

Lives on the line

For more than fifty years, shanties near Shakur Basti, Daya Basti, Sarai Rohilla and Zakhira formed their universe, their playfield and classroom, as Sawra Khatun demonstrated at Shakur Basti. But with the Supreme Court ordering the demolition of nearly 48,000 slum clusters along the railway tracks within three months, R.V. Moorthy captures their crumbling universe.

(Clockwise from top) A woman drying clothes near the railway track adjacent to her home in Sarai Rohilla; a man running a grocery shop; children sitting near the railway track; a man cooking food at his home near Daya Basti as a train whistles by; Sawra Khatun teaching in Shakur Basti; children going for tuition classes near Daya Basti; children playing at Zakhira; a girl and her father sorting wheat in Sarai Rohilla.



IN BRIEF

Metro to begin early for UPSC examinees

NEW DELHI To facilitate students appearing for the Union Public Service Commission exams on Sunday, Delhi Metro services will begin operations from 6 a.m.. "Delhi Metro services on all the lines will begin operations at 6 a.m. from terminal stations," the DMRC said. Services on the Phase III stations usually begin at 8 a.m. on Sundays.

BJP president flags off Shri Ram Rath Yatra

NEW DELHI BJP Delhi president Adesh Gupta on Saturday flagged off the Shri Ram Rath Yatra that started from Rameswaram to Ayodhya by the Legal Rights Council of India.

A month after resumption, Delhi Metro yet to catch up

Line utilisation figures reach 9-10 lakh per day as opposed to 55-60 lakh journeys before the COVID-19 pandemic, ridership sees a steady rise

STAFF REPORTER NEW DELHI

Nearly a month after resumption of services, line utilisation on the Delhi Metro network has reached only 9-10 lakh daily, as opposed to the approximately 55-60 lakh journeys that the network was recording before the COVID-19 outbreak, according to the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC).

Ridership on the network and line utilisation data provided by the DMRC have seen a steady rise.

On September 11, when the entire network apart from the Airport Express Line was operational, the DMRC recorded a ridership of 1,79,457 with a corresponding line utilisation of

halted on March 22 due to the pandemic following which operations remained suspended for over five months. The nearly 400-kilometre long Delhi Metro resumed services in a graded manner with staggered timings from September 7.

Ridership on the network and line utilisation data provided by the DMRC have seen a steady rise.

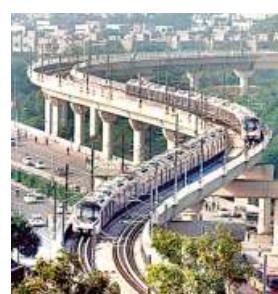
Line utilisation is the measure by which the number of journeys, performed by each passenger in completing his or her journey by using one or more lines, is recorded.

Metro operations were

3,28,968 and on September 12, when the entire network became operational, a ridership of 2,00,607 was recorded with a corresponding line utilisation of 3,80,720. Between September 12 and September 18, the line utilisation increased to 7,46,071.

Curtailed capacity

While officials said that the line utilisation figures have reached 9-10 lakh per day, with a curtailed capacity inside coaches to maintain social distancing, the number of journeys being undertaken currently are way below the pre-pandemic numbers.



The Delhi Metro resumed services in a graded manner from September 7.

In the first week of March, the number of journeys on the Delhi Metro network ranged between 55-60 lakh per day.

Discontinuation of tokens, restricted entry to stations, wearing of masks at all times, alternate seating inside metro coaches are some of the guidelines that were put in place by the public transporter. As a precautionary measure, the DMRC also introduced facilities by which commuters can recharge their smart cards online at the Automatic Fare Collection (AFC) gates.

'Break the Peak'

With certain sections recording an uneven ridership, the DMRC has also advised commuters to "Break the Peak"

and stagger their journeys to avoid crowding.

"In recent days, it has been observed that certain sections of the metro network are showing a trend where occupancy is touching the 100% mark during monitoring and evening peak hours.

Whereas, during off-peak hours, the occupancy in the same sections is in the range of 30%-50% only, leaving ample scope for the people to stagger their travel from peak hours to the extent possible and have hassle-free travel with social distancing in place," DMRC officials said.

However, despite a strict

protocol in place, several commuters continue to be apprehensive of taking the metro amid the ongoing pandemic.

Ahana Dasgupta, who was a daily commuter to Central Secretariat before the lockdown said, "I have not yet started travelling on the metro because I believe that in an enclosed space, the chances of getting infected increases manifold with a general unwillingness to wear masks. Further, in the evenings, there is a long queue outside the station where there is hardly any social distancing."

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER JAL SHAKTI DEPARTMENT, PHE DIVISION PULWAMA



از دفتر ایکر بکٹیو انجینئرنگ شکتی تیپارمنٹ (بی.ایچ.ای) ڈویژن پلواما

Notice Inviting e-Tender

E-NIT S. No. 42/PHEP of 2020-21

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor UT of J&K Freshes-tenders (Two cover System) on Item Rate Basis including the maintenance cost for a period of Three Years which includes 12 months of DLPan invited from Reputed and resourceful Contractors/ Firms/Companies/Joint Venture of repute in PWD or Equivalent in CPWD/ Railways and other state Governments for the following works, which should be uploaded on the Procurement web portal <http://jkttenders.gov.in> for the subject works referred below to be received by the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Department, Division Pulwama and as per the details mentioned in this e-tender notification and to whom all the terms and conditions of detailed e-NIT /Tender Documents/ PWD Form No.- 25 double are accepted. The detailed tender document and Specifications etc. can be downloaded on the e-procurement portal <http://jkttenders.gov.in>.

The cost of tender documents (Non-refundable/Non-Transferable) should be in the shape of e-Challan or Treasury Challan/Receipt in favour Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Department, Division Pulwama.

S. No	Name of Work	Estimated Cost (₹ in lacs)	EMD (in ₹)	Cost of TD (in ₹)	Time of completion	Class of Contract
1	Retrofitting of Water Supply Scheme Goosu by way of construction of collection sump including renovation of operator quarter/ face lifting and providing, laying and fitting of pipes including installation of 203 No. FHTCs for village Goosu.	38.39	76780	1100	60 Days	AAY
2	Retrofitting of Water Supply Scheme Wasamarg by way of providing, laying & fitting of GI pipes including face lifting of various structures by way of painting & white washing, including painting to chain link fencing around structures including installation of 87 No. FHTCs for village Wasamarg.	35.56	71120	1100	60 Days	AAY

Position of Funds: -Available; Major Head of Account: Jaljeevan Mission (JJM)
The Bidding documents consisting of eligibility criteria, specification, drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q) set of terms & conditions of contract and other details can be seen/ downloaded from the e-procurement Portal <http://jkttenders.gov.in> as per schedule of dates given below:-

S.No	Description	Date			Time
		DD	MM	YY	
1.	Publishing date of NIT	01	10	2020	1400 Hrs.
2.	Download Start Date	01	10	2020	1400 Hrs.
3.	Bid Submission Start Date	01	10	2020	1400 Hrs.
4.	Bid Submission End Date	21	10	2020	1600 Hrs.
5.	Bid opening date (Technical Cover)	22	10	2020	1000 Hrs.

Other terms and conditions will remain same as laid down in the detailed E-NIT S. No. 30/PHEP of 2020-21 published vide this office No. PHEP/2503-16 dated. 08-09-2020 and detailed Tender Document attached.

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor UT of Jammu & Kashmir.

No: -PHEP/323-38, Dated: 01-10-2020

DIPK-6726/20

INDIRA GANDHI NATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE ARTS (An Autonomous Trust under Ministry of Culture, Govt. of India)

ADVERTISEMENT FOR FILLING UP THE POSTS ON DEPUTATION/DIRECT RECRUITMENT BASIS

Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts (IGNCA), an Autonomous Trust under the Ministry of Culture, invites applications in the prescribed format for the following positions.

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Associate Professor

(2) Sociology/South East Asia Studies/ Sanskrit, Hindi & Modern English Languages

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(3) Director (Administration)

1 post

Note : *Number of Posts are provisional.

Applications in the prescribed proforma in Annexure-I along with self attested photocopies of testimonials should be sent to the Director (Admn.), Indira Gandhi National Centre for the Arts, CV Mess Building, Janpath, New Delhi 110 001 so as to reach latest by 29th October, 2020. Only eligible candidate as per prescribed qualification and experience should apply. In case of receipt of large number of applications, IGNCA reserves the right to fix the criteria for shortlisting of applications and such shortlisted candidate will only be called for interview. Those who are applying for deputation should forward their application through Proper Channel alongwith 5(five) years APARs and vigilance/integrity clearance certificate. Application received after the prescribed last date will summarily be rejected.

Prescribed Application form and other details are available at IGNCA's website www.ignca.gov.in.

Director (Admn.)

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The fifth week of the Delhi government's '10 Hafte 10 Baje 10 Minute'

anti-vector borne disease campaign will seek to engage children to spread awareness about measures to prevent dengue here on Sunday.

GOVERNMENT OF UTTARAKHAND

Office of Executive Engineer, NH Division, PWD, Dehradun

Phone : 0135-2641242 Email : eenhddn@gmail.com

No. 1550/Tender/2020 Date: 26/09/2020

SHORT TERM TENDER NOTICE

The Executive Engineer, N.H. Division, PWD, Dehradun on behalf of the "Governor of Uttarakhand", invites Tender, for following work. Tender related information available on Web-site <http://uktenders.gov.in> from 05.10.2020

S. No. Name of Work Earnest Money (Rs. In Lakhs) Tender Cost Validity of Tender Period of Completion Contractor's Category of Registration

1	Rectification of accidental black spot at km 106.400 on NH-72 (07) in the State of Uttarakhand under Road Safety Annual Plan (2020-21).	2500.00+ 18% GST + Stationary charges Rs. 3000/-	45 Days	3 Month	Registered in Category (D) & above
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(1)- Further details can be seen on to CPPP/Website <http://eprocure.gov.in> and <http://Bims.gov.in>

(2) Corrigendum/Addendum, if any will be published only in the above Web Site.

Executive Engineer,
N.H. Division, PWD,
Dehradun

DIPR/UK/13367

Govt.'s dengue campaign to engage children now

Children will be encouraged to check their houses for signs of stagnant clean water and to motivate their friends to do the same,

the Delhi government said.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had kick-started the anti-dengue campaign on September 6. Last week, Mr. Kejriwal had asked all

the RWAs of Delhi to come forward and spread awareness to prevent dengue. "In the fifth week of the dengue campaign, schoolchildren will be encouraged to do their homework by inspecting their houses at 10 a.m. for 10 minutes for signs of stagnant clean water," the government said.

Delhi Cong. protests against govt. over 'arbitrary' challans

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

Delhi Congress workers, along with members of party-affiliated Auto Taxi Congress Union, on Saturday staged a protest here against the Delhi government over "arbitrary" challans of vehicles.

Some of the protesters including, Delhi Congress vice-president Jaikishan and Veer Singh Dhingan were detained by the police near Chandgi Ram Akhara, party leader Parvez Alam said.

"The government agencies, including traffic police are arbitrarily issuing vehicle challans in the garb of the Amended Motor Vehicle Act. The protesters demanded Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal to provide relief to auto and taxi drivers from these challans," Mr. Alam said.

Timings DELHI		
SUNDAY, OCT. 04		
RISE 06:16	SET 18:04	
RISE 19:41	SET 08:08	
MONDAY, OCT. 05		
RISE 06:16	SET 18:03	
RISE 20:13	SET 09:01	
TUESDAY, OCT. 06		
RISE 06:17	SET 18:01	
RISE 20:50	SET 09:55	

Delhi Weather max min
Delhi City 36 20
Safdarjung 36 20
Palam 35 23

Delhi Palam Today
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Delhi Palam Tomorrow
36°C Dry weather would prevail. Strong gusty wind during day.

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'Give 1-month extension of parole granted to convicts'

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Prisons Department has written to the government to extend the emergency parole granted to convicts by one month in view of the existing pandemic, said officials on Saturday.

In a letter to the Home Department, it said the emergency parole can be given considering the current situation. "We have written to the government to extend emergency parole of convicts by one month," a senior jail official said.

After the decongestion drive, the number of inmates has reduced to over 13,000 from 18,000 and the actual capacity now is 10,000. The official said Delhi's government's Home Department can take a decision on extension of parole. Recently, 260 inmates and jail staff had tested positive for the virus. According to the data shared by the prison authorities on September 13, the number of active COVID-19 cases in Delhi Prisons was 25, including 20 jail staff. DG of Delhi Prisons Sandeep Goel had also tested positive and is currently under isolation.

Hathras stir: Dalit activists seek judicial probe, fast-track courts

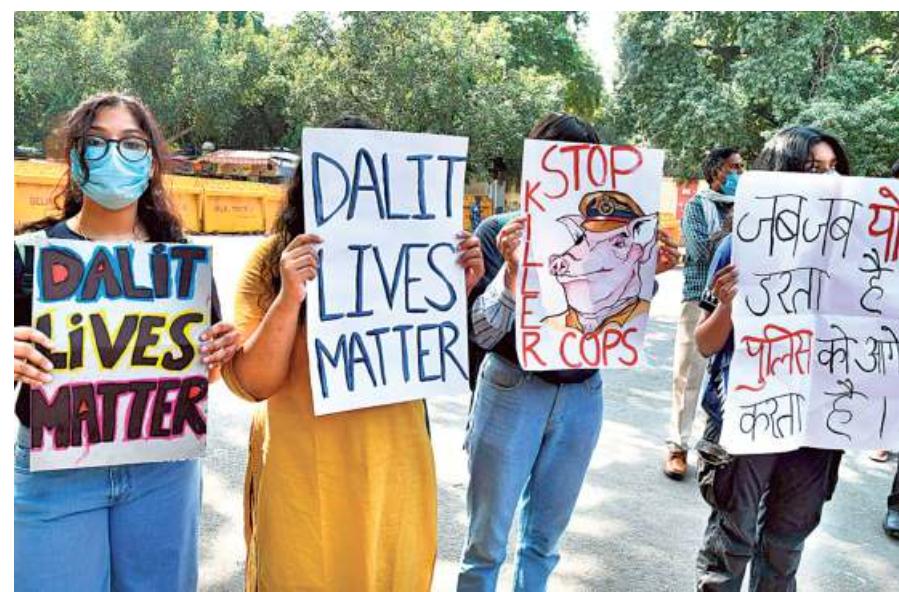
Organisations gather at Jantar Mantar to protest atrocities against Dalit women

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Dalit Shoshan Mukti Manch (DSMM) and other organisations gathered at Jantar Mantar on Saturday to protest against the atrocities meted out to Dalit women in Uttar Pradesh and demanded a judicial inquiry into the cases. They have also demanded more fast-track courts as well as security for the Hathras victim's family.

Sunaina K. of DSMM said: "A series of cases have been reported in the past few days. Atrocities against Dalit women is a norm in U.P. now. The manner in which the bodies were brutally assaulted and the horrific death of the victims show how they were denied basic rights. Even the manner in which the police have acted and the protection provided by the government has remained suspicious."

"We demand a speedy judicial inquiry into all the cases. Suspension of officials is only a means to calm down the agitated masses and suppress the public outcry. We need justice to be provided to the families. Caste factor has to be reported and discussed as well. We also demand safety and security of the Hathras victim's family," said Ms.



Students hold banners during a protest at Jantar Mantar against the Hathras incident, on Saturday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

The manner in which the bodies were brutally assaulted and the horrific death of the victims show how they were denied basic rights

SUNAINA K
Member of DSMM

Sunaina.

Demanding fast-track courts, Vinnita Shikhar, president of the Mahila Dakshata Samiti, said, "Every day there is news about atrocities against women. Why

aren't there fast-track courts in the country and why are the accused not punished swiftly? We want capital punishment for rapists and fast-track courts should ensure that the death penalty is awarded swiftly."

Students protest

Scores of students and others also joined the protest in solidarity.

Kanay Mathur, a first-year student studying at a university abroad, said: "This is the first time I am participating in a protest. It is high

time that we acknowledge that casteism and sexism are both a huge part of this country. We should step out and not remain silent anymore."

Kabir Beotra (17), also a first-time protester, said: "The incident, which took place in Hathras, is really disgusting. Also, the manner in which the Yogi Adityanath-led government handled the case is even more shameful. It is ironic that an actor's death is given more importance and Dalit voices are drowned."

'No home quarantine for most passengers arriving in Capital'

Many of them say there were no follow-up calls from govt.

NIKHIL M BABU
NEW DELHI

Several persons – who have travelled to Delhi from other States – and officials from at least three of the Capital's 11 districts have told *The Hindu* that domestic travellers are not being put under 7-day home quarantine as directed in June 3 order.

All asymptomatic passengers who enter/de-board in NCT of Delhi shall home quarantine themselves for 07 days...[sic]

THE JUNE 3 ORDER BY VIJAY DEV
Chief Secretary of Delhi

June 3 read: "All asymptomatic passengers who enter/de-board in NCT of Delhi shall home quarantine themselves for 07 days...[sic]" Travellers, who arrived in the city by road or by air, said they did not get any follow-up phone calls from the government. There are other States where home quarantine for domestic travellers are still being implemented strictly.

"I came back to Delhi in August and no one took down my details at the airport. After that, the government did not contact me for quarantine," said Sanakan Venugopal, who travelled from Kerala.

Another 25-year-old man said he too did not get any calls from government after travelling by air to the city. "After the landing, they did not even check my status on the Aarogya Setu app. Last week, one of my colleagues of travelled to his hometown by air from Delhi on Friday. After three, he came back to the city to join work. There was no quarantine," he added.

An order by Chief Secretary of Delhi, Vijay Dev, on

stance, if a person has to travel to Kerala from any another State, she has to register in a government website before going and undergo mandatory home quarantine period and is contacted via phone by officials. For a short visit, which has to be less than a week, also the person has to register on the website but there will be no quarantine in this case. But there is no such system in Delhi.

A 27-year-old woman, Anukriti, said: "I came to Delhi from Uttarakhand on August 10 by car with a friend. Our names were not noted down and I did not undergo home quarantine."

Jugal Kishore, head of community medicine department of Safdarjung Hospital, said home quarantine and monitoring help prevent the virus from entering a State or city in the early stage of the infection. "Right now, it is not feasible to implement it in a city like Delhi where lakhs of people travel to the city every day," Dr. Kishore said.

The government spokesperson refused to offer a comment on why the order is not being implemented and whether they plan to revoke the order. Revenue Minister Kailash Gahlot did not respond to calls and messages seeking comment.

Positivity rate now less than 5.5%, claims Health Minister

Delhi records 2,258 fresh COVID-19 cases as testing reduces

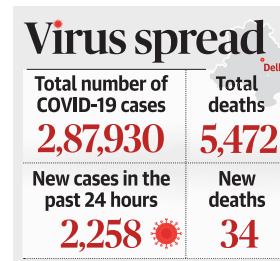
STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

As many as 2,258 new COVID-19 cases were reported in the Capital in the past 24 hours taking the total number of cases to 2,87,930, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Saturday.

Also, 34 more deaths have been reported, taking the total number of deaths to 5,472. Of the total cases, 2,57,224 people have recovered and there are 25,234 active cases.

Beds available
Of the total 15,840 beds available for COVID-19 treatment in the city, 62.1% were vacant, as per government data on Saturday.

But 58.21% of the ICU beds with ventilators have been occupied and 67.06%



creased for the second consecutive day on Saturday. Only 39,306 tests were done in the past 24 hours.

"There was a time when Delhi was second number [in the country in terms of the number of cases] but now it is in the sixth number," Health Minister Satyendar Jain said.

"We had increased the testing on a large scale and had said the cases will decrease in two to three weeks and now it has started to come down. At a time, the positivity rate was around 9-10% now it is less than 5.5%," the Minister said, adding that more beds are available now.

On the Hathras case, Mr. Jain said it feels that people are not afraid of the system and strict punishment should be given.

Stronger together



A girl and her mother carry fodder near the Hindon river on Saturday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

Four J&K youth planning 'terror attack' arrested

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Delhi Police Special Cell has arrested four Kashmiri youth they claim were radicalised and were planning a terror attack in the Capital.

DCP (Special Cell) Pramod Singh Kushwah said that the accused have been identified as Altaf Ahmad Dar (25), resident of Pulwama, Ishfaq Majeed Koka (28) and Ajib Safi (22), both residents of Anantnag and Mushtaq Ahmad Gani (27),

resident of Shopian. According to the police, they were planning a terror strike to be formally inducted in Ansar Ghajwat Ul Hind, an off-shoot of Al Qaida in Jammu and Kashmir. The police claimed that they had come to Delhi on September 27 and were collecting arms and ammunition using the money their handler had given.

Four pistols and 120 live cartridges were recovered from their possession.

Three miscreants snatch gold chain of govt. staffer

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Three unidentified persons snatched a gold chain of a 51-year-old government employee in Prashant Vihar area on Thursday, the police said on Saturday. A case has been registered and investigation is under way, the police said.

DCP (Rohini) P.K. Mishra said that the incident took

place on Thursday evening when the victim, identified as Shyam Chhabra, who works in the Central government's Pay and Account department, was going to the temple.

In a CCTV footage, a man can be first seen arguing with the victim after which he snatches the chain and flees with two of his accomplices on a two-wheeler.

Teams have been sent to nab Arjun's accomplices. The duo used to rob people on knifepoint, said officials.

Man named in four criminal cases nabbed

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 23-year-old man, accused in four criminal cases, was nabbed after a brief chase in Kashmere Gate, the police said on Saturday.

DCP (Dwarka) S.K. Meena said Satish Kumar from Qutub Vihar killed 26-year-old

28-year-old man arrested for killing partner

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 28-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly killing his partner with whom he was in an extramarital relationship, the police said on Saturday.

DCP (Dwarka) S.K. Meena said Satish Kumar from Qutub Vihar killed 26-year-old

Dishu Kumari and hid her body in a bed box.

The police said they received information on September 2 at 9.51 a.m. regarding a foul smell and liquid coming out of a locked room in Chhawla. A team reached the spot and broke open the door and found the body.

The police then checked

the CCTV footage and found that the victim and a man had entered the room on September 23. However, after a few hours, the man can be seen coming out of the room. During investigation, the police received a tip-off following which Kumar was held. During interrogation, he said he got married in 2017, had a two-year-old daughter, but left his family. He said he was in a relationship with the victim since 2017. However, he came to know that Dishu had relations with other persons and they often fought on this issue. On September 23, during a similar fight, he smothered her.

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Experts advise Jaipur authorities to focus on water, sanitation and hygiene

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

JAIPUR Researchers and public health practitioners have laid emphasis on "socially inclusive" services for water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH)

for the urban poor in order to strengthen the connect between local communities and government authorities for removing barriers in accessing resources and facilities.

The recommendation was

made at an event held here recently for releasing the findings of a baseline survey of 11 settlements, comprising 1,118 households, in four zones of Jaipur.

The survey was aimed at

finding out the status of WASH services and existing practices that determined community behaviour.

While 62% of the households reported that they had

piped water, 84.7% had a toilet within their premises. About 11.5% of the households received subsidy under the Swachh Bharat Mission for construction of toilets and only 10.64% reported door-to-door waste collection.

Rakhee Badhwar of the Centre for Advocacy and Research (CFAR) said the human cost of weak WASH services would be unbearable during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

'A minor's consent is not consent'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

JAIPUR

National Commission for Women member Rajulben Desai on Saturday asked why action cannot be taken in the alleged Baran rape case in Rajasthan even if the

two girls had stated that they were with the accused on their own accord.

"A legal point arises here because the girls are minor and a minor's consent is not consent in the language of the law," said Ms. Desai.

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age 33, seeks Christian Profes-
sional and Post Graduates, age 33-37,
in & around Chennai, Caste No Bar,
Contact 8056198771 / ahamed4march@gmail.com

DOCTOR M.S.(Ophthal) II Yr SMU
Slim-Fair 28 yrs seeks Com-
pleted or Undergoing M.D./ M.S./
(Clinical Branches) Groom, Contact :
8056198771 / ahamed4march@gmail.com

DOCTOR, M.S.(OG), Fair, Good look-
ing, 29yrs, 163cm, SC, AD, girl in
Govt service seeks MD, MS, DM, MCh
Groom within 33 years. Caste no bar,
Ct: 9788655751

VANEELA CHETTIAR DOCTOR 26/
152cm MS(ENT) karaiyal, Pondy. Doc-
tor parents. Seeking handsome (MD/
MS) doctor clean habit. Groom. Ct :
98427 74997

MD ANESTHESIA, final year, Chennai
girl, 31/ 165, slim, beautiful,
honey. Muslim Malayalee Mother
TamilSmart Doctor boys 31 to 33
MS MD MCh DM from Kerala and Tamil-
Nadu preferred. Ct: 9840985383

WANTED GROOM 28-33yrs medical doc-
tor/Dentist/MBA educated from Cana-
da for medical/dental bride studies in
Canada. Contact: sanross@
yahoo.com

REDDY GIRL, 1992 / 157 cm, En-
trepreneur MSM/Babson/USA Family
business seeks liberal minded,
well educated suitable match set-
tled in Bangalore C: 9840053399
with photo. Caste no bar.

M.B.B.S., M.D., Govt Doctor, Fernan-
do (RC), 31/53+ Fair, Divorcee. Ct:
944430288, 9443872388.

CHRISTIAN/ FAIR, Unconventional Di-
vorcee, MD & 34yrs MD Ped. Doctors
look for Partners. Mb: 9790799892

GOUNDER/ MUDALIAR (CNB): 20 Cr/
27+Fair, B.Arch, Business Fam-
ily, Chennai. Seeks Groom Business
Engineer - 735851079, 7035081258

REDDY, MD, MRCEM, Doctor bride
Fair/ 31/ 173 cms, having job in
UK, seeks alliance from UK pro-
perty. Post Graduate Doctor/ Engr/
Mgmt grooms, with clean habits.
Ct: 8826501199

MD, M.B.B.S., Govt Doctor, Fernan-
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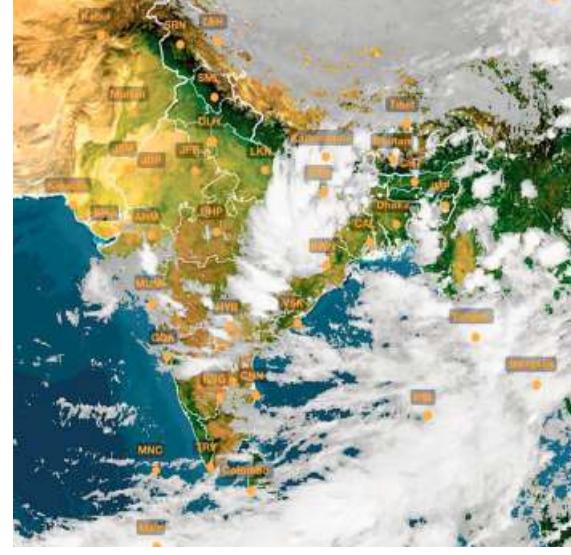
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WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

Forecast for Sunday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Assam, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram, Tripura, Odisha and Konkan & Goa. Moderate thunderstorms with lightning likely at isolated places over east Uttar Pradesh, Arunachal Pradesh, Bihar, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal and north interior Karnataka

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	17.4	33.0	26.0	Kozhikode	—	34.1	24.6
Ahmedabad	—	36.1	25.2	Kurnool	—	32.4	24.7
Aizawl	4	27.8	19.6	Lucknow	—	35.0	24.7
Allahabad	—	—	24.7	Madurai	—	38.6	24.6
Bengaluru	0.4	28.4	21.0	Mangalore	0.2	32.2	23.6
Bhopal	—	34.1	19.2	Mumbai	—	32.8	25.6
Bhubaneswar	43.6	30.0	24.7	Mysuru	8	31.0	21.8
Chandigarh	—	34.6	20.1	New Delhi	—	36.1	20.3
Chennai	—	34.4	27.2	Patna	—	35.6	26.4
Coimbatore	80	33.2	22.9	Pond Blair	32.2	27.1	23.7
Dehradoon	—	33.5	20.1	Puducherry	9.8	35.4	23.8
Gangtok	0.4	21.9	16.5	Pune	2.1	33.5	21.1
Goa	7	32.0	24.8	Raipur	—	33.4	25.4
Guwahati	0.2	34.2	24.2	Ranchi	—	29.2	22.1
Hubballi	—	26.0	22.0	Shillong	1	23.0	17.0
Hyderabad	—	33.2	24.3	Shimla	—	26.8	17.0
Imphal	0.2	28.9	20.7	Srinagar	—	27.5	7.8
Jaipur	—	36.6	22.0	Thiruvananthapuram	—	32.0	24.2
Kochi	—	30.4	24.2	Tiruchi	—	33.4	26.2
Kohima	11	24.2	18.0	Vijayawada	—	34.0	27.6
Kolkata	—	32.4	26.6	Visakhapatnam	—	33.1	26.2

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES SO₂ NO₂ CO PM2.5 PM10 CODE

CITIES	SO ₂	NO ₂	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	19	49	25	.63	.82	■■■■■
Bengaluru	.6	24	33	.36	.62	■■■■■
Chennai	43	33	44	.26	.62	■■■■■
Delhi	5	38	22	.235	.280	■■■■■
Hyderabad	.8	56	30	.75	.126	■■■■■
Kolkata	12	12	—	.42	.48	■■■■■
Lucknow	.7	59	36	.287	.191	■■■■■
Mumbai	17	21	37	.61	.264	■■■■■
Pune	.8	31	18	.127	.133	■■■■■

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.

NO₂: Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

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

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

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Bhopal, Rajasthan recorded an unhealthy quality index (AQI) score of 264 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Kozhikode, Kerala recorded a healthy AQI score of 18

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA MUMBAI

The Maharashtra government on Saturday issued safety guidelines for restaurants and other eateries, which have been allowed to reopen from October 5.

Hotels, food courts and restaurants have been allowed to operate from Monday at 50% seating capacity.

The guidelines make it mandatory for customers to be screened at the entry point for symptoms of the novel coronavirus such as high temperature, cough, and cold. Only asymptomatic customers will be allowed entry. Also, putting on face masks will be mandatory, except while eating, the guidelines said. Customers must follow physical distancing while waiting for service.

The guidelines specify that consent should be obtained from visitors for sharing their details with administrative and health authorities for contact tracing and related activities.

Hand sanitiser must be made available, and payment through digital mode should be encouraged while precautions should be taken during cash transactions. Restrooms and hand-wash areas must be cleaned regularly. Furniture should be disinfected on a daily basis, the guidelines added.

Plexiglass screens or barriers must be erected at counters where interaction with customers occur frequently. Restaurants will have to ensure separate entry and exit points for customers. CCTV cameras must be fully functional and only cooked food can be included on the menu.



Contactless friendship: Two girls share a light moment as they await their turn to get tested for COVID-19 at a medical camp in Dadar on Saturday. ■ EMMANUEL YOGINI

Maharashtra sees more recoveries than new COVID-19 cases again

16,835 discharged; 14,348 fresh cases, 278 deaths in State

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA MUMBAI

Maharashtra on Saturday reported 14,348 fresh COVID-19 cases, taking its total case tally to 14,30,861, according to the State Health Department.

With 278 more people succumbing to the infection, including 151 in the last 48 hours, the cumulative death toll in the State has surged to 37,758.

A total of 16,835 patients were discharged on Saturday, pushing the total number of recoveries to

11,34,555. The State now has 2,58,108 active cases. While the case recovery rate is 79.3%, the case fatality rate is 2.64%.

2,402 cases in Mumbai

Mumbai city recorded 2,402 new cases and 46 fatalities, taking its total case load to 2,12,462 and the death toll to 9,060.

The Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR), comprising Mumbai, added 4,657 fresh cases and 94 fatalities. The MMR now has 4,95,658 cases, while the

total death toll is 16,204. Meanwhile, Pune city recorded 1,077 new cases.

Nashik city added 545 fresh cases, while Pimpri Chinchwad's tally rose by 598. While Ahmednagar reported 146 fresh cases, spikes were recorded in Sangli (21), Aurangabad (21), Nanded (135), Akola (108), and Nagpur (698).

So far, 70,35,296 samples have been tested in the State. While 22,03,966 people are in home quarantine, 28,414 others are in institutional quarantine.

'Suspend investigating officer in Ashwini Bidre murder case'

Victim's husband appeals to Ajit Pawar

RAINA ASSAINAR NAVI MUMBAI

Raju Gore, the husband of murdered policewoman Ashwini Bidre, has written to Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar demanding suspension of the investigating officer in the case.

In his letter, Mr. Gore accused Assistant Commissioner of Police Vinod Chavan of the Navi Mumbai Crime Branch, of aiding the accused. Mr. Gore said, "Senior advocate Pradeep Gharat, who is the Special Public Prosecutor in the case, is a senior citizen. During such times, stepping out is dangerous for him. Yet, he has been attending all the hearings. Mr. Chavan is expected to inform Mr. Gharat about the dates of hearing and the bail applications filed by the accused beforehand so that Mr. Gharat gets enough time to prepare."

'Lack of cooperation'

Mr. Gore said there was a hearing on September 28 on the bail application filed by one of the accused, but Mr. Chavan informed Mr. Gharat about it only on Sunday night. Mr. Gore said Mr. Gharat managed to prepare for the matter and the Bombay High Court issued an order extending the trial period in the case by another year. The trial began at the Panvel sessions court in November 2019 and the court had initially directed that the trial be expedited and completed within a year.

Mr. Gore also demanded that Assistant Commissioner of Police Sangeeta Alphonso, who had been appointed last year by the



Ashwini Bidre

Maharashtra Director General of Police to assist Mr. Gharat in the trial, be transferred to the Navi Mumbai Police and made the investigating officer in the case.

'Unsatisfactory conduct' Mr. Gharat said, "There has been unsatisfactory conduct at the police's end in this murder case." Mr. Chavan, who has been hospitalised after testing positive for COVID-19, was unavailable for comment.

Bidre, an assistant police inspector posted with the Protection of Civil Rights Unit in Konkan Bhawan in Belapur and resident of Roadpali in Kalamboli, went missing on April 15, 2016. A case was registered on July 14, 2016, by her brother Anand Bidre.

On January 31, 2017, a kidnapping case was registered following which the key suspect, police inspector Abhay Kurundkar, who was attached to the Thane Rural Police, was arrested on December 7, 2017. Three more accomplices have been arrested in the case. According to the police, after killing Sangeeta Alphonso, who had been appointed last year by the

Sushant case: AIIMS medical board rules out murder

We're looking into all aspects, investigation under way: CBI

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI



Sachin Sawant

the death case and demanded the formation of a Special Investigation Team (SIT) to nab the conspirators.

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) denied the allegation and said it wanted justice for Rajput.

State Congress spokesperson Sachin Sawant alleged, "The official confirmation by the AIIMS panel proves that the investigation by Mumbai Police was genuine and honest. It is also clear that it was a conspiracy of the Modi government with the help of their fake media allies to defame Maharashtra."

"We demand that the Maharashtra government form an SIT to nab the conspirators, the mastermind and the originators of the social media racket by the BJP IT team," he said.

(With PTI inputs)

CBI should make public probe report, says Anil Deshmukh

'People should know if it was a case of suicide or murder'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NAGPUR



Anil Deshmukh

we get official information. We will give a statement as and when we receive any official information about it."

The minister added, "We want the CBI inquiry report into the case to soon come before the public so that they get to know whether it was a suicide or murder."

Earlier this week, the CBI

had said it has not reached any conclusion in the death case and that all aspects were under investigation.

The Mumbai Police had earlier registered an Accidental Death Report and launched an investigation. However, the CBI took over the probe into the high-profile case in August following the Supreme Court's nod. Rajput's father K.K. Singh had on July 25 lodged a complaint with the Bihar Police against actor Rhea Chakraborty and her family members accusing them of abetting the actor's suicide.

Mr. Deshmukh has in the past defended the Mumbai Police's investigation into the case, saying the force conducted the probe in a "professional manner".

Accused targeted motorists on Sion-Panvel highway

RAINA ASSAINAR NAVI MUMBAI

The accused have been handed over to the Nerul police for interrogation

KESHAV DINDE
Assistant police inspector

the car, an autorickshaw approached them. Three people came out of the auto and attacked the duo. Later, four more people got out of the auto and assaulted Mr. Daate and Mr. Padval.

The assailants stole a mobile phone and ₹

Protests against farm laws continue

Punjab farmers are blocking rail tracks and staging sit-ins at petrol pumps, toll plazas and malls

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
CHANDIGARH

Punjab farmers' protest against the Centre's new farm laws continued on Saturday as they squatted on rail tracks for an indefinite period. The agitating farmers also raised slogans against the government and said that the stir will go on till their demand for revoking the new laws was not accepted.

A total of 31 farmers' bodies have joined hands to step up their agitation. They had announced to block rail tracks from October 1 for an indefinite period.

The farmers have blocked rail tracks at many places including Dhablian (Patiala), Sunam (Sangrur), Budhlada (Mansa), Gidderbaha (Muktsar), Barnala, Bathinda, Faridkot, Gurdaspur, Rupnagar, Phillaur, Samrala and Moga.

Farmers under the banner of the Kisan Mazdoor Sangharsh Committee have been squatting at rail tracks in Amritsar and Ferozepur since September 24.

According to Krantikari Kisan Union president Darshan Pal, besides blocking rail tracks at 33 places, farm-



Members of farmer organisations blocking toll gates on NH-7 in Patiala on Saturday. ■ PTI

ers have also staged sit-ins outside 24 petrol pumps, nine toll plazas, four shopping malls, a thermal power plant and a foodgrain godown belonging to some corporate houses.

Boycott call

The farmers have also given a call to boycott some corporate houses and their products in the State. According to them, the Centre wants to "benefit" a few corporate houses with the "black laws".

'Dharnas' were also being

staged outside the houses of five BJP leaders, including former Punjab BJP chief Shwait Malik.

In Ferozepur, women have also joined farmers who have been agitating at a rail track near Basti Tankan Wali. At Amritsar, protesting farmers burnt the effigies of the government.

In Phagwara, police prevented the farmers from moving towards the residence of Union Minister Som Parkash.

The protesters wanted to 'gherao' the residence. Poli-

ce personnel, led by Superintendent of Police Maninder Singh, stopped the farmers about 200 meters away from Mr. Parkash's residence.

Barricades placed

Barricades were put at all the entry points to stop the farmers from going towards the Minister's residence, said the farmers. Later, the farmers staged a sit-in on the road.

Addressing the protesters, Bharatiya Kisan Union (Rajewal) president Balbir (Amendment) Bill.

Singh Rajewal claimed that the agitation against the anti-farm laws has now snowballed into a mass movement.

He said farmers were not averse to holding talks with the Centre if the invitation for the same comes from the Prime Minister's Office. "We will not accept any leader from the Punjab BJP for talks, as we are boycotting them," he said.

The Punjab unit of the BJP had constituted an eight-member committee to reach out to farmers to apprise them of the benefits of the new laws. Farmers have expressed apprehension that the Centre's farm reforms would pave way for the dismantling of the minimum support price system, leaving them at the "mercy" of big corporates.

President Ram Nath Kovind had given assent to the three contentious Bills – the Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, the Farmers' (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price Assurance and the Farm Services Bill and Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill.

Assam Gurkhas seek gazette notification for safeguards

This follows their exclusion from rights in Clause 6 of Accord

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The Gurkha community in Assam has sought gazette notification on the issue of including it for constitutional safeguards according to Clause 6 of the 1985 Assam Accord.

Clause 6 of the Accord that ended the anti-foreigners Assam Agitation from 1979-1985 envisages constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards for protecting, preserving and promoting the culture, social, linguistic identity and heritage of the Assamese people.

A 14-member panel headed by retired judge Biplob Kumar Sharma had defined "Assamese people" as those who have been citizens of India residing in the territory of Assam on or before January 1, 1951.

"The Clause 6 committee report did not mention anything about the constitutional, legislative and administrative safeguards of local Gurkhas who fought for Assam against the Burmese invaders in 1826 resulting in the Treaty of Yandaboo," said the

Bharatiya Gorkha Yuva Parishad (BGYP) in a statement.

The Gurkhas were permanently settled in the scheduled areas in the last part of the 18th century as grazers and cultivators and were accordingly given permits. They were declared as protected class by the British in the tribal belts and blocks according to the Assam Land and Revenue Regulation Act, 1886, the organisation said.

Minister's assurance

A delegation of the Bharatiya Gorkha Parishad, the parent body of the BGYP, a few days ago met State Finance and Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who agreed that the Gurkhas in Assam are "one of the ancient communities".

He said the government would treat them "on a par with other indigenous communities and protect their constitutional rights while implementing Clause 6".

BGYP president Nanda Kirti Dewan welcomed Mr. Sarma's statement and requested the government to issue a gazette notification

for the including the community within the ambit of Clause 6. "The gazette notification is a request on behalf of 25 lakh Gurkhas in Assam, who were given a commitment before the 2016 Assam elections," he said.

In January 2019, the Ministry of Home Affairs formed the Clause 6 panel headed by retired bureaucrat M.P. Bezbaruah but six of the nine members named quit. The panel was reconstituted almost six months later, on July 16. On February 25, the committee submitted the report to Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal for handing it over to Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

But some members of the committee on August 11 made their "confidential" report public because of the government's "disinterest" in processing their recommendations.

Among the suggestions made by the panel were sealing of the India-Bangladesh border and reservation of 80-100% of the seats in Parliament from Assam for the Assamese people.

7 more arrested in Assam police recruitment scam

The main accused had surrendered

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
GUWAHATI

Seven more people were arrested for their alleged involvement in Assam police recruitment scam, taking the total number of those nabbed to 32, an official said on Saturday.

Five were apprehended by the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) from different parts of the State, while two were held by the Nalbari district police, a spokesperson of the Assam police said.

Examination to recruit 597 sub-inspectors was cancelled on September 20, minutes after it began, as the question paper was found to have been leaked on social media.

BJP leader and one of the

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, NATIONAL HIGHWAYS DIVISION, DHANBAD. (Combined Office Building Campus)

Telephone No.0326-2313339 e-mail: eenhdhanbad-jhr@nic.in

Tender Cancelation

Application invited in the prescribed format from eligible consultants for Request for Proposal (RFP) on Preparation of Feasibility cum Detailed Project Report for Consultancy Services for DPR Preparation of Giridih Byepass including Land Acquisition and Utility Shifting as published vide Tender Reference No:- NH/Dhanbad/02/2020-21 Dated :- 13.08.2020 and PR No. 232939 (National Highway Authority of Jharkhand) 20-21 D is hereby Cancelled due to unavoidable reason.

(Amrendra Kumar Saha)
Executive Engineer
NH Division, Dhanbad

PR 233791(Road)20-21*D

कार्यपालक अभियन्ता का कार्यालय पथ निर्माण विभाग, पथ प्रमण्डल, साहेबगंज शुद्धि-पत्र

पी० आर० न० 233566 Road (20-21)D द्वारा प्रकाशित निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना जिसका Bid reference no. RCD/SAHIBGANJ/728/2020-21 है उसे RCD/SAHIBGANJ/728/2020-21 (Third Call) पढ़ा जाय, शेष यथावत रहेंगे।

कार्यपालक अभियन्ता
पथ निर्माण विभाग,
पथ प्रमण्डल, साहेबगंज

PR.NO.233751 Road(20-21):D

Office of the Chief Engineer -cum-Executive Director

Drinking Water & Sanitation Department, Jharkhand
Doranda Bazar (Water Tower Compound, First floor)
Doranda, Ranchi - 834002, Jharkhand,
Phone: 0651-2480166 Email: swsm.jharkhand@gmail.com,
Website: dwsd.jharkhand.gov.in

CORRIGENDUM/ADDENDUM

The notice inviting EOI for providing personnel in State/District and Sub Divisional level water testing laboratories in Jharkhand published vide PR No.232624 (Drinking Water and Sanitation Department Jharkhand 2020-21) in different news paper and on pursuant of pre-bid meeting held on-15.09.2020, following Corrigendum/Addendum are made. Under head Terms & Conditions Part-I Clause (c), Clause (b) and Clause-(Sub Clause-i) will be now read as:

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Clause-(b)-The firm should be an ISO Certified and must have annual turnover of at least 2.0 crore in last financial year. Audited balance report regarding Turnover should be submitted.

Clause-(Sub Clause-i)-Technical Evaluation marking will act as base for selection. Refer Annexure B , point no-1 has been deleted.

All other Terms & Conditions will remain same. (Deepak Kumar Mahto)

PR 233747(Drinking Water and Sanitation)20-21*D Deputy Director-I

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FROM PAGE ONE

World's longest highway tunnel opened in Himachal

Mr. Modi said the delay in completion of key infrastructure projects such as the Atal Tunnel would only harm the country's interests.

"The delay not just causes inconvenience to people but the country also has to bear the loss on economic front. In 2005, the estimated cost of the tunnel was projected at ₹950 crore, but due to continuous delay, the tunnel has now been completed after spending over ₹3,200 crore," he said.

There was a direct relationship between connectivity and the country's development, the Prime Minister said. "More connectivity means more development. But unfortunately, the seriousness surrounding the connectivity of border development was never shown by previous governments due to lack of strong political will," he stated.

Just like the Atal Tunnel, many other important projects across the country had been ignored for long, Mr. Modi said.

In Ladhak's Daulat Beg Oldi, the airstrip, which is strategically very important, was closed for over 40-50 years. What was the compulsion? What was the pres-

sure? I don't want to go into details... The truth is that it was due to the strong will of the Air Force that the airstrip started to operate, and there was no 'political will' seen behind it," he said.

"There had been several other such projects that were very important from security and convenience point of view, but for several years they were ignored by previous regimes... these projects were not of just strategic importance but would have ushered in economic prosperity as well.

However, in the last six years, the situation has started to rapidly change. Specially, for connectivity development in the border areas, we have been working with full force," he added.

The horse-shoe shaped, single tube double lane tunnel with a roadway of 8 metre, is built through the Pir Panjal range of Himalayas, according to a government statement.

Its South Portal is located at a distance of 25 km from Manali at an altitude of 3,060 metre, while the North Portal is located near village Teling at Sissu in Lahaul Valley at an altitude of 3,071 metre.

Rahul, Priyanka meet family of Hathras victim

Amid the lathi charge, Ms. Vadra stepped out of her car and caught hold of a policeman's baton. She could be heard asking the police not to hit party workers. She also explained the situation to the Congress cadre and asked them to return, before driving on. Mr. Gandhi was also seen climbing atop an SUV and telling party-men to return after the permission was granted.

Denying that Ms. Vadra was manhandled, Mr. Kumar said Ms. Vadra and Mr. Gandhi helped to calm the party workers but some "over-excited" workers broke the barricade and pushed the policemen. "We will take legal action," he said.

Senior Congress leader Mallikarjun Kharge told reporters Mr. Gandhi had offered to go alone two days back. "But the U.P. police stopped him." He described the lathi charge as the "dictatorial" attitude of the State government.

Officials meet family
Earlier on Saturday, Additional Chief Secretary (Home) Awanish Awasthi and Hitesh Chandra Awasthi, DGP U.P. met the family of the victim in Boolgarhi and assured strict action against the culprits. Later, at a press conference in Hathras, Mr. Awasthi said public representatives would be allowed to visit the Hathras victim's village provided they come in a group of five persons. He said SIT would consider all aspects raised by the family and security in

the village would be increased.

Asked on whose order the victim was cremated in the dead of night on September 30, Mr. Awasthi said, "It was the decision of the local administration."

Media persons were also allowed to enter the village. Joint magistrate Prem Prakash Meena said earlier curbs were due to the SIT investigation and four policemen had developed COVID-like symptoms.

DM Praveen Laxkar was however, not present at Hathras. Vineet Jaiswal who took charge as Hathras Superintendent of Police on Saturday, accompanied the senior officials.

Ashes collected

During the day, the brothers of the victim collected the ashes from the cremation ground. "We are still not sure whether these are ashes our sister but for the sake of humanity, we have collected them. We will immerse them only after she gets justice," said the younger of the two.

Speaking about the visit of Congress leaders, family sources said Ms. Vadra had embraced the victim's mother and consoled her. The victim's father had told the Congress delegation that the District Magistrate had threatened them. He also voiced his fears about their security as the relatives of the men accused of the assault and murder were threatening to hold a caste panchayat in the village.

STAFF REPORTER
NALGONDA

Most south Indians either fear or respect police officers – based on this premise, four persons from Rajasthan, including a juvenile, made ₹4.5 lakh in about 75 days.

They targeted 350 police officers from Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and a few from Patna, Prayagraj and Himachal Pradesh, and created Facebook accounts in the names of these police officers.

"The accounts are look-alikes with personal and office photos, and updated bio-data. They would send new friend requests and start conversations asking for money. Some officers did send the money as requested, over



TELANGANA

Google Pay or PhonePe numbers," said Nalgonda Superintendent of Police A.V. Ranganath, who was a near-victim of such a transaction, while producing the accused before the media on Saturday.

On September 18, Mr. Ranganath's friend alerted him, asking if he needed a mobile transfer of ₹20,000 to his wife's number, as requested on Facebook. The number, data and the request appeared to have originated in Odisha, but this was later proved false.

An investigation team that went to Rajasthan following the cyber-trail suspected a few persons in the Kaithwara police station limits.

"Everyone was a suspect, but with the most-used SIM card in a phone, in rela-

tions with other suspicious numbers and tower locations, a few phones were narrowed down and suspects taken into custody. The breakthrough came when one of their phone galleries showed images of SP Ranganath and other police officers apart from screenshots of Facebook chats," investigating officer S.M. Basha said.

According to Mr. Basha,

they serve people and further, the police officials also command fear. They believed that these reasons would work in their favour. And transaction amounts too were not high," another officer, A. Rajasekhar Reddy, said.

Police said the members of the gang had purchased pre-activated and account-linked SIM cards, and bank accounts with passbook and ATM cards, from rural areas at ₹3,000 per set.

The investigation team was able to seize ₹1 lakh cash, 30 SIM cards, phones and laptop, and fake documents.

Accused Mustaqueen, Sayeed and Saddam were booked for forgery, cheating, impersonation and under Sections of the Information Technology Act.

Phishing gang played on sympathy for police officials

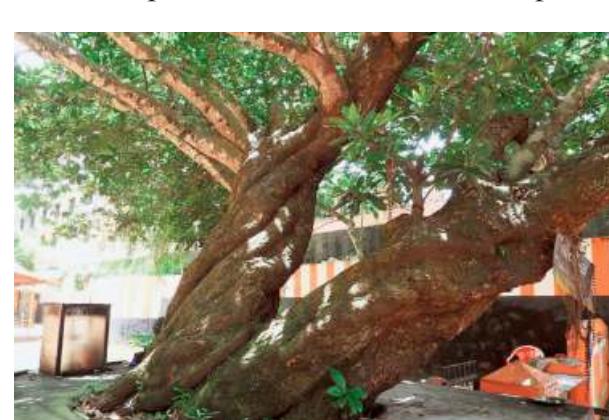
After frauds on e-commerce portals, they targeted Facebook accounts of some 350 personnel



In the net: The gang arrested in the Rajasthan-based phishing racket case, in Nalgonda on Saturday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Extinct tree found after 180 years in Kollam grove

It was in 1835 that *Madhuca diplostemon*, a threatened species of the Western Ghats, was last spotted

Survival instincts: *Madhuca diplostemon* tree is seen at a Siva temple in Kollam. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

finding authored by Shailaja-kumari S., Santhosh Kumar E.S., Sreekala A.K., and R. Prakashkumar of the JNTBGRI and Parthipan B. of

The lone mature tree was located at the Koonial Ayiravalli Siva temple at Paravur, Kollam. Locally, it was erroneously believed to be the common *attilipa*. Shailaja-kumari, one of the authors of the paper, had collected a specimen and brought it to the JNTBGRI two years ago as part of her Ph.D. dissertation. However, surveys in other sacred groves in Kollam district failed to find another tree of the species.

Since the species is represented only by one specimen in a single locality, it is eligible to be categorised 'Critically Endangered' by the IUCN (International Union for Conservation of Nature), the JNTBGRI has noted. *Madhuca diplostemon* has

Wary of public transport, commuters go after bicycles

Cycle repair shops also see rise in number of customers

**JAYASIMHA K.R.
PRAVEEN SUDEVAN**
BENGALURU

The humble cycle has become increasingly popular among people who are hesitant to travel in public transport. Not only are retailers reporting a surge in bicycle sales, but repair shops are also seeing an increasing number of people bringing in their old bicycles for an overhaul.

According to retailers, there has been a steady rise in bicycle sales in the city from May this year. Krishnasamy Devraj, director, Cycle World, which has 17 showrooms across the city, said

that there was at least a 20%-25% rise in sales in almost all the showrooms. "Compared to June 2019, we had a 300% increase in sales this June. As of now, the demand is outstripping supply. Adult and premier bicycles are seeing a huge demand and there are more takers for electric bikes too.

Many are using them to commute to work," he said.

Roshan Kini, founder of Bums on the Saddle, reported a dip in supply of components as well. On the trend of people turning to cycles, he said, "This is happening across

the world and the trend will definitely continue. I have been promoting cycling for 14 years now, and have never seen such demand and response," he said.

It's not just the well-heeled who have turned to cycles. Many cycle repair shops that *The Hindu* spoke to said there has been a surge in demand for spare parts and cycle pumps, apart from repair requests.

"I have been in the business for over three decades and I have never seen such enthusiasm for cycles," he said.

Small respite for Kerala, but not Karnataka

Fresh cases under 8,000 in Kerala, but close to 10,000 in Karnataka; Telangana incidence dips; A.P. remains in 6,000s band

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The COVID-19 epidemic showed steady progression in Kerala with a slight dip in incidence on Saturday. With 54,563 fresh samples tested, the new cases stood at 7,834.

The test positivity rate was 14.3%. On Saturday, 80,818 patients were under treatment in hospitals, with 568 in ICUs and another 127 on

Virus scan

With the number of COVID-19 cases going up, several States have ramped up testing. The graph shows the spread of the pandemic in the southern States



Handling with care: A health worker arranging rapid antigen test samples of COVID-19 in Hyderabad on Saturday. ■ NAGARA GOPAL

*Telangana numbers are as of 8 p.m. on Friday | **Kerala has a mismatch of 82 cases due to unaccounted deaths, missing persons ***Karnataka has 19 non-COVID deaths

ter it went up to 16.47%, 16.86%, and then to 13.07% for the third, fourth and fifth 10 lakh tests. The positivity rate of the last 10 lakh tests came down to 9.64%.

West Godavari reported the highest number of fresh infections while Krishna reported six deaths, the highest.

Karnataka on Saturday re-

ported 9,886 cases and 100 deaths. Active cases continued to remain over a lakh at 1,12,783, and 841 patients were in ICUs.

Bengaluru Urban had

3,925 cases and 21 fresh deaths. As many as 84,922 tests were conducted, including 36,514 rapid antigen tests.

Fresh coronavirus infections continued to rise in Chennai as another 1,364 persons tested positive for COVID-19 on Saturday. The city has been reporting more than 1,000 cases a day since September 24. With 5,622 new cases, Tamil Nadu's overall tally of COVID-19 cases climbed to 6,14,507. As many as 5,596 persons were discharged, taking the total number of persons discharged till now to 5,58,534. The active cases stood at 46,255. A total of 65 persons died, taking the toll to 9,718.

A total of 87,311 samples were tested during the last 24 hours. Till date, 76,13,999 samples were tested.

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

IN BRIEF



Kodiyeri, Chennithala spar over mobile 'gift'

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM
Kerala Leader of the Opposition Ramesh Chennithala and CPI(M) State secretary Kodiyeri Balakrishnan on Saturday

feuded over whether it was proper to participate in a raffle organised by a foreign consulate and accept a gift. Mr. Chennithala on Friday denied that he had received an expensive mobile phone as a gift from Swapna Suresh, accused in the gold smuggling case.

Dasara mahouts test negative to COVID-19

MYSURU
All 19 Dasara elephants' staff members, including the mahouts and kavadis, have tested negative to COVID-19 on Saturday, bringing relief to the forest authorities here. After initial resistance to the test arguing that they were confined to jungle camps all these days and the test was needless, they later agreed to give swabs for the test.

COVID-affected can take EAMCET again

HYDERABAD
EAMCET engineering aspirants in Telangana, who tested positive for COVID-19 and could not attend the test held last month, will be given another opportunity to appear. It is likely to be held on October 8. Those who tested positive between August 17 and September 14 will be eligible for the special test.

Kottayam starts domestic movement of cargo

KOTTAYAM
In a major boost to the trading and manufacturing sectors in central Travancore, the Kottayam port, the first multi-modal inland container depot in the country using inland water navigation, has begun moving domestic cargo.

Bihar grand alliance seals seat-sharing

RJD to get 144 seats, Congress 70 and Left parties 29; VIP chief announces a parting of ways

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PATNA

The *mahagathbandhan*, or grand alliance, led by the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) on Saturday sealed a seat-sharing deal among its constituents for the Assembly election in Bihar to be held from October 28 to November 7. The alliance leaders appealed to the people to give them a chance to govern the State as "Bihar needs a change."

But at the end of the press conference, a "hurt" Vikash-eel Insaan Party (VIP) chief Mukesh Sahni stunned them by announcing a parting of ways with the alliance, saying that he had been "backstabbed".

"By the agreement among our alliance partners, the RJD will get 144 seats; the Congress 70; the Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) 19; the CPI (Communist Party of India) six; and CPI (M) four. The RJD will accommodate the other two partners – the Vikash-eel Insaan Party and the Jharkhand



Joining hands: RJD leaders Tejashwi Yadav and Tej Pratap with other grand alliance leaders. • PTI

Mukti Morcha – from its quota of 144 seats," RJD leader Tejashwi Yadav said at the press conference at a luxury hotel in Patna.

At the end of the press meet, Mr. Sahni alleged, "I was offered 25 seats along with the post of Deputy Chief Minister, but we are being backstabbed. It is a cheating of the people of the Extremely Backward Class." He then left in a hurry. VIP supporters raised slogans against Mr. Tejashwi and his older brother Tej Pratap Yadav outside the venue, and tried to *gherao* the RJD leaders.

Slamming the Nitish Ku-

mar-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) government in the State, Mr. Tejashwi said, "Every four hours, one incident of rape takes place, and every five hours, one murder happens in the State today."

"This government must go," he said, and appealed to the people to give "one chance to *mahagathbandhan* for *maan-samamaan* (dignity and respect), security and development of the State."

"I am a true Bihari, and my DNA is also pure," said Mr. Tejashwi Yadav, taking a jibe at the Chief Minister,

against whom Prime Minister Narendra Modi had, earlier, raised questions over his "DNA" and create a political storm.

"If we form the government, I will provide 10 lakh jobs to the unemployed youth of the State with my first signature at the very first Cabinet meeting of the government," Mr. Tejashwi said.

BSP leader quits

Earlier, Bahujan Samaj Party State president Bharat Bind quit the party to join the RJD. Mr. Tejashwi gave him the party membership.

Later, leaders of the Congress and the Left parties said they were satisfied with the allocation of seats.

Avinash Pandey, chairman of the Congress's screening committee for candidates, declared that Mr. Tejashwi Yadav would lead the alliance in the election.

Confusion in NDA

Confusion still reigns in the ruling NDA as senior Janata Dal(U) leaders were seen rushing to meet Bhupendra Yadav, the Bharatiya Janata Party's State in-charge, here on Saturday.

Leaders of the two parties were huddled in separate meetings to reach a consensus over the allocation of seats.

Senior JD(U) leaders Rajeet Ranjan Singh, aka Lalan Singh, R.C.P. Singh and Vijay Choudhury met Mr. Bhupendra Yadav. The latter and the BJP's election in-charge, Devendra Fadnavis, went to Delhi on Friday and returned to Patna on Saturday to conclude the seat-sharing deal.

Bodies of 3 Rajouri youth exhumed, given to families

They were killed in an encounter in south Kashmir

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

The bodies of three civilians from Rajouri, who were passed off as militants after an encounter at Amshipora in Shopian on July 18, were exhumed and handed over to their families in Baramulla on Saturday.

"The bodies were exhumed at 8 a.m. in the presence of a magistrate and the families. The bodies have been handed over to the legal heirs," Inspector-General of Police Vijay Kumar told *The Hindu*.

Labourers in Kashmir and were on their way to Rajouri in the Pir Panjal valley when they went missing on July 18. They were identified as Abrar Ahmed, 25; Intiyaz Ahmed, 20, and Mohammed Ibrar, 16. On September 25, their DNA samples matched those of their family members.

According to the families, the youth were working as



On the watch: Army jawans standing guard near the encounter site in Shopian on July 18. • NISSAR AHMAD

Poonch, in this connection. They had "tipped off" about the presence of militants in the area", police said.

The Army has initiated disciplinary proceedings under the Army Act against those found *prima facie* answerable. The police, in a statement on July 18, said they had recovered "incriminating material, including arms and ammunition, at the site of the encounter".

U.P. govt. silent on phone tapping charge

Senior official, however, denies it

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

The law was the audio recording leaked by the officials who had access to it, it asked. "The audio has been released with *mala fide* intentions", it said.

Joint Magistrate Hathras Prem Prakash Meena on Saturday rejected allegations that the administration confiscated phones of the rape victim's kin and blocked their movement in the village. He said the charges were "absolutely absurd and baseless".

Since the special investigation team had completed its investigation, restrictions on movement of media towards the residence of the victim's kin have been lifted, he said.

"No phone of anybody, any journalist is tapped. We are not doing anything. This is total rubbish," Additional Chief Secretary, Information, Navneet Sehgal told *The Hindu*.

On Friday, the *India Today* channel said the audio of a call between its reporter Tanushree Pandey and the brother of the rape victim in Hathras was leaked on social media. In an official statement, it asked if the phone of their reporter was being tapped or the numbers of the grieving family had been put under surveillance.

Under what provisions of

the law was the audio recording leaked by the officials who had access to it, it asked. "The audio has been released with *mala fide* intentions", it said.

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Since the special investigation team had completed its investigation, restrictions on movement of media towards the residence of the victim's kin have been lifted, he said.

"At no point, phones or anything had been confiscated nor have they been held captive. They are absolutely free to move in and out of the village," Mr. Meena told a television channel.

In an official statement, it asked if the phone of their reporter was being tapped or the numbers of the grieving family had been put under surveillance.

Under what provisions of

IN BRIEF



India heading towards autocracy, warns Mamata

KOLKATA
West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Saturday led a massive rally in Kolkata in protest against the gang rape and murder of a Dalit woman in Hathras. She also raised several issues, including the denial of GST compensation to the States, saying the country was going towards "super autocracy".

Missing girl's body found in a field in U.P.

LUCKNOW
The body of a 15-year-old girl, who had been reported missing since September 26, was found in a field in Kanpur Dehat, the police said on Saturday. It has been sent for a post-mortem. Two uncles of the girl have been arrested for her murder, the police said, adding that she had been killed and the body abandoned in a millet field over a family dispute. SP of Kanpur Dehat, Keshav Kumar Choudhary, said the girl's father had accused his brothers of murdering her.

Congress seizes the initiative on Hathras

Smriti Irani backs Adityanath

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Amid the clamour for Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's resignation, Union Minister for Women and Child Development Smriti Irani stood firmly behind him.

"The Chief Minister has constituted an SIT [special investigation team]. I have been informed that action has been taken against the Superintendent of Police of



Leading from the front: Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra with a Congress worker beaten by the U.P. police near Delhi on Saturday. • SANDEEP SAXENA

jecting Mr. Gandhi and Ms. Vadra as determined leaders who are ready to take to the streets even in challenging times.

Caught napping

The contrast is sharp with the major Opposition parties in the State – the Bahujan Samaj Party and the Samajwadi Party are yet to get off the ground even as the brutal incident sparked off a national outrage.

The visit seems to have immediate and long-term political goals.

From projecting the Con-

gress as a serious player in Uttar Pradesh ahead of the 2022 Assembly election to portraying the ruling BJP as anti-Dalit just before the Bihar election, the party seems to have a clear strategy.

"The BJP's 2014 election manifesto promised: we will accord the highest priority to ensuring their (Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes) security, especially the prevention of atrocities against them. Is that why the posts of Chairperson of the National Commission of Scheduled Castes and National Commission of Sch-

duled Tribes have remained vacant for several months," asked former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram in a tweet, keeping up the pressure.

Moral high ground

"The U.P. government is morally corrupt. The victim didn't get treatment, police didn't write her complaint, her body was burnt forcibly and the family is in captivity and being pressured. Now, they are being threatened that a narco test will be done on them. This kind of behaviour is not acceptable to the

Hathras. I am confident that once the SIT report is out, Yogi will act against all those who interfered, or because of whom there was a conspiracy, to ensure that the victim doesn't get justice," Ms. Irani said at a press conference in Varanasi.

"People understand well the tactics deployed by the Congress and that is why they ensured the BJP's victory in 2019," she said.

country. Stop threatening the family of the victim," Ms. Vadra tweeted in the morning.

In U.P., where the Congress has been out of power for over three decades and does not have much of an organisation, the party is trying hard to occupy the political centre stage by taking on the Yogi Adityanath government.

In May, Ms. Vadra clashed with the Chief Minister over sending 1,000 buses to transport migrant workers who were walking home during the lockdown.

This is the first time a U.S. P-8A has got access to the islands

DINAKAR PERI

NEW DELHI

A U.S. Navy P-8A long range Maritime Patrol Aircraft (MPA) landed at Port Blair in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands in the last week of September for refuelling under the bilateral logistics support agreement, two defence sources confirmed. This is the first time a U.S. P-8 has got access to the islands for operational turnaround.

On Saturday, the second edition of the bilateral naval exercise between India and Bangladesh "Exercise Bongosagar" began in the northern Bay of Bengal which will be followed by a Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) for the next two days, the Navy said. "The P-8A was in Port Blair on September 25 for refuelling under the Logistics Exchange Memorandum of Agreement (LEMOA). The aircraft came from Japan and was at Port Blair for few hours," one of the sources said.

With Bangladesh

Ex Bongosagar, whose first edition was held in 2019, is aimed at developing interoperability and joint operational skills through conduct of a wide spectrum of maritime exercises and operations, the Navy said in a statement. "In this edition of Ex Bongosagar, ships from both navies will participate in surface warfare drills, seamanship evolutions and helicopter operations," the Navy said.

The exercise will be followed by the 3rd edition CORPAT in Northern Bay of Bengal from October 4-5, wherein Indian and Bangladeshi units will undertake joint patrolling along the International Maritime Boundary (IMBL). India has deployed anti-submarine warfare corvette INS Kiltan and guided missile corvette INS Khukri for the exercise.



To the brave: The memorial located at Post 120 in eastern Ladakh remembers the valiant action of the 20 killed in the June 15 clash at Galwan Valley. • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Army erects a memorial to the 'Gallants of Galwan'

Located at Post 120, it details actions of 20 soldiers killed

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Army has built a memorial in eastern Ladakh to the 20 personnel killed in the clash with Chinese soldiers at the Galwan Valley on June 15, a defence source said on Saturday.

The memorial, which has the names of all 20 "Gallants of Galwan" inscribed on it and is located at Post 120 in eastern Ladakh, was inaugurated earlier this week. It details the actions of 16 Bihar and attached troops led by Col. B Santhosh Babu to evict a Chinese People's Liber-

ation Army (PLA) Observation Post (OP) from the Yana (junction) area under Operation Snow Leopard. They successfully evicted the post and reached Patrolling Point 14 where a "fierce skirmish" broke out between the Indian Army and PLA troops, the inscription reads.

Hand-to-hand combat

"Col. B Santhosh Babu led from the front and his troops fought gallantly in a hand to hand combat, causing heavy casualties to the PLA," it says.

The stand-off in Ladakh has been going on since early May. Several rounds of diplomatic and military talks have failed to reach an agreement on disengagement and de-escalation.

(With inputs from PTI)

Post 120 lies along the Shyok-Daulat Beg Oldi road. China has so far not revealed the casualty numbers on its side. A senior government official said China, through diplomatic channels, had acknowledged five of its soldiers, one of them a Commanding Officer, were killed.

The stand-off in Ladakh has been going on since early May. Several rounds of diplomatic and military talks have failed to reach an agreement on disengagement and de-escalation.

More exercises

Another Passage Exercise (PASSEX) between Indian Navy ships and a U.S. aircraft carrier transiting the region as in July is expected to take place later this month, the source added.

While P-8s of India and

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Central Bureau of Investigation has arrested its recently retired Superintendent of Police N.M.P. Sinha for allegedly receiving a bribe of ₹25 lakh in lieu of the favours extended to an accused.

"Mr. Sinha has been arrested along with a private person. Searches were carried out at eight places in



Boeing P-8 Poseidon aircraft are capable of locating enemy submarines.

the U.S. had exercised together in the past, practised locating submarines together and the LEMOA has been

the LEMOA has been operational for few years now, this is the first time the U.S. got access to A&N under LEMOA. Several countries have expressed interest in getting access to the strategically located A&N islands which are close to the Strait of Malacca and global sea lanes of communication.

In July, frontline warships of the Indian Navy conducted a PASSEX with the U.S. Navy's *Nimitz* carrier strike group near the Andaman and Nicobar (A&N) islands as it was transiting the Indian Ocean. The *USS Nimitz* was returning from the South China Sea through the Malacca Strait where it undertook freedom of navigation operations.

The exercise will be followed by the 3rd edition CORPAT in Northern Bay of Bengal from October 4-5, wherein Indian and Bangladeshi units will undertake joint patrolling along the International Maritime Boundary (IMBL). India has deployed anti-submarine warfare corvette INS Kiltan and guided missile corvette INS Khukri for the exercise.

There has been a sharp increase in India's maritime interactions with the Quad countries on a bilateral basis centred around information sharing for improved Maritime Domain Awareness (MDA) in the Indian Ocean Region and Indo-Pacific. India

India backs n-weapons abolition

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

India on Saturday reiterated that nuclear weapons should be abolished in a step-by-step non-discriminatory process. Addressing the High-level Meeting to Commemorate and Promote the International Day for the Total Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla also said India remains committed to "No First Use" against nuclear weapon states.

"We believe that nuclear disarmament can be achieved through a step-by-step process underwritten by a universal commitment and an agreed multilateral framework. India remains convinced of the need for meaningful dialogue among all States possessing nuclear weapons, for building trust and confidence," Mr. Shringla said in the virtual message.

The comments indicate that India has not revised its key principles regarding the weapons in its arsenal. Following the election victory in 2019, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had hinted at a possibility of changing the No First Use (NNU) principle by declaring that 'circumstances' will determine the "No First Use" stance.

However, Mr. Shringla said on Saturday, India espouses the policy of 'No First Use' against nuclear weapon states and non-use against non-nuclear weapon states. India is a key partner in global efforts towards disarmament and strengthening the non-proliferation order."

Former MP sentenced to 2 years' jail

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
AHMEDABAD

Former Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) parliamentarian from Gujarat Devji Fatepara on Saturday was sentenced to two years in jail and fined ₹2.97 crore in a cheque bounce case.

Fatepara had issued a cheque of ₹1,48,50,000 to one Prabhatsinh Thakor as a part of a land deal. However, the cheque was dishonoured on the ground of lack of sufficient balance in his account.

Principal Senior Civil Judge D.S. Thakur at Kalol in Gandhinagar district also ordered that the former Surendranagar MP would have to undergo an additional jail term of three months if he failed to pay ₹2.97 crore as penalty plus the principal amount and interest thereof to complainant Prabhatsinh Thakor.

Mr. Thakur approached the court after Fatepar's cheque of ₹1,48,50,000 bounced and the latter failed to reply to a notice sent through his lawyer.

As per the details, Fatepar had written the cheque to return money he had taken from Mr. Thakur in connection with a 2018 land deal that failed. Subsequently, he refused to return the money, prompting the complainant to approach the court.

SOUTHERN RAILWAY
Signal & Telecommunication / Construction / Madurai
TENDER NOTICE No.
MDU-SG-CN-OT-20-21-TEL
Dated: 29.09.2020

Name of the work: "Improvement of communication arrangements in connection with Gauge Conversion work in Madurai - Bodinayakanur section." Approximate Cash Value: ₹ 3,48,94,288.11
Earnest Money Deposit: ₹ 3,24,500.00
Closing Date and time: 22.10.2020 @ 15.00 hrs
Period of Completion: Four months
The cost of tender form & EMD can be made only online gateway payment through multiple bank, net banking, debit card & credit card.
Complete details & tender document will be available at www.reps.gov.in

Deputy Chief Signal and Telecommunication Engineer, Construction, Arasari, Madurai - 625 016.
(For and on behalf of the President of India)

Follow us on

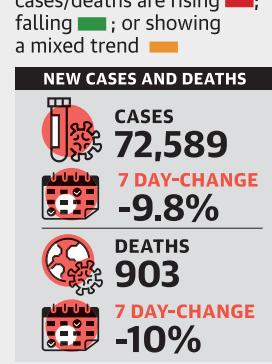
Case fatality rate still low, says Ministry

While the global CFR stood at 2.97%, the comparative figure for India was 1.56%, it says

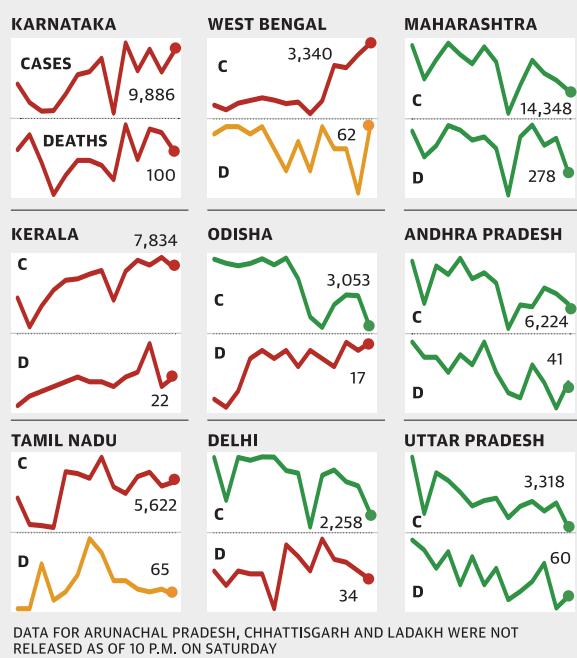
SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Viral tracker

With 72,589 COVID-19 cases recorded on Saturday, India's total stood at 65,44,316. As many as 903 new deaths were registered, taking the toll to 1,01,802. The graphs depict new cases and deaths in the last 14 days in select States. The States are classified based on where cases/deaths are rising ▲; falling ▼; or showing a mixed trend ■■■■■



deaths reported on Friday were from Maharashtra, followed by Karnataka with 125 deaths.



Nearly 77% of the active cases were in 10 States and Union Territories. Maharashtra was in the lead, with more than 2.6 lakh cases. As on date, the active cases contributed only 14.6% of the positive case load of the

Assam wants stage 2 trial vaccine to be allowed

State Health Minister writes to Centre

NISTULA HEBBAR
NEW DELHI



Himanta Biswa Sarma

Assam Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has asked the Central government to make available any likely vaccine candidate against COVID-19 after validation of stage 2 human trials for front line medical workers at the very least.

Mr. Sarma had written a letter to Union Health Minister Dr. Harsh Vardhan last month, requesting that regulatory permits for vaccine candidates being developed in India be expedited as the challenges of dealing with COVID-19 were mounting.

"We are trying to convince people to abide by COVID-19 norms. The evolving situation is a matter of great concern. I will request the Centre to please allow the vaccine even at stage 2 trials. If you wait for stage 3 trials, the waiting period will be too long. If efficacy is established in stage 2, please allow the vaccine for at least front line staff, and that itself can be the stage 3 trial," said Mr. Sarma to *The Hindu* over the telephone.

The fact that the disease is currently being treated symptomatically and not aetologically has weighed on this opinion.

The letter written to Dr. Vardhan clearly states that despite efforts at controlling the spread of the disease, a quick vaccine development and large scale dissemination appears to be the only way to restore a semblance of normalcy to everyday life and the economy.

The Union government has already set up a task force for the storage, distribution and implantation of the vaccine programme.

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Trump doing very well, says WH doctor

Dr. Conley's timeline implies President may have tested positive on Wednesday and travelled thereafter

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN
WASHINGTON

U.S. President Donald Trump, who announced that he had tested positive for the coronavirus during early Friday morning, is doing "very well", according to his physician Sean Conley. The President's treatment includes a five-day course of remdesivir and a cocktail of monoclonal antibodies, an experimental therapy. The doctor's comments also have raised questions on the timeline of Mr. Trump's diagnosis.

A number of others who had been in contact with the President at the confirmation hearing of Judge Amy Coney Barrett on September 26 have also tested positive for the virus.

"At this time, the team and I are extremely happy with the progress the President has made," Dr. Conley said, as he stood with other members of the President's treatment team outside Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, a military hospital in Bethesda, Maryland.

Dr. Conley said on Saturday afternoon that it was "72 hours into the diagnosis", which implied a Wednesday afternoon diagnosis. The President travelled to a fun-



Safety measures: Donald Trump arrives at military medical centre in Bethesda. ■ AP

draiser at his golf club in Bedminster, New Jersey, on Thursday. The White House informed the press of the diagnosis on Friday morning at 1 a.m.

When questioned on the timing of the diagnosis, Dr. Conley said, "Thursday afternoon, following the news of a close contact is when we repeated testing. And given kind of clinical indications and a little bit more concern and that's when that... and late last night, we got the PCR confirmation that he was."

A White House official said, after the medical briefing, that the doctor had mis-spoken about when the diag-

nosis was made, as per a *Washington Post* report.

'Abundance of caution'

Dr. Conley also declined to say when Mr. Trump last tested negative. He also did not answer a question on whether Mr. Trump had ever been on oxygen (which is often needed when blood oxygen saturation levels drop to unsafe levels). Instead, he reluctantly revealed the President was not given any on Thursday, Friday (while at Walter Reed) or Saturday morning prior to the briefing.

This does not rule out the possibility that he received oxygen at the White House, before being trans-

ferred to Walter Reed out of "an abundance of caution".

Dr. Conley said the President was walking around and in "exceptionally good spirits" on Saturday and had not had a fever for the last 24 hours. Mr. Trump had earlier had a fever, cough, congestion and fatigue, as per reports. A prolific tweeter, the President was quieter than usual on the Twitter on Friday and Saturday morning.

"Going well, I think! Thank you to all, LOVE!!!" he tweeted close to midnight on Friday. On Saturday, he thanked the doctors and nurses in a tweet, saying that with their help he was "feeling well." Mr. Trump also

wrote that "tremendous progress" had been made in fighting "this plague" over the last six months.

First Lady Melania Trump, who also tested positive, showed "no indication for hospitalisation", as per Dr. Conley. Current and former Trump advisers Hope Hicks and Kellyanne Conway, former New Jersey Governor Chris Christie, Trump campaign manager Bill Stepien were among those who have tested positive.

Meanwhile, the virus continues to take its toll on Americans, with around 2,09,000 deaths and 7.36 million infections.

At least 15 killed in Afghan bomb attack

The number of casualties, most of whom were civilians, could rise, say officials

REUTERS
KABUL

Attackers set off a truck bomb in Afghanistan's eastern Nangarhar province on Saturday, killing at least 15 people and wounding dozens, according to provincial officials, as violence continues in the war-torn nation despite peace talks taking place in Qatar.

Attullah Khugani, a spokesman for the provincial government, said the number of casualties, most of whom were civilians, could rise and that dozens of people were also injured by the blast in Ghani Khel district.

Oabidullah Shinwari, the Nangarhar provincial council's member, said 52 people were injured in the blast.

No group immediately claimed responsibility for the attack.

Ministry of Interior spokesman Tariq Arian blamed the insurgent Taliban for the attack, saying in the last two weeks they had carried 650 attacks, which had killed 69 civilians and wounded 141 people.

The Taliban did not im-

mediately respond to calls requesting comment. Afghan government negotiators are holding talks with the insurgent Taliban in their political capital of Doha in attempts to end decades of conflict, but calls by the government and international community for a ceasefire have so far been rejected by the Taliban.

The Taliban did not im-

ELSEWHERE



Khan seeks legal options to bring back Sharif

ISLAMABAD
Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan has asked his party leaders to devise a legal strategy to bring back Nawaz Sharif from the U.K. as the absence of an extradition treaty between the two countries makes it difficult for the former premier to be extradited, according to a media report. PTI

Sudan, rebel groups ink landmark peace deal

JUBA
Sudan's government and rebel groups have inked a peace deal to put an end to the country's decades-long civil wars. Saturday's official signing in Juba sealed the deal reached in late August between the Sudanese government and the Sudan Revolutionary Front, a coalition of armed groups. AP

British PM Johnson upbeat on EU trade pact before key talks

He wants the deal by Oct. 15 so that it can be ratified on time

ASSOCIATED PRESS
LONDON

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said on Saturday that "there's a good deal to be done" with the European Union on post-Brexit trade, as he prepared for scheduled talks with European Union chief Ursula von der Leyen.

Mr. Johnson told reporters that the U.K. wants a free trade deal along the lines of the one the EU has with Canada, but is also prepared for negotiations to fail.

"We're resolved on either course, we're prepared for either course and we'll make it work, but it's very much up to our friends and partners," Mr. Johnson said.

The two parties are trying to strike a rudimentary trade deal before the Brexit transition period ends on Decem-



Boris Johnson
ber 31, to avoid a barrage of uncertainty, tariffs and red tape that would hurt economies on both sides.

Deadlock remains

But while negotiators have inchéd close to agreement in many areas during six months of talks, they remain deadlocked over European fishing boats' access to U.K. waters, and over the level of

support governments can give to industry. The EU is concerned that British plans to subsidise sectors such as technology will amount to unfair competition.

"We should not forget that we have made progress on many, many different fields. But, of course, the most difficult ones are still completely open," Ms. von der Leyen said on Friday.

"We want a deal because we think it is better to have a deal as neighbours - also, on top of these COVID times with devastating impact on the economies," she said. "But not at any price."

Mr. Johnson said an October 15-16 EU summit is effectively the deadline for a deal if it is to be ratified by year's end, though EU officials think talks may drag on beyond then.

Germany calls for EU sanctions against Russia

Access to Navalny denied: Moscow

REUTERS
BERLIN

Germany's Foreign Minister Heiko Maas has called for new European Union sanctions against Russia over the poisoning of opposition leader Alexei Navalny with an internationally banned nerve agent.

Mr. Navalny emerged in recent weeks from a coma after suddenly falling ill during a flight in Siberia and being air-lifted to Berlin for treatment. German doctors say he was poisoned with Novichok, a Russian nerve agent.

Germany, France and other Western countries have demanded an explanation from the Kremlin for Navalny's illness. Russia says it has seen no firm evi-



dence he was poisoned and denies involvement in any attack on him.

Russia's Foreign Ministry said on Saturday that the Russian Embassy in Germany had received a refusal from the German Foreign Ministry in response to a request to access Kremlin critic Alexei Navalny.

French Pacific outpost decides on independence

New Caledonia votes in a referendum

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
NOUMEA

19 separatists killed on one side, and six police and special forces on the other.

It will be the second time the archipelago goes to the polls to decide on its fate in two years, after a first referendum in 2018 resulted in status quo with 56.7% of the vote. But the result still marked a shift towards pro-independence sympathies, raising campaigners' hopes that this time it could manage to break free.

Political observers say a majority "Yes" to independence is unlikely, although there have been no opinion polls to help provide guidance. "I would be surprised if the Yes-vote won," said Pierre-Christophe Pantz, a Noumea-based expert in geopolitics.

Xi wishes Trump 'speedy recovery' from COVID-19

BEIJING

Chinese President Xi Jinping sent a message of sympathy on Saturday to U.S. President Donald Trump and First Lady Melania Trump. "My wife, Peng Liyuan, and I express our sympathies to you and your wife and wish you a fast recovery," state TV on its website cited the message. Mr. Trump has been critical of Beijing over its handling of the virus, heightening tensions between the two countries. ■ AP

Intense fighting in Karabakh after 'Azerbaijan offensive'

Armenia says 51 more separatist fighters died in clashes

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
YEREVAN

Armenian and Azerbaijani forces are engaged in intense fighting over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh region after Azerbaijan launched a large-scale new offensive on Saturday, Armenian officials said.

Armenia said that 51 more separatist soldiers had died in clashes with Azerbaijani forces in the breakaway Nagorno-Karabakh region as fighting over the disputed territory entered a seventh day.



Heavy damage: A house damaged by shelling during fighting over the Nagorno-Karabakh in Agdam, Azerbaijan. ■ AP

Baku and Yerevan have pledged international calls for a ceasefire and accused each other of starting clashes that began last Sunday and have seen the heaviest fighting since a 1994 ceasefire.

"Heavy fighting is ongoing on other flanks," Armenian Defence Ministry spokesman Shushan Stepanyan said wrote on Facebook.

Heroic resistance'
Karabakh Army spokesman Suren Sarumyan said Azerbaijani forces, who were using aviation, drones, and

tanks met "heroic resistance" from separatist fighters.

The Azerbaijani Defence Ministry claimed its forces had "captured new footholds (in Karabakh) and cleaned up the territory from enemy troops."

Nearly 200 people have been confirmed killed since the fighting erupted last Sunday, including more than 30 civilians. There are fears the fighting could expand into an all-out, multi-front war involving regional powers Turkey and Russia.

Syrian rebels sign up to fight for Azeris

Syrian Observatory for Human Rights says 1,200 fighters have been despatched

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
BEIRUT

Desperate to help his family displaced by Syria's war, pro-Turkey rebel fighter Abu Ahmad is waiting to be deployed to Azerbaijan hoping to earn almost 80 times his current salary.

"I signed up to fight more than a week ago to go to Azerbaijan... for three

months in exchange for \$2,000 a month," the 26-year-old told AFP.

Clashes erupted on Sunday between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces over Nagorno-Karabakh.

Ankara is backing Baku and has been accused by Yerevan of sending its Syrian proxies to bolster Azerbaijani troops.

Abu Ahmad realises he is taking a risk. But "we have no other option," he said.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said around 1,200 combatants are already headed to Azerbaijan via Turkey.

At least 64 pro-Turkey Syrian rebel fighters have been killed in the clashes, the war monitor added.



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U.S. job growth slows as recovery seems to falter

Number of those permanently unemployed nears 4 million underscoring urgent need for additional fiscal stimulus

REUTERS
WASHINGTON

U.S. employment growth slowed more than expected in September and more than 3,000,000 Americans lost their jobs permanently, dealing a potential blow to President Donald Trump ahead of the fiercely contested Nov. 3 presidential election.

The Labor Department's closely watched employment report on Friday underscored an urgent need for additional fiscal stimulus to aid the economy's recovery from a recession triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic. The slowdown in hiring compounds problems for Mr. Trump, who announced that he had tested positive for coronavirus.

Just over half of the 22.2 million jobs lost during the pandemic have been recouped. Former Vice Presi-



Slow lane: Non-farm payrolls rose by 6,61,000 jobs, the smallest gain since the jobs recovery started in May. ■REUTERS

dent Joe Biden, the Democratic Party nominee, blames the economic turmoil on the White House's handling of the pandemic, which has killed more than 2,00,000 people and infected more than 7 million.

"The jobs report adds to

Trump's woes," said James Knightley, chief international economist at ING in New York. "Betting odds signal a diminished chance he will win re-election and a much higher probability of a Democrat clean sweep."

Non-farm payrolls in-

creased by 6,61,000 jobs last month, the smallest gain since the jobs recovery started in May, after advancing 1,489 million in August.

Every sector added jobs with the exception of government, which shed 2,16,000 positions because of the departure of temporary workers hired for the Census and lay-offs at State and local government education departments as many school districts shift to online learning.

Employment in the leisure and hospitality sector increased by 3,18,000, accounting for nearly half of the gain in non-farm employment. Payrolls are 10.7 million below their pre-pandemic level.

Economists polled by Reuters had forecast 8,50,000 jobs were created in September. Employment growth peaked in June when pay-

rolls jumped by a record 4.78 million jobs.

Classification error

The unemployment rate fell to 7.9% in September as 6,95,000 people left the labour force from 8.4% in August. The jobless rate was again biased down by people misclassifying themselves as being "employed but absent from work."

Without this error, the government estimated that the unemployment rate would have been about 8.3% in September. There were 3.8 million people who had lost their jobs for good, up 3,45,000 from August. More experienced long bouts of unemployment, with the number of people out of work for more than 27 weeks surging 7,81,000 to 2.4 million.

The slowing labour mar-

ket recovery is the strongest sign yet that the economy has shifted into lower gear heading into the fourth quarter. Growth got a boost over the summer from fiscal stimulus. Third-quarter gross domestic product growth estimates are topping a 32% annualized rate, which would reverse a historic 31.4% pace of contraction in the April-June quarter.

Growth estimates for the fourth quarter have been cut to about a 2.5% rate from above a 10% pace.

"The virus is in the driver's seat in controlling the speed of the recovery and right now the economy is in the slow lane unless Congress and the White House can settle their differences and provide additional stimulus," said Chris Rupkey, chief economist at MUFG in New York.



Piyush Goyal

think it's quality, technology, growth, scale; and sometimes for a short period you may need to give a little thrust or support. But if they are looking at literally running a long term engagement with the world on subsidy, it is not going to work," he said, speaking at a webinar on strategies for alleviating policy constraints for exports in select sectors.

'Quality, scale will help lift exports; not subsidies'

Goyal says \$1 tn goal requires focus

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Saturday stressed that quality, technology and scale of production would help India take its annual exports to \$1 trillion and not government subsidies.

He exhorted exporters and the industry as a whole to target \$1 trillion worth of shipments.

"Why can't we aim for \$1 trillion exports from India. We certainly can. I see no reason, [why] we cannot. For that we need to be clear on actionable items [and] subsidies are never going to get us there, I am very clear about that," he said.

"At least in my six years of engagement, I have not found subsidies to be the solution for India's problems. I

Big Billion Days will help create lakhs of indirect jobs: Flipkart

Firm ropes in kiranas for six-day sales event starting Oct. 16

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BENGALURU

E-tailer Flipkart on Saturday said its six-day annual sales event 'The Big Billion Days' is scheduled to commence from October 16. The event is expected to create more than 70,000 direct jobs and lakhs of indirect seasonal jobs as more sellers, artisans, and brands gear up to fulfil consumer demand, Flipkart said.

The company has onboarded thousands of new merchants on its platform in the last six months and offered them the required hand-holding, the e-tailer said in a statement.

Flipkart said consumers



Kalyan Krishnamurthy

would be able to avail a 10% instant discount on purchases through SBI debit and credit cards. The offers also come with a no-cost EMI option from Bajaj Finserv EMI cards and other bank credit/debit cards. Flipkart has also

partnered with Paytm to offer cashback to consumers paying through the Paytm Wallet and Paytm UPI.

The Walmart unit said it had expanded its kirana onboarding programme to include more than 50,000 kiranas, who would help undertake the last-mile deliveries to consumers in more than 850 cities.

"Through strong partnerships with brands and sellers, we have tapped into the power of interconnected businesses and technology to bring consumers a wide range of products at great prices at their doorstep this festive season," CEO Kalyan Krishnamurthy said.

GIC, TPG to invest a total ₹7,350 cr. in RIL retail biz

Singapore fund, PE firm to buy stakes

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd. (RRVL) said global investment firms GIC and TPG would invest ₹5,512.5 crore and ₹1,837.5 crore, respectively, in the company to acquire small minority stakes.

These investments value Reliance Retail at a pre-money equity value of ₹4,285 lakh crore, parent Reliance Industries Ltd. (RIL) said in filings with the stock exchanges on Saturday.

While GIC's investment would translate into a 1.22% equity stake in RRVL on a fully-diluted basis, TPG would acquire a 0.41% equity stake in RRVL through its investment.



TPG would be making the investment from its TPG Capital Asia fund, and the infusion in RRVL would be the private equity firm's second in an RIL subsidiary, following the ₹4,546.8 crore investment in Jio Platforms announced earlier this year.

The transactions would be subject to regulatory approvals, RIL said.

Meity to seek Cabinet nod for policy on AI-based solutions

'Goal to use tech to address problems like language barrier'

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The IT ministry is looking to use artificial intelligence (AI) for addressing problems such as language barrier that are faced by Indians in communication and expects to get Cabinet approval in a month to launch programmes based on the next generation technology, senior government officials said on Saturday.

Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant said that India was organising a conference on AI, RAISE 2020, which would be inaugurated by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday evening.

National e-Governance Division (NeGD) and MyGov CEO Abhishek Singh said that the ministry of information technology (Meity) would soon approach the Cabinet for a policy to introduce AI-based programmes.

Within 60 days

Mr. Kant said that details of the proposal could not be discussed but added that he expected the policy to be in place within 60 days.

"It will not be appropriate to talk at length at this stage because it is going to the Cabinet but hopefully we should have approval within a month or so. We have al-

ready got approval of the expenditure finance committee and [Meity] will drive the proposal. Give us another 60 days," Mr. Kant said.

Problem solving

Meity Secretary Ajay Sawhney said that the AI would bring tremendous opportunity for India if the talent pool that the country has is used to solve various problems by using the technology.

Mr. Singh said that AI would be used for natural language processing which could end the problem of communication by ending the language barrier.

Again Drinks to unveil e-com channel by month-end

MINI TEJASWI
BENGALURU

Again Drinks, a ready-to-drink beverages firm co-founded by K. Vaitheswaran and Sundeep Thakran, has expanded its sales network across the country.

The company is currently in the process of preparing a digital strategy.

"I and Sundeep realised the power of digital over 20 years ago with Fabmart.com, India's first e-commerce venture. Now, we are working on an aggressive digital sales plan for Again Drinks. We will also launch our own e-commerce site againdrinks.com by the end of this month," Mr. Vaitheswaran said.

"Our sales operations remained within Bengaluru since our launch in May last year. But, we have become a national brand and 70% of our sales now come from the rest of the country," he said.

"We also have access to several micro-markets across the country after we were chosen by Amazon Launchpad. By December, we are expecting the sales to go up substantially."

Mr. Vaitheswaran said a good number of orders were also coming from tier II and tier III towns like Puttunagaram in Kerala, Bareilly in Uttar Pradesh, Ganganagar in Rajasthan, Puttur in Andhra Pradesh, Gunupur in Odisha, Pulwama in J&K, Mysore in Karnataka, Sivanganga in Tamil Nadu and Mapusa in Goa.

Again Drinks is planning to unveil four to six products under the same category over the next six months.

Again Drinks is free of refined sugar, added preservatives, artificial flavours or colours, has a shelf life of 90 days, and requires no refrigeration, the company said.

What are the innovations during this period?

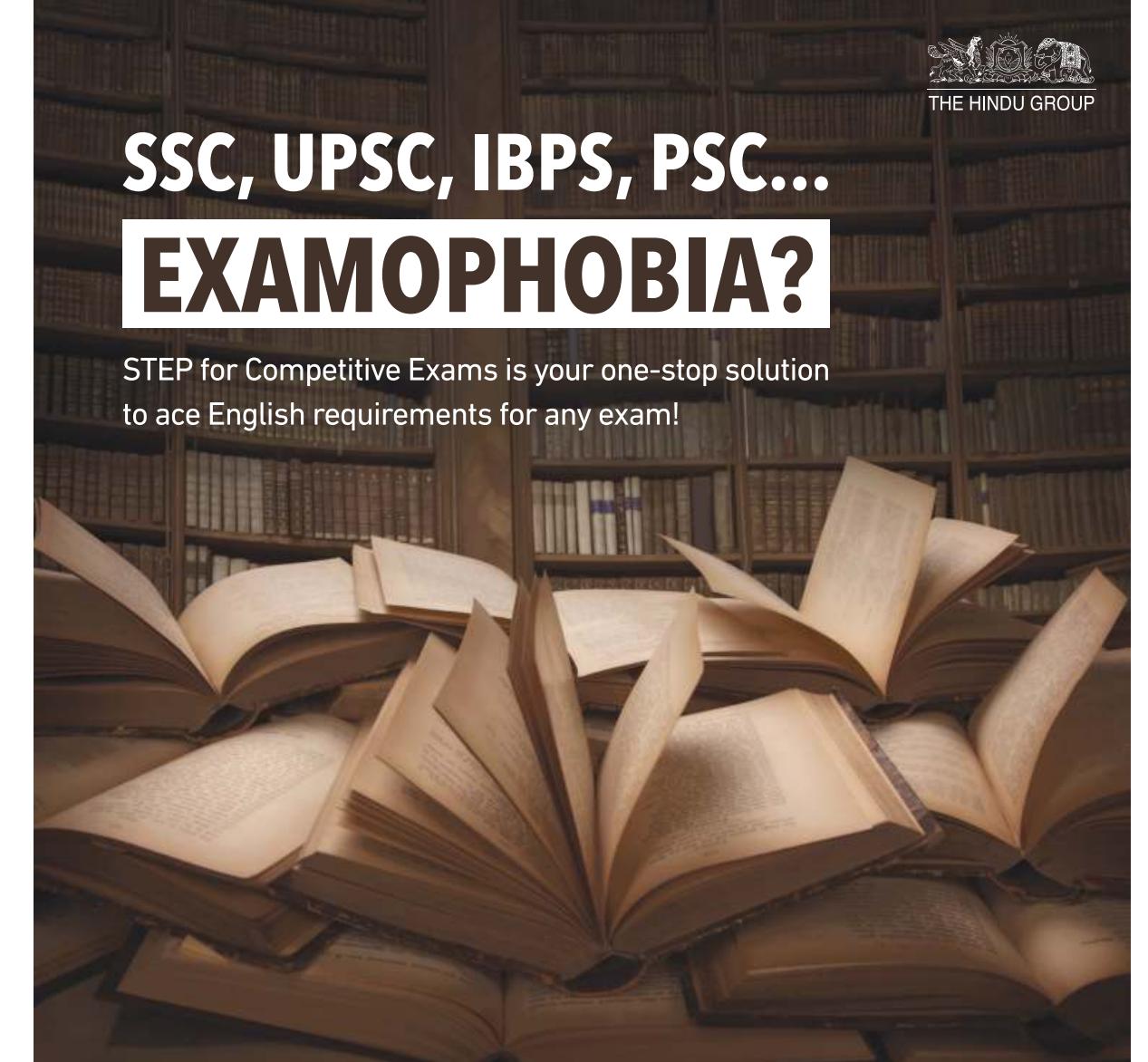
■ Customer utilisation of Internet banking and mobile banking has increased. Regular meetings and staff meetings are happening through video-conferencing. Most of the customer meetings and investors' meetings have also started.

What about network expansion?

■ Last year, we opened 50 branches. For the current year, we have decided to put branch expansion on hold. We will evaluate it once the pandemic is over.

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INTERVIEW | N. KAMAKODI

Back to 85% of pre-COVID-19 transaction levels at CUB'

N. ANAND

Private sector lender City Union Bank's business transactions have reached 85% of the pre-COVID-19 levels. The use of non-banking channels like Internet banking and mobile banking by customers was one of the reasons, said managing director and chief executive officer N. Kamakodi. Edited excerpts:

How did you tackle the challenges during the pandemic?

■ As banks come under essential service, we had to work even during the lockdown. Most of our staff members faced challenges in attending work due to lack of road transport and public transport system. We had asked our customers to make transactions via Internet and mobile banking. By coming to the branches, they were putting themselves and staff members at risk. It was a challenging period and the team rose up to the occasion and managed the situation.

Have you returned to pre-COVID-19 levels in transactions?

■ The business transactions have reached 85% of last year's level. It is improving month-on-month as our customers are doing transactions through non-banking channels too.

How many of your clients availed the moratorium?

■ We extended the option to all the borrowers. At the end of June, [customers] accounts covering about 70% of the

SNAPSHOTS



Genetics and COVID-19
Infection by SARS-CoV-2 produces a range of effects from severe to mild. One of the reasons for this may be in the genes. New research published in *Nature* finds that risk of susceptibility to COVID-19 may be due to genetic variants in chromosome three that were inherited from Neanderthal ancestors.



Thoughts of the divine
Research published in *Nature Communications* advances the hypothesis that those people who can unconsciously predict complex patterns, an ability called implicit pattern learning, are more likely to believe in gods who create patterns in the universe. The study included two different cultural and religious groups from the U.S. and Afghanistan.



Digesting plastic
A study published in *PNAS* describes an enzyme "cocktail" that can digest plastic. This has been discovered by the same group of scientists who re-engineered the enzyme PETase from a rubbish-dwelling bacterium that can digest plastic. The new cocktail of PETase and a partner MHTase can digest plastic six times faster.



Arctic warming
There are several factors that determine why the Arctic is warming two or three times as fast as the rest of the world. Aerosol particle formation, which influences cloud formation, which in turn has a radiative effect and warming, is found to be driven by iodine acid, according to a paper published in *Nature Communications*.

Century-old data help measure the Sun's magnetic field

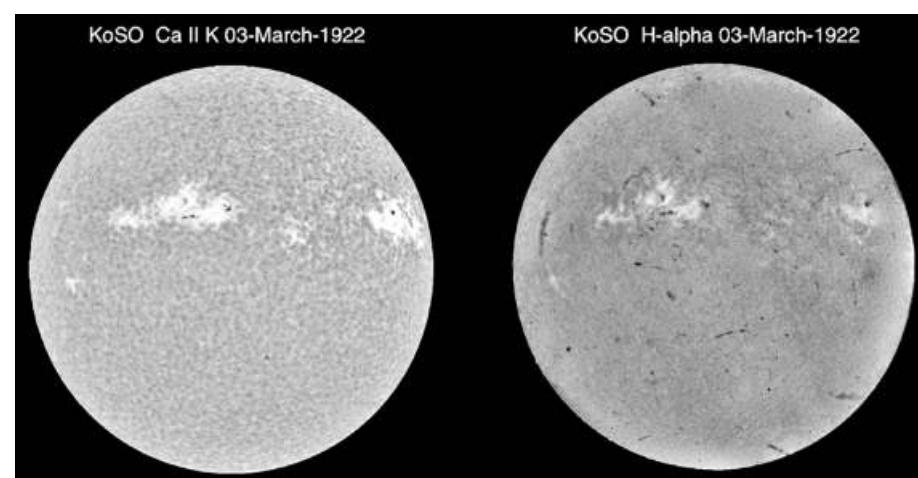
Knowing the magnetic field variations on the Sun can contribute to our understanding of climate and space weather

SHUBASHREE DESIKAN

The magnetic field of the Sun is unique in that, unlike many other celestial bodies, it reverses its polarity roughly every 11 years. Regular observations of the Sun's magnetic field begin in 1967, and, so far, we have data for the period from 1967 almost to the present, spanning the solar cycles 20-24. Now, an Indo-Russian collaboration has added to this with a plot of the solar magnetic field from 1915 to 1965 (solar cycles 15-19). Using a novel approach, they have calibrated and calculated the field using data from the archives of the Kodaikanal Solar Observatory of the Indian Institute of Astrophysics.

"For about the last 50 years, that is, from around 1970s, regular measurements of magnetic field are available from different observatories. One important one is Wilcox Solar Observatory from the US. Before that Mount Wilson Solar Observatory provided some data, although they are not of high quality and uniform," says Dipankar Banerjee, Director of Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences, Nainital, and an author of the paper which has been accepted for publication in *The Astrophysical Journal Letters*.

Data from Kodaikanal
The present study makes the important contribution of building on this using the Kodaikanal Solar Observatory data, and extending the magnetic field calculations for another fifty years approximately. "Understanding the magnetic field evolution in the past improves our under-



Spectral images: The data consist of full disc spectral images of the Sun. • KOSO/IIAP

standing of the physics itself. In the work we have also talked about the timing of the polarity reversal, which is also very important," adds Prof. Banerjee. Solar variations, both of long scale and short, depend on the mag-

netic field, and these can affect both the climate and space weather. Therefore, understanding the magnetic field variations can contribute to our understanding of climate and space weather.

The Kodaikanal Solar Ob-

servatory was established in 1899 and observations of the Sun from this observatory run over a hundred years, providing what is among the longest series of solar data. An important feature of these data is the multi-wave-

"Their presence also represents the magnetic field distribution beneath. They also allow us to study the evolution of magnetic field with time," he explains.

Extracting information

The team first calibrated the Ca II K images of the Kodaikanal data using magnetic field measurements that were available during that period. Using this, they interpreted the data for the periods when magnetic field measurements were not available, namely, years 1915-1965. "The H-alpha images display the location of filaments, which are believed to be formed along the magnetic neutral lines, so these images provide information on the magnetic polarity," says Dr Karak. "Combining the two sets, the full magnetic field data was reconstructed."

A tale of mangrove migration

This directly indicates changes in the micro-environment due to anthropogenic activities and climate change

ASWATHI PACHA



Green migrant: A mangrove plant at Millennium Park in the heart of Kolkata.

In 2008, Punarbasu Chaudhuri, mangrove ecologist from the University of Calcutta spotted an interesting mangrove plant at the bank of river Hooghly inside Kolkata city. It was quite unusual, as mangroves require a cyclic supply of saline water, and this growth at an upstream zone was remarkable. He then started an investigation on their distribution in the Hooghly estuary, and his recent paper suggests that the mangroves have started moving upstream, growing in less-saline regions.

Redistributing plants

After surveying the banks near Kolkata, he was able to spot a few mangroves belonging to *Sonneratia*. He says that over the years due to gradual environmental changes and anthropogenic activities, mangroves have started to redistribute. The paper, published in *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, notes that they have reclaimed even the upper course of the river, which was completely devoid of mangroves before 1995.

His team spent years mapping the distribution of mangroves and associated species using ground surveys and satellite data. They also studied the sediments and water samples along the river banks. "Sewage disposal has increased the pollution load in the river waters. Globally, there is also rapid mean sea-level rise. All these might have played a role in this upstream migration," explains Dr. Chaudhuri who is with the University of Calcutta's Department of Environmental Science.

Associates found
Between Barrackpore and Birlapur, in a non-saline region, about 239 mature trees and numerous saplings of *Sonneratia caseolaris* (commonly known as mangrove apple) have grown naturally. They were just four to five years old with fruits and flowers, exhibiting luxuriant growth. The team also found the redistribution of several other mangrove associate trees, shrubs and climbers in that region.

"This is not welcome news. They directly indicate changes in the micro-environment. We are also planning to study more rivers in this region," adds Dr. Chaudhuri.

mentation, quality of the sediment and biogeochemistry of the river has all been affected by elevated anthropogenic activities and global climate change events," says Somdeep Ghosh, first author of the paper.

Change in ecology

The team emphasised the fact that the construction of Farakka Barrage in 1975 has increased fresh water flow in River Hooghly, thereby causing change in ecology and chemistry of the river.

They also found high chemical oxygen demand in the river because of increased release of harmful chemicals from multiple point and non-point sources. Studies from China have shown that *Sonneratia caseolaris* grow well in the presence of high chemical oxygen demand of water.

"This shows the potential of *Sonneratia caseolaris* to act as a bio-indicator of regional environmental changes. The decline in the mangrove area along with this migration may increase the amplitude of coastal hazards such as storm surges, erosion and flooding. More studies are needed to understand in detail this new horizon of mangrove adaptation and dispersion ecology. We are also planning to study more rivers in this region," adds Dr. Chaudhuri.

Rapid antigen tests ideal for screening for coronavirus

Such tests are quick, cheap and do not rely on labs and expensive equipment

R. PRASAD

With novel coronavirus cases accelerating or plateauing across the world, the focus should shift from using a test that has high sensitivity to pick even small amounts of the virus, such as the molecular test (RT-PCR), to rapid antigen tests which can detect infections, a Perspective piece published in *The New England Journal of Medicine* says.

This message has been misconstrued on social media without understanding the context in which the researchers from Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Boston, and the University of Colorado, Boulder, have advocated this shift.

Right screening tool
The researchers have focused on which test to be used as a screening tool in a community or the entire population in the U.S. to quickly identify infected people, including those who are asymptomatic, and isolate such people so as to quickly cut the transmission chain. Rapid antigen tests are not only quick (can return results in 15-30 minutes compared with 24-48 hours for RT-PCR) but also are cheap and do not rely on laboratory and expensive equipment to carry out testing.



Avoiding mistakes: Frequent testing thus makes up for poor sensitivity. • GETTY IMAGES

virus spread.

Testing in India

No State in India has so far been screening whole communities or populations with either rapid antigen tests or RT-PCR to diagnose those who have been infected. Instead, States follow syndromic surveillance where testing is carried out on people who exhibit fever or any of the other COVID-19 symptoms.

Instead of asking States to repeat the tests in those who have a negative result with a rapid antigen test, even in its June 23 advisory, ICMR has asked States to validate all negative results from rapid

antigen tests with a RT-PCR. Authors of the *NEJM* article, too, make a distinction between tests used on people showing symptoms and for screening a population, and bat for RT-PCR for clinical tests. "Clinical tests are designed for use with symptomatic people, do not need to be low-cost, and require high analytic sensitivity to return a definitive clinical diagnosis given a single opportunity to test," they write.

Problems with RT-PCR

Using RT-PCR to screen a community or population has several problems. RT-PCR test is expensive compared with a rapid antigen test, making repeated testing on the same individual every few days even more expensive. It takes at least one-two days to test and a couple of days to inform the individuals of the test result.

The slow turnaround time would mean that infected individuals will come in contact with others and spread the virus even while waiting for the test result. Also, it may pick people who have been infected but are no longer infectious. This might be a problem when such people have to be isolated even when they no longer spread the virus.

'Warm COVID-19 vaccine' that needs no cold chain

The fragment of the receptor binding domain can be stored for a month at 37 degrees Celsius



SPEAKING OF SCIENCE

D. BALASUBRAMANIAN

Unlike drugs, virtually all vaccines need to be transported at cold temperatures (usually between 2 and 8 degrees Celsius) prior to use. If they are exposed to higher temperatures, many vaccines lose potency. Re-cooling does not help. Thus we need what is called the cold chain of handling before use. It would therefore be extremely useful if we can make and transport a vaccine at room temperature, with no cold chain needed.

Warm vaccine

It is towards such a "warm vaccine" that an Indian group, led by Raghavan Varadarajan of the Indian Institute of Science, Bengaluru (IISc) and other collaborators at IISER Trivandrum, THSTI Faridabad, and the IISc-incubated startup Mynvax have worked. Their preprint, entitled, "Design of a thermo-tolerant, immunogenic SARS-

CoV-2 Spike fragment," is publicly available in *BioRxiv* at <https://doi.org/10.1101/2020.08.18.252437>.

Active domain

The COVID virus has, on its surface, a protein called the spike which is about 1,300-amino-acids long. Within this, a sequence that is about 250 amino acids long, called the receptor binding domain (RBD), attaches itself to the "host" cell surface and starts the process of infection. The group decided to synthesise in the laboratory, not the full spike protein, but a 200-amino-acid fragment of the RBD, and study its structure, (three-dimensional architecture, or the shape which allows it to fit snugly to the host cell surface – a "lock and key" fit), thermal stability (can it work at temperatures higher than the normal lab conditions), and so forth. Happily, the authors found

that this fragment, when freeze dried (or "lyophilized"), is highly stable, can withstand transient exposure to temperatures as high as 100 degrees Celsius and can be stored for over a month at 37 degrees Celsius, suggesting a cold-chain should not be required for this molecule.

Clues from structure
On an aside, for the past 70 years, India has been a pioneer in the field of how the structure or architecture of a protein offers clues to its function. It still is. For example how the triple helical structure of collagen, experimentally discovered by the late G. N. Ramachandran in 1954, explains why it is found in the skin and tendons, offering them rope-like strength. Prof. Ramachandran also suggested, given a protein sequence, how we may predict the ways it may fold into a 3-dimensional architecture. This, in turn, has led biochemists to synthesise proteins with changes in their amino acid sequence that function the way they want it to.

The authors have done exactly this by carefully choosing the sequence of the RBD fragment to be expressed, and demonstrating that the resulting protein is thermo-

tolerant. This exemplifies the power of protein structural analysis and "genetic engineering".

The RBD protein was produced in large amounts in mammalian cells as well as in a yeast called *Pichia pastoris*, which is a highly cost-effective, inexpensive, host. However, when they compared the two proteins, they found that the yeast-expressed protein was more heterogeneous and did not yield the desired antibodies when tested in animals. They also tried expressing the identical RBD fragment in the usual model bacterial system, *E.coli*, but the protein was non-functional.

Adjuvants and trials
Now that we have a thermo-tolerant RBD, can it be tried as a vaccine candidate, generating antibodies that will block the receptor-binding motif of the spike protein and prevent infection? Generally, immunologists add what is called an adjuvant which, when co-injected along with the vaccine material (cells or molecules), stimulates the immune system and enhances the ability of the vaccine to work. Aluminiun salts are often used.

The authors chose to use guinea pigs in their initial im-

munisations, since these are thought to be better models than mice for respiratory illnesses. As adjuvant, they used a generic version of the MF59 adjuvant which has an excellent safety record in humans, and they injected the RBD formulation in guinea pigs. After two doses, tests showed substantial levels of the desired receptor-blocking antibodies in the animals. So, it works.

They point out that numerous other groups have used the entire full length spike protein, or new RNA-based approaches to express antigens, including the RBD. However, unlike all the COVID-19 vaccine formulations currently in clinical trials which require a cold chain, this particular thermo-tolerant RBD fragment, (and possibly other RBD formulations), can be stored at room temperature for extended periods.

The researchers are now testing the ability of the formulation to protect animals from challenge with infectious virus and will simultaneously carry out safety and toxicity assessments prior to testing in human clinical trials. We wish the group all success.

dbala@lvpe.org



Heat-resistant candidate: Making and transporting a vaccine at room temperature would be extremely useful. • GETTY IMAGES



Question Corner

Earthquake swarms

Fault simulator

The team developed a new physics-based fault simulator to aid the study and found that pulses of high-pressure fluids moving closer to the surface can trigger these swarms. While, fluid under pressure can push the walls of the fault away from each other making it easier for the fault to slide, a decrease in pressure creates a suction that pulls the walls together and inhibits sliding. The model was able to predict how quickly a pulse migrates along the fault to slip and triggering these clusters of small earthquakes.

They found that each of the small earthquakes in a swarm has its own aftershock event.

A team from Stanford University used computational modelling and studied swarms

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



What does herd immunity mean for COVID-19?

Why do scientists and experts say that it is not a viable option to tackle the SARS-CoV-2 virus outbreak?

RAMYA KANNAN

The story so far: Right from the time it became obvious that the SARS-CoV-2 virus outbreak was not confined to China, but scaling other shores too, the theory of herd immunity has been floating around. Initially, herd immunity, an important tool in epidemic control, was proposed as a means to overcome the pandemic. Only a certain proportion of the population needs to be infected in order to stop large outbreaks, either through naturally-acquired disease, or through vaccination. Since a vaccine is not available for COVID-19 yet, some people advocated that the infection be allowed to spread in the community until herd immunity is achieved.

Why is this being stoutly opposed?

The SARS-CoV-2 virus is easily transmissible and would require around 60-70% of the population to be infected to acquire herd immunity.

In the World Health Organization's (WHO) 'Science in 5' video series, the organisation's chief scientist, Soumya Swaminathan, explains herd immunity with the help of a common childhood infectious disease – measles – for which there is a very effective vaccine. "To achieve herd immunity in the population, for measles, you need about 95% of the people to have immunity or antibodies," she explains. "Even if you have 5% of children [who are] not vaccinated, these others actually have enough protection in the population to prevent the measles virus from actually going from one person to the next. So, it is really like having a barrier of people who are protected, who break that chain of transmission."

For the SARS-CoV-2, Dr. Swaminathan thinks that at least 60-70% of the population should have immunity to really break the chain of transmission. "If you allow this to happen naturally, it will take a long time, of course, but more importantly, it is going to do a lot of collateral damage," adds Dr. Swaminathan. "So, even if 1% of people who get infected are ultimately going to die, then this can add up to a huge number of people, if we look at the global population. And that is why we believe [that] it is not a good idea to achieve herd immunity by just letting the infection run wild in the general population and infect a lot of people. We should talk about herd immunity in the context of a vaccine," she says.

Marc Lipsitch, Professor of Epidemiology and director, Center for Communicable Disease Dynamics, Harvard School of Public Health, responding on Twitter to the news of the White House's new pandemic adviser recommending 'herd immunity', said: "This is simply



A paper in *Nature* argues that vaccines are particularly suited for creating herd immunity because 'their allocation can be specifically targeted to highly exposed populations, such as healthcare workers'

wrong ... Herd immunity is not a strategy or a solution. It is surrender to a preventable virus."

How and when will herd immunity be achieved in this pandemic?

Arnaud Fontanet and Simon Cauchemez, authors of a recent *Nature* publication, ponder over this exact point: "Herd

immunity is achieved when one infected person in a population generates less than one secondary case on an average, which corresponds to the effective reproduction number R (that is, the average number of persons infected by a case) dropping below 1 in the absence of interventions." The publication says, "With flu pandemics, herd immunity is usually attained after two to three epidemic waves, each interrupted by the typical seasonality of influenza virus, and more rarely, by interventions, with the help of cross-protection through immunity to previously encountered influenza viruses, and vaccines, when available." Currently, there is insufficient confirmed information on re-infection to determine how that will influence the pandemic's course.

What does the sero-prevalence study in India say? A measure of the infection levels in the population is provided through the sero-surveys conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). The second

study was done between August 17 and September 22, 2020, and found the prevalence at 15.6% of the population in urban slums and at 8.2% in non-slum areas. The hotspots were not included this time. In Delhi, the second round estimated a sero-prevalence of 29.1%. The study revealed that for every reported COVID-19 case, there were 26-32 infections, down from 81-130 infections per reported case in May. It also said the susceptibility of a considerable section of people, who are still unexposed to SARS-CoV-2, exists, and the risk in urban slums is twice that in non-slum areas, and four times higher than the risk in rural settings. In Mumbai (study not by ICMR), the second-round estimated around 45% prevalence in slums and 18% sero-prevalence in non-slums.

Are vaccines the solution?

The *Nature* paper argues that vaccines are particularly suited for creating herd immunity because "their allocation can be specifically targeted to highly exposed populations, such as healthcare workers or individuals with frequent contact with customers." They may have a significantly greater impact on reducing viral circulation than naturally-acquired immunity, especially if it turns out that naturally-acquired protective immunity requires boosts through re-infections.

Dr. Swaminathan says, "With a vaccine you can achieve immunity and herd immunity safely. Through natural infection also we can achieve it at some point, but it would be at great human cost." Meanwhile, until a vaccine is ready, it would be best to take actions that would slow down the progress of the virus – following COVID-19 etiquettes of wearing a mask, physical distancing and following hand hygiene – she adds.

DAP 2020: Offset clause and Rafale-like deals

What does the new Defence Acquisition Procedure say? How does the policy work and what will be its impact?

DINAKAR PERI

The story so far: On Monday, the new Defence Acquisition Procedure (DAP) 2020 was released. Among other things, the Defence Ministry has removed the offset clause requirement in inter-governmental agreements (IGA) and has introduced a new category for leasing of military equipment.

What purpose does an offset clause serve?

A defence offset policy was promulgated under the Defence Procurement Procedure (DPP-2005), with the objective that it would bring high-end technology to the country and help build the domestic defence industry. Under the offset clause, a foreign company that wins a defence deal is supposed to invest a part of the contract value in the country, thus developing skills and bringing in technology, while also generating employment.

Under the DPP 2006, the offset value was fixed at 30% of defence deals above ₹300 crore, which was revised to ₹2,000 crore in DPP 2016 for full-import deals. The first offset contract was signed in 2007.

Auditing the offset deals till March 2018, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) said 46 offset contracts were signed for ₹66,427 crore, and till December 2018, ₹19,223 crore worth of offsets should have been discharged. "However, the vendors have claimed discharge of only ₹1,396 crore, [i.e.,] 59% of the offsets," stated a report tabled in Parliament on September 23. Furthermore, the Ministry has accepted only ₹5,457 crore or 48% of these offset claims, while the rest were pending or rejected due to various deficiencies. The remaining offset commitments of about ₹55,000 crore would be due for completion by 2024, but the rate of the offset discharge has been about ₹1,300 crore per year. "Given this situation, fulfilling the commitment of ₹55,000 crore by the vendors in the next six years remains a major challenge," the report said.

The sixth proposal of the DRDO was to obtain technical assistance for indigenous development of an engine, Kav-



What did the CAG say on the Rafale deal offsets?

The IGA of the ₹60,000-crore deal for 36 Rafale fighter jets stated that the French side would facilitate implementation of 'Make in India' through offsets for 50% value of supply protocols, minus the value of performance-based logistics and simulator and training aids annual maintenance. The CAG said the French aircraft manufacturer, Dassault Aviation, and missile maker MBDA have till date "not confirmed" the transfer of technology to the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) under the offset clause.

According to the report, in September 2015, French companies Dassault Aviation and MBDA initially proposed to discharge 30% of their offset obligation in the Rafale deal by offering high technology to the DRDO, and as per the contract, acquisition of technology by the DRDO is envisaged subject to discussions between the vendor and the DRDO. In April 2016, the DRDO identified six new technologies to be obtained from the firms under the offset obligations, but the vendors "did not agree on transfer of five technologies as most of them were not within the vendor's core competence".

The sixth proposal of the DRDO was to obtain technical assistance for indigenous development of an engine, Kav-

eri, for the Light Combat Aircraft (LCA). Stating that in October 2019, the Ministry of Defence (MoD) had informed them that the vendor had not yet been able to confirm their capability for doing the requisite upgradation, the CAG said, "thus, it is not clear if this technology transfer will take place, and there is need for MoD/DRDO to identify and acquire the

right technologies in order to comply with the directions of Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) given in September 2016."

The MoD informed the CAG that the offset obligations under the Rafale deal were to start from September 23, 2019, and the first annual commitment would have to be completed by September 23, 2020. The CAG noted that the maximum discharge of offsets – 57% by MBDA and 58% by Dassault Aviation – had been slated during the last year, which is year seven from the date of contract.

Giving the Rafale deal as a reference, the report said, "In many cases, it was found that the foreign vendors made various offset commitments to qualify for the main supply contract, but later were not earnest about fulfilling these commitments."

What is the status now?

In the new DAP 2020, which came into effect on October 1, the government has removed the requirement for offset clause in IGAs or in Rafale-like deals. "We removed some of the offset requirements as they are not working. From now on, there will be no offset clause in government-to-government, single vendor and IGAs," said Director General (Acquisition), Apurva Chandra.

The revised guidelines on 'ideal' weight and diet

How has the National Institute of Nutrition arrived at reference points for the Indian man and woman?

JACOB KOSHY

The story so far: The National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), the Hyderabad-based premier research body of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), has released a new set of guidelines, updating norms on recommended dietary allowances (RDA), which is the average daily intake needed for a nutritious diet. Besides several other recommendations, a salient point in the report released this week is the upward revision of the 'ideal' weight of Indian men and women.

How are these reports prepared?

In 1989, an expert committee constituted by the NIN to decide on what should be a nutritious diet, used data generated by studying body weights and heights of well-to-do Indian children and adolescents. This was not reflective of the breadth and diversity of India. The reference weights for a man and woman were fixed at 60 kg and 50 kg respectively. Another committee in 2010 considered extensive data on anthropometry collected by the National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau, using nutrition profiles from ten States of India for computing reference body weights. They computed reference weights for different age groups. Most of the data collected were from rural India, but the reference points for a single 'ideal'

weight remained unchanged. For the latest report, NIN looked at nationally representative data from the National Family Health Survey-4 (NFHS-4, 2015-16), the National Nutrition Monitoring Bureau (2015-16), the World Health Organization (2006-07) and the Indian Academy of Paediatrics (IAP, 2016) to "derive acceptable reference body weight values through the lifespan."

The definition for a reference Indian adult man and woman were modified with regard to age (19-39 years) instead of (20-39 years) and a body weight of 65 kg and 55 kg respectively were fixed for a normal Body Mass Index (BMI). Though termed 'ideal', it is more appropriately a measure of the average weight of Indians.

How do Indians compare internationally?

The reference weights are a proxy for the nutritional status of the people of a country. International comparisons find that the average Indian is lighter than his or her counterparts globally. The average Dutch male is 87.4 kg and a woman 72.3 kg, and the average weight in the United Kingdom is 86.8 kg for men and 72.9 kg for women, according to data aggregator 'WorldData.info'. Indians are closer to typical weights prevalent in Asia. The average Sri Lankan male is 61.3 kg and woman 56.2 kg, and the average Japanese man is 69 kg and woman

54.7 kg. The data, however, is based on 2010 estimates, and the latest NIN revision will push India up a few notches.

What are the dietary recommendations?

The guidelines specify the amount of carbohydrates, minerals, dietary fibre, fats and oils, protein, and even water, that a person must ideally consume. The water intake for an adult man ranges from 32-58 ml per kg body mass, and for a woman, it ranges from 27-52 ml per kg body mass. For children, the requirement is over 60 ml per kg body mass, and for adolescent boys it ranges from 47-60 ml per kg body mass, while for girls, it is 39-49 ml per kg body mass. For a pregnant woman, based on the working intensity, the water required from beverages ranges from 2.1 litres to 3.2 litres per day. A minimum 400 gram/day of fruits and vegetables are necessary to obtain sufficient antioxidant nutrients, such as beta-carotene, Vitamin C, and certain non-nutrients like polyphenols and flavonoids that reportedly protect against chronic diseases. This should be complemented with a sufficient amount of vegetable oil to obtain Vitamin E. The fat intakes for sedentary, moderate and heavy activities have been set at 25 gram/day, 30 g/d and 40 g/d respectively for an adult man, and 20 g/d, 25 g/d and 30 g/d for adult women.

Can leaks still happen?

End-to-end encryption cannot prevent leaks from happening if a third party has access to a device which contains these messages. Encryption also does not help in cases wherein the sender or the receiver of a message shares it with others, a member of a group shares it with others, or messages are stored in a different format on a different application or platform open to others.

Are there other vulnerabilities?

Bugs that lead others to control a user's phone are an example of such vulnerabilities. For instance, last year, WhatsApp revealed that surveillance technology developed by Israel's NSO Group had been used to spy on about 1,400 people across the world, including civil rights activists and journalists in India.



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

On the front lines of rights and rows

The advocacy, known for its campaigns and controversies, has exited India accusing the government of a 'witch hunt'

SUHASINI HAIDAR
VIAITA SINGH

Just past 10am on September 29, a notice went up on global human rights agency Amnesty International's India webpage. The notice said that owing to the fact that the government had frozen all its funds through an order earlier in the month, Amnesty was shutting down its India operations, laying off about 150 people and ending its presence in the country, 55 years after it had set up its first office in India.

Amnesty's closure evoked concern from the U.K.,

where Amnesty is headquartered, the 27-nation EU and the U.S. Both the EU and the U.K. said their officials had met Indian officials in Delhi and in Brussels and London, and said they hoped that Amnesty could continue its work in the future, but the government has firmly told them not to interfere. Prior to this, other international groups like Ford Foundation, Greenpeace and Compassion International have faced similar restrictions, part of a list of at least 20 foreign NGOs on the government's scanner.

While Amnesty's notice said the actions by the go-

vernment were part of an "incessant witch-hunt" that had failed to produce evidence of wrong-doing, the government said it had a long list of charges pertaining to the funding of the group and its interference in India's internal affairs, dismissing its claims of conducting humanitarian work as "glossy statements".

Over the past decade, the Ministry of Home Affairs has conducted an investigation into the workings of the group, and even raided its offices in Bengaluru in 2018, summoning various officials and staff members for ques-

tions, and sending income tax notices to its Indian donors.

It also pointed out that Amnesty International's India chapter had been given clearance to accept funds as an NGO under the Foreign Contributions Regulatory Act (FCRA) only once, in the year 2000, but had "circumvented" laws to receive foreign funds through commercial means since then. Eventually, the government said, it had had to block foreign funds of about ₹8 crore to Amnesty India due to their "dubious" routing, in "bipartisan" actions taken by the Manmohan Singh-led UPA government and the Narendra Modi-led NDA government, and the Enforcement Directorate served a show-cause notice to the human rights body for alleged violation of the Foreign Exchange Management Act (FEMA), involving a total of ₹51.72 crore.

"Human rights cannot be an excuse for defying the law of the land," said the government. Amnesty shot back that the government had carried out its crackdown due to its anger over Amnesty's reports on alleged human rights violations in Jammu

and Kashmir, and more recently, on what it called "police complicity" in the Delhi riots of February 2020, in which 53 people were killed.

"Amnesty has never been particularly welcome in India even under previous governments," said former Amnesty International India's executive director Aakar Patel, who has himself faced many enquiries and interrogations. He said that raising contentious issues like the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA), Jammu and Kashmir, the 1984 Sikh massacre, land rights in coal mine areas and journalist protections had always made it difficult for the group to engage with the state.

The West factor

Given a self-proclaimed mandate to raise such issues, Amnesty is not particularly welcome in many of the countries it works in, and is often accused of working for western, interventionist powers, and of gathering intelligence and fomenting trouble in the countries it reports on. In Nigeria, it faced massive protests over its report on sexual violence by the military.

In Turkey, its top officials

were arrested in 2017 on charges of links to the Fethullah Gulen group accused of attempting a coup against President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. Amnesty does not have offices in Pakistan, nor has it been able to set up offices in mainland China (it operates from Hong Kong), but its reports on enforced disappearances, minority rights and the blasphemy law in Pakistan, and the treatment of Uighurs, Tibetans, and democracy activists in China have put it on collision course with those countries. In Russia, in 2016, Amnesty's offices were sealed and then seized, over a series of reports on human rights violations in the North Caucasus, as well as in Syria and Ukraine, leading to the only other time the group has been forced to close its country operations besides in India.

Amnesty now operates in about 150 countries, and claims a global membership of 7 million, which would make the number of its concerned citizens larger than

the populations of Denmark or Lebanon. Its original mandate, when it was set up by British lawyer Peter Benenson in 1961, was to campaign for the freedom of "prisoners of conscience" or political prisoners around the world.

Benenson's first campaign, for two Portuguese students arrested for raising a toast

"to freedom" in a public restaurant during the reign of dictator António Salazar, led to a major newspaper campaign for other political prisoners, many of whom were released as a result of the international spotlight on them.

Once set up, Amnesty broadened its mandate to deal with torture, executions, and other human

rights issues, where its volunteers would bombard governments with letters until they were forced to pay attention to the issue. Among its successes, Amnesty counts its efforts towards the setting up of the International Criminal Court to try war criminals, as well as the end of capital punishment in more than 100 countries, among a total of about 24,000 campaigns it lists on its website. In 1977, when Amnesty won the Nobel Peace Prize, its citation called the group a "light in the darkness", in a reference to its logo of a candle surrounded by barbed wire.

In Focus

■ When it was set up by British lawyer Peter Benenson in 1961, Amnesty's mandate was to campaign for the freedom of political prisoners around the world

■ Later, Amnesty broadened its mandate to deal with torture, executions, and other human rights issues

■ Benenson resigned from the group in 1966, claiming it had been infiltrated by British spies. Amnesty has also been accused of working for western interventions

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JULIAN ASSANGE

Enemy of the state

The WikiLeaks founder is fighting extradition to the U.S. in a British court

SRINIVASAN RAMANI



On April 5, 2010, a 39-minute video was released by a website, called *wikileaks.org*, that showed gun-sight footage of two U.S. AH-64 Apache helicopters in action during the Iraqi insurgency against the U.S. occupation in 2007. The video showed the helicopter crew firing indiscriminately and killing civilians and two Reuters war correspondents.

The release of the video by WikiLeaks was made possible by the leak of nearly 400,000 documents called the Iraq War Logs from the U.S. Department of Defense databases by the intelligence analyst Bradley Manning (who later referred herself as Chelsea), who acted as a whistle-blower. Ms. Manning had copied these files into a CD-ROM and uploaded them onto a WikiLeaks dropbox.

Asylum in Embassy

Ten years since the release of the Iraq War Logs, Mr. Assange is undergoing trial in the U.K. on whether he should be extradited to the U.S. to face charges related to the leaking of classified documents that exposed U.S. war crimes. Seven of those years were spent in asylum in the small Ecuador Embassy in London, after Mr. Assange refused extradition to Sweden to face charges of rape, which were later dismissed by Swedish prosecutors. The then Ecuador President Rafael Correa had extended asylum to Mr. As-

sange, but he could not guarantee safe passage for travel as British authorities threatened arrest as soon as he left the Embassy premises. Mr. Assange had always indicated that extradition to Sweden was a ploy for him to be handed over to the U.S., where Ms. Manning was convicted by court martial in July 2013 for violating the Espionage Act and underwent rigorous imprisonment before her sentence was commuted by President Barack Obama in January 2017.

Mr. Assange continued to front the activities of WikiLeaks even during his refuge in the Ecuador Embassy. WikiLeaks published emails sent and received by U.S. presidential candidate Hillary Clinton and went on to release Democratic National Committee (DNC) emails that were obtained allegedly by Russian intelligence agency hackers. The DNC email releases hinted at bias by the committee against

Bernie Sanders. Mr. Assange denied that the source of the hack was Russian agencies.

In April 2017, the Trump administration's Justice Department had charged him in a sealed indictment. On May 23, 2019, 18 federal criminal charges under the Espionage Act of 1917 were brought by the Justice Department against Mr. Assange for his involvement in "computer intrusion" and leaking of classified information. In June 2020, the charges were further expanded for conspiracy with hacker groups.

Mr. Assange, in his younger days, was a prodigious teenage hacker who was charged and later let off for activities related to invasion into private computers. He later went on to become a "cyberpunk" – an activist who uses cryptography and privacy-enhancing technologies to promote social and political change – a path that led him to found WikiLeaks. The site went on to become a key outlet for whistleblowers. This propelled him into becoming a "global hacktivist" of sorts but his ploy to use WikiLeaks as a means to influence the bipolar U.S. politics has complicated his public image.

It remains to be seen whether the U.K. court will consider his plea not to be extradited on merits of his role as a publisher of sensitive information, something that has been performed by news organisations the world over.

NAGORNO-KARABAKH

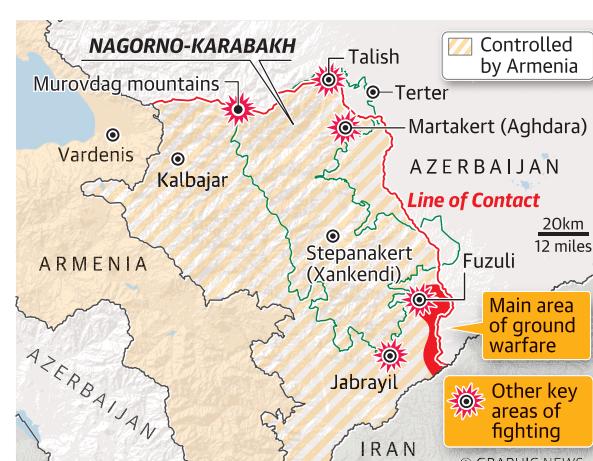
Battle for the black mountains

The landlocked, forested region is at the centre of Armenia-Azerbaijan clashes

STANLY JOHNY

The story of Nagorno-Karabakh, the landlocked, mountainous territory that has been at the centre of the clashes between Armenia and Azerbaijan, has been that of imperial conquests, ethnic violence, civil strife and mass uprisings. Once a part of the Armenian Kingdom, Nagorno-Karabakh (literal meaning, mountainous black garden) has seen all empires – the Romans, the Persians, the Ottomans, the Russians and the Soviets – that came to Transcaucasia establishing their rule over itself. When empires retreated or collapsed, Nagorno-Karabakh, located between the southern part of the Lesser Caucasus range and the eastern edge of the Armenian Highlands, and largely populated by ethnic Armenians, was left within the borders of Azerbaijan, igniting a protracted conflict that's still raging.

The roots of today's conflict go back to the time when Transcaucasia (or South Caucasus) was part of the Russian Empire. Tsarist Russia took over the region in the early 19th century after the Russo-Persian wars from the Persian Empire, which had suzerainty over the region for centuries. After the 1917 revolution, the Russian influence receded in the South Caucasus, the British temporarily filled the vacuum. But they, too, failed to calm the ethnic tensions, which led to an open war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1920. The war was disastrous, especially for the ethnic Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijani forces, after repelling an Armenian offensive, burnt down parts of Shusha, Nagorno-Karabakh's capital. Kar-



bakh became a part of this republic.

But the federation crumbled under its own contradictions and then emerged three separate republics – Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia. Nagorno-Karabakh was incorporated into Azerbaijan by the Azeri authorities. This was also the time when the Ottomans were attacking the region, mainly targeting Armenian militias, in an alliance with Azerbaijan. When the Ottomans, in the face of defeat in the First World War, withdrew from the South Caucasus, the British temporarily filled the vacuum. But they, too,

failed to calm the ethnic tensions, which led to an open war between Armenia and Azerbaijan in 1920. The war was disastrous, especially for the ethnic Armenians in Nagorno-Karabakh. Azerbaijani forces, after repelling an Armenian offensive, burnt down parts of Shusha, Nagorno-Karabakh's capital. When the war was raging,

the Bolshevik revolutionaries took over Azerbaijan and Armenia. Nagorno-Karabakh at that time was 90% Armenian. But the Soviet leaders (Joseph Stalin was the acting Commissar of Nationalities for the Soviet Union under which the Caucasian Bureau, or the Kavburo, was created) decided to give Nagorno-Karabakh Autonomous Oblast (province) to Azerbaijan, despite protests from Armenia. The Soviets also redrew the map between Azerbaijan and Armenia, which left the Nagorno-Karabakh Oblast within the boundaries of Azerbaijan.

Despite the ceasefire, Armenia and Azerbaijan failed to reach a peace agreement. Azerbaijan continues to claim sovereignty over Nagorno-Karabakh. In July this year, violence erupted, which left some 16 people dead. Since then, the border has remained tense. In the current spell of clashes, which broke out on September 27, dozens have already been killed.

Azerbaijan, with direct support from Turkey, seems to be emboldened now. Nagorno-Karabakh is dependent on Armenia for security. Armenia, in turn, is dependent on Moscow, which enjoys good relationships with both Baku and Yerevan. That's why Russia has called for a ceasefire. But for now, Azerbaijan and its backers in Ankara seem to be in a mood to fight.

Ethnic frictions

As long as the Soviet Union remained strong, the region had been relatively peaceful. But with the Soviet power receding in the late 1980s, the ethnic frictions started resurfacing. In 1988, the regional assembly of Nagorno-Karabakh passed a resolution to cancel its autonomous status and join

Capitals win power-hitting battle

Shreyas, Shaw take the side to 228; Morgan and Tripathi nearly pull it off for KKR

IPL 2020

SPORTS BUREAU

Kolkata Knight Riders' Eoin Morgan (44, 18b, 1x4, 5x6) and Rahul Tripathi (36, 16b, 3x4, 3x6) turned a stilt chase into an exhibition of power-hitting, but their side fell 18 runs short of Delhi Capitals' 228 in an IPL encounter at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium on Saturday.

With KKR reeling at 122 for six, Morgan and Tripathi brought the team back into contention with a pulsating 78-run stand. Morgan was particularly severe on Kagiso Rabada (one for 51), hitting him for a hat-trick of sixes in the 18th over, after Tripathi had collected 22 off Marcus Stoinis in the previous over. However, Anrich Nortje's dismissal of Morgan followed by Tripathi's wicket in the final over bowled by Stoinis saw DC home.

Losing Narine early

KKR suffered an early setback when it lost opener Sunil Narine in the second over. But Shubman Gill (28, 22b, 2x4, 1x6) and Nitish Rana (35, 35b, 4x4, 4x6) were unfazed and accumulated 59 runs in the first six overs. Rana was dropped on 27 by Amit Mishra off his own bowling. But the leggie made amends in his next over, getting Gill caught by Rishabh Pant.

Andre Russell briefly entertained, hitting a four and a six off Rabada before the latter got rid of the all-rounder. Harshal Patel then removed Rana and Dinesh Karthik off successive deliveries in the 13th over to make things difficult for KKR.

Earlier, after KKR opted to bowl, Shreyas Iyer's 38-ball 88 (7x4, 6x6) and Prithvi Shaw's quickfire half-centu-



On the rampage: Delhi Capitals' Shreyas Iyer and Prithvi Shaw bludgeoned the Kolkata Knight Riders' attack. ■ BCCI/IPL

ry (66, 41b, 4x4, 4x6) had powered the Capitals to the highest total of this edition.

Capitals got off to a brisk start with Shaw and Shikhar Dhawan (26, 16b, 2x4, 2x6) adding 56 for the first wicket. Delhi had raced to 50 in the fifth over before the Kolkata side broke through when Varun Chakravarthy removed Dhawan in the last over of PowerPlay.

On the go

However, Shaw continued to flourish. The opener sent a Shivam Mavi delivery over extra-cover for six, and brought up his half-century – his sixth in the IPL – with a six over long-on.

DC	KKR
23	Dots 38
18	Fours 12
14	Sixes 14
57/1	PP 59/1
11.40	RR 10.50

Innings scan

DC	KKR
23	Dots 38
18	Fours 12
14	Sixes 14
57/1	PP 59/1
11.40	RR 10.50

SCOREBOARD

DELHI CAPITALS

Prithvi Shaw c Gill b Nagarkoti 66 (41b, 4x4, 4x6), Shikhar Dhawan c Morgan b Varun 26 (16b, 2x4, 2x6), Shreyas Iyer (not out) 88 (38b, 7x4, 6x6), Rishabh Pant c Mavi b Russell 38 (17b, 5x4, 1x6), Marcus Stoinis c Varun b Russell 1 (3b), Shimron Hetmyer (not out) 7 (5b, 1x6); Extras (w-2): 2; Total (for four wkts. in 20 overs): 228.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-56 (Dhawan, 5.5), 2-129 (Shaw, 12.4), 3-201 (Pant, 17.5), 4-221 (Stoinis, 19.1).

KNIGHT RIDERS BOWLING

Cummins 4-0-49-0, Mavi 3-0-40-0, Varun 0-4-49-1, Narine 2-0-26-0, Russell 4-0-29-2, Nagarkoti 3-0-35-1.

KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS

Shubman Gill c Pant b Mishra 28 (22b, 2x4, 1x6), Sunil Narine b Nortje 3 (5b), Nitish Rana c sub (Axar) b Harshal 58 (35b, 4x4, 4x6), Andre Russell c Nortje b Rabada 13 (8b, 1x4, 1x6), Dinesh Karthik c Dhawan b Harshal 6 (8b), Eoin Morgan c Hetmyer b Nortje 44 (18b, 1x4, 5x6), Pat Cummins c Harshal b Nortje 5 (4b, 1x4), Rahul Tripathi b Stoinis 36 (16b, 3x4, 3x6), Kamlesh Nagarkoti (not out) 3 (3b), Shivam Mavi (not out) 1 (3b); Extras (b-4, lb-2, w-5, nb-2): 13; Total (for eight wkts. in 20 overs): 210.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-8 (Narine, 1.2), 2-72 (Gill, 8.1), 3-94 (Russell, 9.5), 4-117 (Rana, 12.4), 5-117 (Karthik, 12.5), 6-122 (Cummins, 13.3), 7-200 (Morgan, 18.3), 8-207 (Tripathi, 19.2).

CAPITALS BOWLING

Rabada 4-0-51-1, Nortje 4-0-33-3, Ashwin 2-0-26-0, Stoinis 4-0-46-1, Harshal 4-0-34-2, Mishra 2-0-14-1.
Toss: KKR; MoM: Shreyas. Capitals won by 18 runs.

Next assignment

DC: Oct. 5 vs. RCB
Dubai, 7.30 p.m. IST

KKR: Oct. 7 vs. CSK
Abu Dhabi, 7.30 p.m. IST

SCOREBOARD

RCB

Virat Kohli (72 n.o., 53b, 7x4, 2x6) and Devdutt Padikkal (63, 45b, 6x4, 1x6) guided Royal Challengers Bangalore to a facile eight-wicket victory over Rajastan Royals in an IPL encounter at Sheikh Zayed Cricket Stadium in Abu Dhabi on Saturday.

The duo helped RCB reach the 155-run target with five balls to spare, giving the side a third win in four matches. Kohli, after three failures in this tournament, struck form with a steady knock. With two clean sixes off leg-spinners Riyan Parag and Rahul Tewatia, Kohli showed that he had regained his old touch.

Growing reputation
Padikkal added to his growing reputation with a third fifty in four matches. The southpaw scored a bulk of his boundaries on the leg-side, with sweetly timed pulls and flicks. The 20-year-old battled cramps late in his knock, before losing his stumps to a fiery yorker from Jofra Archer. Earlier, RR re-

Chahal, Padikkal and Kohli star for RCB

Bengaluru side chases the 155-run target with ease; Royals' batsmen fail again



The one that didn't get away! Chahal catches Samson off his own bowling. Right: Kohli at his majestic best. ■ BCCI/IPL

SPORTS BUREAU

covered from a shaky start to record a respectable total. Jos Buttler, Steve Smith and Sanju Samson fell cheaply, leaving the side tottering at 31 for three.

A low diving catch at slip by Padikkal got rid of the dangerous Buttler (22, 12b, 4x3, 1x6), while leggie Yuzvendra Chahal showed great athleticism to take a tough return catch to dismiss Samson.

Robin Uthappa (17, 22b, 1x4) and Mahipal Lomror (47, 39b, 1x4, 3x6) rebuilt the innings to a small extent with a 39-run fourth-wicket stand. Chahal then showed

Innings scan

RR	RCB
41	Dots 36
9	Fours 16
8	Sixes 3
38/3	PP 50/1
7.70	RR 8.24

Next assignment

RCB: Oct. 5 vs. DC
Dubai, 7.30 p.m. IST

RR: Oct. 6 vs. MI
Abu Dhabi, 7.30 p.m. IST

his class, taking out Uthappa and Lomror with enticing, flighted deliveries. Neither batsman was able to get under the ball, resulting in catches in the deep.

Tewatia (24 n.o., 12b, 3x6) smacked it around, providing vital acceleration at the death. He survived a scare, getting hit flush on the chest by a fast beamer from Nav-

deep Saini. But Tewatia shook it off, and smashed Saini for sixes off the next two deliveries.

Chahal was RCB's most successful bowler (4-0-24-3), while off-spinner Washington Sundar once again returned miserly figures (4-0-20-0), emerging as an invaluable part of the RCB bowling attack.

SCOREBOARD

RAJASTHAN ROYALS

Jos Buttler c Padikkal b Saini 22 (12b, 3x4, 1x6), Steve Smith b Udana 5 (5b, 1x4), Sanju Samson c & b Chahal 4 (3b, 1x4), Robin Uthappa c Udana b Chahal 17 (22b, 1x4), Mahipal Lomror c Padikkal b Chahal 47 (39b, 1x4, 3x6), Riyan Parag c Finch b Udana 16 (18b, 1x4), Rahul Tewatia (not out) 24 (12b, 3x6), Jofra Archer (not out) 16 (10b, 1x4, 1x6); Extras (lb-1, w-1, nb-1): 3; Total (for six wkts. in 20 overs): 154.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-27 (Smith, 2.4 overs), 2-31 (Buttler, 3.1), 3-31 (Samson, 4.1), 4-70 (Uthappa, 10.1), 5-105 (Parag, 15.5), 6-114 (Lomror, 16.4). Toss: Royals.

RCB BOWLING
Udana 4-0-41-2, Washington 4-0-20-0, Saini 4-1-37-1, Chahal

4-0-24-3, Zampa 3-0-27-0, Dube 1-0-4-0.

ROYAL CHALLENGERS

Devdutt Padikkal b Archer 63 (45b, 6x4, 1x6), Aaron Finch lbw b Shreyas 8 (7b, 2x4), Virat Kohli (not out) 72 (53b, 7x4, 2x6), AB de Villiers (not out) 12 (10b, 1x4); Extras (b-1, w-2): 3; Total (for two wkts. in 19.1 overs): 158.

FALL OF WICKETS

1-25 (Finch, 2.3), 2-124 (Padikkal, 15.5). **ROYALS BOWLING**
Archer 4-0-18-1, Unadkat 3-0-31-0, Shreyas 4-0-27-1, Tom Curran 3-0-40-0, Tewatia 4-0-28-0, Parag 1-0-13-0.

Toss: Royals.

Man-of-the-Match: Chahal.

RCB won by eight wickets with five balls to spare.

Mi has the edge over SRH

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

SHARJAH

Boasting an explosive batting line-up that complements effective death-bowling, Mumbai Indians will have the edge in the match against Sunrisers Hyderabad here on Sunday.



Suryakumar Yadav. ■ BCCI/IPL

Adding to SRH's concerns were the doubts over lead seamer Bhuvneshwar Kumar's participation. Bhuvneshwar picked up an injury on Friday night and was unable to complete his final over against Chennai Super Kings.

Winning combination
Mumbai Indians, having humbled a strong Kings XI Punjab in the last game, is unlikely to make any changes to the winning combination.

The biggest positive for Mumbai is that its middle-order has finally delivered with

run win over CSK. The team would be hoping that skipper David Warner, Jonny Bairstow and Manish Pandey are among the runs again.

Kane Williamson also is a certainty, given his ability to take the innings deep and hold one end up.

If Bhuvneshwar misses out, T. Natarajan, Khaleel Ahmed and Rashid Khan will have their task cut out.

CSK will play Bulgarian 18th seed Grigor Dimitrov, who also went through when Roberto Carballés Baena of Spain pulled out after losing the first two sets 6-1, 6-3.

The 33-year-old was rarely extended by his 153rd-ranked opponent and even found time to help out with court sweeping duties when the match was interrupted by rain.

Earlier, German qualifier Daniel Altmaier, ranked 186th in the world, bundled out Italian seventh seed Matteo Berrettini with a comprehensive 6-2, 7-6(5), 6-4 victory.

In the fourth round, Altmaier will meet US Open semifinal

Chilwell pulls the strings for Chelsea

Calvert-Lewin's scoring streak and Everton's winning run continue

EURO LEAGUES

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LONDON

Ben Chilwell scored his first Chelsea goal as the defender's dynamic display on his Premier League debut for the Blues inspired a 4-0 thrashing of Crystal Palace on Saturday.

Later Dominic Calvert-Lewin became Everton's first player to score in the opening four matches of a Premier League season as it beat Brighton 4-2 on Saturday to keep its perfect start intact.

The result left Everton top of the standings on a maximum 12 points from four games.

Stubborn defence

It was Chilwell efforts that broke down Palace's stubborn defence at Stamford Bridge.

Chilwell's thumping finish put Chelsea ahead soon after half-time and he provided the assist for Kurt Zouma's header as the Blues doubled their lead.

Jorginho added a pair of late penalties for Chelsea to complete the rout, although the second caused some angst for Tammy Abraham as the Blues striker argued



Virtuoso performance: Ben Chilwell celebrates after his thunder strike set Chelsea on course to a big win. ■ AP

with Cesar Azpilicueta about who should take it before losing the heated debate with his captain.

The results:

Premier League: Chelsea 4 (Chilwell 50, Zouma 66, Jorginho 78-pen, 82-pen) bt Crystal Palace 0; Everton 4 (Calvert-Lewin 16, Mina 45+2, Rodriguez

52, 70) bt Brighton 2 (Maupay 41, Bissouma 90).

Serie A: Sassuolo 4 (Berardi 19, Caputo 58-pen, 85, Locatelli 90+3) bt Crotone 1 (Simy 49-pen).

LaLiga: Real Valladolid 1 (Villa 37) lost to Eibar 2 (Burgos 29-pen, K. Rodriguez 90); Atletico Madrid 0 drew with Villarreal 0.

Bundesliga: Dortmund 4 (Haaland 31, 66, Can 47, Passlack 90+2) bt Freiburg 0; Eintracht Frankfurt 2 (Kamada 54, Dost 71) bt Hoffenheim 1 (Kramaric 18).

Cologne 1 (Rehbecaj 84) lost to M'Gladbach 3 (Plea 14, Lainer 16, Stindl 56-pen); Werder Bremen 1 (Bittencourt 27) bt Arminia Bielefeld 0; VfB Stuttgart 1 (Kalajdzic 76) drew with Bayer Leverkusen 1 (Schick 7).

Friday: **Serie A:** Fiorentina 1 (Vlahovic 72) lost to Sampdoria 2 (Quagliarella 43-pen, Verre 83).

Bundesliga: Union Berlin 4 (M. Kruse 13, Ingvarsen 49, Friedrich 63, Pohjanpalo 64) bt Mainz 0 0.

Stokes arrives in UAE today

IPL 2020

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
DUBAI

All-rounder Ben Stokes arrives in the UAE on Sunday and will join his side Rajasthan Royals after a six-day quarantine period.

Stokes missed the initial matches as he was in New Zealand to be with his ailing father Ged. The 29-year-old had left for Christchurch in the

middle of the Test series against Pakistan in August after his father, a former All Blacks International, was diagnosed with brain cancer.

The franchise also tweeted a picture of Stokes on his way to the UAE. The England all-rounder had earlier put up photographs of him with his family on Instagram with the caption "goodbyes never get easier".



Saying goodbye: Ben Stokes with his family in New Zealand. ■ INSTAGRAM/STOKESY

Warner impressed with Garg, Abhishek and Samad

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM
HYDERABAD

Sunrisers Hyderabad captain David Warner said on Friday it was nice to see youngsters back themselves after his team defeated Chennai Super Kings.

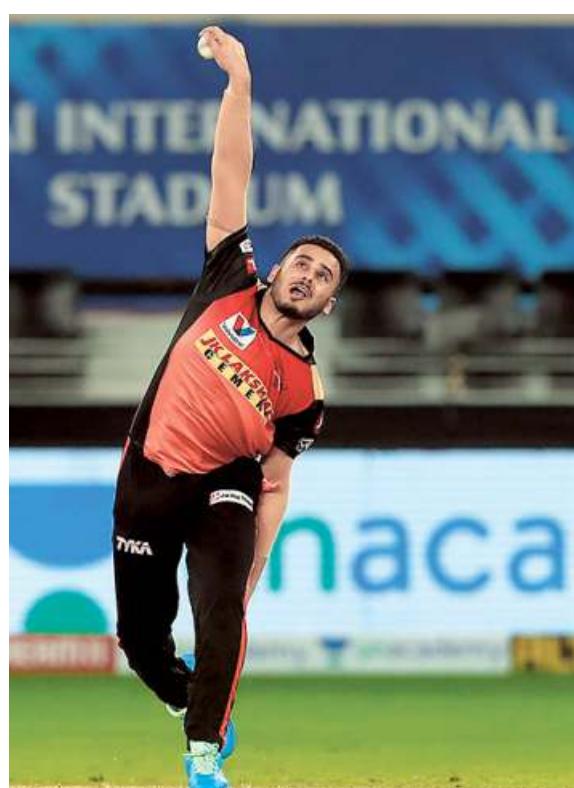
On the fighting partnership of 77 between Priyam Garg and Abhishek Sharma for the fifth wicket, Warner said, "I asked them what was a good score and they said 150 and we got 164."

"These guys assessed the conditions and played really well."

Warner said he had to back 18-year-old Abdul Samad in the final over when they had to defend 27 runs.

"I had no option. We tried to kill the game in the 19th over. Could have given it to Abhishek but Samad, with his height, had to bowl the last one," he said.

Garg said his confidence had grown after the knock. "The plan was to play my shots and their bowling helped," he said. "There was positive energy on the field after such an innings" he said. "I felt very good in



Advantage: Abdul Samad's height prompted Warner to give him the final over against CSK, said the SRH skipper. ■ BCCI/IPL

there, because it was a big stage with the senior players.

"I wasn't thinking too much, just played my natu-

ral game," he said.

"I think the best thing is the team management backed me after I failed in the first game."

Kishan seems to have come of age

The Mumbai Indian batsman says he has worked on his off-side play

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

have finally come of age.

The left-handed batsman has given indications of having learnt to play according to the situation.

"I was not good at playing shots through covers and all but I have worked a lot this off season and if I get the ball over there, I will go for it because it is something that every team plans for you,"

Kishan said ahead of Mumbai Indians' weekend clash against Sunrisers.

Practice is key

"They have meetings before the match, they know what is the weak spot and where they have to bowl to us, but it is important for us to practise about that in the off-season."

Kishan admitted that being around the likes of Kieron Pollard and Hardik Pandya has helped him learn how to peg a bowler back and rotate strike but hoped that the smaller boundaries at Sharjah would mean boundaries will continue to be higher on Sunday.



Ishan Kishan. ■ BCCI/IPL

Encore by James & Davis

Combine for 65 points as Lakers take a 2-0 lead over Miami Heat

NBA FINALS

AGENCE FRANCE PRESSE
MIAMI

LeBron James and Anthony Davis delivered a fearsome one-two punch for Los Angeles on Friday, sparking more memories of Lakers legends Shaquille O'Neal and Kobe Bryant.

James and Davis combined for 65 points in the Lakers' 124-114 victory over the Heat, which put Los Angeles halfway to victory in the best-of-seven cham-

pionship series. They are the first Lakers duo to score 60 points in a Finals game since O'Neal and Bryant achieved the feat in 2002.

James recalled watching the Kobe-Shaq pairing when he was a high school star.

James said that his and Davis's roles in the team can't be precisely compared to those of Shaq and Kobe.

Davis agreed that any likeness was more to do with attitude than style of play.

The result: Heat 114 (Butler 25, Olynyk 24) lost to Lakers 124 (James 33, Davis 32). Lakers 2-0.



Dominant show: LeBron James logged 33 points for Lakers. ■ AP

CM YK

DELHI THE HINDU
SUNDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2020

United needs to win

No more moaning: Spurs' Mourinho

AGENCIES
LONDON

Manchester United needs a response on the pitch when Jose Mourinho returns to Old Trafford as Tottenham manager on Sunday to calm the unease of supporters frustrated by a lack of movement in the transfer market.

Dutch international midfielder Donny Van de Beek is the only player United has signed in the transfer window so far with Monday's deadline leaving precious little time for more deals to be concluded.

The outcry for new players has not been quieted by United's poor start to the Premier League season.

A 3-1 home defeat by Crystal Palace dampened optimism of a title challenge this season before it escaped a 3-2 victory at Brighton last weekend after the host hit the woodwork five times.

Failure to beat a Spurs side playing its fourth game in eight days this weekend will have alarm bells ringing that United risks going backwards this season.

Mourinho, meanwhile, has said he has already moaned enough about the club's packed fixture list and will not use it as an excuse



Jose Mourinho. ■ REUTERS

against United Sunday.

Eric Dier, Toby Alderweireld and Steven Bergwijn have all started twice in 48 hours this week, while United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer fielded a much-changed lineup for Wednesday's League Cup victory at Brighton.

"It's the last one, the last match," he told a news conference on Friday. "I don't want to moan. I moaned enough and I moaned with real things on my hands and I don't think anyone disagreed with me, even when I was moaning about the situation."

Mourinho said forward Son Heung-min could play a part at Old Trafford after the South Korean recovered from a hamstring injury, which was not as bad as first feared.

TV PICKS

Premier League: SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 4.30 p.m., 6.30 p.m., 9 p.m. & 11.45 p.m.
Serie A: Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 4 p.m., 6.30 p.m., 9.30 p.m. & 12.15 a.m. (Monday)
Giro d'Italia: Eurosport (SD & HD), 4.30 p.m.
PGA Tour: Eurosport (SD & HD), 1.30 a.m. (Monday)

IN BRIEF



Liverpool's Sadio Mane tests corona positive

LIVERPOOL
Liverpool forward Sadio Mane has become the second player to contract the coronavirus at the English Premier League champion club this week. "I've been tested positive but I am feeling good and not showing heavy symptoms," Mane wrote on Instagram on Friday. Liverpool described Mane's symptoms as minor and said he was in good health overall. AP

4 birdies in a row raises Shubhankar to T-13

NORTH BERWICK (SCOTLAND)
Shubhankar Sharma finished his second round at the ASI Scottish Open with four birdies in a row to rise to tied 13th. He carded four-under 67, only his second round in the 60s in more than two months. Meanwhile, Gaganjeet Bhullar missed his second straight cut. Australian Lucas Herbert added 65 to his opening 66 to lead at 11-under. PTI

Lahiri stays T-7, five behind leader Bradley

JACKSON (MISSISSIPPI)
Anirban Lahiri returned a two-under 70 in windy conditions in the second round of the Sanderson Farms Championship. Lahiri, however, slipped to five shots behind leader Keegan Bradley, who shot a brilliant 65 to get to 13-under and lead by two strokes. J.T. Poston and Charley Hoffman share second. PTI



Unlikely NBA will pause for Olympics: Silver

Miami
NBA commissioner Adam Silver said on Friday he thinks it is unlikely the league will pause a delayed 2021 season to allow players to compete in the postponed Tokyo Olympics. "We'll consider it," Silver said. "I think it's unlikely at the end of the day that if we start late that we would stop for the Olympics." AFP

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