcenary property should not have been partitioned by the father prior to December 20, 2004. As long

EXPLAINER

as the property remained coparcenary property and was not partitioned as of this date, a daughter can now claim interest in the same.

What are the different categories of persons in a Hindu Undivided Family (HUF)?

■ One is the coparcener, on

whom alone the verdict impacts. The second category is a member (wife), who is only entitled to maintenance and would not be granted any inheritance rights or the right to seek partition in the coparcenary.

What can daughters do?

■ Daughters will now be treated at par with sons of coparceners, and granted equal coparcenary rights in their father's property upon birth.

Even their marital status

would not affect the rights being conferred to them by way of the amendment – hence, they continue to be part of their father's HUF post marriage and can seek a share and bequeath their HUF share under their Will to any beneficiary they choose.

What about the verdict's impact on family businesses and others?

■ The judgement only applies to HUF property, and does not affect personal or self-acquired assets held individually.

In reality, most personal wealth, including ownership in valuable family businesses, are either held in personal names of the patriarch / promoters, or in private trusts or holding companies / limited liability partnerships (LLP).

The 'older' business families may continue to hold some ancestral wealth in HUFs, but the scale and materiality of such holdings is usually limited.

Almost no business family is setting up new HUFs and actually, most existing HUFs are being dissolved.

Old gold, jewellery to attract 3% GST

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

A panel of State Finance Ministers veered around to agree on a proposal to levy 3% GST on sale of old gold and jewellery to check tax evasion, Kerala Finance Minister Thomas Isaac said.

The Group of Ministers (GoM) also decided to implement the e-way bill system for transportation of gold within a State.

Mr. Isaac said on Friday that the GoM arrived at a consensus on bringing sale of old gold within the GST ambit under reverse charge mechanism (RCM). "Sale of old gold will attract GST at 3% under RCM."

This would check tax evasion as most smuggled gold is sold as old jewellery to evade GST.



Anytime now: The replacement cycle for CVs will soon have to begin, says Chola's CFO Arulselvan D. ■ KAMAL NARANG

Chola improves asset quality on loan freeze

'Clients were able to clear earlier dues'

K. BHARAT KUMAR
CHENNAI

Cholamandalam Investment and Finance Company Ltd. has utilised the window provided by the Reserve Bank of India's decision to allow retail borrowers the option of availing a loan moratorium to improve its gross non-performing assets ratio, said Chief Financial Officer Arulselvan D.

anyway there was no pressure on them to pay the more recent ones. They would then start with a clean book at the end of the moratorium period," the CFO said.

'CV revival soon'
Mr. Arulselvan expects the commercial vehicle (CV) industry to revive soon. "For CVs, the BS-IV stock had to be cleared out by March 31 and they had to bring the new fiscal afresh with BS-VI stock. They suffered a supply-side constraint."

Observing that even prior to the COVID-19 shutdowns, the sector had been going through a downturn, he said, "Up to Q1 of last year, it was okay. After that, it started sliding. COVID had a bigger impact". He added that given that a CV is a depreciating asset, replacement demand is inevitable.

"This year, the sudden nationwide lockdown saw the financial services industry lose a few days in March. "With the moratorium on, no billing was being done to customers whose dues came up in May and June. So when our borrowers started operating their trucks, we urged them to clear the previous 3-4 instalments since

the replacement cycle can at best be pushed six months or a year. But after that, vehicles need to be replaced because the cost of running them will go up."

"But for COVID, the upturn should have started now. Now, Q3 is the expectation. Even if it misses Q3, I think it will certainly start in FY22," he added.

Bengal mulls 'industry' tag for logistics

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
KOLKATA

The West Bengal government is contemplating to grant industry status to the State's \$20 billion logistics sector for seamless development of various infrastructure projects, an official said.

The State is working on

framing a logistics policy and it may require about ₹1,000 crore to implement it in the short term, the official told PTI.

The Union government, too, has been formulating a national policy aiming to reduce logistics cost from the present 14% of the gross domestic product to less than 10% by 2022.

"The status of industry will help the logistics sector smoothly develop infrastructure. The conversion of agricultural land to develop logistics-related infrastructure will be easier," the official said.



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With a \$100-million kitty, Vistas Media eyes acquisitions

Company also eyes Indian language movie production

LALATENDU MISHRA
MUMBAI

Vistas Media Capital Pte Ltd. (VMC), a Singapore-based company founded and run by NRIs and which recently raised \$100 million through a Nasdaq-listed special purpose acquisition company, is planning to utilise a bulk of the capital in acquisition and production of Indian language movie content, a top executive said.

It is looking to acquire a global media and entertainment company either in the U.S., Europe or India which would be reverse merged in-

to

Bengali and Punjabi languages, he said.

The vision for VMC is to be a new-age content company aiming to disrupt the market in various capacities such as production, distribution, film market, awards among others, he added.

"We are looking for a company [with global capabilities] in the U.S., Europe and India," said Abhayanan Singh, Group CEO.

"This will help us recognise our growth potential in India," he added.

Bengali, Punjabi content

VMC, which is currently funding and producing/co-producing 18 films in Hindi, Tamil and Marathi languages, is planning to foray into

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in the future.

■ It was more a precaution. I felt that it was clearly China followed by Italy that were affected by Covid. China, of course, already went through a serious crisis and I realised it was only a matter of time before it arrived in India, because in this globally connected world, it is impossible to keep all these out.

Most of our employees came from smaller towns.

Wanting time in office may be due to some disturbance or too little space at home

opened two so far. These are each, sort of 23 seaters.

These are simpler places in which to work, and will not have air conditioning (AC) because when you are in an AC building, recirculating the air would mean circulating the virus around you.

How many such centres do you plan to set up?

■ We are opening about 6-7 in Tamil Nadu and one each in Kerala and A.P. in the next two months. It is not an idea imposed by the company. It is a group of employees who suggest that they would like to work in a particular area;

We have

then we identify a suitable rural location to set up office there.

We did a survey to find out where our people are. Based on that census, location and data, we are putting up regional centres, say in a cluster that has hundred people or so. We will take up an existing building and convert it into an office. This way, we can actually move in within 2-3 weeks.

What is the distance a person would need to travel given there is no public transport?

■ We are not actually forcing anyone to work from these offices right now because the work-from-home will continue; but a lot of people have expressed a desire to work from an office due to lack of space or too much disturbance at home.

Typically they might have

to travel 10-20 km. At least 7

SNAPSHOTS



The milk puzzle

Lactase persistence is the continued activity in adults of the enzyme lactase, whose role is to digest lactose. Paradoxically most pastoralists don't have the ability to digest milk beyond infancy. A recent study in *PLOS Biology* suggests that Central Asians adapted either by fermenting milk or by selecting bifidobacteria as part of their gut microbiota.



Swarm hunting

In Africa and West Asia, climate change and unusually heavy rains have caused the population explosion of swarms of desert locusts (*Schistocerca gregaria*) that can contribute to crop damage. A study published in *Nature* identifies a pheromone molecule of the locust species *Locusta migratoria* which may explain the swarming behaviour.



Dimming star

NASA's Hubble Space Telescope observations have shown clearly that the mysterious dimming of the star Betelgeuse is due to a cloud of immense amount of hot material ejected into space, which blocked its starlight. The dimming of the star started in late 2019 and by April this year it had recovered, according to material released by NASA.



Selecting foes

Conversion of natural habitats to human use may help those animals proliferate that transmit diseases to humans. A global analysis of vertebrates, published in *Nature*, shows that those species that turn out to be the winners in such conversions are ecological generalists. These are more likely to harbour disease-causing pathogens than the losers, the specialists.

T cell immunity prevents recurrent severe COVID-19 disease

Study shows previously unanticipated degree of population-level immunity against COVID-19

R. PRASAD

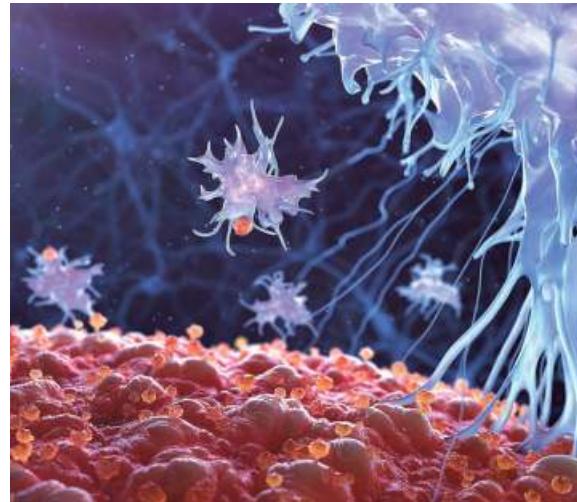
Natural exposure or infection with the novel coronavirus may "prevent recurrent episodes of severe COVID-19", a paper published in *Cell* says. This is because, once infected with SARS-CoV-2, the immune system elicits "robust, broad and highly functional memory T cell responses".

The study published by a team led by Marcus Bugger from Karolinska Institutet, Stockholm, Sweden, found SARS-CoV-2-specific T cells even in family members who have been exposed to the virus but have tested negative on antibody blood tests. SARS-CoV-2-specific T cells were also seen in convalescent individuals with a history of asymptomatic infection and mild COVID-19 disease.

Robust responses

All categories of people – recovered from moderate or severe COVID-19 disease, or in the convalescent phase after mild or severe disease or exposed family members or healthy people – exhibited "robust memory T cell responses months after infection, even in the absence of detectable circulating antibodies specific for SARS-CoV-2", they write.

They were able to detect similar memory T cell re-



Immune cells: SARS-CoV-2-specific T cells are only now being characterised from COVID-19 patients. ■ GETTY IMAGES

ponses directed against the internal and surface proteins (membrane and/or spike) of the virus in some people in whom SARS-CoV-2-specific antibodies could not be detected.

This indicates a "previously unanticipated degree of population-level immunity against COVID-19", they note. This implies that seroprevalence as an indicator may underestimate the extent of immunity in the population, they note.

"The dissociation of antibody (its absence) and a robust T cell response is noteworthy. It reinforces how much we miss by focusing on antibodies out of convenience, since T cells res-

ponse is only assessed in research labs," Eric Topol, Scripps Research Director and Founder, Scripps Research Translational Institute, says in a tweet.

The phenotype of the memory T cells during the acute phase of infection was different from the convalescent phase SARS-CoV-2-specific T cells, which were "polyfunctional and displayed a stem-like memory".

Studies undertaken in rhesus macaques had found that once infected, the animals were fully protected from reinfection. Till date, no documented case of reinfection has been found in people anywhere

in the world, whether they had recovered from mild or severe COVID-19 disease or even been asymptomatic and infected.

While many have been focusing on induction of neutralising antibodies, antibodies may not be detectable in those who have had mild or asymptomatic infection. At the same time, while SARS-CoV-2-specific T cells have been identified in humans, the kind of T cell immune response connected with clinical course of the diseases and serostatus was not known.

To address this lacuna, Dr Bugger's team characterised different T cells in 206 people in Sweden with known clinical outcomes and serostatus.

Clear segregation

They found a "clear segregation" between memory T cells from patients who have recovered from moderate or severe disease, and convalescent individuals and healthy blood donors.

The SARS-CoV-2-specific T cells also acquired an early differentiated memory phenotype in the convalescent phase, which gives the T cells stem-like properties characterised by extensive proliferation and polyfunctionality.

The study has some limitations, though. Since it is a

small study with limited clinical follow-up, it is not known if robust memory T cell responses, when circulating antibodies can be detected, can indeed lead to protection against severe COVID-19 disease. However, both 2002 SARS and MERS have been able to induce potent memory T cell responses that persist even when antibody responses wane.

Adaptive immunity

Even as antibodies wane with time, robust T cell memory formed after SARS-CoV-2 infection suggests that "potent adaptive immunity is maintained to provide protection against severe re-infection".

Like the team from La Jolla Institute for Immunology, La Jolla, California, Dr. Bugger's team too found pre-existing cross-reactive memory T cell against spike or membrane proteins in 28% of the unexposed healthy blood donors. The pre-existing cross-reactive memory T cells are from previous exposures to common cold coronaviruses, and the biological relevance remains unclear.

"But it is tempting to speculate that such responses may provide at least partial protection against SARS-CoV-2, and different disease severity," they write.

Identifying brain damage hours after birth

ASWATHI PACHA

"The piercing first cry of babies is not just a symbol of new life but a desperate puff for air... lack of oxygen to the brain for whatever reason can cause a wide range of neurological damages, and in some cases, even death," explains Prof. C.N. Kamalarathnam from the Institute Of Child Health and Hospital for Children, Chennai. He was part of a team that has designed a new blood test to identify if a newborn baby deprived of oxygen at birth is at risk of developing neurological disabilities later. Such babies are known to have trouble in learning and hearing, low IQ, and even develop cerebral palsy.

The results suggest that such blood profiling may be a promising rapid and cheap tool in developing and underdeveloped countries", adds lead author of the paper published in *Scientific Reports*, Dr. Paolo Montaldo from Imperial College, Centre for Perinatal Neuroscience, London, in a Skype call to *The Hindu*.

Hypothermia study

This study was part of a trial called HELIX (Hypothermia for Encephalopathy in Low and middle-income countries). The study is being carried out in India, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh, where the researchers examine the use of whole-body cooling in oxygen-deprived babies.

"In India, after prematurity and infection, lack of oxygen to the brain is the cause of neonatal mortality or death within 28 days of birth. In Western countries, this therapeutic hypothermia or cooling is well documented and is even the standard care for such babies," explains Dr.B.H. Prathik from the Indira Gandhi Institute of Child Health in Bengaluru, an author of the paper.

"Newborn babies' body temperature is usually at 36.5 to 37.5 degrees Celsius. But in this treatment, they are wrapped in a small blanket of 33.5 degrees Celsius for 72 hours and gradually rewarmed. We are still studying if this method will work in our country and can help reduce mortality and neurological damage. The results are yet to be published," he adds.

Gene activity

The team collected blood samples soon after birth from 47 babies in India (Bengaluru, Chennai, Mumbai and Thiruvananthapuram) who experienced this oxygen deprivation and studied their gene activity.

They identified 855 genes that were "switched on or off" at the time of birth in the babies who had neurological disability later, compared to those who did not. They point out two genes named RGS1 and SMC4 which were the most significant.

"By identifying babies that have a different gene activity soon after birth, we can track down [those] who will have adverse outcomes and need specific care. This is a preliminary study and tests on larger cohorts are essential.

Exactly what LIGO and other detectors have observed now.

Halfway through his defense of the thesis, the examiner from the mathematics department raised a query - why should one bother to prove the stability of an object that was impossible to observe and was of doubtful existence in the first place? Visheshwara's advisor took exception to this and a verbal wrangle followed.

Relevant question

But in Visheshwara's mind only one question remained - how do you observe a solitary black hole? To him, the answer was obvious. It had to be through scattering of radiation, provided the black hole left its finger print on

the scattered wave. During the next years, as a postdoc, he arrived at the answer to this question.

"We have still not detected the spectrum of quasi-normal modes from these coalescing binary systems that Vishu predicted," says Bangalore Sathyaprakash, professor at Penn State University, U.S., and a senior member of the LIGO Collaboration. He refers to the fact that LIGO and VIRGO have so far only detected with significance the inspiral and merger portions of gravitational waves from binary black holes but not similarly the quasi-normal modes from the remnant black hole. "But I am confident we will get there within the next 10 years."

Fifty years ago, when the black hole whispers were first plotted

The calculation of how a perturbed black hole rings out

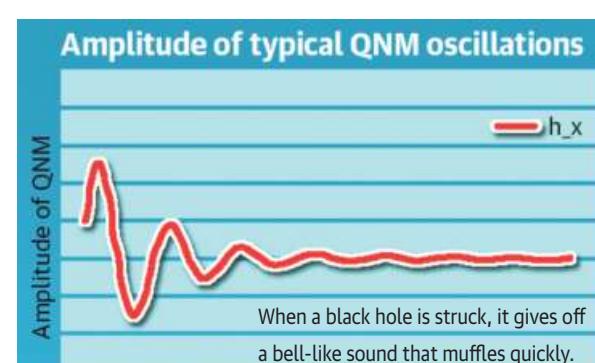
SHUBASHREE DESIKAN

In August 1970, in a paper in *Nature*, relativist C. V. Vishveshwara first published a calculation and plot of the signal that would be given out by a single perturbed black hole. This was the disturbance, or gravitational wave, that would emerge from a black hole when it was hit by a bunch of radiation. It implied that when a black hole is struck, it gives off a sound like a bell, only that it muffles quickly - more like a wooden bell than a silver bell.

When he did this calculation, Vishveshwara was a Research Associate at the Institute of Space Studies at New York. "Those were the times

when the concept of the existence of black holes itself was not easily accepted. It took a couple of decades to believe in their existence," recalls Saraswathi Vishveshwara, spouse of Vishveshwara, who is a professor emeritus at the Molecular Biology Unit of Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru.

In January 2016, when LIGO's big discovery - the first detection of the merger of binary black holes was to be announced, Vishveshwara and Prof Saraswathi were invited to IUCAA, Pune, where it was going to be live-streamed. "Although he was aware of LIGO efforts, he was neither actively involved in the experiments nor the numerical [activity] required to



detect the signal," says Prof. Saraswathi. "All the friends and well-wishers wanted to surprise him and were trying to hide what it was about... Soon after the LIGO finding was announced, they stopped the streaming and

asked Vishu to say a few words. It was like a dream coming true for him."

For his PhD thesis, Vishveshwara had been given the problem of calculating the gravitational waves emanating from a black hole merger.

Every child is a scientist, keenly observant and natural

Learning to transform science into societal value means promoting this ability, allowing it to flourish



SPEAKING OF SCIENCE

D. BALASUBRAMANIAN

At the recently held 'Virtual Consultation on Science for Resilience, Food, Nutrition and Livelihoods: Contemporary Challenges', organised by the M S Swaminathan Research Foundation, a particularly relevant talk on science education was delivered by Bruce Alberts of the University of California at San Francisco, U.S. The theme was science communication - particularly relevant now, with the new National Education Policy to be put in practice soon.

Small s, big S
Prof. Alberts is famous across the world for his involvement in science communication and has served as the Editor-in-Chief of the journal *Science*. His book 'Molecular Biology of the Cell', is a 'bible' of every biology graduate student. Let me give some key points from his lecture at the above meeting.

Before turning to science education, Prof. Alberts re-

minded us of what the physicist Pierre Hohenburg said: "The activity of a scientist is science with a lower case, or 's', while the upper case (or capital) "S" emerges from "s" as a collective public knowledge - universal and free from contradiction, only after repeatedly tested by independent scientific investigators". (Unless a claim by a scientist is verified to be reproducible by other scientists using the same procedure, it is but a claim and not true). For example, Norman Borlaug's discovery that the Mexican dwarf variety of wheat plants offer higher yields was independently tested and proved to be true by M S Swaminathan; this led to the Green Revolution in India; or 's' became "S", and a publicly acknowledged and accepted practice for societal value. This is also referred to as translational research (Of course, "s" here refers to all areas of STEM, medicine, agriculture and social sciences as well).

After turning to science education, Prof. Alberts re-

turning to science education, Prof. Alberts re-



Turning to science education, Prof. Alberts started with the statement that every child is a scientist. How true! Be she/he a baby or a school-going one, the child is aware of the immediate environment, the people, animals, plants and trees nearby, the soil and the dirt around. The child is keenly observant. Information gathering is natural to her/him. It is to promote this ability and allow it to flourish that the so-called 'white sox' experiment was introduced in several schools.

White sox experiment
This involved 5-year-old school going children in the US. Each of them is asked to take off the shoes, and walk

(the uniform) on their feet, and walk around the campus. They were then asked to collect the dark specks stuck on the white sox, and classify them: which are the seeds and which just dirt. The teacher then asked each student to analyse them using a low-cost microscope invented by Stanford University (Facebook Watch "The \$1 microscope! By Jim and Manu"), and confirm whether their earlier conclusions on which were seeds and which dirt are correct or not. Many students confirmed by microscopic analysis that their earlier guess that the regularly shaped ones were indeed seeds. They could also check whether their friend's guess was right by getting his/her sample and checking

it out through microscopy. The white sox study is thus a simple set of experiments involving the use of technology, confirmation (or otherwise) of earlier gut-feeling, and peer review.

The Department of Biotechnology (DBT), India, has been collaborating with Prakash Lab of Prof. Manu Prakash, to procure low-cost paper-folding microscopes and centrifuges to many students. (Watch a ted.com talk by Manu Prakash).

Adapting in India
Happily, India has many NGOs across the country, working in several languages, that attempt to popularise science, and the State and national science academies and governmental agencies too support such efforts. These groups can easily adapt the white sox experiments suited to local conditions. The media too can play a role in highlighting local efforts by students and innovators. Now, under the NEP, such innovative experiments should be taken up right through the 5+3+3+4 level and through universities in their graduate and higher degree programmes. And, as Krishna Kumar points out ("Schools without freedom", in *The Hindu*, Au-

dbala@lvpe.org



Question Corner

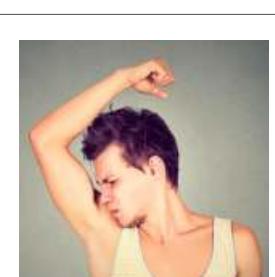
Smell matters

What causes body odour to smell pungent?

Scientists have finally solved the mystery behind the armpit's ability to produce the pungent smell of body odour. Bad odour in the armpit is mainly due to a mixture of volatile organic compounds with volatile fatty acids and thioalcohols being the primary components. Thioalcohols are found in trace amounts but are the most pungent. Thioalcohols are released as a by-product when certain bacteria (*Staphylococcus hominis*) convert compounds present in sweat.

The role of the microbes in the armpit for the formation of body odour is well known. But the molecular mechanism of how the bacteria seen in armpits produce body odour was not known.

Researchers at the



Body odour: Molecular mechanism of how this is produced was not known earlier.

University of York, U.K. traced the source of underarm odour to a particular enzyme in a certain microbe that lives in the human armpit. The enzyme converts a precursor alcohol to thioalcohols. The researchers found that the odour-producing bacteria have this enzyme, according to a study published in *Scientific Reports*. This gives the *S. hominis* bacteria the ability to produce thioalcohol, which was previously unknown.

The understanding of how specific bacteria biochemically contribute to malodour in human armpits will help in developing more targeted strategies to inhibit body odour.

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



Hurdles to Naga peace

Why is the main rebel outfit upset? What is the government interlocutor's stand on the 'framework agreement'?

RAHUL KARMAKAR

The story so far: Fresh hurdles have emerged in the road to peace in Nagaland. After a framework agreement was signed in 2015 between the Centre and the Isak-Muivah faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagalim, or the NSCN (I-M), the largest of the extremist groups in the peace process since 1997, there have been more than 100 rounds of talks and several twists and turns. The latest involves the demand by the NSCN (I-M) to remove Nagaland Governor R.N. Ravi as the Centre's interlocutor for the 23-year-old peace process and his alleged tweaking of the original framework agreement.

What has made the peace process wobble? Talks, fatigue and growing impatience across the Naga domain gave way to optimism when Mr. Ravi was made Nagaland's Governor in July 2019. His appointment was seen as a message from New Delhi that the solution would be found soon. As the Centre's interlocutor, Mr. Ravi had signed the framework agreement in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. But in October 2019, he issued a statement blaming the "procrastinating attitude" of the NSCN (I-M) for the delay in a mutually-agreed draft comprehensive settlement. He also said the NSCN (I-M) imputed "imaginary contents" to the framework agreement while referring to the government's purported acceptance of a 'Naga national flag' and 'Naga Yezhabo (constitution)' as part of the deal. In June this year, the NSCN (I-M) took offence to Mr. Ravi's letter to Nagaland Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio in which he referred to them as "armed gangs" running parallel governments. The NSCN (I-M) reacted by demanding Mr. Ravi's removal from the peace process but the Naga National Political Groups (NNPGs), a conglomerate of seven rival groups, and some social organisations want him to stay.

In his 'Naga Independence Day' speech on August 14, NSCN (I-M) general secretary Thuingaleng Muivah insisted the Nagas 'will never merge with India'. States adjoining Nagaland are apprehensive

What is the 'framework agreement'? On August 3, 2015, the Centre signed a framework agreement with the NSCN (I-M) to resolve the Naga issue, but both sides maintained secrecy about its contents. The optimism among some Naga groups eroded a bit when the NNPGs were brought on board the peace process on November 17, 2017. This agreement ostensibly made the peace process inclusive but it created suspicion about Delhi exploiting divisions within the Nagas on tribal and geopolitical lines. It was also a throwback to the first peace deal, the Shillong Accord of 1975 that Naga hardliners rejected. That had led to the birth of the NSCN in January 1980. Differences surfaced within the outfit a few years later over initiating a dialogue process with the Indian government. It split into the NSCN (I-M) and NSCN (Khaplang) in April 1988 who often engaged in fratricidal battles.

Why is the 'agreement' in the news? A few days ago, the NSCN (I-M) released the contents of the framework agreement. The outfit said Mr. Ravi had "craftily deleted the word 'new' from the original" line that referred to "shared sovereignty" between India and the Naga homeland and provided for an "enduring inclusive new relationship of peaceful co-existence". The NSCN (I-M) claimed "new" was a politically sensitive word that defined the meaning of peaceful co-existence of the two entities (sovereign powers) and strongly indicated a settlement outside the purview of the Constitution of India. The group said it had refrained from publishing the contents of the framework agreement respecting the "tacit understanding reached between the two sides not to release to the public domain for security reasons". But, it claimed, Mr. Ravi took undue advantage and started manipulating the framework agreement to mislead the Nagas and the Centre. The Governor said the framework agreement was an "acceptance of the Indian Constitution" by the outfit.

What are the other hurdles? In his 'Naga Independence Day' speech on August 14, NSCN (I-M) general secretary Thuingaleng Muivah insisted the Nagas 'will never merge with India'. But States adjoining Nagaland, where the peace headquarters of NSCN (I-M) is located, are apprehensive of the sovereignty issue. This is because of the NSCN (I-M)'s idea of Greater Nagalim – a homeland encompassing all Naga-inhabited areas in Nagaland and beyond. Apart from Myanmar, where many of more than 50 Naga tribes live, the Greater Nagalim map includes large swathes of Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Manipur. The Assam government has vowed not to part with "even an inch of land", the All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union warned against any "territorial changes" while finding a solution. Manipur Chief Minister Nongthombam Biren Singh said he has received the Centre's assurance that the peace deal with the NSCN (I-M) will not affect the territorial integrity of Manipur. But non-Naga groups are suspicious since the Tangkhul community, forming the core of the NSCN (I-M), is from Manipur and the outfit may not accept any agreement that excludes areas inhabited by them. The NNPGs, whose members are primarily from Nagaland, are also a factor; their inputs for a final solution could be at variance with those of the NSCN (I-M).

How will the Israel-UAE pact impact the Gulf?

Will the diplomatic breakthrough sharpen divisions in the region even further? How will it affect Palestine, Turkey and Iran?

STANLY JOHNY

The story so far: On Thursday, U.S. President Donald Trump announced that Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) had reached a peace agreement. He tweeted a joint statement issued by the UAE, Israel and the U.S., and called the deal a "historic breakthrough" in Arab-Israel relations. Many countries, including the European powers and India, have welcomed it, while the Palestinian leadership as well as Turkey and Iran have lashed out at the UAE.

What does the deal say?

According to the joint statement, the UAE and Israel would establish formal diplomatic relations and in exchange, Israel would suspend its plans to annex parts of the occupied West Bank. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu had earlier vowed to annex the Jewish settlements in the West Bank. The Trump administration, as part of the President's peace plan announced in January, had backed the annexation plan despite international criticism. But now, as part of the agreement, Israel "will suspend declaring sovereignty over areas" of the West Bank and "focus its efforts on expanding ties with other countries in the Arab and Muslim world". The statement also said delegations from Israel and the UAE would meet in the coming weeks to sign bilateral agreements regarding "investment, tourism, direct flights, security, telecommunications, technology, energy, healthcare, culture, the environment, the establishment of reciprocal embassies, and other areas of mutual benefit".

How significant is the deal for Arab-Israeli relations?

It's a landmark agreement given that the UAE is only the third Arab country and the first in the Gulf region to establish diplomatic relations with Israel. Arab-Israeli ties have historically been conflict-ridden. Arab countries, including Egypt, Transjordan, Syria and Iraq, fought their first war with Israel in 1948 after the formation of the state of Israel was announced. The war ended with Israel capturing more territories, including West Jerusalem, than what the UN Partition Plan originally proposed for a Jewish state. After that, Israel and Arab states fought three more major wars – the 1956 Suez conflict, the 1967 Six-Day War and the 1973 Yom Kippur War. After the 1967 war in which Israel captured the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip from Egypt, East Jerusalem and the West Bank from Jordan and the Golan Heights from Syria, Arab countries convened in Khartoum and declared their famous three "Nos" – no peace with Israel, no talks with Israel and no recognition of Israel". But it did not last long. After the death of Egyptian President Gamal Abdel Nasser, his successor Anwar Sadat started making plans to get Sinai back from Israel. His efforts, coupled with American pressure on Israel, led to the Camp David Accords of 1978. A year later, Israel and Egypt concluded their peace treaty, as part of which Israel withdrew from Sinai in return for Egyptian recognition.

In 1994, Jordan became the second Arab country to sign a peace treaty with Israel. In 1988, after an initial agreement reached between the two countries collapsed, Jordan abandoned its claims to the West Bank and said it would accept a deal between the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and Israel. Following the Oslo Accords, under which the PLO recognised Israel and was allowed to form the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and Gaza, time was ripe for an Israel-Jordan deal. The enmity between the two countries came to an end in July 1994 with the Washington Declaration on the White House lawn by Jordan's King Hussein and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin under the watch of U.S. President



Shades of hope: The Tel Aviv City Hall lit up in the colours of the flags of the United Arab Emirates and Israel after both countries announced the establishment of full diplomatic ties. ■AP

Bill Clinton. The UAE-Israel agreement comes after 26 years. If more countries in the Gulf follow the UAE's lead, it would open a new chapter in Arab-Israeli ties.

Why did the UAE sign the agreement?

The old enmity between Arab countries and Israel has dissipated. The Sunni Arab kingdoms in the Gulf region such as Saudi Arabia and the UAE had developed backroom contacts with Israel over the past several years. One of the major factors that brought them closer has been their shared antipathy towards Iran. Both these blocs were wary of U.S. President Barack Obama's Iran outreach. When Mr. Trump became the President, his administration brought these two blocs of West Asia, both American allies, together. In February 2019, the U.S. brokered a security conference in Warsaw to build a global strategy against Iran. The meeting brought leaders from Israel, Saudi Arabia, the UAE and several other countries. Following this conference, in August 2019, the U.S. arranged secret talks between the UAE and Israel. These meetings laid the foundations for the agreement.

Arab countries have signalled that they are ready to live with Israel's occupation of Palestine. What they do not want is a major change in the status quo which would put them under political and diplomatic pressure. Mr. Netanyahu's plan to annex the West Bank would have drastically changed the status quo, further putting in peril the two-state solution. The UAE-Israel agreement has averted that outcome. It also allows Mr. Netanyahu to label the suspension of the annexation to his right-wing religious allies in the government as a victory. Further, this is an election year in the U.S. If a Democratic President comes to power and restores the Iran deal, both the Israeli and

Arab countries have

signalled that they are ready to live with Israel's occupation of Palestine. What they do not want is a major change in the status quo which would put them under political and diplomatic pressure. Mr. Netanyahu's plan to annex the West Bank would have drastically changed the status quo, further putting in peril the two-state solution. The UAE-Israel agreement has averted that outcome. It also allows Mr. Netanyahu to label the suspension of the annexation to his right-wing religious allies in the government as a victory. Further, this is an election year in the U.S. If a Democratic President comes to power and restores the Iran deal, both the Israeli and

the Arab blocs in West Asia would come under pressure to live with an empowered Iran in what President Obama called "cold peace". A formal agreement and enhanced security and economic ties make the Arab and Israeli sides better prepared to face such a situation. So there is a convergence of interests for the UAE, Israel and the U.S. to come together in the region.

Where does it leave the Palestinians?

Unlike the past two Arab-Israeli peace agreements, Palestinians do not figure prominently in the current one. When Egypt and Israel made peace, the latter agreed to return the Sinai back to Egypt and signed "A Framework for Peace in the Middle East" agreement, which promised the establishment of an autonomous self-governing authority in the West Bank and Gaza and called for the full implementation of the UNSC Resolution 242 that demanded Israeli withdrawal from the occupied territories. The Jordanian-Israeli treaty came after Israel agreed to the formation of the Palestinian Authority in the West Bank and Gaza. But in the UAE-Israel deal, Israel has not made any actual concession to the Palestinians. The annexation plan was a threat. The withdrawal of the threat was packaged as a concession, which the Emiratis accepted. That is why Israeli Prime Minister Netanyahu said, "Who would have ever dreamed there would be a peace agreement with an Arab country without our returning to the 1967 borders?" The Palestinians are understandably upset. They called the UAE's decision "treason".

What are the geopolitical implications of the deal?

The agreement could fast-track the changes that are already underway in the region. The Saudi bloc, consisting of Egypt, the UAE, Bahrain and others, see their interests being aligned with that of the U.S. and Israel and their support for Palestine, which Arab powers had historically upheld, is dwindling, while Turkey and Iran emerge as the strongest supporters of the Palestinians in the Muslim world. This tripolar contest is already at work in West Asia. The UAE-Israel thaw could sharpen it further.

The verdict on women's right to property

What is coparcenary property? Does the Supreme Court of India ruling settle the issue of inheritance?

K. VENKATARAMAN

The story so far: On August 11, the Supreme Court of India held that daughters, like sons, have an equal right to inherit ancestral property. The legislation that conferred coparcenary status on women dates back to 2005, when the Hindu Succession Act, 1956 was amended. The verdict answers the question whether the coparcenary right of daughters comes into effect only if the father – through whom the right is claimed – was alive on the day the amendment came into force. The top court ruled that a daughter's right flows from her birth and not by any other factor.

What is coparcenary property in Hindu law?

A Hindu joint family consists of lineal descendants of a common ancestor. In other words, a male head and his descendants, including their wives and unmarried daughters. A coparcenary is a smaller unit of the family that jointly owns property. A coparcenary consists of a 'propositus', that is, a person at the top of a line of descent, and his three lineal descendants – sons, grandsons and great-grandsons. Coparcenary property is named thus because the co-ownership is marked by "unity of possession, title and interest".

The English term itself is borrowed from common law, but the concept is found in Hindu law. In the Mitakshara school, which prevails in most parts of India, a male's right to be a coparcener is by birth. But if a newborn male is the fifth lineal descendant – that is a great-great-grandson, while the common ancestor, his son, grandson and great-grandson are alive – the right to be included in the coparcenary will ripen only when the common ancestor dies. In other words, a coparcenary has succession up to four degrees of lineal descent. It is believed that this is based on the Hindu tenet that only males up to three degrees can offer spiritual ministration to ancestors. And only males can be coparceners.

What was the traditional position and how was it changed by codified law?

In Mitakshara law, on the death of a coparcener, his interest became merged with that of the surviving coparceners. Sons inherited property only by virtue of being or becoming coparceners. When the Hindu Succession Act, 1956, was enacted, this position was largely preserved by Section 6. It said that when a male Hindu died after the Act came into force, his interest in a Mitakshara coparcenary shall go to the surviving members of the coparcenary and not in accordance with



the Act. However, a proviso was added to preserve the interest of female children. It said if the deceased left behind a Class I female relative (daughter, widow or mother, etc.) or a male relative claiming through such female kin, his interest would go to them by testamentary (by will) or intestate (without a will) succession, and not by survivorship.

This meant that even the codified law did not address the conventional discrimination against women. Although by separate colonial-era laws, some limited rights of inheritance were conferred on daughters (in respect of intestate, non-coparcenary property in the Hindu Law of Inheritance (Amendment) Act, 1929) and widows (whose right to succeed to husband's property was equated to that of the son in the Hindu Women's Rights to Property Act, 1937), women were denied coparcenary status. These laws were repealed by the Hindu Succession Act, 1956.

What changes did the 2005 Amendment bring?

In its statement of objects and reasons for the amendment, the Union government said the recognition given in the 1956 Act to the rule of devolution by survivorship and its retention of the Mitakshara coparcenary property without including women in it meant that women could not inherit ancestral property in the same way as men. It said: "The law by excluding the daughter from participating in the coparcenary ownership not only contributes to her discrimination on the ground of gender but also has led to oppression and negation of her fundamental right of equality guaranteed by the Constitution...."

Therefore, it amended Section 6 to remove the discrimination and confer equal rights on daughters too. It declared that a coparcener's daughter would become a coparcener in her own right by birth, in the same manner as a son; and would have the same rights that she would have, had she been a son. The amendment came into force on September 9, 2005, but it contained a proviso that it would not invalidate any disposition of property by partition or will that had taken place prior to December 20, 2004 – the day the amendment was introduced in the Rajya Sabha.

What is the verdict's significance?

As laws are generally deemed prospective, civil cases relating to coparcenary property threw up questions such as whether it would apply only to daughters born after September 9, 2005, or whether, if they were born before that, it would be limited to those whose father – the coparcener through whom they will inherit the status – was also alive on that day.

Many courts took the view that only a living coparcener's daughter would get the benefit of the new law. It was argued that if a man had died before 2005, his interest would not have passed on to his daughter, as the amendment was yet to come into force. Allowing coparcenary status to such women would imply that the amendment had retrospective effect.

The Supreme Court in *Prakash and Others vs. Phulavati* (2015) ruled on these lines, holding that it had no retrospective effect, and only living daughters of living coparceners (as on the date of its coming into effect) would get its benefit. As another judgment took a different view, this was posted before a three-judge Bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra.

Tuesday's verdict has upheld the stand that coparcenary status of daughters is created by birth, and is not dependent on whether the father was alive or not on the date on which it came into force – a daughter has the same status as a son as soon as she is born. The significance of this verdict is that it has put an end to all doubts about when the amendment comes into force, and whether some women could be left out of it on the ground that it can only have prospective application.

As laws are generally deemed prospective, civil cases relating to coparcenary property threw up questions such as whether it would apply only to daughters born after September 9, 2005

KAMALA HARRIS

A woman with many firsts to her name

The first black and Indian American woman on a major party ticket, she goes to the poll with a record of controversies and achievements

SIRIRAM LAKSHMAN

When U.S. Senator Kamala Harris was picked to be the running mate of presumptive Democratic nominee for the presidency, Joe Biden, she became the first black and Indian American woman on a major party presidential ticket in U.S. history.

Ms. Harris was born in 1964, to Shyamala Gopalan, a cancer researcher from Chennai, and Donald Harris, an economics professor from Jaimaca. Students at the University of California at Berkeley, a campus known for its activism, Ms. Gopalan and Mr. Harris were involved in the civil rights movement. That is the world Ms. Harris entered. She has recalled being taken in a pram to civil rights marches.

Her parents divorced when she was a child, and Ms. Harris and her younger sister Maya were primarily raised by their mother, visiting their father on weekends and during the summer holidays. The Harris children grew up around their mother's friends, many of whom were civil rights activists and intellectuals.

Ms. Harris has talked about being deeply influenced by her maternal grandfather P.V. Gopalan, a civil servant, and grandmother, Rajam Gopalan. Ms. Harris said her grandfather would take her on his walks along the beach in India and she would hear him and his friends talk about democracy. She has also spoken of being inspired by her grandmother's involvement in women's rights.

Shyamala Gopalan raised

her children with a sense of "pride" in her South Asian roots and a "strong awareness of and appreciation for Indian culture", Ms. Harris writes in her book, *The Truths We Hold*. Her mother knew that American society would see the Harris children as black girls and was determined to make sure

The biggest foreign policy mistake of the U.S. was the "jeopardising" of the progress made post-war by engaging in "failed wars" that have "destabilised" regions, says Harris

they would grow up to be "confident, proud black women".

Ms. Harris attended the 'historically black' Howard University where she majored in economics and political science. After getting a law degree from UC Hastings, Ms. Harris began working as a prosecutor in Oakland. She has described wanting to change the system from inside and had to defend her employment choice with friends and family "as one would a thesis."

Controversial record
In 2004, Ms. Harris became San Francisco's District Attorney (DA) – the first black woman to hold the position. In 2011 she became the first female Attorney General (AG) of California. Ms. Harris had indicated that she wanted to be a "progressive prosecutor" and some of her ac-

tions in her early years as a prosecutor are in line with that description.

For instance, as San Francisco DA, she created the Back on Track programme, in which first time drug offenders could avoid jail time by finishing high school or getting a job. She also mitigated the consequences of a law that said could lock someone up for 25 years for committing a third felony by insisting that the DA's office only bring charges on a third felony if it was violent or serious. However, in her later years, she was criticised for her "tough on crime" and pro-police, pro-establishment type actions. As California's AG, she was criticised for not adequately investigating charges of prosecutorial misconduct and defending convictions that involved police officers inserting false evidence.

Ms. Harris's changing record on the death penalty, which she personally opposes due to its finality and disproportionate application to minorities, has also been criticised. As DA in 2004, she refused to seek the death penalty in the 2004 killing of a police officer. A decade later, however, as AG, she appealed a judge's ruling that the State's death penalty was unconstitutional. Ms. Harris argued that it was her professional duty to defend the State's laws regardless of her personal beliefs.

Another controversy in her history stems from a relationship in 1994 that Ms. Harris had with California politician Willie Brown, which raised questions of significant conflicts of interest when he helped her get posi-



ILLUSTRATION: R.RAJESH

tions on two state government bodies.

In recent years, Ms. Harris emerged as a strong proponent of criminal justice reform. Her proposals announced during the Democratic primaries included policies that would legalise marijuana, abolish solitary confinement, private prisons, cash bail and the death penalty.

As a U.S. Senator since 2016, she has served on po-

werful committees on Intelligence and Homeland Security. One of the things she is known for is her prosecutorial style of questioning at Senate hearings.

Following the police killings of African Americans George Floyd and Breonna Taylor at the hands of police, Ms. Harris co-sponsored the Senate's Justice in Police Act in June. She also co-sponsored a Bill to make lynching a federal crime.

After the pandemic hit, Ms. Harris introduced legislation to create a task force to address the racial and ethnic disparities in the impact of COVID-19 and the response to it. In 2019, Ms. Harris and Republican Mike Lee introduced legislation that would result in an increase in country-wise caps for green cards, a move that would benefit citizens of countries with green card application backlog, like India and China.

In terms of foreign policy, Ms. Harris has said she would work with China on common interests – like climate change, while addressing the country's human rights abuses such as with China's Uighur minority. The situation is considerably more complex now than at the start of the Democratic primary season with a more aggressive and assertive China and a more damaged U.S.-China relationship. Ms. Harris is an advocate of a closer relationship with the Europeans and reaffirming support for Ukraine against Russian aggression, i.e., she is in alignment with traditional U.S. foreign policy in these respects.

In an August 2019 interview with the Council on Foreign Relations, a think tank, Ms. Harris said the community of post-war institutions were among the greatest U.S. foreign policy accomplishments (like Mr. Biden, she wants America back in the Paris Agreement on climate). The biggest foreign policy mistake, as per Ms. Harris, was America "jeopardising" the progress made via these institutions by engaging in "failed wars" that have "destabilised the regions in which they have been fought". In this respect, Ms. Harris appears to share with progressive Democrats an instinct not to intervene militarily in foreign conflicts.

Priorities

Speaking in Delaware last week, Ms. Harris and Mr. Biden – at their first appearance together since the V-P announcement – emphasised the Trump administration's botched response to the pandemic, the state of the U.S. economy with more than 16 million unemployed and race relations. Mr. Biden's economic recovery plan for America, with the theme "build back better" will likely be the focus of the initial days of a Biden-Harris administration.

At the moment, the Biden-Harris duo has nationwide lead over the Trump-Pence team. Should they win in November, Ms. Harris will be well on her way to being a serious contender for the leadership of the Democratic party as well as the U.S. presidency.

LOYA JIRGA

The council of elders

Afghanistan's tribal leaders hold huge influence over society and government

SUHASINI HAIDAR

In most republics, the head of state is supreme. Thus, it may have seemed unusual when Afghanistan's President Ashraf Ghani pleaded "helplessness" in making the decision on whether to release 400 Taliban prisoners, and said he would convene a Loya Jirga, a gathering of elders, to deliberate on it. The decision was the final stumbling block in a series of issues the Taliban has held over the government since February, when it signed a peace agreement with the U.S.

These 400, explained President Ghani's office, had been convicted of "serious crimes", and it was not in the President's "mandate" to pardon or release them. The Loya Jirga of approximately 3,200 representatives from various parts of Afghanistan, including Pashtuns, Tajiks, Hazaras and Uzbeks, met on August 7-9, and directed the release of the men, under the condition they would not return to the battlefield, thus paving the way for the Intra-Afghan negotiations (IAN).

The IAN is now expected to begin in Qatar's capital Doha later this week, bringing together officials and negotiators of the Ghani government, the High Council for National Reconciliation and civil society representatives face to face with Taliban representatives for the first time. Signing the decree for the release of the last Taliban convicts, Mr. Ghani



laid all the credit and responsibility for the decision at the Loya Jirga's door.

The truth is, despite a decade or more of democracy, and years of being a republic, Afghanistan still gives its tradition of Loya Jirgas the kind of respect that allows even an elected head of state to defer to it. Since at least 1709, Jirgas have brought together tribal elders to settle issues of national crises in Afghanistan.

Historical decisions

From the momentous decision to appoint Ahmed Shah Abdali (Durrani) King in 1747, to the historic endorsement of Hamid Karzai as President of the post-Taliban republic, all major decisions in the country flowed from the elders' conference. Often, it is the leader who turns to the Jirga, as Mr. Ghani just did, when he wants a broader political consensus or a stamp of approval for a policy decision.

"The Loya Jirga is the

quiet during the Jirga. Within the year, a civil war broke out, and King Amanullah was forced into exile.

Many in Afghanistan in modern times have been wary of the Jirga process, which is seen as a patriarchal structure with unlimited powers. In the run-up to the latest Jirga, activists criticised the decision to release Taliban fighters accused of the most heinous crimes as a 'pre-ordained result', under pressure from the U.S. government that wants to force the pace of the reconciliation process with the timeline of U.S. Presidential elections in November. U.S. special envoy Zalmay Khalilzad made several trips to Doha, Kabul and Islamabad in the weeks running up to the Jirga, in order to keep plans for the IAN on track. Others, especially women's rights activists have criticised both the Jirga and its decision to release Taliban prisoners as a regressive step. During the Jirga last week, at least two women representatives were heckled, even assaulted when they tried to voice their protests.

Organisers countered that since 2002, the Jirga has always included women, and the latest one, which is a part of the consultative "Peace Jirga" convened by President Ghani last year to advise the government on the reconciliation process, comprises 30% women, ensuring participation, if not a resounding voice at the centuries old platform.

HIZB-UL MUJAHIDEEN

In permanent conflict

The militant group, which lost several of its 'commanders', remains a security threat

PEERZADA ASHIQ

Azaad Lalhari, the Pulwama 'district commander' of the Hizbul Mujahideen, was trapped and killed near an orchard on August 12 by the security forces in his home district in south Kashmir. Under the radar of the security agencies since 2014 and blamed for the killing of a policeman and an Army soldier, Lalhari was marked dead in the counter-insurgency cell's long list of militants of the Hizbul Mujahideen.

Lalhari was the 13th militant 'commander' killed in Jammu and Kashmir this year and the sixth top commander of the Hizbul. Out of the 137 militants killed this year, over 60 belonged to the Hizbul. According to top officials in the counter-insurgency cell, the security agencies managed to gain an upper hand over the militant group this time after many years.

Launched in 1990 by Muhammad Ahsan Dar, a school teacher, and Mohammad Abdullah Bangroo, a veteran militant, the Hizbul Mujahideen remains Jammu and Kashmir's largest indigenous militant outfit. It took centre stage in 1994 after the J&K Liberation Front declared ceasefire, calling for complete independence of Jammu and Kashmir.

Two known faces of the group – 'operational commander' Riyaz Naikoo, who had been active since 2017 and managing the online propaganda of the outfit, and 'commander' Junaid Sehra, an MBA pass-out and the son of Tehreek-e-Hurriyat chairman Muhammad Ashraf Sehra – were killed in May in two separate encounters, in a major blow to the militants. The bodies were not handed over to the families under the new policy adopted by the security forces during the COVID-19 pandemic. "Both the striking capability and recruitment of the outfit has gone down significantly due to the back-to-back killing of the commanders, especially in south Kashmir, which remains its capital since 2010," said one official in the counter-insurgency cell.

Faceless outfit
The Hizbul is now a faceless outfit in the Valley. In 2016, Burhan Wani, a student from Tral in south Kashmir who used social media to create an army of unmasked recruits, was killed. The vacuum he left at the group was filled by Naikoo in 2017, who was killed earlier this year. Little-known Gazi Haider is the new chief of the Hizbul in the Valley, with Zaffar-ul-Islam being his deputy and Abu Tariq chief military adviser. "All these three cannot fill the vacuum created after Naikoo's killing. Naikoo was an independent thinker and managed operations on his own, without the consent of the handlers across the border," said the official.

The Hizbul has now returned to pre-2000 modus operandi, where all its commanders were asked to lie low and keep recruitment on the lower side, they added. The security agencies warn that underestimating the Hizbul, which managed to revive militancy in otherwise militancy-free areas of the Chenab Valley in the Jammu region in the past year, "will be a gross miscalculation". "The Hizbul has its sleeper cells and assets intact in the Kashmir Valley, the Pir Panjal Valley and the

Chenab Valley. Outside J&K, it always managed to set up bases for its sleeper cells. The presence of the outfit is far reaching," the official said.

The Hizbul, whose key demand is Jammu and Kashmir's accession with Pakistan, is a well-structured organisation, with Syed Salahuddin heading it for around three decades now. With its office headquartered in Muzaffarabad, the launch pads may have vanished in the urban pockets of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK), under pressure from the international community, but the upper reaches remain open to training centres.

"Due to active and effective counter-infiltration grid, around 90% local recruits never make it to the training camps in PoK. Over 90% local militants killed in PoK this year were trained locally by Hizbul experts, which include training in handling improvised explosive devices," said the official.

The group may be lying low but the militants are providing intelligence to other terrorist organisations such as Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammed and the shadow outfits like the Resistance Front to "manage successful attacks". Once drawing its recruits mostly from the socio-religious Jamaat-e-Islami, the Hizbul recruits now come from all walks of life – students, salaried employees, traders, etc., say officials.



Dhoni bids adieu; leaves behind lasting legacy

Former India skipper will be remembered for triumphs in 2007 World T20, 2011 World Cup and 2013 Champions Trophy

A riveting chapter

M.S. Dhoni's retirement from International cricket has brought to an end one of India's most storied careers – of a captain par-excellence, a peerless wicketkeeper and owner of one of the calmest heads in all of sport

What you've done for the country will always remain in everyone's heart. The world has seen achievements, I've seen the person. Thanks for everything, Skip. I tip my hat to you!!!
VIRAT KOHLI

Massive boots to fill. It's been a privilege and honour to be part of the dressing room and seeing you as a thoroughbred professional at work. Salute one of India's greatest cricketers
RAVI SHASTRI

WICKETKEEPING RECORD

Catches	Stumpings
256	38
ODIs	321
T20Is	57

Welcome to the retirement club, MSD! What a magical career!
KEVIN PIETERSEN

Your contribution to Indian cricket has been immense. Winning the 2011 World Cup together has been the best moment of my life
SACHIN TENDULKAR



INSPIRING AND OUTSTANDING

Your calm demeanour and the laurels you brought as skipper will forever be remembered and cherished. Wishing you the very best - **ANIL KUMBLE**

What a player he has been for the country and world cricket! His leadership qualities will be hard to match, especially in the shorter format. His batting in one-day cricket made the world stand up and take notice. An outstanding career
**SOURAV GANGULY
BCCI PRESIDENT**

2007 T20 WORLD CUP

2011 50-OVER WORLD CUP

2013 CHAMPIONS TROPHY

GRAPHIC: KARTHIK S.

K.C. VIJAYA KUMAR CHENNAI

It was Indian cricket's million-dollar question. But it wasn't hinting at prosperity, it was that one had pathos as its overwhelming base. The query was - will M.S. Dhoni do a low-profile exit from international cricket, like the one he did with Tests? Saturday evening, twilight to be precise, Dhoni did what he does best - spring surprises even if it means either rival bowlers are gob-smacked or cricket writers almost become like William Shakespeare's Hamlet and wonder 'did he' or 'didn't he'?

Through an Instagram post, the former India captain announced his retirement from international cricket. The emphatic message was that the legend from Ranchi, will no longer turn out for India in limited overs cricket. Having retired from Tests in 2014, a move that had all the shock-and-awe of his quicksilver stumpings and helicopter-sixes, Dhoni continued to be India's hope-dispenser in ODIs and Twenty20s until Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma stepped into that rarefied zone.

And now with his usual 'let-me-vanish-without-the-drumbeats' quitting, an era has ended in Indian cricket. Though an international retirement was on the cards - Dhoni turned 39 last month - his exit will take a while to sink in. Such was his impact!

Much-loved cricketer

Over the last two decades, after Sachin Tendulkar, Dhoni became India's much-loved cricketer. There was an air of mystique and a sense of nonchalance like the ones you saw in Clint Eastwood's old Westerns. Above all, he lent hope and only legends have this intangible quality of throwing a lifeline while the

fires raged. An inflationary asking rate of 10 and above was laughed at as long as Dhoni was there. Nothing fazed him, be it the rival bowler or the soul-numbing pressure of expectations.

Every generation has its own eternal sunshine moment. For those with their adolescence in the 1980s, it was all about Kapil Dev holding aloft the 1983 World Cup at Lord's. Much later, came another vignette burnt into our collective memories, the six off Nuwan Kulasekara at a raucous Wankhede Stadium on an April night in 2011 as Dhoni seized the World Cup while delirium spread from Mumbai to the rest of India.

Game awareness

Dhoni, the wicket-keeper was ever agile, the skipper was always aware of the game-situation, and as a batsman, he had this belief that he would always prevail. The last trait was one you previously associated with the great Vivian Richards.

With 10773 ODI runs, a T20 international yield of 1617, a combined tally of 378 catches and 157 stumpings, leading India to titles in the 2007 ICC World T20, 2011 World Cup and 2013 ICC Champions Trophy, Dhoni's phenomenal legacy is set in stone.

His last international joust, in which he scored a valiant 50 in a losing World Cup semi-final against New Zealand at Manchester last year, turned out to be his heart-wrenching full-stop. But there is the Indian Premier League still for his fans to savour while he helms Chennai Super Kings, a squad with which he trained at Chennai's M.A. Chidambaram Stadium on Saturday night after leaving the sporting community in tumult with a social-media post. Truly, he is one of a kind.

Raina, the bold force, retires too

S. DINAKAR CHENNAI

Vibrant, electric and match-winning he was, on his day. Now the mercurial Suresh Raina too has decided to bid adieu to international cricket along with his friend and mentor, M.S. Dhoni.

And in Twenty20 cricket, he was a formidable force; Raina's exceptional fielding and steady off-spin added to his immense value. In 78 T20Is, Raina notched up 1605 runs at a sizzling strike-rate of 134.87. Among former Indian coach Greg Chappell's favourites, he could change gears with ease.

Raina began his Test career with a fighting 120 against Sri Lanka in 2010 in Colombo. He had a secure defence and a flurry of shots. However, a technical flaw against short-pitched bowling saw his Test career being limited to 768 runs from 18 Tests at 26.48. When it came to shorter formats, Raina was a bold Indian force.



M	Runs	HS	100	50	Catches
Tests	18	768	120	1	7
ODIs	226	5,615	116*	5	36
T20Is	78	1,605	101	1	42

TV PICKS

Spanish Grand Prix: Main race, SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 6.35 p.m.
England vs Pakistan: Sony Six (SD & HD), 3.30 p.m.
MotoGP: Eurosport (SD & HD), 2.10 p.m.
Magnus Carlsen Chess Tour Finals: Eurosport (SD & HD), 8.30 p.m.

NBA: Sony Six, 2 a.m. (Monday)

Europa League: Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 12.30 a.m. (Monday)

IN BRIEF



Jones stretchered off in Heats' loss to Pacers

Miami forward Derrick Jones Jr. was stretchered off in a neck brace after a scary collision in the Heat's 109-92 loss to Indiana on Friday, a preview of their upcoming NBA playoff matchup. Doug McDermott led the Pacers with 23 points and Malcolm Brogdon added 16. Holders Toronto, the second seeds in the East, closed out the regular season with a 117-109 win over Denver Nuggets. AFP

Vinales takes pole

SPIELBERG
Yamaha's Maverick Vinales clinched pole for the Austrian Grand Prix on Saturday. Vinales, who sits second in the overall standings before Sunday's fourth race of the campaign, finished 0.068 seconds ahead of Jack Miller, with championship leader Fabio Quartararo also less than a second back in third. AFP

Rogers stuns Serena

WASHINGTON
Serena Williams suffered her first loss since 2012 to a rival outside the WTA's top 100, falling to fellow American Shelby Rogers in a Friday quarterfinal at the Top Seed Open. Rogers, ranked 116th, outlasted ninth-ranked Williams 1-6, 6-4, 7-6(5).

No play on third day

ASSOCIATED PRESS SOUTHAMPTON

Rain meant there was no play at all on the third day of the second Test between England and Pakistan here on Saturday in a match already plagued by stoppages for bad weather.

Play should have resumed at 11 a.m. local time but light rain meant the pitch and square remained fully covered, with the floodlights on full beam.

Had the players been on the field, play may well have continued given the rain was only of the spitting kind.

The officials held three inspections in the afternoon, but with rain now coming down harder they abandoned play without a ball having been bowled.

Pakistan, 1-0 down in a three-match series, will resume on Sunday at 223 for nine in its first innings.

Chetan Chauhan critical

RAKESH RAO NEW DELHI

Former Test opener and twice Member of Lok Sabha, Chetan Chauhan is battling for life after multiple-organ failure. He suffered from kidney failure on Saturday morning and later in the day, some other organs gave way.

Currently on a ventilator, Chauhan caught Covid-19

when in Lucknow in July. Yet to fully recover, he was shifted to Medanta Hospital, Gurugram, where he suffered from kidney infection and issues related with blood pressure.

Part of one of the most successful Test opening pair with Sunil Gavaskar, Chauhan scored 2084 runs in 40 Tests in a career spanning 12 years.

Sikki, Kiran test negative

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM HYDERABAD

Shuttlecock N. Sikki Reddy and physio Dr. Ch. Kiran, attached to the SAI-Gopi Chand Academy here, on Saturday tested negative this time around at a private hospital on Friday.

Sikki and Kiran tested positive when a SAI-selected lab conducted the test on them along with other Olym-

pic probables and the support staff at the Academy.

To ensure there was no ambiguity, the two took the test again, the results of which were negative.

"This is a huge relief for me and for all. I was honestly worried that I should not be responsible for anyone else being affected because of me," Sikki told *The Hindu*.

Bayern 8 Barcelona 2

German giant scores four times in each half

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE LISBON

A merciless Bayern Munich inflicted a humiliating, record defeat on Barcelona on Friday, with a scarcely believable 8-2 victory in their Champions League football quarterfinals to leave Lionel Messi forlorn and surely hastening the end of an era in Catalonia.

Thomas Mueller scored twice either side of goals from Ivan Perisic and Serge Gnabry in a stunning opening 31 minutes at an empty Estadio da Luz, with a David Alaba own-goal having briefly brought Barcelona back level.

Caving in
Luis Suarez pulled it back to 4-2 at one point in the second half, but Barcelona then

won the Champions League in 2015.

He is 33 now and this game may make up his mind that he needs to finally leave Camp Nou if he is to win it again.

Barca was torn apart by Bayern in the 2013 semifinals, losing 7-0 on aggregate, but this was eight goals in 90 minutes.

And with an ageing team featuring six players aged 31 or older, this has to be the end of an era.

Coach Quique Setien will not survive.

His team, having already come second to Real Madrid in La Liga, simply could not cope with Bayern's pressing.

The result (quarterfinals):

Barcelona 2 (Alaba 7-og, Suarez 57) lost to Bayern Munich 8 (Mueller 4, 31, Perisic 22, Gnabry 27, Kimmich 63, Lewandowski 82, Coutinho 85, 89).

Hamilton claims pole

REUTERS BARCELONA

Formula One leader Lewis Hamilton took pole position for the Spanish Grand Prix on Saturday with teammate Valterti Bottas completing the Mercedes front row lockout at the Circuit de Catalunya.

The pole was a record-extending 92nd for the six-time world champion Hamilton, who has won the last three Spanish GPs.

Red Bull's Max Verstappen, Hamilton's closest challenger in the standings,

Paes launches his website

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI

India's tennis ace Leander Paes launched his website www.leanderpaes.in on Saturday. It will be an interactive web platform, where one can know everything about the 47-year-old.



Lewis Hamilton.

will start in third place with Mexican Sergio Perez lining up fourth for Racing Point on his return after missing two races due to COVID-19.

Nakamura leads in second set

RAKESH RAO NEW DELHI

Continuing his dream-run, Hikaru Nakamura stunned Magnus Carlsen in the first game of the second set to inch closer to a possible 2-0 lead in the seven-set title-clash of the \$300,000 Magnus Carlsen Chess Tour on Saturday.

Having stopped Carlsen 2-5.1.5 in the first set on Friday, Nakamura once again thrived in a messy position after the World champion appeared to have got his move-order wrong for his home preparation. At one point, Carlsen spent 11 minutes for a move. Later, Carlsen's decision to trade his bishop for a knight on the queen's side gave Nakamura the advantage.

The results (set two, game one): Carlsen (Nor) lost to Nakamura (USA).

Shell-shocked

1

The 8-2 defeat against Bayern is the worst in Messi's career, eclipsing Argentina's 6-1 loss to Bolivia. Barcelona had also lost 8-0 to Sevilla in the Copa del Rey (round of 16) in 1946.

For the first time since 2006/07, there will be no Spanish team in the CL semifinals. It will also be the first time since 2004/05 that a team having Messi or Ronaldo will not be in the semifinals.

Barca was torn apart by

Bayern's eight strikes is the second-most by a team in a CL game after Real Madrid's 9-1 win against FC Wacker Innsbruck in 1990/91.

Number of German coaches in the CL semifinals this season, with Hansi Flick (Bayern), Julian Nagelsmann (Leipzig) and Thomas Tuchel (PSG)

guiding their teams to the last four, the first time in history