



Criticism of govt. is not sedition, says veteran journalist Vinod Dua
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Madhya Pradesh will offer govt. jobs on NRA test scores: Chouhan
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Joe Biden says America will overcome 'this season of darkness'
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NEARBY



City records 1,250 fresh virus cases, 13 deaths

NEW DELHI

Delhi saw a total of 1,250 new COVID-19 cases and 13 deaths, as per a health bulletin released by the government on Friday. The tally now stands at 15,604 and the death toll is 4,270.

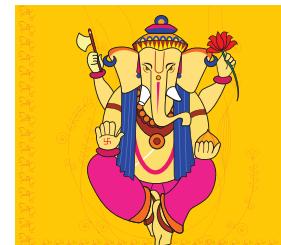
CITY ► PAGE 3

Haryana's fresh curbs to check virus spread

CHANDIGARH

Amid a surge in COVID-19 cases in Haryana, State Home Minister Anil Vij on Friday announced that all offices and shops will remain closed every Saturday and Sunday till further orders.

NORTH & EAST ► PAGE 4



THE HINDU
greets its readers on the occasion of
Vinayaka Chathurthi
There will be no issue of THE HINDU dated August 23, 2020 as Vinayaka Chathurthi is a holiday

Readers can access the online edition at www.thehindu.com

Stopping religious activities alone is strange, says top court

It allows 3 Jain temples in Mumbai to open for 2 days with COVID-19 safeguards

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

It was "strange" that the State governments were opening up activities involving economic interests but were citing the COVID-19 pandemic when it came to religious activities, the Supreme Court said on Friday.

A three-judge Bench, led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde, said this while allowing a plea by Shri Parshwanath Shvetamber Murtipujak Tapagach Jain Trust to keep temples at Dadar, Byculla and Chembur in Mumbai open for prayers on August 22 and 23 for the Paryushan festival, subject to COVID-19 preventive norms.

"We find it strange that they are willing to allow activities involving economic interests, but if it involves religion, they cite COVID to say they cannot open," Chief Justice Bobde remarked orally.

The observation was triggered by a submission made by senior advocate Dushyant Dave questioning the policy of the States in opening malls, saloons and liquor shops. If the Centre was allowing religious congregations, how could worshippers at these Jain temples be denied their right to offer prayers, Mr. Dave asked.

The Trust was seeking permission for a congregation of five at a time up to 250 people a day. "If it is only five people, we do not mind going beyond Jain community and allowing the same for Hindu, Muslim and other communities too," the Chief Justice said at one point.



Destroyer of evil: Pandemic-themed Ganesh idols kept for sale at the Poompuhar showroom in Chennai on the eve of Vinayaka Chaturthi festival on Friday. ■ R. RAGU

five at a time up to 250 people a day. "If it is only five people, we do not mind going beyond Jain community and allowing the same for Hindu, Muslim and other communities too," the Chief Justice said at one point.

Alarming rise

Senior advocate A.M. Singhvi, for Maharashtra, said the number of pandemic cases in the State had seen an alarming rise.

He said if Jains were al-

lowed by the court, how could the State prevent other religions from congregating. The Ganesh Chaturthi festival was also about to start. "If this is allowed, the floodgates will open", Mr. Singhvi struck a cautionary note.

But the court said a blanket ban on religious congregations could not be instituted. Chief Justice Bobde referred to how the court allowed the Jagannath Rath Yatra to be held in Odisha in June amidst strict restric-

tions. The court made it clear that its order to allow worshippers access to the specific Jain temples in Mumbai did not, by default, extend to other temples, trusts or other faiths.

The court said its permission would not act as a precedent for allowing congregations during Ganesh Chaturthi. Those would be considered on an individual basis by the Maharashtra State Disaster Management Authority, it clarified.

Thick smoke, which caused zero visibility, obstructed fire-fighting for sev-

Nine killed in Srisailam powerhouse unit fire

8 others manage to escape through underground tunnel

N. RAHUL

HYDERABAD

Nine people, including five engineers, were killed in a fire in one of the units of the State-run hydel station of the Srisailam project on the Telangana side of the inter-State border across the Krishna. All nine bodies have been recovered.

The fire broke out from a panel board in the 150 MW unit around 10.30 p.m. on Thursday and gradually engulfed the entire area. The 17 engineers and technical staff on duty made frantic efforts till midnight to control the fire. Eight of them, who were in the upper floors, managed to escape through an underground tunnel linked to the power station.

The remaining nine were stuck deep inside the power house on the left canal of the project, which serves Telangana. The right canal meets the irrigation requirements of Andhra Pradesh.



Frantic fight: Fire raging in the control panel of Srisailam powerhouse in Telangana on Friday. ■ U. SUBRAMANYAM

eral hours, said Energy Minister G. Jagdish Reddy.

The Power Minister said Fire Department personnel, wearing masks, managed to gain entry into the shallow unit after three aborted attempts. They were joined by rescue teams from the Na-

tional Disaster Response Force and Singareni Collieries, which reached the site around 1 p.m. on Friday. Power generation was shut down after the accident.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

OFFICIALS BAFFLED ► PAGE 8

Ahead of Bihar poll, EC nod for filing nominations online

Guidelines for elections restrict attendees at public rallies

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Ahead of the Bihar Assembly poll, the Election Commission on Friday approved guidelines for conducting polls during the COVID-19 pandemic, allowing public meetings and roadshows, subject to social distancing and other safety norms.

The broad guidelines for elections and byelections include allowing online submission of nomination forms, affidavits and security amount, and limiting the number of people accompanying candidates for filing nomination to two.

Masks, gloves for voters

For voters, the EC's guidelines include wearing of masks and gloves, and protective gear for polling staff.

On election meetings, the guidelines stated: "Public gatherings/rallies may be conducted subject to adherence to extant COVID-19

BJP leaders to visit Bihar

The BJP will be plunging into full-scale political action in poll-bound Bihar, with national president J.P. Nadda scheduled to visit Patna on August 28. Other senior party members, too, will visit the State next week, sources said. ► PAGE 9

guidelines," while limiting the number of people allowed for door-to-door campaigning to five, including the candidate.

The District Election Officer should identify dedicated grounds for the gatherings with entry and exit points marked clearly. "In all such grounds, the officer should, in advance, put markers to ensure social distancing by the attendees."

The number of attendees

should not exceed the State Disaster Management Authority's prescribed limit for public gatherings, the guidelines said. Roadshows should have convoys of five vehicles each, excluding security vehicles, separated by an interval of half an hour, instead of the existing 100 metre rule.

"Public meetings and road shows shall be permissible with suitable instructions subject to containment instructions issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs/State. Face mask, sanitiser, thermal scanners, gloves, face shield and PPE kits shall be used during the electoral process ensuring social distancing norms. Gloves shall be provided to all the electors for signing on the voter register and pressing button of EVM for voting," an Election Commission statement said.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

Woman fears for life after interfaith marriage in July

Her kin have lodged an abduction case

OMAR RASHID

LUCKNOW

A 22-year-old woman from Kannur has sought security after alleged threat to her life from her family for opting for an interfaith marriage in July.

The parents of the woman, Shalini Yadav, had lodged a police case against Mohammad Faisal and his family on the charge of kidnapping her and forcibly getting her converted, the woman and the police said.

Video on social media

In an undated video circulated on social media, a woman, who identifies herself as Ms. Yadav, claims she married Mr. Faisal and converted of her own free will "without any force or pressure".

In the video, the woman says she eloped with Mr. Faisal, a friend of six years, on June 29 under the pretext of appearing for a col-

lege examination.

Mr. Faisal is seen in the video next to her.

The woman says they got married in a court in Ghaziabad on July 2. She alleges that her father then went to Mr. Faisal's house and threatened his family, saying they wanted her back "dead or alive".

"My life is under threat. I don't know what will happen to me tomorrow. I want your help, please get us security," she pleads in the video.

Babupurwa Circle Officer Alok Kumar Singh on Friday said a First Information Report under Indian Penal Code sections including kidnapping or abducting in order to murder had been lodged on the complaint of Satrupa Yadav, the woman's mother.

The video is being investigated and the police were conducting searches at several locations to trace the couple, he said.

Maternity benefits 'scam' in Bihar district

NRHM money withdrawn under several women's names

AMARNATH TEWARY

PATNA

Leela Devi, a sexagenarian woman in Bihar's Muzaffarpur district, has on paper given birth eight times in 13 months and received ₹1,400 for each delivery under the maternity benefits scheme of the National Rural Health Mission (NRHM).

Shanti Devi, another sexagenarian, has been shown in documents as having claimed money for giving birth twice within a span of 10 hours.

Both of them, as well as 16 other women of Chhoti Kothia village and 50 in the Musa-

hari block of Muzaffarpur district overall, are unwitting victims of a "scam" allegedly orchestrated by customer service point executives of a nationalised bank and local health officials.

The matter came to light after Musahari Primary Health Centre in-charge Upendra Chaudhary smelt a rat and lodged an FIR at the local police station recently.

"When I came to know that I have been included as a beneficiary under the NRHM, I approached the bank's customer service point executive. He pleaded not to lodge

a complaint, promising to return the money withdrawn in my name," Ms. Leela Devi told local media persons. The executive in question, Sushil Kumar, is now absconding.

A local official in Muzaffarpur said an accountant of the Musahari PHC has been put under suspension even as the District Magistrate set up a four-member probe team led by an ADM-rank official after several reports of fraudulent withdrawal of money under the scheme came to light.

The team has been told to submit a report within three days.

AYUSH training in Hindi ignores T.N. group

Ministry official says non-Hindi speakers 'could leave'

SERENA JOSEPHINE M

CHENNAI / NEW DELHI

Delegates from non-Hindi speaking States, including a group of 37 government yoga and naturopathy practitioners from Tamil Nadu, were in a rude shock during a virtual training of master trainers organised by the Union Ministry of AYUSH earlier this week, with Hindi being predominantly used through the three-day programme.

Their repeated attempts to share their concerns over the loss of communication



Institute of Yoga (MDNIY).

Only a handful of speakers handling the sessions spoke in English, often a mixture of English and Hindi that was time-consuming, the participants said.

"The idea behind the programme was right but the approach was not. It was primarily to promote yoga at primary health centres. Though it was a national-level programme, they spoke only in Hindi and we do not know the language. We sent repeated messages to the organisers on the chat box asking them to speak in English but they did not accept saying they were fluent only in Hindi," one of the participants from Tamil Nadu said.

'No video of incendiary speeches by Devangana'

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police on Friday told the High Court that it does not have any video where Pinjra Tod activist Devangana Kalita can be seen making speeches instigating people during the communal violence in north-east Delhi earlier this year.

Additional Solicitor General S.V. Raju, appearing for the police, said that Ms. Kalita's call date records placed her at the location of the riots on the date that violence erupted.

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DETAILS ON ► PAGE 3

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IN BRIEF

Entrance test dates for DU's PG, UG courses out

NEW DELHI
Entrance tests to various postgraduate and a few undergraduate courses of Delhi University will be held between September 6 and September 11, said the National Testing Agency (NTA) on Thursday. Schedules for the same have been uploaded on the university's website. Other details such as centres, timing, availability of admit cards and roll numbers will be intimated 15 days before the start of the exam, the NTA added.

BJP welcomes SC decision on sealing

NEW DELHI
The BJP on Friday said it welcomed the decision of the Supreme Court, which declared sealing by the Monitoring Committee unjustifiable, in addition to asking the three municipal corporations to take necessary action for the de-sealing process. Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta said that 6,000 residential properties would get the benefit of de-sealing out of approximately 10,000 sealed properties after the decision of the Supreme Court. North East Delhi MP Manoj Tiwari alleged the problem of sealing in Delhi had persisted for the last 10-12 years due to "arbitrariness."

JNU begins registration for new term, asks students to clear dues

JNUSU and JNTUA call for postponement of process; students seek fee waiver

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

JNU had asked students to vacate their hostels after the outbreak of novel coronavirus. ■ FILE PHOTO

of the registration is a clear acknowledgement that the administration has not yet been able to create the conditions even on paper for completion of the winter semester of 2020-21, let alone a proper completion.

Phased return

The JNTUA said that it took exception to the JNU administration's functioning of the university in which formalities like registration and extracting fees through this from students are prioritised over ensuring that the institution's responsibilities towards their education are discharged to the fullest extent. It added that the 'provisional' nature

The JNUSU said that no student should be left to uncertainty as online learning has been proved exclusionary and discriminatory and students who have opted for offline/blended mode be given the opportunity to finish their semester requirements through phased return to the campus.

"Phase-wise return of students should start with prioritising stranded students and those who wish to submit their thesis/dissertation and need to access campus based facilities/resources. This will require the administration to facilitate test facility and isol-

ation centre on campus," the students said.

The ABVP also took out a demonstration outside the Dean of Students Welfare office demanding the relaxation of hostel fee and miscellaneous charges during the lockdown up till the reopening of campus and hostel facilities.

"Many students who had not used the mess facility during the period of lockdown have also been unjustifiably charged with inflated mess bills. Students should not be forced to pay for services that were neither utilised nor rendered to them," the ABVP said.

The JNU VC M. Jagadesh Kumar, tweeting a photo of an empty campus road said:

"Online registration process of continuing students at JNU has started today [Friday] and is picking up." He added that the process for registration was convenient and simple, which the students can do from their place of stay. "Let us follow COVID-19 regulations in letter and spirit to keep ourselves and others safe," he said.



DUTA members protest against the Delhi government at Mandi House on Friday. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHAKAR

DU teachers protest over pending salary

Staffers of 28 colleges haven't got wages

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Teachers of Delhi University formed a human chain to protest the non-payment of salaries and pensions to staff of 12 colleges fully funded by the Delhi government, at Mandi House on Friday.

Nearly 150 teachers formed a human chain, protesting against the non-payment for nearly four months, the Delhi University Teachers' Association (DUTA) said.

The crisis of inadequate grants in all the 28 Delhi government-funded and aided colleges of DU has persisted for over a year due to the tussle between the university administration and the Delhi government over the issue of

formation of governing bodies, the group noted.

The insensitive attitude of the Delhi government towards the employees of these colleges has compelled the DUTA to continue its agitation, it said. It also hit out at Deputy Chief Minister over "sweeping charges of corruption" made by him recently and questioned as to why retired employees were being victimised.

The inordinate delay in release of adequate grants was causing severe hardships to the staffers, it said. Termining the government's present stance "callous abdication of its responsibility", DUTA demanded it to resolve the issue responsibly.

DMRC, north body sign MoU for multi-level parking facility

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) and the North Delhi Municipal Corporation on Friday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to develop a multi-level car parking facility, proposed to accommodate 3,000 cars, at Nabi Karim.

The parking facility, which is to be a part of an integrated station complex at Nabi Karim, will be fully automated.

"While an interchange facility for the Janakpuri West-RK Ashram Marg metro corridor and the proposed Inderlok-Indraprastha corridor of Phase IV will come up underground, a six-storey car parking facility along with a three-storey commercial complex will be constructed above the station structure," said DMRC officials.

DMRC spokesperson Anuj Dayal said: "The metro station shall consist of four underground levels and on the surface, the building shall have a formation of ground floor plus eight floors. Above the surface, three floors shall be used for commercial purposes and six shall be utilised for parking."

North Delhi Mayor Jai Prakash said: "This ultra-modern project would be a milestone project for the North DMC. Residents of the walled city will get the benefit of this project after its completion and the project will also speed up the development work of old Delhi."

Located at the Shahi Idgah Road in Sadar Bazar, the project will cover over 25,000 square metres.

"As per initial proposal submitted by the DMRC, construction of underground metro station was to be completed by January 2023 and in the meantime inviting bid and finalization of concessionaire for the construction of multi-level car parking and commercial space above ground will be completed," said officials.

Hunt on for fraudster who duped hundreds of lakhs

Victims protest outside police station

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Hundreds of people gathered outside Govindpuri police station here on Thursday, complaining against a man – who allegedly duped them of several lakhs. The victims demanded action from the police.

A video of the ruckus outside the police station surfaced in which one of the victims can be heard saying that she has been conned of a few lakhs by the man. She also claimed that the man had cheated several people of ₹40 crore.

DCP (South-East) R.P. Meena said all the members had to pay ₹1,000 per month for 15 months and at the end, they were given ₹20,000. "The accused also used to pay ₹700/month to a member, who used to involve 10 others in the scheme," he said, adding that a lucky draw was also conducted in which the selected person would get a lump sum amount or gift. The transactions were made in cash. The police launched a manhunt to nab the accused.

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

fund group – Friends Lucky Draw – and he along with his wife Pini, brother Abdul Kalam, Fazluddin and other accomplices collected money from investors. They all are absconding.

Mr. Meena said all the members had to pay ₹1,000 per month for 15 months and at the end, they were given ₹20,000. "The accused also used to pay ₹700/month to a member, who used to involve 10 others in the scheme," he said, adding that a lucky draw was also conducted in which the selected person would get a lump sum amount or gift. The transactions were made in cash. The police launched a manhunt to nab the accused.

No salary for months, caretakers of night shelters a worried lot

These workers allege that they are facing hardships in managing household finances due to non-payment

the rent. My other daughter has epilepsy and I don't have money for her medicines. What should I do?" a worried Prakash asked. Prakash and his 20-year-old son Tej, who is also a caretaker at a night shelter in east Delhi, said they are owed ₹1.5 lakh to ₹2 lakh for their work respectively. Prakash said he has been working here since 2018 and his son, since 2019.

Their monthly salaries are ₹16,000 (approx) and ₹7,000 (approx) respectively, as per the minimum wages set by the government. However, their payments have been partial and irregular, alleged Prakash.

"My daughter's wedding is on September 13. I don't have money to even pay

the last week of July. Earlier, I was getting irregular payment of ₹10,000 and ₹5,000 on any day of the month," he said, adding that he has spoken to his supervisors but they keep stonewalling him. Rajesh Kumar (34) from Kanpur, who works at the shelter in Shahdara, said he has not been paid salary since his joining in January this year. "I was working with another NGO when I was told by a contractor that this night shelter was in a bad shape. I quit that job to come here. I cleaned the shelter but received no salary since my joining. I have got ₹5,000 on rakshabandhan," he added.

Rajesh said he had to borrow ₹20,000 on inter-

est from a local financier to fund his 6-year-old daughter's treatment. "I am really worried about repaying the loan," he said, adding that he stays in the night shelter as he can't afford an accommodation.

Sanju from Seelampur, who works as a caretaker at a shelter in Nand Nagri, said he was last paid in April and has been receiving payments irregularly. "My latest complaint was to Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal online, which I had sent in December last year. I have been working as a caretaker for the last five years and ever since the tender has been given to Sadik Masih, the payments have become a huge problem," he said.

DUSIB member Bipin Rai said they will look into the matter.

Look into installation of RWHS: NGT

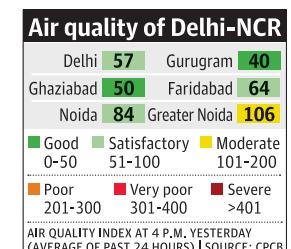
STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed a panel to look into a plea seeking installation of rainwater harvesting systems (RWHS) in government buildings here.

A Bench headed by NGT chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said: "In view of the fact that this Tribunal has already constituted a committee headed by a former Delhi High Court Judge to go into the issue of RWHS in Delhi, we request the said panel to look into issues raised in this application and include its observation on the subject in its next report."

The directions came when the green panel was hearing a plea moved by petitioner Mahesh Chandra Saxena, seeking directions to install properly designed rainwater harvesting systems as the existing ones in government buildings were not designed properly.

The plea had contended that if the present designs continue it could lead to further contamination of underground as various pollutants mix up with the water to be harvested.



HIMACHAL PRADESH PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT
e-Procurement Notice

INVITATION FOR BIDS (IFB)

1. The Executive Engineer Kalpa Division, HPPWD, Kalpa, District Kinnaur (HP) on behalf of Governor of H.P. invites the online bids on item rate, in electronic tendering system, in 2 Cover System for the under mentioned work from the eligible and approved contractors/Firms registered with HPPWD Department.

Sr. No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost	EMD	Cost of Tender	Time allowed	Eligible class of Contractor
1.	C/O Vigilance office at Reckong Peo in District Kinnaur (HP) - C/O Building portion, WS & SI, Site development, Septic Tank and Rain water harvesting system	1,10,02,049/-	1,43,000/-	5,000/-	Two Years	"B" Class
2.	C/O Multipurpose Hall at Ice Skating Rink at Kalpa in Distt. Kinnaur (HP) (SH- Building portion, WS & SI, Septic Tank and site development)	98,17,035/-	1,31,000/-		Two Years	"B" Class

2. Availability of Bid Document and mode of submission: The Bid document is available online and bid should be submitted in online mode on website <https://htptenders.gov.in>. Bidder would be required to register in the web-site which is free of cost. For submission of bids, the bidder is required to have Digital Signature Certificate (DSC) from one of the authorized Certifying Authorities (CA). Aspiring bidders who have not obtained the user ID and password for participating in e-tendering in HPPWD, may obtain the same from the website: <https://htptenders.gov.in>. Digital signature is mandatory to participate in the e-tendering. Bidders already possessing the digital signature issued from authorized CAs can use the same in this tender.

3. Key Dates:-

1. Date of Online Publication	27-08-2020 10.00 HRS
2. Document Download Start and End Date	27-08-2020 10.00 HRS upto 10-09-2020 17.30 HRS
3. Bid Submission Start and End Date	27-08-2020 10.00 HRS upto 10-09-2020 17.30 HRS
4. Physical Submission of EMD and Cost of Tender Document	11-09-2020 upto 5.00 HRS
5. Date of Technical Bid opening, Evaluation of Technical Bid followed by Opening of Financial Bid.	14-09-2020 11.30 HRS

4. TENDER DETAILS:
The Tender Documents shall be uploaded online in 2 Cover:-
i) Cover-1: shall contain scanned copies of all "Technical Documents/Eligibility Information".
ii) Cover-2: shall contain "BOQ/Financial Bid", where contractor will quote his offer for each item.

5. SUBMISSION OF ORIGINAL DOCUMENTS:- i) The bidders are required to submit (a) original demand draft towards the cost of bid document and (b) original bid security/Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) in the shape of FDR duly pledged in favour of Executive Engineer, Kalpa Division, HPPWD, Kalpa and other Technical Documents in the O/O the Executive Engineer, Kalpa Division, HPPWD, Kalpa as specified in Key dates Sr. No. 3 on Tender Opening Date, failing which the bids will be declared non-responsive.

6. LIST OF MACHINERY, TOOL, PLANT:- The contractor/bidder must have to upload/submit the list of Machinery/tools/Equipment etc. in the form of affidavit.

7. CONTRACTOR'S REGISTRATION:- The bidders have to produce the enlistment of competent authority in appropriate class valid at the time of tender and up load as pdf.

8. GST REGISTRATION:- The bidders have to produce/upload the GST registration at the time of tender and up load as pdf.

9. Employee provident fund:- The bidders have to produce/upload the EPF No. as pdf.

10. PAN No.: - The bidders have to produce/upload the PAN No. in pdf.

11. Eligibility Criteria:-
i) Work Done Certificate:- The bidder must have successfully completed similar nature of work not less than 40 % of estimated cost during the last five years (without liquidated damages or compensation).
ii) Work in hand Certificate:- The bidders have to submit/upload the list of works which are completed/in hand (progress) in the proforma shown in General rule No. 19 in schedule "F". These statement should be countersigned by the Engineer-in-Charge not below the rank of Executive Engineer or equivalent in State/Central Govt. PSU's with his seal. The original/attested copies of same may be submitted at the time of physical submission of tender.
iii) Turn over:- Bidders have to submit/upload the turnover of last five years duly certified from the Chartered Accountant in pdf.
iv) Affidavit:- Contractors have to submit an Affidavit wherein mentioned that they have not more than two works in hand in HPPWD.

12. BID OPENING DETAILS:- The bids shall be opened on 14-09-2020 at 11.30 HRS in the office of Executive Engineer, Kalpa Division, and HPPWD, Kalpa, (HP) by the authorised officer. In their interest, the tenderer are advised to be present along with original documents at the time of opening of tenders. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

13. The bids for the work shall remain valid for acceptance for a period of 120 days after the deadline date for bid submission.

14. Other details can be seen in the bidding documents. The officer inviting tender shall not be held liable for any delays due to system failure beyond its control. Even though the system will attempt to notify the bidders of any bid updates, the Employer shall not be liable for any information not received by the bidder. It is the bidders' responsibility to verify the website for the latest information related to the tender.

Executive Engineer
Kalpa Division,
HPPWD, Kalpa.

HP/2393/20-21

HIM SUCHANA AVAM JAN SAMPAK

BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, New Delhi

TENDER NOTICE Date: 22.08.2020

Sealed tenders under Two Bid System (Unpriced & Priced) is invited for following job from all bidders.

NIT No.	Brief Item Description	Cost of EMD (₹)	Due Date & Time of Submission	Date & Time of Opening
CMC/BR/20-21/ SV/AR/AN/866	"HIRING OF BHARAT BILL PAYMENT OPERATING UNITS (BBPOUs) FOR COLLECTION OF ELECTRICITY BILL PAYMENTS FOR BSES RAJDHANI POWER LIMITED"	5 Lac	11.09.2020 15:45 HRS	11.09.2020 16:00 HRS

Cost of each Tender Document: ₹ 110/-

For details in respect of Equipment/BOM/Services, Qualifying requirements, Terms & conditions, purchase/submission of tender documents etc. please visit our website www.bsesdelhi.com

Head (Contracts & Materials)

Regd. Off. : BSES Rajdhani Power Limited, BSES Bhawan, Nehru Place, New Delhi-110019 | Corporate Identification No.: U40109DL2001PLC111527

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Timings
DELHI

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
MONDAY, AUG. 24
RISE 05:56 SET 18:51
RISE 11:19 SET 22:43

Delhi Weather	max min
Delhi City	35 24
Safdarjung	35 24
Palam	34 25

Delhi Palam Today
35°C A short spell of light rain or drizzle may occur at some places. Warm and humid day likely.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
34°C Warm and humid day. A spells of light rain may be a chance at few places with moderate winds.

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THE HINDU
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AAP slams civic bodies over poor ranks in Swachh survey

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Attacking the municipal corporations of Delhi following low rankings in the Swachh Survekshan, AAP spokesperson Saurabh Bhardwaj on Friday said that if AAP were to be brought to power at the municipal corporations, it would bring in a "cleanliness model" just as it had in education and health.

Among 47 cities with a population of above 10 lakh, the SDMC came in at 31, the North Corporation at 43 and the EDMC was at 46. Highlighting that other cities with population of above 10 lakh, such as Indore, Navi Mumbai and Surat had performed much better, Mr. Bhardwaj said that the BJP had "devastated" the Capital of India."

No video of provocative speeches by Pinjra Tod activist, police tell HC

Investigating officer said that area SHO had heard Kalita's incendiary speech

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police on Friday told the High Court that it does not have any video where Pinjra Tod activist Devangana Kalita can be seen making speeches instigating people during the communal violence in north-east Delhi earlier this year.

Additional Solicitor General (ASG) S.V. Raju, appearing for the police, however said that Ms. Kalita's call date records (CDR) placed her at the location of the riots on the date of occurrence.

The ASG said that the riots were pre-planned and part of a larger conspiracy to malign the image of the country at a time when US President Donald Trump was to come here. The ASG said that since a large number of persons were involved in the riots, it is not possible that everyone comes in video footage.

During the hearing conducted through videoconferencing, Justice Suresh Kumar Kait asked the investigating officer if he had recorded any incendiary speech given by Ms. Kalita during the riots. "I want to know what she said which instigated the mob,"



Residents leaving Shiv Vihar after the riots. ■ FILE PHOTO

Justice Kait said.

Distance factor

The investigating officer replied that she was making the statement a kilometre away and there was a mob of about 10,000 people with no media presence. To this, Justice Kait asked how Ms. Kalita's participation in rioting or violence.

Mr. Sibal said that Ms. Kalita was not denying that she participated in the protest. But the police have to show any video in which she was part of a violent crowd. He said that Ms. Kalita neither featured in any of the CCTV footage collected by police nor was her name taken by the co-accused in his statement.

The High Court was also informed that the local SHO had specifically informed Ms. Kalita about the implementation of Section 144 in the area on the day of the riots and had asked her to

disperse the crowd.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Ms. Kalita, contended that she was only protesting against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and that police do not have any evidence to show Ms. Kalita's participation in new citizenship law.

Ms. Kalita was first arrested on May 23, along with fellow JNU student Ms. Natasha Narwal, in connection with an FIR registered on February 24 over the sit-in protest at Jaffrabad Metro Station against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act.

Delhi Police has also invoked sections of the stringent anti-terror law – Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in a separate case related to the communal violence against Ms. Kalita for allegedly being part of a "premeditated conspiracy" in the riots.

The ASG stated that the NHRC report did not say that the police action as a whole was unnecessary. Mr. Lekhi said that terming the entry of police into the Jamia campus as "illegal and malafide" just because the students inside the campus were from minority community is completely untenable and unfounded.

Mr. Lekhi further stated that the protests at Jamia was not peaceful, including destruction of private and public property. He said the

court has adjourned the hearing on the matter for August 28.

The court was hearing a batch of petitions, moved by lawyers, students of JMI, residents of Okhla in south Delhi, seeking setting up of a judicial commission to look into the Jamia violence and registration of FIRs against the erring police officers. Refuting the allegations, Delhi Police has sought dismissal of pleas.

On previous hearing, senior advocate Salman Khurshid, representing one of the petitioners, also urged for an independent committee into the police brutality. He said that the police should not become a judge in its own cause. Mr. Khurshid pointed out that since there was a public road dividing the Jamia campus, students had gathered on the road where they

No positive cases among inmates at Delhi prisons

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Prisons department on Friday said that all the inmates who had contracted COVID-19 have recovered and now, there are no cases among the prisoners in all the three jail complexes.

Director General (Prisons) Sandeep Goel said the pandemic situation has improved in Delhi Prisons. "In August, only two inmates of Tihar tested positive for COVID-19 and both have recovered. As on Friday, there is no inmate who is COVID-19 positive in the three jail complexes of Delhi – Tihar, Rohini and Mandoli," he said.

"A total of 63 prison inmates tested positive, out of which 61 have recovered and two died," he said. Mr. Goel said that the first inmate tested positive on May 13 in Rohini Jail. Two COVID-19-positive inmates of Mandoli Jail unfortunately died on June 15 and July 4. Both were senior citizens, he said.

Meanwhile, two staffers are yet to recover from the virus. According to prison administration, a total of 169 staffers – 87 Delhi Jail staffers and 82 Tamil Nadu Special Police staffers – tested positive, out of which 167 have recovered.

NHRC gave clean chit to none in Jamia violence: HC

'Police action not handled professionally'

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday observed that the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) report on violence at Jamia Millia Islamia University in December last year did not give clean chit to anyone.

A Bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Praetek Jalan noted that the report also stated that the "entire police action was not handled very professionally".

The High Court's remark came after Additional Solicitor General Aman Lekhi, appearing for Delhi Police, cited the NHRC report to seek dismissal of a bunch of petitions to set up an independent enquiry into the police brutality on students inside the university campus.

The ASG stated that the NHRC report did not say that the police action as a whole was unnecessary. Mr. Lekhi said that terming the entry of police into the Jamia campus as "illegal and malafide" just because the students inside the campus were from minority community is completely untenable and unfounded.

Mr. Lekhi further stated that the protests at Jamia was not peaceful, including destruction of private and public property. He said the



protests was a mask for something far grave and serious.

The court has adjourned the hearing on the matter for August 28.

The court was hearing a batch of petitions, moved by lawyers, students of JMI, residents of Okhla in south Delhi, seeking setting up of a judicial commission to look into the Jamia violence and registration of FIRs against the erring police officers. Refuting the allegations, Delhi Police has sought dismissal of pleas.

On previous hearing, senior advocate Salman Khurshid, representing one of the petitioners, also urged for an independent committee into the police brutality. He said that the police should not become a judge in its own cause. Mr. Khurshid pointed out that since there was a public road dividing the Jamia campus, students had gathered on the road where they

₹1 crore for deceased sanitation worker's kin

CM meets family, promises support

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Delhi government said that a decision to increase the number of CATS ambulances has helped the government save lives of thousands of patients. "Till May 15, Delhi had 160 CATS ambulances and by August 10, it increased to 594. This decision helped in the reduction of response time of CATS ambulances," it said. On May 15, the response time of CATS ambulances was around 55 minutes, which reduced to 18 minutes by August 10, it added.

The capacity of receiving calls for the ambulance was also increased from 20 lines on May 15 to 30 lines at present. "On May 15, the number of calls attended by the CATS ambulances was 750, the fleet status was 160, the lines connected were 20, and the response time was 55 minutes. The number of calls refused was 222. On August 10, the number of calls attended by CATS was 945, the fleet status was 594, the lines connected were 30, the response time was 18 minutes, and no call was refused in this month," it added.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday met the family members of sanitation worker Raju, who died in the line of duty, and offered them a cheque of ₹1 crore.

Sanitation worker Raju laid down his life while serving people. He contracted COVID-19 while on duty. I have offered them financial assistance of ₹1 crore... we will do whatever we can to support his family," the Chief Minister said.

in the line of duty. He was employed at the North Delhi Municipal Corporation-run Hindu Rao Hospital and had been appointed to ensure cleanliness and sanitation for COVID-19 patients.

Sanitation worker Raju laid down his life while serving people. He contracted COVID-19 while on duty. I have offered them financial assistance of ₹1 crore... we will do whatever we can to support his family," the Chief Minister said.

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2 held for 'donating' ₹2 cr. to AAP through shell companies

These companies were used for money laundering, entry operation and other illegal activities: police

SAURABH TRIVEDI

NEW DELHI

Delhi Police has arrested two men, including a chartered accountant, for allegedly donating ₹2 crore to AAP through shell companies, officials said on Friday.

The accused have been identified as Mukesh Kumar (53), a resident of Ganga Vihar, and CA Sudhanshu Bansal (43), a resident of Laxmi Nagar, they said.

The police received a complaint from the Registrar of Companies (RoC) where it was mentioned that the four companies allegedly donated ₹50 lakh each to AAP on April 5, 2014, a senior police officer said.

The RoC issued notices to all the directors of the companies, but none of them, except one Deepak Aggarwal, one of the directors in Skyline Metal and Alloys Pvt. Ltd., ap-

peared before the agency. He revealed that the signatures and photograph, on the basis of which the DIN was issued in his name, do not belong to him, the officer said.

On the basis of the complaint, a case was registered on November 21, 2015.

During investigation, the police found that the four companies did not exist at the address available with the RoC record.

"FSL report confirmed that the various documents relating to Deepak Aggarwal submitted to Ministry of Corporate Affairs for issuing DIN were bearing forged signatures. Photograph on the DIN form does not belong to him,"

The trial of the money indicated that the fund for donation to AAP was generated from the account of Antara Purukul Senior Living Ltd, a subsidiary of Max Group, Mr. Mishra said. The two accused

fraudulently procured DIN on the basis of fabricated documents and morphed photographs. Thereafter, the DIN was used for incorporating shell companies. These shell companies were used for money laundering, entry operation and other illegal activities, the police added.

AAP's response

AAP, in a statement, said that it is committed to honest and transparent politics. "AAP will never compromise on its integrity," it said. It added that this case has been investigated by almost all agencies and that it has cooperated with all and would continue to do so.

Motorists get incorrect challans, seek cancellation

Traffic police to register FIRs against people using fake number plates

SAURABH TRIVEDI

NEW DELHI

Sanjeev Kumar, a motorist, received an SMS from the Delhi Traffic Police over a violation. He was shocked when he verified the challan and found a picture of a vehicle bearing registration number of his car, over-speeding on Ring Road.

"My car was at a service centre for the past two weeks after it developed some technical problem. I have a Maruti Suzuki Wagon R, but the car bearing similar registration number was a Hyundai Grand i10. It is clear that someone is impersonating my car registration number with a wrong intention. I have re-

ported the case to the traffic police for further action," said Mr. Kumar.

Random checks

Narendra Singh Bundela, Joint CP (Traffic), said that they have received similar complaints from motorists and they were taking such cases seriously. "If any motorist faces such situation, then he can approach the traffic police and his challan will be cancelled.

We are in the process of registering FIRs against motorists using fake number plates. The traffic policemen on the ground have been instructed to randomly check vehicle registration certificates to identify

motorists using fake number plates," said Mr. Bundela.

Several motorists have raised their grievances on Facebook and Twitter and demanded cancellation of challans issued to them.

Different car

Lalit Kaushik, raising the issue on Twitter, claimed that he received challan but the car shown in the system did not belong to him. Another motorist, Nitin, said that he had raised the issue over an incorrect challan with the Delhi Traffic Police several times but all in vain. The issue still remains unresolved.

"I got a challan for the

cab that is not in use since lockdown. A cab of a different make, bearing registration number of my cab was seen in the challan sent by the traffic police. It is a serious issue as it is a public transport system and the driver using fake number plate could harm passengers," said a cab driver, who wished not to be named.

Since the COVID-19 outbreak, the Delhi Traffic Police has moved to e-challan system to avoid any direct contact with motorists. In some cases, vehicle owners are getting challans even after reporting to the Delhi Traffic Police and getting challans removed from the website.

O Captain! My Captain!
₹75*

* Shipping charges extra

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Haryana's fresh curbs to check virus spread

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Amid a surge in COVID-19 cases in Haryana, State Home Minister Anil Vij on Friday announced that all offices and shops, except those providing essential services, will remain closed on every Saturday and Sunday till further orders.

"All offices and shops except essential will remain closed in Haryana on every Saturday and Sunday due to #COVID-19," Mr. Vij said in a tweet.

Later, a government order by Haryana State Disaster Management Authority said that to contain further spread, all offices (both public and private) and shops, except those dealing with essential services, would remain closed on Saturday and Sunday throughout Haryana.

No transport ban
An official spokesperson said that the order will have no effect on public and private transport and on exams being conducted by Haryana Public Service Commission and Haryana Staff Selection Commission.

COVID-19: 5 Rajasthan districts speeding towards full recovery

Aggressive testing, containment plans helped in fight: Minister

MOHAMMED IQBAL
JAIPUR



A health worker collects a swab sample of an elderly woman during a door-to-door drive in Jaipur. ■ FILE PHOTO: PTI

Five districts in Rajasthan are speeding towards full recovery from the COVID-19 infection, having crossed 90% recuperation rate, while 11 districts have registered a recovery rate of more than 80%. The betterment of health infrastructure in the State has led to the recoveries crossing the 50,000 mark earlier this week.

Medical & Health Minister Raghu Sharma said here on Friday that aggressive testing and containment strategies for specific areas had helped the State fight the pandemic, while a special screening campaign had been launched for vulnerable groups, including the people with comorbidities, to prevent deaths.

The issue of COVID-19 management and economic impact of the lockdown came up for a debate in the State Assembly on Friday. The House was adjourned thrice amid an uproar over the Opposition BJP's charges of negligence and heated arguments with the treasury members. The proceedings were later adjourned to Monday.

Mr. Sharma said the State's

benchmarks in handling the health crisis included the well-planned Bhilwara model, Bikaner's three-layer containment strategy and other intensified models. The five districts speeding towards full recovery were Churu (90.2%), Jalore (96.3%), Jhunjhunu (91.4%), Pali (91.2%) and Sirohi (90.6%).

'First to impose curbs'
"Rajasthan was the first State to impose lockdown, while the strictness adopted in the beginning helped contain the spread of virus. The teams of paramedical staff have reached almost all areas in the State for conducting health surveys," Mr. Sharma said. The State government has completed 20 lakh CO-

VID-19 tests, while the mortality rate has reduced to 1.3%.

Akhil Arora, Principal Secretary (Medical & Health), said the spike in the number of positive cases was the result of aggressive testing, as the State had achieved the RT-PCR testing capacity of 45,000 per day.

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot met the experts here on Wednesday to deliberate on the adherence to health protocol during the pandemic. The experts pointed out that high-flow oxygen for treatment of infection was being arranged in all medical colleges and critical care had been strengthened in the hospitals where serious patients were brought.

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PUBLIC NOTICE

DEATH ANNIVERSARIES

SIXTH ANNIVERSARY

MRS. LALITHA Bhanu, (N.Lalitha) 89 yrs, a noted carnatic music singer at AIR Chennai & Pondicherry, and a playback singer in Tamil, Malayalam films in '50s, passed away at 10:45AM, on 20th Aug.

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Corrigendum Notice

Subject: Tender No. OP2/19/2020-21-Appointment of consultant for Preparation, Construction and Compilation of Fixed Asset as well as Depreciation Register and Preparation, Construction & Compilation of Accounts for FY 2019-20, 2020-21 & 2021-22 on commercial account principles for regulated business of electricity as per regulatory requirement along with its submission, presentation and defense before Regulatory commission / statutory bodies as per scope of work.

The subject cited tender due to be opened on dated i.e. 21.08.2020 at 16.00 Hrs. is hereby extended upto 25.08.2020 at 14.00 Hrs. for uploading and opening date i.e. 25.08.2020 at 16.00 Hrs. due to some administrative reason. All the other terms and conditions shall remain the same.

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Electricity (OP) Division No. 2
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General Secretary : Ramesh Kamat S/o Nandal Lal R/o 44, Karmegh Tole, Moga, Distt. Anand, Khutana, District Madhubani, Bihar.

Treasurer : Mahesh Prasad Mandal S/o Laitu Mandal R/o Jhiti, P.O. Hisar, P.S. Kharif, District - Madhubani-847230, Bihar. This party has submitted application to the Election Commission of India, New Delhi for its registration as a Political Party under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951. Name/ address of the office bearers of the party are as follows:-

President : Ravindra Charan Mandal S/o Laitu Mandal R/o Jhiti, P.O. Hisar, P.S. Kharif, District - Madhubani-847230, Bihar. Anchal-Patirhat, District-Saharsa, Bihar.

General Secretary : Ramesh Kamat S/o Nandal Lal R/o 44, Karmegh Tole, Moga, Distt. Anand, Khutana, District Madhubani, Bihar.

Treasurer : Mahesh Prasad Mandal S/o Laitu Mandal R/o Jhiti, P.O. Hisar, P.S. Kharif, District - Madhubani-847230, Bihar.

If anyone has any objection to the registration of "HINDUSTAN INQILAB PARTY" to file their memorandum to the Election Commission of India, Nirman Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001 within 30 days of the publication of this notice.

This is to publicy announce that my client Mrs. Charu Dhingra has entered into an agreement to sell with Mr. Harbars Lal Arora for purchase of the property bearing no. 233 Ground Floor, Block B-3, Pashchim Vihar, New Delhi-63. Original property papers have been handed over to my client. It is hereby requested that in case any person has any objection to the sale of this property with regard to the said property or this property has any sort of lien, mortgage, agreement to sell, possession, right to possession or any claim of any nature against the said property or has any objection to the sale transaction which is to take place between the aforesaid persons kindly come forward and contact me within a period of 15 days from the date of the present publication. In case no objections are received within the said period, it is hereby informed that no claim of any person with respect to the said property.

Varun Chawla (Advocate) A-68, East Avenue Punjab Bagh, New Delhi-26, Enr-No-D23432/013 #997195999.

AMU Leasing Private Limited
RR-12, Mianwali Nagar, Near
Peeragari Chowk, New Delhi
110087

CIN: U74899DL1993PTC055361

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01.04.2020

a) E-rickshaw loan rate: 20% p.a.

25% p.a. (on flat basis)

b) Business loan rates: 9% p.a. 13% p.a. (on reducing balance basis)

This is to publicy announce that my client Mrs. Charu

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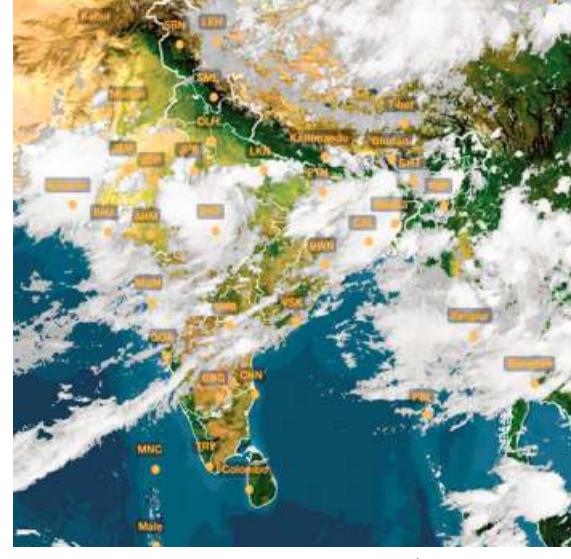
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present publication. In case no objections are

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

Forecast for Saturday: Moderate thunderstorms accompanied with lightning likely at isolated places over Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and coastal Andhra Pradesh. Heavy/heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Gangetic West Bengal, Odisha, Gujarat, Saurashtra & Kutch, central Maharashtra and Konkan & Goa

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	0.1	33.3	25.4	Kozhikode	11.2	31.4	24.6
Ahmedabad	1	33.3	26.4	Kurnool	20.9	31.4	22.7
Aizawl	—	27.2	—	Lucknow	0.6	32.3	27.2
Allahabad	2.8	32.4	27.2	Madurai	—	40.2	26.4
Bengaluru	—	28.0	20.9	Mangaluru	21.1	30.2	23.9
Bhopal	51.2	28.3	22.4	Mumbai	31.6	27.2	24.8
Bhubaneswar	—	30.9	24.6	Mysuru	1	28.9	21.6
Chandigarh	20.2	30.4	24.7	New Delhi	8.2	35.0	24.2
Chennai	—	35.4	28.2	Patna	4.4	31.0	26.2
Coimbatore	—	33.0	23.3	Pond Blair	—	31.8	26.0
Dehradun	29.4	29.0	22.1	Puducherry	—	35.3	27.0
Gangtok	39.2	19.7	17.2	Pune	1.4	26.8	22.2
Goa	25.8	—	25.2	Raipur	15.8	30.2	24.8
Guwahati	2.8	33.0	25.2	Ranchi	0.2	26.6	23.0
Hubballi	—	26.0	22.0	Shillong	10.9	22.6	18.5
Hyderabad	9.6	29.2	21.8	Shimla	0	21.6	18.3
Imphal	1.7	30.6	22.2	Srinagar	0.4	26.0	18.2
Jaipur	0.2	32.9	25.3	Tiruchi	—	39.0	26.6
Kochi	1.4	31.0	25.4	Vijayawada	0.2	33.2	25.0
Kohima	5.2	27.0	19.8	Visakhapatnam	0.8	—	26.2
Kolkata	60.1	27.8	25.5				

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

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CITIES SO₂ NO_x CO PM_{2.5} PM₁₀ CODE

Ahmedabad	15	38	36	...60	...65	GREEN
Bengaluru	17	15	22	...79	...67	GREEN
Chennai	5	13	71	...67	...67	GREEN
Delhi	29	28	72	46	102	ORANGE
Hyderabad	6	39	11	18	20	GREEN
Kolkata	8	12	11	23	56	GREEN
Lucknow	7	37	65	56	96	GREEN
Mumbai	20	28	9	29	61	GREEN
Pune	15	5	50	14	14	GREEN
Visakhapatnam	13	29	8	34	59	GREEN

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

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

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

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

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

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m. for Gorakhpur, Jharkhand recorded an unhealthy air quality index (AQI) score of 250 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Shillong, Meghalaya recorded a healthy AQI score of 11

SSS chief urges Maha Vikas Aghadi govt. to announce ₹250 crore relief package

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

Swabhiman Shetkari Sanghatana (SSS) chief Raju Shetti on Friday criticised the ruling and Opposition parties in Maharashtra and the media for their disproportionate focus on the Sushant Singh Rajput case while dairy farmers in the State are going through a financial crisis.

Mr. Shetti urged the Maha Vikas Aghadi government to announce a ₹250 crore package and a subsidy of ₹5 per litre of milk to help the dairy farmers tide over the crisis.

"At a time when farmers are facing a life-and-death problem, there is an inordinate focus on the actor's death. While he may have had many fans, it is unfortunate of leading politicians in the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi alliance and the Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party to centre their politics around this kind of celebrity circus," he said.

The SSS staged an agitation in front of the Ahmednagar district collectorate on Thursday. Earlier, Mr. Shetti and his activists staged protests in Solapur and Osmanabad. Responding to reports that the SSS supporters had violated 'safety regulations', he said desperate dairy farmers had no option but to agitate on the streets to make their voices heard.

He said, "Farmers are dying any way, pandemic or no pandemic. During the protest in Ahmednagar, the brother of a dairy farmer came up to me and told me about his tragic suicide. How many farmers have taken this extreme step? We have been very restrained till now, hoping that the govern-



Refusing to budge: Swabhiman Shetkari Sanghatana chief Raju Shetti (centre) and his supporters stage a protest in Ahmednagar on Thursday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

ment will come up with some concrete solution. But as nothing has transpired, we have taken to the streets."

On July 21, the SSS, along with other farmers' outfits, had staged a day-long milk blockade. Following the protest, State Dairy Development Minister Sunil Kedar assured the protesters that the State government would soon come up with a financial aid package.

'Vague promises'

Mr. Shetti said, "Since then, I have written time and again to Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray. I have also taken up this matter with Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar. However, for the past one month, we have received just vague promises."

We hoped the government will come up with some solution. But as nothing has transpired, we have taken to the streets

RAJU SHETTI
Swabhiman Shetkari Sanghatana chief

produced by Maharashtra's dairy farmers, the Centre has decided to import 10,000 tonnes of milk powder, thereby undercutting Indian dairy farmers. This is unacceptable."

'Left in the lurch'

Mr. Shetti said the SSS will be staging protests in Satara on August 24 and in Baramati on August 27. He said of the State's daily milk production of 119 lakh litres, around 52 lakh litres are in excess, and the price of milk powder has dipped from ₹330 per kg to ₹80 per kg.

He said, "Despite 1.5 lakh tonnes of milk powder lying unused in the country, of which 50,000 tonnes are

produced by Maharashtra's dairy farmers, the Centre has decided to import 10,000 tonnes of milk powder, thereby undercutting Indian dairy farmers. This is unacceptable."

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Last lap

Biden and Harris have to show they can lift the U.S. out of the virus-induced crisis

Former U.S. Vice-President Joe Biden has become the Democratic Party's official nominee for the 2020 presidential election after a glitzy four-day extravaganza at the Democratic National Convention. Alongside his running mate Kamala Harris, he will seek to oust incumbent Donald Trump from the White House. If he does so, an array of remedial policy actions will be required from an early stage to lift the U.S. up from the economic destruction caused by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Besides, he will need to urgently attend to a series of controversies and setbacks, some with international repercussions, that the Trump administration has become enmeshed in. Does Mr. Biden possess the political heft, personal charisma, and party mandate to do so? The party answered with a resounding 'yes' to all three questions at the Convention, which featured eloquent speeches by former Presidents Barack Obama and Bill Clinton and First Ladies Michelle Obama and Hillary Clinton, as well as party heavyweights including Bernie Sanders, Nancy Pelosi, and Elizabeth Warren. While a few younger Democratic leaders were featured too, the Convention left little doubt that the old guard was still running the show, even if it was seeking to woo the next generation of voters within the framework of an altered political reality.

At the heart of that reality stands Mr. Trump, wobbling as he scores lower than Mr. Biden in the opinion polls, mostly for his bungling response to the pandemic, yet relentlessly throwing punches on mail-in voting and appealing to the 'silent majority' that Mr. Biden, if elected, would "hike taxes on Americans by \$4 trillion, eviscerate the Second Amendment, expand sanctuary cities, and end fossil fuels". To effectively counter these arguments, and avoid another debacle of the sort that Ms. Clinton faced in 2016, Mr. Biden and Ms. Harris need show only one thing – that they can save the U.S. economy and repair the country's standing with the rest of the world, especially by reclaiming a pivotal role in the multilateral governance of global public health, climate change and trade. Whether the Democrats, basking in the self-congratulatory afterglow of the Convention and reaffirming their commitment to liberal values, play their hand carefully through this endgame scenario, or whether the Trump vision of an inward-looking U.S. still carries the day, remains to be seen. What is clear is that the electoral outcome will be both a referendum expressing how much a broadly inclusive paradigm of the American Dream still resonates with the people, and a signal of the degree of openness that it will tolerate toward the peoples of other nations. Mr. Biden will have to bring his A-game to this final lap.

Repeal and reform

Sri Lanka should not undo democratic gains or roll back devolution in the Constitution

A two-thirds majority in the legislature is indeed a mandate for constitutional change, but the winner ought to decide whether the proposed change would bring about reform or impairment; whether it would strengthen democratic institutions or weaken them. In his first address to the newly elected Parliament, Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has predictably declared his intention to repeal the landmark 19th Amendment to the Constitution, and, thereafter, to work towards a new Constitution. The party he belongs to, the SLPP, has just garnered a historic two-thirds majority along with its allies in the parliamentary polls – unprecedented in an election based on proportional representation. Few would doubt that the party led by the President's elder brother and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa has the requisite mandate to overhaul the constitutional and electoral system. The abolition of the 19th Amendment was indeed the party's major poll plank. However, does it necessarily mean that the gains of the 19th Amendment should be thrown out lock, stock and barrel? The legislation that introduced it was also based on a popular mandate for change in the 2015 presidential election, and received more than the required two-thirds support in the previous Parliament. It not only curbed the executive President's vast powers, by restoring a two-term limit, and making it difficult for the legislature to be dissolved at the President's whim, but also sought to protect the independence of oversight institutions.

It would be a travesty of democratic principles if the independence of institutions such as the Election Commission is now curbed in the name of undoing the 19th Amendment. After all, it is now recognised that the largely peaceful and orderly polling was only because of the EC's autonomy. If not for nothing else, but as an acknowledgement of the free election that enabled it to get a massive mandate, the ruling party should seek to prove its detractors wrong by preserving the democratic gains of the amendment. Further, the plan to rewrite the Constitution under the rubric of a 'one country, one law' principle should not be at odds with the urgent need for a new inclusive Constitution that would put the country on the path of equality and reconciliation. The President's address was also notable for the absence of any reference to ethnic minorities. For long, Sri Lankan leaders have maintained that they can give little by way of constitutional concessions to the minorities without the consent of the majority Sinhalese. Given the dependence of the Rajapaksas on the majority, it is possible to look at the President's remarks on the proposed Constitution in the portentous sense of moving away from the concept of devolution. While the abolition of the executive presidency appears no more realistic, it will be retrograde if the idea of sharing more power with the provinces is abandoned altogether.

Differential impact of COVID-19 and the lockdown

The resultant distress in India has exacerbated pre-existing structures of disadvantage based on social identity



ASHWINI DESHPANDE &
RAJESH RAMACHANDRAN

In his book, *The Great Leveler*, Walter Scheidel, the Austrian economic historian, argues that throughout human history, there have been four types of catastrophic events that have led to greater economic equality: pandemic, war, revolution and state collapse. Currently, the world is going through one of them: a massive COVID-19 pandemic. In Scheidel's analysis, the decline in inequality is a result of excess mortality that raises the price of labour. While the validity of Scheidel's argument for the current pandemic can only be assessed after it is over, the pandemic has been described as a leveller more loosely, both because the disease can strike anyone, and also because the resultant lockdowns have led to widespread job losses and economic hardships across the range of the income and occupational distribution.

The marginalised at risk
Focusing on the looser description of the pandemic as a leveller, preliminary data and early indirect evidence from several parts of the world indicate that the incidence of the disease is not class-neutral: poorer and economically vulnera-

ble populations are more likely to contract the virus as well as to die from it. To the extent, economic class and social identity (e.g. race, ethnicity or caste) overlap, this suggests that socially marginalised groups would be at higher risk of mortality due to COVID-19.

The risks extend beyond mortality as the economic consequences of the current pandemic are likely to be most concentrated among the low wage earners, and less educated workers, segments of the labour force where racial and ethnic minorities are over-represented. Early evidence from the United Kingdom and the United States reveals that racial and ethnic minorities are indeed the ones most likely at the risk of unemployment.

What does the evidence from India reveal? Disaggregated data on COVID-19 incidence and mortality are not available for India. Thus, we cannot comment on whether certain caste groups are more vulnerable to the virus than others.

The Indian shutdown
A key element of the pandemic control strategy everywhere has been to shut down economic and social activity, and to impose social distancing with varying degrees of strictness. India's lockdown, imposed in the last week of March 2020, was among the most stringent. The first month of the severe lockdown, April 2020, witnessed a sharp rise in unemployment.

Was this sudden unemploy-



ment caste-neutral, despite the fact that it was caste-blind?

We examine shifts in employment and unemployment rates using data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE)'s Consumer Pyramids Household Survey (CPHS) database. It is a longitudinal data set covering 174,405 households (roughly 10,900 households per week, and 43,600 per month). Each household is followed three times per year. We use unit-level data from six waves of CPHS: Wave 14 (May-August 2018), Wave 15 (September-December 2018), Wave 16 (January-April 2019), Wave 17 (May-August 2019), Wave 18 (September-December 2019), and Wave 19 (January-April 2020).

We find that the proportion of employed upper castes dropped from 39% to 32% between December 2019 and April 2020, a fall of seven percentage points. The corresponding fall for Scheduled Castes (SCs) was from 44% to 24%, i.e. a fall of 20 percentage points, almost three times as large. For intermediate castes, Other Backward Classes and Scheduled Tribes (STs) the fall was from 42% to 34%, 40% to 26% and 48% to 33%. Thus, the fall in employment

for SCs and STs was far greater in magnitude than that for upper castes.

Education as factor

The global evidence suggests that job losses associated with COVID-19 are much more concentrated among individuals with low levels of education and those with vulnerable jobs with no tenure or security. We find that individuals with more secure jobs, i.e. not daily wagers, and those with more than 12 years of education, were much less likely to be unemployed in April 2020 than those with less than 12 years of education and with daily wage jobs, relative to their pre-pandemic employment status. Thus, education did turn out to be a protective factor in the first wave of immediate post-lockdown job losses.

Our earlier work reveals that caste gaps at higher levels of education have either remained static or widened over the last three decades.

The current pandemic is further likely to exacerbate these educational differences.

Data from another nationally representative survey, the India Human Development Survey for 2011-12 (IHDS-II) show that 51% of SC households have adult women who have zero years of education, i.e. are illiterate, and 27% have an illiterate adult male member. These proportions are in stark contrast to Upper Caste (UC) households, where the corresponding proportions are 11% and 24%, respectively. Thus, in the face of current

school closures, parents of SC children would be much less equipped to assist their children with any form of home learning, compared to parents of UC children. This would be the case both because of educational differences among parents as well as due to other significant differences in material conditions living.

Issue of technology

There are many dimensions that reveal continued disparity between caste groups, which would affect the ability of Dalit and Adivasi families to access online education. For example, the proportion of households with access to the Internet is 20% and 10% for UC and SC households, respectively. Only 49% of SCs have bank savings, as compared to 62% of UC households. Thus, differential access to information technology, as well as disparities in the ability to invest in technology will be critical in shaping access to online education, if the pandemic forces schools to close for a substantial period of time.

Early impacts of the pandemic-induced lockdown indicate that the resultant economic distress is exacerbating pre-existing structures of disadvantage based on social identity, and investments in education and health that close gaps between social groups would be essential to build resilience in the face of future shocks.

Ashwini Deshpande teaches at Ashoka University. Rajesh Ramachandran is at the University of Heidelberg

Moving resolutely toward the post-pandemic future

Even as many countries are stumbling, India has seized control of its destiny, is recovering, and making bold plans



JAYANT SINHA

A moment comes, but rarely in history, when a nation seizes control of its destiny; when a new Atmanirbhar Bharat begins and when the people of a nation move forward with confidence. It is fitting that this moment has come during the global novel coronavirus pandemic. Even as the world is reeling from the impact of the pandemic, India is recovering with fresh energy and making bold plans for the future.

The pandemic began spreading around the world just a few months ago. Yet, it has plunged the global economy into its deepest economic contraction since the Great Depression of the 1930s. Trillions of dollars of economic output have been wiped out, most countries will take years to return to pre-coronavirus levels, and billions of people are confronting a shrunken future.

Calibrated measures

India has avoided this fate. The government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi has undertaken a series of decisive, calibrated actions which include: implementing a rapid lockdown to save lives; providing abundant relief to protect livelihoods; and, simultaneously positioning the economy for strong revival through the 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' policy package.

On March 24, 2020, Mr. Modi announced a historic nation-wide lockdown that was eventually lifted on June 1. The national lockdown dramatically dampened the disease's exponential growth rate and gave the country time to prepare. Without a lockdown, the cases of coronavirus would today be several times higher than now. More importantly, coronavirus fa-

talities would have been even higher since the case fatality rate has declined dramatically in the past few months.

Lockdown was essential

A terrible human tragedy was swiftly and decisively averted. During the lockdown, the nation got ready to face the pandemic. Every citizen learned the value of masks and mask wearing, social distancing, and hand washing. Hospital beds, intensive care units, ventilators, oxygen cylinders, personal protective equipment kits, and N95 masks were procured in vast quantities and supplied to every district. COVID-19 care and quarantine centres were established in every block. Testing capacity increased from thousands per day to almost a million per day. Testing labs are now available in 80-90% of all districts. Extraordinary medical advances have also happened in the past few months: several drugs have proven to be efficacious, treatment protocols are now widely available, and many vaccine candidates are now in the final stages of testing. The national lockdown has thus saved lakhs of lives.

Along with lives, livelihoods have also been saved through bold action. Soon after the lockdown was announced, the Prime Minister announced the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana – a massive relief package for the needy. Through this programme, around 80 crore fellow citizens are being provided rations through the Public Distribution System. This has saved them money and put cash in their pockets. Over 20 crore Jan Dhan women account holders have received ₹30,654 crore directly into their bank accounts. Around 2.3 crore construction workers have got ₹4,313 crore, while 2.8 crore beneficiaries in the National Social Assistance Programme have received ₹2,815 crore.

The rural economy, which supports 60-70% of India's population and accounts for 46% of GDP, is



surging. The excellent rabi harvest has resulted in over ₹75,000 crore in farmer payments by the government. Almost 10 crore farmers have received ₹40,000 crore as income support through the PM Kisan Samman Nidhi. Over 4 crore households are benefiting from the expanded Mahatma Gandhi Employment Guarantee Act scheme. Thus the rural economy has received over ₹2 lakh crore of cash directly into beneficiary accounts just from the Central government. State governments have run their own relief programmes as well. These massive cash payments have driven rural confidence, with consumer goods, motorcycle, and tractor purchases at or above pre-pandemic levels now.

RBI and policy actions

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) and large corporates have also been provided substantial relief through coordinated action between the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) and the government. Compliance filings and tax payments were extended by several months. Borrowers received a loan moratorium of six months. Moreover, the RBI has cut rates by 115bps and pumped in more than ₹9 lakh crore in liquidity into the financial system; ₹3 lakh crore have been made available as guaranteed collateral-free loans for MSME borrowers. With close to half of that being sanctioned already. The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development, Small Industries Development Bank of India, National Housing Bank, and Non-banking financial companies have all been provided refinancing facilities. The RBI has undertaken vast long-term repo

operations to bring down the yield curve. As a result of all these policy actions, credit markets have stabilised, credit is available, and spreads have come down to normal levels.

With the loan moratorium coming to an end on August 31, the RBI has now announced a one-time restructuring scheme to provide relief to stressed sectors. Borrowers will be able to restructure their loans to match their cash flows, thereby protecting their businesses and jobs. The net result of these relief actions has been to prevent widespread business failures and job losses, which would have resulted in permanent damage to the Indian economy.

Key reforms

After these relief measures were rolled out, the government introduced the Atmanirbhar Bharat revival package. Following the adage that a crisis is a terrible thing to waste, the Prime Minister has launched bold policy reforms in agriculture, defence production, electronics manufacturing, coal mining, and the public sector. These reforms position India for the future and generate confidence among business people and investors.

The agriculture sector has seen the most transformational changes. Unfortunately, the architects of industrial policy transformation in 1991 have chosen to not commend the agricultural policy transformation of 2020. Through a series of ordinances, price controls have largely been removed in agriculture, farmers can now sell their crops to anyone anywhere, and contract farming has been allowed. Kisan credit cards are being provided to all fishermen, dairy farmers, and other agriculturists. An additional ₹1 lakh crore has been earmarked to build rural infrastructure such as storage depots, refrigerated warehouses, and other post-harvest facilities. Animal husbandry has been sanctioned another ₹15,000 crore.

Defence production is being in-

digenised with 101 items meant only for domestic production. This will likely generate over ₹4 lakh crore of revenues for domestic defence producers in the next few years. Defence foreign direct investment of 74% is now allowed through the automatic route. Similarly, the government has completely opened up coal mining to the private sector to ensure that imported coal worth over ₹1 lakh crore is replaced with domestic coal. Finally, yet another historic decision, the government has declared that there will be full disinvestment in all public sector enterprises in non-strategic sectors.

Production-linked incentives for electronics manufacturing are likely to result in lakhs of crores of smartphone production in India for domestic use and exports. Current projections are that India will soon be among the top smartphone manufacturers globally. In sum, these game-changing reforms have prompted domestic and foreign investors to start pouring in billions of dollars of investments into our economy.

There is confidence

During these uncertain times, India remains a safe haven. The rupee has strengthened against the dollar, the world's reserve currency. Opinion surveys consistently show that Prime Minister Modi is the most popular elected leader in the world; in fact, tracking polls show that his popularity has actually gone up during the pandemic demonstrating that the Indian people approve of his handling of the coronavirus crisis. Confidence in the government has also increased. Many countries are stumbling through the pandemic. Meanwhile, India has seized control of its destiny and is marching resolutely toward the post-pandemic future.

Jayant Sinha is the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Finance in Parliament and a Lok Sabha MP from Hazaribagh, Jharkhand. The views expressed are personal

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.

Character of justice

In a remarkable observation made last December in Jodhpur, the esteemed Chief Justice of India said, "... justice must never take the form of revenge. I believe justice loses its character of justice if it becomes revenge." These redemptive words need to be reflected on in today's litigious atmosphere.

GOPALKRISHNA GANDHI,
Chennai

Indore is the cleanest

Indore being 'crowned' India's cleanest city for the

fourth year running holds out a lesson for administrators in the other big cities (Inside pages, August 21). Indore's success lies in political and administrative will, the cooperation of municipal authorities, NGOs, private companies and citizens. What started as a 'bin-less city model' was soon facilitated by door-to-door garbage collection through 'GPS enabled garbage vans' tracked from a command centre. Segregation of waste at source was the next move followed by the processing of recyclable

and non-recyclable waste. Other steps were road cleaning every night, dustbins on wheels to stop littering, and a system of punishment and rewards.

VISHAL DABAS,
New Delhi

Workers, differences
Watching three daughters writhe in agony, experiencing intense pain for two to three days every month makes me aware of how much women suffer during their menstrual period, not only physically but also emotionally. While I am happy that a visible

beginning has been made by one corporate firm to help women, I do not see any reason why Ms. Barkha Dutt should have any objection to this. I do not understand why she is trying to compound an otherwise simple and straightforward issue by using rhetoric laced with phrases such as 'biological determinism' and 'biological essentialism' which many women do not even care to understand.

For them, all that matters is some quiet and quietude on the day(s) of 'torment' (OpEd page, August 21).

Parley

"Should women be entitled to menstrual leave?"
KRUPAKAR POTHULA,
Hyderabad

Court and apology
I fail to understand why the Supreme Court is firm like a rock in insisting that lawyer and activist Prashant Bhushan apologise for his two tweets which he maintains were not done to denigrate the judicial system and dent its supremacy in any aspect. All discerning people will agree that Mr. Bhushan has not crossed the Lakshman



EC norms will not ensure free polls: Cong.

Election panel asked for suggestions from the Opposition but ignored them, says K.C. Venugopal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday said that the Election Commission (EC) guidelines to conduct polls during the pandemic do not meet the norms of "free, fair and independent elections" and asserted that the poll panel failed in its "basic constitutional obligation".

The party called upon the EC to revisit the recommendations made by the party and invite all political parties for a comprehensive discussion in a transparent and effective manner.

"In case the ECI falters in this bounden duty the conse-



K.C. Venugopal

non-partisan and fair fashion without giving undue advantage to the ruling party".

Questions raised

"The ECI guidelines clearly fail these principal tests thereby negating the constitutional obligation of 'superintendence and control of elections' in a non-partisan and unbiased manner. The simple question to ponder over is, if the very foundation of democracy i.e. our elections cannot be conducted fairly, how will adult franchise and majority mandate, the lifeblood of our democracy, be effectively upheld?" he asked.

"The ECI's guidelines say the relevant provisions of the Disaster Management Act, 2005 and the Indian Penal Code will be invoked against anyone who violates the said guidelines. However, the ECI has surprisingly missed the potential for abuse by the Ruling Party which controls the policing machinery. For example, where members of a crowd in a political gathering violate the rules, how does the ECI ensure that the candidate will be indemnified from unjust penalty or harassment?" asked the Congress general secretary.

He said though the poll panel sought the views of the

political parties such as the Congress, their suggestions were ignored.

For example, the principal Opposition party had suggested not to use electronic voting machines (EVMs) for the fear of infections but the EC ignored it. Similarly, the EC has not made any distinction between urban and rural areas that have had very different trajectory in terms of spread of COVID-19. "The ECI must provide for detailed guidelines and not leave the safety and well-being of the voters to the differing interpretations and largess of local authorities," he said.

BJP plunges into preparation for Bihar poll

Party's national president Nadda scheduled to visit Patna on August 28

NISTULA HEBBAR

NEW DELHI

The BJP will be plunging into full-scale political action, especially in Bihar, as the Election Commission unveiled its broad guidelines for the conduct of polls on Friday, with national president J.P. Nadda scheduled to visit Patna on August 28.

Sources in Bihar BJP have confirmed to *The Hindu* that a series of visits by senior party members will be on the whole of next week with an eye on poll preparation in Bihar, where the election is expected to be held by November.

"National general secretary in charge of the State, Bhupendra Yadav, will be in Patna on August 22, former

Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis, who has been roped in for poll preparations, will be in town on August 24, Sauran Singh, who is co-in-charge (organisation) for the Bihar BJP will visit on August 27 and Mr. Nadda will visit on August 28," said a source in Bihar BJP.

Mr. Nadda and senior party leaders will take part in a two-day virtual meeting starting Saturday to draw up strategy, BJP State president Sanjay Jaiswal told reporters.

Mandal and district-level meetings will be done with the State executive stated to meet on August 23 and a virtual address by Mr. Nadda.

Mr. Nadda is expected to meet with Chief Minister and



Action plan: Bihar's BJP president Sanjay Jaiswal sharing details of a virtual meeting in Patna on Friday. ■ PTI

NDA ally Nitish Kumar while in Patna, to take forward the process of seat distribution between the BJP, the Janata Dal (United) and the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP). The BJP and the JD(U) had fought equal number of seats in the Lok Sabha polls but speculation is rife on whether a simi-

lar arrangement will be endorsed for the Assembly polls.

The party is expecting the poll to go ahead as scheduled around November, and the EC's guidelines seem to be a step in that direction.

The BJP had already kicked off its organisational prepa-

rations during the lockdown via virtual rallies and meetings and door-to-door visits to workers.

Booth-level preparedness was also prioritised during this period with almost 80% of booths being completed, that is, with the requisite number of workers. The party is banking on the benefits distributed through the Pradhan Mantri Gareeb Kalyan Yojana during the COVID-19 pandemic to generate goodwill for the party. "Almost every household in the State has received something or the other as relief under the programme and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's work will be a big campaign plank for us," said a source.

The EC's guidelines include the facility of filing nomination papers online, postal ballots for COVID-19 patients and no big rallies.

Rahul slams Centre's plans for publicity

J&K police flay militants' bid to circulate Baramulla video

The clip was released to glamorise terror, says spokesman

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

SRINAGAR

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Friday slammed the Narendra Modi government for spending taxpayers' money on image correction at a time when the country is faced with multiple challenges.

"Economic slump, unemployment, Chinese aggression ail our country. GOI: Let's spend taxpayers' money on 'image correction,'" tweeted Mr. Gandhi and tagged a news report that said the Centre was planning a publicity blitzkrieg to improve its image on global indices.

tack) and Naseer alias Sad bhai and foreign terrorist Ali bhai alias Danish within 72 hours," a police spokesman tweeted.

The tweet came hours after militant outfit People's Anti-Fascist Front (PAFF) released the video on social media.

The video showed an attacker, wearing a body camera, shooting at the security personnel along with another attacker, apparently in Baramulla's Kreeri on August 17. The two-day gunfight, which followed the attack,

left three Lashkar-e-Taiba militants and five security personnel dead.

The video also comes a day after Director General of Police Dilbagh Singh said the killing of 26 wanted commanders in the past seven months and four top commanders of Lashkar "has led to the collapse of the militancy structure". He also described the killing of Haider, in the Kreeri encounter, and Naseer-u-Din Lone, in the Handwara encounter, "as a major success for the security forces".

Army issues tender for 7.62mm ammunition from private firms

RFI also specifies annual requirement of the various types



Ammunition has been sought for the Dragunov sniper rifle.

The last date to respond to the RFI is September 30. The selected manufacturer is expected to commence supply within six months of signing the contract and initial supply may be through Semi Knocked Down (SKD), Completely Knocked Down (CKD) ammunition procured from the Transfer of Technology (ToT) partner. "The subsequent supply of ammunition will be manufactured in India," the RFI states.

It also proposes that the manufacturer develop the infrastructure and absorb the complete ToT for manufacture of ammunition within two years from signing of contract.

It proposes that the manufacturer will ensure continuous availability of minimum one year's stock components during first two years after signing of contract or 100% indigenisation, whichever is earlier, the RFI said. In case full indigenisation is either not possible or not proposed, from third year the manufacturer will have to hold two year's stock.

The Ordnance factory Board has so far been the manufacturer and supplier of ammunition and efforts to open it to the private sector over the last few years had been delayed. "With the negative import list, the effort should get high priority for the Army to diversify its ammunition procurement," an industry source said on condition of anonymity.

"Various 7.62mm ammunitions as mentioned will have to meet all specifications of in-service ammunitions. All available specifications with Director general Quality Assurance (DGQA) and drawings, where available, with DGQA are proposed to be provided for manufacturers to confirm to, in providing required ammunition," the RFI issued in August first week says. The technology partners could

Bhushan case: court adds AG's name in order

K.K. Venugopal was present at hearing

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has published a "revised" order in the advocate Prashant Bhushan *suo motu* contempt case, this time prominently featuring the name of Attorney General K.K. Venugopal.

The order copy published initially on the court's official website on Thursday had not shown Mr. Venugopal's name even though the top law officer was present during the entire hearing and had even urged the court against punishing the civil rights lawyer for his tweets.

Mr. Venugopal was present after the court issued notice to him when it initiated the *suo motu* proceedings against Mr. Bhushan for his tweet about a photograph of Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde astride a heavy bike and another on how posterity would perceive the role played by the Supreme Court in the past six years.

He was found guilty of contempt by scandalising the court on August 14.

On Thursday, Mr. Bhushan

an sought neither mercy nor magnanimity from the court. He, in a short statement, told the court he would cheerfully submit to the punishment, whatever it may be.

'Genuine mistake'
The court reserved its judgment but gave an opportunity to Mr. Bhushan to tender an "unconditional apology" by August 24. Mr. Bhushan later refused to apologise in court but said the tweets were a "genuine mistake".

During the hearing, Mr. Venugopal stressed that Mr. Bhushan has "done tremendous amount of public good".

"You have convicted him but do not punish him," Mr. Venugopal told the court.

Kashmir figures in China-Pak. dialogue

Both countries back each other on 'core national interests'

ANANTH KRISHNAN

CHENNAI

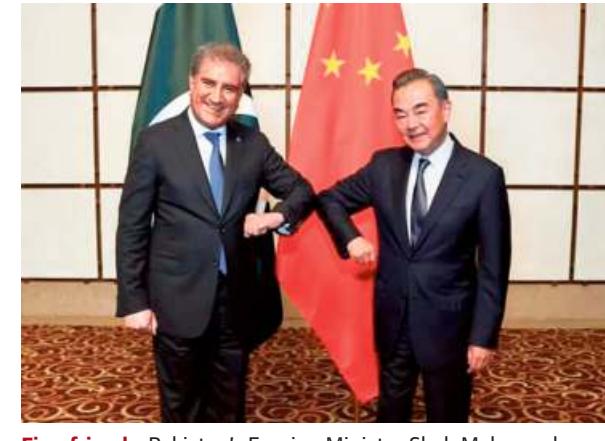
China and Pakistan on Friday said they would firmly back each other on "core national interests", as their Foreign Ministers discussed the Kashmir issue in their annual strategic dialogue.

China said Pakistan was "its staunchest partner in the region" and it would "firmly support" the country "in safeguarding its territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence" and in "striving for a better external security environment," according to a "joint press release" from Pakistan's Foreign Ministry.

Iutions and bilateral agreements. China opposes any unilateral actions that complicate the situation."

The press release from Pakistan's Foreign Ministry said both sides "agreed on continuing their firm support on issues concerning each other's core national interests."

"The Chinese side reiterated that Pakistan and China are iron brothers and Pakistan remains China's staunchest partner in the region and that China firmly supports Pakistan in safeguarding its territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence, independently choosing a development path based on its national conditions, striving for a better external security environment and playing a more constructive role on international and regional affairs," it said. "The Pakistani side appreciated China for standing together with Pakistan in safeguarding its national security and sovereignty."



Firm friends: Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi, left, and his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi at the talks held in China's Hainan province. ■ @SMQURESHI/TWITTER

Nagaland govt. faults Governor's speech

Ruling alliance says remarks made on I-Day had raised concerns among people

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI

The People's Democratic Alliance (PDA) government in Nagaland has faulted Governor R.N. Ravi's Independence Day speech, underlining the growing differences between the two over the protracted Naga peace process.

The State government, appreciating the Centre for resuming the talks, also asked the opposition Naga People's Front (NPF) to return to the Joint Legislators' Forum that was formed in 2017 as a catalyst for the peace process involving several extremist groups since 1997.

The NPF had on Tuesday

quit the forum citing "huge trust deficit" and indifference of the PDA government headed by Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio to suggestions for taking the peace process forward.

"Nagaland is endowed with one of the finest human

and natural resources. Unfortunately, today it has the dubious distinction of the worst-performing State in the country, including the northeast region, on almost all the significant indicators of human development," Mr. Ravi had said in his speech. He is also the interlocutor for the peace process.

"Though Nagaland may not be the best performing State, we are making every effort to take the State forward on all developmental fronts. As representatives of the people, the PDA is compelled to voice the feelings of the people," the government said, reminding Mr. Ravi of the awards it had received as performing small State in law and order in 2018 and 2019.

+

The State government, run by the Nationalist Democratic Progressive Party in partnership with the BJP, took its time to react.

In a statement issued on Thursday evening, it said: "The PDA has taken note of the people's concern on the contents of the honourable

Governor's Independence Day speech wherein negative statements on Nagaland were made. The PDA observes that the speech has not been well received by the people."

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Shri. B.R. Kamdar

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<

Rajiv Kumar
is Election
Commissioner

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
AHMEDABAD

Former Finance Secretary Rajiv Kumar was on Friday appointed as Election Commissioner by the Centre. Mr. Kumar has been appointed in place of Ashok Lavasa, who has resigned to join the Asian Development Bank.

Mr. Kumar is an ex-IAS officer of the 1984 batch of Jharkhand cadre. After retirement, he was appointed as Chairperson of the Public Sector Enterprises Selection Board, which selects top officials for PSUs.

3 of family die in Uttarakhand house collapse

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
PITHORAGARH

A man and his two children were buried alive when their house collapsed following rains in Pithoragarh district of Uttarakhand on Friday, while the body of a woman was found in a village four days after she went missing in a landslide.

Several roads were blocked due to rains.

"We take allegations of bias incredibly seriously, and

Our policies on hate speech are uniformly applied: Facebook

Decisions made by teams, not unilaterally by just one person, says India head

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Following allegation of bias in implementing the company's own guidelines on hate speech in India, Facebook India Vice-President and Managing Director Ajit Mohan on Friday said the social network platform is "non-partisan" and denounces hate and bigotry in any form.

The statement comes almost a week after a report published by the *Wall Street Journal* alleged that the company violated its own rules for hate-speech in favour of some individuals, including those associated with the ruling BJP, after opposition from Ankh Das, the head of public policy at Facebook India.

The report stated that Ms. Das had reasoned that punishing violations by politicians from the ruling party "would damage the company's business prospects in the country".

Mr. Mohan, in a post, said over the last few days, Facebook has been accused of bias in the way it enforces its policies.

"We take allegations of



Speaking up: The social networking platform denounces bigotry in any form, says Ajit Mohan. ■ REUTERS

want to make it clear that we denounce hate and bigotry in any form," he said.

He added that Facebook is and always has been an open, transparent and non-partisan platform where people can express themselves freely.

Impartial approach

Stating that many questions have been raised specifically about enforcement of the company's policies around hate speech, Mr. Mohan said,

"There is no place for hate speech on our platform. We have an impartial approach to dealing with content and are strongly governed by our Community Standards. We

enforce these policies globally without regard to anyone's political position, party affiliation or religious and cultural belief."

Mr. Mohan said the platform will continue to remove content posted by public figures in India when it violates our Community Standards.

"Decisions about designating people or groups as 'dangerous' individuals or organizations" are different – these are based on a combination of signals and are made by our dangerous organisations team who have deep expertise in terrorism and organized hate and pay attention to global and re-

gional trends," he said.

Individuals who are designated as "dangerous" are removed from Facebook services altogether, and all praise, support and representation of them is taken down, as well, he added.

"Because the penalty associated with designation is so severe, it's important that our analysis is comprehensive and detailed, and that our process applies consistently and fairly around the world," Mr. Mohan said.

He further clarified that "In addition to the external input that informs our designation process, we also solicit input from cross-functional teams internal to the company when we're making decisions about individual designations. These decisions cannot and are not made unilaterally by just one person; rather, they are inclusive of different views from around the company, a process that is critical to making sure we consider, understand and account for both local and global contexts. And the process is dynamic and ongoing based on newly available information or activity."

Mr. Mohan said the platform will continue to remove content posted by public figures in India when it violates our Community Standards.

"Decisions about designating people or groups as 'dangerous' individuals or organizations" are different – these are based on a combination of signals and are made by our dangerous organisations team who have deep expertise in terrorism and organized hate and pay attention to global and re-

Fair criticism of govt. is not sedition, journalist tells SC

Vinod Dua moves court to quash FIR booked in Shimla

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Veteran journalist Vinod Dua on Friday argued in the Supreme Court that criticism of the government does not amount to sedition.

Mr. Dua has moved the court to quash an FIR accusing him of sedition registered in the Kumarsain police station located on the outskirts of Shimla in May.

The basis of the case is his YouTube show telecast on March 30. The FIR accused him of blaming the government for its COVID-19 preparedness and making personal allegations against Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Appearing before a Bench led by Justice U.U. Lalit, Mr. Dua, represented by senior advocate Vikas Singh, drew the attention of the court to its own judgment of 1962 on how "in a democratic setup a citizen is entitled to criticise the government with a view to change it".

Mr. Singh quoted from the Kedar Nath judgment, which said "a citizen has a right to say or write whatever he likes about the Government, or its measures, by way of criticism or comment, so long as he does not incite people to violence against the Government established by law or with the intention of creating public disorder".

VINOD DUA, veteran journalist



A citizen has a right to say or write whatever he likes about the Government, or its measures, by way of criticism or comment, so long as he does not incite people to violence against the Government established by law or with the intention of creating public disorder

VINOD DUA, veteran journalist

likes about the Government, or its measures, by way of criticism or comment, so long as he does not incite people to violence against the Government established by law or with the intention of creating public disorder".

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who was engaged in another case, appeared briefly to inform the Bench about his absence. His associate had earlier sought an adjournment.

However, Justice Lalit pointed out that the case had been adjourned thrice and allowed Mr. Singh to commence his submissions. During the hearing, which spanned over an hour, Mr. Singh also highlighted the over 20-day delay in registering the FIR.

The case was finally adjourned to September 2. Mr. Dua approached the SC after a police team appeared at his residence on June 12 and ordered him to be present at the remote Kumarsain police station the very next day.

Referring to transcripts of

Notice to Meghalaya cement plants

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The Meghalaya government has asked the cement companies in the State to pay ₹614 crore for using illegally-mined coal and evading tax.

Officials in the State could not provide specific data, but at least six private firms have cement plants across the coal and limestone belts of Meghalaya.

The NGT also asked the State government to deposit the extracted money for "us-

ing illegally-mined coal" in the Meghalaya Environment Protection and Restoration Fund.

The NGT had in April 2014 banned hazardous rat-hole coal mining in Meghalaya and set a time limit for transporting the coal already mined till that time. Rat-hole is a term used for constricting tunnels that allow an adult to virtually crawl and scrape coal from the seams

underneath.

The tribunal said that the cement companies and their power subsidiaries had purchased the illegally-mined coal in the name of slate, a non-fuel mineral, to get around the NGT ban on coal extracted from rat-hole mines. The NGT also found the appetite of the cement plants for coal had sustained illegal rat-hole mining the State.

SATYASUNDAR BARIK
BHUBANESWAR

The Orissa High Court issued notice to the State government over appointment of bureaucrats as chairman and member secretary of the State Pollution Control Board for the past 10 years.

Pradyumna Satpathy, a social activist, had moved the HC drawing attention that "as per the Section 4 of Water (Prevention and Control of

Pollution) Act, 1974, and Sec 5 of the Air (Prevention and Control of Pollution) 1981, there is provision for appointment of full time member secretary and nomination of full time or part time chairman by the State government. But, for last more than 10 years, the posts of OSPCB are filled up from the cadres of IAS and IFS respectively without adhering to any selection procedure".

He added that in September 2017, the Supreme Court had directed the State go-

vernments to formulate policy regarding the qualification and experience for these posts within six months.

A Division Bench of the HC, comprising Chief Justice Mohammad Rafiq and Judge Dr. B.R. Sarangi, directed to issue notice to the Chief Secretary and Additional Chief Secretary (Forest and Environment).

The State has been told to file its reply by October 5.

M.P. will offer govt. jobs on NRA scores: Chouhan

It is the first State to take such decision

STAFF REPORTER
BHOJPAL

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that State government jobs would be offered based on marks obtained in the National Recruitment Agency (NRA) test.

"The youth will not be required to take any separate examination for government jobs in the State. They will get government jobs only on the basis of marks obtained in the test conducted by the NRA," Mr. Chouhan said on Twitter on Thursday.

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved the creation of the NRA to conduct a preliminary examination, the Common Eligibility Test, for recruitment to Group B and C (non-technical) vacancies in the Central government, which have been filled through different



Shivraj Singh Chouhan

examinations until now.

Mr. Chouhan claimed that the State was the first to take such a decision. "This will make lives of youth comfortable and easy," he said, while exhorting other States to follow suit to provide relief to the youth.

Earlier, Mr. Chouhan had announced that all State government jobs would be reserved for locals. "Now, there will be relief from unnecessary expenditure and travel owing to several examinations," he said.

SC rejects plea over Gogoi's conduct

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court dismissed a plea to set up a commission to inquire into the conduct of former Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi as a judge of the apex court, saying he has already demitted office.

Justice Gogoi is presently a Rajya Sabha member.

"This plea has become infructuous as he has demitted office... Sorry we cannot entertain this," a three-judge Bench led by Justice Arun Mishra told the petitioner, Arun Ramchandra Hublikar.

The petitioner claimed before the Bench that he had met the Secretary General of the top court for listing of his plea but it was not listed.

Justice Gogoi headed the Bench, which delivered Ayodhya land dispute before he retired as the CJI on November 17, 2019.

SC notice on Nagaland plea against Lokayukta

State seeks removal of the ombudsman

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday issued notice on a plea filed by the State of Nagaland for a direction to its Lokayukta to cease exercising his powers and functions and transfer all his work to the UPA-Lokayukta.

A Bench led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde posted the case after two weeks.

A statement issued by Nagaland Advocate General K.N. Balagopal, who appeared for the State, alleged that the writ petition sought the removal of the Lokayukta for "acts of impropriety."

The petition by the State asked the court to use its extraordinary powers under Article 142 of the Constitution to preserve the institutional integrity of the Lokayukta and ensure that a "fit, proper and competent person" occupies the office of

the Lokayukta.

Mr. Balagopal cited several reasons for seeking the Lokayukta's removal, including the latter's alleged demand to be able to work online from Delhi. The State's top law officer said an inquiry had been proposed on the origins of a letter, purportedly approved by the State Chief Secretary, permitting the Lokayukta to function from the National Capital. Mr. Balagopal said it was later learnt that the letter was not approved by the Chief Secretary.

The petition alleged that the Lokayukta had also made an "unjustified request" to be allotted the former office-cum-bungalow of the CM. Earlier this year, the Lokayukta, Justice Uma Nath Singh, a retired Chief Justice of the Meghalaya High court, had ordered a "preliminary enquiry" against the Deputy CM.

Sniffer dog cracks his first case: bison poaching in West Bengal

Use of dogs has been very successful in solving wildlife crimes

SHIV SAHAY SINGH
KOLKATA

Forest officials in West Bengal have arrested a person in Jalpaiguri district for killing a bison (Indian Gaur). The incident occurred in the Gorumara National Park, where the carcass of a bison was found in the forest on Wednesday evening.

On Thursday morning, a sniffer dog called Orlando took the forest officials to a house in Tilabari of Matiai block, a few kilometres away from the site of the carcass of the animal. Raw and cooked meat was recovered from the house of Somra



An Indian Gaur. ■ THE HINDU

said that the accused had killed the wild animal for meat. A horn of the bison was also recovered from the house. The forest official said that sniffer dog Orlando had been deputed only a few months ago. This was the first case for the Belgian Malinois dog.

The practice of introducing sniffer dogs to solve cases of wildlife crime has resulted in considerable success in different States. While there have been reports of poaching of rhinos in north Bengal, poaching of bison is relatively less common.

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IN BRIEF



Pranab being treated for lung infection

NEW DELHI

The health condition of former President Pranab Mukherjee remains the same and he is being treated for lung infection, the Army's Research and Referral hospital said on Friday. "The medical condition of Pranab Mukherjee remains the same... His vital parameters are being maintained and he is haemodynamically stable," the hospital said.

Former IAF man opposes COVID-19 data sharing

NAGPUR

A retired Indian Air Force (IAF) personnel has moved the Maharashtra State Human Rights Commission against the Nagpur civic body for revealing his identity to an RSS-affiliated outfit after he tested positive for COVID-19. In his complaint, the man said he tested positive for COVID-19 on August 16 and got a call from Sumadhar Gokhale on August 18, who said the RSS through its arm Lok Kalyan Samiti, was providing services to infected patients. The complainant said such disclosure of data is a violation of a patient's right to privacy.

Doctors laud decision on PG diploma courses

NEW DELHI

Doctors have welcomed the move by Centre and the Medical Council of India to recognise eight post-graduate diploma courses under the National Board of Examinations. They said the decision would reduce the shortage of specialists within the next five years. Devi Shetty, cardiac surgeon and chairman of Narayana Health, said, "Every year, approximately 1,70,000 doctors write the NEET post-graduate exam to apply for about 50,000 post-graduate seats... This means that, annually, many of the remaining doctors who do not get one of these seats may not return to clinical work."

Curb inflammatory social media posts: Bombay HC

MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Friday said it is high time the Maharashtra government tightened rules to deal with inflammatory social media posts. A Division Bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice Madhav Jamdar was hearing a criminal petition filed by one Imran Khan, through advocate Vivek Shukla. Mr. Khan sought the court to direct the State authorities to delete a video uploaded by Abu Faizal, a supporter of the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen, and permanently block him from using social media platforms. While disposing of the plea, the Bench said, "We wish to observe that the people may exercise some degree of restraint on their liberty of free speech and expression."

Ventilators from firms funded by PM CARES fail trials

2 companies that got ₹22 cr. advance in May later dropped from Ministry list

PRISCILLA JEBARAJ

NEW DELHI

Two firms given purchase orders for indigenously manufactured ventilators for COVID-19 treatment funded by PM-CARES have failed a clinical evaluation by the Health Ministry's technical committee, according to information accessed through the Right to Information (RTI) Act.

The firms – Jyoti CNC Automation and Andhra Pradesh MedTech Zone (AMTZ) – had already received ₹22.5 crore in advance payment in May, when the PM CARES allocation was made. However, by July, they were dropped from the list, according to the Ministry's response to an RTI request filed by activist Anjali Bhardwaj.

Jyoti CNC is a Gujarat-based firm whose ventilators

were slammed as inadequate for critical COVID-19 patients by the Ahmedabad civil hospital.

AMTZ is run by the Andhra Pradesh government. Although its ventilators were not included in the list of recommended suppliers post-clinical evaluation, according to the Health Ministry's July 20 response, the AMTZ orders were mentioned during an August 4 press briefing by Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan.

Falling numbers

The reduction in the list of manufacturers post-clinical evaluation has cut down the PM CARES order for "Made in India" ventilators from the planned 58,850 units to 40,000, with price tags ranging widely from ₹1.6 lakh to ₹



High stakes: The pandemic led to a spike in the demand for ventilators, causing a rise in the cost of imported units.

8.6 lakh per unit. Less than 18,000 units have so far been delivered for installation in hospitals.

As of August 3, only 0.27% active COVID-19 cases were on ventilator support across the country, said Mr. Bhushan, adding that at no time were there more than 1% of cases which needed ventila-

tor support.

Recognising that the domestic demand for ventilators may not be as acute as earlier projected, the Centre lifted its export ban on August 1, allowing domestic manufacturers to start taking their products to the global market.

The situation was very dif-

ferent a year ago. In 2019, the annual supply of ventilators in India was only about 8,500 units, with 75% of the market share held by imported equipment, according to Mr. Bhushan.

The pandemic led to a global spike in demand for ventilators, with several producing countries imposing export restrictions, and the cost of imported ventilators shooting up to ₹10-20 lakh each. The Centre then calculated a projected domestic demand for 60,000 units and called for domestic manufacturers to step up production.

The PM CARES fund announced its first allocations on May 13, including a sum of ₹2,000 crore for the purchase 50,000 "Made in India" ventilators "for augmenting the infrastructure to tackle COVID-19 cases across the country".

On May 18, adviser to

Prime Minister Bhaskar Khulbe wrote to then-Health Secretary Preeti Sudan asking for a detailed proposal for the purchase.

With GPS tracking

"I would request you to ensure that the manufacturers of these 50,000 ventilators are informed that the ventilators bear a distinct identity to show that the supply has been supported through PM CARES Fund. Further, all these ventilators must have an embedded GPS device so as to track their placement and operation," said the letter, accessed through Ms. Bhardwaj's RTI request.

On May 20, Ms. Sudan responded, promising to ensure the PM CARES logo and GPS chips on the devices, and noting that the Ministry had already placed orders for 58,850 ventilators at a total cost of ₹2,332 crore. This included 30,000 units from

state-run defence manufacturer Bharat Electronics Limited at an order value of ₹1,513.9 crore, with ₹205.5 crore paid as an advance.

Other companies which received purchase orders by May 20 included Allied Medical (350 units at ₹30 crore, no advance), AMTZ for both basic and high end ventilators (13,500 units at ₹500 crore, ₹4.5 cr advance) and Jyoti CNC Automation (5,000 units at ₹121 crore, ₹8 crore advance).

The Ministry's July 20 RTI response included the same list of purchase orders. Then it added, "However, the technical committee constituted under DGHS [Directorate General of Health Services], after successful clinical evaluation, so far recommended the following ventilators for installation in various States." The subsequent list does not include AMTZ or Jyoti CNC.

AIIMS starts COVID-19 research via autopsies

Study aims at finding impact of virus on organs



The team will correlate its findings with similar studies worldwide.

es in different organs of patients, correlate findings with clinicopathological ones, and compare them with similar studies worldwide.

"This is the first deliberate attempt in the country to study in detail COVID-19-positive deaths," said Arneet Arora, Dean and Head of Department, Forensic Medicine and Toxicology, at the institute.

As an integrated research intramural project, Microbiology, Pathology and Lab Medicine, Forensic Medicine and Toxicology, and Anaesthesiology departments are involved in conducting autopsies on 10 deceased COVID-19 positive patients after approval from the Institution Human Ethics Committee of the AIIMS.

In a bid to reduce the possible exposure to infection, only five, rather than the usual 10 specialists are conducting procedures. The fear of infection among the doctors conducting the autopsies looms with aerosol generation during the procedure, the reason why the Indian Council of Medical Research has not recommended it. Therefore, the team is adopting low-aerosol generating methods for the autopsies, such as using the conventional hammer-chisel technique instead of the oscillating electric saw to open a skull.

"Our research comes after autopsies in China and Italy, but is more elaborate and comprehensive," added Dr. Arora.

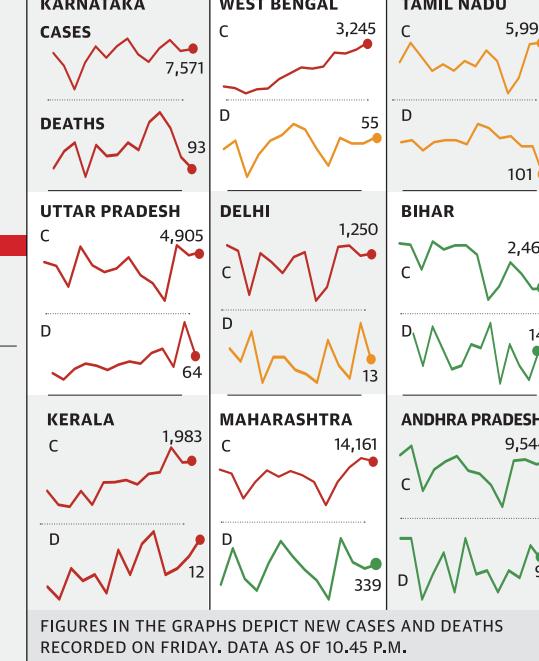
She said it was unclear whether bodies of COVID-19 patients were more infectious than the living ones.

Viral tracker

With 67,717 COVID-19 cases recorded on Friday, India's tally stood at 29,71,846. As many as 924 new deaths were added, taking the toll to 55,915. A total of 3.34 crore samples have been tested as of August 20, according to the ICMR.

NEW CASES AND DEATHS	
CASES 	67,717 +6.9%
DEATHS 	924 -2.1%

The graphs depict the new cases and deaths in the last 14 days in select States. If average cases and deaths in the last seven days are higher than the previous seven days, then the cases and deaths are rising red; if they are lower, then dropping green; if they are similar, then cases and deaths are flatlining orange in that State



HC refuses to stay transfer of funds from Siddhivinayak

Trust to donate to CM's COVID-19 Relief Fund

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Friday refused to grant an interim stay on the transfer of funds from the Trust of the famous Siddhivinayak temple to the State government for the government's 'Shiv Bhojan thali' meal scheme and the Chief Minister's Relief Fund to fight COVID-19.

A Division Bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice Revati Mohitedere was hearing a PIL filed by one Leela Ranga challenging government resolutions dated March 19, June 25 and July 23.

By such resolutions, it had been decided to transfer



Quiet affair: A view of the Siddhivinayak temple during the COVID-19 restrictions on March 16. ■ AADESH CHAUDHARI

₹5 crore from the temple trust to the government to give effect to the scheme.

According to advocate Pradeep Sancheti, representing Ms. Ranga, such transfer is illegal and beyond the provisions of the Shree Siddhi Vinayak Ganpati Temple Trust, 1980.

Mr. Sancheti sought an interim stay on any transfer of money from the temple funds to the government. The court re-

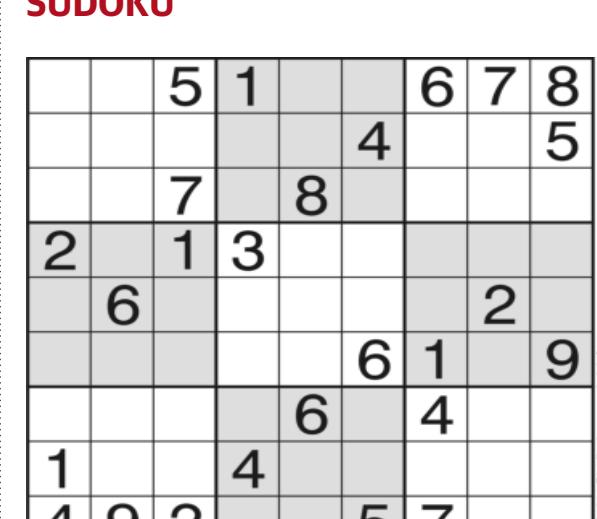
fused the same, however, and said that if any irregularities were found related to the funds, it would direct the government to refund the amount.

The court directed the State and the Shree Siddhivinayak Ganpati Temple Trust Management Committee to file affidavits in response to the plea.

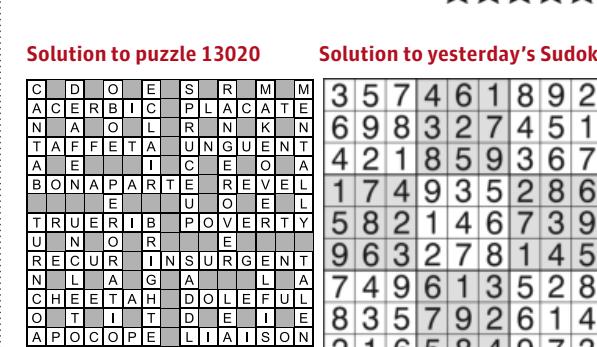
The court posted the matter to be heard in the first week of October.

The study's objectives are to report autopsy findings in deaths due to COVID-19, look for pathological changes

SUDOKU



Solution to puzzle 13020



FAITH

Experience of mukti

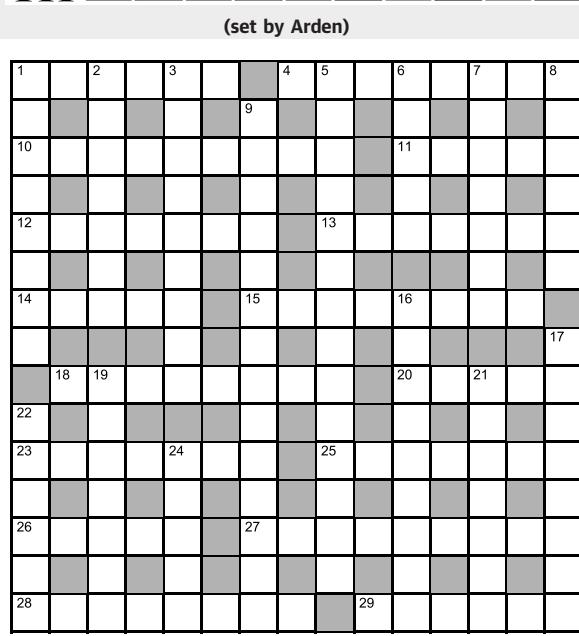
The Vedas, the puranas, the Sutras, the Ithasas, the Tarka Sastra agamas, etc., speak of the nature of atma swaroopa and all of them concur that it is of the nature of consciousness and eternal bliss. This state is the ultimate goal to be attained by every jivatma, say all the scriptures in one voice, pointed out Sri Mani David Sastrigal in a discourse. So it is for the jivatma to understand that the Satchitananda swaroopa described in Vedanta is also present in the jiva. The atma swaroopa in every jiva is sat, eternally existing, and is also the essence of consciousness, chaitanya swaroopa. It is also of the nature of Suka or happiness since one has preethi towards it.

When one knows thus of one's atma swaroopa by accepting the truth of Vedanta, then the realisation is easy. There will be no hurdles. Only when we do not know that we are Satchitananda swaroopa and also we have understood wrongly, we are not able to accept the Vedanta teaching in this regard. One prominent objection raised is that it is clear that Paramatma swaroopa is all pervading and is Poorna in all respects. How can the jiva swaroopa claim to be so? If I am in a particular location how can I have all pervasiveness? There are so many limitations in my present condition.

To counter this argument, the teaching shows that the atma chaitanya is also Poorna because it is the sarva sakshi at all times. Even when the jiva is steeped in worldly matters in earnest, the atma chaitanya is only a sakshi. It is an observer of all and is not associated with samsara. This dhyana of jivatma and Paramatma oneness releases one from samsara immediately and automatically makes one a 'Brahmavith'. This is the state of mukti and of the steady wisdom of one who is satisfied in the self by the self.

TH CROSSWORD + 13021

(set by Arden)



ACROSS

- 1 Formula one at last, after price is fixed (6)
- 4 Paper fox will run away in the middle (8)
- 10 Two boys go through tunnel in the city... (9)
- 11 ... one takes middle path seeking solitude (5)
- 12 Hard work to follow around middle of test ground (7)
- 13 The bricks had to be loaded into the cart (7)

CM YK

Are you a cryptic lover or a quick solver? Find out Now! <https://www.ergo.page.link/jjpTn>



CM YK

A ND-NDE



Instapick

Gentlemen of Our Times: A dusty roll of canvases belonging to the late Indian Modernist Francis Newton Souza, travelled to Israel from New York 18 years ago. Now, in the midst of the coronavirus-induced lockdown, its journey has ended – at his grandson Solomon Souza's Jerusalem studio. The 27-year-old painter, widely known for his street art and graffiti, has used them in a series of oil on canvas, as an homage to his grandfather. The series is a hat-tip to Francis' 1955 paintings, *Six Gentlemen of Our Times*, which showed the busts of six men in suits, their faces weirdly contorted. "[My grandfather's works show] disgust and anger at the greed of the business world. Now, these current times are making people act in certain ways..." says Solomon. Find out more @thehindu.com.



Talking point

US Open: Even as coronavirus cases continue to soar across the country, the final Grand Slam of the year is slated to take place from August 31. Defending champions Rafael Nadal and Bianca Andreescu have dropped out citing safety concerns. However, the organisers are happy with the lineup, which includes Serena Williams in the women's competition and seven out of the top 10 male players.

Pick of the week

Concerts, stand-up and other online events you just can't miss.

The event preview and calendar will resume in a few weeks.



The Injiri edit



Do like Ollie



All for art



Forever summer



Best foot forward



#LockdownWithWeekend

■ FRANCESCO CARROZZINI



Jewels for the jumbos

Space for Giants' new campaign features fashion and a jewellery line from Gemfields



kicked off on August 17 with the release of two exclusive capsules: a selection of 44 jewellery pieces from Gemfields and 15 sustainable collections from luxury fashion e-tailer, Net-a-Porter.

Rubies in the roses

Gemfields' CEO Sean Gilbertson says the wildlife-themed series features Zambian emeralds and Mozambican rubies set in an assortment of necklaces, bracelets, cufflinks, pendants, etc (₹1,12,127 upwards) across brands. Highlights include designer Sandy Leong's three-piece offering, which com-

Set in stone (clockwise from left) The Walk for Giants campaign image, VAK Fine Jewel's Elephant Pop Ring and the Sahara Poison Ring by Sandy Leong

prises a Sahara Poison Ring crafted with brushed 18k recycled yellow gold. VAK Fine Jewel's Elephant Pop Ring's (₹29,19,974) yin-yang design is symbolic of the interdependence of the natural world. "The artisanal, one-of-a-kind handcrafted ring, is designed with two Mozambican non-heated rubies, which are a metaphor for the blood of elephants that's too often lost to poachers," says Gilbertson, adding that the launch was rescheduled due to the pandemic. The pieces are available on gemfields.com.

Net-a-Porter's exclusive capsule collections (₹9,567 - ₹7,91,194) – with everything from asymmetrical pleated skirts, jumpsuits, leather sandals, jackets, linen sun hats, swimwear, duffel bags, and more – come from high-end brands such as Burberry, 3.1 Phillip Lim, Brunello Cucinelli, Chantecaille as well as emerging designers such as Hereu, Fisch and Bassike. The campaign will culminate in an immersive conservation journey along an ancient elephant migration corridor later this year.

Funds from the initiative are intended to support Space for Giants' frontline conservation work across nine African countries – Angola, Botswana, Gabon, Kenya, Mozambique, Namibia, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe. "Proceeds will go towards supporting rangers and law enforcement personnel with training, critical equipment and operational support, construction of electrified fences around smallholder farms, etc," says Graham, who founded the organisation in 2011, adding, "It is our objective to demonstrate to the fashion industry that a unit of consumption can be converted to a unit of conservation. This is not only good for conservation but is critical for business in an increasingly environmentally conscious marketplace."

YARN IT!

Shaken, not slurred

Talk about the highs and lows of the pandemic at the bar

JANE DE SUZA

'Elango,' I slump at my favourite bar, 'make mine a pandemic-special. Whatever everyone's on. And avoid the Corona beer, I'm sick already. Of the puns.'

He fixes me a screwdriver. I drink - and drink - and drink. There's no high in this highball glass. 'It's all orange. No vodka,' I object. 'That's the corporate special,' he says. 'It's a **ScrewedOver**. It's when you realise what your org's been doing to

you all along. The pointless travel, endless workhours. I can add some midnight oil, if you've gotten used to the taste.'

The woman to my left says, 'Try this. A classic **Mannhaven**. Vermouth. Ver-big-mouth. Too much talk, that's the problem. The boss-man. The politico-man. The medico-man. The wifeman. Promises to fix it all - and nothing!' I drink to that.

'Have a **Meragharia**, the man to my right says. 'It's why we land up in the bar. When the ghar

becomes office-school-gymshop, you need the Tequila.'

'With love from the bar then,' Elango pushes a copper mug at him. 'Here's a special. A **Maskow Mule**. It's just like the Moscow Mule (the drink not the man), but it comes with a free mask and straw to drink out of. Cleverly designed so you can suck in but not breathe out the vodka fumes. It's like being in Maskowian Vodka chamber.' The man does a bottoms-up, on his glass and off his stool, and passes out for a happy hour. I have what he had. I'm feeling lighter and happier too. Happy Hour Prost!

'There's great demand for the **Sangriazer**. Sangria and sanitizer. No virus survives that!' Elango suggests. But obviously! Who wants to waste alcohol on your hands - hands. I hug Elango. I hug the man on the floor.

'Keep your social distance!' warns the woman as I lurch towards her. 'Make mine a **Bloody Meanie**, Elango,' she shouts. 'In honour of every idiot who doesn't social-distance or wear a mask.'

She's baying for blood, this

one, but Elango keeps it to tomato juice.

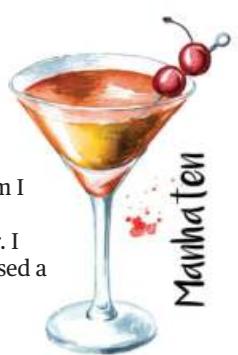
A new guy stumbles onto the stool next to me. He's shivering, he says, 'Am I shivering? Someone sneezed in the corner. I stepped on spit. I passed a woman with a mask under her nose. Have you got a thermometer, oximeter, portable oxygen cylinder?' Elango makes his **Mojittero** with more-jito and more white rum. More happiness! Viruses and other invisibles are out of sight now. Punny!

'**Punny Colada**, Elango!' I holler. 'Let's raise one to all Covidian puns.'

Bar closing time. Elango's slipping me a **Singasnore Sling**.

I'm sloo sleepy now, I's s'hardly sing, sling, slung. Elango sis spouring a gin and scherry brandy and slaying, 'Sleep and you'll wake up in 2021 to realise this whole scare has been a bad dream.'

Where Jane De Suza, author of *Flyaway Boy*, pokes her nose into our perfect lives.



Pyjama nation: a changing dress code

Sarah & Sandeep's loungewear includes pieces that go seamlessly from day to night



SUSANNA MYRTLE LAZARUS



With smart collars and defined cuts, the sets can easily be styled as casual outfits post-lockdown

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

men, the collection of robes and pyjamas feature a muted colour palette of beige, navy, maroon and black. With smart collars and defined cuts, the sets can easily be styled as casual outfits post-lockdown. "Our signature geometric patterns make an appearance as [diamond and pinstripe] prints. We also added subtle details like velvet and suede on the collars, keeping with our minimalist aesthetic while giving a lush vibe," says Gonsalves. They opted for cotton silk and cotton satin fabrics, which are comfortable and drape well.

The collection is currently available for sale on their website, even as in-store customers are trickling back in. "We always had a by-appointment shopping experience, so it is not a new experience for us. People are now more interested in our safety processes as much as they are in the garments," he says.

Coming up is a line of accessories: printed eye masks and the all-important face mask, which will be up on the site shortly. They're also working on slip-ons to wear around the house and a tie-up shrug with geometric detailing that Gonsalves is excited about. "By capitalising on this leisurewear craze and adding our own spin on it, we're covering the entire spectrum, as demand for occasionwear is lesser than usual," he concludes.

Starting at ₹5,000, Sopor is available on sarahsandee.com.

ments changed in the last few months (thanks to the Covid-19 situation), they took note. While the idea for Sopor came up in March, the process took five months – from ideation to product development and execution to setting up e-commerce. "We wanted to create a multi-utility line in keeping with our brand offerings over the past eight years. Basically, a pyjama set that would not look out of place on a Zoom call," he explains.

With options for both men and wo-

NIDHI ADLAKHA

This World Elephant Day (August 12), Africa-headquartered conservation charity, Space for Giants, released the story of employee, Sam Karmushu. Growing up on a community-farm in Kenya, amidst grazing livestock and seeing elephants every day, Karmushu's tale highlighted these vanishing landscapes. "Poaching and loss of habitat have created challenges that require pragmatic solutions, which we're working to innovatively address," begins Max Graham, founder and CEO. An example of this ingenuity is their recent partnership with the Africa-focused mining company, Gemfields.

Titled Walk for Giants, the fundraising and awareness-building campaign for African wildlife conservation

CM YK

AN-NDNE

Set in gold

(clockwise from below) A weaver at work, Shalini James, snapshots from Rahul Mishra's 2006 show at Lakme Fashion Week and a model sporting an outfit by Weavers Village



SARASWATHY NAGARAJAN

Gold caught in the warp and weft of pure white cotton has been the trademark of Kerala handlooms. Woven by the nimble fingers of Balaramapuram's traditional weavers, the GI-tagged fine *mundum-neriyathum* – with gold Kasavu or coloured *kara* borders – has a special place during festivals.

During Onam, which also happens to be the wedding season, the weaving hub of Balaramapuram (about 20 km from Thiruvananthapuram) is usually bustling with buyers from across the world. Weaving in this region goes back to the era of Balarama Varma (1798 to 1810), ruler of erstwhile Travancore. His Dewan Unmini Thampi settled seven weaving families (from Tirunelveli district) who were specifically brought to Thiruvananthapuram to weave clothes for the royal family. Eventually, in the memory of the ruler, the place came to be called Balaramapuram.

However, this Onam, the town's 200-year-old weaving tradition is hanging by a thread as a result of the pandemic and the ensuing lockdown. "We haven't sold a single set in the last few months. Onam is when we have our biggest sale of *mundum-neriyathum*.

More power to the *Kasavu*

How Travancore Design Co, a collective of Kerala designers, is helping Balaramapuram's traditional Kasavu weavers this Onam season

um sets, dhotis and saris, and we usually make enough to sustain ourselves for the rest of the year," says Suresh Sudhakaran, a traditional weaver employing eight women who work on pit looms.

Designers come forward
Taking note of their difficulties, Thiruvananthapuram-based designer Alan Alexander Kaleekal is launching an initiative, Travancore Design Co. to help them sell their products at his store, RAHÉL (facebook.com/rahel.travancore/), along with his label, KALEE-

KAL Usha Balakrishnan of ANKA (ankafabric.in) and Kochi-based Shalini James (shalinijamesmantra.com) and Sreejith Jeevan of Rouka (shoprouka.com) will join him in the next phase where design interventions will be used to reimagine the traditional weaves.

Jeevan, who reinterpreted the Kasavu weave in Chendamangalam last

#ChangeAgents



Instead of projecting them as people who need help, we need to ensure that they see their work as 'cool'. Why can't we see them as custodians of a legacy that only they know? Make them come up with policies that highlight their craft."

SUNIL V, co-founder, Motherland and creator, Make in India campaign

year, is also among a small group of designers behind the Friends of Chendamangalam initiative (set up after the 2018 Kerala floods). This time around, the new collective has been formed to assist the weavers from Balaramapuram. The designers plan to procure the finished products and sell them via online sales or by appointment at their stores (along with their own labels).

Kaleekal, whose curated collection has vibrant Balaramapuram saris and a set *mundu* with Kasavu and *kara*, says, "These weavers produce some of the finest Kasavu fabrics. Their motifs and designs have an identical appearance on both sides of the fabric – it is too precious a legacy to be lost. We'd like each Malayali household to buy at least one sari or *mundum-neriyathum* to bring the Onam spirit into the homes of the weavers.

Balakrishnan, who has been tweaking the weaves with fresh designs and a touch of colour, has revived her brand's classic line of ivory-gold and ivory-silver for the festive season. "We have a new range with a mix of gold and silver Kasavu. Our wedding range has Kasavu with fabric

woven with counts of 120 and 100," she says.

Also bringing out a colourful collection of set *mundu* and saris this season is Shobha Viswanath of Weavers Village. "Karas in bright shades like yellow, with lines and borders, will appeal to a clientele looking for traditional wear that is trendy. We are also giving out matching masks."

Ramping up

It's not just independent designers pitching in, but older brands and chain stores too. Karalkada, perhaps Kerala's oldest brand selling Balaramapuram weaves, has a collection for both weddings and the festival season. These are adorned with *pulielakadu* (motif of tamarind leaf) and other specialties of the weave. At Kasavukada (with branches all over the State), the bespoke weave finds place in their bridal range. Hailing from a weaving family himself, managing partner Nandu VS says that although many of their outlets were closed due to the lockdown, the weaving never stopped. Their USP, he says, is a 'Thali' collection for the wedding season. "It is pure *zari* and costs between ₹30,000 and ₹60,000."

As the countdown to Thiruvonam begins, designers, weavers' collectives and retailers assert that unless the weaving industry adapts to changes and receives help, the proud legacy of Balaramapuram might fade away. However, James – who also worked with Jeevan on the Chendamangalam initiative – says that if weavers are willing to work with designers, it would not be difficult to find new customers. "Without any skill or loom upgradation, they can bring in these design changes to usher in a new product profile. All we request is the willingness to adapt," she says.

For newer audiences

Back in 2006, designer Rahul Mishra's debut collection at Lakme Fashion Week explored how "a design intervention can serve the needs of a global customer with garments rooted in tradition, but with a sense of modernity". Each garment was reversible, to portray versatility and longevity, he says on his Instagram page. Sunil Sethi, president, Fashion Design Council of India (FDCI), agrees that our "textiles can be innovatively used". "It is imperative for designers to work with the weavers and find ways of adapting the weaves for modern lifestyles," he says. Sethi has offered to buy unsold stock from the beleaguered weavers as part of the third tranche of FDCI's COVID-19 Support Fund. "It is important to support every art and craft of India. Also, the younger generation, even when they may not follow the family tradition of weaving, must be made digitally savvy to help their families reach out to the global market," he says, adding that the State and Central governments must act in tandem to ensure the artistes are aware of the schemes in place.

FOOD SPOT



Looking Eastward
Paneer tikka, stir-fried prawns (left), chicken red Thai curry (below) and asparagus tempura (bottom)

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The return of the chef

The Purple Plate caters to the Oriental palate



RAHUL VERMA

non-vegetarian one. Chef Vaibhav is in charge of the Oriental food. The list of starters includes vegetable spring rolls, soya and water chestnut lettuce wraps, sui mai with hot chicken, stir-fried prawns in XO sauce and diced Beijing chicken with chillies. The mains include silken tofu with chilli beans, Cantonese style exotic Asian greens, chicken red Thai curry and sliced chicken in Szechuan sauce. The food comes with your choice of noodles or steamed rice. Then there is a salad or dessert (I had a rose petal phirni which was sublime: thick and creamy, and with just the right fragrance and sweetness).

With the hotels mostly shut, and diners staying away from their favourite restaurants, Bhargava has now joined a catering outfit called The Purple Plate. He called to say that he wanted me to try out some of the dishes he had been cooking.

The catering service delivers food to Delhi NCR. It offers both Oriental and Indian food and supplies for groups of five, 10 or 15. Orders have to be placed 24 hours in advance (mobile no: 9899775259). It offers a three-course meal (₹5,000 for five people for a vegetarian meal; ₹7,000 for five for a

fried. Chef Bhargava sautéed ginger, garlic and onion in a wok, and to this, he added coloured peppers, a nice dash of the XO sauce, Chinese wine and chilli paste. He tossed in the prawns - and the final outcome was a lip-smacking dish, hot but complemented by the sweetness of the prawn and peppers.

From the Indian menu, I tried out the mutton rogan josh, and thought the gravy was robust, and the dal, nicely creamy.

The menu card tells me that the service also offers a cheese platter -- with five kinds of cheeses (from cheddar to gorgonzola), fruits, nuts, olives and crackers (₹5,500) and a Turkish crisps and dip platter -- beetroot crisps, pita crisps and lavash with beetroot hummus, olive hummus, labneh and baba ganoush (₹4,000). A 24-piece vegetarian sushi platter costs ₹3,000; a non-vegetarian platter, ₹4,000.

Chef Bhargava, who has also trained at the celebrated Noma's in Copenhagen, says that the menu will change every now and then. "We do customised dishes, too, if guests have any preferences," he says. "I want to keep highlighting the ingredients as they are the heroes."

Way to go, chef. This is the time for heroes - caped or sautéed.

The writer is a seasoned food critic

The Onakodi edit

Designers' Onam collections this year are a sober reflection of the times

SHILPA NAIR ANAND

This year Onam has arrived quietly sans the usual fanfare. Designers, in keeping with the mood, have gone minimal with their Onam collections.

"The usual large gatherings, during Onam, will be a no-no due to the pandemic – social isolation and physical distancing. Celebrations will be smaller, so our Onam collection too is a reflection of that mood," says Reshma Binu, of Label M designers.

Most of the collections for Onam pivot on traditional Kerala fabric. The current situation has designers thinking and

working differently, reflecting on times.

Designer Sreejith Jeevan has curated a collection of Kerala handloom saris, woven by Palakkad-based weavers co-operative Oodum Paavum. Kodi Edit, by Rouka, is a collection of 18-20-odd saris and dupattas. Also part of the collection are saris those that he designed for Care For Chendamangalam (C4C).

"The saris are traditional, but with quirky factor and detailing," Jeevan says. He is known for his work with Kerala handloom and especially saris aimed at giving the garment and the craft a contemporary element. He is also planning a range of garments



with the kasavu fabric for Onam.

Seamstress' Onam collection is an ode to the spirit of English Mariyam, one of the first Muslim girls from Thalassery to go to a convent school in her time.

The jackets in the collection, inspired by Mariyam's embroidered mulmul jackets, can be paired with saris and also jeans. The collection includes handloom saris. It also includes mundu, for men.

"This Onam, when the mood is generally low, let this be a tale of hope," says Rasmi Poudval, co-founder Seamstress.

Simplicity is the mood of this festive season, unlike last year. Label M garments and saris are known for heavy embroidery, surface embellishments and simple drapes. "Just dresses and kurtas, on Kerala fabric. We are keeping it simple, nothing heavy, if at all some light zari work

to add a little bit of shine," says Reshma.

She adds that it is not just the pandemic. The series of disasters that the State has been through this last month makes for a sombre Onam.

Aanya's Onam collection, Kaonam, is a nod to that time before Chingam dawns and the difficult month of Karkidakam bids adieu.

She sticks to the overriding 'keeping it simple' theme as well.

The collection comprises a range of garments and saris made entirely of fabric loomed at Kuthampally. "We have used every bit of fabric even the borders for detailing so that we don't waste any fabric," says Sujatha Shenoy, founder.

The rules of living may have changed, but what is Onam without kodi?

(Inputs by Anasuya Menon)



(Inputs by Anasuya Menon)

Festive threads From Seamstress' collection of jackets ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

This season of darkness will end: Biden

In his acceptance speech, the candidate says, 'America is at an inflection point, a time of real peril'

SIRIAM LAKSHMAN

In a speech that portrayed America as having arrived at a moment of choice between two very different futures, Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden said the country would overcome "this season of darkness", as he accepted the nomination.

"The current President has cloaked America in darkness for much too long. Too much anger. Too much fear. Too much division," Mr. Biden said on the fourth and final day of a virtual Democratic Convention, themed 'America's Promise'. Compelled by the pandemic to implement distancing measures, the former Obama-era Vice-President spoke from a mostly empty room, addressing an audience across the country watching on their computer and television screens.

"If you entrust me with the presidency, I will draw on the best of us not the worst. I will be an ally of the light not of the darkness. For make no mistake. United we can, and will, overcome this season of darkness in America. We will choose hope over fear, facts over fiction, fairness over privilege," Mr. Biden said.

Declaring that he was a proud Democrat, Mr. Biden pitched himself as a candidate with broader appeal: a line consistent with his presidential campaign and the early part of the convention.

Convention programming from earlier in the week had featured a number of Republicans – politicians as well as regular citizens – who were voting for Mr. Biden rather than President Donald Trump. "I will work as hard for those who didn't support me as I will for those who did," Mr. Biden said.



Sealing the nomination: Joe Biden and Kamala Harris, right, greeting supporters at the Chase Center in Wilmington at the conclusion of the Democratic Convention on Thursday. ■ AFP

Democrats are trying to get voters across their spectrum – from the centrists to the progressives – to vote for Mr. Biden. Prior to his speech, the convention organisers aired a clip of a video call between several of Mr. Biden's former competitors from the Democratic primaries, including progressive candidates Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, talking up Mr. Biden's candidacy.

Attack on President
Throughout his speech, Mr. Biden did not directly name the current occupant of the White House (Mr. Trump), but attacked his policies and personal.

"What we know about this President is if he's given four more years he will be what he's been the last four years. A President who takes no responsibility, refuses to lead, blames others, cozies up to dictators, and fans the flames of hate and division." Mr. Biden said, articulating a vision for America that was in sharp contrast to his char-

racterisation of Mr. Trump's vision. "I see a different America. One that is generous and strong. Selfless and humble," he said. "It's about winning the heart, and yes, the soul of America." He defined this winning as belonging to the generous, to the workers and to communities that have known the "injustice of the 'knee on neck'" – a reference to George Floyd the unarmed black man who died after being pinned down by a white policeman. Mr. Biden said he had spoken to Floyd's young daughter before her father's funeral and being affected deeply by her words.

With regard to foreign policy, Mr. Biden said: "I will be a President who will stand with our allies and friends. I will make it clear to our adversaries the days of cozying up to dictators are over."

There was also an apparent warning to Russia, with reference to intelligence reports that Russia had offered Taliban fighters bounties for killing American and coalition forces in Afghanistan.

"Under President Biden, America will not turn a blind eye to Russian bounties on the heads of American soldiers. Nor will I put up with foreign interference in our most sacred democratic exercise – voting," he said.

Mr. Biden said the November 3 election was consequential and "life-changing."

"All elections are important. But we know in our bones this one is more consequential. America is at an inflection point. A time of real peril, but of extraordinary possibilities."

"Character is on the ballot. Compassion is on the ballot. Decency, science, democracy. They are all on the ballot," he said.

Fallout of COVID-19

Mr. Biden outlined the health and economic fallout of COVID-19 – five million Americans were infected and more than 17,000 dead, with 50 million filing for unemployment this year.

Mr. Biden, who has often drawn connections between his personal story and those

of people he meets, spoke about the loss of close family members – his (first) wife, their daughter and, more recently, his son Beau. He talked about his father falling upon hard times and connected that event to his economic plan.

The plan included an outline of infrastructure projects, enhancing childcare and building on the Affordable Care Act, an Obama-era health care plan that was intended to bring uninsured Americans into the health insurance net. Mr. Biden also spoke of a future of rising wages and equal pay for women. His platform supports a \$15 federal minimum wage and actions designed to support the closing of the gender pay gap. Mr. Biden said there would be "an immigration system that powers our economy and reflects our values," and of an opportunity to create jobs while fighting the climate crisis. His platform includes policy reform for temporary and permanent visas for highly skilled workers.

He praised his running mate, Senator Kamala Harris. "She knows about all the obstacles thrown in the way of so many in our country. Women, Black women, Black Americans, South Asian Americans, immigrants, the left-out and left-behind," he said. "But she's overcome every obstacle she's ever faced."

The former Vice-President called his wife, Jill Biden, an "unstoppable force." "She was a great Second Lady and she will make a great First Lady for this nation, she loves this country so much."

Mr. Trump responded to Mr. Biden's speech on Twitter. "In 47 years, Joe did none of the things of which he now speaks. He will never change, just words!"

Turkey to convert another former church to mosque

Kariye Museum includes elements of multiple cultures

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
ISTANBUL

Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on Friday ordered another ancient Orthodox church that became a mosque and then a popular Istanbul museum to be turned back into a place of Muslim worship.

The decision to transform the Kariye Museum into a mosque came just a month after a similarly controversial conversion for the UNESCO World Heritage-recognised Hagia Sophia.

Both changes reflect Mr. Erdogan's efforts to galvanise his more conservative and nationalist supporters at a time when Turkey is suffering a new spell of inflation and economic uncertainty caused by the virus.

But they have added to Turkey's tensions with Greece and its Orthodox Church.

Greece's objection
The Greek Foreign Ministry called the decision "yet another provocation against religious persons everywhere" by the Turkish government.

The 1,000-year-old building's history closely mirrors that of the Hagia Sophia – its bigger neighbour on the historic western bank of the Golden Horn estuary on the European side of Istanbul.

The Holy Saviour in Chora was a medieval Byzantine church decorated with 14th-century frescoes of the Last Judgment that remain treasured in the Christian world.

It was originally converted into the Kariye Mosque half a century after the 1453 conquest of Constantinople by the Ottoman Turks.

It became the Kariye Mu-



Tourism goes on: A tourist at the Chora or Kariye Museum in Istanbul on Friday. ■ AFP

seum after Second World War as Turkey pushed ahead with the creation of a more secular new republic out of the ashes of the Ottoman Empire.

It features a minaret in one corner and small cascading domes similar to those of other grand mosques whose calls to prayer echo over Istanbul.

Frescoes and mosaics
But inside it is filled with magnificent frescoes and mosaics that represent some of the finest examples of Byzantine art in the Christian world.

Turkey's tumultuous efforts to reconcile these two histories form the underpinnings of the country's contemporary politics and social life.

Opposition HDP party lawmaker Garo Paylan called the transformation "a shame for our country".

"One of the symbols of our country's deep, multicultural identity and multi-religious history has been sacrificed," he said in a tweet.

Parents shave French Muslim girl's head

She was in relationship with a Christian

ELSEWHERE



Masks mandatory for French children above 11

PARIS
French schoolchildren above the age of 11 will be required to wear masks when they return to school in just over a week in a bid to halt the quickening spread of the virus, said Jean-Michel Blanquer, the Education Minister. ■ AFP

Israel bombs Gaza as rocket fire intensifies

GAZA CITY
Israeli warplanes bombed the Hamas-ruled Gaza Strip on Friday, as Palestinians fired rockets and launched fire bombs into southern Israel, the Army said. Israeli planes launched raids against Gaza shortly after midnight on Thursday and then again later on Friday morning. ■ AFP

Pak. Punjab pushes crackdown on publishers

Bill gives authorities power to control, censor and confiscate any work they deem problematic

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LAHORE

Publishers in Pakistan's most populous province could soon face prison if they fail to win approval from government bureaucrats before printing or importing books, pamphlets and many other written works.

Lawmakers in Punjab, home to about half of the country's 215 million people, unanimously approved the measure last month as part of a sweeping Bill targeting "objectionable" printed material.

Dividing the industry
If implemented, the Bill could gut the publishing industry in regional capital Lahore and divide Pakistan's literary world, leaving books available in one part of the country but banned in another.

Punjab's Governor has yet

to sign the Bill into law and has indicated he may seek some amendments before doing so. In its current form, the legislation would give authorities almost unlimited scope to control, censor and confiscate any texts they deem problematic.

Any material that is likely to jeopardise or is prejudicial to the ideology of Pakistan or the sovereignty, integrity or security of Pakistan –

which would gain broad new powers to inspect any printing, publication house

would be subject to tough new controls, the Bill states.

So would any work promoting "vulgarity" and "obscenity".

Publishers would have to submit detailed descriptions of all books to an "authorised officer" with Punjab's office of the Director General of Public Relations (DGPR) –

which would gain broad new powers to inspect any printing, publication house

they are producing or translating, and booksellers would need to reveal books they are importing. Those falling foul of the DGPR could face up to five years in prison.

More than 200 academics, journalists, historians and other community figures have written an open

letter to the Punjab Assembly expressing grave concern about the "immense arbitrary, unfettered and unilateral power" given to authorities to decide a book's fate.

Newspapers and magazines already face intense scrutiny under existing laws and are not subject to the pending legislation.

Neither are textbooks, which are controlled by the Punjab Curriculum and Textbook Board (PCTB).

Soon after lawmakers passed the Bill, an emboldened PCTB used existing laws to impose its first mass ban – censoring 100 textbooks used by private schools. Some of the newly banned books contained quotes from Mahatma Gandhi.

A mathematics book, which used three cartoon pigs – forbidden in Islam – to illustrate a simple counting exercise, was also banned.

Publishers would have to inform bureaucrats of works they are producing or translating, and booksellers would need to reveal books they are importing. Those falling foul of the DGPR could face up to five years in prison.

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MARKET WATCH

	PRICE	CHANGE
Sensex	38,435	0.56
US Dollar	74.84	0.24
Gold	52,990	0.32
Brent oil	44.28	-0.92

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	354.35	0.75
Asian Paints	1958.00	83.10
Axist Bank	440.45	5.50
Bajaj Auto	3053.15	16.20
Bajaj Finserv	6282.40	-7.05
Bajaj Finance	3389.30	-4.50
Bharti Airtel	520.25	-5.30
BPCL	410.10	-2.35
Britannia Ind	3882.75	14.65
Cipla	760.75	-1.95
Coal India	139.50	1.00
Dr Reddys Lab	4489.75	13.75
Eicher Motors	21702.40	331.05
GAIL (India)	101.75	0.25
Grasim Ind	677.35	11.75
HCL Tech	705.90	-4.20
HDFC	1804.05	18.90
HDFC Bank	1085.65	26.65
HDFC Life	598.10	3.05
Hero MotoCorp	3033.45	77.40
Hindalco	196.25	-2.75
Hind Unilever	2202.05	16.35
ICICI Bank	371.15	3.40
IndusInd Bank	513.55	0.15
Bharti Infratel	199.50	0.25
Infosys	948.80	-6.35
Indian Oil Corp	88.85	-0.20
ITC	196.80	1.00
JSW Steel	281.90	-0.75
Kotak Bank	1339.40	1.05
L&T	994.15	-1.60
M&M	609.80	-2.25
Maruti Suzuki	6973.00	-1.70
Nestle India Ltd.	16561.95	350.00
NTPC	105.95	4.85
ONGC	81.05	-1.10
PowerGrid Corp	189.10	7.90
Reliance Ind	2081.85	-15.20
State Bank	198.40	3.65
Shree Cement	22317.75	237.55
Sun Pharma	532.35	10.05
Tata Motors	120.90	-0.80
Tata Steel	428.85	-3.75
TCS	2248.60	-4.25
Tech Mahindra	732.60	6.20
Titan	1138.10	12.40
UltraTech Cement	4187.80	43.55
UPL	493.40	1.50
Wipro	273.35	-0.85
Zee Entertainment	192.05	-7.40

EXCHANGE RATES

Indicative direct rates in rupees a unit except yen at 4 p.m. on August 21		
CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar.....	74.64	74.96
Euro.....	88.17	88.55
British Pound	98.50	98.92
Japanese Yen (100)	70.74	71.04
Chinese Yuan	10.80	10.84
Swiss Franc	81.98	82.33
Singapore Dollar	54.54	54.78
Canadian Dollar	56.55	56.82
Malaysian Ringgit	17.85	17.95
Australian Dollar	53.62	53.85

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



'Sans Aadhaar, physical inspection must for GST'

NEW DELHI

Businesses registering under GST can opt for Aadhaar authentication, in the absence of which registration would be granted only after physical verification of the place of business, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs said. The applicant, shall, with effect from Friday (August 21), undertake the said authentication while submitting an application, it said. PTI

Don't renew motor cover without valid PUC: IRDAI

HYDERABAD

IRDAI has urged general insurers to comply with a Supreme Court direction under which motor insurance should not be renewed unless the vehicle has a valid pollution under control (PUC) certificate. The Central Pollution Control Board has raised concerns on the status of compliance of the direction in the National Capital Region, the insurance regulator said.

₹88,652-cr. I-T refunds issued so far this fiscal

NEW DELHI

The Income Tax department has issued refunds worth ₹88,652 crore to over 24 lakh taxpayers. This includes personal income tax refunds of ₹28,180 crore to over 23 lakh taxpayers and corporate tax refunds of ₹60,472 crore to over 1.5 lakh taxpayers. "CBDT has issued refunds of over ₹88,652 crore to more than 24.64 lakh taxpayers from 1st April, 2020," the department tweeted. PTI

Strides gets USFDA nod for liver disease drug

NEW DELHI

Strides Pharma Science said its step-down subsidiary has received approval from the U.S. health regulator to market Ursodiol tablets, used for treatment of patients with primary biliary cirrhosis. Strides Pharma Global, Singapore, has received approval for Ursodiol tablets USP in the strengths of 250 mg and 500 mg from the United States Food and Drug Administration (USFDA). PTI

State-run banks stare at capital shortage again, warns Moody's

Asset quality to deteriorate, driven by non-performing loans of MSMEs

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

A sharp slowdown in India's economic growth exacerbated by the COVID-19 outbreak will hurt public sector banks' (PSBs) asset quality, and result in sharp increases in credit costs, hurting profitability, according to Moody's Investors Service.

This will lead to a depletion of the already weak capital buffers of the PSBs, it wrote in a report.

"We estimate the PSBs will need ₹1.9-₹2.1 trillion (\$25-\$28 billion) in external capital over the next two years to restore their loss-absorbing buffers. The most likely source of capital to plug the capital shortfalls



Red flag: NPLs and credit costs will rise in the next two years, depleting PSBs' capital buffers. ■ V. SREENIVASA MURTHY

will be government support, despite the completion of a large recapitalisation by the government several months ago," it said. The banks' asset quality will deteriorate, led by retail and small business

loans. "We expect the Indian economy will contract sharply in fiscal year ending March 2021 before returning to growth, though modestly, in the next fiscal," it said.

As a result, formation of

new non-performing loans (NPLs) will accelerate substantially, driven by retail and micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) segments.

Although the one-time loan restructuring allowed by the RBI will prevent a sudden rise in NPLs, NPLs and credit costs will increase in the next two years, hurting PSBs' already weak profitability and depleting their capitalisation, it said.

If PSBs, which dominate the banking system, fail to function properly in the absence of state capital support, India will face a deepening credit crunch, hampering economic recovery, Moody's added.

Investments via P-notes soar to ₹63,000 cr.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Investments through participatory notes (P-notes) in the domestic capital market soared to ₹63,288 crore till July-end, making it the fourth consecutive monthly rise.

P-notes are issued by registered foreign portfolio investors to overseas investors who wish to be a part of the Indian stock market without registering themselves directly. They, however, need to go through a due diligence process.

According to SEBI data, the value of P-note investments in Indian markets – equity, debt, hybrid securities and derivatives – stood at ₹63,288 crore till July-end, while such investments stood at ₹62,138 crore at the end of June.



Building blocks: A lot of infrastructure projects are coming back on track, says Sundaram Finance's MD. ■ AFP

'Construction gear seeing demand uptick'

Seeing infra revival: Srinivasaraghavan

K. BHARAT KUMAR
CHENNAI

Demand for financing purchases of construction equipment and small commercial vehicles (CVs) has seen an improvement in recent months, said T.T. Srinivasaraghavan, MD, Sundaram Finance Ltd.

"We are seeing demand for construction equipment going up in several States," Mr. Srinivasaraghavan told *The Hindu*. "Hindu."

"Our disbursements for construction equipment exceeded our disbursements on commercial vehicles. It is almost unreal," he added.

"A lot of projects are coming back on track. The government seems to be committed to infrastructure spending, primarily on roads. The small CV segment too has been robust."

The lender's total disbursements slumped 79% to ₹929 crore during the quarter ended June. Of this, disbursements to the construction equipment segment accounted for 22.4%, while that to the tractor segment was 24%. In the first quarter of the previous financial year, these two segments had accounted for 10.7% and 5.1% of the ₹4,414 crore in disbursements, respectively.

Disbursements for CVs accounted for a mere 26% of the total in the last quarter, compared to 57.4% a year earlier.

Asked as to by when he expected clarity to emerge on the way forward in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, he said, "December, I feel, is a good timeline to aim for; by that time, hopefully, we should have some relief from the pandemic and something will happen to mitigate this. Only then will we know how deep and serious this is. Right now, it is surreal."

'Excess capacity'

Mr. Srinivasaraghavan also pointed out that the broader CV segment, an indicator of an economy's health, was still not out of the woods.

Asked if he expected potential replacement demand for CVs kicking in any time soon, he said, "Excess capacity that has built up is very significant and therefore the corner that you speak of is still further away than all of us would like. I don't see revival any time this financial year. Activity is still reviving very slowly. For the existing capacity to get soaked up, it will take another six months."

'RBI at end of rate-cut cycle, fiscal steps must for recovery'

High inflation unlikely to decline materially: SBI economists

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank is at the end of its rate-cut cycle as inflation is unlikely to decline materially from the current level, and the onus of economic recovery has now shifted to the government, economists at SBI said.

The comments come a day after the release of the minutes of the latest meeting of the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee, where high inflation was cited as the prime reason for the unanimous decision to hold rates. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) had cut rates by 1.15% in two moves since the



onset of the pandemic in March this year in order to push economic growth, but surprised many by holding rates at the August review as inflation overshot its target.

"Fiscal policy should play a decisive role, if we have to

Priority plan: TRAI mulls notice to Vodafone Idea

Telco's response not satisfactory'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

TRAI is considering issuing a show-cause notice to Vodafone Idea over the priority plan issue, as the telecom regulator is not satisfied with the response given by the company on the matter so far, according to a source.

Bharti Airtel, which has stopped onboarding new customers on its platinum offering after an earlier TRAI directive, may not be served a notice.

A regulatory source said that Vodafone Idea had not been able to satisfactorily respond to many of the issues raised by TRAI, including two major concerns as to how the company would ensure priority services and speeds to select customers who opted for the premium offering, and how the priority plan would not adversely

impact services and experience of non-premium users. The decision on issuing the show-cause will be taken in a day or so, and Vodafone Idea would be given a few days to respond to the notice and explain its position, the source added.

TRAI's decision will be based on safeguarding interest of mobile consumers, the source added. A mail sent to Vodafone Idea on the issue did not elicit a reply.

TCS: U.S. court held damages as 'excessive'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Tata Consultancy Services on Friday said a U.S. Court of Appeals had held that the punitive damages award of \$280 million on the Indian company in an intellectual property rights case with Epic Systems was 'constitutionally excessive'.

The Court had however, upheld the compensatory damages award of \$140 million, TCS added.

"TCS is exploring the options available to it," the IT major said.

TV PICKS

Cincinnati Open: Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 8.30 p.m.
England vs Pakistan: Sony Six (SD & HD), 3.30 p.m.
NBA: Sony Six (SD & HD), 6.30 a.m.
MotoGP: Eurosport (SD & HD), 4 p.m. & 3.30 a.m. (Sunday)
Champions League final: 12.30 a.m. (Monday)

IN BRIEF



Milwaukee Bucks makes it 1-1 with Orlando Magic

Miami Heat 109 (Dragic 20, Robinson 24) bt Indiana Pacers 100 (Oladipo 22) Heat 2-0; Milwaukee Bucks 111 (Antetokounmpo 28, Lopez 20) bt Orlando Magic 96 (Vucevic 32) 1-1; Houston Rockets 111 (Harden 21) bt Oklahoma City Thunder 98 (Gilgeous-Alexander 31) Rockets 2-0; LA Lakers 111 (Davis 31) bt Portland Trail Blazers 88 1-1. AFP

Crawley stands firm

England steady even as Pakistan bowlers strike regularly

ASSOCIATED PRESS
SOUTHAMPTON

Zak Crawley was on the verge of posting his first Test century as England reached tea on 184 for four on the opening day of the third and final Test against Pakistan at the Rose Bowl on Friday.

Crawley was on a career-best 97 (165b, 11x4) and sharing an unbeaten 57-run partnership with Jos Buttler (24) after England lost captain Joe Root (29) and Ollie Pope (3) after lunch.

Root edged a beautiful delivery from paceman Naseem Shah that seamed away, with wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan taking a fine catch to his right.

Pope lasted a mere 15 balls before he was bowled by Yasir Shah, trying to play the leg-spinner off the back foot, leaving the host at 127 for four.

Early strike

Earlier, Shaheen Afridi removed Burns (6) for the third time this series in the fifth over of the day and Dom Sibley (22) was adjudged leg-before to Yasir af-



Positive attitude: Zak Crawley in full flow. ■ GETTY IMAGES

SCOREBOARD

England — 1st innings: Rory Burns c Masood b Afridi 6, Dom Sibley lbw b Yasir 22, Zak Crawley (batting) 97, Joe Root c Rizwan b Naseem 29, Ollie Pope b Yasir 3, Jos Buttler (batting) 24; Extras (lb-3); Total (for four wkts. in 56 overs, at

tea): 184.

Fall of wickets: 1-12, 2-73, 3-114, 4-127.

Pakistan bowling: Afridi 13-2-39-1, Abbas 12-1-32-0, Yasir 19-3-60-2, Naseem 10-1-45-1, Fawad 2-0-5-0.

Toss: England.

.....

England 312 for four

■ England was 312 for four in 83 overs with Crawley (169) and Buttler (73) at the crease.

This is Crawley's maiden Test century.

.....

Teams check-in to the hotels in the UAE

CSK, MI and RCB land in the Gulf on Friday; Royals squad completes first testing

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DUBAI

Defending champion Mumbai Indians, along with Chennai Super Kings (CSK) and Royal Challengers Bangalore (RCB), arrived in the UAE on Friday for the event beginning on September 19.

All three teams posted their departure photos on social media. The Mahendra Singh Dhoni-led Super Kings had held a brief training camp in Chennai before flying out and was the only team to do so.

RCB skipper Virat Kohli,

who made his own arrangements to reach Dubai directly from Mumbai following all BCCI SOP, also posted a photo from the team hotel after touching down.

CSK and RCB are based in Dubai while Mumbai Indians is camping in Abu Dhabi. The players are not allowed to venture out of their rooms during the six-day isolation period.

The players, who were already tested multiple times before departure, will now undergo a six-day isolation period with testing on day 1,

3 and 6. If they clear all the tests, they will be eligible to enter the tournament's bio-bubble and start training. Subsequently, the players and support staff will be tested every fifth day of the tournament.

On Thursday, Kings XI Punjab, Rajasthan Royals and Kolkata Knight Riders became the first set of teams to arrive. Sunrisers Hyderabad and Delhi Capitals will land over the weekend.

While the Royals' squad completed its day 1 testing as per BCCI's Standard Operat-

ing Procedure (SOP) at the airport itself, KXIP went for a repeat test on Friday.

The Royals have demarcated the outdoor area which a player cannot use if his next door teammate too is outside.

KXIP players can also talk to their immediate neighbour while using the balcony.

KKR skipper Dinesh Karthik said lack of extensive training would be a factor in the IPL but the players would give their "all" to make fans proud.

Khel Ratna for five approved

Sports Ministry prunes Arjuna Awards list to 27

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The Sports Ministry on Friday accepted an unprecedented five recommendations for the country's highest sporting honour (Khel Ratna), but decided against bestowing the Arjuna Award on former Rajiv Gandhi

hi Khel Ratna winners Sakshi Malik and Mirabai Chanu, pruning the list to 27.

The Dronacharya Awards will be given to 13 individuals, including eight in the lifetime category, while 15 athletes will receive the Dhyana Chand Awards. Six institutions have been recom-

mended for the Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar. Panjab University has been chosen for the Maulana Abul Kalam Azad Trophy. In a first, the awards will be held virtually on August 29, the National Sports Day, instead of the Rashtrapati Bhavan this year due to COVID-19.

Carlsen has the final say

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

In a sensational finish, Magnus Carlsen left Hikaru Nakamura stranded within half a point of victory and went on to win his signature event – the \$300,000 Magnus Carlsen Chess Tour Finals – on Thursday.

The exhausting victory for Carlsen in the seventh set came after he squandered a 1-0 lead to trail 2-3 when Nakamura won the first blitz game. Carlsen faced a must-win situation to deny Nakamura the title.

Hitting back

In spite of the mounting pressure, Carlsen hit back to level the match 3-3. In the deciding Armageddon game., Carlsen chose to play with black pieces.

That meant Nakamura needed to win from the white side with five minutes on his clock to Carlsen's four to take the title.

Carlsen played solidly and stayed firm to clinch the title.

The victory was worth \$140,000 for Carlsen while Nakamura earned \$80,000 from the world's richest online event.

The result (final): Magnus Carlsen (Nor) bt Hikaru Nakamura (USA) 4-3.

Williams F1 team sold to Dorilton Capital

LONDON: The historic, 43-year-old Williams Formula One team has been bought by US-based investment firm Dorilton Capital, it was announced on Friday.

Founded by Frank Williams and Patrick Head, Williams won nine constructors' titles and seven drivers' championships, the last coming through Canadian Jacques Villeneuve in 1997. AFP

Hockey HPD David John quits

UTHRA GANESAN
NEW DELHI

Things never remain static in Indian hockey for long. While the players have been without competition for more than five months and are likely to remain so till the end of 2020, they will now also be without high performance director David John.

With less than a year to go for the re-scheduled Tokyo Olympics, John has cited health and personal reasons to resign.

He has written to both Hockey India and Sports Authority of India. Hockey India has accepted his resignation and reiterated health as the official reason for HI had gradually deteriorated.

John's exit. However SAI, the official employer, is yet to decide on the matter.

John's contract had been renewed recently following the Sports Ministry's decision to extend all foreign coaches' contracts till September 2021.

It had led to women's coach Sjoerd Marijne being made men's coach and Harendra Singh being given charge of the women.

Analytical coach Chris Ciriello and wife Heida had also left a month back citing visa issues and are currently not with the Indian team in Bengaluru. Ciriello, who also doubled as penalty corner coach, is expected to be back but there is no clarity on the issue.

India begins brightly

Wins all three matches to go top

P.K. AJITH KUMAR
KOZHIKODE

India got off to a splendid start at the online Chess Olympiad on Friday, winning all its three matches. The seventh seed finished the opening day on top of Pool A with six points.

India had opened its campaign with a crushing 6-0 victory over the lowly Zimbabwe. It won all its six games, despite deciding to test the bench; skipper Vidit Gujrathi was the only main player to take the field.

India's second-round opponent Vietnam was not to be taken lightly, so except for Viswanathan Anand, the big stars played. It won four of its matches, lost one and drew two for a 4-2 scoreline.

The third round saw Anand playing his first game, but was held by Uzbekistan's Nodirbek Abdusattarov.

All the other five players posted victories, though, to make it 5.5-0.5.

Second seed China is also on six points, but is second in the group – India's tie-break score is superior – with another six rounds remaining in the preliminary league.



Virat Kohli is all smiles after settling in. ■ TWITTER/@IMVKOHLI

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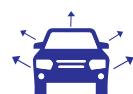
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