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Indian Blade Runner



**Gul  
Panag**

Actor, Entrepreneur &  
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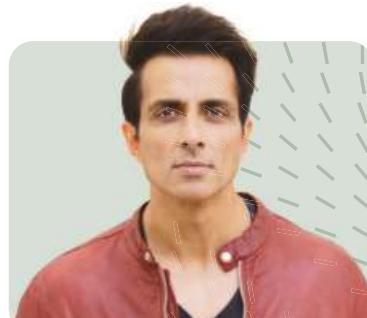
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# UNRELENTING RISE

COVID-19 cases in India are growing at the fastest pace in the world and the country's case tally in August is the highest. Among the States, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh recorded around 10,000 infections daily on average in the last week. By Naresh Singaravelu and Sumanth Sen

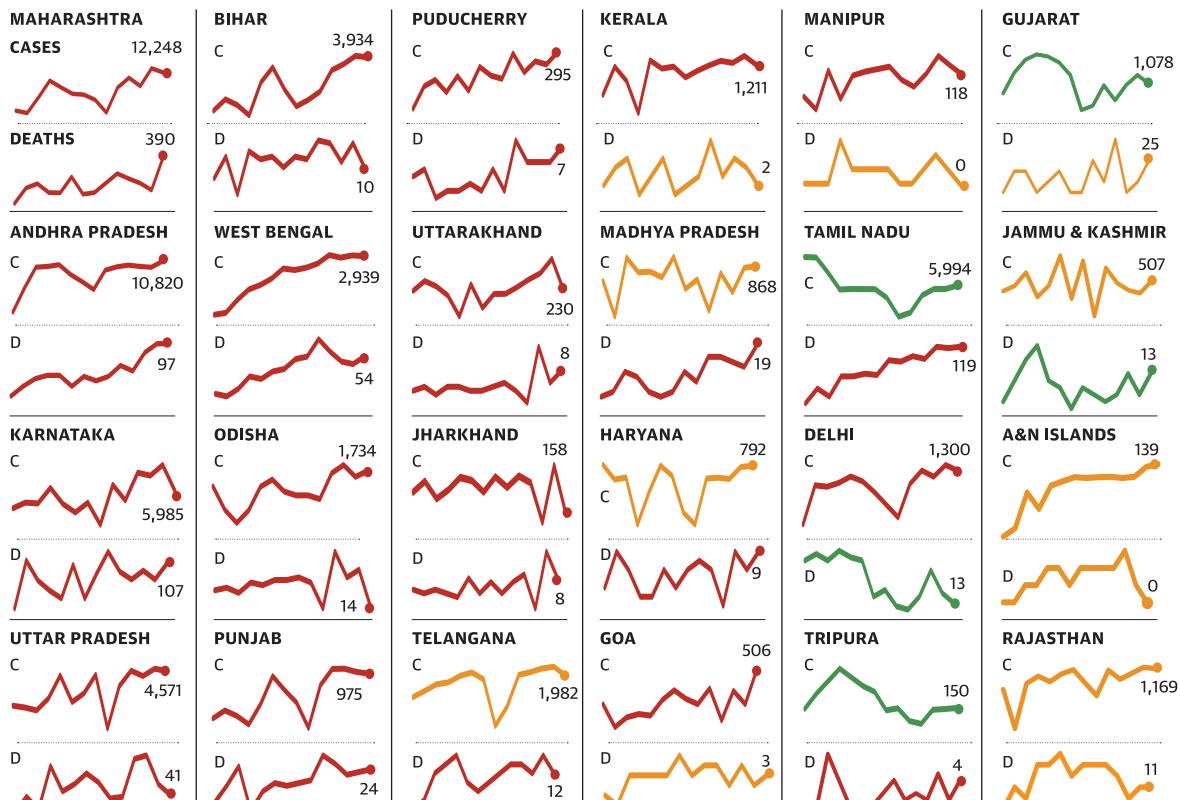
## Viral tracker

With 1,012 deaths recorded on Sunday, India's COVID-19 toll stood at 44,475. As many as 61,055 cases were recorded on the day, taking the tally to 22,13,005.

A total of 15,31,788 people have recovered. This data is based on State Health Department releases on Sunday as of 10.30 p.m.



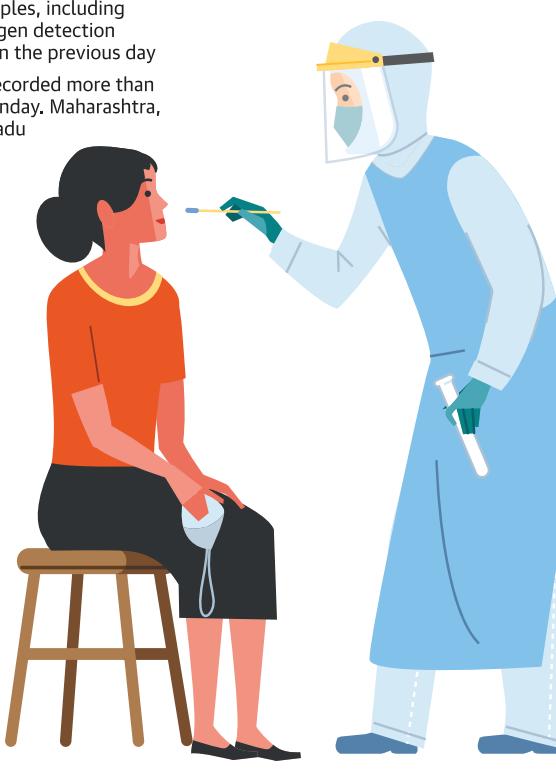
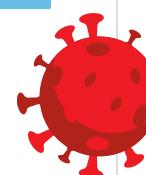
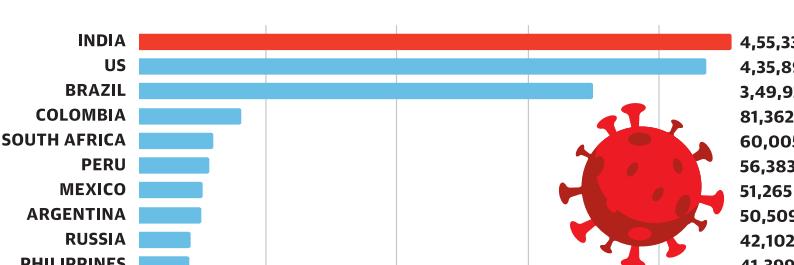
The graphs depict the new cases and deaths in the last 14 days in select States. If average cases/deaths in the last seven days are higher than the previous seven days, then cases/deaths are rising ; if they are lower, then dropping ; if they are similar, then showing a mixed trend in that State



## Most cases in August

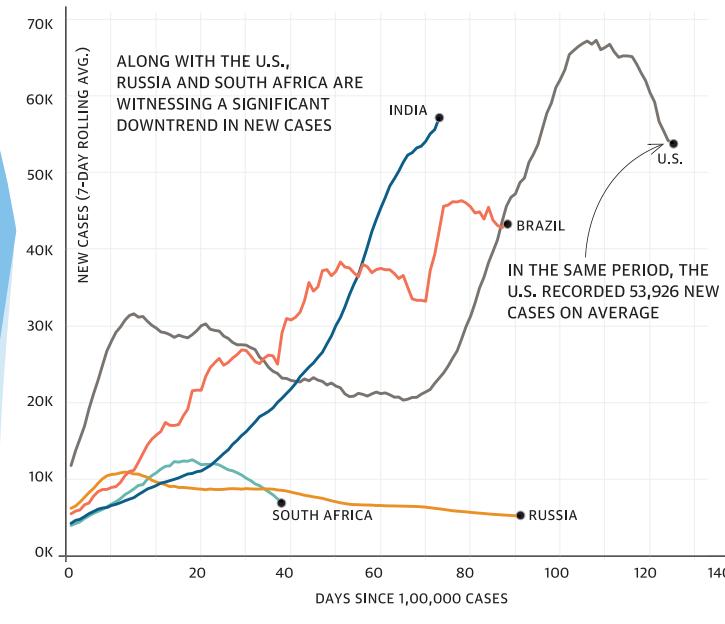
Between August 1 and August 8, India recorded 4,55,330 cases, the highest in the world. The U.S. recorded the second-highest infections in the same period (4,35,891)

Source: Johns Hopkins University, Our World in Data. \*Days taken for cases to double in last seven days

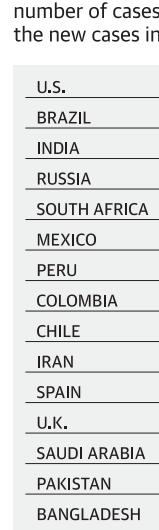


## Exponential growth

The chart shows the seven-day rolling average of new cases recorded in the five countries with the most infections. Cases in India are growing faster than any other country in the world. Between August 2 and August 8, India recorded 57,152 new cases on average



**Where India stands** The chart shows the number of new cases recorded in the 15 countries with the most infections between June 9 and August 8. Each square represents the number of cases registered on that day. The darker the colour, higher the new cases in the country



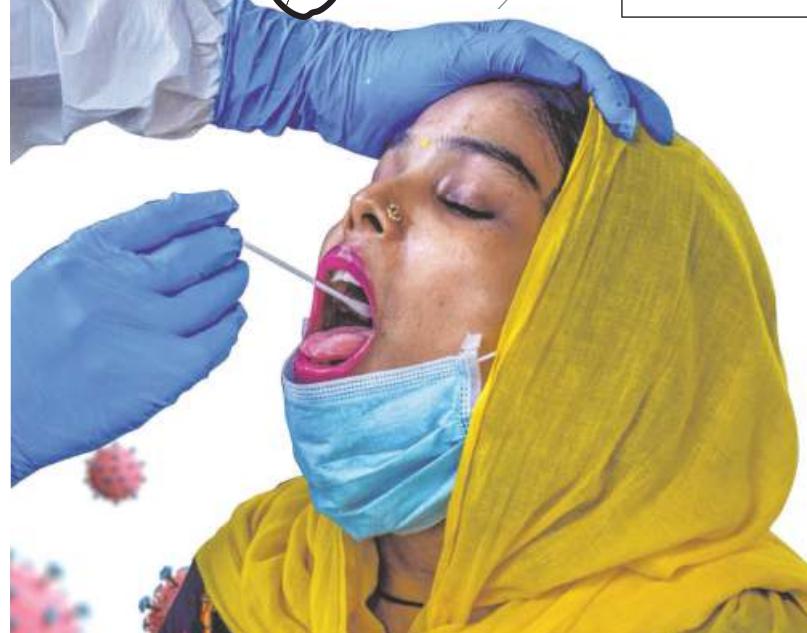
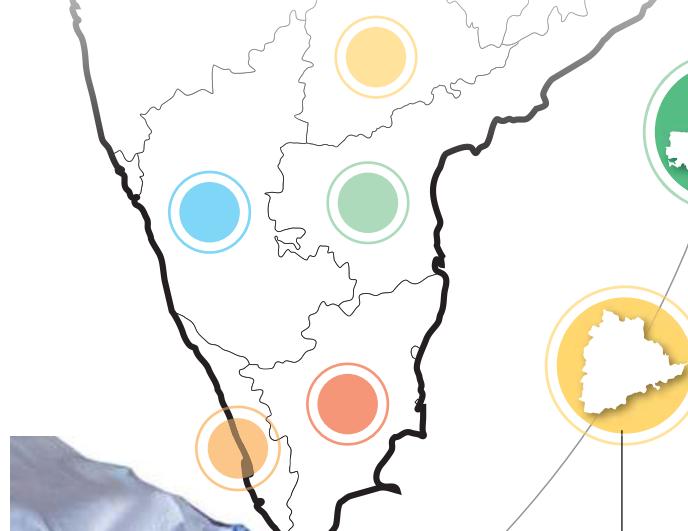
CASES	7-DAY ROLLING AVERAGE OF NEW CASES	DEATHS	7-DAY ROLLING AVERAGE OF DEATHS	TESTS PER MILLION	DOUBLING TIME*
49,97,929	53,926	1,62,423	1,139	1,80,218	60.15
30,12,412	43,505	1,00,477	988	11,933	40.56
21,51,950	57,152	43,463	865	17,805	23.58
8,80,563	5,239	14,827	113	2,05,833	115.16
5,53,188	7,128	10,210	294	53,109	51.79
4,75,902	5,958	52,006	648	7,485	50.83
4,63,875	8,055	20,649	233	11,426	47.63
3,76,870	10,098	12,540	316	32,624	24.1
3,71,023	1,909	10,011	68	92,101	135.67
3,24,692	2,563	18,264	183	30,801	85.29
3,14,362	3,691	28,503	8	99,508	49.31
3,11,461	843	46,651	53	1,50,796	247.57
2,87,262	1,398	3,130	35	1,04,166	139.22
2,83,487	740	6,068	17	9,413	318.91
2,55,113	2,179	3,365	33	7,294	69.11

GRAPHIC: B.SRINIVASAN AND KARTHIK S.T.

## When COVID-19 forced governments to step up

With the pandemic bringing unprecedented hard times for the people, governments have had to step up and do much more than they would normally deliver. With much of normal life disrupted due to lockdowns that were imposed with the idea of slowing the transmission of the virus, this intervention from the state became necessary. The governments also had to upgrade health infrastructure in their States, as it soon became obvious that the existing health facilities were going to be woefully inadequate.

Here is a look at what the governments of the southern states – Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Kerala, Andhra Pradesh and Telengana – did in order to be of service to the people during the continuing reign of the SARS-CoV-2 virus. This list is not exhaustive; there are multiple schemes being evolved to cater to the emergency situations that arise from time to time.



### TAMIL NADU

Free rations (rice and other commodities from April to July/additional rice only until November) to card holders, migrant workers, those outside PDS network & NGOs  
 Provision of free meals through Amma Canteens  
 Quarantine Allowance or cash support ₹1,000 - ration cardholders and members of welfare boards such as construction workers & barbers

### KERALA

• Free ration and grocery kits to all ration card holders (88 lakh families) in April and July  
 • Community kitchens opened by local bodies and Kudumbashree. Food provided free-of-cost to those in home quarantine as well as to the public on call  
 • All welfare pensions provided in two tranches in April and July. More than 50 lakh beneficiaries across various categories. Allocation of ₹1,000 each through welfare boards to

11 lakh members. One-time payment of ₹1000 to the deserving, who are not part of any pension scheme  
• ₹58.5 crores allocated to NORKA (Department for Non Resident Keralites Affairs) for payment of ₹5,000 each to expats who lost jobs or are unable to return to various countries  
• Up to 50% reduction in the additional power charge incurred by

households during the lockdown period  
• Moratorium on all pending taxes, rents and dues for shops and buildings owned by local bodies. Tax concession of one-third of quarterly tax payable by private bus owners (around ₹10,000 concession per bus). Tax payment deadline extended  
• Remuneration of National Health Mission employees, on contract and daily basis, increased. Risk allowance of 25% for nurses and other health workers

### KARNATAKA

• ₹2,272 crore provided as relief for workers of unorganized sector, flower, fruit and vegetable growers, weavers, taxi/ auto drivers, hairdressers, laundrymen, and leather craftsmen  
• Under PM Kisan Samman Yojana an additional ₹4,000 each has been provided to 50 lakh farmers  
• Fixed charge in electricity bills of small entrepreneurs waived off  
• ₹60-cr loan waived off for 23,507 fishermen, especially fisherwomen loans up to ₹50,000 from commercial banks  
• Loans worth ₹98-cr from cooperative banks have been waived off benefiting 29,631 weavers  
• Financial aid of ₹2,000 each has been provided to handloom weavers  
• Adequate food supply and rations at free of cost was ensured for

### HEALTHCARE

Covid hospitals - 29 (All Govt)  
Private hospitals willing to admit Covid patients - 70  
Covid beds (Govt) - 8,775  
ICU beds - 871  
Ventilators - 532  
Covid beds (private hospitals) - 3,400  
ICU beds - 176  
HCU beds - 129

### TELANGANA

• The government announced a package of close to ₹2,500 crore for providing free rice and cash to below poverty line families holding the white ration cards. 12 kg rice per head to 87.4 lakh families and a cash component of ₹1,500 each to these families for purchase of other essentials including pulses, for two months - April and May  
• Nearly ₹100 crore spent on providing 10 kg rice and ₹500 cash each to the families of migrants who did not possess a BPL card

• In addition, card portability, enabling people to draw their monthly quota of essentials irrespective of their location, had been introduced to provide ease to the BPL families  
• Decreed that property owners should not demand rent for three months effective March this year  
• Strict warning issued to managements of schools against any attempts to increase fee for the academic year 2020-21

### MEDICAL FACILITIES

Total no. of testing facilities - 362  
Government - 339  
Private - 23  
1) RT-PCR/CBNAAT/TRUE-NAT testing centres in Telangana  
Government - 16  
Private - 23  
2) Rapid Antigen Test centres Govt. - 323  
Total number of COVID-19 hospitals in Telangana - 147  
Government hospitals - 56  
Private hospitals - 91

### ANDHRA PRADESH

• Free rations (rice and other commodities from April to July/additional rice only until November) to card holders in eight phases. Rice and other pulses distributed  
• Dry ration provided to school students of day scholars and hostels at their door steps

• ₹1000 financial aid provided to all eligible families during lockdown

• Provision of free meals through Amma Canteens

• COVID allowance or cash support ₹2,000 being provided to patients upon recovery

• ₹15,000 financial aid announced for kin of persons who succumb to COVID-19.

• Directive to private schools not to collect fee before the commencement of the new academic year. Managements were also asked to give option for payment of fee in instalments.

• Deferment of rent payment by tenants to property owners

### MEDICAL FACILITIES

Total no. of testing facilities - 74  
Government - 65  
Private - 9  
Total no. of COVID-19 hospitals in AP - 138  
Government hospitals - 60  
Private hospitals - 78  
Total number of COVID-19 beds in government hospitals in Andhra Pradesh: 38,607  
Total number of ICU beds available in COVID-19 hospitals: 4,214  
Total number of beds with oxygen supply lines in COVID-19 hospitals: 17,232  
Total number of ventilators available in the State - 1,620  
Free COVID-19 treatment under Aarogyasri for card holders in government and private hospitals. (Inputs from Tharun Boda)





PM Narendra Modi launches financing scheme for agriculture  
page 9



Heed voice of people to save democracy, Gehlot tells MLAs  
page 9



Mahinda Rajapaksa sworn in as Sri Lankan PM after landslide win  
page 12



Barcelona to meet Bayern in Champions League quarterfinals  
page 14

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## NEARBY



### COVID-19 situation under control: Kejriwal

NEW DELHI  
Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said the COVID-19 situation in the Capital is under control and all the parameters are looking good. "However, novel coronavirus is an unpredictable pandemic and no one knows what might happen tomorrow," he said.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

### 11 members of Pak. Hindu family found dead

JODHPUR  
Eleven members of a family of Pakistani Hindu migrants were found dead at a farm in Jodhpur district on Sunday, police said. Kewal Ram, 35, of the family, however, was found alive outside their hut, an officer said.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 9

EDUCATIONPLUS ▶ PAGE 11

## CISF to probe 'Are you Indian?' taunt at MP

Move follows Kanimozhi's complaint

B. KOLAPPAN  
CHENNAI

The Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) on Sunday ordered an inquiry into DMK MP Kanimozhi's complaint that a woman officer of the paramilitary agency at the Chennai airport had asked her if she was an Indian, after coming to know that she couldn't speak in Hindi.

"It would not have been an issue had the incident taken place in Delhi. Surprisingly, it occurred at Chennai airport," Ms. Kanimozhi told *The Hindu*.

Soon after the incident, which occurred while the

## 10 killed in blaze at COVID-19 care facility in Vijayawada

20 patients suffer burns; CM announces ₹50 lakh each to kin of deceased

STAFF REPORTER  
VIJAYAWADA

Ten patients died and another 20 suffered burns after a fire broke out at a private COVID-19 care centre in Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, early on Sunday.

The fire broke out around 5 a.m. on the ground and first floors of Hotel Swarna Palace, which was leased by Ramesh Hospitals as a COVID care centre. There are about 40 rooms in the hotel, and patients were undergoing treatment in 30.

Director General of Disaster Response and Fire Services Department Md. Ahsan Raza said one patient was charred to death and nine had died of asphyxiation. Three women were among the victims.

"According to available information, 30 patients and



Tragic hour: NDRF personnel shifting a body from the COVID-19 care centre in Vijayawada on Sunday. ■ K.V.S. GIRI

10 hospital staff were in the hotel-turned-quarantine centre. The police, the NDRF and fire services personnel rescued 28 patients, and shifted 10 bodies to the Government General Hospital mortuary. The particulars of two patients are not known,"

said Police Commissioner B. Srinivasulu.

One person working at the hotel suffered severe injuries after he jumped out a window on the first floor to escape the blaze. A criminal case under Sections 304 (2) and 308 of IPC has been re-

gistered against the management of Hotel Swarna Palace and Ramesh Hospitals.

The State government set up two committees to conduct a probe into the exact cause of the fire and other lapses that led to the tragedy.

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy announced ex gratia of ₹50 lakh each to the next of kin of the deceased.

The State government said negligence on the part of the hospital management in running the Covid centre in the hotel since mid-July had been *prima facie* established.

On August 6, in a similar incident, eight COVID-19 patients were killed in a fire at Shrey Hospital in Gujarat's capital Ahmedabad.

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MORE REPORTS ▶ PAGE 8

## Defence Ministry to impose import embargo on 101 items

Aim is to boost indigenous production, says Rajnath Singh

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Defence Ministry will "introduce import embargo on 101 items beyond given timeline to boost indigenisation of defence production", Defence Minister Rajnath Singh announced through a series of tweets on Sunday.

Speaking at a function later in the day, he said the government intends to reach a turnover of \$25 billion through indigenously manufactured defence products and also expects to export products worth \$5 billion.

"Government has also decided that in any government contract over ₹200 crore, no foreign company can participate in the tendering process... We will help Indian defence manufacturers... This year ₹52,000 crore items [are] to

be bought only from Indian

companies," Mr. Singh said in an online interaction.

"In his address to the nation on August 15, Prime Minister Narendra Modi will present the outline for a self-reliant India," he added.

### LAC stand-off

The policy change comes in the wake of Chinese transgressions and the build-up along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh. China has refused to pull back from several areas, where it

has massed troops since May.

"The Ministry of Defence is now ready for a big push to #AtmanirbharBharat initiative... The Ministry has prepared a list of 101 items for which there would be an embargo on the import beyond the timeline indicated against them... This is a big step towards self-reliance in defence. #AtmanirbharBharat," Mr. Singh tweeted.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## Four BJP leaders quit in Kashmir

Decision after spate of attacks, killings of panchayat members in past one week

VIJAYA SINGH  
NEW DELHI

Leaders of the BJP in the Kashmir Valley announced their resignations on social media after a spate of attacks and killing of panchayat members in the past one week.

On Sunday, BJP worker Abdul Hamid Najjar was shot at by suspected terrorists in Budgam district. Hours later, four leaders of the BJP – Avtar Krishen, Imran Ahmad Parray, Wali Mohammad Bhat and Sameer Ahmad Shah – circulated pictures of their handwritten letters on social media that they have "no contact with the BJP".

On August 6, Sajad Ahmad Khanday, a sarpanch affiliated with the BJP, was killed by alleged terrorists in Kulgam. On August 4, another panchayat member, Arif Ahmad, was critically wounded in an attack.

Shafiq Mir, Chairman of the All Jammu and Kashmir Panchayat Conference, said



A security man posted at an encounter site near Kulgam on Sunday. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

the government was not serious about the safety and security of sarpanches and panches and it did not have a plan for them. He said many members were not able to visit the villages and were forced to live in police accommodations.

"The panchayat members are the only elected representatives in Jammu and Kashmir right now who are playing the role of a bridge between the people and the government. The security agencies do not even come to know who will come under attack next," Mr. Mir said on phone from Kashmir.

The panchayat elections were held in the former State

in 2018 and as many as 12,776 sarpanch and panch seats, particularly in south Kashmir, are still vacant as elections could not be held due to security concerns then.

### Modi's assurance

Mr. Mir said the members agreed to fight the elections on a personal assurance given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He said 20 panchayat members had been killed since 2012. "We are not able to work. We plan to meet the PM again if the need arises. We had shared our concerns with former Lieutenant Governor G.C. Murmu few days ago but then he was replaced."

Despite incessant rain and mist hampering the search operations in this remote hilly terrain in Kerala, efforts to drain water from the area began on Sunday. Around 200 members of the

## Idukki landslip toll goes up to 43, many still missing

Drones, dog squad deployed in search

GIJU K. RAMAN  
IDUKKI

With the recovery of 17 more bodies on Sunday, the number of fatalities due to Thursday's landslip that buried the housing quarters of tea estate workers in Pettimudy in Idukki has gone up to 43. According to officials, 23 persons are still missing, including six Forest Department staff who were staying with the workers.

The deployment of the dog squad of the district police in the search operation helped trace some victims. Drones were also used. Eight bodies were found in a nearby stream into which the gushing waters from the landslip poured in.

National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) searched the nearly three-acre site, which is covered by debris. Seven earthmovers were engaged for the search operation, but manoeuvring them on the waterlogged terrain is proving to be difficult.

The deployment of the dog squad of the district police in the search operation helped trace some victims. Drones were also used. Eight bodies were found in a nearby stream into which the gushing waters from the landslip poured in.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

ANOTHER REPORT ▶ PAGE 8

## Opposition pulls out all stops to woo U.P.'s Brahmins

SP, BSP and Cong. promise statues of warrior hero Parshuram in the run-up to 2022 Assembly polls

OMAR RASHID  
LUCKNOW

The 2022 Assembly elections in Uttar Pradesh are not yet in sight but Opposition parties have already started wooing the Brahmin community through caste symbols, in particular Parshuram, the axe-wielding warrior believed by the Hindus to be the sixth avatar of Lord Vishnu.

If the Samajwadi Party has announced it would build a 108-foot-tall statue of Parshuram in Lucknow, Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati on Sunday said its version of a

Parshuram statue, to be built if it came back to power, would be much more grand than the SP's.

Parshuram was a "special symbol of Brahmin faith and self-esteem", the four-time former Chief Minister said.

This is not the first time Ms. Mayawati has tried to woo Brahmins through symbolism or representation. However, her latest overture towards the community comes in the wake of the Bikru ambush and subsequent killing of accused Vikas Dubey, a Brahmin, in an alleged encounter. A section of Brah-



■ FILE PHOTO.

min leaders in U.P. and social media users had wondered if the community was being targeted, fuelling a perception of discontent among them.

Since the Kampur episode in July, Opposition parties have tried to link it with other incidents where Brahmins have been targeted or killed under the BJP government, headed by Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, a Thakur.

Though they constitute just around 9% of the State's population, as per the last caste census in 1931, Brahmins punch way above their weight in politics due to their strong social network and hold key positions in bureaucracy, economy, judiciary and media.

SP national secretary Abh-

ishek Mishra said a statue of Parshuram would be built in Lucknow under the banner of the Bhagwan Parshuram Chetna Peeth.

The Congress, led by former Union Minister Jitin Prasada, has also launched a campaign to woo the Brahmins. Under the Brahmin Chetna Parishad, Mr. Prasada, himself a Brahmin, is highlighting incidents of alleged atrocities and neglect faced by members of the community. This involves underlining the caste of the victims in cases of violent crimes or police cases.

## Mukhtar Ansari's aide shot dead

OMAR RASHID  
LUCKNOW

The U.P. police shot dead an aide of jailed MLA Mukhtar Ansari from Mau in an alleged exchange of fire after the SUV he was purportedly travelling in along with four other suspects crashed into a tree in the early hours of Sunday in Lucknow.

The family of the deceased Rakesh Pandey, however, accused the police of picking him up from home in Lucknow and then killing him. Pandey had been a co-accused in the 2005 murder of then BJP MLA Krishnanand Rai.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 10

## When a marooned troop got a lifeline

Group of 50 monkeys camping in tree canopy near the Tungabhadra rescued



Safe link: Monkeys crossing the Tungabhadra in Karnataka's Davangere district on Sunday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

team then threw a rope, which some bolder simians grabbed. But others balked. Finally, it was a rope ladder snaking its way to the river bank that did the trick. The operation

returned to the trees as it tilted, making them lose balance," District Fire Officer, Davangere, Basava Prabhu Sharma said.

**Food provided**  
The rescue exercise also involved arranging food for the hungry monkeys. With water levels rising, there was apprehension among the authorities whether the monkeys could be saved.

The team stabilised the ladder by tying it to stones and dispersed a crowd on the river bank that was scaring the monkeys, thus aiding their move to safety.

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SUNALINI MATHEW  
NEW DELHI

If you're confused with all the information about what mask to wear, and how COVID-19 is transmitted in the first place (aerosols? surfaces?), you're like most people who have a dozen masks around the house, with no clarity on what works best. Here, doctors give us some gyan.

**Why should I wear a mask when those around me already are?**

If you're late to the game, then know that masks fulfil two purposes: they prevent the transmission of the novel coronavirus (and other pathogens – viruses and bacteria) from you (if you have it), via little droplets when you breathe hard, speak, sneeze, cough, or sing. They also prevent the same from other people. Over 120 countries have asked citizens to wear masks in public spaces according to Oxford University's news piece put out in July.

Even if everyone around you is wearing a mask, the World Health Organization (WHO) has not ruled out aerosol transmission in closed settings “particularly in these indoor locations where there are crowded and inadequately ventilated spaces where infected persons spend long periods of time with others.” Look at them as personal protective equipment if you’re going to work in an air-conditioned office with several people, for instance, even if you’re keeping a metre-long distance.

**What is N95 mask?**

The ideal is the respirator mask (N100, N99, N95), designed for poultry cleaning or logging – high virus or dust loaded environments. It was meant to be worn for no longer than eight hours, to protect the wearer.

The N stands for non-oil, meaning an industry can choose this if there is no oil present in the air. There are also R and P masks, where R means oil is present; P is when oil is present.

The number stands for the expectation that the filter will trap 95% particles. So an N95 mask “filters at least 95% of airborne particles but is not resistant to oil,” as per the Centers for Disease Control, US. These are certifications provided by Ameri-

**They may confuse face-recognition software and cause unknown people to greet you on an evening walk, but face masks are now as necessary as your underwear**

ca's National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). Reputed companies will generally say on their packaging that they are NIOSH certified. Do check this, as there are several fakes in the market.

KN95 are the Chinese equivalent of the N95. “The salient features of these masks are that they provide a complete seal around the nose and mouth [a gasket fitting that provides no leakage],” says Ambarish Satwik, a vascular and endovascular surgeon in Sir Ganga Ram Hospital. “They also work on the mechanism of electrostatic attraction.” Here, the filter that is fibrous in nature, attracts oppositely charged particles. The masks come with filters that need to be changed periodically – check the box or manual for instructions.

An N95 once used, must be placed in a breathable paper bag (no plastic lining) and worn on the fifth day, as it is believed that if the virus is present, it dies in that time.

**What mask should I wear?**

It all depends on the purpose of the mask. “A surgical mask is meant to prevent infection from wearer to people around,” says Suresh Munuswamy, Programme Coordinator and Associate Professor, Indian Institute of Public Health, in Hyderabad.

These are three-ply, meaning they have three layers. “Make sure the middle layer is a melt blown micro/nano fibre layer, and wear it with the folds between the pleats facing downwards and on the outside, with the nose clip on the nose [if there's one],” says Dr. Satwik, who uses them on his run, because of the breathability (it doesn't cause hypoxia – oxygen deprivation).

“As a rule though, it's best not to wear a mask at all when you're running, but then make sure there's no one around.”

They are one-time-use and can be used for a prolonged period of time, about 4-6 hours, but never reused. If they are wet

with sweat or moisture, they must be replaced. “Dispose of it by wrapping it in a tissue paper and throwing it in the garbage, if you don't have COVID-19,” says Dr. Satwik.

Do remember though that these are plastic derivatives and are adding to environment pollution, so you may want to keep these to the minimum.

Dr. Munuswamy says it isn't necessary for people working from home with limited interaction with other people to wear a respirator mask. “If you're taking care of a family member who has COVID-19 or you're going into a high-risk area, do wear one,” says Dr. Satwik.

The third category of masks is cloth that ideally need to be approved by the South India Textile Research Association (SITRA) that offers third-party testing and has a government accredited, NABL-

approved laboratory.

**Are these available?**

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layer, and material from an old cotton T-shirt on the inside, would be the closest description to this,” says Sangeeta Sen, a textile designer, from Delhi.

Dr. Munuswamy, who heads PHFI's Hi-RapiD Lab, says that most N95 masks are designed for Caucasian facial features, so in his team's development of a mask for India and Indians, they tweaked the design a little to allow for a broader nose and for the mask to sit slightly away from the face. His mask - a low-cost reusable respirator - has air-intake vents from the sides, with the air being channelled through a matrix. This forces air to bend, and each time the air hits a wall, it deposits some airborne dust and virus particles here, enhancing efficiency and prolonging the role of the replaceable HEPA filter. The mask has been tested in their lab and a research paper

A surgical mask is meant for one-time use, and it's best to avoid a mask with a slit of vent

■ V.V. KRISHNAN

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**What are these anti-viral masks that are being sold?**

These are masks that have a finish of an anti-viral coating, based on nano technology (the science of very tiny particles). The finish often uses metals like silver or copper, and have the ability to kill a virus. Most are tested with a range of two to 24 hours, which means the virus will get killed in that time duration. However, if the kill time is one hour, but you touch your mask before that and then touch your eyes, you are still vulnerable. “These finishes lower the risk, but don't eliminate it,” says Prof Ashwini Agrawal, Dept of Textile and Fibre Engineering, IIT-Delhi, who has developed a silver finish that is currently undergoing testing in a lab abroad. “The problem is that there are very few labs in the world doing this testing, and many individuals are fooling companies into believing they are providing these testing facilities,” he says.

**Can't I just use my dupatta or a handkerchief?**

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# The latecomer's guide to FACE MASKS

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NEW DELHI

If you're confused with all the information about what mask to wear, and how COVID-19 is transmitted in the first place (aerosols? surfaces?), you're like most people who have a dozen masks around the house, with no clarity on what works best. Here, doctors give us some gyan.

**Why should I wear a mask when those around me already are?**

If you're late to the game, then know that masks fulfil two purposes: they prevent the transmission of the novel coronavirus (and other pathogens – viruses and bacteria) from you (if you have it), via little droplets when you breathe hard, speak, sneeze, cough, or sing. They also prevent the same from other people. Over 120 countries have asked citizens to wear masks in public spaces according to Oxford University's news piece put out in July.

Even if everyone around you is wearing a mask, the World Health Organization (WHO) has not ruled out aerosol transmission in closed settings “particularly in these indoor locations where there are crowded and inadequately ventilated spaces where infected persons spend long periods of time with others.” Look at them as personal protective equipment if you’re going to work in an air-conditioned office with several people, for instance, even if you’re keeping a metre-long distance.

**What is N95 mask?**

The ideal is the respirator mask (N100, N99, N95), designed for poultry cleaning or logging – high virus or dust loaded environments. It was meant to be worn for no longer than eight hours, to protect the wearer.

The N stands for non-oil, meaning an industry can choose this if there is no oil present in the air. There are also R and P masks, where R means oil is present; P is when oil is present.

The number stands for the expectation that the filter will trap 95% particles. So an N95 mask “filters at least 95% of airborne particles but is not resistant to oil,” as per the Centers for Disease Control, US. These are certifications provided by Ameri-

with sweat or moisture, they must be replaced. “Dispose of it by wrapping it in a tissue paper and throwing it in the garbage, if you don't have COVID-19,” says Dr. Satwik.

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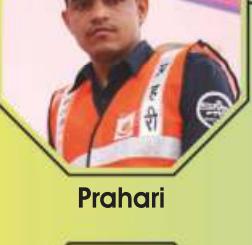


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DP/9244/2020

## AAP gears up for civic body elections

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party's Delhi unit is being reorganised from top to bottom in preparation for the municipal corporation elections, to be held in 2022, said party convener Gopal Rai on Sunday.

Mr. Rai announced appointments of district in-charge, district communications in-charge, and 70 assembly observers. The restructuring has been taking place for the last week and is expected to be completed by August 20, Mr. Rai said, adding that priority was being given to party leaders who had helped out during the Assembly elections and in the pandemic.

In the next phases of the reorganisation, the party will appoint another 70 Assembly in-charge and 272 ward in-charge party members, Mr. Rai said.

Air quality of Delhi-NCR			
Deli	115	Gurugram	142
Ghaziabad	147	Faridabad	158
Noida	149	Greater Noida	129
Good	0-50	Satisfactory	51-100
Poor	101-200	Moderate	201-300</td

## Timings

DELHI

MONDAY, AUG. 10
RISE 05:48 SET 19:05
RISE 23:08 SET 11:29
TUESDAY, AUG. 11
RISE 05:49 SET 19:04
RISE 23:41 SET 12:21
WEDNESDAY, AUG. 12
RISE 05:50 SET 19:03
RISE 00:00 SET 13:16

## Delhi Weather

max min  
Delhi City 35 26  
Safdarjang 35 26  
Palam 34 27Delhi Palam Today  
33°C Spells of light to moderate rain and thunder-shower with cloudy sky and gusty winds would affect.Delhi Palam Tomorrow  
33°C Spells of light to moderate rain and thunder-shower with cloudy sky and gusty winds would affect. Largely comfortable day.© Copyright Skymet Weather 2019  
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## CAIT launches 'China Quit India' campaign

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI  
Traders body – Confederation of All India Traders (CAIT) – on Sunday launched a "China Quit India" campaign, calling for checks on "China's growing footprint in India".

The campaign, which is an extension of its earlier demand to boycott Chinese goods, involved demonstrations at nearly 600 places in different parts of the country, the CAIT said.

With this it appealed to the government to take a check on Chinese imports, investments in Indian companies and start-ups and digital apps. Chinese stake in government projects and construction machinery "should be put under the scanner", the group said. It demanded an "all-round siege" of China and its activities in India.

## COVID-19 situation in Capital under control, asserts Kejriwal

Inaugurating a 200-bed facility, CM said the parameters are looking good in city

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday said that the COVID-19 situation in the Capital is under control and all the parameters in Delhi are looking good.

"The recovery rate is improving, the positivity ratio and death rate are decreasing. However, novel coronavirus is an unpredictable pandemic and no one knows what might happen tomorrow. If the situation goes out of control again, the Delhi government is fully prepared to deal with it," the CM said. He was speaking after inaugurating a hospital in Ambedkar Nagar. The CM said that the hospital will soon have a total capacity of 600 beds. But 200 beds with



The hospital in Ambedkar Nagar that was inaugurated on Sunday. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

oxygen supply have been made available to treat COVID-19 patients.

He said that the construction of the hospital began in 2013 as there was no large hospital in Ambedkar Nagar and there was a demand

from the people.

"The 200 beds which will be made operational from today [Sunday] will be a huge help in the treatment of COVID-19 patients. Oxygen is available on all beds as it is the primary require-

ment in their treatment," Mr. Kejriwal said. He said he hoped the 200 beds will remain unused until the entire hospital becomes fully functional.

The hospital was not scheduled to begin for a few more months but 200 beds were inaugurated as the government was making every effort to improve the health infrastructure of the city. "I want to thank and congratulate engineers, doctors and all the people for their efforts in making this hospital available," Mr. Kejriwal said.

This is the second hospital he has inaugurated during the pandemic. On July 25, Mr. Kejriwal had inaugurated a 450-bed hospital in Burari which will eventually have a total of 700 beds.

## Cases rising as many from outside getting tested: Jain

1,300 new cases reported in Capital

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Capital recorded 1,300 new COVID-19 cases on Sunday, taking the total number of cases to 1,45,427. In the past 24 hours, 13 deaths were reported taking the total fatalities to 4,111, said a health bulletin from the Delhi government.

## COVID-19

With the recovery of 1,225 people, the total number of recoveries now stands at 1,30,587. There are 10,729 active cases in the city at present, the bulletin added, out of which 5,462 patients are under home isolation. Out of the 13,527 hospital beds available, the government said that 3,084 were occupied. At the Dedicated Covid Care Centres 711 out of 10,146 beds are occupied.

A total of 5,702 RT-PCR and 18,085 rapid-antigen tests were conducted, according to the bulletin, tak-

ing the total number of tests done so far to 11,92,082. The number of containment zones stands at 472 in Delhi.

Reacting to the rise in number of COVID-19 cases in the city over the past few days, Health Minister Satyendar Jain said that the rise was due to patients from outside getting tested in Delhi.

"There have been reports that COVID-19 cases are increasing in the national capital. Many patients from outside Delhi are getting tested here, hence there is a rise in the number of cases. There is otherwise a decline in cases here," Mr. Jain said.

## FIR against unknown for 'threat to law and order'

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The police have registered an FIR against an unknown man after many mobile users received calls from an international number, inciting threat to law and order situation here ahead of Independence Day, said officials.

The matter came to the fore after the police said multiple calls were received on mobile phones via Voice over Internet Protocol from an international number.

A purported pre-recorded audio was allegedly sent to multiple numbers inciting threat to law and order situation on Independence Day. Through the audio, the unidentified man could be heard inciting people to disrupt the 71st Independence Day celebration and not allow Prime Minister Narendra Modi to unfurl the national flag. An FIR was registered under relevant sections.

## RTI activist seeks recovery of fine from Haryana officials

Senior officials were fined by SIC for violation of the Act

ASHOK KUMAR  
GURUGRAM

A complaint has been filed before Haryana Lokayukta by a Panipat-based RTI activist seeking recovery of ₹2.27 crore outstanding fine with interest from 1,726 officials, including several Haryana Civil Services officials. The officials were fined by the State Information Commission (SIC) over the past few years for violating the provisions of the Act, including not furnishing the information, in separate cases.

P.P. Kapoor, the complainant, said these officials were penalised by the SIC under Section 20 (1) for violation of the law, but they neither paid the fine nor imparted the information making "mockery" of the RTI Act. He further said that the State government had also failed to initiate any legal action against these officials. "Those seeking information under the law keep running

from pillar to post, but they are not heard. It is also causing loss to the State exchequer," said Mr. Kapoor.

P.P. KAPOOR  
Complainant

from pillar to post, but they are not heard. It is also causing loss to the State exchequer," said Mr. Kapoor.

Besides seeking the recovery of the fine, Mr. Kapoor demanded that the improper conduct of the officials be recorded in their Annual Confidential Reports, the Drawing and Disbursement Officials responsible for the recovery be also punished and a special cell set up for the recovery of fine in the future.

Some of the defaulter officials named in the complaint are Bharat Bhushan Gogia (then Estate Officer, Haryana Sahari Vikas Pradhikaran,

Gurugram), Bijender Hooda (then SDM, Charkhi Dadri), Kumari Shalini Chetan (then CTM, Hisar), Aiyaz Mohammad (Estate Officer, Waqf Board, Sonipat) and Parveen Kumar (then ADC, Gurugram).

As per the complaint, State Public Information Officer (SPIO), Yagya Dutt Chugh, in reply to a query filed by Mr. Kapoor under the RTI Act, had revealed that 2,974 SPIOs were fined ₹3.50 crore till December 2019 and ₹2.27 crore was yet to be recovered. Mr. Kapoor added that the number of defaulter officials would have gone up since then.

Mr. Kapoor said that circulars were sent to the heads of the departments of the defaulter officials and the senior officials of the government by Chief Secretary, Administrative Reforms Department, several times, but the "influential" defaulters did not pay the penalty.

tain peace in the area. We have deployed police personnel to avoid any clash," added the officer.

Uneasy past  
A local said that there are only a few houses of Muslims in the area, dominated by Hindus. In the past, an anti-social had tried to disrupt peace by targeting the only mosque in the village by restricting outsiders to visit the mosque for Friday prayers. A few locals had earlier threatened and abused the Imam and asked him to vacate the area. A complaint was made to the police.

The officer added that they have taken appropriate legal action against the accused persons and they have been sent to jail.

## 'Bhoomi pujan': AAP attacks BJP for not inviting Kovind

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

AAP Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh alleged that the BJP was an "anti-Dalit" party as it did not invite President Ram Nath Kovind to the 'bhoomi pujan' ceremony of Ram temple at Ayodhya. Mr. Kovind is the first Dalit President of the country.

"Why was the President not called for Bhoomi Puja? Is it because he is a Dalit? BJP should answer this. Anti Dalit BJP [sic]," Mr. Singh tweeted.

He alleged that the BJP did not invite the President because they did not want to involve him in the rituals.

Mr. Singh said that when the BJP made Mr. Kovind the President of India, its leaders were proclaiming loudly across the country that they had chosen a Dalit as the President, but the move was made with an eye on vote bank politics.

## As city unlocks, so does pollution

Delhi's air quality is still better than 2019 and 2018, but the margin of improvement is steadily decreasing, suggest CPCB data

NIKHIL M BABU  
NEW DELHI

Amid the challenges of COVID-19-induced lockdown, the considerable improvement in the city's air quality gave some solace for Delhiites fighting a contagion from the confines of their homes.

Now, as they step out to bring life back to normal, the air quality is also slipping back to its 'normal unhealthy levels', suggests an analysis of Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) data done by *The Hindu*.

The air pollution levels in the city saw a sharp decline during the first two of the four phases of lockdown compared to previous years. However, the margin of decline during the rest of the lockdown and unlock phases has reduced comparatively.

Experts say the government will have to make systematic changes and ensure strict implementation of control measures if it wants to sustain the low pollution levels seen during the lockdown.

The analysis of CPCB data shows that the average air quality index (AQI) during each phase of the lockdown and unlock periods between March 25 and July 31 was less than the AQI of

the same period in 2019 and 2018.

A lower value of AQI means better air quality. AQI is the weighted average of different pollutants such as particulate matter, nitrogen dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>), sulphur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) and other pollutants.

Also, there were no "very poor" or "severe" AQI days between March 25 and July 31, unlike 2019 and 2018 when there were six and seven "very poor" days respectively. In 2018, the AQI was "severe" on three days, according to the analysis.

A study of PM<sub>2.5</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub> levels by the Centre for Science and Environment, a research and advocacy organisation in Delhi, till May 31 has also shown similar results."We had done an analysis of PM<sub>2.5</sub> and NO<sub>2</sub> levels and found out that both had substantially reduced during lockdown 1 and lockdown 2. But the levels were rising again during lockdown 3 and 4," said Anumita Roychowdhury, executive director of CSE.'Won't last long'  
The low levels of pollution are not expected to last, according to experts and officials.

## Air today, gone tomorrow?

Period (2020)	2019	2018
Lockdown 1 March 25 - April 14	90.23	208.57
Lockdown 2 April 15 - May 3	118	211.94
Lockdown 3 May 4 - May 17	137.14	259.35
Lockdown 4 May 18 - May 31	156.07	176.64
Unlock 1 June 1 - June 30	123.26	189.36
Unlock 2 July 1 - July 31	83.80	134

SOURCE:CPCB

The average AQI of Delhi during the first lockdown from March 25 to April 14 was 90.2 compared to 208.5 in 2019 and 197.2 in 2018. But by unlock 2, from July 1 to July 31, when there were a lot of relaxations, including vehicular movement, though the AQI was still less – 83.8 as compared to 134 in July 2019 and 103.8 in July 2018 – the difference had reduced significantly. The lesser value of AQI in July this year as compared to March and April,

when the AQI was 128.2 and 109.8 respectively, was also because of the effect of monsoon. Apart from the known sources of pollution, the air quality is also affected by wind speed, rainfall, temperature and other factors.

Every department has suffered due to COVID-19 pandemic and many projects to fight air pollution have been affected. But things are starting now. We are in talks with IIT-Bombay for building a smog tower," a Delhi government official said.

We need to have a zero emission strategy for transportation. That includes electric vehicles, non-motorised transport and more public transport. Also, industries should move towards cleaner fuel and follow high emission controls," said Ms. Roychowdhury. "The government should review the plans and targets set before the pandemic and revise it and ensure strict implementation."

## Delhi, Mumbai police save man's life after they get a call from Facebook

The caller informed DCP (Cyber) about a suicidal activity

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

In a successful joint operation involving a social media giant, Delhi Police and Mumbai Police, a man was coaxed out of his decision to kill himself.

At 7.51 pm on Saturday, DCP (Cyber) Anyesh Roy received a call from Ireland. An official from Facebook informed him that their systems have identified 'suicidal activity' on a Facebook account belonging to a Delhi resident and the information was further shared on his email address, the police said.

They said when Mr. Roy checked his email, he found a report from Facebook referring to the account of a woman from Delhi and shared her mobile number that was

mobile number but was not aware of his address. When the Delhi Police tried to contact him, his number was found to be unreachable, so

Mr. Roy managed to trace the location of the phone user to Mandawali here. The details were shared with DCP (East) Jasmeet Singh, who then despatched his staff to the woman's house.

However, the officials were relieved on reaching the spot to find her fine. When enquired, she said its her phone number but her Facebook account is being used by her husband, who is living in Mumbai. She told police that her husband had left for Mumbai after a fight ensued between them around 14 days ago. He has been working as a cook in a hotel there since then.

She shared her husband's

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The Mumbai policemen swung into action. After a while, when his phone was found to be switched on, Dr. Karandikar spoke with the man who was in psychological distress. He counselled him and despatched policemen in Bhayandar area, a suburb of Mumbai to control the situation.

Suicide prevention helpline: Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health, Telephone: 011-4076 9002, Monday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-7.30 p.m.

## DSLSA organises first online Lok Adalat

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Bringing

# AAP claims on virus management absurd: Punjab Health Minister

'So-called Delhi model nothing but desperate bid to divert attention from failures'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHANDIGARH

Punjab Health Minister Balbir Singh Sidhu on Sunday said the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) was making a laughing stock of itself with its absurd claims on COVID-19 management in the national capital and termed the so-called 'Delhi model' nothing more than a desperate bid by the Delhi government to divert attention from its failures.



Punjab Health Minister Balbir Singh Sidhu.

jab's battle against the virus was not on account of any help from the Central government, unlike Delhi where the Centre had to step in and virtually take over the pandemic management to pull the city out of the total and unprecedented mess into which the AAP government had pushed it.

"The less said about the AAP government's COVID management in Delhi the better," said the Minister, pointing out that even now, the Delhi High Court was continuously questioning and, in fact, pulling up the Delhi government over its pandemic strategy.

"What Delhi model is this, which even the High Court is not satisfied with?" he asked, adding that Punjab

remained far ahead of Delhi in terms of effectiveness in COVID-19 management.

#### Under HC scanner

"Given that the entire testing strategy of the Delhi government was under the court's scanner, Mr. Cheema's insistence on Punjab adopting the same strategy was not just laughable but a clear indication that the AAP was not interested in protecting the people of Punjab," said Mr. Sidhu.

He said all the AAP had ever cared about was promoting its own interests, while the people of Punjab had seen through back in 2017 itself when they had shattered the party's dreams of forming the government in the State.

## 18 institutes named after fallen soldiers

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GURUGRAM

More than seven years after a policy was put in place to name government and aided educational institutions in the State after those killed in a war or anti-insurgency operation to boost the morale of the armed forces, the Palwal district administration has named institutes in an honour to 18 slain soldiers.

The policy to name educational institutes after those killed in Kargil war was framed in 1999 and later extended to those who were awarded national awards, freedom fighters and those killed in other wars, anti-insurgency operations as well in 2013. As per the policy, the Deputy Commissioner could effect the change in the name of the institute following a resolution from Gram Panchayat or a municipal body in this regard.

Deputy Commissioner, Palwal, Naresh Narwal told *The Hindu* that the policy was framed seven years ago, but remained on the papers. "Of the 39 martyrs, it was found that educational institutes were not named after as many as 18. The gram panchayats concerned were then directed to sent the resolutions and the names of the institutes were changed with a single stroke of pen," said Mr. Narwal.

## Rights panel seeks report from Centre

Pension issue of Bhopal gas survivors

STAFF REPORTER

BHOPAL

The National Human Rights Commission has sought an action-taken report within four weeks from the Centre and the Madhya Pradesh government on a complaint by Bhopal gas tragedy survivors demanding the monthly pension of ₹1,000 to each widow of victims that was discontinued in December 2019.

The Commission on August 7 directed the complaint filed by the Bhopal Gas Peedit Mahila Udyog Sangathan be forwarded to Secretary, Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers; Secretary, Ministry of Law and Justice and the Chief Secretary, Madhya Pradesh government.

The complainant had pointed out that the Union Cabinet in 2010 had approved a recommendation of a Group of Ministers to provide pension to around 5,000 widows. Initially, ₹500 a month was paid and later the amount was in-

creased to ₹1,000 a month by the Centre, for which ₹30 crore had been allocated.

As such, ₹25.43 crore was disbursed as pension to beneficiaries until 2019-2020, the complainant informed the Commission, and ₹4.57 crore was still left with the Centre.

"However, now the hapless widow beneficiaries are being deprived of the pension," the Commission said in the order.

**Curative petition**  
Further, the complainant said a curative petition filed by the Centre before the Supreme Court for enhancing the settlement sum by an additional amount of ₹7,728 crore was pending for last 10 years.

"Thus, the widows of thousands of gas victims are forced to live in abysmal conditions because of the inordinate delay in payment of additional compensation," the Commission noted.

## 24 deaths, 987 new cases in Punjab

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHANDIGARH

Punjab recorded 987 new COVID-19 cases on Sunday and reported 24 more deaths taking the toll to 586, according to an official statement.

The number of positive cases has reached 23,903. The major chunk of new cases, 316 and 204 were reported from Ludhiana and Patiala districts respectively. The health department said the active cases are 7,998 and 15,319 patients have so far recovered been cured.

**Governor tests negative**  
Meanwhile Punjab Governor V.P. Singh Badnore has tested negative while J.M. Balamurugan, Principal Secretary to Governor, tested positive and has been home quarantined.

According to the official spokesperson of Punjab Raj Bhawan, a two-day testing exercise was carried out at Raj Bhawan in which 336 people were screened. Besides Mr. Balamurugan, four others also tested positive.

Mr. Deshwal said a lot of industrial and township development was expected in the region, especially along the KMP Expressway, and the rail corridor would be

## Protest over pay



ASHA workers staging a protest to demand their pending wages, at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on Sunday. ■ R. V. MOORTHY

## Elderly Naga couple with comorbidities beat COVID-19

Their recovery has given hope in a State where stigma against the infected is high

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI

The recovery of an elderly Nagaland couple with comorbidities has given a fillip to the State government's fight against the stigma surrounding the novel coronavirus infection.

Unlike some parts of Nagaland where the infected have been shunned even after recovery, the people of Lasumi village in Phhek district bordering Myanmar stood by 93-year-old Tsulo Therie and his 79-year-old wife Zuni-ii.

The couple's 10 children,

members of their extended family and neighbours welcomed them back home after their discharge from the District (COVID-19) Hospital in district headquarters Phek.

**Noteworthy recovery**  
The hospital's Medical Superintendent, Dr. Tiala Longkumer said their recovery was noteworthy as Mr. Therie has arthritis and his wife is a diabetic.

"It is because of God's blessings that my parents survived. Besides, they are active and refuse to touch

28 via RT-PCR," the doctor said.

Another of the couple's sons had tested positive earlier.

Kute Therie, one of the couple's sons and a Community Health Officer at a government-run health and wellness centre near Lasumi village, said he was the first in the family to get infected possibly because of his COVID-19 infection.

"It is because of God's blessings that my parents survived. Besides, they are active and refuse to touch

## Rail corridor to put Gurugram on fast track

Proposed line will allow train travel in different directions from Millennium City

ASHOK KUMAR

GURUGRAM

Set to connect four major radial routes of the Indian Railways from Delhi passing through Haryana, the proposed 121-km-long Haryana Orbital Rail Corridor running along the Kundli-Manesar-Palwal Expressway will be the much-needed rail bypass of Delhi, reducing traffic congestion in the Capital, besides making travel possible by train in different directions from the Millennium City.

The four major radial routes of the Indian Railways originating from Delhi to be intersected by the proposed corridor are: Delhi-Palwal-Mathura, Delhi-Rewari-Jaipur-Ahmedabad, Delhi-Rohat-Bhatinda and Delhi-Amritsar-Chandigarh. "The project will not just provide rail bypass of Delhi, but also connect Gurugram to these radial routes. As of now, Gurugram is located on a unidirectional route from Delhi to Jaipur via Rewari. The orbital corridor will make it possible to travel in different directions viz. Mathura, Bhatinda and Chandigarh from the Millennium City. It will significantly improve the rail connectivity in this region," said Haryana Rail Infrastructure Development Corporation (HRIDC), Managing Director, Dinesh Chand Deshwal.

**Metro-like' trains**  
Mr. Deshwal said the railways was also mulling "metro-like" trains on the corridor between Palwal and Sonipat for commuters travelling daily on the route for jobs and business.

The proposed orbital corridor would also be the linchpin of economic growth in NCR connecting the Indian Railways' Dedicated Freight Corridor at Prithi station and logistics hubs and promoting development of new multi-modal hubs along the periphery of the Capital.

Connecting Palwal to Sonipat via Sohna, Manesar and Kharkhoda, the rail corridor is a broad gauge electrified double railway line for passenger and freight traffic.

Mr. Deshwal said a lot of industrial and township development was expected in the region, especially along the KMP Expressway, and the rail corridor would be

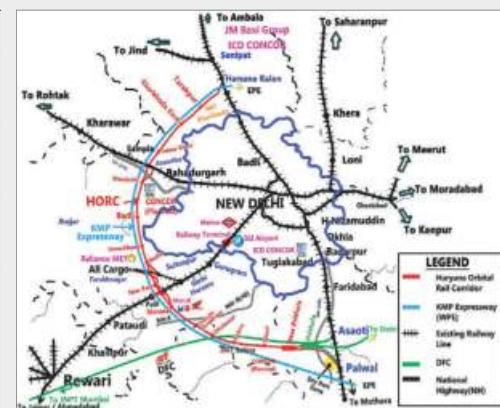
## Haryana Orbital Rail Corridor

### A Snapshot view

- New broad gauge electrified double line
- From Palwal to Sonipat bypassing Delhi via Sohna, Manesar and Kharkhoda
- Length: 121.742 km (143.932 km, including connectivity)
- Project Cost: ₹5617.69 crore
- No of stations: 14 new (3 existing)
- Speed Potential: 160 kmph
- Implementation through public-private partnership

### Project Objectives

- Connecting logistics hubs and promoting development of new multi-modal hubs
- Feeder route connectivity to dedicated freight corridor network
- Connecting four important Indian Railways radial routes
- Reduction in traffic congestion and pollution in Delhi
- Direct connectivity to Gurugram and major Haryana districts
- Peripheral link to industrial growth and new townships around Delhi



### Milestones of the Project

- In-principle approval granted by Ministry of Railways on March 5, 2019
- DPR approved by BOD of HRIDC on June 25, 2019
- Haryana Cabinet approved the project in a meeting held on July 16, 2019
- Project proposal submitted to Railway Board on July 25, 2019, for clearance from Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs
- Expanded Board for Railways has approved the project on October 24, 2019
- Draft Cabinet note, duly approved by Union Minister of Railways and Union Finance Minister, was submitted to Cabinet Secretariat and Prime Minister's Office on March 6, 2020, for the approval of the CCEA

SOURCE: HARYANA RAIL INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

the stimulus for real estate and industrial development.

"The Haryana State Industrial and Infrastructure Development Corporation (HSIDC) plans to develop five super smart cities under its project, "Panchgram," along the KMP Expressway. The freight from across the country now first comes to Delhi. It leads to problems of pollution and congestion. Many mandis and big logistics hub will shift to the periphery of Delhi with the development of this railway line. Cargo multi-modal parks are likely to develop along this railway line," said Mr. Deshwal.

It is also expected that the commissioning of the project will shift the non-traditional rail traffic, such as fruits, vegetables and refrigerated cargo, from roads to railways.

The land acquisition officers have also commenced the process of land acquisition. For two sub-divisions of Pataudi and Gurugram, land plans have already been submitted with the revenue authorities concerned for further actions and for remaining sections, the same is under process. The HRIDC this past month invited Expression of Interest applications from global engineering and consultancy firms to

the country," said Mr. Gajend.

The 107-km-long Regional Rapid Transit System corridor from Delhi to Haryana-Rajasthan border passing through the Millennium City and the 1290-km-long access-controlled Delhi-Mumbai Expressway originating here are two other major infrastructure projects coming up in the region.

### Land acquisition

The Ministry of Railways provided in-principle approval to the project in March last year following which the Haryana Cabinet gave its nod four months later and the project would be completed in five years after commencement of the work.

"It will be commissioned in phases. For instance, when the connection between two radials of railways is completed, it will be commissioned for meaningful traffic. Unlike the regular railway lines, the

appoint a General Consultant for the project.

A Special Purpose Vehicle, Haryana Orbital Rail Corporation Limited (HORCL), has also been created for implementation of the project. It comprises HRIDC, HSIDC, Gurugram Metropolitan Development Authority and the Maruti Suzuki India Limited, among others.

### Project completion time

HORCL Chairperson Rajeev Arora told *The Hindu* that they had all approvals from the Haryana government and many of the Union Ministries and the project would be completed in five years after commencement of the work.

"It will be commissioned in phases. For instance, when the connection between two radials of railways is completed, it will be commissioned for meaningful traffic. Unlike the regular railway lines, the

## Pandemic restrictions put Bhopal sex workers in a bind

They wonder how to keep the virus away yet continue earning

SIDHARTH YADAV

BHOPAL

Whenever the COVID-19 advisory chimes in on her phone – maintain a distance of at least two yards with others and always wear a facemask – Kajal\* is caught in a bind. A sex worker for eight years, she wonders how to keep the virus away yet continue earning.

"New clients fear if we have the disease, but what about them? Even we fear they might have it

KAJAL

Bhopal sex worker

daughter's schooling continues, Kajal can't depend entirely on her husband, who makes a mere ₹5,000 a month. Moreover, there is the added burden of paying ₹4,000 rent for a one-room apartment she and three other sex workers have taken.

"Several workers have given up such rooms. They now visit the client's residence which can be unsafe or sit home jobless," she says.

With no one to guide them through profession-specific precautions, sex workers simply follow those prescribed for the general public.

The lockdown-induced economic crisis has also pushed tens into sex work in Bhopal. Recently, a 15-year-old girl, responsible for a younger brother after her mother died during the lockdown, took up the profession as working as a domestic help didn't work, for households are still loath to take outsiders inside.

"Our work will come back on track only after the pandemic goes away. But people say it is here to stay," said Manisha\*, 42, whose husband is a contractor.

Whereas Kajal is now desperate to switch to an alternative profession, perhaps opening a boutique, for it will offer a stable income and reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19 or STDs and harassment by the police.

"But other professions will require hefty investments. Where will we get money during the pandemic?" she asked.

### Credit from customers

Only regular clients have come to the rescue of the workers during the lockdown. While Kajal received ₹10,000 in advance from a client, who'll recover the amount later, Manisha too had taken credit from her boyfriend.

"We simply tell our families we work at offices and got the loan from our employers," said Kajal.

Six-seven sex workers in Bhopal had also tested positive for COVID-19, though not through their profession, said Rajesh Chouhan, project manager, Centre for Advanced Research and Development, an NGO.

"Ensuring safe sex among the workers during the lockdown has been a challenge. But we distributed condoms among workers in bulk earlier," he said. Of the city's 1,200 workers registered with the group, around 800-900 were home-based.

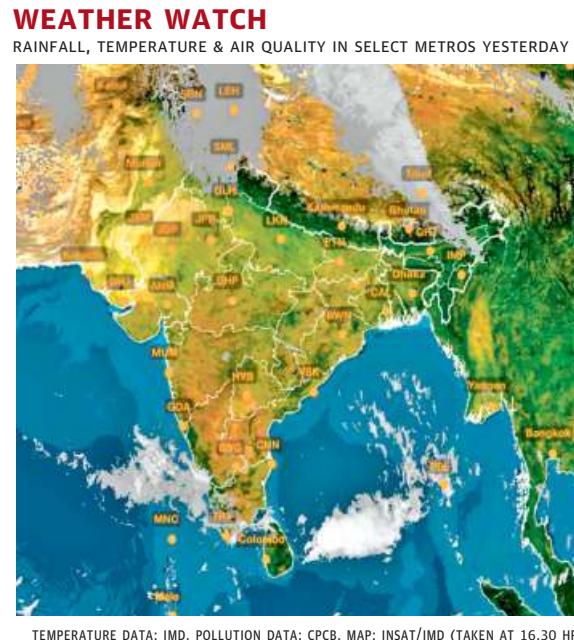
\*Names changed

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### EDUCATIONAL



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

**Forecast for Monday:** Heavy to very heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Karnataka, Kerala, Jammu and Kashmir, Haryana, Delhi, Bihar, West Bengal, Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Nagaland, Goa and Andhra Pradesh

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	... - 35.1	27.3	-	Kozhikode	54.4...	25.8...	23.6
Ahmedabad	74.4...	25.6	-	Kurnool	0.8...	31.8...	25.0
Aizawl	... - 26.3	-	-	Lucknow	0.4...	35.4...	27.2
Allahabad	15.8...	33.9	26.8	Madurai	6.4...	33.8...	24.5
Bangalore	6.2...	27.0	18.8	Mangaluru	78.2...	26.7...	23.0
Bhopal	3.8...	29.7	24.0	Mumbai	6.2...	30.4...	26.5
Bhubaneswar	9.5...	32.0	25.4	Mysuru	10...	26.0...	20.3
Chandigarh	... - 34.0	28.9	-	New Delhi	1...	35.0...	26.2
Chennai	61.7...	35.0	23.6	Patna	0.2...	34.0...	28.4
Coimbatore	8.5...	31.0	21.6	Port Blair	44.9...	30.2...	23.7
Dehradoon	... - 30.0	25.0	-	Puducherry	16.6...	29.2...	24.0
Gangtok	26...	22.3	19.0	Pune	6...	28.4...	20.4
Goa	10.8...	30.2	25.1	Raipur	2.9...	29.2...	25.0
Guwahati	12.8...	37.4	26.4	Ranchi	0.2...	32.0...	24.0
Hubballi	... - 26.0	22.0	-	Shillong	0.6...	27.6...	19.0
Hyderabad	29.8...	23.3	-	Shimla	... - 26.5	21.2	-
Imphal	1.8...	29.0	23.0	Srinagar	0.6...	30.0...	20.9
Jaipur	1.2...	34.9	25.6	Thiruvananthapuram	7.9...	27.0...	23.4
Kochi	123...	27.2	23.0	Tiruchi	18.1...	30.0...	23.8
Kohima	... - 25.6	-	-	Vijayawada	... - 32.6...	29.2	-
Kolkata	18.3...	33.5	26.7	Visakhapatnam	3...	32.4...	28.2

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

#### Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>x</sub>	CO	PM2.5	PM10	CODE
Ahmedabad	25	47	37	69	—	—
Bangalore	... - 15	20	31	52	—	—
Chennai	3	13	86	67	—	—
Delhi	3	31	45	62	132	—
Hyderabad	32	24	8	36	60	—
Kolkata	... - 6	65	20	37	—	—
Lucknow	8	6	55	127	102	—
Mumbai	14	9	4	18	70	—
Pune	25	44	6	23	24	—
Visakhapatnam	17	30	18	48	78	—

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

**SO<sub>2</sub>:** Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

**NO<sub>x</sub>:** Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravated 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., Maruti Godardar, Patna, recorded the highest air quality index (AQI) score of 236 indicating a poor level of pollution. In contrast, Shillong, Meghalaya, recorded a healthy AQI score of 10

#### Review meeting

Earlier in the day, Mr. Tope, along with Nationalist Congress Party president Sharad Pawar, took stock of the worsening COVID-19 situation in Satara and Kolhapur at a review meeting, which was attended by Guardian Ministers, elected representatives and senior officials from the two districts.

Mr. Tope said early identification of symptoms would help reduce the case fatality rate and directed officials and medical authorities to test at least 15 contacts of a positive case to break the chain of transmission. The Health Minister also warned private hospitals in the two

districts of stern action if they refuse to treat suspected COVID-19 patients.

He said, "There have been numerous complaints from people in these districts of private hospitals not admitting people with COVID-19-like symptoms or refusing to treat them. This is very wrong. The district administration has full authority to investigate such cases and book errant hospital staff."

**Threat of strict action**  
Mr. Tope said 45 hospitals in Kolhapur and 27 in Satara are covered under the Matatma Jyotiba Phule Jan Arogya Yojana – the State government's flagship health insurance scheme – to provide free treatment to COVID-19 patients. He said these hospitals will face strict action if they are found charging patients.

Satara has been reporting

There is an urgent need to increase testing in both Satara and Kolhapur given the drastic surge in new cases

RAJESH TOPE

State Health Minister

5,600 active cases, while its death toll has gone past 250.

The Health Minister also said the State government would soon be procuring 500 ambulances and allotting them to hospitals in the State's rural areas. The Mahavikas Aghadi government last month belatedly realised the dire scarcity of ambulances in the State's rural hospitals and had released ₹90 crore to purchase them.

#### 10-day lockdown in Beed

Five important towns in Beed district in Marathwada, including Beed city, Parli and Ambejogai, have decided to observe a rigid 10-day lockdown from August 12 in view of the rising cases in the district. During this period, only milk supply will be allowed and shops selling essentials will be permitted to remain open, according to district authorities.

# 'No action taken yet in Krushi Sevak recruitment scam'

RTI applicant yet to get compensation

ALOK DESHPANDE

MUMBAI

This month, an RTI applicant received a letter from the State Agriculture Department seeking his bank details to deposit the compensation amount awarded to him last year with regard to an alleged scam in the 2016 Krushi Sevak recruitment examination.

Dr. Vikram Gaikwad, general secretary of the Maharashtra Youth Congress, said, "I filed an application under the Right to Information Act in October 2016, seeking documents related to the investigation into the alleged scam, which was published in newspapers."

The verdict said, "Instead of providing information, irregularities were covered up. It is a clear case of purposefully denying information. The applicant has faced mental, financial and physical problems and therefore the authority concerned must pay a fine of ₹25,000."

The delay in the entire process resulted in over 700 candidates, who cleared the questionable examination, joining government duty. State Information Commissioner Sambhaji Sarkunde said during the three-year period, disturbing facts about the scam emerged. The Agriculture Department was also charged with withholding information.

Dr. Gaikwad said, "So much time has passed and those who cleared the dubious exam have joined duty. The previous government chose not to act against irregularities despite being alerted. Now, the present government can take the case to the High Court."

So much time has passed and those who cleared the dubious exam have joined duty

DR. VIKRAM GAIKWAD

General secretary of the Maharashtra Youth Congress

lurities, who gave themselves a clean chit," he said.

Dr. Gaikwad's application seeking documents of investigation was denied by the office of the then agriculture commissioner. After being denied information, he filed an appeal, but his application was dismissed.

Dr. Gaikwad then filed another appeal in February 2017, which came up for hearing in May 2019.

The Maharashtra State Council of Examination conducted the Krushi Sevak recruitment examination in 2016 through a private partner, which landed in trouble over allegations of malpractice. The allegations involved – one student passing from two locations; two brothers passing with identical marks; passing of students with similar surnames from neighbouring villages; students in the age group of 20 to 22 clearing the exam from Retired Defence Personnel category; and interestingly, not a single student scoring in the 150-178 bracket in the 200-mark exam.

He said the allegations were discussed in the State Assembly in 2016 and the then agriculture secretary had recommended an inquiry by the Criminal Investigation Department. "But the then State government did not follow the recommendation and chose to conduct the probe through officers who were accused of irregularities.

Dr. Gaikwad said, "So much time has passed and those who cleared the dubious exam have joined duty. The previous government chose not to act against irregularities despite being alerted. Now, the present government can take the case to the High Court."

## One killed, 7 injured in LPG cylinder blast, wall collapse

Neighbour dies trapped under debris

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

PUNE

the minister in-charge for coordination on the Maharashtra-Karnataka border issue, said the statue was removed at Mangutti village. He said the statue had been installed with the permission of the gram panchayat, but the administration removed it deliberately.

Sena workers in Maharashtra's Kolhapur district, which borders Karnataka, held a series of protests over the issue on Saturday.

Meanwhile, BJP leader Ashish Shelar alleged that the local Congress MLA was responsible for the removal of the statue. "We condemn the incident of removal of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's statue. It should be restored with full respect. But will the Sena protest against the local Congress MLA who ordered the removal of the statue?" Mr. Shelar asked.

"The explosion was so powerful that the common wall between the flats collapsed," said senior police inspector Vivek Lawand.

"Most places in Maha-

flats of Surwades and Temkar collapsed," said senior police inspector Vivek Lawand of Dighi police station.

When the wall collapsed, Dryaneshwar Temkar got trapped under the debris and died on the spot. His eight-year-old daughter also sustained injuries. Ms. Surwade was seriously injured and suffered around 80% burns. Five other members of her family also sustained injuries, Mr. Lawand said.

"Prima facie, it seems the liquefied petroleum gas leaked from the cylinder and caused an explosion the moment the electric switch was turned on," he said.

## Heavy rain likely in Maharashtra: IMD +

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

Heavy to very heavy rainfall is likely in parts of Maharashtra due to a low pressure area formed over north-west and adjoining west-central Bay of Bengal, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Sunday.

"Heavy rainfall is expected over the Vidarbha region on Monday, while Madhya Maharashtra would receive

thunderstorms accompanied with lightning," the official said. Mumbai and parts of the western coast will witness winds with speeds up to 50 to 60 km per hour.

The southwest monsoon is expected to become active again over Mumbai and other parts of coastal Maharashtra from Monday.

## Fadnavis should lead stir against Shivaji statue removal, says Sena

Reinstall statue in Belagavi: Eknath Shinde to Karnataka CM

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

MUMBAI

Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut on Sunday condemned the removal of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj's statue in Belagavi district of Karnataka and said all parties should come together to protest against the incident under the leadership of Maharashtra Leader of Opposition and Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Devendra Fadnavis.

Belagavi has a sizable Marathi-speaking population and has been the subject of a long boundary dispute between the two States. The border dispute is pending before the Supreme Court.

Talking to reporters, Mr. Raut said, "Mr. Fadnavis should be taken into confidence over the issue and we should all unite under his leadership to protest against the action of the Belgaum



Eknath Shinde

police." The Sena-led Maharashtra (MVA) government had on Saturday shot off a letter to Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, seeking reinstatement of the statue of the Maratha warrior king.

Marashtra Urban Development Minister Eknath Shinde, who is a close aide of Chief Minister Uddhav, had written the letter to Karnataka government, where the BJP is in power. Mr. Shinde, who is also

Scientists Mandar Sawant, Dr. Nikhil Modak and Sagar Sarang said it took them eight years of fieldwork in the forests of Matheran to come out with the research paper. Mr. Sawant said, "While roaming the forests of Matheran and clicking these flying beauties, we never thought somewhere in future we will be working on this data to give it a form of a research paper."



## Safety deficit

The Kozhikode air crash shows that there can be no compromise on airport infrastructure

The tragic crash of an Air India Express 'Vande Bharat' relief flight in Kozhikode, in which 18 people, including two crew members, lost their lives and many were left severely injured, is a forceful reminder that there are no acceptable risks in aviation. Although an even bigger disaster was averted by the absence of fire in the aircraft, the crash snuffed out the lives of many returning home from Dubai after a long, traumatic separation from loved ones in the pandemic. Many Indians could not quickly return home from countries where they were employed, studying or travelling, although they desperately sought flights back home since March. For those who took that long-awaited trip on August 7, it ended in disaster. There are clear pointers to the dangerous nature of flight operations at Kozhikode airport in the midst of a strong monsoon, even with the availability of an instrument landing system for the "tabletop" runway carved into undulating terrain. There are problems with visibility, a far shorter safety area at the runway end than optimal, and absence of arrester systems that could stop an overshooting plane from falling off the edge, as it happened with this aircraft. Which of these factors, along with the monsoon impact, led to the disaster will become clear with a professional investigation. The Civil Aviation Ministry should make a full disclosure on the technical evidence gathered, the integrity of which will be scrutinised by safety organisations worldwide.

Apparently anxious to project an image of normalcy, the Ministry allowed the airport to restart flights in a day, while the accident cause was yet to be ascertained. If rainy conditions existed during the landing, as Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri has said, these may persist during the rest of the monsoon. Each flight must, therefore, be considered for a potential diversion to a safe airport nearby in bad weather. Significantly, the admission by the DGCA that the key recommendation of runway extension at Kozhikode made almost a decade ago was not possible due to land acquisition issues – although the facility could still support wide-bodied aircraft – strengthens the view that corners may have been cut on safety. The instance of an Air India Express plane suffering a tail strike in the same airport last year should have led to a full assessment, following up on the recommendations made after the 2010 crash in Mangaluru. Since the visible cause of Friday's crash was an overshoot, the runway continues to pose a threat. Bad meteorological conditions such as rain and wind, and runway surface problems such as stagnation of water or rubber deposits that contribute to skidding endanger passengers and crew. Every air safety incident diminishes India's reputation. The Kozhikode crash should lead to a fresh review of all risky airports. Transparent remedial action must be taken immediately.

## Balancing priorities

Development goals must be pursued without breaching environment regulations

Forecasts of 'good' or 'normal' monsoons are often beguiling and belie the ominous. This year, the annual floods that upset the Brahmaputra Valley have been followed by intense spells along the Konkan coast and Mumbai, and now Kerala, which until the end of last month recorded a slight deficit. The landslip in Idukki, that has so far claimed 22 lives and rendered several homeless, follows from a continuing spell of heavy rains in Kerala. Most districts have received three or four times more rain than what is normal. Last year too, neighbouring Wayanad saw multiple hamlets wiped out and the year before, the devastating floods in the State forced a debate on the need for new models of development. Landslips, or landslides, in the Western Ghats have history. Following the 2018 floods, data from the Geological Survey of India showed that Kerala had experienced 67 major landslide events and several minor ones from 1961-2013. As part of a National Landslide Susceptibility Mapping (NLSM) programme, the agency mapped several States in the Western Ghats, North-eastern States, Jammu and Kashmir and Uttarakhand to assess how vulnerable their districts were. Nearly 13,000 square kilometres were mapped until 2018 and 6,000 were to be covered in 2019-20 in Kerala, according to the programme website. Nearly 13 of the State's 14 districts were prone to landslides and what made Kerala particularly vulnerable was the high population density – over 800 per square kilometre – compared to other States that also faced high landslide risk.

The objective of the NLSM maps is to help State and district authorities incorporate the risk of landslides into zoning laws. However, just as in the case of earthquake zonation maps, or for that matter, any exercise to scientifically ascertain the risk from natural hazards to a region, these laws are barely implemented in the right spirit. And this is not unique to Kerala. The details might vary but it is now beyond contestation that India is living in a new climate normal. Frequent high intensity bursts of rain will co-exist along with long dry spells. It has emerged from studies of Kerala's topography that quarrying and the unscientific cutting of slopes into hills aggravates the risk of soil erosion. Operationalising the State's disaster management apparatus and allocating funds for preparedness are key policy responses, but Kerala also must double down on enforcing regulations and observing zoning laws as well as ensuring that slopes carved into hilly terrain have adequate provisions for draining water. A lack of compliance with such principles is often a key reason why natural hazards end up causing a significant number of avoidable casualties. There is a cost to pursuing development goals without paying attention to environmental constraints.

# A new direction for India-U.S. ties

The fresh paradigm should be on how to structure common understanding; China needs to be factored in



SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY

**T**he United States under the leadership of President Franklin D. Roosevelt during the early 1940s once pressed Britain's Prime Minister Winston Churchill to free India and co-opt India as a formal ally in World War II.

But Britain firmly and obstinately refused to agree despite the writing on the wall – that Indians had stood up and would achieve freedom sooner rather than later.

India stabilised after a bloody Partition in 1947, declared its commitment to democracy, fundamental rights, free press and non-violence in a written Constitution which came into force on January 26, 1950.

### The UN and China

India thus appeared to the U.S. as worthy of replacing China in the most important body of the United Nations, namely the Security Council, as a Permanent Member with a Veto in view of the Communist overthrow of the Chiang Kai-shek-led government.

According to a recent study by Dr. Anton Harder, "Not at the Cost of China: New Evidence Regarding US Proposals to Nehru for Joining the United Nations Security Council" Working Paper #76", Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, Washington, DC, USA, March 2015" (<https://bit.ly/3fOXYON>), the author states that the U.S.'s offer for India to join the UN Security Council was conveyed by India's Ambassador to the U.S. then, *viz.*, Ms. Vijaya Lakshmi Pandit, Jawaharlal Nehru's sister.

In late August 1950, Mrs. Pandit wrote to her brother from Washington DC that: "One matter... in the State Department should be known to you. This is the unseating of China as a Permanent Member in the Security Council and of

India being put in her place."

"Nehru's response to his sister within the week was unequivocal: 'In your letter you mention that the State Department is trying to unseat China as a Permanent Member of the Security Council and to put India in her place.'

"So far as we are concerned, we are not going to countenance it. That would be bad from every point of view. It would be a clear affront to China and it would mean some kind of a break between us and China."

"We shall go on pressing for China's admission in the UN and the Security Council. India because of many factors, is certainly entitled to a permanent seat in the security council. But we are not going to at the cost of China."

Nehru not only declined the U.S. offer to India to become a UNSC Permanent Member with Veto but instead campaigned for China to take up that seat.

The U.S. however resisted that campaign till 1972, when in a turnaround the U.S. supported Communist People's Republic of China and entered into "strategic partnership" in the 1970s onwards with the reform-minded new leadership of Deng Xiaoping.

Subsequently what China did to Nehru for this generosity at India's expense is history from which we must learn. No use is served by crying about China's betrayal or perfidy.

### The shift to Pakistan

In 1953 after India's tilt to the Soviet Union and China in the Korean war, the U.S. turned to Pakistan as a possible counterweight in South Asia against the Soviet Union and China. The U.S. made Pakistan a member of the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) and the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO), and liberally gave aid and armaments.

Pakistan which was no match in military, economic development, and ancient and continuous culture that ensured democracy, began to dream of equality with India in the international domain.

As a consequence, India had to

GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO



go to war with Pakistan in 1965, 1971 and 1999, losing precious lives defending our own territory. The U.S. even sent a Seventh Fleet Task Force with nuclear weapons on board to threaten us on the dismemberment of Pakistan.

The rest is history. We have to learn from our past mistakes. Today there is a new opportunity with the U.S. but it is not on a clean slate.

### America's November poll

The success of our new bonding with the U.S. will first depend on the outcome of the U.S. Presidential elections this November. The Democratic party rival and Presidential candidate, Joe Biden, has already taken a hostile stand against our government, with the Left wing and liberals in the U.S. highly critical of the Narendra Modi government, such as rubbishing the Citizenship (Amendment) Act passed by India's Parliament with a two-thirds majority.

In inner U.S. circles our purchase from Russia of the S-400 air defence missile system and the refusal to agree to America's request to send Indian troops to Afghanistan have mostly browned off U.S. officials. U.S. policy makers know Indians love atmospherics and *melas*, but not substantive issues which concern the U.S.

Therefore, we need to build trust with the U.S. that we will give to the U.S. as good as it gives us, and not give us lectures instead. The U.S. will then respond more than what we concede.

In 1991 when then Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar told me to find out if we can get a policy-condition free loan at a concessional interest rate from the International Monetary Fund (IMF), I told him that the IMF would never agree,

India must be firm in two areas

but since a large size of the voting power in the IMF was directly or indirectly controlled by the U.S., we should placate the U.S.

Thereafter, Prime Minister Chandra Shekhar spoke to the U.S. that India would agree to a pending American request with the Prime Minister's Office for permission to refuel their air force planes flying from the Philippines to Saudi Arabia for the first Gulf War when Iraq occupied Kuwait.

Thereafter told the U.S. Ambassador in New Delhi about this but I said it was conditional on getting \$2 billion (1991 prices). Over the weekend that loan arrived and India was saved from a default.

### In synchrony

Today, thus, the new or fresh paradigm should be on how to structure India-U.S. understanding and which is in sync with common India-U.S. perspectives. For this structuring we must: first realise that India-U.S. relations require give and take on both sides.

What India needs to take today is for dealing with the Ladakh confrontation on our side of the Line of Actual Control by China. Obviously, India needs U.S. hardware military equipment. India does not need U.S. troops to fight our battles against China on our border.

Third, the U.S. needs India to fight her enemies in the neighbourhood such as in Afghanistan. It is my view that India should send two divisions gradually to Afghanistan and relieve U.S. troops to go home.

India needs the support of the U.S. and its ally, Israel, in cyber-warfare, satellite mappings of China and Pakistan, intercepts of electronic communication, hard intelligence on terrorists, and controlling the military and the Inter-Services Intelligence in Pakistan.

India needs the U.S. to completely develop the Andaman & Nicobar, and also the Lakshadweep Islands as a naval and air force base, which the U.S. can share along with its allies such as Indonesia and Japan.

India must be firm in two areas

which are not amenable to give and take. One is that economic relations must be based on macroeconomic commercial principles. Free, indiscriminate flow of U.S. foreign direct investment (FDI) is not in India's national interest.

### Look at technologies

Thus, India needs technologies such as thorium utilisation, desalination of sea water, and hydrogen fuel cells, but not Walmart and U.S. universities to start campuses in India, as proposed in the new National Education Policy draft.

Eighth, the U.S. must allow India's exports of agricultural products including *Bos indicus* milk, which are of highly competitive prices in the world.

FDI should be allowed into India selectively from abroad, including from the U.S., based on the economic theory of comparative advantage and not on subsidies and gratis.

Tenth, tariffs of both India and the U.S. should be lowered, and the Indian rupee should be gradually revalued to ₹35 to a dollar. Later, with the economy picking up, the rupee rate should go below 10 to the dollar.

The other firm constraint is that India should not provide the U.S. with our troops to enter Tibet, or be involved in the Hong Kong and Taiwan issues because there is always a possibility of a leadership change in China, as what happened when Deng Xiaoping replaced Mao Zedong's nominees in 1980. Thus, China's policy changed very favourably towards India. In the cases of Tibet, Taiwan, and Hong Kong, we have made explicit agreements. In the case of Tibet, two formal treaties were signed by Nehru (1954) and A.B. Vajpayee (2003).

In the last point, in the long run, India, the U.S., and China should form a trilateral commitment for world peace provided Chinese current international policies undergo a healthy change.

*Dr. Subramanian Swamy is an economist from Harvard and a Rajya Sabha MP, now on his sixth term*

# Bringing nuclear risks back into popular imagination

Awareness of the horrors of nuclear weapons needs to be revived given public apathy and political complacency



MANPREET SETHI

**L**ittle Boy" was dropped on Hiroshima on August 6, 1945 at 0815 hours. This was followed three days later by the dropping of 'Fat Man' on Nagasaki, at 1101 hours. The two nuclear bombs vapourised around 150,000 people who were going about their morning business; 130,000 others succumbed to burns, radiation sickness, and other ailments that the collapsed health system could not treat. Few, then, understood why their skin erupted wounds that would not heal, hair fell off in clumps, and stomach churned with pain and nausea. Several *hibakusha*, or survivors of the atomic bombs, have recounted how an ordinary day turned into one where they wished they too had died in that instant flash.

### Buried under

The purpose of recalling these horrors from 75 years ago is to ensure that nuclear armed states do not forget the real nature of nuclear weapons. Human memory is short and often preoccupied with the immediate. Currently, the socio-economic-health emergency posed by COVID-19 and the grow-

ing geopolitical tensions between major powers owing to their abrasive behaviour seem to be consuming us all. But nuclear risks are lurking just below the surface, and they are growing.

### Dangers of unintended use

Among the risks of nuclear use, the highest likelihood is that of inadvertent escalation due to miscalculation or misperceptions. It is less likely that adversaries will launch pre-mediated, deliberate nuclear attacks because each understands that a splendid first strike is impossible and that nuclear retaliation cannot be escaped. Of course, the severity of the damage would depend on the number and yield of weapons used. But studies indicate that use of even a fraction of the weapons held in medium-sized arsenals would cause a massive human tragedy and have long-term repercussions for food and water availability, agricultural output, climate change, migration, etc.

Possibilities of unintended use are exacerbated by many factors: stressed inter-state relations, unchecked strategic modernisation as arms control arrangements waver and nations hedge against each other; adoption of nuclear postures that peddle the benefits of 'limited' nuclear war; and emergent technologies creating new anxieties. Advancing capabilities of cyberattacks on nuclear command and control, blurring lines between conventional and nuclear

delivery, induction of hypersonic missiles capable of high speed and manoeuvrability, incorporation of artificial intelligence in nuclear decision making are new developments that threaten to create unknown risks. As capabilities grow and inter-state trust diminishes, chances of stumbling into nuclear war are not insignificant.

### The Cold War and after

However, these risks are not part of our collective popular imagination today. During the Cold War, citizens of affected nations were made to undergo regular nuclear drills. As sirens blared, everyone had to rush to bunkers created in homes, schools, hospitals, etc. There were guidelines on what to equip these nuclear shelters with so as to be able to sustain lives in case mushroom clouds went up. Several works such as novels, movies and TV documentaries depicted life "the day after". These graphic depictions kept nuclear weapons and their highly destructive nature alive in the consciousness of the people. Public pressure translated into civil society movements that demanded action from

political leaders to engage with the subject of risk reduction through unilateral, bilateral or multilateral measures.

The end of the Cold War pretty much brought down the curtains on nuclear weapons for the common man. The perceived sense of danger of nuclear war receded and nuclear strategies went back to being dictated and driven primarily by security conclaves.

Over the years, technological advancements and growing hyper-nationalist tendencies have shaped strategic discourse in a manner that is largely devoid of popular participation.

But, this connect is important to temper national choices and create the much needed checks and balances.

General awareness of the horrors accompanying nuclear weapons, therefore, needs to be revived since a high level of public apathy and political complacency have brought us to the threshold where the risks remain high but the desire to address them is low. In fact, one does not see a shared desire for nuclear risk reduction among nuclear armed states. Drunk on their faith in deterrence, there is a tendency to use strategies of nuclear brinkmanship and ambiguity that actually add to the risks. There is also a display of confidence in being able to manage and control risks. However, unmet war games have shown that it is impossible to calculatedly climb the escalation ladder. Any nuclear use between nuclear adversaries

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hope are still alive.

M. PRADYU,  
Thalikavu, Kannur, Kerala

outstanding gestures. There were large queues of blood donors at hospitals even at midnight, proving that humanity, humaneness and

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

In the interview titled "Lockdown has hit nutritional services" (August 9, 2020), the reply to the question "What are the challenges India is facing vis-a-vis nutrition?" needs to be recast as follows: "According to a Lancet study last year, of the 10.4 lakh under-5 deaths in India in 2017, as many as 7,06,000 deaths could be attributed to malnutrition. In other words, two in three under-5 deaths were due to malnutrition. So on an average, every day 1,934 children under five die with malnutrition as underlying cause; they could all be alive if there was no malnutrition. But due to COVID-19 induced food security and malnutrition these figures will go up."

In the article titled "Verify before reporting" (Notebook, OpEd page, August 7, 2020), Rafic Hariri was referred to as former President of Lebanon. It should have been former Prime Minister.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

### Battered yet again

It is saddening that the people of Kerala, for the third consecutive year, are undergoing difficulties following monsoon-related flooding and landslides. Though these are termed natural disasters, one cannot ignore human intervention that aggravates these issues.

# COVID-19 deaths may be higher than reported

The death figures for India may have to be adjusted for low coverage of medical certification of cause of death



HEMANT DEEPAK SHEWADE & GIRIDARA GOPAL PARAMESWARAN

As on July 31, India had the third highest burden of COVID-19 globally (based on total reported cases). According to the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MoHFW), there were 35,747 reported COVID-19 deaths and 5,45,048 active cases. India had 26 COVID-19 deaths per million population. This has been cited to substantiate the low mortality in the country. As per Indian Council of Medical Research guidelines, if it is medically certified that the underlying cause of death is suspected or confirmed COVID-19, then that death should be recorded and reported as a COVID-19 death.

The States update the number of COVID-19 deaths to the MoHFW based on the updates received from cities and districts. The reported COVID-19 deaths have to be updated in the medical certification of cause of death (MCCD) web portal. Updates from States and the MoHFW are our immediate source of COVID-19 deaths. The same should also be available at the end of the year when the MCCD reports are collated. The latest MCCD report is available for 2017.

**Death registration and MCCD**  
Do the reported COVID-19 deaths reflect the true picture? Before we get into this, we need to understand the prevailing coverage of death registration and MCCD in India. According to the latest vital statistics of India based on the Civil Registration System (CRS, 2018), 86% of the total deaths were registered of which 22% had a medically certified cause of death (MCCD report, 2017). This means 18.9% (0.86\*0.22) of the total deaths were medically certified with a cause of death. The key reason for this is that only 34% received institutional medical attention at the time of death (CRS, 2018). Another reason is that not all hospitals (including public and private hospitals in rural and urban areas) have been brought under the coverage of MCCD. Errors, missing details or issues in the qual-



ity of MCCD have also been reported. This proportion of total deaths that are medically certified with a cause of death varies from State to State. It is less than 10% in Nagaland (1.5%), Bihar (2.4%), Jharkhand (2.6%), Uttarakhand (5%), Uttar Pradesh (5%) and Madhya Pradesh (7.4%); more than 60% in Delhi (60.7%) and Puducherry (63.7%); and 100% in Goa.

The COVID-19 deaths compiled by States predominantly include deaths occurring in COVID-19-designated facilities among reported COVID-19 cases. Hence, suspected COVID-19 deaths occurring at home or during transit or in non-COVID hospitals may not be reported. Outside designated COVID-19 facilities, there could be many instances of suspected COVID-19 being the cause of death (testing not done or results not available); this may not be captured. This is possible in the context of a prevailing systemic under-registration of deaths and the poor coverage of MCCD. This may be more pronounced in rural and semi-urban areas where there is poor access to health facilities and/or qualified medical doctors. Hence, we need to adjust for the prevailing under-registration of deaths and poor coverage of MCCD to arrive at the correct estimate of COVID-19 deaths.

#### Estimated COVID-19 deaths

To adjust for the prevailing under-registration of deaths and poor coverage of MCCD, we multiplied the reported COVID-19 deaths by a multiplication factor. It was 5.29 for India and calculated as the inverse of 18.9% (the coverage of MCCD among total deaths based on the 2018 CRS and 2017 MCCD reports). This gave a total of 1,88,938 estimated COVID-19 deaths taking the deaths per million population to 138. This is in contrast to the widely prevailing notion that deaths are very low in India.

This estimated COVID-19 deaths per million population is higher than Russia (96 per million, 100% MCCD of total deaths), similar to South Africa (137 per million, 92% MCCD) and lower than the U.S. (477 per million, 100% MCCD), Brazil (440 per million, 99% MCCD), Mexico (362 per million, 100% MCCD), Peru (588 per million, 57% MCCD), Chile (498 per million, 95% MCCD), Spain (608 per million, 95% MCCD) and Iran (202 per million, 90% MCCD). Most of the above countries (but for Peru) have a high MCCD coverage. Hence, we do not need to adjust the reported COVID-19 deaths of these countries.

Within India, we calculated State-wise estimated COVID-19 deaths by multiplying the reported COVID-19 deaths with the multiplication factor for the respective State. The top 10 States based on estimated COVID-19 deaths (ranging from 347 per million population to 114) in decreasing order are Delhi, Maharashtra, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh, Nagaland, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal, U.P. and Tamil Nadu. If we go by reported COVID-19 deaths, then Nagaland, Madhya Pradesh, Uttarakhand, West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh do not find a mention in the top 10.

Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal, U.P., Bihar and Jharkhand constitute 43% of the national population. These States with <12% MCCD coverage and less than 10,000 COVID-19 tests per million population contribute to 38% of the total estimated COVID-19 deaths. If we go by reported COVID-19 deaths, then these States contribute to a mere 12% of total reported COVID-19 deaths. This clearly shows the extent to which cases and deaths could be missed.

COVID-19 deaths per million population is a straightforward metric but this entirely depends on the timing of the epidemic and how close are the reported and estimated COVID-19 deaths to the true picture. We also recommend the MoHFW to monitor the proportion of COVID-19 deaths coded with 'suspected COVID-19' as the cause of death.

graphic region. The deaths per million increase as the epidemic progresses. Therefore, inter-country or inter-State comparisons have to be made and interpreted considering the stage of the epidemic.

In India, many media reports have highlighted that when suspected COVID-19 was the cause of death (testing not done or results not available), it was erroneously not reported as COVID-19 death. Hence, even among the registered deaths, the COVID-19 deaths appear to be under-reported. Therefore, the estimated COVID-19 deaths calculated by us, despite the adjustment, are an underestimate.

#### Considering adjustments

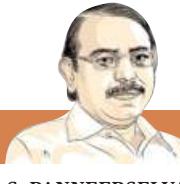
We call upon the MoHFW to consider the adjustments suggested before arriving at the COVID-19 deaths and before making inter-State and inter-country comparisons. The States with a relatively high estimated COVID-19 death per million population and low testing need to be focused upon. These are also the States that have poor healthcare infrastructure. Additionally, this is an opportunity to improve MCCD. Reporting of deaths with suspected COVID-19 as the cause needs to be encouraged and ensured from COVID-19 facilities, non-COVID-19 facilities and homes. The current COVID-19 reporting mechanism is very different from the MCCD reporting. Therefore, we request that it is ensured that the reported COVID-19 deaths are promptly captured in the MCCD web portal. Also, for triangulation of data, we urge the MoHFW to release monthly or quarterly bulletins of national and State-wise deaths reported under CRS and MCCD. Data under CRS will enable us to compare the deaths registered before and during the epidemic and help understand how close are the reported and estimated COVID-19 deaths to the true picture. We also recommend the MoHFW to monitor the proportion of COVID-19 deaths coded with 'suspected COVID-19' as the cause of death.

Hemant Deepak Shewade and Giridara Gopal Parameswaran are community physicians by training. Hemant works for an international NGO and is based in Bengaluru. Giridara works at the All India Institute of Medical Science, Delhi. This piece along with graphs can be accessed online at [www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com)

#### FROM THE READERS' EDITOR

## The elusive search for truth

Many people trust social media forwards more than evidence-based, data-driven journalism



A.S. PANNEERSELVAN

tab Mattoo's "Rekindle Kashmir's lost and real connect" (August 5) – and a 'Data Point' titled "Paradise lost" (August 5). But the reactions we got to these were puzzling. One reader dismissed the 'Data Point' and placed his faith above the evidence available. He asked: "Is your source reliable? Was it done by an independent agency or some 'politically' motivated one? Why compare the J&K lockdown with the COVID-19 lockdown? What are you trying to convey apart from confusing people and feeding negativity? Yes, both the lockdowns are severe for J&K but they will be eventually removed and normalcy restored."

Another reader, Raghavan, was angry with Mr. Jacob's piece. He said: "A mythmaking opinion from the factory of mythmaking, JNU, anxious about the myths made for decades being exposed as myths. Expecting a miracle within a year to prove that undoing Article 370 is better than the decades of turmoil with no end in sight while nurturing that Article is in the realm of myths, really." Jugal Ghosh felt that Mr. Mattoo was wrong and said: "The abrogation stretched the state benefits to all its residents and the sooner they realise it, the better it is for all. This pain about abrogation is purely imaginary to make news."

#### Facts and truth

First Draft Footnotes is a study commissioned by First Draft with the aim of protecting communities around the world from harmful, false, and misleading information. Silicon Valley conglomerates rely on quantitative attributes. They value the metrics that drive the traffic to websites. The Footnotes series, on the other hand, brought back the qualitative component to counterbalance the reliance on analytics to determine the health of our news and information environment. One of their recent studies was about the perceived difference of news consumers between facts and "truth", and about how this perception creates vulnerabilities online. The study documents our paradoxical existence in more ways than one. For instance, it points out that "those who generate and amplify misinformation and malinformation are the ones who often use words related to the truth, such as disingenuous; nonsense; false; charade; deception; concealed, disguised, hiding, show; find; reveals; exposes; uncovers." In this world view, journalism is all about facts, but conspiracy theories are what gain the status of truth. The crisis is not with journalism alone.

[readerseditor@thehindu.co.in](mailto:readerseditor@thehindu.co.in)

## At stake is our bodily integrity

The potential misuse of data collected during this pandemic raises concerns beyond just privacy

TANISHA RANJIT

Governments around the world are increasingly turning to technology as a tool to combat the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic. In India, these tools have ranged from various contact tracing apps to using drones. Privacy concerns have been raised by activists, lawyers and concerned citizens about the use of such intrusive digital technologies. But while these concerns are valid, a crucial element remains unrecognised: what is at stake is not merely our informational privacy, but our autonomy, dignity, bodily integrity, and equality.

We live in a world where data about us are constantly being collected. Governments and corporations are moving towards using data as a means of governance and regulation of what our physical bodies can do. This is what is happening, for example, when you are asked to digitally scan your fingerprint to allow your physical body to enter your workspace. Or you may have felt a sense of unease when you realise you are under surveillance through CCTV cameras. Nobody is physically present, yet we somehow feel the gaze on our bodies.

**Bodily integrity and autonomy**  
Informational privacy may no longer be sufficient to ensure our rights are protected. Instead we need to include matters such as bodily integrity, autonomy and dignity. In the current jump towards technologies as a means to combat the pandemic and control our bodies, this is particularly evident. Consider the questions of control that are raised as this line is becoming blurred. Most people would feel uncomfortable inviting an official into their home every hour to show they are complying with quarantine orders. But effectively, that is what is happening through apps such as Karnataka's Quarantine Watch, which requires those under quarantine to send hourly selfies with GPS coordinates to officials. Through your digital images, your physical body is being disciplined to stay at home, without the need for the official to be physically present.

And where personal data about

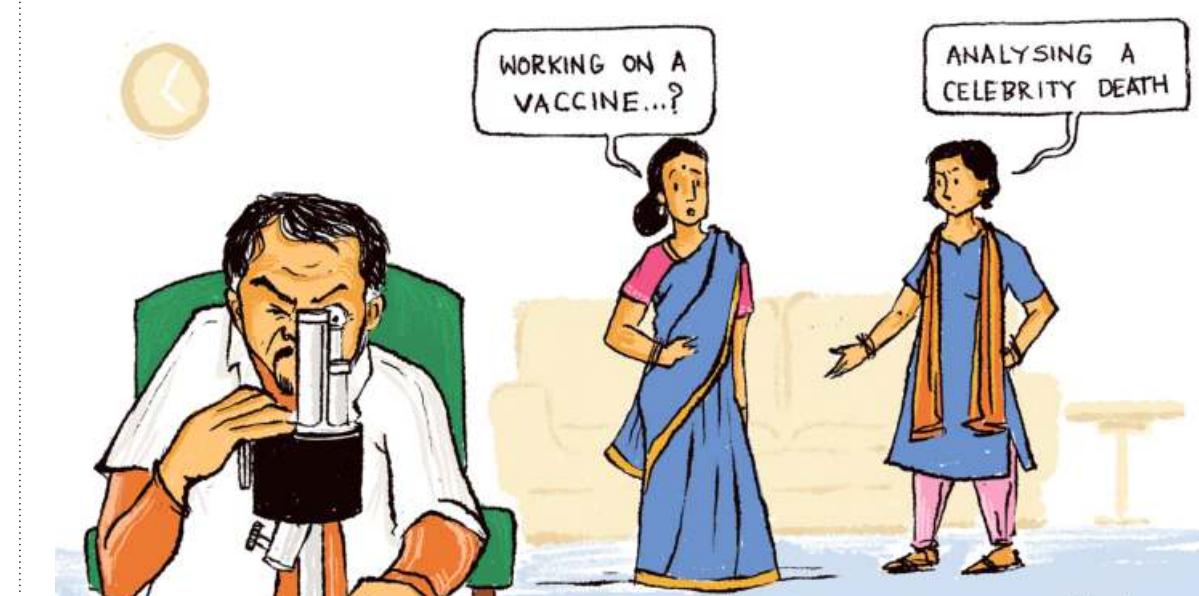
ourselves are shared or leaked, this may lead to us experiencing a sense of lack of control, fear of uncertainty, and loss, even though nothing has been taken from us physically. This is evident, for example, where data of those who have been home quarantined are shared publicly. Those affected have reported immense psychological stress. In Hyderabad, one home-quarantined man described his experience as "torture" after people started calling at odd hours to provide suggestions or ask questions.

#### Greater discrimination

Thus, the potential misuse of our data raises concerns beyond just privacy. It can lead to individuals feeling humiliated, publicly targeted and shamed, raising concerns of dignity and discrimination. The consequences of the public sharing of personal data will not be felt equally by everyone. The experiences we have navigating the material world are often relational to who we are and what body we have. Those who do not conform to society's dominant views, such as trans people, tend to face greater discrimination. In Hyderabad, derogatory posters targeting trans people were put up saying interactions with them could lead to COVID-19. Such differences also apply to the virtual world shaping our online experiences. Given the greater risk of stigma trans people face, public sharing of their personal data can have dangerous consequences.

So, while a pandemic might warrant greater collection of our data, we must not lose sight of the harms this can bring, now and in the future. The data collected by various institutions can be used to re-exert control over our bodies, through ways often unknown, making it hard to question this. But data protection legislation have not kept up with this new reality and the challenges it brings. Formulated on the premise of data as a 'resource' or 'oil', they tend to completely miss out on the issues of bodily integrity and autonomy.

Tanisha Ranjit is a junior researcher at the Internet Democracy Project, a member of the Data Governance Network



#### DATA POINT

## Empty coffers

The government's tax revenues recorded a massive shortfall in the first three months of FY21 due to the stringent COVID-19-related lockdown. While all tax heads recorded falls, GST dropped year-on-year by 41% in that period. Even while revenue dwindled, expenditure recorded a marginal increase resulting in fiscal deficit widening to a whopping 83% of the year's target in the first quarter. By The Hindu Data Team

Year	Share of gross tax	Share of corporation tax	Share of income tax	Share of GST
FY19	89.8%	28.6%	20.4%	25.1%
FY20	80.2%	22.6%	20.7%	22.7%
FY21	78.3%	22.0%	20.6%	22.3%

<sup>a</sup> Revised estimates for FY20; Budget estimates for FY21

**2. Income comes down** | The table compares the revenues from tax sources in Q1FY21 (April-June) with the same quarter last year. In FY20, by the first quarter, 16.3% of the year's gross tax revenue target was achieved, while in FY21, by the first quarter, only 11.1% was achieved. The gross tax revenue fell by 32.7% in Q1FY21 compared to Q1FY20

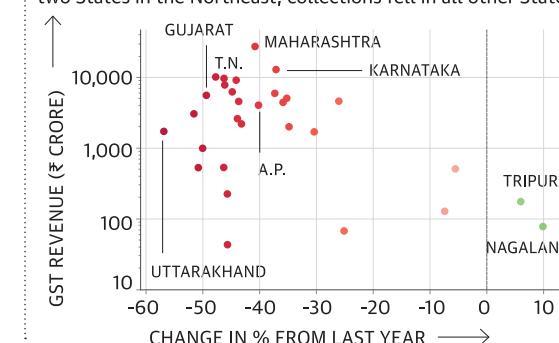
Taxes	% achieved of FY20's target by first quarter	% achieved of FY21's target by first quarter	% change in tax collected in Q1FY21 compared to Q1FY20
Gross tax	16.3%	11.1%	-32.7%
Corporation tax	9.2%	8.0%	-23.3%
Income tax	17.0%	9.7%	-35.9%
GST	47.4%	26.8%	-41.0%

SOURCE: GST.GOV.IN, BUDGET DOCUMENTS, CGA.NIC.IN, PIB

**3. Spending goes up marginally** | The table compares the expenditure in Q1FY21 with the same quarter in the previous year. India spent 26.8% of this year's target expenditure by the first quarter, while only 25.9% was spent in the same period last year. Expenditure increased by 13.1% in the first quarter of FY21 compared to the same period last year. Due to revenue shortfall, fiscal deficit (revenue minus expenditure) widened to 83.2% of the year's target, which is a record high for any first quarter

Parameter	% of FY20's target achieved by Q1FY20	% of FY21's target achieved by Q1FY21	% change in figure in Q1FY21 compared to Q1FY20
Expenditure	25.9%	26.8%	+13.1%
Fiscal deficit	61.4%	83.2%	+53.3%

**4. State-wise** | Graph shows the GST collected in Q1 of FY21 and the change from the same period last year. Except two States in the Northeast, collections fell in all other States



A HUNDRED YEARS AGO AUGUST 10, 1920

#### The Tilak Day

A public meeting of the ladies of Bombay was held on Sunday [August 9] evening to express their sorrow and sense of loss to the country on the death of Mr. Tilak. Mrs. Saraladevi Chaudhurani presided. As the crowd was too great for the spacious hall of Gandharva Mahavidyalaya an overflow meeting was held in the compound, with the chairman having to address twice. Saraladevi in her address said that the wonderful funeral procession of Mr. Tilak testified the appreciation by the people of Mr. Tilak's love for his countrymen, a love that hoped highest and braved all and made him suffer repeatedly for their sake. Swaraj to him was a passion and he gallantly fought all his life for the interests of his country. She exhorted the audience to follow his simplicity of dress and manners and use nothing but swadeshi goods. The speaker deprecated the slavish imitation of following the latest Western fashions in dress and passionately appealed to all her sisters to show their love for the departed patriot by taking a vow for using nothing but swadeshi goods at least for some years, if not forever.



## IN BRIEF



## Trade unions oppose 'anti-worker' policies

NEW DELHI

Central trade unions (CTUs) on Sunday held protests across the country against the Centre's "anti-worker, anti-farmer, anti-people and anti-national" policies, including the planned privatisation of some PSUs and commercialisation of some sectors, including coal mining, a statement by the joint platform of CTUs said. Workers' associations of different sectors joined the demonstrations held under the banner, "Save India Day," it said.

## Allow homeopathic drugs for COVID-19, says plea

NEW DELHI

Homeopaths have urged the Supreme Court to direct the Centre to allow the administration of homeopathic medicines for mild cases of COVID-19 and as an add-on to allopathic drugs in severe cases. The petitioners said they had given a representation to the Prime Minister, proposing the "development of 'nosco-CoV,' which they had introduced as a homeo prophylaxis to prevent COVID-19."

## Invite requests for 'senior advocate' title: Jaising

NEW DELHI

Senior advocate Indira Jaising has urged the Supreme Court to brush off its 'inertia' and invite applications from lawyers for conferment of "senior advocate" designation. In an application filed in the court, Ms. Jaising, who was the country's first woman Additional Solicitor General, suggested that the court could initiate the designation process online during the pandemic. It could conduct virtual interviews of the candidates.

## PM launches farm infra scheme

₹17,000 crore released to about 8.5 crore farmers under PM-KISAN plan

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday launched a new financing scheme under the ₹1 lakh crore Agriculture Infrastructure Fund meant for setting up storage and processing facilities, which will help farmers get higher prices for their crops, according to the government statement.

Mr. Modi launched the scheme via videoconferencing and interacted with farmers across the country. He also released the sixth instalment of funds under the PM-KISAN scheme, which amounted to ₹17,000 crore to about 8.5 crore farmers.

The scheme will support farmers, PACS [primary agricultural credit societies], FPOs [farmer producer organisations], agri-entrepre-



**Big boost:** Narendra Modi addressing the nation at the launch of the financing scheme on Sunday. ■ PTI

neurs, etc. in building community farming assets and post-harvest agriculture infrastructure. These assets will enable farmers to get greater value for their produce as they will be able to store and sell at higher prices, reduce wastage, and in-

crease processing and value addition," the statement said.

During the launch, Mr. Modi spoke to representatives from three PACS from Karnataka, Gujarat and Madhya Pradesh, who are beneficiaries of the scheme. He later addressed the country. Mr. Modi said the scheme would give farmers and the agriculture sector a boost and "increase India's ability to compete on the global stage."

Mr. Modi reiterated that "India has a huge opportunity to invest in post-harvest management solutions like warehousing, cold chain, and food processing, and build a global presence in areas such as organic and fortified foods," the statement said.

## Confusion prevails over Sonia's term

She will head Congress till a successor is elected, says party spokesperson

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The confusion over Sonia Gandhi's tenure as the president of the Congress continued, with some quarters calling for a more permanent arrangement and a section of the party insisting that there is no fixed tenure for an interim president. Ms. Gandhi's tenure ends on Monday.

At an online press conference, party spokesperson Abhishek Manu Singhvi said Ms. Gandhi would continue to be president till a procedure was implemented to bring in her successor. "Just like nature, political parties too can't function in a vacuum. It is true that her tenure



Sonia Gandhi

expires tomorrow, there is a laid-down procedure for elections. In the meanwhile, if anyone is suggesting that the Congress will become headless at the stroke of midnight on August 10, is that a fair interpretation?" he said.

Lok Sabha member Shashi Tharoor said the party must have elections to the Congress Working Committee selects can take over for an interim period. He also clarified that the party does not have to in-

form the Election Commission, because it is an internal matter.

## Rahul not in the race

Sources indicate that Rahul Gandhi is not planning to return as president as the conditions which forced him to resign still persist. In his resignation letter on July 3 last year, Mr. Gandhi had called for accountability for the defeat of the party in the 2019 polls, and said "at times I stood alone", referring to the Lok Sabha campaign.

However, in the last few months, he has attended key meetings of the party, including chairing a strategy meeting on the upcoming Bihar Assembly polls.

A three-judge Bench, led

## Gehlot calls on all MLAs to 'stand by the truth'

Rajasthan CM writes to legislators ahead of House session

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
JAIPUR

Ahead of the crucial Rajasthan Assembly session which could witness a floor test, Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Sunday wrote a letter to all MLAs appealing to them to "stand by the truth" and defeat the attempts being made to topple his government.

Mr. Gehlot sought the cooperation of all MLAs, cutting across party lines, in fulfilling the promises for the State's development. "People's mandate is the supreme command. I expect you to understand the sentiments of your family members and the electorate of your constituencies to ensure that the government elected by the people continues to work," he said.

"Victory and defeat are part of elections. You may be an MLA from any political party but you should stand by the truth and act in the larger interests of people," he said, adding that Prime



Ashok Gehlot

Congress last year by following all norms and in the interest of a stable government. While the merger was within the parameters of law, there was no justification for the attempts to destabilise the government by horse-trading of MLAs, he said.

## 'Big split in the BJP'

Mr. Gehlot questioned the shifting of BJP MLAs to Gujarat and alleged that the party was within the parameters of law, there was no justification for the attempts to destabilise the government by horse-trading of MLAs, he said.

The Congress government is likely to seek a confidence vote during the Assembly session, beginning on August 14, amid the political turmoil caused by the rebellion of former Deputy CM Sachin Pilot and 18 MLAs supporting him. Though Mr. Gehlot seems confident of majority, the legislators supporting him have been sequestered at a resort near Jaismal.

The Chief Minister said six BSP MLAs had joined the

agencies just wanted to talk to them but it was projected as if a sedition case had been registered against them.

## Interim order on contempt case today

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court will pronounce on Monday its interim order in a decade-old contempt case against noted civil rights lawyer Prashant Bhushan for his remarks about judicial "corruption" in an interview to *Tehelka* magazine in 2009.

*Tehelka* magazine editor-in-chief Tarun Tejpal is a co-responsible with Mr. Bhushan.

The Bench had noted in its order that it would go on to hear the contempt case if

"we do not accept the explanation/apology".

A communication released by Mr. Bhushan's office late on August 4 said the Bench had talked to the lawyers in the case via a WhatsApp call.

It said Mr. Bhushan had refused to apologise and said the word 'corruption' was used in the interview in a wide sense to mean "lack of propriety". He had not meant that the judiciary was financially corrupt.

## INTERVIEW | SHASHI THAROOR

## + 'We should be clear about our leadership'

Congress MP says election to the post of president will have beneficial outcomes

SOBHANA K. NAIR

Senior Congress leader and Thiruvananthapuram MP Shashi Tharoor has called for elections to the Congress Working Committee and the post of president to challenge the perception of the party being "adrift and rudderless, incapable of taking up the challenge of a credible national Opposition".

Sonia Gandhi completes a year as Congress president. This was supposed to be an ad hoc arrangement. But so far there is no clarity on what the party will do on August 10. What are your personal views on the way forward for the party?

I certainly believe we should be clear about our leadership going forward. I welcomed Soniaji's appointment as interim president last year but I do believe it's unfair to her to expect her to carry this burden indefinitely.

Aside from the great legacy they have inherited from their illustrious forebears, they have consistently brought together the various groups, ideologies, geographies and communities that collectively make up the fabric of the Congress party.

They also have a clear record of success and experience in leading the party, both when in government and during tough times in the wilderness, when they have still managed to rally the men and women of the Congress together.

Let us not forget the magnitude of what they have achieved for the party – or the ultimate sacrifice paid by two former presidents from the family.

So, if Rahul Gandhi is ready to resume the leadership, all he has to do is to with-

ciated with re-energising the rank and file of the party.

You have repeatedly called for an open election within the party, a sort of public event, which you said would galvanise the party cadres. The history of the Congress, however, does not really stand by your proposition. The party has repeatedly picked the family over others. Your comments.

I think the question mixes up two different issues. Obviously, the Nehru-Gandhi family holds a special place in the hearts of Congress party members – and with good reason too.

Through his activities during this lockdown, whether it has been on the issue of the COVID-19 virus or Chinese transgressions, Rahul Gandhi has without a question and almost single-handedly done a remarkable job in holding the present government accountable for its actions and failures.

He has also displayed tremendous foresight and vision, been a constructive voice that has offered critical inputs and has shown an impressive capability to really understand the aspirations of the people during these challenging times. I hope he will continue doing that, whether as president or in any other capacity of his choosing.

I certainly think he has the mettle, capability and aptitude to again lead the party, given the widespread admiration and support he enjoys among the rank and file.



**C** It's unfair to Sonia Gandhi to expect her to carry the burden indefinitely

draw his resignation. He was elected to serve till December 2022 and can just pick up the reins again. It would be a popular outcome among the rank and file of the party. But if he does not, we have to find another solution. That's what I am talking about.

How dangerous is it for the party to continue to coast along in this manner without a clarity about leadership?

As I have often pointed out, the challenge is that there appears to be a growing public perception, fuelled by a dismissive media, that the Congress is adrift and rudderless, incapable of taking up the challenge of a credible national Opposition.

That is precisely what we need to urgently address by expediting the process of finding a full-term president.

Once this is done, we can also move towards identify-

ing solutions to other areas such as organisational challenges, revitalising the party particularly in the States that we have not been performing well in recently, energising the rank and file of our membership and so on.

Should Rahul Gandhi return to the helm withdrawing his resignation?

I, for one, would be delighted if he did. Just look at the active and dynamic leadership these last few months.

Through his activities during this lockdown, whether it has been on the issue of the COVID-19 virus or Chinese transgressions, Rahul Gandhi has without a question and almost single-handedly done a remarkable job in holding the present government accountable for its actions and failures.

He has also displayed tremendous foresight and vision, been a constructive voice that has offered critical inputs and has shown an impressive capability to really understand the aspirations of the people during these challenging times. I hope he will continue doing that, whether as president or in any other capacity of his choosing.

I certainly think he has the mettle, capability and aptitude to again lead the party, given the widespread admiration and support he enjoys among the rank and file.

## 11 of Pak. Hindu family found dead

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

JODHPUR

Eleven members of a family of Pakistan Hindu migrants were found dead at a farm in Jodhpur on Sunday, police said.

Kewal Ram, 35, of the family, however, was found alive outside their hut at Lodha village of the Dechu

area, over 100 km away from Jodhpur city, an officer said. "But he claimed to have no idea about the incident, which is believed to have happened in the night," said SP (Rural) Rahul Barhat.

The family came to India in 2015. They had been living at the village farm for the past six months.

**HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT  
TAMIL NADU ROAD SECTOR PROJECT II**

**Assignment Title:** Construction Supervision Consultancy Services for upgradation of EPC 11, EPC 12, EPC 13 under Engineering Procurement and Construction (EPC) contracting mode for TNRSPII – Additional Financing.

**Reference No:** 195/2020/TNRSPI/USC05/A/E/dated: 18.07.2020

**Request for Expression of Interest (REoI)**

Experienced Consultants are invited to submit their Expression of Interest (EoI) for carrying out the above mentioned assignment. Further details and REoI are available in the website: [www.tnrsip.gov.in](http://www.tnrsip.gov.in). Last date for receipt of EoI: 31.08.2020 upto 15.00 hrs.

**Superintending Engineer (H),  
(For and on behalf of the Governor of Tamil Nadu)**

**TNMB Building, 1st Floor, 171, South Kesavapuri Puram,  
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**Telephone No:** +91 44 24951072, **Email:** tnrsip1@gmail.com **Website:** [www.tnrsip.gov.in](http://www.tnrsip.gov.in)

DIPR/2978/Tender/2020

**Registrar  
Annamalai University**

**GOVERNMENT OF TAMILNADU  
HIGHWAYS DEPARTMENT  
TAMIL NADU ROAD SECTOR PROJECT II**

**Assignment Title:** Project Management Consultancy Services for Tamil Nadu Road Sector Project –II –Additional Financing.

**Reference No:** 203/2020/TNRSPI/PMC/12 dated: 18.07.2020

**Request for Expression of Interest (REoI)**

Experienced Consultants are invited to submit their Expression of Interest (EoI) for carrying out the above mentioned assignment. Further details and REoI are available in the website: [www.tnrsip.gov.in](http://www.tnrsip.gov.in). Last date for receipt of EoI: 10.09.2020 upto 15.00 hrs.

**Superintending Engineer (H),  
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**Telephone No:** +91 44 24951072, **Email:** tnrsip1@gmail.com **Website:** [www.tnrsip.gov.in](http://www.tnrsip.gov.in)

DIPR/2979/Tender/2020

# 'LAC complicates India's options'

America is not going to get involved in a continental war here, says ex-NSA

SUHASINI HAIDAR  
NEW DELHI

The threat from China is pushing India into closer ties with the U.S. but is unlikely to yield a military 'alliance' at present, said experts in Delhi and Washington during a discussion on Indian Foreign Policy. In particular, former National Security Advisor Shiv Shankar Menon and academic Pratap Bhanu Mehta felt that India's common boundary with China and "continental challenge" still complicates its choices, referring to the nearly four-month-long standoff at the Line of Actual Control (LAC).

"India can build coalitions, the Quad [Quadrilateral with U.S., Australia and Japan], or an alliance of democracies. But geography matters, proximity matters



Shiv Shankar Menon and the implication of China in our neighbourhood matters... Given our limited options, it is good that the government has not acted in haste," said Mr. Mehta, a professor at Ashoka University, who praised the government's recent economic actions aimed at China, including the restrictions on FDI and imports and banning of 59 software apps.

"We have a problem with China on land and the U.S. is not going to get involved in a continental war here. The [U.S.] is pulling out of Afghanistan. The landmass of Eurasia is being consolidated under China's Belt and Road Initiative and by various other means, and even the Russians have decided they need to work with China. India needs to find a continental strategy that works for it as the relationship with China gets more and more adversarial," said Mr. Menon.

#### 'Collective defence'

U.S.-based Carnegie Endowment expert Ashley Tellis, who served as a diplomat to India, said the U.S. would not seek an alliance with India unless both sides were "committed to a collective de-

fence" of each other in both the continental and maritime spheres.

"It comes down to a very simple question: why would it be in America's interest to provide those capabilities to India if it doesn't feel that the quality of the relationship it has with India warrants it? That is still a work in progress. But if we don't answer that question I don't think [the U.S.] will get the partnership that makes our contribution worth the money," Mr. Tellis said, adding that apart from "putting boots on the ground", the U.S. could help India with intelligence sharing, space technology and air power support.

The experts were part of a seminar organised by the Indo-American Friendship Association..

Rahul hits out at Modi govt. over job losses

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Nearly 14 crore people have been rendered unemployed because of the "ill-conceived policies" of the Narendra Modi government, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi said in a video message, launching the Indian Youth Congress's campaign, "rozar do" (provide employment) on Sunday. He urged unemployed youths to raise their voices and "awaken the government from its slumber".

"When Narendra Modi became PM, he promised that he would give employment to 2 crore people every year. He sold them a very big dream. The truth is 14 crore people have been made jobless," he said.

Mr. Gandhi blamed three policies - Demonetisation, faulty implementation of GST and extended lockdown - for "destroying" India's economy.

# Aide of Mukhtar Ansari shot dead

Family of the deceased Rakesh Pandey alleges he was pulled out from home

OMAR RASHID  
LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh police shot dead an aide of jailed MLA Mukhtar Ansari from Mau in an alleged exchange of fire after the SUV he was purportedly travelling in along with four other suspects crashed into a tree in the early hours of Sunday in Lucknow.

The family of the deceased Rakesh Pandey alias Hanuman Pandey, however, accused the police of picking him up from home in Lucknow and then killing him.

#### Co-accused in murder

Pandey had been a co-accused in the 2005 murder of then BJP MLA Krishnanand Rai. However, in 2019 he along with MLA Mukhtar Ansari and six others was acquitted in the case by a special CBI court in Delhi.

Around 4.20 a.m. on Sunday, an SUV carrying Pandey and four others was inter-



Mukhtar Ansari. ■ FILE PHOTO.

cepted and followed near the Shaheed Path in Lucknow by STF teams from Varanasi and Lucknow on inputs by informants, police said.

The U.P. STF said it received an input that along with his gang members Pandey was collecting weapons to execute a crime and intercepted him travelling towards Kanpur road.

During the chase, the SUV crashed into a tree near Sarojini Nagar following which

the suspects fired at the police team, said SSP STF Sudhir Singh.

"In the cross-firing, one accused got shot," Mr. Singh told reporters, adding that Pandey was declared "brought dead" at a hospital.

However, in a statement issued later, the STF said an injured Pandey was rushed to the CHC Sarojini Nagar where he died during treatment.

SSP Singh said Pandey was a "dreaded shooter of Mukhtar Ansari". The STF said he carried a bounty of ₹50,000 in an attempt-to-murder case in Prayagraj.

The other four suspects fled taking cover against a drain, said Mr. Singh. In the STF press statement, however, police said the other suspects took advantage of the dark and fled.

They also did not state how many persons were in the car.

The STF said Pandey had

12 criminal cases and was out on bail in a case.

Police accused him of managing criminal and land-related activities for Mr. Ansari after alleged gangster Prem Prakash Singh alias Munna Bajrangi was shot dead inside the premises of Baghpat jail by another inmate in 2018.

Baldutt Pandey, Rakesh Pandey's father, said his son was pulled out of his residence by police in Lucknow around 3 a.m. Since Rakesh's mother was unwell and getting treated at a Lucknow hospital, he had been in the city to take care of her. She was discharged only a couple of days ago and he was taking care of her, he said.

While police said Rakesh had 12 criminal cases against him, his father said he had no [pending] cases as all had been decided. He also said he had never heard about any bounty being declared on his son.

"Because of restrictions on movement in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, travelling to the border for a meeting isn't advisable," the official added.

The last such meeting between the two countries was in October in Islamabad, and, as per the agreement in the Indus Water Treaty (IWT), a meeting was to be scheduled in India before March 31.

The practice at the IWT meetings is that they are led by Indus Water Commissioners from both countries and a range of issues on construction of dams and hydropower projects concern-

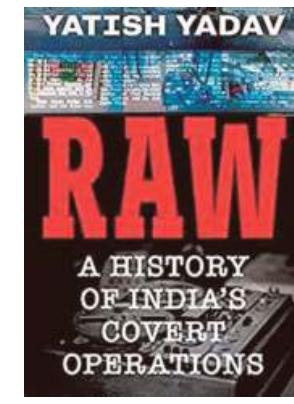
# 'Overseas support was crucial for Khalistan groups'

Book sheds light on RAW operations against terror networks

NISTULA HEBBAR  
NEW DELHI

Nepal is the land of origin of Lord Buddha, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Kathmandu asserted on Sunday after External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar described the founder of Buddhism as one of the greatest Indians ever. Former Prime Minister Madhav Kumar Nepal said Mr. Jaishankar's comments about Lord Buddha were "objectionable".

"It is a well-established and undeniable fact proven by historical and archaeological evidence that Gautama Buddha was born in Lumbini, Nepal. Lumbini... is one of the UNESCO world heritage sites," said the official spokesperson of the Ministry.



YATISH YADAV

RAW: A HISTORY OF INDIA'S COVERT OPERATIONS

istani figure, Chatar Singh, who was living on Fairfax Road in Maryland," says the book, describing in detail the large cache of arms in Singh's basement and his eventual recruitment by the Indian spy agency.

A proposal has been moved by the government extending immunity to cyber decoys recruited to counter propaganda and criminal activities in the virtual world. A decision to set up a joint counter operations centre involving the R&AW, the National Investigation Agency (NIA), Intelligence Bureau (IB) and the Punjab Police, has been taken.

The book, "RAW: A History of India's Covert Operations" by journalist Yatish Yadav, goes into much detail on not just how Khalistani terrorists operated offshore but also how foreign governments turned a blind eye and, in some cases, offered covert support to such groups.

"The RAW didn't believe U.S. authorities' assurances that it would investigate the role of Khalistani extremists in Washington and New York," says the book.

According to the book, a RAW operative - one "Dinesh Mathur" - managed to penetrate the networks in North America, and even managed to get to the terror movement's leader Jagjit Singh Chouhan, and other top ranking members.

"In November 1988, Mathur had recruited a key Khal-

Most important, in a meeting of top officials in 2019, hiring of retired officers and spies, who had served in Punjab during the Khalistan movement, has also been approved.

The events of the turbulent 1980s when the country was almost torn asunder due to separatist movements in Punjab and Assam is vividly described in the book.

Recruitment of U.S. lobbyists, politicians for propaganda purposes by pro-

+

# Amid pandemic, India & Pak. spar over Indus water talks

Differences arise over design of Ratle project on Chenab

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI



agree upon a final resolution on the design parameters of this hydropower project.

According to the terms of the IWT, India has the right to build RoR projects on the three 'western' rivers - the Chenab, Jhelum and Indus - provided it does so without substantially impeding water flow in Pakistan downstream. Pakistan believes that the project's current design does pose a serious impediment and has told the World Bank that it wants a

+

India has refused a request by Pakistan to hold a meeting on issues around the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) at the Attari checkpost near the India-Pakistan border. In March India had suggested a virtual conference but Pakistan had insisted on a physical meeting, a senior official in the Ministry of Water Resources told *The Hindu* on Sunday.

"Because of restrictions on movement in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, travelling to the border for a meeting isn't advisable," the official added.

The last such meeting between the two countries was in October in Islamabad, and, as per the agreement in the Indus Water Treaty (IWT), a meeting was to be scheduled in India before March 31.

The practice at the IWT meetings is that they are led by Indus Water Commissioners from both countries and a range of issues on construction of dams and hydropower projects concern-

However, the COVID-19 pandemic led to the meeting being cancelled and this was followed up by discussions between representatives of the two countries on how discussions could be conducted.

Among the key points on the table was evolving a procedure to solve differences on technical aspects governing the construction of the Ratle run-of-the-river (RoR) project on the Chenab in the Kishtwar district of Jammu and Kashmir.

India has called for the appointment of a 'neutral' party while Pakistan favours a Court of Arbitration to

set up to decide on the issue. India says this is only a technical issue and mutually solvable. It has agreed to a 'neutral party' since a CoA potentially could stall any construction on all Indus projects, the official said.

The IWT has been in existence since 1960, and reached a flash point in the aftermath of the Uri attacks in 2016 with Prime Minister Narendra Modi declaring that "blood and water couldn't flow together" and India would utilise the full hydropower capacity of its share of the Indus systems.

# Andaman and Nicobar will be a maritime hub: Modi

PM will inaugurate a submarine optical fibre cable between Chennai and the islands today

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday the Andaman and Nicobar islands region, owing to its strategic importance, was going to be developed as a "maritime and startup hub" and highlighted his government's development initiatives for it.

He said this during a video link with BJP workers from the Union Territory a day before he is to inaugurate a submarine optical fibre cable between Chennai and the islands.

"The region will no longer

face any problem in getting virtually connected to the outside world."

The BJP has projected the inauguration of the submarine optical fibre as the islands turning "digitally independent" on August 10.

#### High-impact projects

"The region will play an important role in our government's self-reliant India project and the growth of new India," Mr. Modi said highlighting the Andaman archipelago's significance in the freedom movement.

He said 12 islands of the ar-



Narendra Modi

chipelago have been selected for high-impact projects with an emphasis on boosting trade of sea-based, organic and coconut-based

products of the region.

He said the proposed transhipment hub in the Andamans will help the group of islands become an important centre of blue economy and a maritime and startup hub.

Over 300 km of national highway is expected to be completed in record time, he said, adding his government is working to improve air connectivity within these islands and between them and the rest of the country.

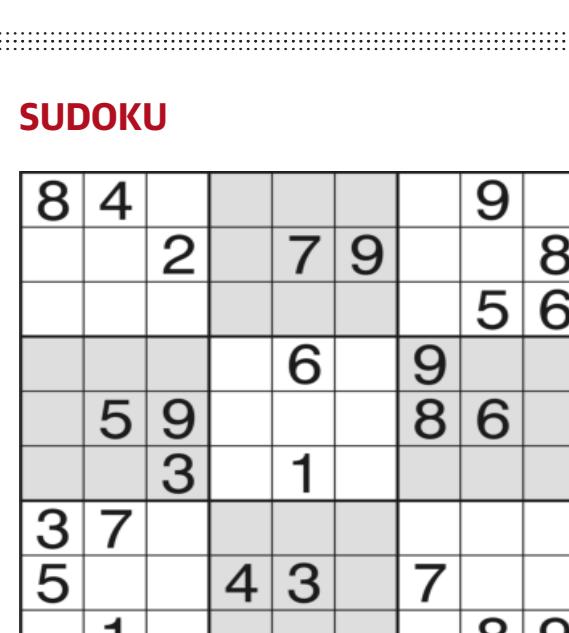
Noting that his government has brought in more education facilities, includ-

ing law and medical colleges, to the region, Mr. Modi asked the BJP workers to inform the masses about the changes the Central government has ushered in and how things were earlier.

BJP president J.P. Nadda, who also addressed the meeting, hailed PM Modi for his work in dealing with the pandemic. The daily testing has risen to five lakh from 1,500 earlier, he said.

Andaman and Nicobar BJP leader Vishal Jolly highlighted the high COVID-19 infection rate among the local population.

**SUDOKU**



Solution to yesterday's Sudoku



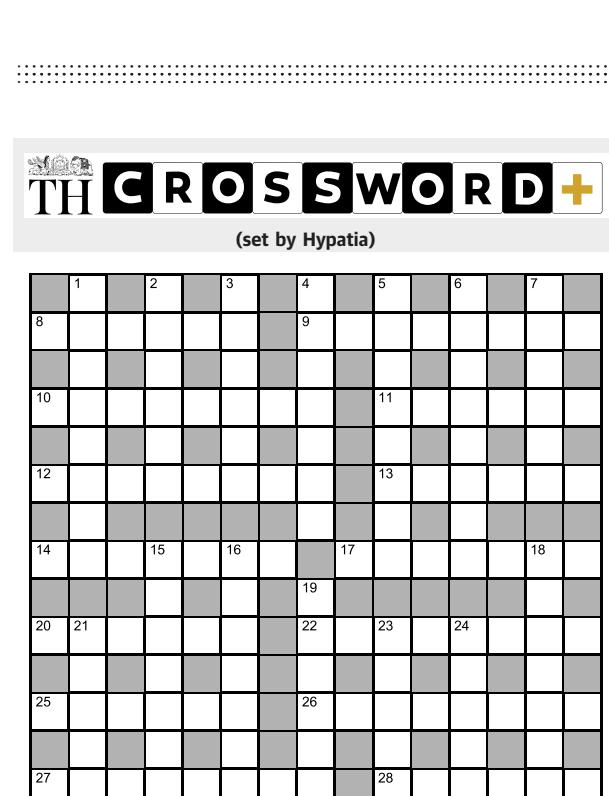
# FAITH

## Vyasa advises Arjuna

The incident of Arjuna realising the loss of his renowned prowess and powers as an invincible warrior is narrated by Suta in the Devi Bhagavata Purana. Though it is difficult to believe this truth, and still more difficult to accept it, he is enlightened about his self by Vyasa, pointed out Sri K. Srinivasan in a discourse. The Pandavas are steeped in untold grief on learning of the departure of Krishna and Balarama from this world.

Yudhishtira asks Arjuna to go to Dwaraka to console the aged parents of Krishna, and His consorts. Since Dwaraka is in imminent danger of getting submerged in the seas, Arjuna makes arrangements to move the people out of Dwaraka. He plans to take them to Hastinapura. But on the way, the caravan is attacked by dacoits who take away gold, jewellery and even the women. Arjuna is unable to stop the plunder. He finds that his gandhabha of unfailing prowess is no longer so. Arjuna feels most frustrated and disappointed at the pale reflection of his hitherto invincible self. Vyasa explains to him the truth that he and Krishna are Nara and Narayana, the ancient divine gods. Arjuna's powers are owing to Krishna and since the avatar is over, the powers have left him. He tells him that whenever Nara and Narayana are to incarnate the powers will automatically be with them. Nara and Narayana are very powerful and unconquerable in battle. They are also the best of the ancient rishis.

Yudhishtira and the Pandavas understand the inevitable effects of time where change alone is the most abiding factor in the universe. The old order changes to give place to the new. After thirty six years of rule, Yudhishtira makes Parikshit the king and leaves for the Himalayas along with Draupadi and his brothers to undertake the final journey.



■ ACROSS  
8 Cosmetic oil from sweetheart in work area (6)  
9 Doctor No and old fellows switch positions (2,3,3)  
10 Elaborate shelf (5,3)  
11 Time worked in Church, reflected one's upbringing? (6)  
12 Threatening sibling drinking at home (8)  
13 Bachelor saint abdicates Ashram built for creator (6)

Improve your language & problem solving skills. Try our Crosswords site! <https://qrqo.page.link/jjpTn>



SCAN TO PLAY

CM YK



# A parent's guide to gadget-free play

After schoolwork on a screen is done, how do you make sure your child is not back on one, playing video games? Parents share what works for them



**One day at a time**  
From gardening and art, to involving them in simple household chores, parents can seamlessly merge children in the adult world

■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

AKILA KANNADASAN

"I just hate classes on the computer! My mother makes me sit in front of it all day. I can't even see my friends on the screen properly." This is a four-year-old's rant. Apart from the economy, if there's one other thing the pandemic has sent for a toss, it is our education system. Classes are all online now, including those for children as young as three. This comes with its own problems.

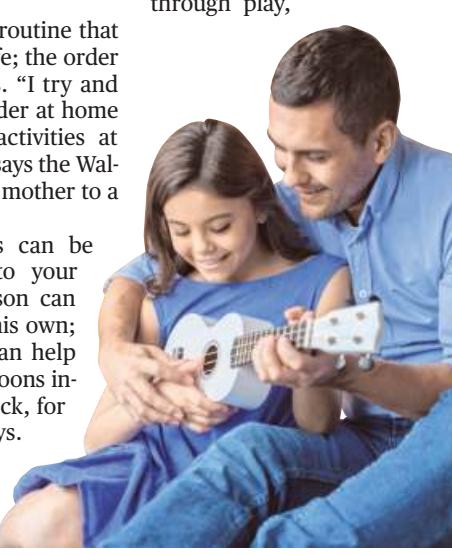
Dr Sowmya Bhaskaran TS, Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist at Coimbatore-based Insight Clinic, says, "Online classes for children

younger than six are not helpful." However, she adds that her views on screen time are not the same as they were before the pandemic. "I do not view screens as 'bad' any more," she says. But then, once classes are over, it helps to engage your child in something that does not involve gadgets. We asked parents to pitch in on how this can be done:

**Give life a rhythm**  
Madhu Karthik, who is based in Erode, believes in the Waldorf concept of 'rhythm' and making children feel responsible and developing a sense of belonging. She feels that today,

children miss the routine that school brings to life; the order a time-table offers. "I try and bring the same order at home by having fixed activities at stipulated times," says the Waldorf educator and mother to a six-year-old.

These activities can be fixed according to your child's age. "My son can wash utensils on his own; a younger child can help put the washed spoons inside the correct rack, for instance," she says. "We also fold clothes together. A younger child can fold a to-



and that parents need not look anywhere else for material to keep children engaged.

**Enter your teen's world**  
Talking to teenagers can be tricky, more so at a time of uncertainty and recurring lockdowns. Chennai-based Deepa Packiyanath, who has twins aged 12, and a 17-year-old daughter, says that most teenagers crave a safe space to share their feelings openly. "All the hours spent online affects her; I ensure that I spend our morning tea time together, during which we chat about everything that interests her," she says. And to get her daughter to open up, Deepa says she tries to be involved in her world. "She is into K-pop, and so I listen to it too, and ask her doubts here and there," she adds. This leads to more conversations, and in the end, it's a win-win for both parent and child.

**Embrace an adventure**  
K R Balathandapani runs an academy in Coimbatore that guides children in Science and Math. "My 10-year-old daughter sits through the sessions," he says. "Sometimes, she runs away saying I'm repeating the same thing," laughs the 50-year-old. Before the pandemic, Balathandapani regularly travelled on work – he works in sustainability – his daughter would accompany him. "Active parents, such as entrepreneurs, farmers, or the self-employed, can afford to take their children along with them on their work day so that the child can observe them," he says. During lockdown, Balathandapani has been setting up kitchen gardens for people, and his daughter is right there, learning by seeing.

**Bubble fun**  
US-based Sindhuja Sandeep, mother of an active four-year-old, has long lists of activities to keep her son engaged through the day. "We melt crayons and put it in a cookie cutter to get new shapes," she says. "I also give him a tub of water and some soap and he makes bubbles; I toss in some utensils and he pretends to wash them." She adds that he makes play-dough of various colour combinations using food colour.

## COULD IT BE THAT...

# Yoga is being sexualised?



SUNALINI MATHEW

If you look at yoga search trends over the past five years in India, on Google Trends, (a dynamic matrix that tell us, in data terms, what people searched for online) the first three results were in Hindi. "Sexy yoga", "Yoga sexy video", and "yoga sex video" showed what Google calls "breakout" numbers, meaning it shot up by over 5000% compared to the previous five years.

How did yoga make the shift from spiritual practice to soft porn?

For starters, yoga has gone mainstream world over, and once something is seen as potential money-spinner, capitalism will turn its greedy eye to it. Yoga was tagged onto the sports-meets-fashion industry, and marketing departments turned it into the 'aspirational glamour' segment, where young, slim, white women curved themselves into a vrischikasana, balancing themselves on their arms like it was the most natural thing to do. Women's magazines promoted it as a means to sexual nirvana.

Much like the expensive, finished cotton clothes that we imported into India during British rule, made from the raw material we had supplied, we brought back yoga, in tights and sports bras – as a fitness habit and a weight-loss promise, abandoning the spiritual reason for its being. Entrepreneurial Indian women benefited – they had the eyeballs of many like them who wanted to learn yoga. Buoyed by the nascent but quickly growing

amateur sports industry, where runners were told to "also do yoga" and Yoga Day began to be promoted, it became a parallel business. The growth of social media influencers fuelled the 'market', where styling became all-important: soft light, an excellent background, beautiful bodies and clothes.

In their earlier avatar until about 10 years ago, yoga instructors in India, much like beauticians, would go from house to house, or building to building, teaching people how to go through a set of asanas. Now, this world was open to upper-middle-class women (men too, though like in the modelling world more women benefitted). Along with a knowledge of yoga, they also had urbanisation, education, feminism on their side, to be able to carve out a sometimes rough path for others after – yoga had, even 50 years ago, been male dominated. The rough path included nasty, sometimes lewd comments.

The nature of what can trigger sexual desire is nuanced, but there is something to be said about a) just seeing more women in a space they weren't dominating, b) seeing the beauty of the human form suddenly 'out there' on social media, when we don't see it in real life – on a road or even in most gyms. It is a reaction to a change in the culture of fitness; a generation of women now learning not just to accept, but to celebrate their bodies.

This search for yoga videos that titillate then, is a phase, until India gets used to seeing women revel in a sport in clothes that are comfortable and that show the form, as is often needed for yoga teachers. Until then, we'll keep seeing searches that deflect from the practice, and focus on quite something else.



■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

## CONVERSATIONS WITH SELF

### We are warriors

The fear that we feel is real, yet let us not allow it to overstay in us



TT SRINATH

Several persons I know have either fallen ill owing to COVID-19 and some I know have suddenly passed on.

This pandemic and news we hear is telling me that the worst moments are going to roost here while all the good stuff seems to be crumbling.

So how and what may I do to get by, to wake up every morning and not feel the dread I have been experiencing?

One thing I am slowly yet surely learning is that overthinking tends to push me into worrying about the worst scenarios.

'The world is not stopping for my tragedy, it keeps moving and we have to move with it', so I read somewhere and this is true.

A couple of days ago on a YouTube channel, a gentleman mentioned a gallant officer who died fighting it out alone. His motto was 'the cavalry is not coming so I better take charge.'

Given all this I am telling myself that I have to shore up from within. I cannot let what is happening around me paralyse me.

We do not have to consider our fears as reminders that we are weak. Let us see them as proof of our keenness to be resilient, only

then can we drum up energy and the spirit to combat this foe that is chipping away at our confidence, our roots and our very being.

It is our fear of not being in control that is paralysing us. Fear that we feel is real, let us not fool ourselves, yet let us not allow it to overstay in us. Since we anyway cannot see the future why get excited or worried about it, let it just play itself out.

The only way I will douse fear is by facing it; just as a shadow diminishes in size and disappears as we walk towards it, so will my fear if I so act. Albert Camus the philosopher says, 'there is winter around me, everything is cold and dying, yet in my heart there is an invincible summer.'

I sincerely hope this resonates with many of us.

The writer is an organisational and behavioural consultant. He can be contacted at tt.srinath@gmail.com



GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

SOMA BASU

Somesh Singh, a former professor at NID Ahmedabad and the former Director of Institute of Apparel Management, declares that the Covest, a jacket he has designed, merges crafts with technology. The four-layer jacket is made using cotton printed Ajrakh (a block printing technique from Gujarat), and has various in-built capabilities to protect the wearer from infections outdoors.

It took him more than two months of research, trial, and error, before the prototype was finalised. Constructed with Cemi-Flex (cement fabric combining natural and synthetic material that looks like leather), the jacket is coated with Viroban-N9 SC100, an anti-bacterial and anti-viral textile finish. It is fitted with social distancing sensors, sanitisation pockets, a thermometer to measure the body temperature, and an in-built mask.

The Ajrakh is sourced from national awardee Abdul Jabbar Khatri, a craftsman from Bhuj. Somesh is awaiting an ISO 45001 certification, after which the jacket will be available online, around September. Initially, it will be priced at ₹4,999 and available in sizes S, M, L and XL. Excerpts from an interview with Somesh, who is also an NIFT graduate and has worked with the Indian Army in the past to design warm clothing for soldiers posted in Siachen.

**How did the idea of the jacket occur to you?**

Like many others I believed the novel coronavirus will go away in three weeks after lockdown 1.0. But it didn't. One day, I went out to fill petrol in my car and forgot the mask at home. After using the credit card for payment, I wondered how I could sanitise it, along with other personal belongings like car keys,



For protection Somesh Singh working on the Covest prototype ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

### answer in combining crafts with technology?

As multiple doubts gave birth to ideas, I zeroed onto what is popularly known as smart clothing abroad, but not much known in our country. The best product I could think of was a garment-like jacket that could help to embed sensors in a 360 degree sphere to ensure the mandatory physical distancing, to fight COVID-19 in a mindful way. And handcrafting it would also mean jobs for craftspeople.



# Full tech jacket

This smart Ajrakh jacket comes with social distancing sensors, sanitisation pockets, a thermometer and an in-built mask

coins, kerchief, wrist watch, spectacles or sun glasses, mask, gloves and mobile phone. Over the next few days I read hundreds of articles to understand the nature of the virus and it be-

came clear that as part of new norms to effectively tackle the coronavirus, a person's behaviour will have to be altered.

### How did you find the

### How does fashion meet health in your product?

It is fashion moulded into functional health! For instance, the mask was never an accessory and wearing it is not our habit. But now the convertible collar of the jacket will not allow you to forget. Introducing Ajrakh print as a start will find quick acceptance in the market.

### What is the purpose of the jacket?

The jacket is not for treatment, but has been developed to check the contagion by incor-

porating different preventive features. It is important to build a culture of alertness through our dressing, just as we are working on immunity boosters, given a future vulnerable to infections.

### Could you describe the jacket?

The garment looks like any usual jacket but for its unique features such as a sensor fitted on the shoulders and the back that beep if you do not maintain the recommended distance of two metres with others on any side. A digital thermometer fitted in the front reads the body temperature on simple finger contact.

Three-layered 6x10 inch pockets are stitched in the front where all your personal belongings fit in for sanitisation in 30 seconds under UV light of 260 nanometre wavelength. The metal buttons are switches to operate the LED lights for the UV radiation and the seams act as circuits. When you open the pocket flap to take your things out, the radiation circuit gets cut.

### How does a person maintain the jacket?

It is regular daily wear, which you will need to dry clean preferably every fortnight. Remove the batteries before giving it. The mask is detachable for frequent home wash.

### Can the jacket be used in other situations?

Since this is a jacket made for the COVID-19 pandemic, the sensor range is two metres. It can be increased for visually challenged people for proximity alert, and women can be warned of stalkers. Bikers can prevent accidents with vehicles coming from behind. I also want to provide a fragrance finish to the jackets to reduce stress through aromatherapy.

From island-dwelling geckos to bats in Berlin, chiropterologist Rohit Chakravarthy shows how sound produced by different creatures can surprise you

MEGHNA MAJUMDAR

Bat songs sound as delicate as birdsong, only it is far too loud for human ears. Geckos on the Andaman islands, on the other hand, have a sharp, yell-like call that can be heard by people from hundreds of metres away. You and I in the city, however, cannot hear them unless we follow chiropterologist Rohit Chakravarthy's recent social media posts.

"If you have been to an interpretation centre in a forest (in any national park), you can see the photo of an animal, press a button, and hear its call," says Rohit over phone from Nagpur.

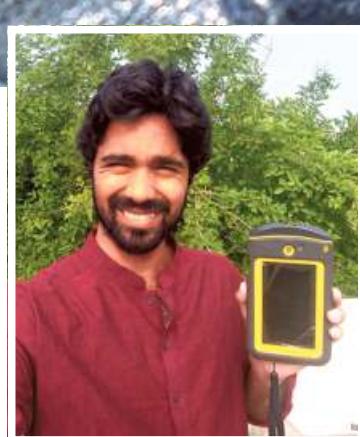
His posts on Instagram are similar: press 'sound on' on the image of a pipistrelle bat and you will hear a slight, barely discernible cheep followed by a sudden string of twitterings that could easily have been mistaken for the chirp of a little bird had it lasted longer. Swipe to the photo of a European free-tailed bat, and the sound that greets you can only be described as the zaps of a miniature lasergun – just like one a child mimics at play.

Another post features a solitary image of a tokay gecko – a completely different genera from the garden lizards and *tikki* [house lizards] that we find in our



## As the gecko calls

homes", he says – whose short and abrupt call is startling and loud enough to cut through the whisper-like white noise of other nocturnal creatures that can be heard in the background. As Rohit puts it: "Some animals can't be reduced to photographs; they have to be felt with



more than one sense."

The sounds are diverse and captivating, but unfamiliar to most people. "With bats, the more appealing, social calls are heard much less. What you hear mostly are chirp-like sounds," says Rohit, adding, "There are tonnes of resources for

birdcalls, but for most animals and even mammals, records of calls are few and only available with researchers."

Rohit is not talking about exotic or far-flung creatures: take the common squirrel, for instance. "The squirrels that you hear in Bengaluru are a different species than the squirrels in Nagpur and further North. When birdwatchers first hear the sound of the squirrel here, they just can't believe it's coming from a squirrel. They assume it's a bird. Even these simple mammalian sounds are not well-known; there is no proper repository," he says.

His #animalsounds series is not an attempt to build this missing repository. It is partly to dispel a fresh wave of hatred against bats that have sprung up due to COVID-19 – "Bats living near cities and other human habitats are not the bat species that carry Coronavirus," he reiterates. But for the most part, it is "just a fun project to do at home". Not everyone has a stack of recordings built over years of fieldwork in different continents to sift through, but he points out that there are plenty of sounds to record within the lively confines of backyards.

"Lizards, squirrels, mice, shrews..." he believes recording them will be helpful in the long run. For instance: "Different cities have different noise levels, so some animals might inherently be communicating in a different way to be heard over city noise."

Backyard recordings of familiar creatures can help us understand this. "If different photographs of the same species come into the same platform, you can start looking at differences in colours across its geographical range. If you do it long-term, who knows, you might start finding trends like changes in habits due to environmental change. That same thing is also very likely with sound."

## HOMING IN

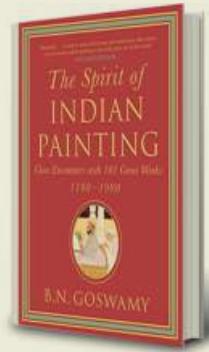


One has to be a good reader to feel different kinds of power, says dancer, writer and poet **Tishani Doshi**. So in her **Reading List**, she recommends a book on paintings, tales of war, and a play of poems

SOMA BASU

## The Spirit of Indian Painting by BN Goswamy

The urge with such a beautiful book is to consume it greedily, but the book suggests slowing down, to stay with one painting for a long time and find a way into it. For me, Goswamy reframed the relationship between the visual and the word, the performer and the receiver; by giving a name to instincts I had only wispy notions of, he linked me to a concrete study of aesthetics. With this book, I experienced a kind of transformation that was nothing short of magical.



## If This Is a Man by Primo Levi

Primo Levi's account of his year in Auschwitz – the complexity and complicity involved in surviving – drew me to this translated work since lockdown made me think about questions of survival. He shows us power structures, and how because these exist, you have "the drowned and the saved". We only need to look around to see these structures still exist.



## The Little Virtues by Natalia Ginzburg

Written during the period after the Second World War, her essays move between the vocation of writing, domesticity, war, friendship and loss. They are autobiographical and political, keeping the most perfect balance at all times. Never sentimental, never cold, Natalia is a writer of great restraint, asking courageous moral questions, but also finding a way to draw circles around personal grief and loss.

## Deaf Republic by Ilya Kaminsky

I am interested in the individual's role in the collective, which leads me to this book of poems, or rather a play made up of stand alone poems. It opens in the town of Vasenka where soldiers kill a deaf boy, Petya, and the gunshot becomes the last thing the citizens hear. We meet characters as they live through this epidemic of deafness, learning sign language as a way of resistance. These poems are about silence and oppression and ways of countering violence.

We would love to know how you are keeping busy at home. Tell us what you are reading at metro@thehindu.co.in

## Pain and love

Patrick Kirst, composer for *The Kissing Booth* films on Netflix, talks about weaving tension into onscreen romance with his score



DIVYA KALA BHAVANI

At a time when darker and mature romantic comedies are favoured, the world of *The Kissing Booth* (2018) has an early 2000s romcom feel to it. Perhaps that is what drew German-born composer Patrick Kirst to the quirky project. Now, the film's sequel is out on Netflix and Patrick is thrilled to follow the young characters on their journeys.

Over Skype from his Los Angeles home, Patrick says he had focussed on

creating character themes as well besides the anthemic for the film. "Throughout *The Kissing Booth* 2, I was able to develop these themes more emotionally because the story has matured with Elle and Noah in a long-distance relationship," he says.

With a long-distance relationship comes a lot of uncertainty and fear – both of which are strongly enveloped by love – and Patrick was mindful that the music reflects this. These moments, after all, were not so present in the first film.

Deeper connection Patrick Kirst (below) a still from *The Kissing Booth 2* • NETFLIX AND SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



"We are planting a lot of question marks in the movie, so we have to musically weave tension in and out accordingly," he adds.

Though the film features popular songs such as 'More' by The Eiffel or 'Build Me Up Buttercup' by The Foundations, Patrick's score can be heard during romantic montages or in a scene depicting emotional crossroads. The composer enhances the emotion already present with strings overlaid to pull the viewer in deeper. "The film industry does this quite a bit, actually. It should come across as though the strings are part of the natural arrangement already," he says.

Recently, Netflix announced that *The Kissing Booth* 3 too had been filmed be-

fore COVID-19 outbreak. "We are in the process of finessing the edit. The beginning few weeks, for me, is about procrastination. I just want to get it right because

I'm very analytical," Patrick says, admitting that he had come on board the film series unsure of what to expect.

He was baffled when he saw a rough cut of the first film, but continued to work on compositions because he knew he was part of 'something special'. "When I was travelling, I would converse with strangers and when I would say I worked on these films,

they would get super excited and talk about how the film impacted them," he adds.

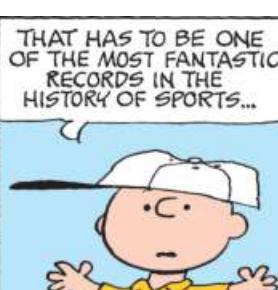
The *Kissing Booth* 2 is streaming on Netflix

We are in the process of finessing the edit. I just want to get it right because I'm very analytical.  
PATRICK KIRST  
Composer, on *The Kissing Booth* 3

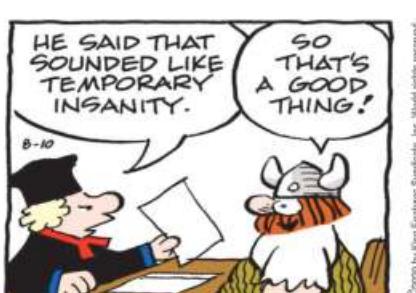
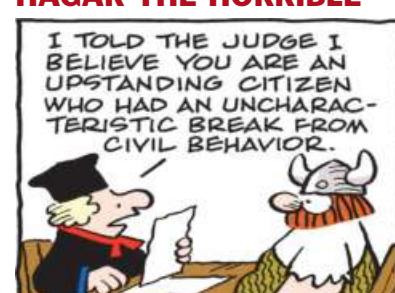
## POOCHE CAFE



## PEANUTS



## HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



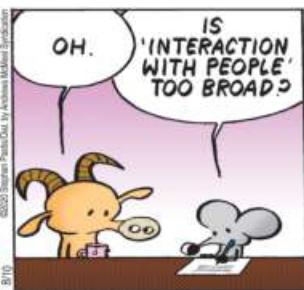
## CALVIN AND HOBBES



## TIGER



## PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



# Loya jirga approves prisoner release

Of the 400 contentious Taliban militants to be freed, over 150 are on death row for serious crimes

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
KABUL

The Afghan government and the Taliban are "on the verge of peace talks" after thousands of prominent Afghans approved the release of about 400 contentious militant prisoners, the head of Kabul's peace council said on Sunday.

The prisoners' fate has been a crucial hurdle in launching peace talks between the two warring sides, which had committed to completing a prisoner exchange before negotiations can start.

#### Three-day meeting

The resolution was passed at the end of a three-day "loya jirga" – a traditional Afghan meeting of tribal elders sometimes held to decide on controversial issues. "In order to remove the hurdles for the start of peace talks, stopping bloodshed, and for the good of the public, the jirga approves the release of 400 prisoners as demanded



**A difficult trade-off:** Afghan President Ashraf Ghani holding up the resolution on the last day of the Loya Jirga in Kabul on Sunday. ■ AP

by the Taliban," jirga member Atefa Tayeb announced.

According to an official list seen by AFP, many of the inmates are accused of serious offences, including many involved in attacks that killed scores of Afghans and foreigners, with more than 150 of them on death row.

The jirga urged the government to give assurances to the population that the released prisoners would be monitored and would not be allowed to return to the battlefield, adding that foreign fighters should be sent back to their respective countries.

It also demanded a "serious, immediate and lasting ceasefire" in the country.

"The decision of the loya jirga has removed the last excuse and obstacles on the way to peace talks. We are on the verge of peace talks," said Abdullah Abdullah, who

is leading the government's peace process and was appointed head of the loya jirga. Afghan President Ashraf Ghani said he would sign a decree to release the prisoners on Sunday. "The Taliban should now demonstrate that they are not afraid of a nationwide ceasefire," he said. The Afghan government has released almost 5,000 Taliban inmates, but authorities had balked at

freeing the final prisoners demanded by the Taliban.

#### High-profile attacks

The prisoners include 44 insurgents of particular concern to the United States and other countries for their role in "high-profile" attacks. Five are linked to the 2018 attack on the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul that killed 40 people, including 14 foreigners. A Taliban militant involved in the massive May 2017 truck bombing near the German embassy in Kabul is also on the list.

The family of French aid worker Bettina Goislard who was murdered in Afghanistan in 2003 said they would not accept the release of her killers, who are on the list. The decision has raised hopes for talks, however. "Based on the information I have, the intra-Afghan talks would begin within two to three days after the release of the 400 Taliban prisoners," former President Hamid Karzai told the jirga.

It is the second-hardest hit country after the United States



**Counting the dead:** A health union member in Sao Paulo, Brazil, holding a sign reading "Mourning for the 1,000 dead" during a tribute to the victims of the virus. ■ AFP

# Brazil's COVID-19 death toll crosses one lakh mark

It is the second-hardest hit country after the United States

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
RIO DE JANEIRO

Brazil on Saturday surpassed 1,00,000 COVID-19 deaths and three million cases of infection, crossing the grim milestone after President Jair Bolsonaro said he had a "clear conscience" on his response to the outbreak.

With 1,00,477 fatalities and 30,12,412 confirmed cases, the South American nation of 212 million people is the second hardest-hit country in the global pandemic, after the United States. The Health Ministry reported 905 new deaths in the past 24 hours, as well as 49,970 fresh cases. But the official figures are most likely an undercount, with experts estimating that the total number of infections could be up to six times higher due to insufficient testing.

Brazil has seen 478 deaths per million people, a figure roughly equivalent to that of the United States (487), but lower than that of Spain (609) or Italy (583).

#### 4 days of mourning

Senate speaker Davi Alcolumbre announced four days of mourning in Congress to pay tribute to the country's 1,00,000-plus virus victims.

The COVID-19 outbreak in Brazil is showing no sign of slowing as it enters its sixth month. The country's first confirmed COVID-19 case was identified in Sao Paulo on February 26, with the first death on March 12, also in the city. Brazil marked 50,000 deaths a hundred days later, but then doubled that total in just half the time.

Under Mr. Trump, relations with Taiwan have warmed dramatically and he has approved a number of major military sales, including F-16 fighter jets. In southern States such as Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, hardest-hit by the virus in absolute numbers, the situation has stabilised, while the virus's presence has declined in northern regions after reaching catastrophic levels in April and May. At Copacabana beach in Rio, activists from the

bring the State's total to 210. The southeastern State, with infections concentrated in Melbourne, accounts for a lion's share of the national tally of more than 21,000 cases and 295 deaths.

The State has imposed a night curfew, tightened restrictions on people's daily movements and ordered large parts of the economy to close.

regions and areas where the virus was late in arriving, particularly the country's south and center-west.

In southeastern States such as Sao Paulo and Rio de Janeiro, hardest-hit by the virus in absolute numbers, the situation has stabilised, while the virus's presence has declined in northern regions after reaching catastrophic levels in April and May. At Copacabana beach in Rio, activists from the

NGO Rio de Paz released 1,000 red balloons on Saturday while standing between 100 black crosses stuck in the sand, in a tribute to the victims. Former President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva on Twitter denounced "the arrogance of a President who has chosen to describe this cruel virus as a little flu, defying science and even death, and who bears in his soul the responsibility for all the lives lost."

# U.S. Health Secretary visits Taiwan, angering China

Alex Azar's trip marks the highest level visit to the island by an American official since 1979

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
TAIPEI

A senior member of U.S. President Donald Trump's administration landed in Taiwan on Sunday for Washington's highest level visit since switching diplomatic recognition to China in 1979, a trip Beijing has condemned.

During the three-day visit, Health Secretary Alex Azar will meet President Tsai Ing-wen, who advocates Taiwan being recognised as a sovereign nation and is loathed

by China's leaders. Ms. Tsai's office said the meeting would take place on Monday morning.

Mr. Azar is the most senior U.S. Cabinet member to visit Taiwan in decades and his visit comes as relations between the world's two biggest economic powers plunge to historic lows.

**Lessons on fighting virus**  
Washington has billed the Taiwan trip as an opportunity to learn from the island's fight against the COVID-19

and to celebrate its progressive values. "This trip is a recognition of Taiwan's success in combating COVID-19 and a testament to the shared beliefs that open and democratic societies are best equipped to combatting disease threats like COVID-19," a health and human services department official told reporters ahead of the visit.

But Beijing balks at any recognition of self-ruled Taiwan, which it claims as its own territory and vows to one day seize, by force if necessary.

It has described Mr. Azar's visit as a threat to "peace and stability", while China's Defence Minister warned against Washington making any "dangerous moves".

As well as meeting Ms. Tsai, Mr. Azar will hold talks with his counterpart Chen Shih-chung and Foreign Minister Joseph Wu. He will also meet COVID-19 experts and give a speech to public health students as well as alumni of a training programme with the U.S. Cen-

ters for Disease Control and Prevention. Taiwan has become a poster child for defeating the COVID-19 thanks to a well-honed track and tracing programme as well as firm border controls.

Despite its proximity and economic links to China it has recorded fewer than 500 infections and seven deaths.

Under Mr. Trump, relations with Taiwan have warmed dramatically and he has approved a number of major military sales, including F-16 fighter jets.

# Trump signs order extending virus relief

Stimulus offers unemployment benefits

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
BEDMINSTER

U.S. President Donald Trump on Saturday signed executive actions extending financial relief to Americans hit by the COVID-19 pandemic as polls showed a large majority of voters unhappy with his handling of the crisis.

The four measures marked a presidential show of strength after Mr. Trump's Republican Party and White House team failed to agree with Opposition Democrats in Congress on a new stimulus package aimed at stopping vulnerable Americans from falling through the cracks.

Many Americans had been relying on relief measures approved earlier by Congress, but which mostly expired in July. Mr. Trump's measures are likely to face

court challenges because Congress controls federal spending, and in any case they may add up to less money than initially appears.

One key Trump order promises to get \$400 a week added to Americans' unemployment benefits, while two others offer some protection from evictions and relief for student loans.

The \$400 assistance is below the \$600 offered in the expired stimulus package. It may also end up amounting only to \$300 extra a week, because Mr. Trump said \$100 would be provided from State budgets – and only if States were able to do so.

A fourth measure ordered a freeze in payroll taxes. This makes a big headline for Mr. Trump but is only a deferral, rather than a cut in the tax.

The swearing in ceremony was held at the Kelaniya Raja Maha Vihara, at a revered Buddhist temple near Colombo, where his younger brother and President Gotabaya Rajapaksa administered the oath, after he bowed and took Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa's blessings.

The emphatic two-thirds majority to the ruling party in the recent poll, after Mr. Gotabaya Rajapaksa's big win in November, allows the Rajapaksa brothers to amend the Constitution. As part of their poll campaign, the brothers vowed to repeal a 2015 legislation capping presidency at two terms and trimming the President's executive powers. The ninth Parliament of Sri Lanka will not only see the siblings helm the country's two most powerful offices, but will

win among its members, their third and elder brother Chamal Rajapaksa, a former Speaker, his son Shasheendra Rajapaksa and Namal Rajapaksa, son of Mr. Mahinda Rajapaksa and a popular former MP from the southern Hambantota district.

**The Tamil question**  
Both the President and Prime Minister have under-

scored the need for greater development in the country's civil war-affected areas, while the Tamil leadership is also concerned about the minority's long-pending demand for greater political rights.

In the decade following the long civil war, Sri Lanka's northern Tamils have been demanding a lasting political solution, with a greater measure of power to self-govern. R. Sampanthan, Leader of the Tamil National Alliance (TNA) – which suffered an electoral setback and secured only 10 of its 16 seats this election – said the people of the country had given the government a strong mandate.

"It has the authority and power to do all that is necessary for the people. As far as we are concerned, we will extend to the government our fullest cooperation to everything done in national

interest and in the interest of solving the country's problems," he told The Hindu.

Much work has been done in the past, including the Indo-Lanka Accord of 1987 and the consequent 13th Amendment that speaks of power devolution, Mr. Sampanthan said. Discussions on improving the 13th Amendment continued with Presidents R. Premadasa, Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga, Mahinda Rajapaksa in the past, and with the former government of Maithripala Sirisena-Ranil Wickremesinghe.

The new government, he said, must "evolve a formula without delay" for the resolution of the lingering national question. "I believe it will be part and parcel of the new Constitution being contemplated," he told The Hindu.

The inaugural session of the new Parliament is scheduled for August 20.

# Lebanese protesters call for sustained uprising

Dozens injured in weekend demonstrations at Martyrs' Square; Macron holds donors conference



**Anger on the streets:** A Lebanese protester waving the national flag in Beirut on Saturday. ■ AFP

leader to do so after the explosion, and promised humanitarian aid would come but that profound political reform was needed to resolve the country's problems and secure longer term relief.

Protesters have called on the government to quit over what they say was negligence that led to Tuesday's

explosion. Anger boiled over into violence scenes in central Beirut on Saturday.

**Cabinet should resign'**  
Christian Maronite Patriarch Bechara Boutros al-Rai said the Cabinet should resign if it cannot "change the way it governs". "The resignation of an MP or a Minister is not enough (...) the whole go-

vernment should resign if it is unable to help the country recover," he said in his Sunday sermon.

Information Minister Malal Abd Samad said she was resigning on Sunday, citing the explosion and the failure of the government to carry out reforms.

Dozens of people were injured in Saturday's protests, the biggest since October when thousands of people took to the streets in protests against corruption, bad governance and mismanagement. About 10,000 people gathered at Martyrs' Square, which was transformed into a battle zone in the evening between police and protesters who tried to break down a barrier along a road leading to Parliament.

Soldiers in vehicles mounted with machine guns were stationed beside Martyrs' Square on Sunday. "People should sleep in the streets and demonstrate against the government until it falls," said lawyer Maya Habi.

# Belarus strongman faces stiff challenge

Lukashenko has ruled since 1994

REUTERS  
MINSK

Belarus voted in an election on Sunday pitting President Alexander Lukashenko against a former teacher who emerged from obscurity to lead the biggest challenge in years against the man who has ruled the country for a quarter of a century.

Mr. Lukashenko, 65, is almost certain to win a sixth consecutive term but could face a new wave of protests amid anger over his handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, the economy and his human rights record.

He faces a surprise rival in Svetlana Tikhanouskaya, a former English teacher who entered the race after her husband, an anti-government blogger who intended to run, was jailed.



**A woman reading a ballot before casting her vote in Belarus on Sunday.** ■ REUTERS

In possible anticipation of unrest, local media reported squares being blocked off by the authorities in Minsk and the presence of some soldiers on the capital's outskirts. Social media networks experienced disruption. Queues also formed outside the Belarusian embassies in Moscow and Kiev for voters casting their ballot abroad.

**30 killed, 12 missing after floods in S. Korea**

SEOUL

Landslides and flooding triggered by days of heavy rain in South Korea have left at least 30 people dead and 12 missing, officials said on Sunday, warning of more downpours. Torrential rain has wreaked havoc across the country since the beginning of the month, but nearly half of the deaths occurred in the past three days, according to the Interior Ministry. ■ AFP

**New Zealand marks 100 days of no new cases**

WELLINGTON

New Zealand marked 100 days on Sunday with no recorded cases of the virus in the community but health officials warned there was no room for complacency. There are still 23 active cases but all were detected at the border when entering the country and are being held in isolation facilities. ■ AFP

## ASK US



K. NITYA KALYANI

**Q.** Suppose I decide to buy an online term insurance plan of a life insurance company, is it possible for me to buy the same through an agent of a life insurance company or should I apply for it on my own through online only?

V. SUBRAMANIAN

**A.** Agents and websites (of the insurance company itself or of an insurance web aggregator) are two different distribution channels for insurance. You have the option of using either of these by submitting your proposal form and paying your premium through them. So, when it comes to the purchase transaction, they are mutually exclusive.

The insurance company will have independent sales commission arrangements with differing intermediaries (and, usually, a premium discount if you buy from the company website directly).

Some products are designated to be sold only online and, conversely, all products will not be available online.

A classic purchase strategy of customers of other goods and services has been to research online and buy offline.

This combines the benefits of extensive product information material across companies and products. In addition, you can research on third-party websites also. This much information would not be as easily available from an individual sales person.

Going to an agent after you do your research will help you take your purchase forward with better clarity of what you want and what is available where.

Also, once an agent is in the picture, you get to buy only the products offered by the companies he represents. For information, an insurance agent can represent one life insurer, one non-life insurer and one standalone health insurer.

## Health insurance for parents

**Q.** I am 27 years old. My mother and father are 51 and 61, respectively. My company provides a family floater health insurance, that includes parents, covering up to ₹5 lakh. I want to opt for additional health insurance for them.

**What else do I need to consider for health insurance and how will this be useful in my tax savings?**

ABINASH PATTJOSHI

**A.** Additional cover is always wise, and the sooner the better as you will not have too many exclusions in the form of pre-existing conditions and, if so, your waiting period clock can start ticking and you can become eligible for coverage benefits.

Please make an assessment of what likely illnesses they may face and how much treatment for it costs where you live. This will give you an indication of the sum insured you need.

Also check the option of keeping your employment cover as the basic hospitalisation cover and opt for buying a top-up or a super top-up cover as that is a more cost-effective way of increasing cover.

Your tax break on premium for parents will be as per the latest provisions of Section 80D of the Income-Tax Act, 1961, which is currently ₹25,000 (₹50,000 if either of the parents is a senior citizen).

Remember, this is only if they are dependent on you.

(The writer is a business journalist specialising in insurance and corporate history

Readers can send in queries on personal finance and investing to moneywise@thehindu.co.in. Our experts who write on personal finance will answer these queries. Moneywise will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund scheme, share or fixed deposit.

## LOOSE CHANGE

RAVIKANTH



"Tell me again? The money we put in stocks is considered as what? Savings or expenditure?"

## MIND YOUR MONEY

# Saving for a GOAL

Start a systematic investment plan with a special financial objective as it will bring a sense of direction to investments

GAURAV MASHRUWALA

On a live TV show, Roshan from Pune called. His query was, should a SIP, in which a sum of ₹5,000 is invested monthly, be continued with or stopped.

In response, he was asked about the financial goal for which this particular SIP was started. There was no specific answer.

Many a time, we start an SIP –

Systematic Investment Plan – without linking it with any specific financial goal.

SIPs are a way for individuals to invest a fixed, pre-decided amount of money into a mutual fund scheme at pre-defined intervals, usually every month.

Most of the time, SIPs are started without any intention to fulfil any particular financial goal. This has limited benefits, in the sense that regular investing is a good habit and to that extent, starting an SIP is a good decision. However, if it is linked to our specific financial goals, it becomes much more useful.

There are various financial goals we have to fulfil in life and for



IMAGING: J.A. PREMKUMAR

## THINK INVESTOR

## Do your systematic investments need a pause?

Investment Recess allows an individual facing salary cuts to ease COVID-19-related pressure on cash flows

VENKATESH BANGARUSWAMY

If your income has declined this year as a fallout of COVID-19, you may be under pressure to manage your cash flows. In this article, we discuss why you should consider taking an Investment Recess to reduce the pressure on your cash flows.

Investment Recess is a temporary period – typically one year – where you stop your systematic investments earmarked for achieving your life goals.

Suppose you have been saving ₹20,000 every month till your income was affected because of the COVID-19-related lockdown.

You have to either cut your current consumption to continue saving ₹20,000 or reduce your savings to maintain your current consumption.

As humans, we suffer from present bias. We prefer instant gratification to deriving greater happiness in the future. So, consuming now is much better



**Tough choice:** With incomes declining due to lockdowns, individuals are under pressure to manage cash flows. ■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCK

than saving today to spend in the future! But you have to save to achieve your life goals such as buying a house or funding child's college education.

So, what should you do? It is difficult to cut non-discretionary expenses. This refers to essential expenses needed to run your household such as groceries and utility bills.

Also, you may want to spend some money on discretionary expenses (take-away dining, for instance) to reduce your emotional stress. That leaves you with little choice but to cut your monthly savings, leading to an Investment Recess.

You should take an Investment Recess on all systematic investments in equity mutual funds. This is required to ensure that your investments do not add to your already-high cash-flow volatility arising from unstable income.

For the same reason, you should also liquidate your exist-

ing equity investments.

## RD no exception

You should, if required, also take an Investment Recess on recurring deposit (RD) earmarked for achieving any life goal, except your high-priority goal. A high-priority goal is one that you cannot postpone –

your child's college education fund, for instance.

Note that banks may charge a

penalty if you fail to deposit

money into your RD on the

agreed date every month. An alter-

native will be to continue

with your RD and use fixed de-

posits (FDs) to ease the pres-

sure on your cash flows. The

flip side is that lump sum mon-

ey in your FDs will provide more emotional comfort than continually building your invest-

ments through RD. The choice between taking an Investment Recess on RD and breaking a FD should depend on associated penalties.

You should also work with your bank to explore the possi-

bility of converting the money

accumulated in your RD into a

FD at a lower interest rate to re-

duce penalty charges.

These are unprecedented times. And such situations may force you to work against your best judgment, especially be-

cause pressure on cash flows is salient. One way to lower your emotional stress arising from cash flow pressure is to transfer some of your existing FD to your savings account.

Having normal balance in

the savings account is one way

to cheat your brain into think-

ing your cash flow levels are

comfortable. Of course, moving money from an FD to a savings account will reduce interest in-

come. Also, taking an Invest-

ment Recess will hurt life goals.

But you are justified in being present-biased when your cash flows are under pressure.

So, your roadmap to reducing your cash flow pressure is as follows: First, take an Investment Recess on all equity invest-

ments. Second, liquidate all

your existing equity invest-

ments and place the sale pro-

ceeds in monthly-income bank

deposits. The periodic interest

income can reduce the cash-

flow gap arising from a salary

cut. Third, take an Investment Recess on RDs or break your ex-

isting FDs depending on the pen-

alties. As the last resort, use

fixed assets as collateral to bor-

row money.

(The author offers training programmes for individuals to manage their personal investments)

Bank Fixed Deposit Rates				
Bank Name	Highest Slab	1-year tenure	3-year tenure	5-year tenure
<b>SMALL FINANCE BANKS</b>				
Suryoday Small Finance Bank	8.25	7.25	8.10	8.25
Utkarsh Small Finance Bank	8.00	7.75	7.75	7.75
Jana Small Finance Bank	7.50	7.25	7.50	7.25
Fincare Small Finance Bank	7.50	6.95	7.20	6.50
Equitas Small Finance Bank	7.35	7.10	7.15	6.75
AU Small Finance Bank	7.25	6.00	7.25	7.00
ESAF Small Finance Bank	7.00	7.00	6.50	6.00
Capital Small Finance Bank	6.65	6.50	6.50	6.25
Ujjivan Small Finance Bank	6.50	6.50	6.05	5.80
<b>PRIVATE SECTOR BANKS</b>				
RBL Bank	7.25	7.00	7.25	6.75
IDFC First Bank	7.00	6.75	6.75	6.75
IndusInd Bank	7.00	7.00	6.75	6.75
DCB Bank	6.95	6.50	6.95	6.95
Nainital Bank	6.50	5.40	5.50	5.50
Lakshmi Vilas Bank	6.25	6.00	6.00	6.00
Bandhan Bank	6.25	6.25	6.10	6.00
Tamilnad Mercantile Bank	6.00	5.90	5.75	5.75
Karur Vysya Bank	6.00	5.70	5.85	5.85
CSB Bank	5.75	5.25	5.75	5.75
City Union Bank	5.75	5.50	5.75	5.50
Karnataka Bank	5.70	5.50	5.65	5.65
South Indian Bank	5.60	5.50	5.60	5.60
Dhanalaxmi Bank	5.60	5.25	5.50	5.50
Federal Bank	5.60	5.45	5.60	5.60
<b>FOREIGN BANKS</b>				
Deutsche Bank	6.25	4.00	4.75	6.25
DBS Bank	5.20	4.15	4.70	5.20
HSBC Bank	4.00	3.15	4.00	4.00
Citibank	3.90	3.00	3.80	3.90

FD rates as on August 5, 2020

Source: Paisabazaar.com

Home loan interest rates			
Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.)	Name of Lender	Loan Amount (Rs.)
	(In ₹)		(In ₹)
	Upto 30 lakh		Upto 30 lakh & Above 75 lakh upto 75 lakh

## TV PICKS

**NBA:** Sony Six (SD & HD), 6.30 a.m. & 4 a.m. (Tuesday)  
**Europa League:** Sony Ten 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 12.30 a.m. (Tuesday)

## IN BRIEF



Stokes to miss rest of Pakistan Test series

MANCHESTER  
England allrounder Ben Stokes will miss the remainder of the ongoing Test series against Pakistan for family reasons, the England and Wales Cricket Board announced on Sunday. "Stokes will leave the UK later this week and travel to New Zealand," said an ECB statement.



Doncic on a roll as Mavericks pip Bucks

MIAMI  
Luka Doncic scored 36 points in his NBA-leading 17th triple-double and Dallas Mavericks scored the last seven points of regulation to force overtime, going on to a 136-132 win over Milwaukee Bucks on Saturday.  
**Other results:** Denver Nuggets bt Utah Jazz 134-132; Los Angeles Clippers bt Portland Trail Blazers 122-117; Phoenix Suns bt Miami Heat 119-112; Indiana Pacers bt LA Lakers 116-111. AP

## Ko surges clear at LPGA Marathon Classic

WASHINGTON  
A late flurry of birdies left Lydia Ko with a four-shot lead at the LPGA Marathon Classic on Saturday. The 23-year-old New Zealand star carded a three-under 68 and moved to 16-under. Danielle Kang is second with 12-under. AFP



Juventus appoints Pirlo as new coach

TURIN  
Serie A champion Juventus named former midfielder Andrea Pirlo as the new coach on Saturday, giving him his first senior managerial role. Pirlo was a World Cup winner with Italy in 2006. REUTERS



Rookie Brad Binder claims Czech MotoGP

BRNO  
Brad Binder (KTM) won the Czech MotoGP on Sunday, ahead of Franco Morbidelli (Yamaha-SRT) and Johann Zarco (Ducati-Avintia). It was the 24-year-old's first win in his third race and the first victory at the elite level by a South African and for the KTM team. Fabio Quartararo (Yamaha-SRT), winner of the first two rounds and championship leader, finished seventh. AFP

## Manitombi passes away at the age of 39

Former India and Mohun Bagan footballer succumbs to illness



Mani Singh. ■ FILE PHOTO

## Messi inspires Barcelona into last eight

Lewandowski excels as Bayern Munich overwhelms Chelsea to set up a meeting with the Catalans

## CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

REUTERS  
BARCELONA

A fired-up Lionel Messi led Barcelona to a 3-1 win at home to Napoli on Saturday for a 4-2 aggregate victory which took the club into the Champions League quarter-finals for the 13th consecutive season, where it will face Bayern Munich.

Robert Lewandowski struck twice as Bayern cruised past Chelsea 4-1, for a 7-1 aggregate victory, and remains on course for a treble of titles.

## Superb strike

The Catalans had a shaky start but took the lead in the 10th minute with a powerful header from a corner by Clement Lenglet before Messi scored a superb second in the 23rd, seeing off four defenders to curl the ball into the far bottom corner.

Messi had the ball in the net again soon after, follow-

ing a superb team move, but the Argentine's goal was harshly ruled out for handball after a VAR review. But Messi later won a penalty which Luis Suarez converted.

Napoli got one back when Lorenzo Insigne converted a spot kick at the end of the first half and was the better side after the interval but Barca survived to set up a mouth-watering clash with Bayern next Friday.

Meanwhile in Munich, the Bavarians went two up through Lewandowski's penalty and Ivan Perisic before Tammy Abraham pulled one back for Chelsea. Corentin Tolisso and Lewandowski completed the rout.

**The results:** Bayern Munich 4 (Lewandowski 10-pen, 83, Perisic 24, Tolisso 76) bt Chelsea 1 (Abraham 44). Bayern 7-1 on aggregate.

Barcelona 3 (Lenglet 10, Messi 23, Suarez 45+1-pen) bt Napoli 1 (Insigne 45+1-pen). Barcelona 4-2 on aggregate.

## Champions League in numbers

3 Barcelona, Bayern and Manchester City have remained unbeaten in this edition. Bayern has won all its eight matches, City six (two draws) and Barcelona five (three draws).

10 Bayern and Barcelona have won 10 trophies between them (five each), and are the only remaining sides in this year's tournament to have clinched the trophy. The other six teams are yet to claim the title.

13 Lewandowski's goals this season, putting him four short of the all-time record (in a single campaign) held by Ronaldo (17, 2013-14).

35 Number of opponents Messi has scored against in the Champions League after netting against Napoli, the most by a player in the tournament's history. Ronaldo and Raul have scored against 33 teams.

## THE QUARTERFINAL MATCH-UPS:

Aug. 13: Atalanta vs PSG

Aug. 14: RB Leipzig vs Atletico Madrid

Aug. 15: Barcelona vs Bayern Munich

Aug. 16: Lyon vs Manchester City

All matches begin at 12.30 a.m. IST



COMPILED BY ANANTAAJITH RA

## Johnson gets his nose in front

Koepka in striking distance; Woods sees his chances fading

## PGA CHAMPIONSHIP

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
SAN FRANCISCO

Dustin Johnson shot a 65 on Saturday to put himself on course for another mouth-watering final-round showdown at a PGA Championship with two-time defending champion Brooks Koepka.

Johnson and Koepka are no strangers at the PGA Championship as Johnson nearly chased down Koepka in the final round last year at New York's Bethpage Black before losing by two shots.

## One-shot lead

Johnson's five-under 65 on Saturday got him to nine under for the tournament and a one-shot lead over fellow Americans Scottie Scheffler and Cameron Champ.

History-chasing American Koepka is tied for fourth with two others, just two strokes behind the long-hitting Johnson.

Johnson's 65 was his eighth straight round in the 60s at a PGA Championship. His eight birdies are the



**What's it this time?** Dustin Johnson's eighth straight round in the 60s in a PGA Championship took him to the top. ■ AFP

most he has made in any round of a Major, bettering the seven he made at the 2017 PGA Championship and the 2014 British Open.

But his results have been mixed in 2020 as he missed the cut at the Memorial, withdrew from the 3M Open with a bad back after an opening 78 and finished 12th at the WGC event in Memphis.

Third-round leader Li Haotong of China shot a 73 and, like Koepka, struggled on the par-4 13th, making a double bogey. But Li never

recovered from that and made two more bogeys and finished on 205.

## Tiger in the woods

Tiger Woods saw his chances all but extinguished as he struggled on the greens and shot a 72. He is tied for 59th at 212, 11 behind Johnson.

**The scores:** 201: Dustin Johnson (USA) 69, 67, 65; 202: Scottie Scheffler (USA) 66, 71, 65, Cameron Champ (USA) 71, 64, 67; 203: Brooks Koepka (USA) 66, 68, 69, Collin Morikawa (USA) 69, 69, 65, Paul Casey (Eng) 68, 67, 68.

## Verstappen snaps Mercedes' streak

Hamilton finishes second, equals Schumacher's record of podium finishes

## 70TH ANNIV. GP

REUTERS  
SILVERSTONE

Red Bull's Max Verstappen won Formula One's 70th Anniversary Grand Prix on Sunday to end Mercedes' run and become Lewis Hamilton's closest challenger.

In a race dominated by tyres and strategy, Hamilton swept past Mercedes teammate and pole sitter Valtteri Bottas to take second place late in the race and stay 30 points clear in the standings.

Hamilton, who gained an extra point for the fastest lap, also equalled Michael Schumacher's record of 155 career podium finishes.

## Ninth win

"I didn't see it coming, but after the first stint it seemed like we were really good on tyres," said Verstappen as he celebrated his ninth win that left him with 77 points to Hamilton's 107.

Mercedes had won the four previous races, and taken every pole, but Verstappen was alone among the top 10 on the grid to start on

## Fast Facts

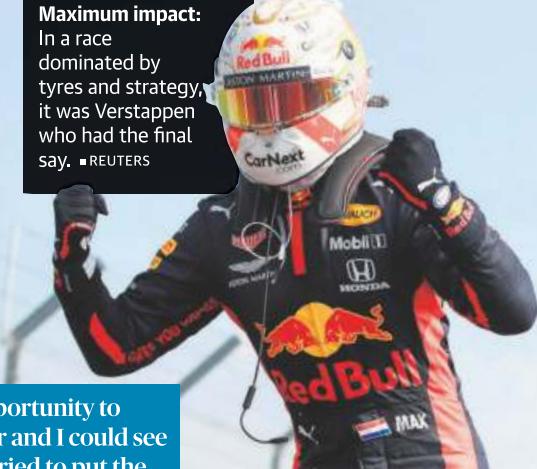
- Red Bull's first win at Silverstone since 2012
- This is Verstappen's ninth career victory
- He is the first non-Mercedes driver to win a race in 2020
- The last five times a P4 driver has won a race has been from Red Bull
- Hamilton equals Schumacher's 155 podiums record
- Vettel's worst start to a season since 2008 at Toro Rosso

**We haven't really had an opportunity to push them in the races so far and I could see we were pushing them [today]. I tried to put the pressure on, they had to pit, I did my own pace**

MAX VERSTAPPEN, Red Bull

## Maximum impact:

In a race dominated by tyres and strategy, it was Verstappen who had the final say. ■ REUTERS



1:13.70, 13. Sainz Jr. (McLaren) +14.070;

+1 lap: 14. Ricciardo (Renault), 15. Raikkonen (Alfa Romeo), 16. Grosjean (Haas), 17. Giovinazzi (Alfa Romeo), 18. Russell (Williams), 19. Latifi (Williams). DNF: 20. Magnussen (Haas).

**Standings: Drivers:** 1. Hamilton 107, 2. Verstappen 77, 3. Bottas 73, 4. Leclerc 45, 5. Norris 38.

**Constructors:** 1. Mercedes 180, 2. Red Bull 113, 3. Ferrari 55, 4. McLaren 53, 5. Racing Point 41.

## Carrom presents a strong case for Arjuna award



Rashmi Kumari.



S. Appoorwa.

and two World Cup gold medals. She has also been national women's singles champion ten times, from 2004, bettering Maria Irudayam's record of nine. One of those came in the eighth month of her pregnancy.

Quite remarkably, she has won 100 international medals, including 89 gold, at the Asian, SAARC and global levels. She made the Indian team when she was 15 in 1998, and continues to serve the nation with distinction.

Since the inception of the Arjuna award in 1961, athletics, with 93 awardees, leads the list, followed by hockey (88), cricket (54), wrestling (53), shooting (47), boxing (41), weightlifting (37), kabaddi (36), badminton (32), table tennis (29), football (26), volleyball (25), swimming (22) and golf (20).

Even compared to billiards and snooker, a sophisticated version of carrom with 17 awardees, kho kho (13), ball badminton (6), bodybuilding (5), wushu (4) and roller skating (2), carrom looks to have lost out.

## Rakesh Rao

NEW DELHI

Having repeatedly failed to set its house in order, the Equestrian Federation of India (EFI) is fast running out of time.

## Tough questions

Following the recent Delhi High Court order dismissing the EFI's twin-plea, the governing body may have to answer some tough questions when the case comes up for hearing on September 24.

Alongside its reluctance to comply with the 2011 National Sports Development Code, the EFI has been bat-

tling court cases challenging its governance and election of office-bearers.

The EFI's questionable practice of appointing the current Quartermaster-General (QMG) as the EFI president saw Lt. Gen. R. Gopal hold the post the day he was made a member of the EFI, last September. On retirement as the QMG on May 31, 2020, he resigned immediately as the EFI president.

When Lt. Gen. S.S. Mishra took over as the new QMG, he was made a member of the EFI on 17 May, 2020, and nominated as the president in June. The other contentious appointment was that

of Lt. Gen. M.K.S. Yadav as the vice-president (admin), to run the affairs of the EFI till elections were held.

Last month, the Rajasthan Equestrian Association (REA) moved the Delhi High Court challenging these nominations.

The Court, in its order dated July 20, 2020, restrained the two nominated members from acting in the interim capacity.

The REA also argued that these nominations were based entirely on the ranks in the army and therefore detrimental to equestrian sport in the country. The REA requested the Court to

form an ad-hoc committee to run the EFI until elections.

The REA president Raghuvendra Singh Dundlod insisted on the EFI complying with the Sports Code for normalcy to return to the sport.

## Interim measure

The EFI challenged the July 20 order on the ground that the appointments were made with the consent of Dr. S.Y. Quraishi, the observer appointed by the Court. It was further argued that these appointments were only interim measures to run the Federation.

Seven other EFI posts due to fall vacant are vice-president (Sports Development), one each for eventing, tent pegging and endurance besides a regional member's post from west, east and north-east.

In response to EFI's plea to vacate the order of July 20 or allow it to hold elections within 60 days for nine posts, including the president and vice-president (admin), the Court posted the case for September 24.

Maintaining status quo, the Court allowed the respondents three weeks to reply and two weeks, for the rejoinder, if any.

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