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Kamala Harris accepts historic V-P nomination of Democratic Party
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Putin critic Navalny in coma, allegedly poisoned by toxic tea
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England takes on Pakistan in the third and final Test from today
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NEARBY



Curbs, night curfew in all Punjab cities, towns

CHANDIGARH
Punjab CM Amarinder Singh on Thursday ordered a series of emergency measures, including extension of weekend lockdown and two-hour increase in daily night curfew in all 167 cities and towns in the State from August 21, in a bid to deal with the COVID-19 situation.

NORTH & EAST ▶ PAGE 4

3 RJD MLAs join JD(U); Manjhi exits alliance

PATNA
Ahead of the Bihar elections, three more Rashtriya Janata Dal MLAs – Chandrika Rai, Jaivardhan Yadav and Faraz Fatmi – on Thursday joined the Janata Dal (United). Former CM Jitan Ram Manjhi-led Hindustani Awam Morcha (Secular), too, decided to quit the Grand Alliance.

NORTH & WEST ▶ PAGE 5

Restaurants, hotels to serve alcohol in Delhi

NEW DELHI
The Delhi government on Thursday decided to allow restaurants and hotels in the city to serve alcohol, but bars will remain shut as per Unlock guidelines issued by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs. The decision was taken considering the "revenue implications" of it.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

SC gives Bhushan time to reconsider statement

He agrees but says he may not make any substantial changes

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

NEW DELHI
The Supreme Court on Thursday asked civil rights lawyer Prashant Bhushan to take "two or three days" to "reflect on", and possibly modify, a statement that he read out to judges, in which he refused to apologise for his tweets.

One tweet was about a photograph of Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde astride a motorbike and another on how posterity would perceive the role played by the top court in the past six years.

On August 14, Mr. Bhushan was found guilty of contempt by scandalising the court.

The one-page order on Thursday said the hearing in the case had concluded and the court had reserved its decision on his sentence. It, however, gave Mr. Bhushan time till August 24 to submit an "unconditional apology, if he so desires". The case would be posted on August 25 if an apology is submitted, it stated.

The three-judge virtual Bench, led by Justice Arun Mishra, wrapped up the oral arguments on Mr. Bhushan's punishment.

Mr. Bhushan said he shall cheerfully submit to whatever punishment the court im-

I.K. VENUGOPAL

Attorney General of India
JUSTICE ARUN MISHRA

JUSTICE B.R. GAVAI

I am misunderstood'

Civil rights lawyer Prashant Bhushan on Thursday told the Supreme Court that he was "pained not because I may be punished, but because I have been grossly misunderstood".

posed on him. The tweets embodied his bona fide belief. It would be contemptuous on his part to apologise for something he believed in.

'A humble guard'

The senior lawyer quoted Mahatma Gandhi asking for neither mercy nor magnanimity from judges. He said he was neither a cheerleader nor a courtier. He had, after

He might have done a lot of good, but he should not cross the Lakshman Rekha. We can be lenient only if the person tenders his apology in the real sense

JUSTICE ARUN MISHRA

JUSTICE B.R. GAVAI

He conveyed his shock at being found guilty of mounting a "malicious and scurrilous" attack by the very court he had served at some professional and personal cost. ▶ PAGE 9

all, served for 30 years as a humble guard of the court's majesty.

But the Bench persisted, asking him to "think over" his statement. He politely agreed but observed that he may not at the end make any substantial changes in its text. "The statement I made is well thought-out and considered," he submitted.

Blood samples of 15,239 people were randomly collected in the August 1-7 survey from 11 districts.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Farooq allowed to meet NC leaders

It was the first meeting after August 5, 2019

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT SRINAGAR

The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Thursday allowed four senior National Conference leaders to attend a meeting called by party president Farooq Abdullah at his residence in Srinagar.

It was the first meeting of the senior NC leaders at Dr. Abdullah's house after August 5, 2019, when the Centre removed Jammu and Kashmir's special status and detained most of the regional leaders.

All-party meet
Dr. Abdullah told mediapersons at his Gupkar Road residence that he held a meeting



Speaking his mind: National Conference chief Farooq Abdullah addressing a press conference on Thursday. ▶ NISSAR AHMAD

with NC general secretary Ali Muhammad Sagar; party provincial president, Kashmir, Nasir Aslam Wani; former Minister Abdul Rahim Rather; and former legislator Muhammad Shafi Uri.

"Once all the leaders are set free, we will sit together and discuss the issues properly," Dr. Abdullah said.

"We will have the all-party meeting on the Gupkar declaration," he added.

Dr. Abdullah's all-party meeting was not allowed on August 5 this year.

He said he was in constant

touch with incarcerated Peoples Democratic Party chief Mehbooba Mufti.

'Worried for Mehbooba'
"I am concerned about her prolonged detention. We do want to see her free and [also] the other leaders of Jammu and Kashmir," he added.

He said people were facing "miserable conditions".

"As my dad was today allowed to attend the meeting called by Dr. Abdullah sahib, my father paid obeisance at the Hazrat Syed Yaqoob sahib shrine at Sonwar on the way to Gupkar," tweeted Mr. Sagar's son, Salman Sagar.

NC vice-president and former Chief Minister Omar Abdullah said it was "sad how we have normalised this illegal detention".

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

29% Delhiites developed antibodies against virus

It is 27% in Punjab containment zones

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI

Antibodies against COVID-19 infection have been found in 29.1% of people in the latest sero-prevalence survey in the national capital, Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain said on Thursday.

Blood samples of 15,239 people were randomly collected in the August 1-7 survey from 11 districts.

"If Delhi's population is considered 2 crore, then about 60 lakh people have developed antibodies and have recovered," Mr. Jain said. According to the findings of another sero survey, antibodies have been found in 27.7% of people in Punjab's containment zones.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

DELHI'S HERD IMMUNITY ▶ PAGE 3

U.P. govt. seeks cancellation of bail of 3 anti-CAA activists

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government has moved a local court here seeking the revocation of bail of three activists who were accused of vandalism during the protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act and the proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC) on December 19, 2019.

The court of Additional Sessions Judge, Lucknow,

had issued summons to Congress activist Sadiq Jafar, theatre personality Deepak Mishra, alias Deepak Kabir, and advocate Mohammad Shoaib. On Thursday, the court listed the next hearing in the matter for September 5 after the accused prayed for more time to respond to the application, a copy of which was not immediately available to all of them.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 11

6 IN TOP 100

30 IN TOP 100

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Teenager, woman raped; 23-yr-old accused arrested

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Two women, including a minor, were allegedly raped by two men in south-east Delhi's Pul Prabhadeep on Wednesday, the police said.

They confirmed that a 23-year-old Faridabad resident has been arrested in connection with the case. A senior officer said the two friends, aged 17 and 21, left their residence in Pul Prabhadeep on Tuesday to go to the market where they met two persons known to them. The four decided to spend time together and went to a hotel where they were not allowed a room. After this, they went to the rented accommodation of one of the boys.

The men then got the victims drunk and committed the crimes. In the early hours of Wednesday, the woman managed to leave the room and returned to her house and narrated the ordeal to her parents. The minor's parents were then informed about the incident following which they went to the rented room in Jaitpur. They rescued their daughter and informed the police. The victims were then taken for medical examination. The police said beer bottles have been recovered from the room. Based on the complaint, a case on charges of rape has been registered against the men. A manhunt has been launched to nab the other accused.

Day after deluge, Millennium City limps back to normalcy

Water recedes in most parts of city; roads cave-in and building damage reported

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

A day after rain wreaked havoc on the Millennium City causing a flood-like situation, normalcy was partially restored as water receded in most parts of the city on Thursday. At least three buildings were partially damaged due to rains and there were two incidents of road cave-in.

The rain overnight, over 60 mm, led to waterlogging in a few parts of the city in the morning, including NH-48, prompting the traffic police to appeal to the residents to stay indoors. Normal traffic was restored on NH-48 near Narsinghpur village around noon, but a part of the service lane remained waterlogged.

The Raghavendra Marg underpass near DLF Phase-I Rapid metro station continued to remain shut for traffic since water could not be drained out.

Around a dozen fire engines were pressed into service to drain out the water. Another unidirectional un-



A civil defence volunteer team rescues a family in Gurugram on Thursday. ■ MANOJ KUMAR

derpass near Medanta Hospital also remained shut.

People evacuated

People staying in houses around a five-storey under-construction building in Sector 46 were evacuated after it leaned dangerously. Teams from disaster management and Haryana Sahari Vikas Pradhikaran visited the spot

and served notice to the owner to demolish the structure.

Two more buildings in Sector 27 and Sector 47 developed cracks, though there were no reports of casualty. The basement of a building in Sector 28 was inundated.

A road caved in on NH-48 near IFFCO Chowk and in Sector 23A. In another rain-

related incident, a wall collapsed in a residential society.

The GMDA helpline received 30-odd calls regarding waterlogging throughout the day.

A civil defence volunteer team rescued a man and his daughter from the outskirts of an inundated Daultabad village.

Light rain continues in Delhi; three of a family injured in house collapse

No heavy rain for the next few days, sky to remain cloudy: Met

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Light rain continued in the city on Thursday with the Safdarjung weather station recording 8.2 mm of rain between 9 a.m. and 5.30 p.m.

While several instances of waterlogging and traffic jams were reported, the situation was better than Wednesday.

However, three members of a family sustained injuries when the roof of their house collapsed on Thursday morning following a heavy downpour. The police said they received a PCR call regarding the incident from Hari Singh Park in Paschim Vihar. The other three were received from Malviya Nagar, Chandni Chowk, and Tigris.

'40-year-old house'

On reaching the spot, the three victims – Shyam, his wife Kavita and their 16-year-old daughter – were rushed to Sanjay Gandhi Hospital with minor injuries. They were discharged after treatment.

"It has been learnt that the single-storey building is about 40-years-old and was in a dilapidated condition."



A man carries ration through waterlogged roads on Thursday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

said Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer) A. Koan.

The Delhi Fire Service said four calls regarding house collapse were received on Thursday, including the one in Paschim Vihar. The other three were received from Malviya Nagar, Chandni Chowk, and Tigris.

The maximum and minimum temperatures settled at 29 degrees Celsius, which was five degrees below normal and a minimum of 24.1 degrees Celsius, which was two degrees below normal.

The forecast for August 21 reads "generally cloudy sky with light rain/thunderstorms. Maximum and minimum temperatures will be between 32 and 25 degrees Celsius respectively."

Head constable shoots man dead for filming him drinking on duty

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A policeman has been arrested for allegedly killing a 28-year-old man for filming the former while he was drinking on duty at Rohini on Thursday morning, the police said.

DCP (Rohini) P.K. Mishra said the accused has been identified as Head constable

Surender Kumar, posted in Shahbad Dairy police station. He has been suspended and the process for his dismissal has been initiated.

An officer said the victim – Deepak Gehlot – from Noida area was a gym owner. He saw the policeman drinking on the road while on duty and questioned him. This annoyed the official and the

two got into an argument. Next, the victim started making a video of the official, following which he shot at the victim with his service pistol and fled the spot.

A newspaper vendor took the victim to a hospital where he was declared dead.

The official informed a beat officer of his crime and was then arrested.

NDMC in third spot in Swachh Survekshan rankings

North, East municipal corporations ranked among lowest in terms of cleanliness

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) was on Thursday ranked third in terms of cleanliness out of 382 cities with population between 1-10 lakh, according to the Swachh Survekshan 2020 report released by the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry.

Last year, NDMC was ranked fifth among all cities surveyed in the annual status report brought out by the Ministry as a part of its Swachh Bharat Mission-Urban.

But this year, there were 382 cities in 1-10 lakh category and we got third. Since they changed the categories, we are also not able to compare," an NDMC official.

Earlier, we got the first rank among 47 cities in 1-10 lakh population category.

But this year, there were 382 cities in 1-10 lakh category and we got third. Since they changed the categories, we are also not able to compare," an NDMC official.

Door-to-door collection

The NDMC said it was carrying out 100% door-to-door collection and processing of waste on a daily basis.

"No garbage goes to landfills and the entire waste is incinerated to produce power. All NDMC schools [middle and senior] have sanitary napkin vending machines. NDMC area also has 100% sewerage connectivity," said NDMC.

In the National Capital

cities with a population above 10 lakh.

The EDMC stood at 46 while the North body at 41. The lowest-ranked city in this category was Patna, Bihar. The SDMC, on the other hand, was ranked at 31.

Senior SDMC officials attributed the civic body's success to various efforts such as achieving ODF plus ranking, decentralised compost plants, remediation of dump sites, efforts to reduce the use of plastic and other interventions.

AAP lashes out at BJP

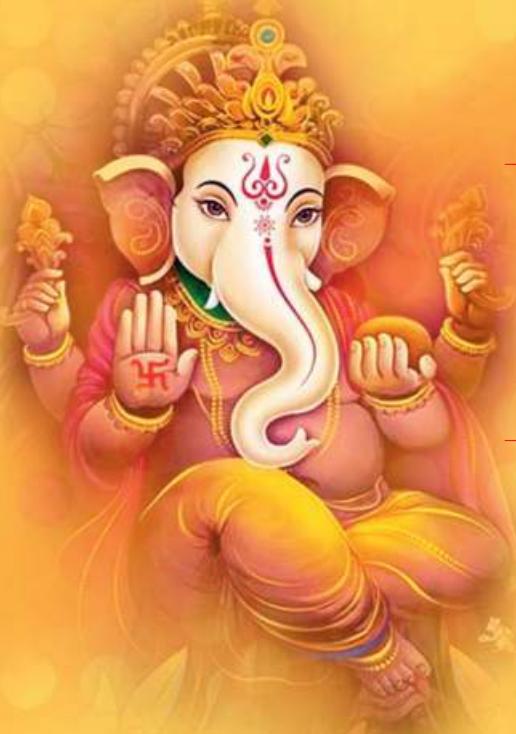
The Aam Aadmi Party attacked the rankings secured by the civic bodies by saying that the BJP, which was in power at all three corporations, had failed in their task to keep the city clean. They had "tarnished the image of Prime Minister Narendra Modi", said AAP leader Durgesh Pathak.

DELHI POLICE
SHANTI SEWA NYAYA

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DP/925/2020

HPPWD TENDER

Sealed item rate tender on the prescribed form, terms and conditions mentioned in form-6&8 are hereby invited for the following works by the Executive Engineer, Electrical Division No.II, HPPWD Shimla-171003 from the firms/contractors enlisted with PWD (Electrical), so as to reach in the office of the XEN (1) Tender documents consisting of plans classes of work to be done and set of terms and conditions of contract to be complied with by the contractor/firms whose tender may be accepted and other necessary documents can be seen in the office of the XEN between hours of 11.00 AM to 4.00 PM except on Sundays and public holidays. (2) The firm/contractor who are not registered under H. P. General Sale tax Act, 1968 and have not cleared all the dues on account of sale tax shall not be issued the tender documents (3) The contractor who has no registration certificate with Excise and taxation department of HP will not be issued the tender documents (4) Tenders placed in sealed envelope with name of work and due date written on the envelope will be received by the XEN and will be opened by him or his authorized representative in his office in the presence of contractors, present if any. (5) The earnest money in the shape of NSC/Time deposit account /saving account in any of the post offices of HP duly pledged in favour of XEN must accompany with the tender in the separate envelope. The tenders without earnest money will summarily be rejected. (6) In case of holiday, the tenders shall be sold/received and opened on the next working day. (7) Tenders of contractors who quote two or more than two rates for any item of work shall be rejected. (8) The competent authority on behalf of Governor of H. P reserves the right to reject any or all the tenders received without assigning any reason. (9) Tender forms shall be sold to only those contractors who deposit earnest money in any of the prescribed modes simultaneously at the time of sale of tender documents.

(i)	Last date of receipt of application :-	08.09.2020	Up to 1.00 P.M
(ii)	Date of sale of tenders :-	08.09.2020	Up to 2 PM to 5.00 PM
(iii)	Last date of receipt of bids :-	10.09.2020	Upto 10.30 A.M
(iv)	Date of bid opening :-	10.09.2020	AT 11.30 A.M

Work No. (1) R/O Central heating plant in Telecobalt building at IGMC Shimla for the year 2020-2021(w.e.f.15.10.2020 to 15.04.2021). Estimated cost Rs. 2,07,306/- Earnest money Rs. 4200/- Time: 6 months. Cost of form Rs. 350/NR

Work No. (2) R/O Central heating plant at Kamla Nehru state hospital (new building) for mother and child at Shimla for the year 2020-2021(w.e.f.11.11.2020 to 15.03.2001). Estimated cost Rs. 1,55,480/- Earnest money Rs. 3200/- Time: 4.5months. Cost of form Rs. 350/NR

Work No. (3) R/O Central heating plant at Kamla Nehru state hospital (old bldg.) for mother and child at Shimla for the year 2020-2021(w.e.f.1.11.2020 to 15.03.2021). Estimated cost Rs. 1,55,480/- Earnest money Rs. 3200/- Time: 4.5 months. Cost of form Rs. 350/NR

Work No. (4) R/O Central heating plant in Himachal hospital of mental and rehabilitation centre at Shimla for the year 2020-2021(w.e.f.1.11.2020 to 15.03.2021). Estimated cost Rs.1,55,480/-Earnest money Rs. 3200/-time:4.5 months. Cost of form Rs. 350/NR

Work No. (5) R/O Central heating plant in block-E at IGMC Shimla for the year 2020-2021(w.e.f.1.11.2020 to 15.03.2021) Estimated cost Rs. 1,55,480/-Earnest money Rs.3200/-Time: 4.5 months. Cost of form Rs. 350/NR

Work No. (6) R/O Central heating plant in block-D at IGMC Shimla for the year 2020-21(w.e.f.1.11.2020 to 15.03.2021) Estimated cost Rs. 1,55,480/-Earnest money Rs. 3200/-Time: 4.5 months. Cost of form Rs.350/NR

Work No. (7) R/O Central heating plant in block-C of IGMC Shimla for the year 2020-2021(w.e.f.1.11.2020 to 15.03.2021) Estimated cost Rs. 1,55,480/-Earnest money Rs. 3200/Time:4.5 months. Cost of form Rs. 350/NR

Work No. (8) R/O Central heating plant in new hospital building block-B Phase-I at IGMC Shimla for the year 2020-21(w.e.f. 1.11.2020 to 15.03.2021) Estimated cost Rs. 1,55,480/- Earnest money Rs. 3200/ Time:4.5 months. Cost of form Rs. 350/NR

Work No. (9) R/O Central heating plant at block-A of hospital building at IGMC Shimla for the year 2020-21(w.e.f. 1.11.2020 to 15.03.2021) Estimated cost Rs.1,01,574/-Earnest money Rs.2100/-Time: 4.5 months. Cost of form Rs. 350/NR

Work No. (10) R/O Central heating plant in Govt. Dental college(A&B) at IGMC Shimla for the year 2020-21(w.e.f. 1.11.2020 to 15.03.2021) Estimated cost Rs.1,01,574/- Earnest money Rs. 2100/- Time: 4.5 months. Cost of form Rs. 350/NR

Work No.(11) Providing of pre-filter and HEPA for CTVS operation theatre of top floor for AHU and chemical servicing of AHU and chiller therein Estimated cost Rs.4,26,000/- E/Money Rs.8600/- Time: 6 months. Cost of form Rs.350/NR

Work No.(12) Repairing and recommissioning of compressor No.1 of chiller No.2 installed at CTVS operation theatre chiller plant of IGMC Shimla. Estimated cost Rs.2,17,900/-E/Money Rs.4400/-Time:6 months.

Note: Works appearing at Sr.No.1 to 12 will be issued to only those contractors/firms who have already executed similar nature of work, proof of which should be attached with the application.

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

HIM SUCHANA AVAM JAN SAMPARK

HP/2344/20-21

AN-NO-

Timings

DELHI

FRIDAY, AUG. 21
RISE 05:54 SET 18:55
RISE 08:02 SET 20:48
SATURDAY, AUG. 22
RISE 05:55 SET 18:54
RISE 09:08 SET 21:25
SUNDAY, AUG. 23
RISE 05:55 SET 18:53
RISE 10:13 SET 22:03

Delhi Weather max min
Delhi City 29 24
Safdarjung 29 24
Palam 28 25Delhi Palam Today
33°C Light rain and thunderstorm with cloudy sky would affect the area.Delhi Palam Tomorrow
35°C A spell of rain and thunderstorm may occur at some places. Warm and humid day likely.© Copyright Skymet Weather 2019
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IN BRIEF

AAP will fight all seats in Uttarakhand polls: CM
New Delhi
The AAP will fight all seats in the upcoming Uttarakhand Assembly election, party chief Arvind Kejriwal said here on Thursday. "AAP will fight all seats in the Uttarakhand Assembly election to be held in February 2022," he said. "This time the people of Uttarakhand will fight for their rights and new expectations in partnership with the Aam Aadmi Party," Mr. Kejriwal tweeted.

Respond to plea on pending salaries: HC

NEW DELHI
The Delhi High Court on Thursday directed the Delhi government and North Delhi Municipal Corporation to reply to a plea seeking direction for payment of salaries to employees of the hospitals run by the civic body. The court gave two weeks time to respond to the petition filed by the Hospital Employees Union.**674 institutions take part in ARIIA ranking process**
GREATER NOIDA
The MHRD has taken an initiative, the Atal Ranking of Institutions on Innovation Achievements, (ARIIA) to systematically rank higher educational institutions and universities in India and this year, 674 institutions have participated in the ranking process. BIMTECH, Greater Noida is the only business school to be among the top 25 in the category of 'Private or Self-Financed Colleges/ Institutions'.

Delhi moving steadily towards herd immunity, observe experts

As per the current evidence, they say, antibodies are stable for about six months

NIKHIL M BABU
NEW DELHI

Commenting on the result of second serological survey of Delhi, epidemiologists on Thursday said that the city is on its way to attain herd immunity with the survey showing that 29.1% people have developed antibodies against the virus.

They also said that according to prevailing informations, antibodies formed are stable for about six months and the increase in sero prevalence compared to the last survey is a "good" sign.

When a larger part of the population becomes immune to the virus, the chain of transmission of the virus is broken, thus reducing the spread of the disease. This is called herd immunity. So, a higher value of sero prevalence is favourable.

"Between the two surveys, there is an increase of about 6% people with antibodies and the disease is spreading without much increase in the number of daily new fatalities compared to earlier. This



Residents of Adarsh Nagar queue up for COVID-19 testing in north-west Delhi on Thursday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

shows that we are moving towards herd immunity," said Giridhara R. Babu, professor at Indian Institute of Public Health, Bengaluru.

"The current survey shows the percentage of people with neutralising antibodies. But there are also non-neutralising antibodies, and T cell immune response. The sum total of all these three immune mechanisms in the population should be about 60% to attain herd immunity," he said. "So, the percentage of just neutralising antibodies in the population required for attaining herd immunity will be lesser than

60%," the expert said.

Dr. Babu said that initial evidence shows neutralising antibodies last for at least three to six months.

'Not disappearing'
Jayaprakash Muliyil, an epidemiologist and former principal of Christian Medical College, Vellore, said that the increase in percentage of people with antibodies shows that the antibodies formed are holding up and not disappearing.

"If the antibodies were transient, then they should have dropped or stayed at the same level in the second sur-

vey compared to the first. As per current evidence, antibody levels remain stable up to at least six months," Dr. Muliyil said.

But experts said that the time period up to which antibodies last may go up, as the virus is still being studied. "Certain clusters of Delhi might have already achieved herd immunity. But for cities, where population density is high, more than 50% people should have antibodies to attain herd immunity" Dr. Muliyil said.

Dr. Babu said that Delhi is still witnessing more than 1,000 cases per day and it is a lesson for other States that there is going to be a "long plateau" before the cases drop. "The government should do more testing to contain transmission at this stage," he said. He also said that the result of a sero survey done in Pune cannot be compared to Delhi, as the former was done in high-risk areas. "But Mumbai and Delhi were moving towards herd immunity," he said.

Surge continues in city with 1,215 new cases and 22 more deaths

Active cases have been increasing in the past four days

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

As many as 1,215 new COVID-19 cases were reported in Delhi in the past 24 hours, taking the total number to 1,57,354, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Thursday. At the same time, 22 more deaths have been reported, which takes the death toll to 4,257.

Of the total cases, 1,41,826 people have recovered and there are 11,271 active cases. The number of active cases has been increasing for the past four consecutive days and it has swelled from 10,823 to 11,271.

The active cases, which were 27,007 on July 1, had fallen to 9,897 – below the 10,000 mark in months – on August 4, but since then it has remained above that mark. But the number of new cases has been less than 1,500 for the past 35 days, which is less compared to June. On June 23, daily new cases touched almost 4,000, the highest so far, and since then it has been dropping.

Delhi has the capacity for 11,000 RT-PCR tests a day, but only 6,010 tests were done in the past 24 hours. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

COVID-19

"Currently, the doubling time of COVID-19 cases in Delhi has gone up to 101.5 days, as compared to the rest of the country which stands at 28.8 days. Moreover, the mortality rate in Delhi has also considerably decreased due to the multiple efforts being made by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to bring the death figures to zero. In August, the mortality rate in Delhi is 1.4%, while the country has a mortality rate of 1.9%," the Delhi government said in a statement.

Also, the recovery rate of Delhi is 90.2% as compared to 72.5% for the rest of India, the government said.

Plasma bank for COVID-19 patients in Gurugram sees few donations

Only 42 people have come forward to donate in two weeks

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

In the two weeks since a plasma bank was set up in Gurugram for COVID-19 patients, only 42 people have come forward to donate. Of these, only 19 fulfilled the criteria for donation.

The positivity rate in Gurugram has dipped below 7% for the first time since the outbreak and the fatality rate continues to hover around 1.3%.

Gurugram Chief Medical Officer Virender Yadav on Tuesday expressed concern over the lukewarm response to the plasma bank and said that only 38 units of plasma could be collected from 19 people so far. He said there was a need to reach out to the masses through social and mainstream media to create awareness for plasma

Gurugram was on the verge of being the first district in the State to conduct 1 lakh tests per million. "We have already conducted 98,363 tests per millionVIRENDER YADAV
Gurugram Chief Medical Officer

have already conducted 98,363 tests per million," he added.

The recovery rate for COVID-19 is 91.79% in Gurugram and the cases are doubling every 94 days.

Mr. Yadav said that a serological survey will begin on Wednesday, after a delay of two days, and 850 tests will be conducted across the district.

Deputy Commissioner Amit Khatri said the average number of cases in Gurugram continues to hover around 700, out of which nearly 600 are in home isolation. He said that special camps are being held in industrial areas to conduct COVID-19 tests.

Mr. Yadav said that 50 hoardings have been put up across the district to raise awareness.

Set up in collaboration with the Rotary Blood Bank, the plasma bank currently has only five units available.

Mr. Yadav, however, said that Gurugram was on the verge of being the first district in the State to conduct 1 lakh tests per million. "We

have conducted 98,363 tests per million," he added.

Around 1,000 tests have been conducted on the workforce in industries so far.

Restaurants, hotels to serve alcohol; bars to stay shut

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government on Thursday decided to allow restaurants and hotels in the city to serve alcohol, but bars will remain shut as per Unlock guidelines issued by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.

"Considering the revenue implications, Excise Department will issue necessary permission for service of liquor in the restaurants and clubs by licensees at the table and in hotel rooms," Mr. Sisodia said in an order to the Excise Commissioner. The decision was made considering the "revenue implications" of it.

"Bars will remain closed under the provisions of Unlock guidelines of the Ministry of Home Affairs," the order signed by Mr. Sisodia read.

IGIA redirected 31 passengers to govt. officials for 'abnormal' health conditions

Thermal scanners at gates the primary source of detection'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The IGI Airport has installed thermal cameras at the entry gates. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Besides other initiatives, to maintain a high level of hygiene and social distancing at the terminal when domestic services resumed.

"Since the resumption of domestic flights, the Delhi airport served 23% of the total passengers handled by all Indian airports, a rise from 18% during pre-COVID time. This is the highest passenger share handled by any Indian airport post resumption of airport operations," the airport said.

Police personnel missing in action since onset of COVID-19 to face music

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

The Delhi police have ordered strict action against personnel who are absenting from work since the onset of COVID-19, said a senior police officer on Thursday.

In an order issued by Deputy Commissioner of Police (Headquarters) Chinnay Biswas on August 15 to all the district DCPs and heads of other police units, he asked

them to provide the list of police personnel who are absenting from work since the onset of COVID-19. The consolidated list has to be submitted before senior officers at the earliest.

Salary to be stopped

Salary of all such personnel will be stopped immediately, the order copy reads. Disciplinary action will be initiated against them by rank, not

below the DCP. The violators would be transferred to non-sensitive assignment for not less than three years. It is, therefore, requested that necessary action may be taken, and compliance report of the same may be sent to this headquarters, at the earliest, it said.

Till date, 15 police officers succumbed to COVID-19 and over 2,800 personnel have tested positive for the virus.

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Petitions in HC challenge elections of Kejriwal, Gupta

Petitioner alleges they furnished false information about their poll expenses

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

Two petitions before the Delhi High Court have challenged the elections of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and BJP leader Vijender Gupta to the Delhi Assembly on the ground that they allegedly furnished false information regarding their poll expenses.

Justice C. Hari Shankar on Thursday remitted the peti-



tions for hearing on November 25 after the petitioner, Ramesh Khatri, did not appear for arguments even after the matters were taken

election held this year. The plea against Mr. Gupta has been filed by Mr. Khatri as a voter of the constituency - Rohini Assembly Constituency 13 - from where the BJP leader contested and won.

In both his pleas, the petitioner has claimed that neither of the political leaders disclosed accurate day-to-day expenses of their poll campaign in the expenditure register.

The petition said that Mr. Khatri contested against Mr. Kejriwal in the Assembly

FIAPO, PETA to be part of study on circus animals

Animal Welfare Board to hold survey

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

The court was hearing pleas by FIAPO and PETA. During the hearing, the counsel appearing for Great Bombay Circus and Jumbo Circus said that the officials come and take away animals saying they require private care and treatment even when the circuses have own veterinarians.

FIAPO has challenged the Performing Animal Rules, 1973 and Performing Animal (Registration) Rules, 2001, to the extent that they allow registration of animals as 'performing animals' for circuses as against the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and the Constitution of India.

The court asked the Board and two organisations can give medicines, food and nourishment to the animals, if they are found ill or malnourished, at the circus.

The court asked the Board to submit a report based on the survey and asked the cir-

Doctors advise against reopening schools

It will require substantial effort to condition children to follow safety protocols'

BINDU SHAJAN PERAPPADAN
NEW DELHI

The medical community in Delhi-NCR has advised schools to delay reopening as children, especially those belonging to the younger age group, are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 infection.

"Opening schools can pose a health challenge for infection control as it will require substantial effort to condition children to follow the norms. At best we can look at older students coming to school in a phased, time- and restricted manner," said doctors.

Col. Vijay Dutta (Respiratory Medicine) of Indian Spinal Injuries Centre cited the example of the USA where

any containment zone, he added.

"It is important to assess whether the school has the capability to implement such large-scale arrangements. If the school is unable to do that, it can infect the child and cause complications such as multi-system inflammatory syndrome," said Dr. Dutta.

Raman Ranjan, consultant paediatrician at Motherhood Hospital in Noida, said that till a vaccine is created, phased opening of schools was the best way forward. "Instead of reopening the whole school, it should be opened in a phased manner. It will be difficult, almost impossible, for schools to enforce social distancing

among children who have not seen their friends in so many months," said Dr. Ranjan.

"Children, especially younger ones, are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19 symptoms, if a patient does not have fever or other symptoms for another three days, then no further test will be required and the doctor will discharge him/her with a certificate from the hospital or safe home. The patient must stay under home quarantine for an additional 7 days before returning to normal life."

We must learn from the USA where reopening of schools have reportedly increased cases. As and when schools reopen, parents must take extra precaution to check safety measures... It is recommended that parents physically inspect the arrangements before sending the child to school," he added.

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Ankit Kumar Advocate
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Arunachal groups differ on autonomous zones

They agree on Sixth Schedule status

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Community-based organisations (CBOs) in Arunachal Pradesh differed on the issue of creation of two autonomous councils but agreed that the State needs to be brought under the Sixth Schedule of the Constitution.

The CBOs representing the major ethnic groups debated the demand for Mon

Autonomous Region (MAR) and Patkai Autonomous Council (PAC) at the first meeting of a consultative committee in State capital Itanagar on August 19.

Chief Minister Pema Khandu had on August 5 proposed a discussion on the issue. The committee was subsequently set up with Deputy Chief Minister Chowna Mein as its chairperson.

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Health workers collecting swab samples of people at a dispensary in Patiala. ■ FILE PHOTO

Telemedicine takes health specialists to PHCs in M.P.

SIDHARTH YADAV
BHOPAL

The National Health Mission (NHM) in Madhya Pradesh has decided to take services of medical specialists to rural belts through telemedicine as public transport remain largely suspended in view of the lockdown and reluctant patients fear travelling to cities, hit harder by COVID-19 pandemic.

Offering consultancy through electronic communication in remote areas could bring down patient burden on urban tertiary care institutions by pruning the referral count, besides improving accessibility to healthcare, say NHM officials.

In the first phase, 50 primary healthcare centres in Raigarh, Raisen, Vidisha and Sehore districts, that are dependent mostly on tertiary-care institutions in Bhopal, had been linked with the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, Bhopal, said NHM State-unit Additional Mission Director S. S. Sidhu.

Doctors of the gynaecology, pediatrics and medicine departments of the institute, where almost 30-50% patients referred are from neighbouring districts, would offer telemedicine services three days a week respectively, said Dr. S. S. Sidhu. "Most common diseases relate to the branches whose care is not often available at health centres. The aim is to take doctors to patients rather than the other way round," she explained.

and encourage the use of the online grievance redressal system that has been ramped up by the State government to minimise in-person contact.

Thursday's official statement said in the five worst-affected districts of Amritsar, Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Patiala and SAS Nagar (Mohali), restrictions on vehicular capacity have been imposed again, with buses and other public transport to operate with 50% capacity and private four-wheelers not allowed to carry more than three passengers per vehicle.

Surge in cases
Punjab recorded 1,741 fresh COVID-19 cases on August 20 and reported 37 more deaths taking the tally to 957. The major chunk of new cases, 398 and 242, were reported from Ludhiana and Jalandhar districts respectively. The Health department said the number of positive cases in the State has reached 37,824. Capt. Amarinder has ordered an increase in testing to 30,000 a day, with at least 10 persons in the immediate circle of every positive patient to be tested.

The Chief Minister also directed the concerned officials to restrict public visitors in government offices

economic activity," said the Chief Minister, pointing to the 920 virus-related deaths reported in Punjab so far.

"Each death pains me, and the projections for the coming weeks are grim," he added.

Health emergency'
The Chief Minister said the State was in a "health emergency" situation necessitating harsh measures, which might have to be further intensified in the coming days. Though the COVID-19 cases are currently concentrated mainly in urban areas, rural areas have also witnessed an increase, he said, adding that if needed, travel restrictions may have to be imposed.

Reviewing the situation during a videoconference with top health and medical experts and officials, Capt. Amarinder also directed the Health department to supply ventilators free of cost to medical colleges and private hospitals.

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Controller of Examination

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Dated 18/08/2020

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Less taxing

A standardised recruitment test is an advance, but more jobs are needed

The Union Cabinet's decision to create a National Recruitment Agency to conduct a screening examination for non-gazetted jobs, eliminating the need for candidates to take separate examinations of the Railway Recruitment Board, Staff Selection Commission and Institute of Banking Personnel Selection, is a welcome administrative reform measure. For some years now, the railways have been using contractual labour in projects and services, but the government system remains a major recruiter. In March this year, Railways Minister Piyush Goyal told Parliament that four employment notifications for Group C employees in the Ministry were issued in 2019 for 1.43 lakh posts, besides a similar number selected the previous year. Overall, the posts coming under the ambit of the proposed NRA would cover about 1.25 lakh jobs a year, which typically attract about 2.5 crore aspirants. The gains from a single examination, when offered at the district level in the regional language, as opposed to a multiplicity of tests in far fewer locations are self-evident. Candidates would no longer have to travel to urban centres at considerable expense and hardship to take an employment test. Opportunities to improve performance, subject to age limits, and a three-year validity for scores are positive features. Yet, the long-term relevance of such reforms will depend on the commitment of governments to raise the level of public employment and expand services to the public, both of which are low in India.

While announcing the proposal for the recruitment agency in her Budget speech earlier this year, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said the NRA would be an independent, professional, specialist organisation. There would also be an emphasis on creating advanced online testing infrastructure in 117 aspirational districts, many of which are in States with low social development indices. These are laudable objectives, but it is relevant to point out that as a share of the organised workforce, Central government employment appears to be declining. New posts are sanctioned periodically, but a large number of vacancies remain unfilled. With growing emphasis on transferring core railway services to the private sector, there may be fewer government jobs on offer in the future. Moreover, jobs under the Centre, predominantly in the railways and defence sectors, constitute around 14% of public employment, with the rest falling within the purview of States. Reform must, therefore, have a wider reach to achieve scale. Recruitment must be marked by well-defined procedures, wide publicity and open competition, besides virtual elimination of discretion. As a preliminary screening test, the NRA can potentially cut delays, which are a familiar feature with government, boost transparency and enable wider access. The entire process of candidate selection must be a model, raising the bar on speed, efficiency and integrity.

A losing proposition

Nativism is not a solution to India's growing unemployment crisis

India has seen many versions of the 'sons of the soil' argument over decades. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan's announcement that only those domiciled there would be eligible for government jobs in the State is not unique in that sense. At the same time, it denotes a certain mainstreaming of nativism that more parties and States appear to be adopting. Mr. Chouhan's announcement was packaged as a promise to the youths of the State, but in reality, it is a sign of gloom. Regional parties have always focused on local sentiments, but what is notable in recent years is the BJP and the Congress too jumping on the bandwagon. The Congress in Madhya Pradesh is supporting the move, and in Maharashtra, it is part of the ruling coalition led by the Shiv Sena which is pushing measures to give priority to locals in employment in the private sector. Similar moves from States such as Karnataka, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Haryana and Telangana in recent years to introduce various types of domicile eligibility for job seekers, in private and government jobs, have either been aborted or had limited outcomes. But measures that raise artificial barriers go against the grain of national integration, which includes market integration.

There are regional particularities to be considered, nevertheless. Some States require a certain proficiency in the local language to be employed in government jobs, which is for administrative reasons. There are also restrictions on movement of people into tribal areas of India. These are exceptions provided in the legal and constitutional scheme of India to manage its remarkable diversity. Inciting local passions in order to divert public attention from the real challenge of generating employment for the country's swelling youth population falls in a different realm. Migrant populations fulfil a market demand created by gaps in skills and preferences. That is one reason why government orders and even laws of the past in several places that mandated quotas for locals in employment were not enforced. The spectre of locals losing out to migrants is hugely exaggerated and often designed to beguile the people. In Gujarat, politicians including those of the ruling BJP continue to raise a hue and cry for a domicile quota of 85% in the private sector workforce whereas the government data showed in 2017 that 92% of it was local already. India has a severe unemployment crisis and efforts that match the challenge are badly needed. Nativism is not a part of the solution. In fact, it can aggravate the crisis by creating a hostile environment to investment, growth and employment generation.

The marriage age misconception

Addressing poverty is the key to improving the health and nutritional status of mothers and their infants



MARY E. JOHN

From the ramparts of the Red Fort on Independence Day, the Prime Minister declared that the government is considering raising the legal age of marriage for girls, which is currently 18 years. He said, "We have formed a committee to ensure that daughters are no longer suffering 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." The Committee in question is the task force set up on June 4, announced earlier by the Finance Minister in her Budget Speech. It is widely understood (but not officially stated) that the task force is meant to produce a rationale for raising the minimum age of marriage for women to 21, thus bringing it on a par with that for men.

Population control

Since there is no obvious constituency that has been demanding such a change, the government seems to be motivated by the belief that simply raising the age of marriage is the best way to improve the health and nutritional status of mothers and their infants. Because it flies in the face of the available evidence, we need to ask where this belief is coming from.

One plausible source could be those who advocate for population control and who are influential and whose research is well-funded. Consider, for example, an article published in the prestigious journal *The Lancet Child and Adolescent Health*, by Nyugen, Scott, Neupane, Tran and Menon, on May 15, 2019. It was funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. This article analyses data on stunting in children and thinness in mothers (as measures of under-nourishment) in the latest round of the National Family Health Survey 4 (2015-16). The paper uses rigorous methods to chase a flawed hypothesis. The authors examine the strength of the association between many different causal factors (the mother's age at childbearing, her educational level, living conditions, health conditions, decision-making power, and so on) and the health status of mother and child. As it turns out, the poverty of the mother plays the greatest role of all by far – both in relation to her undernourishment and that of her child, but this is not acknowledged. The authors only concede that their cross-sectional design (using data from a single time period) "reduces causal inference. For example, becoming pregnant early might lead to reduced education or wealth; however, a woman from a poor background and lower education might be more likely to become pregnant early." In other words, instead of early pregnancy causing malnourishment, they may both be the consequences of poverty.

The stated concern of the study was to find ways to break the "in-



NAGARA GOPAL

tergenerational cycle of under-nutrition". Surely the best way to go about breaking such a cycle would be to pick the factors that are playing the strongest role in perpetuating it. In this case, it would be to address the poverty of the mother, which could be done in a myriad ways, beginning with the most direct method of nutritional programmes for girls and women through a range of institutional mechanisms from Anganwadis to schools. However, the authors choose to concentrate on delaying the age of pregnancy, even though this is the weakest link of all. In fact, age only begins to have some real significance when pregnancies are delayed to ages of 25 and above, which is true of only a minuscule proportion of women in India. The article is unusually generous in its use of the usual scholarly caveats, but leaves itself open to being co-opted by larger agendas driven by the doctrine that "over-population" is the root of all evil in poor countries.

Declining fertility rates

It is unfortunate that such thinking is finding a home in the highest office of the Indian government. Just

a year ago, from the ramparts of the same fort, the Prime Minister bluntly declared that "population explosion" was one of India's major problems. As he put it, "with an ever increasing population, we have to think, can we do justice to the aspirations of our children? Before a child is born in our home, we must ask if we have prepared ourselves to fulfil the child's needs, or are we going to leave the child to its fate?" Perhaps he (or his advisers) were influenced by the many international reports making alarming predictions about future dystopias that would result if child marriage were not swiftly eliminated in countries like India, which is home to the largest number of underage marriages in the world. It is a pity that those who have the Prime Minister's ear did not bother to seek the advice of our own demographers who have been studying the apparent link between early marriage and escalating fertility rates for decades. As it turns out, India's fertility rates have been declining to well below replacement levels in many States, including those with higher levels of child marriage. This could be the reason why those advocating population control have chosen to shift from fuelling fears about booming populations to expressing concern for the undernourishment of children.

Costless and effortless

Perhaps there is a more cynical reason at work. Raising the age of marriage by amending the law is costless and can be effortlessly achieved by legal fiat. Why not claim that doing so will enhance

the welfare of women and children, since addressing the true causes of the poor health and nutrition of mothers and children is too difficult a task? The government will not incur any financial costs for raising the age of marriage of girls from 18 to 21 years. But the change will leave the vast majority of Indian women who marry before they are 21 without the legal protections that the institution of marriage otherwise provides, and make their families criminalisable. Those who fervently believe that the minimum age of men and women should be the same in the name of gender equality can suggest that India follow global norms of 18 years for both.

Given the present climate, it could even be that this move is partly prompted by a vague belief that child marriage is more prevalent among Muslims and helps them reproduce faster. The evidence shows that this is not true, but such prejudices are inoculated against all evidence. In this context, it is interesting that the States with high mean ages at marriage of 25 years are erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir, Mizoram, Nagaland, Manipur and Goa. Even Kerala (22 years) and Delhi (23 years) have significantly lower mean ages at marriage.

The proverbial "thinking Indian" – fast becoming an endangered species – has now become accustomed to watching helplessly as acts of state folly unfold. She can also continue to hope for miracles.

Mary E. John is at the Centre for Women's Development Studies. Views are personal

The leaders we need in today's world

Existentialist questions of the day magnify the importance of leadership committed to a liberal, inclusive, egalitarian order



ASHWANI KUMAR

A tormented world, shaken out of its comfort by a panademic whose devastating reach mocks humanity's collective capacity to prevail, yearns for answers about our common future. Glaring and persisting inequities of the world order, accentuated by the virus and the digital divide, foretell the story of a failed leadership and failing realisation of the Millennium Development Goals.

The question of leadership befitting the moment was, therefore, seldom more relevant. History beckons us once again to summon leadership that can navigate a happy and secure future for all, anchored in the inviolability of values that define our humanity. Whether one subscribes to the view that history is a chronicle of accomplishments of the great men and women of their time, or believes that they do not make history "...as they please but under circumstances existing already..." the centrality of leadership at transformative moments in history stands empirically established. As Will Durant reminds us, leaders "are the very life and blood of history, of which politics and industry are but a frame". Arnold Toynbee, in

his monumental work, *A Study Of History*, tells us similarly that the rise and fall of civilisations is a history of periodic challenges and our response to them. Clearly, the question of leadership is integral to the context that summons it.

A potent cocktail

A survey of the present landscape is both daunting and depressing. The global retreat of democracies, relegation of the ethical imperative to an obsessive pursuit of raw power as an end in itself, a crisis of institutional legitimacy, and the challenge of forging a political consensus needed for hard but necessary decisions interrogate the proclaimed assumptions of democratic resilience. The rise of 'jingoistic nationalism' in confrontation with an international cooperative endeavour to face common challenges, a skewed balance between demands of security and sanctity of civil rights, the sordid saga of fake news and misinformation, an unprecedented global financial crisis that has weakened our collective capacity to rescue national economies, loss of millions of jobs with an estimated \$3.4 trillion lost in labour revenue and the resultant social distress, heightened geopolitical rivalries, racism, xenophobia, and woeful absence of a united global response to the challenge of climate change collectively present a potent cocktail of societal instability and political disruption.

Increasing encroachment of the private sphere by a 'surveillance

state' through the abuse of digital technologies and Artificial Intelligence systems raise disconcerting questions about the flawed dominance of efficiency over ethics and power over principle. Notwithstanding the wholly welcome technological empowerment of vast swathes of humanity, digital inequality, the omnipresence of algorithm-driven platforms and commercial harvesting of personal data raise disquieting questions about an unheralded infringement of privacy rights and human dignity. Issues concerning accountability for autonomous systems, the absence of enforceable global norms on cybersecurity given the expanding reach of cyber bullies, and communal polarisation and violence facilitated by social media raise questions about the future of liberty and dignity in an age of rights. In a world driven by untamed technology, the relationship between its creator as the 'measure of all things' and his creation has been reversed. Digital 'code wars' are seen as the new ideological confrontation with a

potential to divide the world. The diminished authority of the state to regulate the impact of technology on our social and political life questions the original premises of the social compact. The 'insidious creep' challenges the idea of the democratic state itself.

The absence of an enforceable philosophical framework of values defining the boundaries of the digital world in which life is a drama of decisions is supplanted by algorithms and robots impels an unheralded reflection on the kind of world we want and the choices we must make. The new world in which life will be re-engineered and adapted to unprecedented changes will need extraordinary leadership that can apply knowledge of the new age to challenges of the future within a moral framework that celebrates freedom and fairness as cherished values.

Leaders moulded in different frames are expected to follow their own trajectories, hopefully without falling to the seduction of absolute power induced by narrow nationalisms. Indeed, they must decide the bridges they should burn and those they must cross. Leaders are expected to mould the collective reflections of the people and flesh out a vision befitting the task at hand. They must reconcile power with public sentiment. In a world scarred by conflict and injustice, leadership is about giving hope in the future to the marginalised and respecting aspirations and mediating amongst competing views to forge a sustainable

political consensus through powerful messaging.

True leadership

Integrity, consistency, empathy, relentless determination, self-facing humility, a binding moral compass and the ability to motivate masses within the inviolate ethical and ideological framework of politics are leadership attributes more relevant today than ever. A largeness of heart willing and able to rise above the petty and personal, together with intellectual depth necessary to lead the battle of ideas for the establishment of a dignitarian global society, best define the qualities of leadership in these troubled times.

Arrogance, ignorance, obduracy, boastfulness, and 'scapegoating' have no place in the lexicon of elevating leadership needed to address the vexed questions that we confront. True leadership is about loyalty to larger purposes of the day and which, when confronted with a necessary choice, owes no apology to other multiple loyalties. It is about investing politics with a high moral purpose.

Existentialist questions of the day magnify the importance of inspiring leadership committed to a liberal, inclusive and a truly egalitarian order. The time for such a leadership is here. Those aspiring to lead will have many challenges to meet and lessons to learn.

Ashwani Kumar is Senior Advocate at the Supreme Court and former Union Minister for Law and Justice

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters emailed to letters@thehindu.co.in must carry the full postal address and the full name or the name with initials.

PM CARES Fund

Any fund created for a specific purpose needs to be utilised for that purpose ("Need for transparency", August 20). The Supreme Court has endorsed the Fund as a public charitable trust. The Prime Minister is the ex-officio Chairman of the PM CARES Fund and three Cabinet Ministers are its trustees. Transparency and accountability are imperative. The government cannot absolve all responsibility from overseeing the Fund's operations. It is its duty to clear the air instead of saying the allegations of the Opposition are baseless.

K.R. SRINIVASAN,
Secunderabad

When the government is so strict about the

transparency of NGOs, it cannot choose to hide facts about the PM CARES Fund, especially since this Fund has received huge amounts of money from PSUs, taxpayers and foreign sources. The PM CARES Fund includes only the Prime Minister and three Cabinet Ministers, all of whom are from one party, so naturally questions will arise if there is no transparency.

RAMEEZA A.,
Chennai

Sensationalising death
If the Central Bureau of Investigation has been thought of as the best agency to get to the bottom of the case and bring out the truth about the actor's death, so be it ("SC confirms CBI probe into

Sushant's death", August 20). But why do popular news channels think this is the only news story worth broadcasting to the exclusion of all other important news stories? Some TV anchors are even trying hard to influence the course of the investigation! The Sushant case is being made to be a thriller of sorts when so many across the country are experiencing extreme distress due to COVID-19, both health and job related.

G. DAVID MILTON,
Maruthandalam

Lacking conviction
Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said almost a year ago that there are plenty of able people to lead the party ("Many able persons in Cong: Priyanka", August 19). One of

August 20). If she really means her words, she should ask the party rank and file to elect a non-Gandhi as their leader. Ms. Vadra also said her brother will always be her leader. If that is the case, her words lack conviction and credibility. Will she then be able to accept any other elected leader of the party as her leader?

C.G. KURIAKOSE,
Kothamangalam

Safety is priority
The Madras High Court judgment has brought a lot of relief to the people in and around Thoothukudi where 13 innocent people lost their lives in the police firing against protesters in 2018 ("High Court rejects plea to reopen Sterlite plant", August 19). One of

the most important features of the judgment is that prime importance has been given to the environment and safety of the villagers as well as the workers where the plant is situated. Business interests have rightly taken a back seat, and directive principles of state policy have been given a pride of place.

N.G.R. PRASAD,
Chennai

Online concerts
Creativity cannot be bottled up for too long and needs an outlet for its continued growth. It looks like the Margazhi season will be online this year. Virtual performances will be a poor replacement for the joy we get during live concerts in sabhas and

other spaces. Four ingredients make for an outstanding performance: the art, the artist, the platform or the venue, and the audience. Can we integrate these ingredients into a virtual performance? It feels like this pandemic is changing the nature of art itself. But this 'new' art has also kept us going through these difficult times. Not just concerts, but documentaries on the lives and times of the great legends of the past and archival material from the Sangeet Natak Akademi and other institutions can help us go through these times.

R.K. CHAKRAVARTI,
Chennai

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Should women be entitled to menstrual leave?

PARLEY

Workers in all their diversity need workplaces to acknowledge and accept their differences

Last week, Zomato announced a new paid menstrual leave policy for its employees, 35% of whom are women. While this is not the first time that a company is announcing such a policy, it has triggered a sharp debate among women themselves on whether this is a progressive move, mere tokenism, or a regressive move. Barkha Dutt and Kavita Krishnan discuss the issue in a conversation moderated by Radhika Santhanam. Edited excerpts:

Barkha, you tweeted that you are opposed to this policy. Zomato is granting 10 days of leave, and whether women avail it or don't is up to them; it is a choice. So, why do you think this is a bad idea?

Barkha Dutt (BD): My opposition does not come from the number of days that Zomato has announced; it comes more from what I believe this policy represents. I have had to fight to go on certain assignments, to be assigned certain kinds of stories. I know how tilted newsrooms are towards the casual hierarchical supremacy of men. Women have had to fight twice as hard to get to the same place as men. Because I am inherently opposed to the gendering of the workplace, I see period leave as the gendering of the workplace, as a statement of biological determinism, as using biology against women to offer equal opportunities and assignments.

In the nature-versus-nurture debate, I have always been on the side of nurture. I believe that social differences and constructs create our differences, not biological essentialism. And I believe period leave is biological essentialism that my feminism opposes.

But don't you think workplaces should be designed taking into consideration the needs of women rather than ignoring them?

BD: Your question presupposes that it is the need of all women to have a day off. If a woman has a particularly debilitating period, if she has endometriosis or is in a situation where she can't work, I believe

that should qualify under the larger bracket of medical leave.

I have a problem with all women being generalised as women needing menstrual leave. And if the argument against that is that it cuts into normally assigned medical leave, I do not have a problem if medical leave is extended for both women and men for extenuating circumstances a couple of times a month; leave that a man is also entitled to for different problems that we can't identify. I have a problem with biology-specified medical leave.

Kavita, do you think there should be separate menstrual leave or should women just avail of medical leave if they are unable to go to work?

Kavita Krishnan (KK): I understand and empathise with what Barkha is saying. As women who work in a world which is extremely unfair in so many ways, it is a double bind for many women. Women I have spoken to have asked, do we assert our pain and emotional states around the time of our period or will doing so mean that we are conforming to the patriarchal notion that women are not the same as men or not as good as men?

I would like to understand this as a fundamental issue of the relationship between gloriously diverse human bodies and social selves and the world of work. Should workplaces be shaped only for an abstract and one-size-fits-all capitalism or should they be shaped keeping in mind the optimum productivity and comfort of diverse human bodies and selves?

This is a debate that we've been having since the 19th century. The debate has been brought up not just in the context of women, but even when it came to the human right to sleep; for an eight-hour workday; for weekends; for bathroom breaks; for food breaks – all these are seen as time stolen from the labour time that the capitalist has bought. I feel that places of work should be reshaped to acknowledge these social divisions and that will help people be more productive.

Also, I am not at all in favour of medicalising menstruation. I don't



think this is about a medical issue, about debilitating pain. It is about our being differently productive around those times and our being able to avail of those differently productive times.

Could you elaborate on how we should reshape workplaces for diverse bodies and selves?

KK: Let me quote the anthropologist Emily Martin here: "Women are perceived as malfunctioning and their hormones [as] out of balance, rather than seeing the organization of society and work perceived in need of a transformation to demand less constant and disciplined productivity of a certain kind."

So, the idea is that women are more creative around their period, whereas meeting deadlines and doing certain kinds of work may not be what those particular women choose to do at the time. And this is about women, menstruating people, people with variety of different abilities and disabilities. Let me give you a simple example: we say ramps should be in places so that people with wheelchairs are able to access these places. Would that be biological determinism? Would we say then that biology is coming in the way of equality?

BD: I see Kavita's point about diverse selves and the relationship between diverse selves and workplace. And if that is the conversation, if the conversation was not so gendered, I would have been a lot more comfortable with it. I would have been comfortable with the conversation being about easy access to sanitary pads or separate bathrooms – 20% of Indian girls drop out of school after reaching

The moment we gender our leave policies, we gender our assignments

BARKHA DUTT,
Senior journalist

puberty, according to the United Nations. And in large part this happens because of the stigma that continues to exist in large parts of the country around menstruation. So, the conversations I want to have are about destigmatising menstruation, diversity at the workplace, access to sanitary pads or menstrual cups, why religious orthodoxy looks at menstruation as impure, etc.

If I am a woman fighting to have women as infantry soldiers in the military, and we have a gendered leave policy, can we as women ask to be soldiers on the front-lines? Can we ask to be deployed in conflict zones? The moment we gender our leave policies, we gender our assignments.

Weren't these the same arguments that were used even when women fought for maternity leave? That they wouldn't be able to do certain jobs? But feminists fought for it.

BD: Which is why my battle is for parenting leave. There are people who adopt children and that relationship is also no less. If we are truly evolved, we should encourage the same kind of leave for men.

Yes, but parenting does involve the participation of men and women, whereas only women get their period.

BD: So, even if I have no problem during my period, I should get leave because it is specific to my biology?

Even if I have no pain, nothing? Parenting is not the same thing as our monthly period. Even our notions of maternity leave are evolving. The most involved organisations have family leave. If there is no equality at home, there is no equality at work. And if we place the responsibility of parenting entirely on women, through some romantic notion of how our biological differences make us different from men, we confirm stereotypes.

KK: But we are different. There are biological differences, and not just between men and women. If someone requires a wheelchair, we would expect the workplace to be designed to ensure that that person is able to access the workplace and be their best there. People in wheelchairs will be told they can't do certain jobs. But would we accept that? No, we should be able to redesign workplaces so that all of us can access those spaces. My arguments are not just about gendered differences. My arguments are that workers in all their diversity need workplaces to acknowledge and accept their differences.

And let me tell you, period leave in India isn't some fancy thing that Zomato has just introduced. In Bihar, government employees have availed of it since the 1990s. They asked for it, got it and have been quietly availing of it since then. We went and asked them about their experiences – has it meant more discrimination, have they been treated more differently – and they argued that differential treatment happened even before they had this leave. That differential treatment requires just various excuses and this is just one excuse among men.

Barkha, you had said on Twitter that such a policy would shut the doors for women and that you would shut them too for someone who thinks this is a good time to take off. Do you still stand by that?

BD: I think my comment has been totally misrepresented. I do believe many doors will shut for women with a generalised period leave and I believe that someone like me would no longer be able to argue that all jobs and all roles should be kept open for women. Think once again about reporting or fighting

war or going into space. It is not because I don't report on what could be unique female experiences. During my four months on the road reporting COVID-19 for example, one of my reports was the story of a female nurse and her experience bleeding in a PPE. I also had my period twice while wearing a PPE inside a COVID-19 hospital and it was a traumatic experience but nothing that would make me step back from the chance of reporting that very story with all its difficulties. Again, to repeat, once we start accepting the specificity of gender, it weakens our argument against gender barriers. Let us talk in more general, less-gendered terms of an inclusive, equal work space.

KK: I would also like to respond to this. Any demand for equality and dignity at work has been a pretext for shutting the door on women. For that matter, even men availing of parental leave are subjected to discrimination. The idea that women demanding or availing of period leave should/would be sacked is much like the idea that women complaining of sexual harassment at work should/would be sacked, or would not be hired.

Isn't it a biological stereotype to assume that menstruating bodies (or bodies needing wheelchairs) be treated exactly as bodies that do not menstruate or need wheelchairs? I think gender blindness does not bring gender equality. Rather, being blind to gender diversity (and other bodily and social diversities) leads workplaces to be wilfully blind to the various kinds of gender and social discriminations.

Kavita, since you think that period leave should be given, what do you think is the ideal number of days? Do you see this being implemented in the near future?

KK: I don't think I or anyone can suggest an "ideal" number of days for period leave. We are in times when employees and workers are having to struggle to defend and implement every single labour law. Even maternity leave and benefits are mostly implemented only where there are unions to fight for implementation. Otherwise, the laws are flouted by employers. The same holds for period leave.



Barkha Dutt
is senior journalist
and Editor of Mojo



Kavita Krishnan
is CPI (ML)
Politburo member,
and Secretary, All
India Progressive
Women's
Association



Scan the QR code to listen to the full conversation online

Technology as an enabler

The NEP's emphasis on technology is welcome. But, the context and purpose are also important

MALISH C.M.

The National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 proposes a revamping of existing systems of higher education. Integration of technology for enhancing teaching-learning is an important policy objective. In India, much of the debate on new technology focuses on issues of digital divide and associated challenges on equity which leads many to view new technology and associated opportunities as an antithesis to equity and inclusion.

However, opportunities provided by new technology can act as potential sources for promoting egalitarianism in higher education, if access to technology is democratised and values of inclusion is institutionalised.

Envisioning inclusive learning requires a deeper understanding of the larger context of student diversity in contemporary campuses. Currently, a large share of students are from lower social strata such as Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes and Other Backward Classes and from poor households and families where no one has undergone any post-secondary education. A significant proportion of those students are from government schools, under-developed regions, remote villages and urban margins. They are more likely to have had the regional language as a medium of instruction in schools.

A national-level study on 'student diversity and social inclusion' carried out at the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration in 2016 showed that students from marginalised social groups face severe challenges due to social exclusion and academic non-integration. The institutional mechanisms to bridge the gaps are also inadequate. As a result, inclusion made in terms of access is not getting translated into quality educational experience and equitable academic outcome.

Remote learning

Since the lockdown, the 37 million students in higher education in India have not attended colleges and universities. Indefinite closure of institutions has compelled higher education administrators to explore

possibilities for remote learning. A national-level study carried out at the NIEPA revealed that there is a long way to go in moving towards inclusive learning mediated by technology. It also found that urban-rural disparity in conduct of online classes is alarmingly high.

The NEP emphasises vital linkage between education and technology in the context of the country's transformative journey towards a digitally empowered society and knowledge economy. An autonomous body called National Educational Technology Forum (NETF) will be entrusted with the task of advising institutions on use of technology, capacity building, providing directions for research and innovation and creating avenues for exchange of ideas.

Learning at your own pace

When teaching-learning is facilitated by new technology, the temporal and spatial restrictions on learning tend to disappear. In technology-mediated learning, the pace of the learning is not determined by the teacher in most cases. Students can decide how much is to be learned at a given point of time. They have the freedom to learn according to their convenience. This peculiar feature of self-paced and student-centered learning can provide greater support to marginalised learners and help teachers to assume a new role of facilitator.

The NEP's emphasis on technology is a welcome step. However, in what context and for what purpose technology is used in educational settings is also important. As academic integration continues to remain a major challenge, technology needs to be seen as a means to provide additional learning inputs. Universities and colleges should invest in ICT infrastructure keeping these larger goals in mind. It requires institutions to espouse and enact values of inclusion in structure and process of higher education.

Malish C.M. is an Assistant Professor at the National Institute of Educational Planning and Administration, New Delhi. Views are personal



NOTEBOOK

Washington via Patna

Polls in Bihar and the U.S. will be a test of how COVID-19 has changed reporting

VARGHESE K. GEORGE

Election enthusiasts have to split their time and attention between Bihar and the U.S. in the coming weeks. One is a State, and the other is a country, but they are unique specimens for understanding the various possibilities and colours of democracy, contemporary and historical.

My first reporting stint as the Bihar State representative of *The Indian Express*, between 2003 and 2005 was politically eventful. I ended up covering two State elections in Bihar and the 2004 Lok Sabha elections not only in Bihar but also in Uttar Pradesh in two years. Exactly a decade later, in 2015, I went to the U.S. as *The Hindu's* representative. I have covered all elections in Bihar and U.P. since 2003, barring the two during my three-year stint in the U.S.

Embedded reporting with candidates and studio

punditry dominate the American election coverage, and people's voices and concerns get a subsidiary treatment though they are not altogether absent. Opinion polls have a halved status in the coverage of elections in the U.S., and they try to make matrices on feelings and preferences – 'Yes, No, Can't Say'. This never worked in India; and, in the U.S. also, this no longer works as well as it used to, as the mainstream reporting and predictions on the 2016 contest between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton showed.

More questions to ask
As people have an increasing number of questions to ponder over before making a voting choice, the traditional survey tools may have become less effective. For instance, all those who are opposed to China trade are not against immigration in the U.S. and vice versa.



measure of a candidate's chances is the enthusiasm of her own supporters – which is very easy to figure, from the response at the rallies. 'Energising the base' has now become a thing in elections in the U.S. and India.

Parenthetically, not all those who vote for Mr. Trump are anti-immigration or anti-trade.

Election reporting in India, on the other hand, gave limited importance to opinion polls, certainly until the crowding out of nuanced political writing by mushrooming TV channels. Good election reporting in India involves longish conversations, distinct from interviews, with the public. If one is willing to engage in that exercise keeping aside biases and wishes, it is not difficult to arrive at a reasonably accurate assessment of the impact.

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As people have an increasing number of questions to ponder over before making a voting choice, the traditional survey tools may have become less effective. For instance, all those who are opposed to China trade are not against immigration in the U.S. and vice versa.

Over the years, I have figured that one reliable

measure of a candidate's chances is the enthusiasm of her own supporters – which is very easy to figure, from the response at the rallies. 'Energising the base' has now become a thing in elections in the U.S. and India.

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I wish to retrace the steps this time too, but the virus has the last word on the reporter's itinerary, be it in Bihar or the U.S.

(From an editorial)

The Hindu

FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO AUGUST 21, 1970

PM's remark sparks uproar

In the bizarre drama of Delhi politics, running battle of wits in Parliament to-day (August 20) took the strange turn of the Young Turks joining hands with the Congress (O), Swatantra, Jan Sangh and S.S.P. in the Rajya Sabha to demand an expression of regret by the Prime Minister for the remark that the shouting in the House by Opposition members was not going to make any impact on the people. The trouble arose when the Young Turk, Mr. Krishan Kant, protested that the reply given by the Minister of State, Mrs. Nandini Satpathy, on behalf of the Prime Minister, to the question relating to governmental strategy for meeting the basic needs of the people was not only unsatisfactory but needlessly non-committal and vague. The Prime Minister rebutted the charge that the Government was sliding back from its earlier commitments and remarked rather sharply that it was not a question of not wanting to meet the minimum needs of the people but what was possible in the given circumstance. This led to shouting and counter-shouting culminating in Mrs. Gandhi's retort which touched off the bigger furor.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO AUGUST 21, 1920
National Education.

National education in India as a movement independent of the system recognised and worked by the Government, cannot be said to have attained the measure of success worthy of the noble object underlying it. Nor has it yet gained an All-India character with the hearty support and actual cooperation of the people all over the country. No doubt we have at present great and successful institutions which have owed their origin to the idealistic fervour and self-sacrificing labours of pronounced advocates of "national education". Some of these also promise to develop into universal centres of learning and culture. The Dayananda Anglo-Vedic College at Lahore, the Gurukula at Hardwar, the Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh, the Hindu University at Benaras, Tagore's School at Bolpur, and Gandhi's Satyagraha Ashram at Sabarmati, as well as the many institutions working under the recently started National University, are all notable instances of pioneer institutions embodying "national" ideals of education in some form or other. But it will be admitted that, except as regards the general cult of patriotism, each of these institutions has an atmosphere of its own, mostly embodying the particular ideals of their individual founder.

FROM PAGE ONE

SC gives Bhushan time to reconsider statement

Attorney General K.K. Venugopal, in the capacity of his constitutional office, urged the court not to punish Mr. Bhushan.

"He has done tremendous amount of public good... You have convicted him but do not punish him," he said.

Justice Mishra replied, "He might have done a lot of good but he should not cross the *Lakshman Rekha*... We can be very, very lenient, but only if the person tenders an apology in the real sense."

Mr. Venugopal said, "I have before me a list of five judges of the Supreme Court who said democracy has failed. I have a list of nine judges who said there is corruption in higher judiciary. Of this, two made statements while in court and seven immediately after they retired. I myself gave a speech..."

Justice Mishra intervened, "We are not hearing a review. Our judgment stands." At one point early in the hearing, he said the court would inflict punishment on Mr. Bhushan only after his review petition is decided. Besides, the lawyer's professional profile would weigh in while considering the suitable punishment.

"You may not be fair to us but we will be fair to you," Justice Mishra said.

Dave's plea dismissed
The Bench refused a plea by senior advocate Dushyant Dave to defer the sentence hearing till Mr. Bhushan files a review and it is decided.

Senior advocate Rajeev Dhavan, also appearing for Mr. Bhushan, reminisced that the "last six years have indeed been very difficult for the court and very difficult for lawyers. One day,

Farooq allowed to meet senior NC leaders

"That we have to be 'allowed' to meet freely in spite of the government claiming in court that none of these leaders are detained is a blot on Indian democracy and rule of law," said Mr. Abdullah.

COVID-19 pandemic
The NC has decided to hold more such meetings in coming days in batches due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting assumes significance in the wake of the NC's habeas corpus petition

29% Delhiites developed antibodies against virus



Checking for antibodies: A health worker collecting blood samples for a serological survey in New Delhi. ■ PTI

In Delhi, the South East district had the highest sero prevalence of 33%, while South West had the lowest of 16.3%.

Mr. Jain said in the first survey, which was done from June 27 to July 4, the sero prevalence was 22.8%. Over 22,000 samples were collected then.

Out of the samples collected in the second survey, 25% were from the age group of 5-17 years, 50% from 18-49 years, and 25% from the age group of 50 years and above. Antibodies were found in 28.3% of samples of the men and 32.2% of the women tested. The next survey will begin on September 1.

The Punjab survey find-

Four States add 216 deaths, most in Karnataka

1,724 test positive in Telangana; fresh cases exceed 9,300 in Andhra Pradesh; Kerala records incidence of 1,968 cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Telangana was close to the one lakh mark for COVID-19 cases as of Wednesday, as 1,724 positive test results brought total infections to 97,424. Ten patients died, taking the toll to 729.

The 1,724 new cases included 395 from Greater Hyderabad, 169 from Ranga-reddy, 105 from Medchal-Malkajgiri, 101 from Karim-

COVID-19

nagar, and 91 from Warangal urban, data released on Thursday said.

Of 97,424 cases, 21,509 were active, 75,186 recovered, and 729 died. Around 15,000 people were in home or institutional isolation. On Wednesday, 23,841 tests were conducted, taking total tests to 8,21,311. Reports of

968 more samples were awaited. Though testing data in a day and the total were published, the break-up between RT-PCR and Rapid Antigen Tests, and number of positive cases between the two test types was not.

Cumulative deaths in Andhra Pradesh crossed the 3,000-mark, with 95 more reported on Thursday. The State also witnessed 9,393 new infections, the tally going up to 32,5,396.

There were 87,177 active patients in the State, the Health Department said. With 3,001 deaths, the death rate stood at 0.92%.

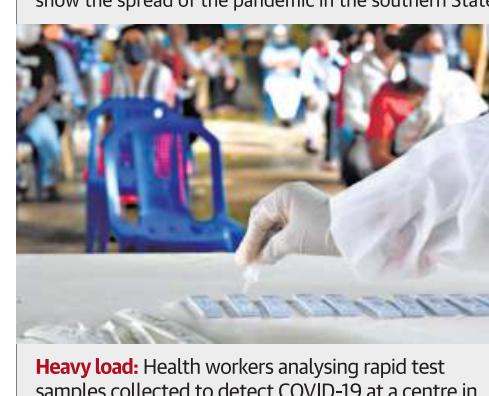
Kerala reported 1,968 new cases and 1,217 recoveries on Thursday, its cumulative cases standing at 52,199. The number of persons under treatment in hospitals was 18,123. Nine more deaths were added by the Health Department, and the toll put at 191. Eight deaths were re-

ported from Thiruvananthapuram during the past one week while one death took place in Kozhikode.

Over 90% of the new cases - 1,788 out of 1,968 cases -

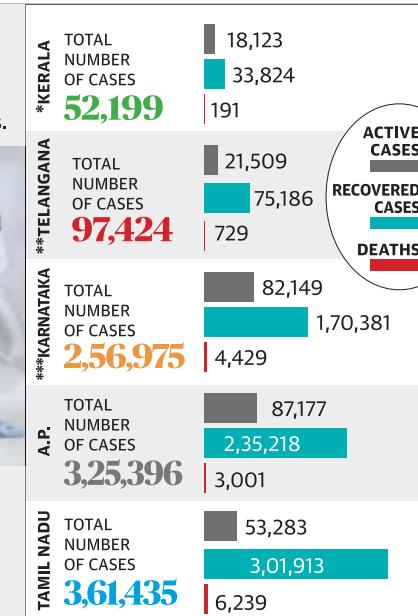
Tough task

There seems to be no rest for health workers as COVID-19 cases show no sign of decline. The graphs show the spread of the pandemic in the southern States.



Heavy load: Health workers analysing rapid test samples collected to detect COVID-19 at a centre in Visakhapatnam on Thursday. ■ K.R. DEEPAK

*Kerala has a mismatch of 61 cases due to unaccounted deaths, missing persons | **Telangana numbers are as of 8 p.m. on Wednesday | ***Karnataka has 16 non-COVID-19 deaths



Karnataka cases stood at 2,56,975 as 7,385 new cases and 102 deaths were reported on Thursday. The Health Department said there were 82,149 active cases. COVID-19 deaths totalled 4,429. On Thursday, Bengaluru Urban reported 2,912 cases, Ballari 483 and Belagavi 358 cases. Bengaluru Urban also reported 25 new deaths.

T.N. tally

As 5,986 more persons tested positive for COVID-19 in Tamil Nadu, the State's toll increased to 6,239 with another 116 persons succumbing to the infection.

Thursday's daily count took the State's tally to 3,61,435 cases. With the discharge of 5,742 persons, a total of 3,01,913 persons were discharged till date.

(With inputs from Vijaya-wada, Thiruvananthapuram, Bengaluru and Chennai bureaus)

Thiruvananthapuram airport transfer may take 8 months

AAI will soon issue Award of Letter to ATIAL

S. ANIL RADHAKRISHNAN
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Adani Trivandrum International Airport Ltd. (ATIAL) of the Adani Group that has bagged the bid for operating and managing the Airport Authority of India's (AAI) Thiruvananthapuram international airport for 50 years will get control of the airport only after the agreement is executed and the performance bank guarantee is paid. This is estimated to take around eight months.

The ATIAL has prepared a road map to take over the airport before the new government takes charge after elections in 2021, official sources told *The Hindu*.

The AAI will soon issue

Tharoor draws flak

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Thiruvananthapuram MP Shashi Tharoor of the Congress appeared to have earned the ire of his own party and that of the ruling front for having posted a Twitter message that seemed to support the Central government's decision to hand over the operations of the

the Award of Letter to the ATIAL, after which a lease agreement for 50 years will be executed. ATIAL personnel will come to Thiruvananthapuram, observe the operations for two months and take over commercial operations.

Once commercial operations are taken over, AAI of-

Thiruvananthapuram airport to the Adani Group.

KPCC president Mullappally Ramachandran seemed to refer obliquely to the tweet when he said "no Congress worker should be on the payroll of Adani or any corporate".

The CPI(M) said Mr. Tharoor had acted against the interest of his constituency.

ficers in the grade of DGM and above will return to the AAI. Those up to the AGM grade will be retained as on deemed 'deputation.' Within three years, the ATIAL will give two offers for 60% of the staff up to the AGM grade. If they do not accept the offer, the Adani Group will have to pay their salary and benefits till retirement.

Kerala did not qualify in airport bidding, says Puri

Adani Enterprises was highest bidder

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Kerala government had decided to participate in the bidding process for the Thiruvananthapuram airport based on the principle of right of first refusal, but despite the special provision it didn't qualify. Minister of State for Civil Aviation Hardeep Puri said on Thursday.

"Following a meeting with EGoS [Empowered Group of Secretaries], the GoK [Government of Kerala] themselves decided to participate in the process & requested that their participation be based on RoFR [right of first refusal]. This was agreed upon. It was stipulated that if the Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation (KSIDC) bid comes within the 10% range of the winning bid, they would be awarded the work. There was a difference of 19.64% between them & the next



bidder when bids were opened," said the Minister presenting the Centre's stance in a series of tweets.

While the highest bidder, Adani Enterprises Limited, quoted ₹68 per passenger, the Kerala State Industrial Development Corporation (KSIDC) quoted ₹135 per passenger, and therefore, despite the special provision of the right of first refusal, the Kerala government couldn't win the bidding process, said the Minister.

Alert sounded as Godavari levels rise

Heavy rainfall predicted in catchment areas, people moved to safer places



A.P. Ministers Alla Kali Krishna Srinivas and P. Venkataramaiah visiting villages in West Godavari. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Collector R.V. Suryanarayana.

The Bhadrachalam Agency is facing a renewed threat of floods as the Godavari swelled rapidly on Thursday by crossing the first (43 feet) and second (48 feet) warning levels in a span of just little over 12 hours, before inching closer to the danger mark (53 feet) at Bhadrachalam town. This has prompted the official machinery to bolster its emergency response mechanism in the flood-prone areas by deploying 46 boats and 100 swimmers equipped with life jackets along the Godavari in seven Agency mandals.

(With inputs from Hyderabad bureau)

'Namath Basai', a big hit among Kerala tribal children

The Kerala government's programme of teaching them in their mother tongue has found many takers

ABDUL LATHEEF NAHA
PALAKRAD

'Namath Basai', the Kerala government's unique programme of teaching tribal children in their mother tongue, has become a runaway hit in Attappady.

The programme, implemented by the Samagra Siksha Kerala (SSK), has succeeded in retaining hundreds of tribal children in their online classes by making them feel at home with the language of instruction.

The SSK has distributed some 50 laptops exclusively for Namath Basai. Pre-recorded classes are offered through a YouTube channel.

Most children of 192

hamlets in Attappady began enjoying the classes when lessons in Namath Basai were introduced a few weeks ago. Classes are being offered in three tribal languages in Attappady.

While the Irula language has the largest number of takers, the Muduka and Kurumba language do not have many.

Out of the 192 hamlets in Attappady, 149 belong to the Irula tribe, 24 to the Muduka tribe and 19 to the Kurumba tribe. Naturally, the project got its name in Irula language. 'Namath Basai' in Irula means 'our language'.

The hamlets are spread across the Agali, Pudur, and

Sakthivel K. offering a class in the Irula tribal language. Sholayur grama panchayats. Most hamlets in Sholayur are Irula, and most colonies in Pudur are of Kurumba tribe. But in Agali, which has 73 hamlets, the Irula, Muduka and Kurumba tribes are evenly spread.

"Teaching in the tribal language has a good extent stopped students from dropping out, which is quite usual in hamlets," said Sakthivel K., one of the Irula resource persons. A teacher at the Government Upper Primary School, Kottathara, Mr. Sakthivel said the classes in their tribal mother tongue had added a new verve to

the online studies.

Apart from him, 12 resource persons were being used for Namath Basai classes. The Education department is reportedly planning to encourage schools in tribal areas too to promote classes in tribal mother tongue. The resource persons are from the locality, mainly drawn from the tribes. Though the textbooks are in Malayalam, the media of instruction are the tribal languages. "This scheme is going a long way in preserving the ethnic culture and language of the tribespeople," said C.P. Vijayan, SSK block project coordinator in Attappady.

CM YK

AN-NDE

IN BRIEF



Pranab's respiratory parameters improving

NEW DELHI
Former President Pranab Mukherjee's respiratory parameters have shown some improvement following the lung infection he had developed a day before, the Army's Research and Referral hospital said on Thursday, adding that his vital parameters remain stable.

Haryana CM quarantines himself for three days

CHANDIGARH
Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal on Thursday said he has home quarantined himself for three days as a precautionary measure. In a tweet, the CM said, "I have come in contact with many people in the past days who had symptoms of corona. Although, I have got my corona test done, which has come negative but as a precaution I am getting myself quarantined for 3 days."

Pained, as I am misunderstood'

It would be contemptuous, insincere to apologise, says Bhushan in SC hearing

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Convicted of contempt for his tweets, civil rights lawyer Prashant Bhushan on Thursday read out a short statement in the Supreme Court, saying that he had served the top court for three decades not as a "courtier or a cheerleader", but as a "humble guard of its majesty".

"Failing to speak up would have been a dereliction of duty, especially for an officer of the court like myself... We are living through that moment in our history when higher principles must trump routine obligations, when saving the constitutional order must come before personal and professional niceties.."

PRASHANT BHUSHAN, Lawyer

Failing to speak up would have been a dereliction of duty, especially for an officer of the court like myself... We are living through that moment in our history when higher principles must trump routine obligations, when saving the constitutional order must come before personal and professional niceties..

sentence hearing via videoconferencing.

Mr. Bhushan, in an emotionally charged voice, said, "I am pained not because I may be punished, but because I have been grossly misunderstood." He conveyed his shock at being found guilty of mounting a "malicious and scurrilous" attack by the very court he had served at some professional and personal cost.

The lawyer cited the words of Mahatma Gandhi in the Young India sedition trial or 'The Great Trial of 1922,' as it is commonly known: "I do not ask for mercy. I do not



appeal to magnanimity. I am here, therefore, to cheerfully submit to any penalty that can lawfully be inflicted upon me for what the Court has determined to be an offence, and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen."

Mr. Bhushan conveyed his disappointment to the court for not even sharing a copy of the complaint over which the contempt action was taken against him. He said he was dismayed that the court did not provide any evidence of his motives. He added that he found it hard to believe the court's version that two of his tweets destabilised the very foundation of Indian democracy.

"Public scrutiny is desirable for healthy functioning of judiciary itself. I believe that open criticism of any institution is necessary in a democracy, to safeguard the constitutional order," Mr. Bhushan said.

Law has to be applied in a fair manner, says Congress

Issues raised about contempt order can't be dismissed, it says

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Congress on Thursday said "the law has to be applied in an even-handed, fair, balanced manner" in the contempt case against advocate Prashant Bhushan, who has been held guilty by the Supreme Court.



Abhishek Singhvi

er in India," it said.

'Economic scenario'

Talking about the economy, the Congress said the total job loss was just under 2 crore (1.9 crore) in July and the GDP, which was 4.2% in 2019-20 before COVID-19, would become zero post the pandemic going by the World Bank warnings. "This government cannot be a Ram bharose government, because even Ram helps them-selves," Mr. Singhvi said.

Speaking about the contempt case, CPI general secretary D. Raja said, "Today what happened in Supreme Court shows the courage and commitment of Prashant and Bhushan. People should revisit the views of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on judiciary and the Supreme Court."

India and China hold fresh talks

Gaps remain but both sides agreed to resolve outstanding issues, says Centre

ANANTH KRISHNAN

CHENNAI
India and China on Thursday held another round of border talks aimed at breaking the impasse along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), with complete disengagement still remaining a far-off prospect.



A Light Combat Helicopter deployed in Leh on August 12. ■ ANI

had built remain in place. Tensions also prevail in the Depsang plains, where the PLA has obstructed India's patrols from reaching the LAC, and in the Gogra-Hot Springs area.

The Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) said on Thursday that both sides had, at the talks held between Naveen Srivastava, Joint Secretary (East Asia) in the MEA and Hong Liang, Director-General of the Department of Boundary and Ocean Affairs of the MFA, "positively evaluated the progress made in the disengagement of the front-line forces of the two countries" and "agreed to conscientiously implement the consensus reached between the two Foreign Ministers and the Special Representatives on China-India boundary question, continue to maintain dialogue and communication through military and diplomatic channels, further cool down the border situation, properly handle the remaining issues on the

ground, and jointly maintain peace and tranquillity in the border areas".

Pakistan FM in China

Meanwhile, China and Pakistan began their annual two-day strategic dialogue on Thursday. Chinese officials said Pakistan's Foreign Minister, Shah Mahmood Qureshi, who met Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, was only the second top foreign official to visit China following the pandemic, with the Indonesian Foreign Minister also beginning a visit earlier this week.

"As the regional and international landscape is going through complex changes, in particular with the profound global impact of COVID-19, China and Pakistan, as all-weather strategic cooperative partners, need to further strengthen communication and cooperation to deal with external challenges, achieve greater development and bring more benefits to the people," said MFA spokesperson Zhao Lijian.

China has not accepted India's demand for a return to *status quo ante* before early May's tensions. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) remains on India's side of the LAC on the north bank of Pangong Lake, where most of the new fortifications it

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IN BRIEF



Jal Shakti Minister tests positive for COVID-19

NEW DELHI

Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat has tested positive for COVID-19. "On getting some symptoms, I got the corona test done... I am hospitalised on the advice of doctors. I request that those who came in contact with me in the last few days isolate themselves and get themselves examined," he tweeted on Thursday. Mr. Shekhawat is the fifth Union Minister to be diagnosed with COVID-19.

Prashant Kanojia to move sessions court for bail

LUCKNOW

Freelance journalist Prashant Kanojia will move a sessions court here for bail on Friday after a Chief Judicial Magistrate rejected his plea in connection with his arrest over an alleged forged post on Twitter, his wife Jagisha Arora said. "[The] CJM has rejected the bail," said Ms. Arora, adding that he was currently kept at a quarantine centre. Mr. Kanojia was arrested from his Delhi residence by the U.P. police on Tuesday for allegedly posting on Twitter the screenshot of a forged post.

'BJP shielding PM CARES Fund from scrutiny'

NEW DELHI

Former Union Finance Minister P. Chidambaram on Thursday accused the BJP of "desperately" trying to shield the PM CARES Fund from scrutiny. "Was the Fund set up by the central government as concluded by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs? If not, who set up the Fund? If the Fund was not set up by the government, why are the PM and three Ministers serving as Trustees? If the Fund is a private established fund, why are donations to the Fund counted against CSR," asked Mr. Chidambaram.

India to assess all vaccines

Tie-ups will be decided later: MEA

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

India maintained a cautious approach to the announcement of Russian vaccine Sputnik V, saying the "National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for Covid-19" would evaluate all candidates first and then explore partnerships for Indian companies.

"The purpose of the [expert] group is to keep India in the forefront of any ongoing effort worldwide to innovate, prepare, produce and launch candidate vaccines to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic, for India and for the world," said Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) spokesperson Anurag Srivastava in response to a question from *The Hindu*. He added that the Ministry would support the group in order to connect the vaccine manufacturers to Indian companies interested.



Sputnik V, the vaccine for COVID-19 developed by Russian company RDIF. • AP

Earlier this week, sources in the MEA said the Indian Embassy was in touch with Russian company RDIF for "safety and efficacy data" on the vaccine.

Without referring directly to the vaccine, the MEA said that it would also facilitate the process of making "relevant testing data" available to the Indian regulatory agencies that would decide on further trials needed before the vaccine was used in India.

INTERVIEW | KIRILL DMITRIEV

'Sputnik V will be made available to Indians'

Clinical trials showed that all volunteers developed immunity within 21 days, says Russian firm's head

SUHASINI HAIDAR
JACOB KOSHY

One week after Russian President Vladimir Putin announced that Russia registered the world's first vaccine to combat COVID-19, Kirill Dmitriev, the CEO of the Russian Direct Investment Fund that created the vaccine – Sputnik V – says it will be made available for India. In a written response to questions on concerns raised in several countries, he says the mechanisms used are the "safest" in the world.

Please tell us about the process before clearance for the vaccine. Has Russia approached the WHO for its pre-qualification?

■ Russia got a head start because its MERS (Middle East respiratory syndrome) vaccine was actually ready. COVID-19 is 80% similar to MERS. So, we were able to use a very safe approach. Clinical trials demonstrated that 100% of the volunteers developed immunity within 21 days. After the second vaccination, the immunity response was further boosted and provided for long-lasting immunity. All the volunteers are feeling well, no unforeseen or unwanted side effects were observed. Not a single participant of the clinical trials has caught COVID-19.

As you may know, myself, my wife and my parents, who are 74 years of age, have been vaccinated. None of us suffered any side effects.

The high efficacy of the vaccine was confirmed by high precision tests for antibodies in the blood serum of volunteers (including an analysis for antibodies that neutralize the coronavirus), as well as the ability of the immune cells of the volunteers to activate in response to the spike S protein of the coronavirus, which indicates the formation of both antibody and cellular immune vaccine

response. Post-registration research based on top international standards is involving thousands of people in Russia and abroad. The vaccine received a registration certificate from the Russian Ministry of Health on August 11. Most nations welcomed the vaccine ... and are working with us to study it.

Several countries like Germany, for example, have expressed scepticism about the vaccine breakthrough, asking for details on the "quality, efficacy and safety" of the vaccine

do not have impact on fertility and carcinogenic effects. Many novel approaches are not tested on those effects.

■ The vaccine has already been proved to be safe and effective and we will aim to make it available for use in countries all around the world and create strategic partnerships for vaccine production in all parts of the world, including India.

Compared to other candidate vaccines, human adenoviral vectors tested on tens of thousands people worldwide



All the volunteers are feeling well, no side effects were observed

familiar adenovirus vector for delivery into a human cell. They also proposed using two different types of adenoviral vectors (Ad5 and Ad26) for the first and second vaccination, boosting the effect of the vaccine. The vaccine thus "tricks the body," which develops some immunity to one type of vector after the first intake.

What kind of cooperation do you hope for with India?

■ Historically, India has been a strategic partner for Russia across many sectors. The RDIF has been collaborating with Indian companies and organisations since 2012.

India has a great programme, Make in India, started by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. It has strongly developed the local pharma industry and let Russia and other countries see India as a potential hub for vaccine production. So, we will make the vaccine available for India and other countries.

CWC may meet amid leadership row

A meeting is due but it got delayed because of the Rajasthan developments

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Congress Working Committee (CWC), the highest decision-making body of the party, is likely to meet soon amid a churn over the leadership question, a source said on Thursday.

Though there were reports that the CWC could meet as early as August 22 (Saturday), there was no official confirmation from the Congress about the meeting or its agenda.

"A CWC meeting is due but it got delayed because of the Rajasthan develop-

ments," a CWC member told this newspaper, adding that there has been no official communication from the party.

Congress chief spokesman Randeep Surjewala had said, "No such letter has been written or received by

the Congress president."

Despite the official denial, Mr. Jha's tweet did bring into focus 'informal efforts' by a group of leaders who were unhappy with the 'sense of drift', had reservation about Mr. Gandhi taking back the reins of the party and wanted a more collective style of leadership.

On Wednesday, however, the Congress asserted that "millions of Congress workers want Mr. Gandhi back at the top post as he is the only one who has been consistently taken on the Narendra Modi government."



Randeep Surjewala

BJP MP demands removal of Tharoor as IT panel chief

It is being used to serve his political agenda, says Dubey

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The row over Facebook intensified with BJP MP and member of the Parliamentary Committee on Information and Technology Nishikant Dubey on Thursday demanding the removal of Congress leader Shashi Tharoor as Chairman of the panel alleging that the committee is being run 'unprofessionally' and to serve his own "political agenda".

Former Union Minister Rajyavardhan Rathore also pitched in with a letter, accusing Mr. Tharoor of "flouting rules". "We are not against representative of any organisation being called, but he [Mr. Tharoor] instead of discussing with us, discussed it with the media," he said.

In the four-page letter to Speaker Om Birla, Mr. Dubey raised a litany of com-



Nishikant Dubey

plaints against Mr. Tharoor, many of them referring to his social media posts. He recalled Mr. Tharoor's tweet criticising the move to refer the Personal Data Protection Bill to a Joint Select Committee instead of the IT panel as "a dangerous precedent". Mr. Dubey found fault with Mr. Tharoor for "bitterly criticising" the government's ban on 59 Chinese apps, "knowing well that this aspect is entirely connected with a wider canvas

of 'national security'."

Mr. Dubey said Mr. Tharoor tried to "defame" Mr. Birla and gain "political mileage" by going public about the cancellation of the meeting of the standing committee due to the pandemic.

Spat over tweet

The political spat started with Mr. Tharoor's tweet on August 16 announcing that the standing committee would wish to hear from Facebook on the report of the *Wall Street Journal* which accused the social media giant of going easy on hate speech by the BJP and its leaders in the run up to the previous Lok Sabha election.

Mr. Tharoor also clarified that this issue fell well within the subject of "safeguarding citizens' rights and prevention of misuse of social/online news media platforms including special emphasis on women security in the digital space".

Mr. Tharoor did not respond to the allegations.

House panel summons Facebook

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information Technology has summoned Facebook on September 2 to discuss the issue of alleged misuse of social media platforms in the wake of claims that the U.S. firm did not apply hate speech rules to certain Bharatiya Janata Party politicians.

A day before, the committee will also discuss the issue of Internet shutdowns.

Besides representatives of Facebook, the committee has also asked representatives of the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology to remain present on September 2 to discuss the subject of "safeguarding citizens' rights and prevention of misuse of social/online news media platforms including special emphasis on women security in the digital space".

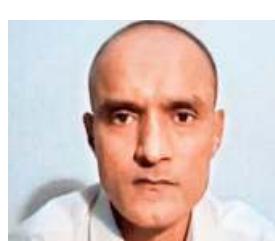
Our lawyer should represent Jadhav: India

MEA urges Pak. to give free access

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) on Thursday declared that former Navy official Kulbhushan Jadhav should be represented by an Indian lawyer in Pakistan.

"We are in touch with Pakistan through diplomatic channels. For a free and fair trial in keeping with the letter and spirit of ICIJ (International Court of Justice) judgment, we have asked for Shri Jadhav to be represented by an Indian lawyer," said Anurag Srivastava, official spokesperson of the MEA. He also reiterated that Pa-



Kulbhushan Jadhav

kistan should provide relevant documents related to the case, and provide unimpeded consular access to Mr. Jadhav. The Islamabad High Court had earlier said that Mr. Jadhav should be represented by a Pakistani lawyer.

that a high-level monitoring mechanism be set up to regularly review the progress of the ongoing projects," said Anurag Srivastava, official spokesperson of the MEA.

Railway lines

The monitoring mechanism is expected to assist in timely completion of several ongoing projects, including the Rampal Maitree Power Plant, India-Bangladesh Friendship Pipeline, and rail links between Akhaura-Agartala, Chilahati-Haldibari and Khulna-Mongla rail line that are to be completed by 2021.

India, Bangladesh to monitor projects

New mechanism to be in place soon

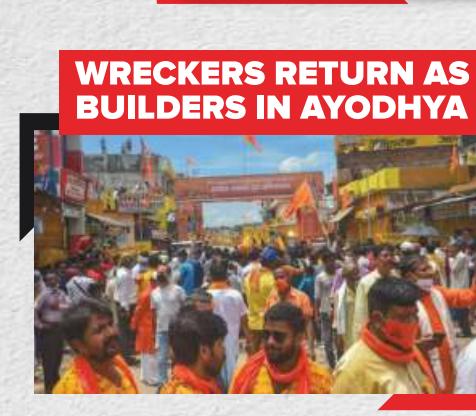
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India and Bangladesh will set up a mechanism to monitor bilateral projects, an official of the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Thursday.

The announcement came a day after Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla returned after holding talks with the leadership of Bangladesh in Dhaka, where both sides agreed to jointly deal with the border killings and establish a closer partnership to deal with the COVID-19 crisis. "The two countries also proposed



Decoding the New Education Policy
It is a deadly cocktail of the Hindutva agenda and the World Bank model of knowledge prepared to suit the needs of corporate job markets



WRECKERS RETURN AS BUILDERS IN AYODHYA



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A ND-NDE

Gmail services disrupted

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Google's popular email service, Gmail, is facing disruption in its services since Thursday morning, with users complaining that they are unable to log in, add attachments and receive messages.

The company said it was investigating the issue, but did not specify a reason for the outage that seems to be affecting some users in various parts of the globe.

Earlier in the day, G Suite status dashboard – which provides performance information on various Google services – said the company was “investigating reports of an issue with Gmail”.

The dashboard shows that services such as Google Drive, Google Docs and Google Meet have also been affected.

Stating that it will provide an update, the company said there was disruption in sending e-mails, Meet recording, creating files in Drive, posting message in Google Chat and other functions.

Indore wins cleanest city title again

Survey of sanitation in over 4,000 cities was carried out over 28 days earlier this year

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

For the fourth year in a row, Indore has been ranked the cleanest city in the country, according to a Swachh Survekshan 2020 report released by the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry on Thursday.

The survey of sanitation in over 4,000 cities was carried out over 28 days earlier this year.

The Ministry released the findings through a virtual event that was supposed to be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, but he could not make it.

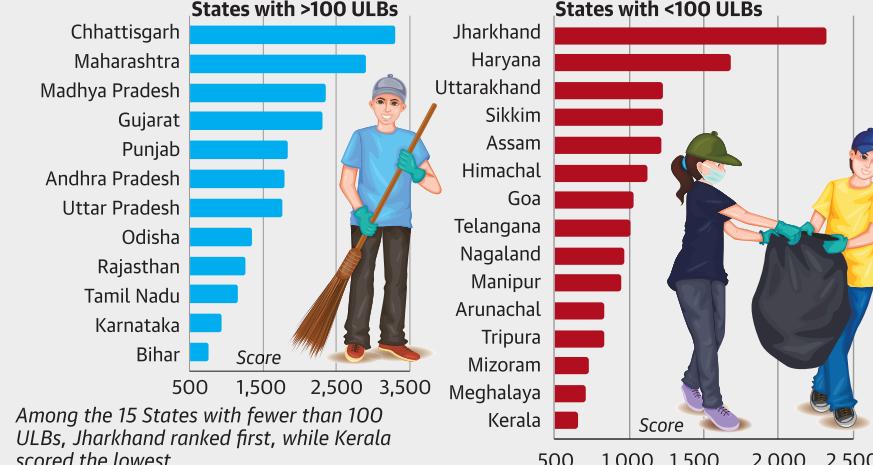
Citizen feedback

Housing and Urban Affairs Minister Hardeep Puri said Swachh Survekshan, in its fifth edition, had become the world's largest sanitation survey, with 1.8 crore citizens giving their feedback.

Among the cities with over 1 lakh population, Indore was ranked number one, followed by Surat, Navi Mumbai, Ambikapur, Mysore, Vijayawada, Ahmedabad, New

State of cleanliness

Chhattisgarh scored the highest in the Swachh Survekshan assessment among the 12 States which have more than 100 urban local bodies (ULBs)



Among the 15 States with fewer than 100 ULBs, Jharkhand ranked first, while Kerala scored the lowest

Delhi, Chandrapur and Khar-gone. Among smaller cities, with population under 1 lakh, the top three cities – Karad, Sasvad and Lonavala were all from Maharashtra.

Chhattisgarh was ranked the cleanest State out of those with over 100 cities, while Jharkhand was the cleanest among those with

fewer than 100 urban local bodies (ULBs) or cities. In the category of “Ganga towns”, Varanasi, Mr. Modi's Lok Sabha constituency, was ranked the cleanest.

Jalandhar got the top rank among cantonments and New Delhi was the cleanest capital city.

Speaking about the

Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM)-Urban, Mr. Puri said it had had a deep impact on health, livelihoods, quality of life and behaviour, which had come in handy when dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic.

When the mission was launched in 2014, waste processing was 18%. Now it had

increased to 66%. Earlier in the event, Housing and Urban Affairs Secretary Durga Shanker Mishra said Swachh Survekshan, which began with a survey of 73 cities in 2016, had grown to cover 4,242 cities, 62 cantonment boards and 97 “Ganga towns” in 2020. Survey teams visited 58,000 residential and 20,000 commercial areas in 28 days, while 1.87 crore citizens' feedbacks were received.

Second phase

Mr. Mishra told presspersons later in the day that the Ministry was actively working on coming up with a second phase of the SBM-Urban, which was initially supposed to be till March 2020 but was extended till March 2021.

He said “SBM 2.0” should be finalised before the end of the current phase.

The goal of the second phase would be take targets further, than making cities open defecation-free, to also include 100% sludge management and zero dumping of waste in the open.



Radha Mohan Das Agarwal

Mr. Agarwal said a man was murdered in Kanshiram Colony of Lakhimpur Kheri district last month but the police were yet to take any action.

If a person delayed filing an FIR, it was considered mala fide, similarly a delay in action by the police would also be considered mischievous, said the legislator.

Mr. Agarwal, however, clarified that his critical post did not mean he was rebelling against his government or the Chief Minister and stressed that there was “internal democracy” in his party.

Private firms employ more women in R&D'

Study says they perform better than government-funded major scientific agencies in doing so

JACOB KOSHY
NEW DELHI

India's private sector research companies appear to employ a larger proportion of women in core research and development activities than government-funded major scientific agencies do, according to data in the Science and Technology Indicators (STI), 2018, a periodic compendium of the state of scientific research in India, released this month.

Of the 20,351 women employed in private R&D companies, 15,011 – or about three in four – were involved in “R&D activities” and the rest in “auxiliary or administrative activities”.

However, of the 23,008 women in “major scientific agencies”, fewer than half – or 10,138 – were in the same ‘R&D activities’ category.



Skewed state: The study reiterates the trend of women scientists being outnumbered by men. ■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

The STI is prepared by a division of the Department of Science Technology, the National Science and Technology Management Information System, and is based on data provided by a range of scientific establishments across the country.

A scientist told *The Hindu* that, on the whole, private

sector companies had a greater commitment to ensuring that women scientists were fairly represented in recruitment, promotions and appraisal processes than in many scientific organisations. “Managers have to answer why women in their teams are not promoted or why, for instance, are women drop-

ping out of their workforces,” said the person who is now in a private research organisation but was formerly an academic in a government-funded institution. She declined to be identified citing company restrictions.

Historical trend

The 2018 indicators reiterate the historic trend of India's scientists being overwhelmingly men. For every one of the 15,011 women counted earlier, there are six male scientists in private sector R&D establishments, or about 92,000. However that proportion improves to about one in four in major scientific agencies where there are 43,753 male scientists in R&D for the 10,138 women equivalent.

Overall, India had 341,818 scientists in R&D with nearly

2,03,759 employed by government institutions or in the higher education sector.

Earlier too, inquiries have been launched by independent commissions as well as the NITI Aayog to ascertain causes for the inadequate representation of women scientists. “The large drop in the number of women between the doctoral and professional stages appears to be in part due to social pressure on women to have a family which is seen as incompatible with a professional career. There are also patriarchal attitudes in hiring practices,” according to a detailed investigation by Rohini Godbole of the Indian Institute of Science, and Ramakrishna Ramaswamy of Jawaharlal Nehru University, for the Indian Academy of Sciences.

The court of Additional Sessions Judge, Lucknow, had issued summons to Congress activist Sadaf Jafar, theatre personality Deepak Mishra, alias Deepak Kabir, and advocate Mohammad Shoaib.

U.P. govt. seeks cancellation of bail of three anti-CAA activists

Sadaf Jafar, Deepak Mishra and Mohammad Shoaib named

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government has moved a local court here seeking the revocation of bail of three activists who were accused of vandalism during the protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act and the proposed National Register of Citizens (NRC) on December 19, 2019.

The court of Additional Sessions Judge, Lucknow, had issued summons to Congress activist Sadaf Jafar, theatre personality Deepak Mishra, alias Deepak Kabir, and advocate Mohammad Shoaib.

On Thursday, the court listed the next hearing in the matter for September 5 after

the accused prayed for more time to respond to the application, a copy of which was not immediately available to all of them.

Named on hoarding

The three persons are among the 57 accused in the anti-CAA protests whose names, photos and addresses were displayed on hoardings erected across Lucknow by the administration earlier this year in a bid to “name and shame” them.

In its application seeking the revocation of Mr. Shoaib's bail, the government said that he had violated a condition of his bail (January 15), stipulating that he would not be involved in any criminal act. On January 30,

Mr. Shoaib was among 13 persons booked by the Lucknow police on charges of leading a candle-lit march at the Hussainabad clocktower protest on the occasion of Gandhi Jayanti.

The police accused the septuagenarian lawyer of inspiring and instigating those participating in the “illegal” protest.

Mr. Shoaib, however, said that while he was present at the clocktower, he “did not participate” in any candle-lit march.

Ms. Jafar said her lawyer appeared on her behalf and sought time to file an objection. Ms. Jafar accused the Yogi Adityanath-led government of harassing activists to polarise communities.

Orphanage manager arrested in abuse case

He blames many states, multilateral organisations

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Individual behaviour of many states and old-styled multilateral organisations prevented a collective response to global challenges in a contemporary world, External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar said on Thursday.

To deal with the new global challenges, nation states were rediscovering the merits of ideas like “strategic autonomy”, he stated at the 6th Roundtable Meeting of the ASEAN-India Network of Think Tanks (AINTT).

“The irony, however, is that just when multilateralism was most in demand, it did not rise to the occasion. If we saw little leadership, it was not just due to the admittedly anachronistic nature of key international org-

anisations,” he noted. Mr. Jaishankar described the current pandemic as an unprecedented challenge, and

blamed “individual behaviour of many states” for the failure of the multilateral organisations to come to the rescue of the pandemic-hit world.

The impact of COVID-19 on the world economy was still not clear and the contraction of the world economy would be the largest since the Great Depression of 1929. “None of us has seen a crisis of this proportion before, or indeed uncertainty of this level,” he said.

The Minister urged greater cooperation to counter challenges such as the pandemic, and called for “collective solutions”.

Beyond orthodoxies

He highlighted the difficulties hindering a strong response to deal with the pandemic and called upon the ASEAN countries to look beyond “orthodoxies” in trade, politics and security to find solution to the challenges. As part of that, he pointed

Jaishankar says old order preventing a collective response



S. Jaishankar

ed to the idea of “strategic autonomy”, which created space for states to take the decision that was in their best interest.

“In fact, the concept of strategic autonomy that was once fashionable in a unipolar world has now assumed relevance once again in terms of global supply chains”, he said, adding that the behaviour of states in the pandemic season would determine the way they would be viewed by the world.

■ DOWN

- 1 John and Bill are from Cambridge (6)
- 2 Inside a fence, you can make it soundproof (6)
- 3 Essential jobs – does involve an instrument (4)
- 4 Sweet girl from bottom to top (6)
- 5 Pure cocaine mixed in drink – make it neat (6,2)
- 6 After road rage, end of an SUV (5,5)
- 7 Remove cocktail and drink a cocktail – that's complete change (8)
- 8 Soldiers count silently (8)
- 14 Each talk will have closing remarks (10)
- 16 After spell, one's asleep, switching sides (8)
- 17 Dirty one removed, short book on a novel character (5,3)
- 18 Make it shine – perhaps Stokes' got it correct (8)
- 22 Burden as market has doubled (6)
- 23 Playful after school or greedy? (6)
- 24 A small boy's intent is to get skill (6)
- 27 Heavy metal guitarist, perhaps (4)

■ ACROSS

- 9 Bitter result as computer maker starts biting into competition (7)
- 10 Keep a model in good humour (7)
- 11 Material for employees – no point before arrival (7)
- 12 Badly outgunned? Do away with the cream (7)
- 13 Malleus, say, assumed a role of an emperor (9)
- 15 Be happy, Rod's back (5)

SUDOKU

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to puzzle 13019

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

SHODDILY	L	O</td



Craving freshly made ready-to-cook *ravioli*? Or perhaps some *tagliatelle*? Check out these food services supplying artisanal pastas

From their casa to yours

APARNA NARRAIN

Tara Deshpande Culinary Studio, Mumbai

Soon after her first trip to Italy, actor and author Tara Deshpande returned to New York and took a class at the International Culinary School. She has been making and supplying fresh pasta from home, for the last year-and-a-half.

Says Tara, "I used to do it on a very small scale for people who knew me and wanted hand-cut pasta. Then many people started asking us and so we made it part of the menu. There is only a minimum amount we can do, because the recipe is for a kilogram." On offer are tortellini, fettuccine, tagliatelle and agnolotti. The sauce has to be ordered separately.

Stating that very few people sell fresh pasta in the country, Tara says, "I don't know anyone selling hand-cut stuffed pastas. There are two ways to do this. One is pasta that is entirely hand rolled and hand-cut. Then there is pasta for which one can use a hand-cracked machine. But when it comes



to stuffed pasta, you have to hand-cut, hand-stuff and hand-roll each piece. So, the tortellini and agnolotti are a lot of work and they have a short shelf life."

Has she noticed a difference in demand pre and post lockdown? "Yes, a lot of people are ordering now. The stuffed ones are especially popular."

Visit taradeshpande.in

Tocco, Chennai

After marriage, Santhaya Subramaniyam lived in Dubai where she had Italian friends. With such expertise at hand, Santhaya too learnt the art of making pasta. "Though we used to make pastas earlier, when the lockdown happened, we tried making many different types because we had the time. I have been a homemaker for a long time and wanted to have a business that was food-related, and so we started Tocco in a small way." While her husband is a hotelier, her brother is a chef who helps out with orders.

"It's been two years since we came to Chennai. I searched everywhere but haven't been able to find fresh pasta," she says.

Stating that Tocco (meaning feel/touch in Italian) focuses on ravioli – "I like ravioli, as do my children" – Santhaya says that ravioli are a bit harder to find outside 4- and 5-star restaurants. On average, Tocco gets eight to 10 orders a week. They provide options such as activated charcoal ravioli and spinach and quinoa ravioli with a cream cheese filling, and also try custom orders.

WhatsApp 9150869900 or find Tocco on Instagram



Buttons so sweet

Finally, something to cheer about in 2020: Cadbury has launched a new range of products, called Orange Chocolate Buttons and Orange Chocolate Fingers. Even as product photos emerged on social media, the company released a statement saying that the Buttons and Fingers will be available at stores in the UK in mid-August and September. The range is said to be a combination of smooth and creamy Dairy Milk chocolate with a citrus-fresh orange hint. While they are not available in India at present, here's hoping that we get to try them soon.

Pasta Dal Cuore, Gurugram

Ayesha Seksaria has been making pasta for many years now. Having started it as a fun activity to do with her father when she was younger, she now views it as a stressor. "It's basically an art. There is a lot of kneading, you have to decide what the ravioli should look like and what the filling should be." Adding that she loves going out to eat and specifically to eat fresh pasta, Ayesha says, "During the lockdown when everything was shut, I realised that not many people in India are making fresh pasta. So, I started Pasta Dal Cuore (pasta from the heart in Italian) as a passion project."

Adding that she has been to Italy and took a short course while there, Ayesha adds, "The menu changes every month. So if one has tried it already, they have something new to try the next month. The first pasta we did was a mushroom and blue cheese ravioli. This time, we have introduced three cheese, caramelised onion and roasted garlic ravioli."

Since she is also continuing with her job in the fashion industry, she supplies the pasta only on weekends. "I'm doing this on my own. It takes quite some time to get used to making it so I haven't got around to training anyone yet," she laughs.

While the number of orders vary, Ayesha says, "I think I made about 1,000 ravioli for a special request for Rakhi!"

WhatsApp 9810577069 or find Pasta Dal Cuore on Instagram

The Artisanal Pasta Company, Bengaluru

Earlier, this year, Harshit Garg was at Erasmus University in the Netherlands, pursuing his Master's in Economics. He returned to India just as the COVID-19 crisis began.

Racking his brains for a venture, he first decided to make sourdough bread. When that did not work out, he drew upon his travels, particularly in Italy. "The first time I had proper ravioli was in Liguria. I learnt how to make it from my friend's grandmother. And then started The Artisanal Pasta Company."

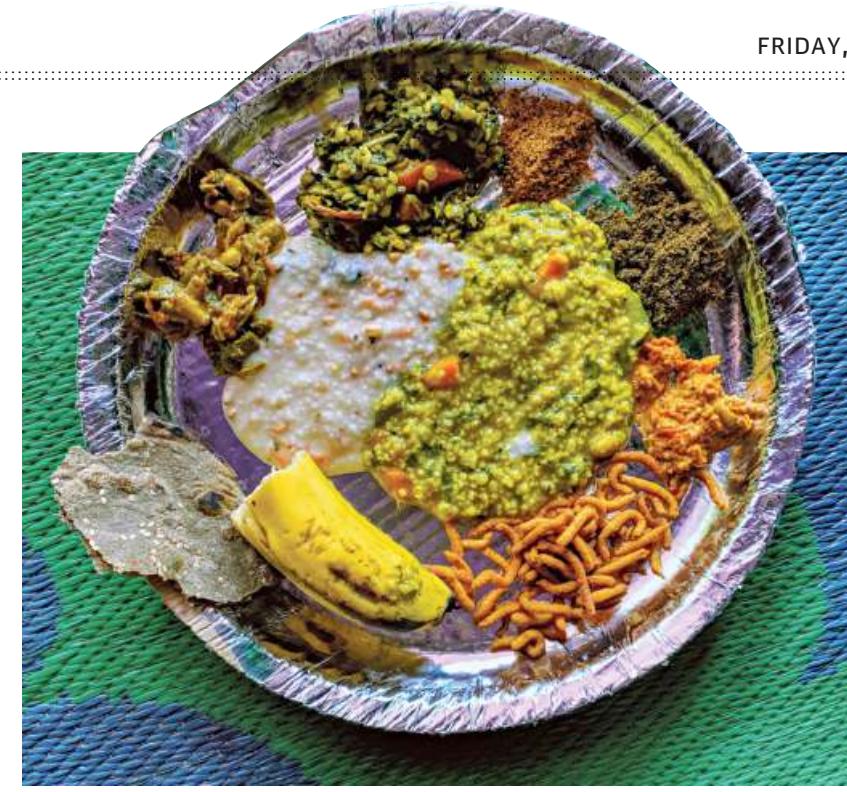
Harshit handles the cooking and experimenting by himself, waking up at 5 am every day and making 200 ravioli a day on average. "People can order the pasta either with the sauce as a combo or without. As I enjoy cooking so much, I wanted to promote the idea that people should just try cooking. So, for example, if someone orders a spinach and cream cheese ravioli, they have to boil it. Compared to the market pasta which takes 10 to 12 minutes, this takes less than three minutes. The sauce needs to be heated up and I send some fresh parsley and peppercorns to be crushed. The smell is heavenly. These tiny things make it more of an experience."

WhatsApp 9986656598 or find The Artisanal Pasta Company on Instagram



Beer from 5,000 years ago

A 5,000-year-old clay tablet was recently unearthed at the site of the ancient city of Uruk, in present-day Iraq. Interestingly, it features inscriptions that appear to depict how beer was produced at the West Asian Inanna Temple in 3,100 BC, as well as a beer-making transaction. It even has an illustration of the process of transforming barley or corn into beer and transporting it to the brewhouse. The square tablet, put under the hammer by London-based Bloomsbury Auctions, is also said to be the earliest known record of a personal name in history. It carries symbols translating as 'Ku' and 'Sim' in the top left corner.



Unadulterated flavours
(Clockwise from left) FFI shares images of the millet meal sampled by the team during its visit to Telangana; a woman demonstrating the making of jawar rotis; and meat getting cooked in a clay pot for the same meal • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

A virtual food tour

Chef Garima Arora's non-profit Food Forward India brings delicious traditions from around the country to your inbox

PRABALIKA M BORAH

With everyone tuning in to the virtual world, Michelin star Chef Garima Arora decided to go with the flow with her food initiative Food Forward India (FFI). A not-for-profit initiative started by the chef behind the Michelin Star restaurant GAA, Bangkok, FFI seeks to prioritise the future of Indian food by exploring it and dispelling myths about the cuisine.

The initiative attempts to start a dialogue on foods and ingredients that have been shunned, either because they are not presentable in a five-star set-up or because we choose not to discuss it.

A few months into the movement, started early this year, FFI's search took it to different states of the country. Then the pandemic broke and FFI decided to take the campaign of promoting and exploring food identity virtually calling it Virtual Escapes. The movement now travels virtually across various states of India, highlighting their rural, urban and tribal perspectives through articles, newsletters and a podcast.

Says Garima, "Geography is well reflected in the food in all States. In places like Manipur, a variety of leaves, vegetables and fermented produce demand simple cooking techniques – like stews and roasts with fish and meats, making the cuisine stand out as one of the most well-balanced and healthy diets in the world."

In parts of Madhya Pradesh, the complexity of dishes around just one ingredient like *besan* (gram flour) show a different kind of culinary ingenuity that is tied back into produce and what is available within the geography."

Garima says the team looked at Virtual Escapes as a great opportunity to propagate their social media channels as a free-for-all knowledge platform. "Our main goal with Virtual Escapes is to give some of the amazing people we have come to know and find, a chance to introduce themselves and talk about their experiences of home. That sense of belonging and pride comes out in the way they show us their home state and their food culture. We think they deserve a chance to share this with the world. Especially given the international travel bans, we hope that when people travel locally they find these people and look up the businesses we have featured on FFI. We all are struggling to make sense of this situation we are in. This is our way to make sure we help our community out there," adds Garima.

Brass tacks

"One State every two weeks," says Matylda Grzelak, general project manager, Food Forward India, "For this, we are collecting stories and engaging with local people or specialists who can share content to promote the culinary landscape of that State."

FFI's main feature was conducting on-the-ground research and they still hope to return to it as their main activity. FFI believes it is important to spend time with the people in the State, and try to work out the context for the food culture.

Matylda adds, "Since we predominantly rely on documenting and researching food-related know-



ledge based on our travels, and promotion of local initiatives internationally, we have decided to alter the way we do this and bring it to a 'contactless dimension' and slightly less in-depth form that can build up gradually."

Matylda admits to altering their method of functioning after the lockdown. "The current Virtual Escapes campaign was a major shift. Suddenly, instead of having a crew making films for us, we are analysing data from notes and audio, learning to compile videos of other people, and using their stories and narrations since we are unable to document them ourselves and share our own experiences. From making itineraries and planning events, we are now drafting campaigns and figuring out how to continue to comprehensively explore the urban, rural and tribal areas of states. We raised the tempo to give snippets and sneak peaks into foodscapes of many States – first weekly, then bi-weekly."

Lockdown has been a unique experience, in a different sense, comments Matylda. "Getting over 2,500 followers in four weeks without sponsored ads definitely adds to that," she says.

At the time FFI finished their first Rural Escape and Urban Adda in Telangana in February this year, COVID-19 was rapidly escalating in Wuhan. During this time, the team was preparing to finish the itinerary.

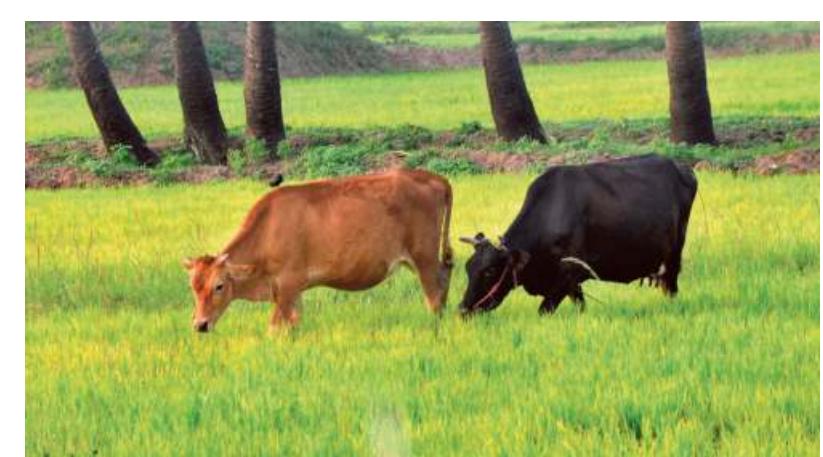
"A trip to Manipur in May was to include a week-long Rural Escape and Urban Adda in Imphal. The team didn't stop their work, they kept the engagement on by inviting people from Manipur to discuss their food, herbs and local dishes online. As a result FFI had an engaging session on their FB page that led to interesting food discussion and discoveries."

The overload of information has led them to discover local experts and authentic local foods. It has paradoxically given them a connection with the community, experts and people in India they never had before and would have never achieved otherwise.

"This remoteness has made us more connected," says Matylda.

The question of milk

A new report by the Sustainable Food Trust (SFT) says that vegans should switch to grass-fed cows' milk from soya milk to save our rainforests. This is because global consumption of soya products is going up, and much of this is produced on land created by deforestation. The Amazon rainforest, especially, has suffered due to the soya industry, states the report. The report also says that livestock is fed soya in animal feed, which profits the unsustainable soya industry. Reportedly, around 85 litres of milk is produced in the UK for every kilogram of soya bean meal consumed by dairy cows. However, no more than 7.5 litres of soya drink are produced from a kilogram of whole soya beans.





The veteran actor discusses playing a religious hardliner in his upcoming film *Mee Raqsam* and foresees a future in filmmaking when multi-crore blockbusters become a thing of the past

Talking sense Naseeruddin Shah in a scene from *Mee Raqsam*
■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

should pass judgement on a character one is playing with sincerity."

Solitary journey

The veteran actor is all praise for Aditi, calling her "a real find. I don't think she has ever acted in her life. You know dance takes a lifetime to master. But she practised and learned as much as was possible in the few months before shooting. There is also a quality of stillness to her performance which is rare."

Mee Raqsam was shot in Kaifi Azmi's hometown, Mijwan, in Uttar Pradesh. Aditi also hails from the same town. Does it make sense for filmmakers to take their craft to little pockets of the country in a bid to discover such talent? "Who is going to make that effort? I don't think it is a practical idea. And in any case, an actor's journey is a solitary one. He's got to learn all his lessons on his own and depend on no one but himself. This is true regardless of the family you are born in. It is, however, imperative for a filmmaker to recognise the talents that lie all over the country."

Finding middle ground
The actor makes a bold prediction. "I foresee a dim future for the multi hundred crore blockbusters. I hope this is an opportunity for the film industry to grab and start to value content based drama over sensationalism though there is probably a slim chance of that happening. We have not changed too much for several decades so it is too much to expect for a change now. They will just come back with a vengeance and make the kind of films that Hollywood is making... all the superhero nonsense, but I think the smaller filmmakers will also have found a space by then. Will there be a middle ground or not... I don't know."

Mee Raqsam is streaming on Zee5

told them I wanted to be an actor. They thought I was doing un-Islamic stuff."

Talking about the Pakistani film *Khuda Kay Liye* (2007) in which he had played a cameo, Naseer says, "It is an important film because it talks about this belief, about music being *haram* and compelling all Muslims to have beards, wear pyjamas etc. I was told this as a child and I always rebelled against it. *Khuda Kay Liye* spoke for me without me knowing it. *Mee Raqsam* is similar. The kind of objections this child in the film faces are far more rabid and venomous than what I faced."

In *Mee Raqsam*, Naseer plays a powerful representative of a small town community where he commands unparalleled respect and obedience. "The child's father is a tailor and supports her against the 'establishment' of which I'm a representative. I say things I do not believe in, but as an actor, I had to make it my business to put in as much conviction as I could into what I was saying. I don't think one

"I could empathise with the dilemma of the protagonist. She is a child from an orthodox lower middle class Muslim family who wants to learn Bharatanatyam. I think even a child from an affluent Muslim family will have a problem (with such a choice) because of our prejudices and deep seated resentment of the other."

The actor rolls back the years to draw a parallel. "People in my family thought I was crazy when I

PRADEEP KUMAR

Naseeruddin Shah finds being sidelined at home, even as a pandemic rages on, a manageable situation. Such is an actor's life that he admits spending months together away from work and at home. "I have never lived the kind of life like some people who are used to leaving home early morning and returning late at night. So being at home is fine," he says. He has also made a lockdown self discovery: that he is quite fond of house work.

Talking on the phone from Mumbai, 'Naseer saab' says, "I quite enjoy pottering around the kitchen, something I had never done before".

Common thread

Naseer will be seen in a Zee5 film, *Mee Raqsam*, directed by Baba Azmi; the latter has previously stated that the film is a tribute to his father, the acclaimed Urdu poet Kaifi Azmi. Baba is actor Shabana Azmi's brother.

Naseer plays "the antagonist", in his words, except instead of brute strength what his character seeks to impose upon the protagonist – a young Muslim girl (Aditi Subedi) who wants to learn Bharatanatyam – is his will.

"I could empathise with the dilemma of the protagonist. She is a child from an orthodox lower middle class Muslim family who wants to learn Bharatanatyam. I think even a child from an affluent Muslim family will have a problem (with such a choice) because of our prejudices and deep seated resentment of the other."

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Kamala Harris accepts historic V-P nomination

My mother taught me that service to others gives life purpose and meaning, she says at Democratic convention

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN

Kamala Harris, the first black woman and person of Indian descent to be nominated on a major political party ticket in U.S. history, accepted the (uncontested) nomination as vice-presidential candidate of the Democratic Party.

"My mother taught me that service to others gives life purpose and meaning. And oh, how I wish she were here tonight, but I know she's looking down on me from above. I keep thinking about that 25-year-old Indian woman – all of five feet tall – who gave birth to me at Kaiser Hospital in Oakland, California. On that day, she probably could have never imagined that I would be standing before you now speaking these words: I accept your nomination for Vice President of the United States of America," Ms. Harris said in a televised address from Delaware, during day three of the Democratic National Convention.

In her acceptance speech,



Landmark moment: Kamala Harris speaking at the Democratic National Convention, being held virtually in Wilmington. ■AP

Ms. Harris revisited a theme she has talked about in her book, *The Truths We Hold*: her mother raised her and her sister to be "proud, strong Black women" and to "know and be proud" of their Indian heritage. Millions tuning in to the virtual convention were introduced to the term "*chiththi*" – a Tamil word to describe one's mother's younger sisters, used by Ms. Harris to refer to her aunts.

On the state of the nation under the current administration, Ms. Harris said: "The constant chaos leaves us adrift. The incompetence makes us feel afraid. The callousness makes us feel alone. It's a lot."

As a U.S. Senator, Ms. Harris had, earlier this year, introduced legislation to examine and respond to the race dimensions of the COVID-19 burden. She said in her speech that a disproportionately high number of racial minorities were being impacted by the diseases due to "structural racism".

"This virus has no eyes, and yet it knows exactly how

we see each other – and how we treat each other," she said. "And let's be clear – there is no vaccine for racism. We've gotta do the work."

Voting plan

At the opening of the virtual convention, Ms Harris delivered a recorded video message addressing concerns around voting. Mr Trump has been accused by Democrats and civil rights groups of attempting to make voting in the November 3 election difficult.

On Tuesday, Postmaster General Louis DeJoy, a recent Trump appointee, walked back cost-cutting measures, postponing them until after the election after intense criticism and potential legal action for what was seen as an attempt to interfere with the election.

"I think we need to ask ourselves, 'Why don't they want us to vote?'" Ms. Harris said. "Each of us needs a plan... a voting plan. Joe and I want to make sure you're prepared."

Former U.S. Secretary of State and 2016 Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton also stressed the importance of voting. Dressed in white, to mark the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote, Ms. Clinton said of the people who had come to her and said they should have voted in 2016. "This can't be another woulda-coulda-shoulda election. If you're voting by mail, request your ballot now, and send it back as soon as you can. If you vote in person, do it early. Bring a friend and wear a mask. Become a poll worker."

Although she won the popular vote by just under 3 million, Ms. Clinton lost the Electoral College vote – and hence the Presidency – to Mr. Trump in 2016.

"Remember: Joe and Kamala can win 3 million more votes and still lose. Take it. From Me. We need numbers so overwhelming Trump can't sneak or steal his way to victory," she said on Wednesday.

House of Representatives Speaker Nancy Pelosi – also

dressed in white – dwelt on women-specific policies in Mr. Biden's agenda, which she listed as: the protection of abortion rights, pay equality and guarantee to safe and affordable child care.

Disrespect for facts

"As Speaker, I've seen first hand Donald Trump's disrespect for facts, for working families, and for women in particular – disrespect written into his policies toward our health and our rights, not just his conduct," she said.

Apart from former U.S. President Barack Obama, other speakers at the virtual convention included former Democratic presidential candidate (primary level) Elizabeth Warren and former Congresswoman Gabby Giffords, a survivor of gun violence who spoke on gun control.

Addressing the inaugural session of Parliament following the August 5 general election on Thursday, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa said: "As the people have given us the mandate we wanted for a constitutional amendment, our first task will be to remove the 19th Amendment to the Constitution. After that, all of us will get together to formulate a new Constitution suitable for the country." The new Constitution, he said, would prioritise the concept of "one country, one law for all the people."

Sri Lanka to draft new Constitution

Presidential powers set to be restored



Power-up: Gotabaya Rajapaksa in Parliament in Colombo. ■AP

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

Sri Lanka will draft a new Constitution, jettisoning the 19th Amendment passed in 2015 that imposed curbs on presidential powers and strengthened Parliament, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has said.

Addressing the inaugural session of Parliament following the August 5 general election on Thursday, President Rajapaksa said: "As the people have given us the mandate we wanted for a constitutional amendment, our first task will be to remove the 19th Amendment to the Constitution. After that, all of us will get together to formulate a new Constitution suitable for the country." The new Constitution, he said, would prioritise the concept of "one country, one law for all the people."

Outlining his plans further, President Rajapaksa told Parliament that it was "essential to make changes to the current electoral system" while drafting a new Constitution, retaining elements of the proportional representation system currently followed. On the government's task of reviving the country's economy, he called for "out-of-the-box thinking" to overcome local and global challenges.

Foreign Minister Dinesh Gunawardena assumed charge as Leader of the House, while Samagi Jana Balawegaya (SJB) United People's Front, who broke away from the United National Party (UNP), was named Leader of Opposition.

The SJB secured 54 seats in the general election while the presence of the UNP, which led the former government, diminished to 1.

Trump lacks interest, treats presidency as reality show: Obama

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN

Former U.S. President Barack Obama ripped into the four-year record of President Donald Trump, saying Mr. Trump treated the presidency as a reality show and did not take the job seriously.

The comments were made in a video address on day three of the virtual Democratic National Convention, themed 'A More Perfect Union'.

Mr. Obama, who has already endorsed his former deputy Mr. Biden and participated in campaign videos, compared Mr. Biden and Mr. Trump based on his direct interaction with both candidates.

dates. "I have sat in the Oval Office with both of the men who are running for President. I never expected that my successor would embrace my vision or continue my policies. I did hope, for the sake of our country, that Donald Trump might show some interest in taking the job seriously; that he might come to feel the weight of the office and discover some reverence for the democracy that had been placed in his care," Mr. Obama said.

"But he never did. For close to four years now, he's shown no interest in putting in the work; no interest in finding common ground; no interest in using the aw-

some power of his office to help anyone but himself and his friends; no interest in treating the presidency as anything but one more reality show that he can use to get the attention he craves. Donald Trump hasn't grown into the job because he can't," he said.

Policy roll back

Mr. Trump has rolled back a significant number of Mr. Obama's policies – from domestic environmental policies to taking the U.S. out of a number of treaties the Obama administration had entered into.

On Wednesday, Mr. Obama said Mr. Biden and his

running mate, Senator Kamala Harris, believed that nobody, including the President, was above the law.

"They understand that in this democracy, the Commander-in-Chief doesn't use the men and women of our military, who are willing to risk everything to protect our nation, as political props to deploy against peaceful protesters on our own soil," Mr. Obama said.

"They understand that political opponents aren't 'un-American' just because they disagree with you; that a free press isn't the 'enemy' but the way we hold officials accountable," he said.

Mr. Obama also addressed

those who have not yet made up their mind between the two candidates.

"Tonight, I am asking you to believe in Joe and Kamala's ability to lead this country out of dark times and build it back better," Mr. Obama said.

Undecided voters

In 2016, many of those who were undecided between Mr. Trump and his competitor former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton had voted for Mr. Trump – the then untested candidate.

Like Democratic vice-presidential candidate Kamala Harris and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton did

earlier in the day's proceedings, Mr. Obama asked people to make a plan to vote.

"...This President and those in power – those who benefit from keeping things the way they are – they are counting on your cynicism. They know they can't win you over with their policies. So they're hoping to make it as hard as possible for you to vote..." he said.

In response to Mr. Obama's speech, Mr. Trump tweeted out a series of messages including, "HE SPIED ON MY CAMPAIGN, AND GOT CAUGHT!", alleging that the Obama administration illegally spied on the Trump campaign.

Ex-Trump aide Bannon held in Mexico wall fraud case

He was charged with defrauding donors by raising \$25 mn



AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
NEW YORK

U.S. President Donald Trump's former aide Steve Bannon was on Thursday arrested and charged along with three others for defrauding hundreds of thousands of donors in a Mexico border wall fundraising campaign – a blow to the Republican incumbent.

The online crowdfunding campaign known as "We Build the Wall" raised more than \$25 million, prosecutors said, which the defendants said would be used on construction but was instead used for their own profit.

The arrest is the latest in a string of high-profile legal battles faced by members of Mr. Trump's inner circle.

Manhattan federal prosecutors said Bannon, the organization's founder Brian Kolfage, Andrew Badolato and Timothy Shea "received hundreds of thousands of dollars in donor funds from We Build the Wall, which they each used in a manner inconsistent with the organization's public representations."

All four men are charged with one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering.

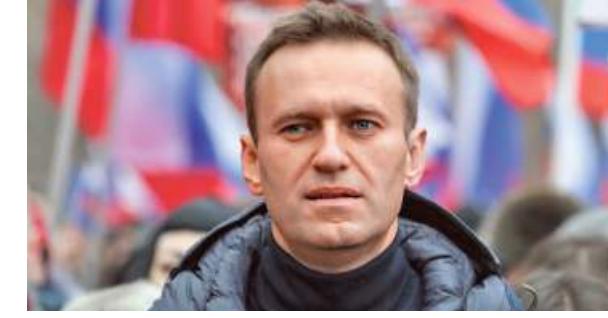
The initiative began in 2018 as a GoFundMe campaign to raise money towards the border wall Mr. Trump had promised during his 2016 campaign, which Bannon orchestrated.

Kolfage, according to the indictment, took more than \$350,000 for his own use and worked to hide his actions. After calling the effort a "volunteer organization," Bannon, 66, received over \$1 million of the donations, which he funnelled through a non-profit he controlled, using some of it for his personal expenses, prosecutors said.

All four men are charged with one count of conspiracy to commit wire fraud and one count of conspiracy to commit money laundering.

Navalny in coma after 'poisoning'

Putin critic was taken seriously ill after drinking tea on a flight to Moscow



REUTERS

MOSCOW

Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny was fighting for his life in a Siberian hospital on Thursday after drinking tea that allies said they think was laced with poison.

A fierce critic of President Vladimir Putin, Mr. Navalny started feeling ill on a plane returning to Moscow from Tomsk in Siberia on Wednesday morning. He was carried off the plane on a stretcher after it made an emergency landing at Omsk.

Kira Yarmysh, his spokeswoman, said he was in intensive care in a serious but stable condition, and on an artificial lung ventilator in a hospital in Omsk, about 2,200 km east of Moscow.

"We assume that Alexei was poisoned with something mixed into his tea. It was the only thing that he drank in the morning. Alexei is now unconscious," Ms. Yarmysh said.

There is a long history of Kremlin foes being poisoned or falling ill after suspected poisonings.

'Need for lab tests'

They include Alexander Litvinenko, who died in London in 2006 after drinking tea laced with polonium-210, and Sergei Skripal, a former double agent who was poisoned with a nerve agent in 2018 in Salisbury, England.

The Kremlin has repeatedly denied involvement in those and other incidents, calling them anti-Russian provocations.

It said on Thursday that doctors were doing everything they could to help Mr. Navalny and wished him a speedy recovery.

Any poisoning would need to be confirmed by laboratory tests, Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov said.

Ms. Yarmysh did not say who she believed may have poisoned Mr. Navalny but said police had been called to the hospital.

Passenger Pavel Lebedev posted an account of what he saw on social media.

"At the start of the flight he went to the toilet and didn't come back. He started feeling really sick. They struggled to bring him round and he was screaming in pain."

Protesters are Western puppets: Lukashenko

Demonstrators continue to build pressure on Belarus President to step down

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Belarusian demonstrators again took to the streets of the Belarusian capital and other cities on Thursday, keeping up their push for the nation's authoritarian leader to step down after extending his 26-year rule in a vote the opposition saw as rigged.

President Alexander Lukashenko has dismissed the protesters as Western puppets and threatened opposition leaders with criminal charges.

EU slammed

The 65-year-old Belarusian leader dismissed the European Union's criticism of the August 9 vote and told its leaders to mind their own business.



Together we stand: Demonstrators in front of a government building in Minsk, Belarus. ■AP

The EU leaders on Wednesday rejected the official results of the election that showed Mr. Lukashenko won 80% of the vote and expressed solidarity with protesters. The EU said it's preparing sanctions against

clubs. At least three protesters died.

The crackdown fuelled massive outrage and swelled protesters' ranks, forcing authorities to change tactics and stop breaking up crowds that grew to an unprecedented 2,000,000 on Sunday.

Mr. Lukashenko on Wednesday warned that the participants would face dismissal and ordered law enforcement agencies to protect factory managers from the opposition protesters.

Hong Kong govt. slams U.S. decision to suspend treaties

City will also suspend its extradition deal with the U.S.: China

ASSOCIATED PRESS

HONG KONG

On Wednesday, the U.S. suspended its extradition treaty with Hong Kong, becoming the latest country to do so after Canada, Australia and Britain suspended such agreements. The U.S. also suspended an agreement with Hong Kong on reciprocal tax exemptions on income derived from the international operation of ships.

"The U.S.' unilateral decision reflects its disrespect for bilateralism and multilateralism under the current administration and should be condemned by the international community," the Belarussian leader also warned members of the Coordination Council, who held their first meeting on Wednesday that they could face criminal responsibility for their attempt to create "parallel power structures."



Zhao Lijian

territory's government said.

The government "strongly objects to and deplores the U.S.' action, which is widely seen as a move to create troubles in China-U.S. relationship, using Hong Kong as a pawn," it said.

The government said that

bilateral agreements were not preferential treatment given to Hong Kong, but were negotiated in good faith to benefit both parties.

China's Foreign Ministry said Hong Kong will also suspend its extradition agreement with the U.S. in response. "I want to emphasize again that Hong Kong affairs are purely China's internal affairs and no one should interfere," said Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian.

Since July 1997, Hong Kong has surrendered 69 fugitives to the U.S., with the U.S. extraditing 23 people to Hong Kong, according to a statement.

'U.S., China to soon hold call on trade'

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE

BEIJING

Beijing and Washington will soon hold a

MARKET WATCH

	PRICE	CHANGE
Sensex	38,220	-1.02
US Dollar	75.02	-0.27
Gold	52,819	-2.67
Brent oil	44.69	-0.45

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	353.60	-3.05
Asian Paints	1874.90	-10.80
Axistel	434.95	-9.25
Bajaj Auto	3036.95	-22.85
Bajaj Finance	6289.45	-9.60
Bharti Airtel	525.55	-10.30
BPCL	412.45	8.75
Britannia Ind	3868.10	-7.30
Cipla	762.70	4.35
Coal India	138.50	3.40
Dr Reddy's Lab	4476.00	-13.25
Eicher Motors	21371.35	110.00
GAIL (India)	101.50	0.05
Grasim Ind	665.60	0.75
HCL Tech	710.10	0.25
HDFC	1785.15	-42.80
HDFC Bank	1059.00	-7.60
HDFC Life	595.05	-8.40
Hero MotoCorp	2956.05	23.00
Hindalco	199.00	2.20
Hind Unilever	2185.70	-7.90
ICICI Bank	367.75	-6.70
IndusInd Bank	513.40	-8.75
Bharti Infratech	199.25	-2.05
Infosys	955.15	-4.15
Indian Oil Corp	89.05	1.05
ITC	195.80	-2.65
JSW Steel	282.65	4.10
Kotak Bank	1338.35	-17.25
L&T	995.75	-13.35
M&M	612.05	-11.85
Maruti Suzuki	6974.70	-15.60
Nestle India Ltd.	16211.95	-133.80
NTPC	101.10	6.45
ONGC	82.15	2.60
Power Grid Corp	181.20	3.85
Reliance Ind	2097.05	-34.50
State Bank	194.75	-2.30
Shree Cement	22080.20	-1.10
Sun Pharma	522.30	-3.10
Tata Motors	121.70	-3.45
Tata Steel	432.60	0.90
TCS	2252.85	-3.75
Tech Mahindra	726.40	-0.30
Titan	1125.70	-22.70
UltraTech Cement	4144.25	-55.60
UPL	491.90	-7.50
Wipro	274.20	-5.55
Zee Entertainment	199.45	2.65

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	74.83	75.15
Euro	88.53	88.91
British Pound	98.07	98.49
Japanese Yen (100)	70.59	70.90
Chinese Yuan	10.81	10.86
Swiss Franc	81.98	82.34
Singapore Dollar	54.60	54.85
Canadian Dollar	56.61	56.85
Malaysian Ringgit	17.92	18.01
Australian Dollar	53.52	53.76

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



Hindalco, UltraTech ink MoU for red mud supply
NEW DELHI
Hindalco Industries, a global leader in aluminium and copper, on Thursday said it had signed an MoU with UltraTech Cement to deliver 1.2 million metric tonne of bauxite residue annually to the cement company's 14 plants located across 7 states. Hindalco claims to be the world's first company to achieve 100% red mud (bauxite residue) utilisation, across 3 of its refineries. PTI

L&T arm to build methanol plant for NTPC
MUMBAI
L&T Hydrocarbon Engineering, a wholly owned subsidiary of L&T, has signed an MoU with NTPC to be the engineering, procurement and construction management partner to build a CO2-to-Methanol demonstration plant at NTPC's power station. LTHE and NTPC will collaborate to accelerate the development and commercialise CO2-to-Methanol plants.

GMM to buy 54% in parent for \$27.4 million
MUMBAI
GMM Pfauder Ltd. (GMM), has announced the signing of definitive agreements to acquire a 54% stake in the global business of its parent, the Pfauder Group of the U.S., from private equity firm Deutsche Beteiligungs AG Fund VI (DBAG) for \$27.4 million. Besides, the Patel family, who are the promoters of GMM, will acquire 26% stake for an undisclosed amount. DBAG will retain 20% stake.

Volvo Trucks to deploy tractor trailer for Delhivery
BENGALURU
Volvo Trucks, in collaboration with supply chain firm Delhivery, will deploy an articulated, telematics-driven tractor-trailer combo for quick and cost-effective cargo movement. The company said with Delhivery, it worked on a long-haul tractor trailer - Volvo FM 4x2. Volvo Trucks said this will enhance the efficiency of express cargo movement through trailers of higher capacities.

'Slowdown to extend as virus goes rural'

Sluggish consumer demand, slowdown in rural lending are causes for concern, says Ministry official

REUTERS



Green shoots: Farmers planted almost 14% more between June 1 and July 31 than last year given good rains. ■ REUTERS

India is staring at a protracted slowdown as coronavirus cases reach its countryside, with signs of recovery in the rural economy hailed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi "at best a mitigating factor", government officials and analysts said.

The world's No.5 economy reports first-quarter GDP data on Aug. 31 and, according to a Reuters poll, it is likely to have contracted 20% over April-June. It is forecast to shrink 5.1% in the year to March 2021, the weakest since 1979.

Almost half of India's 1.38 billion population rely on agriculture, with the sector accounting for 15% of economic output.

Mr. Modi has been citing higher fertiliser demand and sowing of monsoon crops,

both key signs of rural activity, as "green shoots".

But four government officials said the uptick may not be as large as believed given a spike in virus cases in rural areas that were initially isolated from the pandemic.

"The economic situation has, in fact, worsened since

April and May, and we are likely moving towards a longer economic slowdown than earlier expected," a Finance Ministry official said.

The official cited sluggish consumer demand and a slowdown in rural lending as causes for concern.

"The situation on the eco-

nomy front is very serious and the government's hands are tied on the fiscal front," a government adviser with direct knowledge of budget plans said.

Both declined to be named. A Ministry spokesman declined to comment.

'A mitigating factor'

A slump in monthly demand for fuel, electricity, steel, consumer durables and auto sales over April-June highlight the dire state of the economy.

India also has the third-highest number of virus infections at more than 2.7 million, and new cases are increasingly emerging outside major cities, dashing hopes the rural economy will be a buffer against shrinking exports and manufacturing.

"While a recovery in rural activity provides a glimmer

of hope, it is at best a mitigating factor," said Rahul Bajoria, a Barclays economist. He expects India's GDP to have contracted 22.2% in the June quarter.

Farmers planted almost 14% more between June 1 and July 31 than last year given good rains, while fertilizer output rose 4.2% in June.

"Even as the momentum coming from the agriculture sector owing to a normal monsoon and robust sowing is a positive, we believe this may not sustain due to surplus labour concerns, along with an increasing proportion of active COVID-19 cases," said Upasna Bhardwaj, economist at Kotak Mahindra Bank.

A widening fiscal deficit may also limit India's ability to provide more stimulus.

The deficit had hit 83.2% of the fiscal year's target.

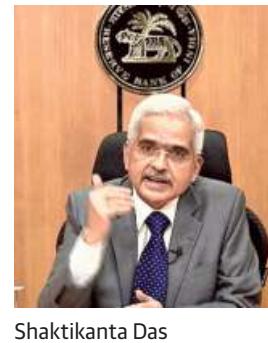
Monetary arsenal must be kept dry for use: Das

MPC opted to wait and watch: minutes

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das had emphasised that although there was headroom for further monetary policy action, the 'arsenal' has to be kept dry and used judiciously for promoting growth, which has been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, according to the MPC minutes released on Thursday.



Shaktikanta Das

brata Patra said that even when the economy improved, the expectation was for a slow, hesitant recovery, with the situation likely to worsen before it gets better.

Upicks that easing of lockdowns yielded were likely to be ephemeral and vulnerable to flattening out due to lack of underlying vigour, he said.

External member, Ravinder H. Dholakia said there were high uncertainties regarding the macroeconomic environment.

"Although the present circumstances are truly exceptional, the primary mandate given to MPC for inflation targeting at 4% with the upper tolerance limit of 6% has to be respected," he said.

'In a minority'

External member Chetan Ghate said he had been advocating a more cautious path for policy rate reductions since February 2019.

"However, I have been in a minority in the MPC. Inflation has now been above the upper band of 6% for a number of months. Notwithstanding large rate cuts to spur growth over the last year and a half, growth has steadily declined despite 250 bps in cuts since February 2019," Mr. Ghate said.

Future MPC meetings should not go soft on inflation, he added.



India and other stakeholders (DFIs, SROs, IBA, NPCI) under the aegis of the Technical Group on Financial Inclusion and Financial Literacy under the Chairmanship of Deputy Governor, RBI.

The document has been approved by the FSDC-SC in its 24th meeting, held on June 18, 2020, the RBI said.

"The NSFE: 2020-2025 intends to support the vision of the Government of India and the Financial Sector Regulators by empowering various sections of the population to develop adequate knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviour which are needed to manage their money better and to plan for the future," the statement added. The strategy recom-

mends adoption of a multi-stakeholder approach to achieve financial well-being of Indians.

To achieve the vision of creating a financially aware and empowered India, certain strategic objectives have been laid down including calculating financial literacy concepts among various sections of the population through financial education to make it an important life skill, encouraging active savings behaviour and developing credit discipline.

Improving usage of digital financial services in a safe and secure manner, and bringing awareness about rights, duties and avenues for grievance redressal are also objectives.

This NSFE for the period 2020-2025, the second one after the 2013-18 NSFE, has been prepared by the National Centre for Financial Education (NCFE) in consultation with all the Financial Sector Regulators (RBI, SEBI, IRDAI and PFRDA), DFS and other Ministries of Govt. of

laboration among various stakeholders.

"For two quarters in a row, we have been posting profit," said Partha Pratim Sengupta, MD & CEO at a media interaction.

"Despite COVID-19 impact, we were able to maintain our profit levels," Mr. Sengupta added.

"In the last two quarters, the bank made a provision of ₹401 crore towards COVID-19. We plan to recover bad debts worth ₹1,000 crore each for the next three quarters," he said.

Going forward, IOB

would focus on digitalisation to attract millennials and GenY, drive MSME business and contain non-performing assets.

Total income rose to ₹5,234 crore (₹5,006 crore) mainly on an increase in treasury income.

Provisions and contingencies contracted to ₹970 crore (₹1,170 crore).

Going forward, IOB

is expected to deal with the stress by making masks, PPE kits and home decor," he added.

The global pandemic has affected consumer behaviour as they juggled household chores with office work and other commitments," Parveen Kumar Sahni, senior VP, sewing machines business, Usha International told *The Hindu*.

"Yet, they found time to pick up sewing as a creative

outlet to deal with the stress by making masks, PPE kits and home decor," he added.

The black sewing machines used by your grandma and tailors are in demand accounting for almost 80% of the total sales," he said

'CV makers staring at a loss of ₹6,000 cr.'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI



Gross NPAs declined to ₹18,291 crore (₹33,262 crore) and net NPAs to ₹6,081 crore (₹14,174 crore).

TV PICKS

England vs Pakistan: 3rd Test, Sony Six (SD & HD), 3.30 p.m.
NBA: Sony Six (SD & HD), 6.30 a.m. & 4 a.m. (Saturday)
PGA Tour: Eurosport (SD & HD), 12.30 a.m. (Saturday)
Europa League: Sony Ten 2 & 3 (SD & HD), 12.30 a.m. (Saturday)

IN BRIEF



Toronto Raptors go 2-0 over Brooklyn Nets

MIAMI Toronto Raptors rallied to beat Brooklyn Nets 104-99 in the NBA playoffs on Wednesday. **The results:** Toronto Raptors 104 (VanVleet 24, Powell 24) bt Brooklyn Nets 99 (Temple 21) **Raptors 2-0;** Boston Celtics 128 (Tatum 33, Walker 22) bt Philadelphia 76ers 101 (Embiid 34) **Celtics 2-0;** Utah Jazz 124 (Mitchell 30, Clarkson 26) bt Denver Nuggets 105 (Porter Jr. 28, Jokic 28) **1-1;** Dallas Mavericks 127 (Porzingis 23, Doncic 28) bt LA Clippers 114 (Leonard 35, Williams 23) **1-1.** AFP

Stan Wawrinka rallies to beat Sumit Nagal

PRAGUE Three-time Grand Slam champion Stan Wawrinka outplayed Sumit Nagal 2-6, 6-0, 6-1 in the quarterfinals of the €137,560 Challenger tennis tournament on Thursday.

Other results:
Doubles (quarterfinals): Steven Diez (Can) & Blaz Rola (Slo) bt Kimmer Coppejans (Bel) & Sriram Balaji 6-4, 6-3.



Sprint star Lyles wins 100m at Hungary meet

PARIS World 200m champion Noah Lyles won the 100m in 10.05s at an athletics meet in Szekesfehervar, Hungary on Wednesday. American Lyles breezed home ahead of Briton Adam Gemili (10.28s). The 23-year-old raised his right fist in homage to the Black Lives Matter movement ahead of the race. AFP

Two South Africa cricketers test positive

JOHANNESBURG Two players of the men's cricket team have tested positive for COVID-19 and will miss a specially-arranged culture camp, Cricket South Africa said on Thursday. However, CSA did not disclose the names of the two players. CSA had conducted 50 tests on players and support staff before the team's culture camp in Skukuza (August 18-22). PTI

Liverpool plays Leeds in League season-opener

LONDON Liverpool will begin defending its Premier League title on Sept. 12 at Anfield when it plays Leeds United, which returns to the competition for the first time in 16 years. Manchester United will kick off at home to Crystal Palace on Sept. 19 and City will travel to Wolverhampton Wanderers for its opener. Mikel Arteta will begin his first full season in charge of Arsenal with a trip to newly-promoted Fulham, while Tottenham Hotspur hosts Everton in the pick of the opening weekend's fixtures. REUTERS

Bryan twins not in US Open list

NEW YORK Bob and Mike Bryan were not on the entry list released for men's doubles at the US Open, possibly signalling the end of the 42-year-old American twins' record-breaking careers. The Bryans won five of their 16 Grand Slam doubles titles together in New York, most recently in 2014. Kim Clijsters received a wild-card entry in doubles to go along with the one she got for singles as she makes her Grand Slam comeback.

Pakistan has everything to play for

Has to win the final Test, or lose its first series against England in 10 years

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
SOUTHAMPTON

Pakistan heads into Friday's third Test in a must-win situation if it has to avoid a first series defeat against England in 10 years.

The tourists are 1-0 down in a three-match campaign after a three-wicket defeat in the first Test at Old Trafford, a match where Pakistan was on top until the closing stages, was followed by a draw in a second Test at Southampton where neither side had a chance of victory in a match blighted by bad weather.

Despite little play in the second Test, Pakistan coach Misbah-ul-Haq was heartened by the determination of Mohammad Rizwan, who top-scored with 72, the resilience of Pakistan's top-order in "testing conditions" and the fact that an attack featuring leg-spinner Yasir Shah took four wickets.

Big game
"It's a big game and we want to end the series on a good note," Misbah said.

Meanwhile, England faces another selection dilemma. There will be a strong temptation to stick with the tried and tested pace trio of James Anderson, Stuart Broad and Chris Woakes, so effective in the kind of overcast English conditions that are likely to be a factor in the third Test as it was in the second.

But with English cricket constantly obsessed about the next Ashes series, a 2021-

The finale unfolds

As England and Pakistan head into the third Test with the hosts having a 1-0 advantage, a look at how the teams have fared in final games of three-match series

Eng. leading 1-0 going into the third contest:

2-0 TRIUMPH (winning final Test): **10 times**

1-0 WIN (drawing third game): **13**

1-1 DRAW (losing third Test): **3**

0-1 LOSS (drawing final game): **7**

0-2 LOSS (reverse in last Test): **2**

Pak. trailing 0-1 going into the final Test:

1-1 DRAW (winning third contest): **3 times**

First: vs Australia (away), 1976-77
Latest: vs Sri Lanka (neutral), 2013-14

0-1 LOSS (drawing final game): **7**

First: vs England (home), 1961-62
Latest: vs Sri Lanka (away), 2012

0-2 LOSS (reverse in last Test): **2**

First: vs England (away), 1967
Second: vs New Zealand (away), 1984-85

COMPILED BY
R. NARAYAN &
G. PRASAD
SOURCE: ESPNCRICINFO

JOE ROOT, England skipper
JAMES ANDERSON
STUART BROAD

We have got a great group of bowlers now that we feel cover a number of different surfaces and challenges wherever we go in the world

JOE ROOT, England skipper

22 tour of Australia, the team management would like to give express fast bowlers Jofra Archer and Mark Wood more Test-match game time before they head down under.

"It's very difficult," said England coach Chris Silverwood.

"You look at what you need for the here and now and you look down the line for what we potentially need (in Australia)."

Another immediate issue

is that Friday's match could be played on a used pitch as the weather meant the Ageas Bowl ground staff did not have enough time to prepare a fresh surface after the second Test finished on Monday.

The teams (from):

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

Wood.

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

Umpires: Richard Illingworth and Michael Gough; **TV umpire:** Richard Kettleborough; **Reserve umpire:** Mike Burns; **Match referee:** Chris Broad.

Match starts at 3.30 p.m. IST.

Chess online Olympiad promises plenty of thrills

Anand, Humpy part of strong team

P.K. AJITH KUMAR
KOZHIKODE

Every two years, a large number of chess players, ranging from lower-rated players to World champions, would assemble for the Chess Olympiad. It is the mind sport's answer to tennis' Davis and Fed Cups.

The 44th edition of the Olympiad was scheduled to have been held in Russia around this time, but world chess governing body FIDE had to postpone it till next year following the coronavirus outbreak.

Instead, an online Olympiad is being organised. Its qualifying event opened on July 25.

On Friday, the top division of the Olympiad will kick off. India is one of 25 teams seeded directly to the final stage. Fifteen teams have come through the



Viswanathan Anand.

FILE PHOTO: K.V.S. GIRI

qualifiers.

With a strong, experienced squad comprising Viswanathan Anand, Koneru Humpy, P. Harikrishna, Vidit Gujrathi, D. Harika, Nihal Sarin, R. Praggnanandhaa, R. Vaishali, Arvindh Chithambaram, Bhakti Kularki, Divya Deshmukh and Vantika Agarwal, India is among the medal contenders.

PM Modi all praise for Dhoni

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a letter to M.S. Dhoni has described him as the embodiment of a new India where family name does not make one's destiny. "You have been one of the important illustrations of the spirit of new India, where family name does not make young people's destiny but they make their own names and own destinies," wrote the PM.

"An Artist, Soldier and Sportsperson what they crave for is appreciation, that their hard work and sacrifice is getting noticed and appreciated by everyone. Thanks PM @narendramodi for your appreciation and good wishes," replied Dhoni.

CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LISBON

Serge Gnabry struck a first-half brace and Robert Lewandowski also scored as a ruthless Bayern Munich taught Lyon a harsh lesson in their Champions League semifinal here on Wednesday, winning 3-0 and setting up a tantalising final against Paris Saint-Germain.

Lyon squandered two opportunities to go ahead early on at the Estadio Jose Alvalade, through Memphis Depay and Karl Toko-Ekambi.

Bayern, with 42 goals in 10 Champions League outings, has won all its European games this season but the biggest test is still to come, against a PSG side which will be a step up from what Hansi Flick's team faced here.

The result: Bayern 3 (Gnabry 18 & 33, Lewandowski 88) bt Lyon 0.

Bayern continues merry run

Will face Paris Saint-Germain in a tantalising final



Unstoppable: Gnabry was in the thick of things, scoring twice in Bayern's 3-0 win over Lyon. ■ GETTY IMAGES

India can reach Olympic final, says Sardar Singh

Primary goal at a big event is to play the sport as you know it, says Adrian D'Souza

SANTADEEP DEY
KOLKATA

Former India captain Sardar Singh strongly believes India, which last won an Olympic hockey medal in 1980 at Moscow, has a good chance to come out on top in Tokyo as long as all the players perform at their best.

"We are No. 4 in the world rankings now and that is a positive sign. We have a proper structure in place

and there are good coaches to take care of things. I believe all the players should start training for the big stage from now and possess the winning mind-set.

"I am sure they'll already be working on it. All our 16-17 players should perform at the same level. [P.R.] Sreejesh or Manpreet [Singh] alone can't win matches for you. We need everyone. With that consistency, we

will be good enough to reach the semifinals or even the final," said the 34-year-old in the third episode of *Sportstar's Star Talk* on Thursday.

"Firstly, whether it is at Tokyo or any other big event, all that our youngsters have to do is what they love the most, which is to play hockey. And that is the primary goal – to play the sport as you know it," added Adrian

D'Souza, former goalkeeper of the national team.

Odisha has been at the forefront of the nation's hockey revolution and Vishal K. Dev, commissioner-cum-secretary of the State's Sports and Youth Services, said bagging the elusive medal at the Games will boost the sport's popularity.

"Hockey India League,

which hasn't been

organised for the past three

years, needs to be revived."

Ganesha Chaturthi falls on Saturday but festivities began on Wednesday – during pre-COVID-19 times, they were held at the BA Block of Salt Lake City – with cultural programmes being streamed live. They will end on Sunday, when the immersion of the idol in the Hooghly river will also be shown live.

"Even the location of the deity has been kept a secret, because the moment people find out the venue, they will start crowding – something

we want to avoid at any cost,"

said Anindya Chatterjee, president of the organising committee of the Bidhanagar Ganesh Chaturthi Mahotsav, told *The Hindu*.

Ganesha Chaturthi

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river will also be

shown live."

"The advantage of going

digital is that we have

a worldwide audience.

Some of the people

participating in

the cultural events are

also

EUROPA LEAGUE</h