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Number of accidental deaths and suicides grew in 2019: NCRB
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Mask-wearing children return to classes in France, Poland, U.K.
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Osaka overcomes Djokovic's challenge, Djokovic cruises to victory
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NEARBY



Mukherjee cremated with military honours
NEW DELHI
Former President Pranab Mukherjee, who passed away on Monday, was cremated with full military honours on Tuesday. The last rites were performed by his son, Abhijit Mukherjee, at the Lodhi crematorium.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 10

Highest new COVID cases in two months in Delhi

NEW DELHI
The national capital on Tuesday recorded the highest number of daily new COVID-19 cases in the last 59 days with 2,312 cases being reported in the past 24 hours, said a health bulletin released by the Delhi government. The total number of cases in the city stood at 1,77,060.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

'Bhushan's conviction is against international law'

NEW DELHI
The ICJ on Tuesday said civil rights lawyer Prashant Bhushan's conviction for criminal contempt of court by the Supreme Court seemed inconsistent with the freedom of expression law guaranteed by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights that India was a party to.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 9

Bars allowed to open in Bengal amid pandemic

KOLKATA
The West Bengal government has allowed bars to open in the State, outside containment zones, as the phase four of 'Unlock' is in progress. The order added that bars will be required to make adequate arrangements to ensure strict adherence to social distancing norms.

NORTH & EAST ▶ PAGE 4

OPPORTUNITIES ▶ PAGE 5

'Provocative action' by PLA again: MEA

Aggressive action even as Commander-level talks on de-escalation at LAC were under way at Chushul



Eye in the sky: An IAF chopper in the skies of Leh, Ladakh, on Tuesday amid tensions with China along the LAC. ■ PTI

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI
Chinese troops engaged in "provocative action" along the disputed boundary in Ladakh once again on August 31, even as Commanders of the two sides were in discussion to de-escalate the situation, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said on Tuesday.

As Brigadier-level talks continued for the second day in Chushul, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh held a high-level meeting to review the ground situation.

"We have taken up the matter of recent provocative and aggressive actions with the Chinese side through both diplomatic and military channels and have urged them to discipline and control their front line troops from undertaking such provocative actions," MEA spo-

kesperson Anurag Srivastava said in response to a query.

Due to the timely defensive action, the Indian side was able to prevent these attempts to unilaterally alter the status quo, he stated.

A defence source said that on August 31, PLA troops came closer to the posts dominated by the Indian Ar-

my but "they were dissuaded".

Mr. Srivastava said the Foreign Ministers and Special Representatives had agreed that the situation should be handled in a responsible manner and either side

should not take any provocative action or escalate matters. The Chinese side violat-

'India violated consensus'

China's Foreign Ministry on Tuesday accused India of "breaking earlier consensus", and called for India to "immediately withdraw its troops", in statements issued in Beijing and New Delhi. The Indian Army said on Monday that on August 29 night, the PLA carried out "provocative" military movements to

change the status quo.

"The Indian side's statement may be different from the Chinese side's but there is only one truth and fact," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said. "China has never provoked any war or conflict and never occupied an inch of other country's territory." ▶ PAGE 9

ed this understanding and engaged in "provocative military manoeuvres" in the late night of August 29 and 30 in an attempt to change the status quo in the south bank area of Pangong Lake.

The Indian Army took "appropriate defensive measures" to safeguard our interests and defend the terri-

tory integrity". The actions and behaviour of the Chinese side since earlier this year along the LAC had been in clear violation of the bilateral agreements and protocols concluded between the two countries, the spokesperson noted.

RAJNATH MEETS DOVAL ▶ PAGE 9

Doors reopen



Prayer time: Devotees at the Sri Ramanathaswamy temple in Rameswaram, Tamil Nadu, after the government allowed large religious places to reopen from Tuesday. ■ L. BALACHANDAR

GST revenue falls 12% in August at ₹86,449 crore

Major decline in Maharashtra and T.N.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
Goods and Services Tax revenue in August stood at ₹86,449 crore, just over 1% lower than the ₹87,422 crore collected in July. On a year-on-year basis, GST collections dropped 12% from August 2019, according to data released by the Finance Ministry on Tuesday.

State-wise data shows that Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan have posted a marginal increase in collections, while Haryana and Rajasthan saw a marginal decrease. Major States still showing a significant drop include Maharashtra, West Bengal and Tamil Nadu.

Overall, revenues from

import of goods dropped 23% from the previous year, while revenues from domestic transactions dropped 8%. The Ministry noted that small businesses with a turnover less than ₹5 crore have till September to file returns.

"Coming after the disappointing GDP data for the first quarter yesterday, these figures indicate that collections are on the recovery path in the first month of the second quarter."

The collections on domestic transactions are just 8% lower than the same month last year, indicating a revival of economic activities post lockdown," said M.S. Mani, partner at Deloitte India.

While appearing before a Bench, led by Justice Ashok Bhushan, Mr. Mehta was asked whether the moratorium, which was to expire on August 31, had been extended. "It is extendable to two years," he replied.

Mr. Mehta was referring to two circulars issued by the RBI on August 6. An 82-page affidavit filed by the Mi-

Loan moratorium is extendable to two years'

Solicitor General Mehta submits in SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Union government and the Reserve Bank of India, informed the Supreme Court on Tuesday that the loan moratorium introduced during the lockdown "is extendable to two years".

While appearing before a Bench, led by Justice Ashok Bhushan, Mr. Mehta was asked whether the moratorium, which was to expire on August 31, had been extended. "It is extendable to two years," he replied.

Mr. Mehta was referring to two circulars issued by the RBI on August 6. An 82-page affidavit filed by the Mi-

nistry of Finance said the circulars have devised a framework, which not only allowed concessions in interest rates but also "permits lenders to allow moratorium of up to two years, irrespective of current six-month moratorium ending on August 31".

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Railways plan to run more special trains

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI
As India enters the fourth phase of the post-pandemic 'unlock' process, the Indian Railways plan to start more special passenger trains in high-demand sectors, for which they are in discussions with various State governments.

These trains will be run in addition to the 230 special trains that are currently operational.

While the Railways did not share more details, an official spokesperson said, "More special trains are being planned. State governments are being consulted."

While the Railways had also announced in June that more trains were likely to be introduced soon, the plan was shelved as various State governments, including of Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Odisha and Jharkhand, requested the cancellation of existing trains or for a reduction in their frequency due to the rising number of COVID-19 cases.

Freight demand grows In a separate statement, the Ministry said its freight loading for the month of August 2020 at 94.33 million tonnes, surpassed the loading (91.02 million tonnes) for the corresponding month last year.

The total loading included 40.49 million tonnes of coal, 12.46 million tonnes of iron ore and 6.24 million tonnes of foodgrains.

Delhi HC grants bail to Devangana Kalita

Court says police failed to show the activist instigated people or gave hate speech

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH

NEW DELHI
The Delhi High Court on Tuesday granted bail to Pinjra Tod activist Devangana Kalita, arrested in connection with the north-east Delhi riots cases, noting that police had failed to present any material showing she instigated women of a particular community or gave hate speech.

Justice Suresh Kumar Kait also ordered Ms. Kalita not to "directly or indirectly influence any witness or tamper with evidence". She has been asked not to leave the

country without permission of the trial court.

Ms. Kalita has been granted bail in connection with an FIR registered on February 26, 2020 at Jafrabad police station. She is facing four different FIRs connected to the anti-CAA protests in Jafrabad, north-east Delhi riots and violence in Daryaganj during a protest last year.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Ms. Kalita, informed the High Court that she had already secured bail in two of the FIRs.

Additional Solicitor Gener-

al S.V. Raju, representing the Delhi police, argued that Ms. Kalita had emerged as one of the main conspirators in the FIR. She, with an intention to flare communal passion and instigate a section of people to engage in rioting, did all the preparatory work such as mobilising crowds and sustaining the mob at the protest site, the ASG argued.

The Delhi police have also invoked sections of the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in a separate case against Ms. Kalita.

NARWAL CASE ▶ PAGE 2

presence is seen in peaceful agitation, which is a fundamental right guaranteed under Article 19 of the Constitution," Justice Kait said.

"There is no such evidence which establishes that the alleged offence has taken place on the act done by the petitioner [Ms. Kalita]," the High Court observed.

The Delhi police have also

Release Kafeel Khan immediately, Allahabad HC orders U.P. govt.

Court sets aside his detention under NSA, calls it illegal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

LUCKNOW

The Allahabad High Court on Tuesday set aside the National Security Act order passed against Gorakhpur doctor Kafeel Khan, terming it illegal, and directed the Uttar Pradesh government to forthwith release him from jail.

A Division Bench of Chief Justice Govind Mathur and Justice Saumitra Dayal Singh, hearing a habeas corpus writ filed by Dr. Khan's mother, also declared the extension of the period of his detention under the NSA as "illegal".

The BJP government had



Dr. Khan was booked under the stringent law on the day he was expected to be released on bail from Mathura jail where he was lodged after his arrest in the case on January 29.

While rejecting the arguments given by the State government in favour of the NSA, the court concluded that it had "no hesitation" in saying that neither the detention of Dr. Kafeel Khan under the National Security Act, 1980 nor the extension (twice) of the detention are "sustainable in the eye of law".

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

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IN BRIEF

JNU opens applications for MBA, MPhil courses

NEW DELHI
JNU on Tuesday announced the opening of the application process for its MBA, MPhil and PhD under JRF category and diploma of proficiency programmes. The deadline for application is September 21 and all application forms are available online. Students have been asked to refer to the e-prospectus on the JNU website for further details. Dates for viva/interviews for the JRF applicants will be announced shortly.

EDMC starts door-to-door waste collection

NEW DELHI
Door-to-door waste collection and transportation in East Delhi was launched by Mayor Nirmal Jain on Tuesday. A private agency has been assigned the work, which will be carried in the EDMC's jurisdiction along with local waste pickers, the civic body said. Standing Committee chairman Satyapal Singh said that the segregated waste would be transported to decentralised plants and to the Ghazipur landfill.

Air Quality of Delhi-NCR			
Delhi	53	Gurugram	50
Ghaziabad	57	Faridabad	74
Noida	52	Greater Noida	54
Good	51-100	Satisfactory	101-200
Poor	201-300	Very Poor	301-400
Severe	>400		
Air Quality Index at 4 p.m. yesterday (Average of past 24 hours)		Source: CPCB	

Timings

DELHI

	WEDNESDAY, SEP. 02
RISE	06:00 SET 18:41
RISE	19:07 SET 05:50
THURSDAY, SEP. 03	
RISE	06:01 SET 18:40
RISE	19:39 SET 06:44
FRIDAY, SEP. 04	
RISE	06:01 SET 18:39
RISE	20:08 SET 07:38

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

Delhi Palam Today
34°C A short spell of light rain and thunderstorm would occur with gusty winds and partly cloudy sky.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
33°C Light to moderate rain and thundershower with cloudy sky likely. Comfortable morning and evening.

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IN BRIEF

Doctor found dead in Gurugram's Sector 47

GURUGRAM
A 39-year-old doctor with a private hospital in the city was found dead in Sector 47 at 4 a.m. on Tuesday. The police suspect personal reasons for him taking the extreme step. He was staying alone, the police said, adding that his six-year-old daughter stays with his wife in West Bengal.

Man held for stabbing another to death

NEW DELHI
A 38-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly stabbing a man to death in south-west Delhi's Vasant Kunj, the police said on Tuesday. Three days ago, the accused, Surender, had misbehaved with the victim's wife. Following this, the victim – Sagar – had slapped Surender, a senior officer said. To take revenge, Surender stabbed Sagar on Monday night. The victim was rushed to hospital where he was declared brought dead.

Despite govt. target of 40K tests daily, the number stands at half

Govt. meeting today with V.K. Paul-led expert committee to sharpen strategy

NIKHIL M BABU
NEW DELHI

Almost a week after Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced that the number of daily COVID-19 tests would be doubled from 20,000 to 40,000 within a week, the average number of tests is still in the range of 20,000, according to the State government data.

Mr. Kejriwal had made the announcement on August 26 after chairing a meeting on the upward trend in COVID-19 cases in the city.

However, in the next six days, the average number of daily tests was only 20,837, according to data from the official government bulletins. This is slightly higher than the average daily tests in July – 19,684.

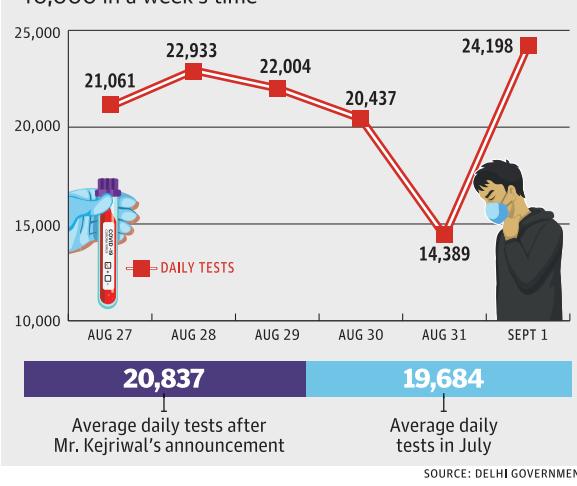
When contacted, a Delhi government spokesperson said: "We are increasing the number of tests and have reached around 25,000 tests in a day. We will attain 40,000 in the coming days." Delhi has been witnessing a spike in the number of COVID-19 cases for the past 10 days with Tuesday reporting the highest number of new COVID-19 cases in the last 59 days.

An official said the government is expected to form a strategy on how to increase the testing in a meeting with an expert committee on Wednesday.

"There is a meeting with an expert committee headed by V.K. Paul (Member, NITI Ayog) tomorrow [Wednesday]. The number of tests cannot be randomly increased. The idea is to break the chain and control the virus and for it, we will have to know whom to test or which

Little improvement

On August 26, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal had said that daily testing would be increased from 20,000 to 40,000 in a week's time



A healthcare worker tests a man for COVID-19 in Daryaganj on Tuesday. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

a decision.

Mohalla clinics

"We are looking at whether testing can be done from Mohalla clinics during its working hours. If it is not possible, we are also considering whether we can conduct testing from the premises after the clinics close

The decision to increase testing had become controversial with the Delhi government last week alleging that the Union Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) was putting pressure on Delhi government officials to not increase the number of COVID-19 tests in the city, a claim which was rubbished by the MHA, which termed it as "false and baseless".

Multiple district officials said they were yet to get any directions from the government on the increasing testing.

Delhi records highest single-day spike in 59 days with 2,312 cases

Third sero-survey begins, West district to be covered today

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Capital saw its highest single-day spike in 59 days with 2,312 new cases of COVID-19 reported in the past 24 hours, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Tuesday. The last time a higher number of new cases was reported was on July 4 – 2,505 cases.

The total number of cases now stands at 1,77,060.

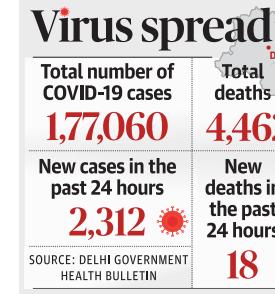
Tuesday also witnessed an increase in almost all other parameters – number of active cases, positive people in home isolation, positivity rate, and people admitted in hospitals. Also, 18 more deaths have been reported, taking the total number of deaths to 4,462.

Of the total cases, 1,56,728 people have recovered and there are 15,870 active cases.



Migrant workers rest near Kashmere Gate in New Delhi on Tuesday.

■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA



seven days and the result will be out in seven-10 days after it," Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain said.

"We will start the survey in the west district from tomorrow [Wednesday]. The district has to collect the highest number of samples and they are still preparing for it," an official said.

The first such survey done in June-July showed that 22.8% of people had developed antibodies and the second one in August showed that 29.1% of people had antibodies. In the current survey, about 17,000 random blood samples from across the city will be collected.

The active cases, which stood at 27,007 on July 1, had fallen to 9,897 on August 4, but since then it has remained above that mark. The number of positive people in home isolation crossed the 8,000-mark on Monday and is the highest in over 40 days.

People in hospitals – 4,186 – are also the highest in over 45 days. The number of containment zones in the city has increased to 846, which has been increasing for about 15 days.

Active virus cases in Gurugram cross 1,000 mark again

May reserve more beds in pvt. hospitals'

ASHOK KUMAR

GURUGRAM

The number of active COVID-19 cases in Gurugram breached the 1,000-mark again on Tuesday, over a month after the number had fallen to three digits.



Since the Haryana government has capped the charges for COVID-19 treatment, the private hospitals prefer patients from outside the State. So, we might also consider fixing a quota for residents of the State

VIRENDER YADAV, Chief Medical Officer (Gurugram)

The district administration is now considering reserving 30% beds in private hospitals for COVID-19 patients and fix a quota for State residents.

As many as 196 new cases were recorded and 142 people recovered in Gurugram on Tuesday. The total number of active cases now stands at 1,048. So far, 133 people have died due to the virus, including 93 with co-morbidities.

The number of active cases in Gurugram had declined steadily from June 20 to August 16, except for a brief surge from July 15 to 24. During the period, the number of active cases fell from 1,840 to 694.

There was an improvement in recovery rate and a steep decline in infection rate, despite an increase in number of tests per day.

On July 30, the number of active cases in Gurugram had fallen below 1,000-mark to settle at 991 for the first time since the surge in cases was noticed towards May-end. However, active cases again witnessed a surge post-August 16. The district has been recording more than 100 new cases per day since August 21.

Chief Medical Officer (Gurugram) Virender Yadav said the surge was a pan-In-

AAP protests 'corrupt' civic bodies

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) on Tuesday protested across the city against the "corrupt" BJP-run municipal corporations. The protests were headed by AAP MLAs and councillors.

The party had put up 250 hoardings and banners across the city condemning the BJP. Addressing a press conference, Aam Aadmi Party leader Durgesh Pathak said: "BJP-ruled municipal corporations have not only tarnished the image of Prime Minister Narendra Modi but also insulted the people of Delhi."

"Dirty city"
"It is very unfortunate that Delhi, which is the Capital, was found to be the dirtiest city due to BJP's corruption. Tourists from different countries of the world come to Delhi, the PM lives in Delhi..." the AAP leader said.

He said one of the key responsibilities of the civic bodies is to keep the city clean but the survey by the Centre shows that they have "miserably failed at this".

"The BJP in Delhi has done only one thing – made money through corrupt means," Mr. Pathak said.

Education and health
He said the municipal corporations have also failed in the sector of education as they could not provide books to the students. They also failed to give salaries to doctors, he added.

"The citizens of Delhi will defeat the BJP in the upcoming elections. We will run the civic bodies within the same budget and make Delhi clean if we come to power," he added.

Six ISIS operatives plead guilty before Delhi court

Matter likely to be taken up today

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Six accused in a terror case on Tuesday pleaded guilty before a Delhi court of being ISIS operatives and part of the criminal conspiracy.

Special Judge Parveen Singh is also scheduled to take up the matter tomorrow to consider the quantum of sentence for six other accused, who pleaded guilty earlier.

'Consider other viable options for giving GST dues to States'

Kejriwal tells Modi that the two options given by Ministry of Finance will put onerous burden on govt.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Tuesday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to consider more "legally viable and sustainable" options for providing Goods and Services Tax (GST) dues to States to help them tide over the financial crisis during the pandemic.

Repayment liabilities
In the letter, Mr. Kejriwal told the Prime Minister that the two options provided by the Ministry of Finance – which require the States to borrow loans and then meet the repayment liabilities – will put an onerous burden on them.

Mr. Kejriwal issued an appeal that the GST Council should consider authorising the Centre to borrow on its behalf and extend the period of collection of cess beyond

Man held for killing room-mates over payment of rent in Khyala

He stabbed the duo when they were sleeping, say police

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

A 23-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly killing his two room-mates in west Delhi's Khyala over payment of rent, the police said on Tuesday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (West) Deepak Purohit said the accused, Sakir, is from Amroha.

The victims have been identified as Ajam (45) and Amir Hasan (46), who used to sell garlic on a cart.

The victims were living together in a rented accommodation since 1994.

The police said they received a PCR call at 7.25 p.m. on Monday stating that two persons had been murdered on the first floor of a building in Raghbir Nagar.

On reaching the spot, the men were found dead with multiple stab injuries.

Nabbed from village

During enquiry, the police discovered that a man named Sakir also used to stay with the victims, but was absconding.

Teams were formed to find the suspect. It was also revealed that he is a resident of Chuchela village in Amroha. A team was sent to the village from where he was arrested," the officer said.

During interrogation, Sakir allegedly told the police that the victims were asking him to pay rent for four months, even though he had not been staying in Delhi due to the lockdown.

"He had left for his village

earlier this year and returned after four months. The victims were pressurising him to pay the rent but he was arguing that he won't pay because he wasn't staying," Mr. Purohit said.

They had been fighting

The two sides were fighting over this for the last 10 days and during one of the arguments, the victims used foul language against Sakir following which he hatched a plan to kill them.

On Sunday night, Sakir stabbed the duo while they were sleeping. "Sakir hid the murder weapon and left for his village to collect money so that he could move to an unknown location," the DCP said, adding that the weapon has been recovered.

As part of a public engagement strategy pertaining

to MPD-2041, the urban body will be interacting with several stakeholders over the next two months.

"As part of the process, a series of discussions and consultations have been carried out with various stakeholders and civil society groups to seek inputs from the people of Delhi that will help drive the agenda for the Master Plan. In the coming month, meetings have been scheduled with RWAs," the statement read.

Earlier, the DDA had launched a Public Engagement Portal for MPD-2041, where information pertaining to the plan would be made available. "It will also provide citizens the opportunity to share opinions through perception surveys," the DDA said.

Earlier, the DDA had launched a Public Engagement Portal for MPD-2041, where information pertaining to the plan would be made available. "It will also provide citizens the opportunity to share opinions through perception surveys," the DDA said.

TO ADVERTISE<br

Assam Foreigners' Tribunals have 83,000 pending cases

Six detention centres housing 425 people, govt. tells Assembly

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

GUWAHATI

The State government said on Monday that 83,008 cases of doubtful or D-voters were pending across the 100 Foreigners' Tribunals (FTs) in Assam.

D-voters are a category of people struck off Assam's electoral rolls by the Election Commission on suspicion of being foreigners. Their cases are referred to the FTs, which judge their citizenship.

To a question by Congress MLA Zakir Hussain Sikdar, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary told the 126-member House that the Sorbhog Assembly constituency in Barpeta district has the highest pending cases at 7,776.

Among the districts, Kamrup (Metro) covering much of Guwahati has the most such cases (6,406).

Rejection slips

Mr. Patowary said the government had appointed 221 former judges, retired bureaucrats and lawyers as members for heading 200 new FTs sanctioned. "The new tribunals have not been able to start working," he said.

Apart from the COVID-19 restrictions, they have not been functional because of the delay in issuing rejection slips to 19.06 lakh people excluded from the updated National Register of Citizens (NRC).

The complete NRC con-



People wait in queue to check their names on the National Register of Citizens at a centre in Assam. ■ FILE PHOTO

taining the names of 3.11 crore out of 3.3 crore applicants was published on August 31, 2019.

The 19.06 lakh people were to have been issued rejection slips for approaching the FTs within 120 days for deciding the status of their citizenship.

The Assam government had in February said the State had 1.13 lakh D-voters. It also said 4,32,944 cases were registered against suspected foreigners between 1985 and 2019.

"After verification and trials, 1,26,998 people were declared foreigners, 1,18,367 were found to be Indians and 29,890 were deported. At the last count, there were 1,13,738 D-voters," Mr. Patowary had told the Assembly in February.

The D-voters who fail to establish their citizenship at the FTs are housed in six detention centres along with those declared foreigners by the same FTs on the basis of cases referred by the State

police's Border wing tasked specifically with detecting and detaining suspected foreigners.

The detention centres house 425 'foreigners'.

Officials said the cases against 83,008 of the 1.13 lakh D-voters detected earlier this year remain to be heard.

NRC re-verification

The Assam government also said it was firm on its demand of 10-20% re-verification of names included in the complete NRC.

"We had given an affidavit in the Supreme Court saying there should be re-verification of 20% included names in the districts bordering Bangladesh and 10% in the rest of the districts. We need a re-verification because people of Assam want the correct NRC," Mr. Patowary said.

He said 227 'foreigners' have been deported from March 13, 2013 to July 31 this year.

Amarinder govt. failed to control COVID-19 situation, claim Akalis

'Many reports of people not getting beds in govt. hospitals, shortage of ventilators'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHANDIGARH

A war of words has ensued between the ruling Congress government in Punjab and the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) after a few village panchayats in the State passed resolutions asking COVID-19 patients to not seek treatment at government hospitals.

After the Congress accused the party of inciting people with false propaganda surrounding the issue, Akali Dal chief Sukhbir Badal on Tuesday hit back saying that the government has completely failed to control the COVID-19 situation in the State and has lost the trust of the people.

"Following COVID-19, the State government had con-



SAD chief Sukhbir Badal

vened an all-party meeting. I had assured the government of all support to fight the pandemic, which the Akali Dal workers had been sincerely extending... But today, I am sorry to say that the government has completely failed to control the situation. There have been sever-

al reports of people not getting beds in government hospitals and of a shortage of ventilators," said Mr. Badal in a video message.

Lost faith'

Mr. Badal said people have lost faith in the ruling government and that several panchayats have passed resolutions asking people to remain at home instead of encouraging the villagers to risk their lives by inciting them against the State government amid the pandemic.

"The government is completely indifferent towards the problems being faced by the people. COVID-19 cases are continuously rising and if immediate and effective steps are not taken by the government, the situation could worsen. I demand Chief Minister Amarinder

Singh to lead from the front to save the people," he added.

Minister slams SAD

Punjab Health Minister Balbir Singh Sidhu earlier slammed the party and accused it of making provocative statements with regard to the panchayat resolutions, further accusing it of encouraging the villagers to risk their lives by inciting them against the State government.

"The entire propaganda seemed to be part of a nefarious design to undermine the State government's fight against COVID-19, of which the Akali leader seemed to have become a part," said Mr. Sidhu.

Ex-Punjab DGP's bail plea dismissed

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

A local Mohali court on Tuesday dismissed the bail plea of former Punjab Director General of Police (DGP) Sumedh Singh Saini in the case relating to disappearance and murder of a man in 1991.

The court of Additional District and Sessions Judge Rajnish Garg dismissed the bail plea of Mr. Saini, who had filed an anticipatory bail plea in the case, said Special Public Prosecutor Sarjeet Singh Narula.

Mr. Saini had moved the bail application after the Punjab Police's Special Investigation Team had last month added Section 302 of IPC (murder) in the case, in which the ex-DGP and six other accused have been booked in connection with the disappearance of Balwant Singh Multani.

Bars to open, schools to remain shut in West Bengal

The State recorded 55 deaths on Tuesday; 2,943 new COVID-19 cases take overall tally to 1,65,721

SHIV SAHYA SINGH

KOLKATA

The West Bengal government has allowed bars to open in the State, outside containment zones, as the phase four of nationwide 'Unlock' is in progress.

"Service of liquor for consumption may take place within any service area attached to a bar. Operating hours for liquor service will be according to the opening hours of food service in res-

taurants as specified by appropriate authorities in view of the pandemic situation," an order issued by the State's Excise Department said.

School closed till Sept. 30

The order also added that bars will be required to make adequate arrangements to ensure strict adherence to social distancing norms, such as hand hygiene, frequent sanitisation and wearing of masks. The West Ben-

gal government has extended lockdown in containment zones till September 30. It has also decided to keep school and colleges closed till September 30 and will observe complete lockdown on September 7, 11 and 12.

Meanwhile, the State recorded 2,943 new cases on Tuesday, taking the tally to 1,65,721. It also recorded 55 deaths in the past 24 hours taking the toll to 3,283 in the

State. Of the 55 deaths, 11 were from Kolkata, taking the toll in the city to 1,301. North 24 Parganas recorded 12 deaths, taking the total number of people who died in the district to 751.

Discharge rate improves

With more people getting discharged in the past 24 hours than the number of infections, the discharge rate of the State improved to 83.04%.



A health worker takes a swab in Kolkatta on Tuesday. ■ AFP

UNIDENTIFIED DEAD BODY



General Public is hereby informed that one female Namely: Rani, W/o: Paras Sharma, Address: B-94, Street No. 7, Joshi Colony, Mandawali, Delhi, was admitted in Lal Bahadur Shastri Hospital, Delhi on 17.08.2020 at 10:00 pm. During the treatment Doctors declared her dead. The body has been preserved in Lal Bahadur Shastri Hospital's Mortuary, Delhi. In this regard a case has been lodged vide DD No. 01-A, dated 17.08.2020 at P.S. Madhu Vihar, Distt. East, Delhi. The description of the dead female is as under:- Age: About 40 years, Sex: Female, Height: 5', Complexion: Dark, Face: Round, Wearing: Red colour T-shirt and Pink colour salwar. If any one having any information about this dead female please inform undersigned.

SHO

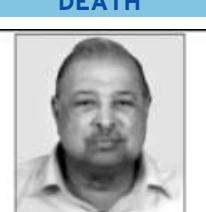
PS. Madhu Vihar, Delhi

Ph.: 011-22732427, 8750870624

DP/180/ED/2020

OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH



NARIMAN F MOGRELIA

DOB: 10/06/1938 - DOD: 31/08/2020

Chairman & Managing Director Zoro Garments Pvt Ltd

Ex-Chairman Apparel Export Promotion Council of India

Ex-Chairman Apparel & Handloom Exporters Association

Patron Madras Parsi Zarathostri Anjuman

Chairman Phil & Mary Clubwala Jadhav Trust

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Email: pojya.vivekanandcollege@gmail.com

M: 972915527, 9169921727

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Phy. Science-1, Mathematics- 1,

Economics-1 Commerce- 1, Hindi-1,

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Rajasthan to ramp up farm produce exports

'It will strengthen rural economy, increase productivity and employment'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

The Rajasthan government is examining the scope for increasing the export of agricultural commodities after strengthening agro-processing units amid the limited opportunities available during the COVID-19 pandemic. The State Agricultural Marketing Board will help the farmers in the export of cumin, oilseeds and isabgol.

Chief Secretary Rajeeva Swarup said here on Tuesday that the export promotion would help strengthen agricultural economy, which in turn would enhance productivity and employment. Attempts would be made to promote the outreach of ethnic food items, organic produce and value-added farm products in the international market, he said.

The mandi samitis in Nagaon, Jodhpur, Barmer, Pali, Jalore and Bikaner will shortly send proposals to the Union Ministry of Food Processing Industries for developing mini food parks under the agro-processing cluster scheme.

Mr. Swarup said at a meeting of the State-level

agricultural export monitoring committee that the Board would connect the farmers and exporters directly with the Agricultural and Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) and the Spices Board through videoconferencing.

The State agro-processing, agri-business and agri-export promotion policy, released last year, encourages agricultural exports and seeks to increase farmers' incomes. The policy has made a provision for a ₹500-crore fund in the Rajasthan State Cooperative Bank to disburse loans to farmers and allocated a grant of up to ₹20 lakh every year on the export of organic farm produces.

The policy also seeks to promote the capacity of agro-processing sector to upscale the operations through capital infusion, technology transfer and hand holding support. The State government has tried to accelerate capital investments in value and supply chain of agriculture and allied sectors while implementing the policy.

The officials of the Agriculture Department and representatives of APEDA threw light on the action taken under various schemes for promoting farm activities and identified the cereals, vegetables and fruits that could be processed and exported.

Closure of child-care institutions, diversion of staffers for COVID-19 duties, putting

Minor raped, killed in Mathura

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GHAZIABAD

A minor girl was allegedly raped and killed in a village in Mathura in the early hours of Tuesday, the police said.

The incident happened in a village under Yamunapar police station. The victim's uncle told reporters that a local man allegedly took his niece and his own niece with him on Monday evening without informing anyone. "We kept searching for the girl the whole night. At around midnight, we in-

formed the police. Early morning, the police found her body in the fields outside the village. Without clothes, it was covered in blood," he said. The relative claimed that during the search they found that the accused first left his niece at his sister's place in a neighbouring village and then took the other girl to the fields.

Mathura Senior Superintendent of Police Gaurav Grover said, "The body has been sent for post mortem and the report is awaited.

The witnesses have claimed the culprit is a local, who took the two girls to a village grocery shop. He is absconding," he said.

The SHO of Yamunapar police station said an FIR has been registered against the accused for kidnapping and murder.

Locals suggested more than one person could be involved in the crime.

Earlier, agitated locals shouted slogans and it took the police some time to bring the situation under control.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
INDORE

Five persons were arrested under the stringent National Security Act on Tuesday for allegedly taking out processions here in Madhya Pradesh on the occasion of Muharram in violation of the COVID-19 restrictions imposed by the local administration, the police said.

All the five persons, including 60-year-old former Councillor Usman Patel who resigned from the BJP in February to protest against the

Citizenship Amendment Act and joined the Congress, have been sent to the Indore Central Jail, she said.

Despite the ban imposed by the Indore administration on all religious events in view of COVID-19 pandemic, tazia processions were taken out in Khajrana area on Sunday, officials said.

Usman Patel, Ismail Patel (45), Ansar Patel (38), Mohammed Ali Patel (65) and Shahzad Patel (28) were arrested in this connection following an order from the

district administration, Superintendent of Police-East Vijay Khatri said.

Meanwhile, Khajrana police station in-charge Dinesh Verma said they have recommended that NSA provisions be invoked against one more person for alleged violation of the COVID-19-related restrictions during the Muharram procession. He said 22 others have also been arrested in this connection and four separate FIRs registered under various IPC sections and other provisions.

One by one



Policemen stopping devotees at the Girgaum beach in Mumbai in order to stagger immersion of idols on Anant Chaturdashi.

VIVEK BENDRE

Over 53,000 evacuated from flood-hit Vidarbha

Nagpur, Bhandara, Chandrapur and Gadchiroli districts are severely affected

'Students can approach NTA'

MORE than 53,000 people have been evacuated from 175 villages of Nagpur, Bhandara, Chandrapur and Gadchiroli districts in Maharashtra's Vidarbha region where flooding occurred following heavy rain and release of water from dams, officials said on Tuesday.

Over 92,000 people have been affected by the floods and heavy showers in the four districts in the last few days, a report released by the Nagpur divisional commissionerate said.

Eleven rescue and relief teams, including of the National Disaster Response Force, State Disaster Res-

The JEE-Main for admission to engineering colleges began on Tuesday and will go on till September 6, while the NEET is scheduled for September 13.

Mr. Wadettiwar said the State would protect the interest of all students, adding that the NTA will take an appropriate decision on such representations.

hyderabad, water was released from various dams of Maharashtra and the neighbouring State, causing flooding in several various villages of east Vidarbha.

Till 1 p.m. on Tuesday,

53,224 people from 175 affected villages of the Nagpur division have been shifted to safer places, the report said. Out of these, 27,091 people have been evacuated from Nagpur, 18,192 from Bhandara, 5,667 from Chandrapur and 2,274 from Gadchiroli district, it said.

As many as 76 villages have been affected in Bhandara district, 61 in Nagpur, 22 in Chandrapur and 16 in Gadchiroli, the report said. Two teams of the Army were deployed in Pombhurna tehsil and Ladaj village of Chandrapur, disaster management officer Jitesh Survade said, adding that water has started receding.

Following incessant rain during the weekend in east Vidarbha region and Mad-

hya Pradesh, water was released from various dams of Maharashtra and the neighbouring State, causing flooding in several various villages of east Vidarbha.

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Inevitable collapse

With COVID-19 hitting private consumption, demand recovery will hinge on govt. spending

The inevitable has happened. India's GDP suffered its steepest contraction on record in the April-June quarter, as output shrank 23.9% from a year earlier, provisional data show. It is evident that the stringent COVID-19 lockdowns in force through the first third of the quarter, and substantially in May, hollowed out demand. Private consumption spending, which accounts for almost 60% of GDP, contracted 26.7% as consumers abjured almost all discretionary spending. And exports, which contribute to a fifth of GDP and reflect overseas demand for Indian goods and services, shrank by nearly 20%. Investment activity was the worst-hit, collapsing 47% and shrinking in share of GDP to about 22% from 32% a year earlier as larger businesses conserved cash and refrained from any capital spending in the face of uncertainty, and smaller firms prioritised survival. Across the real economy, every single industry and services sector shrank with the solitary exception of agriculture, which grew 3.4% and outpaced the year earlier quarter's 3% expansion. Construction suffered the most, plunging 50%, followed by the omnibus services category – trade, hotels, communication, transport and broadcasting – which shrank 47%, hit by the pandemic-linked restrictions. Manufacturing too took a severe beating, contracting 39% as demand for products deemed non-essential evaporated, and factories, even after reopening, struggled to run amid shortages of labour and added safety norms.

It was left to the government to keep the bottom from falling out on demand as the Centre's pandemic mitigation expenditure helped expand its consumption spending by 16.4% year-on-year and softened the overall blow to GDP. However, with the fiscal deficit already having exceeded the full year's budgeted target in just the first four months, and revenue receipts impacted by the economic contraction, the government is unlikely to maintain a similar trend in expenditure growth over the next three quarters. Unless, of course, it is prepared to forsake its vaunted fiscal conservatism and finds innovative ways to mobilise resources. The still rising trajectory of new COVID-19 infections and a high level of job losses and income erosion are also sure to retard any recovery in momentum. If the latest survey-based data from IHS Markit show manufacturing PMI for August signalling growth for the first time in five months, the same researcher's findings also stress that "job shedding continues at a strong rate" in the industry. Equally significantly, the output numbers which are expected to undergo revision given the acknowledged difficulties in collecting data, do not capture a swathe of informal sector activity that was severely impacted. Agriculture too faces headwinds in the form of higher-than-ideal rainfall in August in several key crop growing regions in western and central India and with the impact of recent farm market ordinances yet to play out, it may be a while before the end of the tunnel is sighted.

A golden moment

India's chess players deserve more attention after the Olympiad triumph

If further proof was needed of India's growing stature in world chess and of the mind sport's rising popularity in the country, the online Chess Olympiad provided it in emphatic fashion on Sunday. India became the joint champion, along with title favourite Russia, even as the Olympiad trended on Twitter and thousands followed the action through live streaming on social media. The title had to be shared because the result in two games in the second match of the final was affected by a net outage. India's Nihal Sarin and Divya Deshmukh had lost on time – competitive chess is always a race against the clock – but probably neither would have if they were not disconnected. The Indian team management lodged a complaint and the world chess governing body FIDE's decision to have joint champions was agreeable to Russia too, and thus there was a fruitful ending to the final. That was not quite the situation, though, when Armenia raised a similar complaint after it lost a crucial game, involving Nihal, to India in the first match of the quarter-final. The Armenians protested by not playing the second match and withdrew from the competition. But that incident should not take the sheen off India's triumph. Chess Olympiad has always been the most prestigious team event in the game, and its history stretches to 1924. India's best effort has been the third place in 2014. FIDE decided to conduct an online Olympiad because the 44th edition had to be postponed till next year due to the pandemic.

Though India was seeded only seventh, among 163 countries, no contender would have taken it lightly, given the presence of strong players in the three categories – men, women and junior. If Viswanathan Anand and Koneru Humpy are among the greatest players the world has ever seen, Nihal and R. Praggnanandhaa could be tomorrow's stars. In the euphoria surrounding the great Indian victory, some grim facts should not be overlooked. On Saturday when the Arjuna awards were being distributed by President Ram Nath Kovind online, the Indian chess team pulled off a thrilling victory against Poland in the semifinal of the Olympiad. Ironically, no chess player has won an Arjuna for seven years, though there have been several outstanding performances and India is ranked fourth in the world. India captain Vidit Gujrathi had said how the team was on its own ahead of the Olympiad with no support from the All India Chess Federation. The federation officials are embroiled in a tussle for power. They announced two separate teams for the Olympiad, forcing chief selector R.B. Ramesh to quit. This moment of glory, therefore, is also a time for introspection.

In Kashmir, still a long way to go

Delhi should be careful not to view immediate dividends as representing a new dawn; much lies beyond the horizon



M.K. NARAYANAN

In August last year, Parliament removed Articles 370 and 35A of the Constitution from the statute book, effectively emasculating the special status of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). It followed this up by carving out two Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh from the State of J&K. The asymmetric character of the Indian federal structure notwithstanding, the manner in which the changes were effected caused a great deal of dissonance. Criticism was, nevertheless, muted given assurances that the step would ensure a more closely integrated Indian Union. Pakistan, predictably, criticised the step, while China raised its voice observing that the bifurcation of J&K and the voiding of Article 370 should not be seen as solely India's internal matter.

Use of 'shock and awe'

The August 2019 move confirmed the Centre's willingness to resort to 'shock and awe' tactics to achieve pre-determined objectives, irrespective of whether the end results were achievable or not. The move on J&K was unexpected, the closest parallel possibly being demonetisation. In both instances, the decisions were taken in utmost secrecy, leaving no scope for discussion, debate or retreat. The rashness of the determination to 'cross the Rubicon', and erase the notion of a separate 'Kashmiri identity', was not dissimilar (though in a totally different context) to the use of air power to hit targets inside Pakistan (in February 2019).

Ruling party spokesmen went to considerable lengths to argue that the August 2019 decision was aimed at ending an anomaly that had existed for long, and had impeded Kashmiri's peace and progress. To sugar-coat the decision, prospects were held out of vastly enlarged economic and job oppor-

tunities, reduction in levels of terrorist violence, closer integration with the rest of India, etc. At the time, much of India seemed to accept this line of argument, though there were quite a few who objected to the stealth and secrecy that preceded the announcement of abrogation of two key Articles of the Indian Constitution, and the stringent security measures that were enforced across J&K, immediately prior to and subsequently.

Unrealised goals, concerns

The laundry list of achievements and missed targets post-August 2019, however, suggest that the intended objectives of bringing Kashmir into the national mainstream, reducing levels of violence within the Union Territory, and expansion of jobs and economic opportunities, are still to happen. Levels of violence continue to remain high, broadly approximating to what existed in earlier periods. The only silver lining has been the elimination of some top leaders of terrorist outfits, such as the Hizbul Mujahideen.

The incarceration of several senior political leaders for several months under various provisions of the law, including the Jammu and Kashmir Public Safety Act, has, meanwhile, undermined faith in the Centre's commitment to an early return to orderly political discourse. Senior leaders like former Chief Minister, Mehbooba Mufti, still remain in custody. Prominent National Conference leaders, Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah, have been released from custody, but continue to face restrictions, with regard to any kind of political activity. Peoples Conference chief Sajad Lone was released after spending almost a year in preventive detention. The widespread concern about human rights and human rights violations in Kashmir, hence, appears justified.

As former Supreme Court of India judge, Justice Madan Lokur, observed in a recent newspaper article, that even a form of house arrest is a matter of grave human rights concern.

Among other major concerns has been the difficulty faced by the



populace in accessing information, following the snapping of high speed Internet connections. Students, in particular, have faced serious problems on account of the lack of access to high speed Internet. Another has been the State government's announcement (in May this year), to notify the J&K Grant of Domicile Certificate Procedure Rules, 2020 and set a fast track process in motion. The domicile certificate issue has become a 'ticking time-bomb', with some political parties declaring that it could "change the demography of the erstwhile State of J&K". The latest notification allows non-nationals to apply for domicile certificates, thus potentially opening the floodgates for 'outsiders' to settle in the State, acquire property, and also apply for jobs in an already scarce job market.

Even Jammu which had less to lose on account of the changes effected in August last year, has its own list of concerns, mainly relating to the likely influx of outsiders into the State following the removal of restrictions. The inability of local businesses to compete with goods from outside is another of their special concerns. Together with the higher cost of manufacture in J&K, as also the need to import raw material from elsewhere, concerns abound about their ability to compete with 'outsiders'.

The complexity of Kashmir

India has had problems with Kashmir ever since 1947. The reasons are too well known to merit repetition. Successive governments in Delhi and Srinagar have wrestled with the problem. Kashmir has also figured prominently in at least four India-Pakistan conflicts, and the Kashmir issue has been a constant irritant in India-Pakistan re-

lations. Anyone who deigns to read the debates in the United Nations on Kashmir during the 1950s and 1960s, and even subsequently, will understand the complexity of the Kashmir problem. Every government in Delhi has dealt with Kashmir during their tenure in office, and there has been no lack of trying on their part to solve the issue.

Many options on how to deal with the problem have been previously explored. In the past, the security problem had attracted the attention of renowned international experts, with experience in dealing with insurrections, sub-national tensions, terrorism, and various other facets of organised and unorganised violence. During the final decades of the 20th Century, many saw a parallel between the situation in Kashmir and that prevailing in Northern Ireland. There was also a steady exchange of ideas and concepts with a view to finding a solution. A major difference between Northern Ireland and Kashmir, however, was that unlike in the case of the former, Kashmir had two hostile neighbours, one of whom was intent on instigating violence and providing a suitable 'rear' for terrorist elements.

Long shadow of world events

It is a moot point whether a long-standing problem of this nature can be solved merely by rejecting notions of a 'separate Kashmiri identity', disowning all talk of Kashmiri 'insaniyat' and 'jamhooriyat', and making Kashmiris pay for their past mistakes. An ingrained belief that the solution lay in squeezing Kashmir's politics into the 'straitjacket' of national politics, shorn of all past beliefs and practices, could prove to be highly misplaced. It would amount to proposing a simplistic solution for a complex problem.

The Kashmir problem cannot again be detached from the extant situation prevailing in parts of the world, where many existing systems are undergoing changes. This crucial aspect of current history cannot be avoided.

Across the globe, for instance,

radical Islamist ideas appear to be gaining ground, and the impact is being felt on youth in our region as well. No longer can it be solely attributed to the fallout of the Afghan Jihad of the 1980s, for there are other forces such as the Islamic State in existence today, that are a force to reckon with. This must be recognised even as claims are being made that home-grown militancy in J&K has been extinguished. There are sizeable pockets of radical Islamist influence present in Kashmir today. One index is the existence of the so-called 'unattached militant'. All such elements are driven by the power of an idea, and cannot be suppressed through sheer force. These are among the fundamental issues that need resolution in Kashmir.

Have debate, introspection

Current policy makers should not assume that it is a failure of imagination, or of policy making, that prevented past leaders from understanding and finding a solution for the Kashmir problem. It would be wise for leaders in Delhi to be careful not to view immediate dividends as representing a new dawn, and should instead pause to try and ascertain what lies beyond the horizon. Restoring normalcy should be an urgent priority even if many of the senior political leaders in Kashmir belonging to the National Conference, the People's Democratic Party, or PDP, the J&K Congress, and the J&K Peoples' Conference appear highly critical of the Centre's policies.

An intense debate must start as to where we go from here. Introspection after the initial one year has become essential. 'Strong arm populism' has its limits. A moment arises in the course of any struggle when it becomes necessary to undertake value-based judgements. In Kashmir, the moment is now. We cannot afford any more 'evolutionary adaptations to an already dangerous social and complex environment'.

M.K. Narayanan is a former National Security Adviser and a former Governor of West Bengal

Disruption and chalking out a new idea for education

In the aftermath of the pandemic's deep impact in India, 'Acadonomics' is a concept whose time may have come



SANDEEP SANCHETI

When the novel coronavirus first made headlines at the beginning of the year, few in the comity of nations would have thought even in their wildest dreams that it was going to have so much of an impact that not even a single sphere of life would be left unaffected.

Now, six months into the pandemic, not only has there been a colossal loss of life and economic damage the world over, but COVID-19, as it has come to be called, is leaving a lasting impression on education. This in turn is bound to have a telling impact on generations to come, forgetting for a second the extent to which the current graduating classes are in a state of limbo. In a larger perspective it has also raised the spectre of educational institutions shuttering their doors completely or taking unprecedented steps that have invariably affected jobs and livelihoods.

A comparison with the West
Shifting gears in an academic setting is not easy whether one is talking about institutions in the developed West or the developing nations. Economics has always been a part of academics; it is only in the present circumstances that it has become all the more apparent as to how management, especially in private institutions, is going to meet demands on the one hand and availability of resources on the other. If one may call this new phenomenon "acadonom-

ics", it would imply a careful allocation of resources keeping in mind the transient nature of the issue of how long it is going to take to come back to the steady state of affairs that it once was. 'Acadonomics' will also involve seeing the economics of moving on to an online mode of the teaching-learning process, whether it is going to be a temporary phenomenon, something of a mix to be offered or a permanent alternative to the current scheme of things that has come to stay for the short and the medium terms.

The academic choices, or in some instances, luxuries, are not the same for all countries across the world. For instance in the United States, long considered as the Mecca of Higher Education, the elite private and state subsidised universities have endowments that can be used for a range of academic activities – from giving out fellowships to subsidising tuition fees. Harvard University, for example, is said to have an endowment of close to \$40 billion, and the top 10 have a cushion of anywhere between \$10 billion to \$40 billion. By contrast, private academic institutions in India which are not-for-profit do not have any such buffers; and, none of the institutions in this country possesses big campuses from alumni or industry; their survival for the most part is on the annual income that comes from tuition and the assortment of other fees collected.

Private education
In the way they are set up, private institutions in India are hardly in a position to meet an eventuality such as COVID-19, something that comes by lightning speed and leaves a trail of destruction that would take many, many years to rectify. In an educational set-up in



India, nothing can be reduced – the norms cannot be lowered nor can the infrastructure be dismantled. The status quo with respect to fixed costs remains the same, with some marginal adjustments possibly in costs of electricity, water and deferrals in salaries. For the most part, the fixed and operational costs remain the same, and infrastructure once created cannot be shrunk.

The downside to self-financed institutions is that in the time of the pandemic and loss of jobs, students plead inability to pay the requisite fee (and in many instances, the hostel fee as well) thereby placing additional burden on the management which feels already stretched because of existing commitments that would include paying off interest on the money borrowed for improving infrastructure on their campuses.

Dual mode of learning

The spike in cost for persisting with a dual mode of the teaching-learning process is going to be quite prohibitive for the next few years. First, the scaling of operations that would include the dual modes of online and offline is going to be expensive due to a dual mode of educational delivery. To rub salt into the wound, the new social distancing norms would lead to the enforcement of smaller

class sizes, thereby increasing the effective teaching load and multiplicity of efforts. Second, the online teaching mode brings with it increased costs of IT infrastructure such as network bandwidth, servers, cloud resources and software licensing fees. Third, online teaching means new hiring in the IT sector and increased costs due to engagements with Massive Open Online Courses, or MOOCs, and other online platforms. Fourth, online teaching means setting up multiple studios and educational technology centres which translate into investments in high technology. Fifth, creation of virtual laboratories across all domains of studies and examination centres, etc. would add to the woes in terms of already depleted finances. Finally, it is a wrong perception that all faculty members are adept in online teaching – style and delivery go far beyond donning a jacket, having adequate personal grooming and rattling off from a teleprompter. Therefore, additional funds have to be allocated to train faculty for online teaching.

Possible reforms

In these difficult times, the onus is on the Centre and State governments to provide soft loans to students to stay with the educational course. For professional and non-professional courses, the natural tendency for students would be to opt for online courses as they could cut back and save on hostel, mess and travel costs. At the same time students looking at online instruction would be disinclined to pay the same fee charged for offline instruction which means that some institutions may well have to shut down due to their inability to meet costs. Therefore, owing to 'acadonomics', the consequences

can be quite dire with a potential to cause irreparable and long-term harm to the younger generations of students as well as institutions. At this point of time it would seem prudent for the government and regulatory bodies to not interfere in the fee structure, and, for the future, even consider a measure of higher degree of financial autonomy. One would agree that in the long run, technology can flatten the cost due to economies of scale, but in a shorter frame of time of three to five years, the cost of education is likely to go up.

It may be an exaggeration to say that in India, education and the financial models are inverted as opposed to many others: there is good quality private school education but one that is fairly expensive; but good quality higher education is subsidised in relation to their direct costs. While replicating any western model in India may not be wholly appropriate, it is high time institutions in India are allowed to create coffers or corpus for a rainy day. Or, perhaps, educational institutions could come to be treated like any other corporate body, with an allowable small margin of profit. The corporate model addresses not just financial sustainability but also a professional governance structure that would entail better accountability and holistic education. 'Acadonomics' of the future will not only decide the fate of the academic sector in India but also its quality, ranking, research, innovation potential and its collective impact on our country's economy.

Sandeep Sancheti is Vice Chancellor, SRM Institute of Science and Technology (SRMIST) Chennai and Past President, Association of Indian Universities (AIU) New Delhi

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.

Border tensions again
It appears that China is not serious at all about the ongoing disengagement and de-escalation talks at various levels over the border issue, given its frequent provocative transgressions at different points (Page 1, "PLA

aggression blocked at Pangong Tso", September 1). While the need for continuance of military and diplomatic-level talks cannot be overemphasised, the PLA's aggressive moves must be met with a befitting response. China's new aggressive actions could be

to pressure India into accepting the current status quo on the border.
KOSARAJU CHANDRAMOULI,
Hyderabad

Pranab Mukherjee
When personalities like the former President of India, Pranab Mukherjee, fade

away, it signifies the end of an era. His rise to the highest office is remarkable in addition to his knowledge of politics. Rarely do we see such a personality being respected across the spectrum.
MADHUSREE GUHA,
Kolkata

Fine for contempt
The Supreme Court of India has rightly meted out a symbolic punishment to advocate Prashant Bhushan (Page 1, September 1). His long-drawn allegation of the so-called destruction of democracy by judges is just blatant abuse of the

freedom of expression and a denigration of the top court of the land. Should we not respect at least judgments delivered in consensus?
GEETHA B.K.,
Mangaluru

To read more letters online, scan the QR code



A 'new' democracy?

A systemic transformation of democracy is taking place from within to its very opposite



HARBANS MUKHIA

The 'democracy' that a major part of our world swears by comprises free and fair, multi-party, fixed-term elections based on universal adult franchise in its ideal state. A contestant party winning the majority of votes represents the will of the electorate and gets to form the government; others sit in the opposition until the next election. Simple.

Its simplicity also conceals some of its structural flaws. The 'majority of votes' actually boils down to the majority of seats in the legislature which, in 99% of the time, comes riding a minority of votes. Rarely is a government formed backed by a majority of votes won in a free and fair election. Rajiv Gandhi's formidable, highest-ever majority in Lok Sabha in 1984 was still short of a majority of votes by about 2%. Narendra Modi in 2014 had the backing of 31% of the votes cast and in 2019, of just about 40%. In 2016, Donald Trump won the presidential race in the U.S. with a deficit of over 2.5 million popular votes vis-à-vis his chief competitor, Hillary Clinton. It is the same story everywhere.

What democracy brought

Besides the fact that this democracy is far from becoming universal even well into the 21st century, its own life history is just a tiny dot on the canvas of time: short of a hundred years. Universal adult franchise itself is yet to hit the 100-year mark in the most advanced nations. Even in the U.S., white women won the franchise a hundred years ago but their black sisters had to wait another few decades. The white women too won it in the teeth of opposition, including from thousands of women raising the slogan: A vote or a husband? The Swiss women got the vote less than a half century ago, nearly a quarter century after Indian women did.

Democracy did not come alone; its accoutrements included guaranteed individual rights and freedoms, free market economy, equality of all citizens, freedom of life and proper-



ty, etc. – inviolable constituents of capitalism. Elections created space for change of governments even as they guaranteed security against challenge to the regime; the challenge could arise only outside of it, through 'revolutions', which in turn had much contracted the space even for a change of government and none for a change of regime. In the end, most 'revolutions' could not escape the dragnet of 'democracy', their existential as well as conceptual adversary.

One of democracy's primary premises, free market, which 'revolutions' had sought to eradicate, is now under threat not from its adversary but from its own internal dynamics. The unprecedented concentration of wealth at the top 1% around the world knocks the bottom out of competition in the market, so integral to its freedom.

The principle and the form

This high concentration of wealth is in turn getting to impact the system's political functioning by replicating the process. The hollowing out of this foundational principle of capital-

ism while retaining its form is also running parallel in the other freedoms, other constituents of 'democracy' by hollowing out the substance of even free and fair elections and individual freedoms while retaining the form. The notion of the free choice of the exercise of vote at the ballot box gets completely distorted with innumerable manipulations of that choice on all sides, all within the four walls of the constitutional provisions. These include distortions injected into the electoral process through control and misuse of the institutions responsible for carrying out the process; the creation of an atmosphere of delegitimisation of dissent or protest vis-à-vis the government by counter-posing the demands of unquestioning patriotism or nationalism to it; using the sentiment of patriotism to circumscribe the dispensation of fair justice; the control of the flow of information through the 'independent' media; setting up of professionally organised mechanisms for creating and propagating fake news; creating and promoting hatred between communities of people through patronising

identity politics and using frenzy in lieu of reason as a mobiliser of votes; and not least, meting out the harshest treatment to the most prominent dissenting voices by lodging them in prison on fake charges, never mind that they would all be let off a decade later by the courts for want of evidence. The message to society would have been delivered.

A global scenario

True, much of what we see happening before our eyes has been witnessed by history; Adolf Hitler's example, though extreme, comes closest to what we are watching helplessly. Yet, the example is a bad one, for Hitler needed to destroy the Constitution which had brought him to power; today, remarkably democratic and progressive constitutions around the world give rulers enough space for misuse for achieving those goals and yet making the misuse palatable to voters through media and mobilisation. It is interesting that voters haven't tired of this misuse anywhere going by the ever-rising voting percentages at election time.

If this concentration of wealth and political power was the case with one country or society, it could easily be attributed to specific local conditions; but this looks like a more generalised, global scenario: in the U.S., China, Russia, India, Brazil, Hungary, Turkey and elsewhere. It is therefore futile to argue that this has flown from the personality or personal dictats of one or the other charismatic leader. Its global scale defies that inference.

Clearly then, we are witnessing the transformation of the regime of democracy, a systemic transformation from within, from one that had brought us the promise of liberté, égalité, fraternité political, social and economic, to its very opposite: the highest concentration of economic, political and therefore social powers ever in history. Yet 'democracy' remains its trademark. Nor does it have the appearance of a sudden, odd aberration with an expected short life, or a spontaneous occurrence in different regions. Its scale is too massive for that.

Is this a 'new' democracy in store for humanity?

Harbans Mukhia taught history at Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

Treating data as commons

If everyone gets greater access to non-personal data, they can develop their digital businesses or other activities with it



PARMINDER JEET SINGH

The Gopalakrishnan Committee set up by the government on developing a governance framework for non-personal data recently put out its draft report for public consultation. The report's main purpose is to ensure wide sharing and availability of data in society. To ensure that companies share the required data, it was found necessary to develop strong conceptual and legal basis for data-sharing requirements and obligations.

To understand why data sharing is needed, and its importance to a strong and fair digital economy, we must first recognise the infrastructural nature of data. Industrial age infrastructure – roads, electricity, etc. – were often publicly owned. Even if there was some private role, these were run as closely regulated public utilities. The idea was to ensure widespread availability of such infrastructural elements to all, and avoid wasteful duplications. Society's data have a similar nature for a digital economy.

Digital vertical integration

The digital age came with useful digital services that everyone lapped up. Many of these services were free or highly subsidised. The infrastructure versus over-the-top services distinction may initially have not been too significant. But that difference becomes important as digital corporations begin to dominate all sectors, including important ones such as education and health.

That very few corporations have vertically integrated all the digital components involved in delivery of any digital service is the reason for their becoming such huge global monopolies. Seven out of the top 10 companies globally today have a data-centric model. Such unsustainable concentration of digital power has a significant geopolitical dimension, with complete domination globally of U.S. and Chinese companies. At the national level its deleterious effect is of exploitation of consumers and small economic actors, and of strangulating competition and innovation. There are calls worldwide to break up Big Tech; to moderate their monopoly power. Their monopoly is best addressed by separating the infrastructural elements of digital service provision from the business of digital service delivery. There are two key infrastructural components of a digital economy: data and cloud computing.

The Gopalakrishnan report and this article focus on the infrastructural element of data.

Infrastructures are to be equitably provided for all businesses. Data have similar characteristics. But today, dominant digital corporations are building exclusive control over any sector's data as their key business advantage. Start-ups try to ape the same mode. What is needed, however, is to treat data as infrastructure, or 'commons', so that data are widely available for all businesses. The digital businesses then shift their key business advantage from exclusive access to data to employing available data for devising digital services for consumers' benefit.

Reducing digital dependence

The Gopalakrishnan committee takes such an infrastructural view of data. Data collected from various communities are considered to be 'owned' by the relevant community. Such 'community ownership' means that the data should be shared back with all those who need it in society, whether to develop domestic digital businesses or for producing important digital public goods. With a robust domestic data/AI industry, dependence on U.S. and Chinese companies will reduce.

It is for these purposes that the Gopalakrishnan committee proposes the concept of 'community data'. Only the data collected from non-privately owned sources, from society or community sources, have to be be shared when requested for. Data from privately owned sources remain private. Since a community requires a legally recognisable body to articulate its data ownership claim, the committee introduces the concept of community trustees that could be various bodies representative of the community.

Data collectors are considered as data custodians that will use and secure data as per the best interests of the community concerned. Data trusts are data infrastructures that will enable data sharing, sector-wise, or across sectors, and which can be run by various kinds of third-party bodies. The committee recommends a new legislation, because ensuring and enforcing data sharing will require sufficient legal backing. A Non-Personal Data Authority is also envisaged to enable and regulate all the envisaged data-sharing activities.

India is the first country to come up with a comprehensive framework in this area. Starting early in this important digital policy and governance area may just provide a formidable first mover advantage for India to acquire its rightful place in the digital world.

Parminder Jeet Singh works with the Bangalore-based NGO IT for Change. He is a member of the Gopalakrishnan Committee. Views are personal

The politics of hate speech

Facebook is different in its treatment of hate speech in India as compared to the U.S.

THAMIZHACHI THANGAPANDIAN

For years, Facebook has made us believe that it is committed to enforcing its policies against hate speech and misinformation. However, the recent article by *The Wall Street Journal* has made it clear that Facebook is not only deliberately unequipped in its handling of hate speech, but has also adopted different approaches in its treatment of hate speech in India as compared to other developed nations.

Changing its policy

In the run-up to the presidential election in the U.S., Facebook's CEO announced that the company will change its policies to prohibit hate speech in its advertisements. Face-

book also announced that it will fix labels on posts that violate hate speech or other policies. It will also not only remove posts that incite violence or attempt to suppress voting, including posts by political leaders, but also ramp up its teams for detecting and acting against hateful content. To show its commitment towards these new policies, it has even removed posts and ads from Donald Trump's 2020 re-election campaign over their use of Nazi imagery.

However, in India, the company seems to follow a completely different set of rules. The company has taken no such action against hate speech, misinformation and the threats, bigotry and harassment which thrive on the platform here. This is despite evidence that the hate speech against minorities published on Facebook has time and again led to deadly violence.

The continuous spread of fake news has invigorated hate crimes in India, the most recent being the riots in Delhi this year. So lax is the control on hate speech today that even India's most respected journalists and other dissenting voices are routinely threatened with rape and death threats by hundreds of social media users which remain unchecked.

What is even more appalling about Facebook is its unequal treatment of hate speech. Social media platforms rely on a combination of artificial intelligence, user reporting, and content moderators to monitor hate

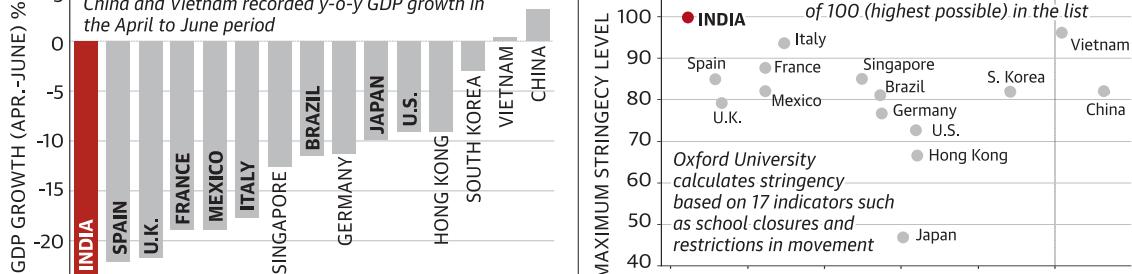


DATA POINT

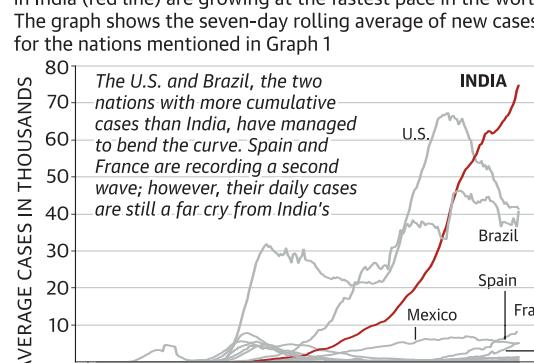
Double whammy

1. Fastest contracting economy | In the COVID-19-hit months of April to June, India's GDP contracted 23.9% year-on-year. India's contraction was the worst among many key economies for which data for the quarter were available

2. Most stringent lockdown | India had the most stringent lockdown in the world and its GDP contraction was the highest. The graph shows the maximum stringency recorded during a nation's lockdown period



3. Fastest rise in cases | Since August 8, average daily cases in India (red line) are growing at the fastest pace in the world. The graph shows the seven-day rolling average of new cases for the nations mentioned in Graph 1



Despite enforcing the most stringent lockdown to control the spread of COVID-19, the average daily cases and deaths in India are growing at the fastest pace in the world.

Due to the severe restrictions between April and June, the economy took an unprecedented hit with the GDP contracting for the first time in decades in the April to June quarter.

By Sumanth Sen and Vignesh Radhakrishnan

Only India reached the stringency level of 100 (highest possible) in the list

Oxford University calculates stringency based on 17 indicators such as school closures and restrictions in movement

Japan

GDP GROWTH (APR-JUNE) %

MAXIMUM STRINGENCY LEVEL

INDIA

Italy

France

Singapore

Brazil

S. Korea

Vietnam

China

U.K.

Mexico

Germany

U.S.

Hong Kong

Japan

2.500

2,000

1,500

1,000

500

0

AVERAGE DEATHS

Jan 1

Mar 1

May 1

July 1

Sept. 1

Source: Ourworldindata, Johns Hopkins University, OECD, Reuters

The U.S. and Brazil, the two nations with more cumulative deaths than India, have managed to bend the curve

India's average daily deaths curve surpassed that of U.S. and Brazil

U.S.

Brazil

Mexico

Spain

France

U.S.

India

U.S.</p

IN BRIEF



Rajiv Kumar takes over as Election Commissioner

NEW DELHI

Rajiv Kumar, a retired IAS officer of the 1984 batch from the Bihar/Jharkhand cadre, on Tuesday took over as Election Commissioner, filling the vacancy after Ashok Lavasa moved to the Asian Development Bank. Mr. Kumar retired as Union Finance Secretary last February, and had been Chairman of the Public Enterprises Selection Board from April 2020 till demitting office on Monday.

NCB seizes marijuana sourced from abroad

NEW DELHI

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) seized 3.5 kg curated marijuana sourced from abroad, in an operation carried out in Delhi and Mumbai. The contraband, popularly known as "bud", was seized in Delhi. It was illegally imported from the U.S. and was destined for Mumbai. The one seized in Mumbai was sourced from Canada and was to be transferred to Goa, said NCB.

Another RJD MLA joins JD(U) in Bihar

PATNA

With the Bihar Assembly poll round the corner, Opposition Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) MLA Birendra Kumar on Tuesday joined the ruling Janata Dal United (JD-U), while the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) declared it would contest for 50 seats in the State. Mr. Kumar is the seventh RJD MLA to join the JD(U) in the past fortnight.

Ex-bureaucrats demand action against TV channel

NEW DELHI

A group of 91 former civil servants, in a letter to Home Minister Amit Shah and Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar, demanded legal and administrative action against Sudarshan News channel for its trailer of a news series about the recruitment process for IAS and the IPS, which it claims has ensured a spike in the number of Muslim officers. The letter said the claim is not factual. As per the DOPIT data, Muslims make up only 3.46% of the force. The group also said there were batches where not a single Muslim candidate was selected.

Rajnath meets Doval, Rawat over LAC crisis

Talks held to ensure situation doesn't escalate, says source

DINAKAR PERI
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh held a meeting with National Security Adviser (NSA) Ajit Doval, Chief of the Defence Staff (CDS) Gen. Bipin Rawat and the three Service Chiefs to discuss the situation on the ground in Ladakh, a defence source said on Tuesday.

At Chushul, the Brigadier level talks began around 9:30 a.m. and went on till about 6 p.m., the first source said.

"The talks are a confidence-building measure to ensure the situation on ground doesn't escalate," the source stated on the outcome of the talks.

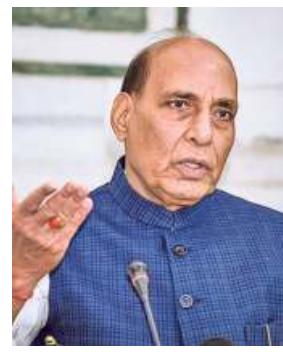
Troops on two peaks

Another defence source said the Army deployed troops on two peaks in the Chushul sector near the Spanggur gap on the Indian side of the Line of Actual Control, but also claimed by China, to pre-empt any action by the People's Liberation Army to occupy them.

The official said mobilisation and movement of troops could be detected from a distance in the area due to the powerful surveillance equipment.

PLA plan foiled

On Monday, the Army said in a statement that it pre-empted the People's Liberation Army (PLA) activity on the Southern Bank of the Pangong Tso (lake), undertook measures to strengthen its positions and "thwart



Rajnath Singh

At Monday's talks, China demanded that India withdraw from the peaks in the Chushul sector, it has been learnt.

An official said this was an attempt by China to change the alignment of the LAC in the South Bank of Pangong after making ingress up to Finger 4 on the North Bank since the stand-off between the two Armies began in May first week.

Unlike the North Bank, where the Army only undertakes patrols, in the South Bank, it has a firm presence and has significantly strengthened its defences in the

area in the past few years. This includes deployment of tanks in the South Bank area.

There was no change in the ground situation on the North Bank and other stand-off areas, the first source said.

Chinese troops continued to occupy the ridge lines of Finger 4, and in the last two months, have undertaken a further build-up, which showed they were preparing to stay for the winter, the source added.

Stalemate continues

The two sides have held five rounds of Corps Commander talks so far since May, in addition to military-level talks at other levels but the talks have hit a stalemate after some initial disengagement.

It was during the first phase of disengagement that the violent clashes occurred at the Galwan Valley, resulting in the deaths of 20 Indian armed forces personnel as also an unknown number of Chinese personnel.

India violated consensus, says China

Chinese Foreign Ministry, Embassy counter Indian Army's account of tensions

ANANTH KRISHNAN

China's Foreign Ministry on Tuesday accused India of "breaking earlier consensus", and called for India to "immediately withdraw its troops", in statements issued in Beijing and New Delhi that questioned India's account of the latest tensions.

The Indian Army said on Monday that on August 29 night, the PLA violated previous agreements and carried out "provocative" military movements to change the *status quo*. To pre-empt these moves, India undertook measures to strengthen our positions".

India has maintained that it carried out these measures on its side of the LAC (Line of Actual Control), near the south bank of Pangong Tso. In May, China crossed the LAC on the north bank, and has since entrenched its positions 8 km into India's side. Chinese troops have also crossed the LAC in the Depsang plains in the north and in the Gogra-Hot Springs area.

"The Indian side's statement may be different from the Chinese side's but there is only one truth and fact,"

The statement, issued by

India's move has grossly violated China's territorial sovereignty, seriously violated relevant agreements, protocols and important consensus reached between the two countries, and severely damaged peace and tranquillity along the China-India border areas

JI RONG, CHINESE EMBASSY, NEW DELHI

Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said, "China has never provoked any war or conflict and never occupied an inch of other country's territory."

Embassy statement

In a statement, the Chinese Embassy in Delhi said, "On August 31, Indian troops violated the consensus reached in previous multi-level engagements and negotiations between China and India, illegally trespassed the Line of Actual Control again at the southern bank of the Pangong Tso Lake and near the Requin Pass in the western sector of China-India border,

and conducted flagrant provocations to the Indian side, urged the Indian side to strictly control and restrain its frontline troops, earnestly honour its commitments, immediately stop all the pro-

vocative actions, immediately withdraw its troops illegally trespassing the Line of Actual Control, immediately stop any actions leading to the escalation and complication of the situation."

On Tuesday, China also released remarks made by its Foreign Minister Wang Yi following a speech on Sunday during an official visit to France, saying Beijing "will not be the first to complicate or escalate the situation" along the LAC.

Mr. Wang said because "the boundary between China and India has not yet been demarcated, there will always be problems of this kind." On recent developments on the border, he said, "What I want to tell you is that China has always been committed to maintaining stability in the Sino-Indian border areas."

The statement said, "What India has done runs counter to the efforts made by both sides for a period of time to ease and cool down the situation on the ground, and China is resolutely opposed to this. China has made solemn representations to the Indian side, urged the Indian side to strictly control and restrain its frontline troops, earnestly honour its commitments, immediately stop all the pro-

China was "ready to manage all issues through dialogue" and called on India to "place the issues in an appropriate position in the bilateral relationship," he said.

'Camera caught Chinese movement'

It helped thwart move to alter *status quo* near Pangong Tso, says official

VIIJITA SINGH
NEW DELHI

A surveillance camera installed at South Bank of Pangong Tso helped the Indian Army thwart an aggressive move by the Chinese troops to alter the *status quo* in the area on the night of August 29 and 30, a senior government official told *The Hindu*.

The official said mobilisation and movement of troops could be detected from a distance in the area due to the powerful surveillance equipment.

On Monday, the Army said in a statement that it pre-empted the People's Liberation Army (PLA) activity on the Southern Bank of the Pangong Tso (lake), undertook measures to strengthen its positions and "thwart



Shifting gears: An Army convoy moving on the Srinagar-Ladakh highway at Gagangeer on Tuesday. ■ AP

Chinese intentions to unilaterally change facts on ground."

"After the Chinese movement was caught on camera, the Indian troops mobilised and stopped them from entering India's perception of the LAC. They had enough time to prepare," said the official. *The Hindu* could not confirm when the equipment was installed.

The official said that China also has a similar equip-

ment on its side.

Earlier, a document uploaded on the Ministry of Defence's website on August 5 and later deleted said, "Chinese aggression has been increasing along the LAC, and more particularly in Galwan valley, since May 5. The Chinese side transgressed in the areas of Kuan Nala, Gogra and north bank of Pangong Tso on May 17-18."

Twenty soldiers were killed on June 15 in Galwan in violent clashes with the Chinese PLA. India and China held the first round of Corps Commander-level talks on June 6, but there has been no restoration of status quo ante since.

Chinese ingress

Latest assessment by intelligence agencies shows that at Galwan junction, where the June 15 clashes were reported, the Chinese PLA are still within 800 metres of India's perception of LAC as against 5 kilometres initially. The Chinese moved back after a series of dialogues, including the Special Representatives talks on July 5.

At Galwan Valley and Gogra, Chinese troops are 2 km and 1 km inside respectively. The ingress is 8 kilometres in the Finger area of North Bank of Pangong Tso.

India aims for balance with slew of multilateral meetings

Ministerial meetings of SCO, Quad members scheduled

SUHASINI HAIDAR
NEW DELHI

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar will meet with their Russian and Chinese counterparts next week for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) meeting, while New Delhi is planning to host their American counterparts for the Indo-U.S. "2+2" talks as well as a meeting of Foreign Ministers of the "Quad", including Australia and Japan in October, several officials confirmed.

The plans for the meetings by the government indicates it is still pursuing both strategic formations despite rising tensions at the Line of Actual Control with China.

On Wednesday, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh will leave for Moscow to "attend the SCO Defence Minister's meeting" on September 3, the Minister's office tweeted on Tuesday. He will attend the meeting alongside de-



S. Jaishankar

fence ministers of China and Pakistan, although the only bilateral meeting planned is with Russian Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu.

Meanwhile, U.S. State Department Deputy Secretary Stephen Biegun confirmed on Monday that a meeting of Ministers of the Quadrilateral is being planned "this fall", and officials confirmed that it would be in October.

"There's going to be meeting of the Quad, a ministerial meeting with the Quad this fall in Delhi – that is the intention anyway," said Mr. Biegun while speaking at a U.S.-India Strategic Partnership Forum (USISPF) event.

India, Russia to hold naval drills in Andaman Sea

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Amid high operational alert by the Indian Navy in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) due to the ongoing stand-off with China in Ladakh, India and Russia are scheduled to hold the bilateral naval exercise, *Indra 2020*, in the Andaman Sea, close to the strategic Strait of Malacca later this week.

Three Russian Navy ships will take part in the exercise on September 4 and 5 along with an equal number from the Indian Navy, along with some aircraft," a defence source said.

This is also the first bilateral naval exercise since all such engagements were suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The timing of the exercise

coincides with Defence Minister Rajnath Singh's visit to Russia for the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Defence Ministers meet. It also comes just after India withdrew from the Kavkaz-2020 multinational exercise in Russia that is scheduled for later this month.

While the stated reason for the withdrawal was the

COVID-19 pandemic, defence sources had said that it was due to the participation of Chinese troops.

"So instead of exercising with Chinese troops in Kavkaz 2020, we would exercise with Russian Navy near the mouth of Malacca," another source observed.

Exercise with U.S.

In July, frontline warships of

the Indian Navy conducted a Passage Exercise (PASSEX) with the U.S. aircraft carrier *USS Nimitz* strike group in the same area near the Andaman and Nicobar (A&N) islands as it was transiting the Indian Ocean.

USS Nimitz was returning from the South China Sea through the Malacca Strait where it undertook freedom of navigation operations.

NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR EMPOWERMENT OF PERSONS WITH MULTIPLE DISABILITIES (NIPMD) (Deemed to be University)
ECR, Mutukudikavu, Kovilakam Post, Chennai 603 112
Tel: 044-27472104, 27472113, 27472425
Toll Free No.: 18004250345
Website: <https://nipmd.org>

E-TENDER NOTICE

House Keeping and Other services and Service Sectors

NIPMD invites E-Tenders through <http://eprocurement.gov.in> eprocure/app from reputed and experienced Agencies for the following services.

1. House Keeping and Other services 2. Service Sectors

The tender documents can also be downloaded from our website <https://nipmd.tn.in>.

Last date for submission of bidding (Service Services and House Keeping) - 4.00 PM 21/09/2020.

Phone : 0497-2705902

Website : www.kwa.kerala.gov.in

KWA-JB-GL-6-282-2020-21

KERALA WATER AUTHORITY

e-Tender Notice

Tender No : 53 / 2020-21/PHC/KNR. Jal Jeevan Mission- Kannur District- Kunhimangalam Panchayath- Water Supply Scheme to Cheruthazham and Kunhimangalam- Phase II - Laying Distribution System and providing FHTCs. EMD: Rs. 500000. Tender fee: Rs. 16800

Last Date for submitting Tender : 26-09-2020 03:00 pm.

Superintending Engineer PH Circle Kannur

MADHYA PRADESH POWER GENERATING CO. LIMITED

OFFICE OF THE CHIEF ENGINEER (R&M)

Shed No. 10, RAMPUR, MPPGCL, JABALPUR (M.P.), INDIA

(CIN No. U40109MP2001SGC014882)

Email: cpnr@rediffmail.com, Ph: +91-761-2393844

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

MPPGCL invites Expression of Interest from prospective bidders for Tender Specification No. 2020_MPPGCL_103809 for shortlisting the bidders to conduct feasibility study

including Residual Life Assessment Study, Condition Assessment etc. and preparation of tender documents

RSS wing flags changes in defence policy

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS)-affiliated Swadeshi Jagaran Manch (SJM) has red flagged the raising of the foreign direct investment (FDI) limit in defence production in India under the automatic route from 49% to 74%, saying that this may lead to the undermining of Indian vendors and domestic players.

In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the all India convenor of the SJM, Ashwani Mahajan has asked that the definition of "Indian vendor" be made clear with regard to the Defence Acquisition Policy, 2020, so that foreign entities do not get advantages over entities owned and promoted by Indian resident citizens under the "buy" and "buy and make" categories.

'Definition diluted'

"We feel that with the changed policy allowing FDI upto 74% under the Automatic route, the definition of 'Indian vendor' has been diluted significantly to such an extent that any foreign company can register itself in India and acquire 74% equity and still continue to be called 'Indian vendor,'" said the letter. The letter goes on to state that in the SJM's "considered opinion", "Indian vendor" should only mean "entities in which majority ownership and control is retained by Indian Resident Citizens".

The Centre had, last month, banned the import of 101 items related to defence and had announced a new draft acquisition policy to encourage domestic manufacture of defence equipment.

65.4% of virus deaths in a day in 5 States

States, Union Territories are progressively increasing their testing capacity, says Health Ministry

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

In the last 24 hours, five States have posted the highest addition to the new cases in the country, with Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka leading the tally, followed by Tamil Nadu and Uttar Pradesh. Together they account for 56% of the confirmed cases added in the last 24 hours, said a release issued by the Union Health Ministry here on Tuesday.

The Ministry said that these five States have also reported the maximum number of patients that have recovered in the last 24 hours, cumulatively accounting for 58.04% of the national figure of 65,081 persons.

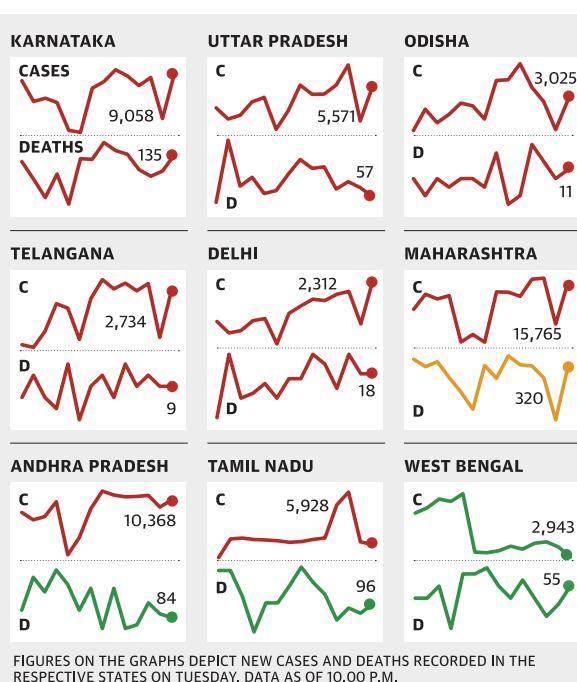
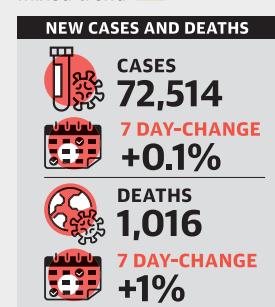
Cumulative figure

With a cumulative figure of 536 deaths in the last 24 hours, the five States together account for 65.4% of the deaths added to the national total (819).

Maharashtra has reported 184 deaths, Karnataka has

Viral tracker

With 72,514 cases recorded on Tuesday, India's COVID-19 tally stood at 37,60,936. As many as 1,016 new deaths were registered on the day, taking the toll to 66,470. The graphs depict new cases and deaths in the last 14 days across select States which are classified based on where cases or deaths are rising —; falling —; or showing a mixed trend —.



FIGURES ON THE GRAPHS DEPICT NEW CASES AND DEATHS RECORDED IN THE RESPECTIVE STATES ON TUESDAY. DATA AS OF 10:00 P.M.

States account for nearly 34% of the total testing," said the release.

The Ministry added that India's per day testing capacity has crossed 10 lakh tests. 10,16,920 tests were conducted in the last 24 hours.

'Sustained growth'

"There has been a sustained growth in the average weekly numbers of tests. The weekly average tests have multiplied by more than four times since the first week of January 2020," said the Ministry.

Stating that expanded diagnostic lab network and facilitation for easy testing across the country have given a substantial boost, the Health Ministry noted that Tests Per Million (TPM) have also seen a sharp increase to 31,394.

"22 States/UTs have better TPM than national average. Goa, Delhi, Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu are reporting maximum number of tests in a day," the Ministry added.

cumulative tests crossed 4.3 crore on Tuesday.

"1,22,66,514 tests were done in the last two weeks alone. States/UTs are progressively increasing their

testing capacity. The States contributing maximum to the overall number of tests include Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra among others. These three

institutions could be started in graded manner. There should be a pragmatic approach, especially in areas where sufficient population is already infected with SARS-CoV-2."

The statement is available online at the website of the IPHA. On May 31, the group of epidemiologists criticised the government for not taking field-level epidemiologists, and "overly relying" on modelling estimates to take decisions on the lockdown, which ended up triggering a migrant crisis.

"It's time now to move towards normalcy. Opening of school and other educational

Focus must be on preventing deaths: experts

Lockdowns have outlived their utility and schools should be reopened in a graded manner, they say

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The government's focus should be to prevent deaths from COVID-19 and no longer on containing the infection, says a statement jointly issued by the Indian Public Health Association (IPHA), the Indian Association of Preventive and Social Medicine and the Indian Association of Epidemiologists.

India now accounts for the highest number of increase in cases globally.

Lockdowns have outlived their utility in India and schools should be reopened in a graded manner, according to a joint statement by the three leading epidemiologist associations — some of whose members are a part of the government's national COVID-19 task force.

The statement said: "Lockdown as a strategy for control should be discontinued. Geographically limited restrictions for short periods may be imposed in epidemiologically defined clusters... In large cities where already there has been substantial spread, there is NO (sic) ad-

vantage of creating containment zones and aggressive testing".

"In cities with a high number of cases, symptomatic patients (even if they don't test positive) should be treated at home or hospital depending on the degree of severity. Most patients should be monitored through phones and pulse oximeter readings followed up and these should be used to take decisions on early hospitalisations," it said.

"However in cities and rural areas where the infec-

tions are 'moderate' or extremely limited, containment zones as well as isolating those who might carry the infection ought to be implemented strictly. Moreover, practices such as labelling houses with those afflicted, as 'positive' should be done away with," the statement said. 'Social stigma' was a key factor that kept people with symptoms from coming forward and getting tested, it added.

"It's time now to move towards normalcy. Opening of school and other educational

institutions could be started in graded manner. There should be a pragmatic approach, especially in areas where sufficient population is already infected with SARS-CoV-2."

The statement is available online at the website of the IPHA. On May 31, the group of epidemiologists criticised the government for not taking field-level epidemiologists, and "overly relying" on modelling estimates to take decisions on the lockdown, which ended up triggering a migrant crisis.

To formally allow members of one House into the other, the Lok Sabha Speaker and the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha may have to officially grant permission on the first day of the session.

Other important changes are also likely as the government plans to drop Question Hour — the one-hour time allotted to MPs when

COVID-19 blueprint for Parliament ready

Govt. reaches out to Opposition

SANDEEP PHUKAN
NEW DELHI

Staggered timings, a two-hour break for disinfection, and working weekends — the Union government's plan to hold the first ever Parliament session during the COVID-19 pandemic is ready, a senior leader said on Tuesday.

Deputy Leader of the Lok Sabha and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is learnt to have reached out to senior Opposition leaders, including Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Ghulam Nabi Azad, Congress leader in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, and Trinamool Congress MP Derek O'Brien, to brief them about the plans.

The plan is yet to be announced officially as some aspects are still being finalised. But to maintain distancing norms and spread out the Members of Parliament in both the Houses, Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha will have separate timings.

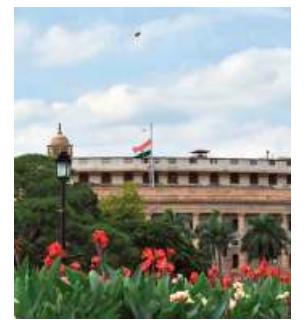
While the Rajya Sabha will transact business between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. in the first half, proceedings in the Lok Sabha will start at 4 p.m. and will go on until 8 p.m.

Disinfect chambers

The two-hour break, between 2 p.m. and 4 p.m., will be used to disinfect both the chambers.

To formally allow members of one House into the other, the Lok Sabha Speaker and the Chairman of the Rajya Sabha may have to officially grant permission on the first day of the session.

But the Secretary-Generals of the Houses cited technical capacity limitations, not enough time, and difficulty in providing simultaneous translation online, to reject such a demand.



The upcoming Parliament session will have 18 sittings and will end on October 1.

they can raise questions related to different Ministries.

Though Mr. Chowdhury had written to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla not to curtail Question Hour and Zero Hour as it encroaches on an MP's right, the government may not agree.

Zero Hour
However, Zero Hour — when an MP can raise any urgent issue on the floor of the House — may be allowed.

The monsoon session of Parliament that usually gets under way by the third week of July was postponed because of COVID-19 and will now start on September 14.

The upcoming session will have 18 sittings, which includes two working Saturdays and Sundays each, and will end on October 1.

Opposition leaders, including Mr. Chowdhury and former Finance Minister and Rajya Sabha member P. Chidambaram, had also written to the presiding officers of both the Houses to allow virtual participation along with physical sittings.

But the Secretary-Generals of the Houses cited technical capacity limitations, not enough time, and difficulty in providing simultaneous translation online, to reject such a demand.



Final journey: Military policemen escorting an ambulance carrying the remains of the former President in New Delhi on Tuesday. ■ AFP

Mukherjee cremated with military honours

Central government, several States announce seven-day state mourning

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Former President Pranab Mukherjee, who passed away on Monday, was cremated with full military honours on Tuesday. The last rites were performed by his son, Abhijit Mukherjee, at the Lodhi crematorium on Tuesday.

Earlier, Mr. Mukherjee's mortal remains were placed at his residence in 10 Rajaji Marg to

enable dignitaries and the general public to pay their last respects. President Ram Nath Kovind and Prime Minister Narendra Modi paid their last respects.

'India's progress'

"Paid tributes to respected Shri Pranab Mukherjee. He would be remembered by generations for his efforts towards India's progress," Mr. Modi said on

Twitter later.

Due to the requirement of following social distancing norms and other COVID-19 related protocols, the mortal remains were carried in a hearse van instead of the normal gun carriage. All guidelines with regard to COVID-19 related preventive measures were in place.

Mr. Mukherjee, 84, passed away at the Army's Research & Referral hospital where he was

undergoing treatment since he had an emergency surgery for a brain clot. He had also tested positive for COVID-19. He developed a lung infection.

The Central government and several States have announced seven-day state mourning for the former President.

The National Flag would fly at half-mast on all buildings throughout the country, the Home Ministry said.

China mourns Pranab

ANANTH KRISHNAN

China on Tuesday said the passing of former President Pranab Mukherjee was a heavy loss for China-India friendship.

"Former President Mukherjee was a veteran statesman of India," Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Hua Chunying said in Beijing.

China-India relations

"In his 50 years in politics, he made positive contributions to China-India relations. In 2014, he received President Xi [in India] and the two sides issued a joint statement on building a closer development partnership. It is a heavy loss for China-India friendship and to India. We express deep condolences over his passing and extend sincere sympathies to the Indian government and to his family."

The Indian Embassy in Beijing shared on Twitter photographs of the former President's engagements with China, from his hosting of President Xi Jinping in India in 2014 to his state visit to China in 2016, when he held talks with Mr. Xi and Premier Li Keqiang and visited a Buddhist temple in Guangzhou.

ODISHA STATE MEDICAL CORPORATION LTD.
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Assuring Quality, Saving Lives
Phone No.: (0674) 2380608,
Website : www.osmcl.nic.in
E-mail : proc.osmcl.od@nic.in

Notification No. 11181

Dated:26.08.2020

SHORT TENDER CALL NOTICE

Sealed tenders in prescribed format are invited by the Odisha State Medical Corporation Ltd (OSMCL) from intended bidders for "Supply and Installation of Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) Storage Vessel System and Supply of Liquid Medical Oxygen on Rate Contract Basis to MKCGMCH-Berhampur", as per the scope of work and technical specification as detailed in the enclosure "Annexure-A" which can be downloaded from the "Tenders" section of OSMCL's official website, i.e. <http://osmcl.nic.in> free of cost.

The technical bid and financial bid must be enclosed in two separate sealed envelopes titled "Technical bid for Supply and Installation of Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) Storage Vessel System and Supply of Liquid Medical Oxygen on Rate Contract Basis to MKCGMCH-Berhampur" and "Financial bid for Supply and Installation of Liquid Medical Oxygen (LMO) Storage Vessel System and Supply of Liquid Medical Oxygen on Rate Contract Basis to MKCGMCH-Berhampur (Format-I)". These two envelopes must then be placed in the third sealed envelope titled "Supply and Installation of Liquid Medical Oxygen(LMO) Storage Vessel System and Supply of Liquid Medical Oxygen on Rate Contract Basis to MKCGMCH-Berhampur.", which must be addressed to "MANAGING DIRECTOR, Odisha State Medical Corporation Ltd. (OSMCL), Convent Square, Bhubaneswar-751007, ODISHA". The sealed quotations should reach to the above mentioned address by Speed Post / Registered post / Courier only on or before 09th September, 2020 upto 5:00 PM.

No tender will be entertained after expiry of the prescribed date and time. The tenders will be opened on 10th September, 2020 at 11:00 AM in the Tender Hall of OSMCL, Bhubaneswar.

Note:
All further notifications, corrigendum or addendums (if any) related to this tender shall be floated on OSMCL website. Bidders are advised to follow the websites timely during tender process.

CAD-436
GM, Operation (Equipment), OSMCL, Bhubaneswar
OIPR-1012/11/0024/2021

Odisha State Medical Corporation Limited (OSMC)
In front of Ram Mandir, Convent Square, Unit-III,
Bhubaneswar-751 001
Tel.: (0674) 2380608; Website: www.osmcl.nic.in, Email: proc.osmcl.od@nic.in

Date : 24.08.2020

NOTICE INVITING E-TENDER FOR SUPPLY AND INSTALLATION OF MANIKINS FOR SKILL LABS OF MEDICAL COLLEGES

Online Bids through e-Tender portal (<https://tendersodisha.gov.in>) are invited from eligible bidders for supply, installation & commissioning of Equipments as per the particulars mentioned below:

Sl. No.	Bid Reference No.	Item Name	Bid Document Cost inclusive of GST (Rs.)

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Suresh Raina
asks Punjab
police for help

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Suresh Raina, a former batsman on the Indian cricket team, has made an appeal to the Punjab police to find out who was behind the killing of his uncle, Ashok Kumar, near Pathankot in Punjab.

Mr. Raina took to Twitter saying, "What happened to my family is Punjab was beyond horrible. My uncle was slaughtered, my bua & both my cousins had severe injuries. Unfortunately, my cousin also passed away last night after battling for life for days. My bua is still very very critical & is on life support."

Ashok Kumar died after being attacked by a group of people at night between August 19 and 20 at Tharayal village. Four members of the family were also injured. Tagging the Chief Minister's Office, Mr. Raina added, "I request @PunjabPoliceInd to look into this matter."

Number of accidental deaths, suicides grew in 2019: NCRB

Annual report compares figures with that of 2018

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The number of suicide cases and accidental deaths registered an increase across the country last year from the 2018 figures, according to the annual National Crime Records Bureau report. The most cases of mass/family suicides were reported from Tamil Nadu (16), followed by Andhra Pradesh (14), Kerala (11) and Punjab (9) and Rajasthan (7).

Suicides in the country went up slightly from 1,34,516 to 1,39,123. Of the 7,613 male suicides, the most were of daily wage earners (29,092), followed by self-employed persons (14,319) and the unemployed (11,599). Of the 41,493 female, over half were housewives.

The most suicides by unemployed persons were in Kerala at 14% (1,963), followed by 10.8% in Maharashtra, 9.8% in Tamil Nadu, 9.2% in Karnataka and 6.1% in Odisha. Most suicides by those in business activities were in Maharashtra (14.2%), Tamil Nadu (11.7%), Karnataka (9.7%), West Bengal (8.2%) and Madhya Pradesh (7.8%).

The suicide rate in cities (13.9%) was higher compared to the all-India average.

In the Central Armed Police Forces, a total of 36 personnel died by suicide, 38.9% were due to "family problems". Five such sui-

JEE-Main begins with safety precautions

Masks, social distancing and sanitisers will be par for the course of the computer-based test

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI



New normal: A candidate waiting to enter an examination centre in New Delhi. ■ R.V. MOORTHY

Students applying for architecture and planning courses were the first to step out for the Joint Entrance Examination-Main, as the six-day entrance test began on Tuesday. After protests and court cases failed to spur a further postponement in the examination that was originally scheduled for April, lakhs of candidates donned masks and gloves, and armed themselves with sanitiser to brave the COVID-19 pandemic and attempt the examination.

Overall, 8.58 lakh students have registered to write the computer-based test, which is being conducted from September 1-6, with two shifts per day at 660 centres across the country.

So far, 7.7 lakh students have downloaded admit cards, according to data from the National Testing Agency (NTA).

The first day of the examination was devoted to B.Arch and B.Planning. Reports from around the coun-

try and on social media suggest that many students who have also applied for the B.E. and B.Tech papers later in the week, or the medical entrance examination NEET latter in the month, decided not to risk their health by attempting the architecture papers today.

"My daughter is also absent today due to lack of transportation and she is al-

so NEET aspirant. If she gets infected now, then how can she give NEET examination on 13 September? And tomorrow is her JEE main B.Tech exam also," said Twitter user N. Parveen.

Many worried

On social media, students shared pictures showing varying levels of compliance with the NTA's safety norms

at different centres, with some saying distancing guidelines to protect them from infection were not followed, especially as students exited the exam hall.

The NTA said arrangements had been made to disinfect seating areas between shifts of students, provide fresh masks and sanitiser, check body temperatures with thermal guns, and iso-

late students with fever in separate rooms. "JEE exam was conducted smoothly all over the country," said Higher Education Secretary Amit Khare.

On Tuesday morning, the Nagpur Bench of the Bom Bay High Court refused to defer the examination, but said that students from the flood-hit parts of Maharashtra's Vidarbha region, who could not reach the examination centre or reached late could apply to the NTA for a re-examination.

On Tuesday, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi tweeted expressing concern for JEE candidates, as well as for those who have written the SSC Railway examinations in 2018 and are yet to get their results. "Modi Govt" is jeopardising India's future. Arrogance is making the

m ignore the genuine concerns of the JEE-NEET aspirants as well as the demands of those who took SSC and other exams. Give jobs, not empty slogans," he tweeted.

Govt. to release SOP for Metro operations

Services are set to resume on Sept. 7

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Detailed guidelines for resuming operations of Metro trains from September 7 would be announced on Wednesday, the Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry said on Tuesday.

Housing and Urban Affairs Secretary Durga Shankar Mishra held a meeting with managing directors of Metro companies on Tuesday to discuss the draft standard operating procedure (SOP) circulated to them earlier, Ministry spokesperson Rajeev Jain said. Under the Unlock 4 guidelines announced by the Union Home Ministry last week, Metro services are allowed to restart in a phased manner.

The suggestions [of Metro MDs] were considered in the meeting and accordingly SOP is being finalised," Mr. Jain said.

Housing and Urban Af-



Metro services have been allowed to resume in a phased manner.

fairs Minister Hardeep Puri would be announcing the guidelines, he said.

The draft guidelines prepared by the Ministry were general in nature, including social distancing, restrictions on the number of passengers, maintaining hygiene and wearing masks,

according to sources. The guidelines will be finalised in coordination with the Home Ministry, an official said.

Ravi Shankar Prasad writes to Facebook on 'left bias'

'Platform against those who have right-of-centre ideology'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday claimed that international media has exposed Facebook and WhatsApp's 'brazen assault' on India's democracy and social harmony and demanded an investigation into the allegations against social media giant.

Tagging an article by the *Wall Street Journal* that questioned Facebook India employees' neutrality, Mr. Gandhi tweeted: "No one, let alone a foreign company, can be allowed to interfere in our nation's affairs. They must be investigated immediately



Ravi Shankar Prasad

In a related development, Congress' chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala questioned why India's IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad had to write to FB CEO Mark Zuckerberg on alleged bias in FB's India team.

"Dear Ravi Shankar ji, If Modi Govt has an iota of credibility, why doesn't it agree to a JPC probe into the shameless collusion between #Facebook India & BJP? Why are you running scared? Why are you giving cover fire to guilty? Why protect the colluders? Where is the 56' chest?" asked Mr. Surjewala.

Tweeted.

in his letter, Mr. Prasad, who also holds the portfolio of Law and Justice, said the spate of recent anonymous, source-based reports is nothing but an internal power struggle within Facebook for an ideological hegemony.

The Minister said he has been informed that in the run up to 2019 General Elections in India, there was a concerted effort by Facebook India to not just delete pages or substantially reduce their reach but also offer no recourse or right of appeal to affected people who are supportive of the right-of-centre ideology.

Alluding to media reports

Sushant death case: NCB detains one

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has detained one person in connection with the case registered to probe the drug angle linked to actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death.

The Enforcement Directorate referred the matter to the NCB on the basis of mobile phone data extracted by officials. Rhea Chakraborty, Samuel Miranda, Jaya Saha, Simone Kham-batta and Gaurav Arya are under the scanner.

AGR dues have to be paid in toto: SC

Court says companies can make the payment in 'equal yearly instalments'

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday softened its stance somewhat to allow telecom companies a "reasonable time" of a decade to pay their adjusted gross revenue (AGR) dues to the government in "equal yearly instalments".

The top court said it changed its mind taking into consideration the financial stress and the involvement of the banking sector.

In a series of directions to the telcos, the court said they shall raise no dispute

telcos to make the repayments in three months.

"But at the same time, it is to be ensured that the dues are paid in toto. The concession is granted only on the condition that the dues shall be paid punctually within the time stipulated by this court. Even a single default will attract the dues along with interest, penalty and interest on penalty at the rate specified in the agreement," the court warned the telcos.

In a series of directions to the telcos, the court said they shall raise no dispute

nor will there be any reassessment of the dues.

The telecom operators would make the payment of 10% of the total dues as demanded by Department of Telecom by March 31, 2021.

The yearly instalments would commence from April 1, 2021, up to March 31, 2031.

The instalments would be paid by March 31 every year.

The managing director/

chairman or other authorised officer should give an undertaking within four weeks, to make payment of arrears. The telcos shall keep

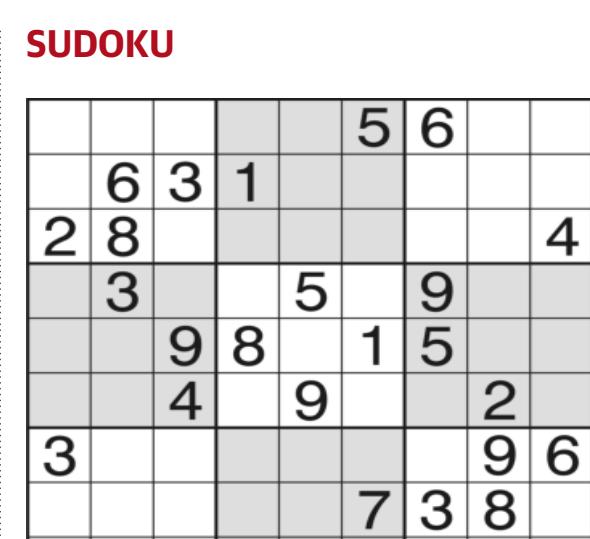
alive the existing bank guarantees they had submitted

regarding the spectrum until the payment is made. Telecom majors such as Vodafone had said they were in no position to give fresh bank guarantees for repayment of the AGR dues.

In the event of any default, interest would become payable along with penalty and interest on penalty without reference to court. Besides, it would be punishable for contempt of court.

Compliance should be reported every year on April 7.

SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to puzzle 13029 | Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

C	O	P	R	E	S	S	P	R	A	W	L
Y	A	E	P	O	L	A					
P	A	R	M	E	S	N	P	O	R	E	
A	R	M	E	S	N	P	O	R	E		
R	D	V	R	S	C	H	G				
D	V	R	R	S	C	H	G				
V	R	R	R	S	C	H	G				
R	V	R	R	S	C	H	G				
V	R	R	R	S	C	H	G				
R	V	R	R	S	C	H	G				
V	R	R	R	S	C	H	G				
R	V	R	R	S	C	H	G				

FAITH

The power of Kali

Parikshit is renowned for his righteous reign and gains reputation as a royal sage, a raja rishi. He places faith in Krishna and never takes to heart the previous prophecy that he would die of snake bite as per the curse of a Brahmin boy. But such is the power of Kali and the efficacy of the prophecy that the king is led into a situation that he misreads inadvertently which brings about the curse leading to his death, pointed out Sri K. Srinivasan in a discourse.

Once Parikshit goes hunting and finds that his arrow has pierced a deer which runs away. So as he chases the deer he enters the ashram of a sage who is steeped in meditation. The king asks for water and when he does not get a response, he becomes angry.

Here Parikshit does not realise that the sage is in meditation. He fails to respect the sage, and gives in to his ego that he is a king. Though a wise and kind ruler, he forgets the truth that it is wrong to disturb anyone in penance and that such transgressions can bring about curses. At the moment when he is tired and thirsty, he feels he deserves to be attended immediately.

So the great Parikshit who had subdued Kali is unable to escape its clutches. Getting deluded and indulging in wrong acts is common in Kali Yuga. He picks up a dead serpent and flings it across at the sage very casually and returns to his palace. The sage is not aware of the dead serpent that has landed on his neck.

The sage's son Shringi who was playing nearby is told about this insult to his father. The boy though young has inherent spiritual fervour and in a moment of anger curses that the serpent Takshaka should bite and kill the king who has disgraced his father.

TH CROSSWORD + 13030
(set by Anon)

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9		10				
11		12				
13	14		15			
16	17	18	19	20		
	21		22	23	24	
25			26			
27		28				

ACROSS

- One trades prototypes (6)
- Glove finally in hand of adult at party (6)
- Starts addressing faults and rectifies from a distance (4)
- Settle with firm, start making contract (10)
- I leave Isaac's father with misplaced identity initially for script (6)
- Synonym books, article mother leaves Japanese warrior with (8)

DOWN

- Understand Roman emperor's limits in Hell (7)
- First off, shortage of dry land (5)
- Missing resin-like material for monarch (7)
- Serial blasts in Asian country (6)
- Outlines number of starting markers of sun sign (9)
- Insists on starting rebellion in property (7)
- Moose silently dances without any passion (13)
- Dampens, destroys notes with feathers (5,4)
- Squirms at legal document she constructed (7)
- Links to groups (7)
- Knocks off odd deep canals (7)
- Remove Delaware programme (6)
- Doctor Verne has



With a lighter clutch, improved looks and a more spacious cabin, Datsun's Redigo upgrade is not mere lip service

SHIRISH GANDHI

Launched in 2016, the Redigo was Datsun's push into the entry-level hatchback segment. Now they have rolled out a facelift addressing many of the concerns of the outgoing model while upgrading to comply with the latest safety and emission norms. So how much has the Redigo improved as a package?

The new Redigo sports a more aggressive look that will split opinions. The trademark Datsun grille is now larger and the bumper sports sharp cuts and creases. Slimmer and more prominent L-shaped LED DRLs gives the Redigo a contemporary look. Datsun badges on the front fenders, smart dual-tone wheel covers and body-coloured wing mirrors distinguishes the new Redigo from the old. Datsun has also added LED fog lamps to the top-spec variant.

The Redigo also maintains its basic profile and tall boy proportions; the standard 14-inch steel wheels with thicker 165/70 section rubber improves the overall stance. The posterior is largely unchanged, save for the addition of an LED signature in the tail-lamps. There are also structural upgrades under the skin.

The Redigo's CMF-A underpinnings have been beefed up in order to comply with the latest crash-test and pedestrian protection norms.

The cabin is where the majority of visual upgrades appear. The asymmetrical dashboard design has made way for a more traditional, horizontal layout.

Taking the pride of place on the piano black-finished centre console is a new 8.0-inch touchscreen infotainment

Stepping up their game



system which is slick and easy to operate.

Spacious drive

Inside, Datsun has provided full door cladding and the black-grey textured upholstery is another premium touch. Some ergonomic flaws have been rectified: the appallingly compact glovebox has been replaced by a sizeable unit,

the wing mirrors are now internally adjustable and the static reel seatbelts for outboard rear passengers have made way for retractable ones. Though the Redigo is the shortest car in its class with the smallest wheelbase, its cabin space is quite good. Knee room for rear passengers is sufficient, and its tall boy proportions leaves a generous amount of headroom.

Redigo's equipment



SPECIFICATIONS

LENGTH (MM)	3435mm
WIDTH (MM)	1574mm
HEIGHT (MM)	1546mm
WHEELBASE (MM)	2348mm
GROUND CLEARANCE (MM)	187mm
BOOT CAPACITY	222 litres
FUEL TANK SIZE	28 litres
ENGINE	999cc, 3-cyl, petrol
MAX POWER	68hp at 5550rpm
MAX TORQUE	91Nm at 4250rpm
GEARBOX	5-speed manual

list includes power steering, air conditioner, remote locking, front power windows, ABS, rear parking sensors and a driver's side airbag. Though Datsun has added a passenger airbag on the top-spec trim, it does not offer steering-mounted audio controls.

The Redigo continues to be powered by either a 54hp, 0.8-litre petrol engine or a 68hp, 1.0-litre unit. Start up the engine, and the characteristic three-cylinder hum creeps into the cabin, though vibrations in the driving controls re-

Datsun has launched the 2020 Redigo 0.8 in four trim levels – D, A, T and T(O) – priced from ₹2.83 to 4.16 lakh. The Redigo 1.0 is available only in the range-topping T(O) variant, and is pegged at ₹4.44 lakh for the manual and ₹4.77 lakh for the AMT automatic version.

While the previous model fell short on some counts, the facelift has come a long way. It is safer, gets sharper styling and packs in more kit with a fair few features, making it worth considering for budget hatchback buyers.

With the latest update, Datsun has definitely stepped up its game in the entry-level segment but then, so has the competition.

main well contained. Step on the gas and there is a definite step up in power after 2,000rpm. However, by the time the engine builds up speed to 3,500-4,000rpm, the thrummy three-cylinder hum becomes quite prominent, so it is better to shift up early.

The allied 5-speed manual transmission is notchy, and slotting in the dog-leg reverse gear requires some effort. A narrow footwell also means that the left leg starts protesting on longer drives. The saving grace is the light clutch, which redeems the Redigo's city drivability.

Other factors that aid the Datsun's urban manners are its compact footprint and a light steering. The lack of a sufficient self-centring action, however, marks the steering down. The brakes, too, have a sharp bite point, which takes some getting used to. Though not uncomfortable, the suspension is set up a bit firm and you can feel the road surface. The high-set seating and large glasshouse provide a great view up front, but the thick C-pillars mar rear visibility. The rear-view camera on the range-topping version, then, proves an excellent aid while parking.

A little over a month after its launch, Hector Plus prices have been hiked by up to ₹46,000. The Hector Plus is now priced between ₹13.74 lakh and ₹18.69 lakh (ex-showroom, pan-India). The hike is not uniform across variants – the Style trim sees the sharpest rise in prices by around ₹25,000, followed by the Sharp DCT at ₹15,000. Hector Plus Sharp Hybrid prices are up by about ₹10,000 while the Smart DCT will set you back an additional ₹5,000.

AUTO SNIPPETS



Honda launches new Hornet 2.0

Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India has forayed into the 180-200cc segment with its latest motorcycle, the Hornet 2.0. Priced at ₹1.26 lakh (ex-showroom, Delhi), the Hornet 2.0 sports muscular styling, a new chassis and a few segment-first features. The Hornet 2.0 is based on the Honda CB190R that is sold in international markets albeit with most body panels changed with the addition of a sharp LED headlamp, beefy tank and sleek tail section. Suspension duties are handled by a USD fork up front and an adjustable monoshock at the rear. The bike rides on new alloy wheels shod with a fat 110mm tyre at the front and a 140mm tyre at the rear. Power comes from a new 184.4cc, air-cooled, fuel-injected, single-cylinder engine. The bike is equipped with single-channel ABS only. The Hornet 2.0 is the only motorcycle in its segment to feature an USD fork. It will be available in showrooms from the first week of September 2020.



MG Motor India hikes Hector Plus prices

A little over a month after its launch, Hector Plus prices have been hiked by up to ₹46,000. The Hector Plus is now priced between ₹13.74 lakh and ₹18.69 lakh (ex-showroom, pan-India). The hike is not uniform across variants – the Style trim sees the sharpest rise in prices by around ₹25,000, followed by the Sharp DCT at ₹15,000. Hector Plus Sharp Hybrid prices are up by about ₹10,000 while the Smart DCT will set you back an additional ₹5,000.



Audi launches RS Q8 SUV-coupe

Audi has launched its high-performance RS Q8 SUV-coupe in India at a starting price of ₹2.07 crore (ex-showroom, India). A rival to the Porsche Cayenne Turbo Coupe and Lamborghini Urus, the RS Q8 is Audi's most powerful SUV yet. Compared to the standard Q8, the RS Q8 gets cosmetic changes including sportier bumpers, larger 23-inch wheels, a larger exhaust, revised grille and a bespoke roof spoiler. The cabin gets many RS-specific touches, such as sports seats up front, an RS steering wheel and RS-specific graphics for the infotainment. Bits such as the dual-touchscreen layout on the centre console are carried over from the standard Q8.

Q AND A WITH HORMAZD



My first car

I am looking for a pre-owned car and I am confused on what to pick; my budget is ₹4 lakh. Two of my colleagues are selling their cars: a 2017 Hyundai i20 Asta (O) and a 2019 Maruti Suzuki Swift VXi, quoting ₹5.50 lakh and ₹6 lakh, respectively. Can you please advise on what car I should buy as I have yet to learn to drive.

Mickey

• Suggest you to look for something even smaller, preferably with an automatic transmission which will be easier for you to learn and get used to. The options you have are much higher than your budget, so I'd recommend you shortlist a Hyundai Grand i10 automatic, Maruti Suzuki Ignis AMT and Honda Brio automatic. These are very easy to drive and parts and maintenance will be relatively stress-free. Pick the newest and the best-equipped example you get out of these three cars.

Why a skip in norms

In India, we are directly going to BS6 emission norms from BS4, and skipping BS5. Please let the readers know why we've skipped BS5 norms.

Muhammed Akram

• Upgrading vehicles to meet emission standards comes at huge costs to car manufacturers who have to make heavy investments in newer hardware and software. Taking this crucial factor among many others into consideration, the governing body decided to move directly from BS4 to BS6, as the particulate matter and NOx emission reduction is significantly better. This difference would have been only slightly better if there was a BS4 to BS5 upgrade.

Hormazd Sorjee is the editor of Autocar India. Mail your feedback and queries to roadshow@thehindu.co.in

On the road again

The massive overhaul of Hero's Passion Pro makes it significantly better than the model it replaces in almost every way

FIROZE IRANI

The Passion is a strong brand for Hero. The Passion Pro, when it was updated a couple of years ago, received the in-house developed 109.1cc motor. For 2020, it gets the updated BS6-compliant 113cc engine from the iSmart, which puts out 9.15hp and 9.9Nm of torque.

The fuel-injected engine is hard to fault. It is smooth, punchy and gets the bike to 60kph in 7.21sec and 80kph in 14.9sec. What you will really like is how unstressed it feels at 80kph. At lower speeds, it chugs along quite nicely without needing a lot of clutch control. With its 'Auto-sail' tech, the new Passion Pro lets you move forward by just letting go of the clutch. The only thing here that will remind one of the older Passion is the chunky 4-speed gearbox.

The bike is also incredibly fuel-efficient, delivering 86.4kpl on the highway and 75.9kpl in the city. A feature that helps with this is the start-stop function that Hero calls i3s. Another big

change comes in the form of the new diamond frame, which has made the motorcycle more responsive in its handling. Though the bike feels more stable, the skinny 80/100-18 tyres at both ends do not inspire a lot of confidence on wet corners.

The Passion Pro also has an increased ground clearance of 180mm. Hero says the suspension travel has increased by 14% at the front and 10% at the rear. The Passion Pro also has a really soft seat, although riding more than 50km at a stretch might leave you feeling sore. With its new flowing design, the lines on the Passion Pro appear more pronounced; tank extensions are larger and its bright two-tone co-



Top notch The Passion Pro's fuel-injected engine is hard to fault

▪ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



lour options stand out.

The new Hero Passion Pro also features a redesigned and updated head and tail lights. The instrument cluster on the new Passion Pro uses a small digital screen to showcase the fuel-level, odometer, trip meter and the i3s function.

With an ex-showroom, Delhi price of ₹65,740 (drum brake) and ₹67,940 (disc brake), the Passion Pro is among the more expensive motorcycles in its segment. As to how it fares against rivals, only a comparison review can tell.

SPECIFICATIONS

CUBIC CAPACITY	- 113cc
FUEL DELIVERY SYSTEM	- Fuel-injected
MAX POWER	- 9.15hp at 7500rpm
MAX TORQUE	- 9.89Nm at 5000rpm
NO OF GEARS	- 4
FRONT BRAKE TYPE	- Disc / drum
FRONT BRAKE SIZE (MM)	- 240mm / 130mm
REAR BRAKE SIZE (MM)	- 130mm
FRONT SUSPENSION	- Telescopic fork
REAR SUSPENSION	- Twin shock absorbers
ACCELERATION	0 - 60 kph (sec) - 7.21s
BRAKING	60 - 0 kph (mts) - 18.94m





The return of the king

In *The House of Jaipur*, Australian author John Zubrzycki lifts the veil on the city's fabled royals to bring alive stories of forbidden love and forged wills

DEEPA ALEXANDER

Rudyard Kipling believed that Providence had created maharajas just to offer mankind a spectacle. Their vices and virtues, lives and loves became intricately woven into the fabric of Indian folklore. The fairytale dimmed with Independence, but the legend lives on.

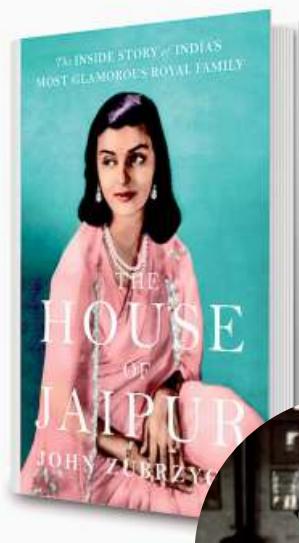
When Padmanabh Singh, the present ceremonial maharaja of Jaipur ascended the throne in 2011, he inherited not only a profusion of palaces and forts, but also a heritage of lawsuits. The 22-year-old polo-player has rather large shoes to fill, especially those of his grandfather, Brigadier Bhawani Singh, Maha Vir Chakra, and his great-grandfather the dashing Sawai Man Singh II (Jai) and his third wife Gayatri Devi, who *Vogue* magazine once described as "a dream in sari and jewels".

Her life that *The New York Times* called "of novelistic dimensions, part E.M. Forster, part Jackie Collins", the times she and Jai lived in, and the crumbling empire of riches they left in their wake is the focus of John Zubrzycki's book.

The author-journalist-researcher with an abiding love for India looks at the final decades of the British Raj and the evolution of democracy through the prism of this princely state in *The House of Jaipur – The Inside Story of India's Most Glamorous Royal Family* (published by Juggernaut).

India foray

"My first book was on the last Nizam of Hyderabad, Mukarram Jah, who had this unique Australian connection, having moved there in the early 1970s to create a 'durbar in the desert' where he could drive bulldozers through the outback. Writing that book piqued my interest in princely India, because it looked at the role of the British in



Straddling worlds
(Clockwise from right) Author John Zubrzycki; book cover; Sawai Man Singh II and Gayatri Devi; with Jackie Kennedy at a polo match; Member of Parliament and daughter of the last maharaja of Jaipur, Diya Kumari; her son, Padmanabh Singh ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT AND GETTY IMAGES

emasculating them through the subsidiary alliances, integration of the princely States in the lead up to Independence, abolition of the privy purse and its effect on the fortunes of India's royals," says Zubrzycki in an email interview.

While the Jaipurs have been in the public eye for more than half a century, playing polo with British royals, entertaining the jet-set and laying out hunts for Hollywood's rich and famous, Zubrzycki says "there had never been a book that looked at the dynastic dramas that took place from the time

Jai became the maharaja until now. Jai and Gayatri Devi are at the centre of the story".

Gayatri Devi (nicknamed Ayesha after a character in Rider Haggard's *She*), whose almond eyes and beauty harpooned the spectator, was from the Cooch Behar royal family. "Anyone who has read Gayatri Devi's memoir *A Princess Remembers* is only getting a fragment of the story. There was so much more – opposition to Gayatri's marriage from the British, her unacknowledged half-sister, Jai's philandering, the lives of his other wives, Gayatri's controversial political career, and, of course, the litigation that tore the family apart," says Zubrzycki, adding that the story is a very relevant one of how tradition and modernity collide and "how India's princely families have tried to adapt to a more globalised world".

Detailed account
Zubrzycki uncovers hidden gems with his remarkable storytelling. He describes how Thomas Cook ran its own Eastern Princes Department to enable maharajas to attend Queen Victoria's jubilee celebrations, the extraordinary circumstances in which Mormukut Singh was crowned Sawai Man Singh II, palace intrigues and the raising of a young prince in the midst of debauchery, his years at Mayo College with an army of servants and nine syces, dinner at Firpos with a teenage Gayatri, and the fairytale proposal to her in a Bentley while driving around London's Hyde Park.

In writing it over a year and a half, Zubrzycki reached out to each branch of the family for interviews, consulted thousands of pages of legal documents in order to make sure that the book

was balanced and fair, and researched at the India Office Records at the British Library, London, the National Archives of India, New Delhi, and newspaper archives.

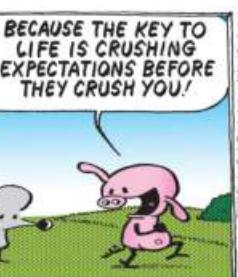
Zubrzycki is now working on a short history of India and on a biography of the magician Gogia Pasha. He says, "I have been visiting India for more than 40 years and have seen huge changes in that time, not always for the better. But there is something enduring about Indian culture that keeps grabbing me and won't let go. Most importantly, I find the people incredibly warm and open. India is an extraordinary repository of untold stories – it's a historian's paradise and a biographer's dream."



POOCH CAFE



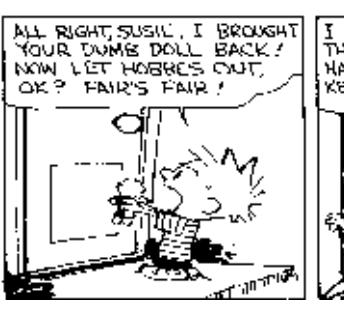
PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



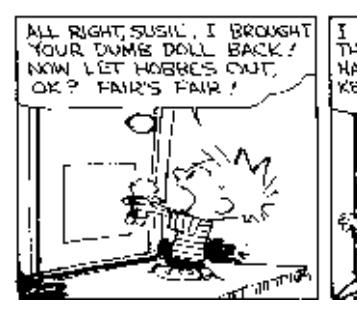
HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



TIGER



PEANUTS



Your friendly neighbourhood guy

Artist Harun Robert on returning to television with Disney's *Imagine That*, and the challenges in keeping today's kids entertained and informed

Back on familiar terrain Rob will motivate children to come up with designs and craft models ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

by none other than himself. But he counters this by drawing a food analogy. "If you mix two ingredients, you get a new flavour. It's the same case with art as well. There's so much out there, even for art," he adds.

The idea is to introduce re-purposing to kids, drawing designs and crafts centering around that idea. "We keep generating fresh trash these days. For example, in my old show, I used to make models out of floppy disks, which were replaced by CDs. Now, it is hard disks," he says. "Once trash changes, you come up with a different idea and work around that."

The big picture
When Rob was performing his bag of tricks in previous shows, he was primarily dealing with an audience (read: kids) in the pre-smartphone and Marvel era. Has the demography of the audience changed, given the scant attention span amongst today's tech-savvy kids? "They are the most challenging audience to please," says Rob, "Television still has the reach because it is a family affair. I'm not just catering to kids but families as well. Even during the lockdown, most households experimented with art."

Their exposure to technology has only made the path easier to communicate with children, says Rob. "We used to love comic books when we were kids since there was no TV. But today's kids are consuming a lot online. The medium has changed, but the curiosity is still there. My role is to tap into their curiosity."

Which is why Rob has introduced a special segment in *Imagine That*, wherein he would take video requests from kids. "They can place a design request, or if they have a bunch of materials and are looking for a way to create something, we can also work around that."

More than a decade into the business, Rob has interacted and engaged with scores of children, some of whom consider him an imaginary friend. He recounts the one time a boy walked up to him and said: "Don't you remember? We were watching the show together..." It took some time for Rob to realise what the boy meant. "He thought I was looking at them through TV and was present with him. That's the kind of relationship I share," he says.

The theme of the show is built around upcycling, where art would take its shape out of discarded materials and everyday trash. Rob agrees that it is a concept that has been done-to-death

Imagine That will premiere on September 6 on Disney Channel



When Harun Robert also known as Rob, made his digital transition in 2014 – with his YouTube channel, Mad Stuff with Rob – he managed to translate the strong fanbase he gained from television into figures, averaging several lakh, sometimes even a million views for each video.

But a question that followed Rob like a shadow, despite the channel's steadily growing viewership, was when he would return to television with his very own show. He listened to their requests, which has now resulted in an art show for Disney Channel titled *Imagine That*.

"It's a completely different process to make content for digital. It's a shorter and slightly easier format. But shooting for television is more elaborate; it's challenging and rewarding. There's this rush you get when you shoot for TV, which I've been missing," says Rob, over phone from Goa.

Playful learning
The format of *Imagine That* is simple; it is a do-it-yourself (DIY) show and a terrain he is familiar with and mastered over the years. He will engage with children and motivate them to come up with designs and craft models, introduce concepts and #lifelessons in a non-preachy way – a la the highly successful *M.A.D.*

Rob, however, says that it is unfair to compare the show with *M.A.D.*, which actually laid the foundation for his audience. "This show is unique in its own way and we have created DIY projects that are entertaining and engaging," he says.

The theme of the show is built around upcycling, where art would take its shape out of discarded materials and everyday trash. Rob agrees that it is a concept that has been done-to-death

Imagine That will premiere on September 6 on Disney Channel

Millions in Europe head back to school

Mask-wearing children returned to classes in France, Poland, U.K. and Russia after summer breaks end

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

Millions of mask-wearing European children headed back to school on Tuesday after summer holidays despite rising numbers of novel coronavirus infections, as Hong Kong rolled out a mass COVID-19 testing programme.

Schools reopened in Russia, Ukraine, Belgium, England and France, where teachers and their pupils aged 11 and older were obliged to wear face coverings, echoing regulations in place across the continent.

Russia's 17 million school children returned to class as the country confirmed it had passed one million infections – still well behind the tally in the U.S., now higher than six million.

Officials have drawn fire from parents and teachers worried that strict social distancing and other protective measures will not be enough to prevent a second wave of COVID-19.

But many governments insist that the greater risk is young people losing out on



Back in classroom: A teacher, wearing a protective face mask, teaching in a classroom at a primary school in Nice after it reopened on Tuesday. ■ REUTERS

crucial in-person lessons, and that keeping kids at home for distance learning puts too big a burden on working parents.

"I do not underestimate how challenging the last few months have been, but I do know how important it is for children to be back in school, not only for their education but for their development and well-being,"

Britain's Education Secretary Gavin Williamson said.

The Chinese city at the centre of the initial outbreak, Wuhan, took another leap back to normality on Tuesday when its almost 1.4 million youngsters also returned to schools and kindergartens.

State media broadcast images of thousands of students hoisting the Chinese

flag -- a daily routine at all public schools -- despite warnings to avoid mass gatherings.

Upsurge in cases

European countries have faced an upsurge in cases in recent weeks after successfully suppressing the numbers, a similar story to Hong Kong where three-quarters of cases have been detected

within the past two months.

However, Hong Kong's attempts to roll out a mass testing scheme have been hampered by distrust of officials following China's crushing of the city's democracy movement.

Doctors and testing firms from mainland China are involved in the programme, fuelling public fears that their DNA and data will be harvested to create a system of control underpinned by biometrics.

"I think it's a waste of time," local resident Emily Li told AFP. "The government can't convince me in terms of the effectiveness of the testing programme."

Distrust of officials continues to fuel protests across the world against social-distancing measures, mask-wearing and other regulations.

Several European governments have promised not to try to enforce more lockdowns of the severity seen earlier this year when businesses were forced to close and millions of people were confined to their homes.

Protests erupt after police kill another black man in U.S.

Sheriff's deputies chased him over 'vehicle code violation'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
LOS ANGELES

U.S. police have shot dead another black man, who they said had a handgun but had dropped it during a violent altercation in Los Angeles, triggering fresh outrage as tensions soar over racism and police brutality.

The man, named in local media as 29-year-old Dijon Kizzee, was riding his bicycle when Los Angeles County sheriff's deputies tried to stop him for an unspecified vehicle code violation on Monday afternoon.

He fled on foot, and when officers caught up with him he punched one deputy in the face, dropping some items of clothing he was carrying, police said.

'Possessed handgun'

"The deputies noticed that inside the clothing items that he dropped was a black semi-automatic handgun, at which time a deputy-involved shooting occurred," Lieutenant Brandon Dean



Clashes continue: Protesters confronting deputies of the Los Angeles Sheriff's Department on Monday. ■ AP

told reporters.

It was not clear if the man was reaching for the gun when he was shot. Mr. Dean said officials had yet to interview the deputies involved.

"So, he did not have the gun in his hand, it had already dropped to the ground, so when he was actually shot, he was unarmed at that point?" a reporter asked during the televised press conference.

"I don't know that," Mr. Dean replied, adding later: "If this individual was reaching for a semi-automatic handgun, I would suggest..."

that's probably why deadly force was employed."

The man was pronounced dead at the scene.

Up to 100 people gathered at the scene demanding justice in the hours after the shooting, according to local media.

The latest killing came as U.S. President Donald Trump was headed for Kenosha, on Tuesday, where police shot black father Jacob Blake seven times in the back on August 23, leaving him paralysed from the waist down. The killing had triggered protests.

Turkey renews call for talks, sharing of resources with Greece

The countries are locked in a tense standoff over claims to hydrocarbon resources in the eastern Mediterranean Sea

ASSOCIATED PRESS
ANKARA

Turkey's Foreign Minister said on Tuesday his country favours a dialogue with rival Greece that would lead to the fair sharing of resources in the eastern Mediterranean, where the two countries are locked in a tense standoff that threatens to spill into a conflict.

Speaking at a news conference with his Algerian counterpart, Mevlut Cavusoglu also accused Greece of engaging in "provocative acts" in the region with the backing of the European Union, which has threatened sanctions against Ankara.

"We favour a joint solution that involves sitting around the table to negotiate with all



Defusing tensions: Warships from Greece, Italy, Cyprus and France engaged in a joint drill in the Mediterranean Sea. ■ AP

sides in the eastern Mediterranean, for everyone to benefit from the eastern Mediterranean resources in a just manner or for the sharing (of resources) fairly," Mr. Cavusoglu said.

Both countries' forces

reserves. On Monday, Turkey extended Oruc Reis' mission by another 10 days, until September 12.

Meanwhile, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who has threatened Greece with military action, described Turkey's activities in the eastern Mediterranean as the "pursuit of (its) rights and justice" and denounced what he said were Greek efforts to "imprison" Turkey to a small region surrounding its coast.

"Efforts to descend on the riches of the Mediterranean, which are the rights of every country around it, is an example of modern-day colonialism," Mr. Erdogan said.

"It is comical how (nations) are trying to throw a

state that cannot even help itself as bait in front of a regional and global power like Turkey," he said.

Threat of EU sanctions

Greece, a member of the EU, claims the waters are part of its continental shelf and has enlisted the support of the 27-nation bloc, which has condemned Turkey's "illegal activities" and plans to blacklist Turkish officials linked to energy exploration.

Turkey disputes Greece's

claims that waters where it's searching for hydrocarbons are part of Greece's continental shelf, insisting that Greek islands near Turkey's coast cannot be taken into account when delineating maritime boundaries. Ankara

accuses Athens of trying to grab an unfair share of the eastern Mediterranean's resources.

Greece voiced hope on Monday that the threat of sanctions from its European Union partners would persuade Turkey to stop its offshore energy prospecting.

Greek government spokesman Stelios Petras said the threat of sanctions gave Turkey an "exit strategy" from the evolving crisis. "It is in Turkey's interest above all, with its economy shaken and so many open fronts, to realize that right now Europe is offering it a way out... (allowing) the peaceful settling of our differences to define maritime zones between the two countries," he said.

the population risk a food crisis by the end of the year.

On August 9, the international community pledged €252.7 million (around \$300 million) in aid at a video conference jointly organised by France and the UN.

The international community promised to stand by Lebanon but demanded that its aid be distributed directly to the needy instead of through the government.

He said work going forward would be "under very firm coordination with the United Nations, so we can again ask for support from all the different states".

Protesters who have taken to the streets since October last year regard Lebanon's political class as inept and corrupt.

Turmeric shortage sparks concern in Lanka

After govt. restricted imports, spice is being sold for 5 times the capped price in the black market

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

A shortage of turmeric, a key ingredient in Sri Lankan cuisine, has sparked concern among consumers about supply amid soaring costs in recent months, after the government decided to restrict imports in the wake of the global coronavirus pandemic.

While the government has capped maximum retail price of turmeric powder at LKR 750 (about ₹295) a kg, traders point to a black market where the spice is sold for almost five times the price. The Sri Lankan Navy has also busted attempts to smuggle in turmeric by sea. Last week alone, authorities recovered nearly 1,500 kg of dried turmeric in Norochcholai, some 150 km north of

capital Colombo, on the island's western coast.

Despite the shortage and reports of shooting prices, President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has said his government will not go back on its decision on import restriction. Addressing a Cabinet sub-committee on Cost of Living on Monday, Mr. Rajapaksa said even though public

faced difficulties for a "short period" of time, steps taken to "strengthen the rural economy and uplift the farming community cannot be reversed." To control foreign exchange parity rates and to get rid of high debt burden on farmers, imports should be restricted, he said, according to a media statement issued by his office.

In April, a month after COVID-19 hit Sri Lanka, the go-

vernment announced a ban on non-essential imports, to cope with the strain on the country's foreign reserves as the country's crucial export and remittances sectors were badly hit. Vowing to boost local production, President Rajapaksa said his government would focus on domestic agriculture.

Key source

According to importers in Sri Lanka, India is among their chief sources of turmeric imports, selling about 5,000 tonnes a year. With production in the island far from meeting the demand – an estimated 7,000 tonnes – consumers fear an acute shortage of turmeric in the coming months. Sri Lanka produces about 2,000 tonnes of processed or dehy-

drated turmeric a year, a report in the local weekend newspaper *Sunday Times* said.

The flavourful spice is used in everyday cooking in Sri Lanka, in a range of regional dishes from the *hodi* or *sodhi* (stew), a staple side dish with strong hoppers, hoppers and *pittu*, to dal, eaten with rice and curry. Further, following the pandemic, some have begun adding a pinch of turmeric to their daily cup of tea, citing "medicinal" properties it is believed to have.

Sri Lanka was in the past self-sufficient in turmeric cultivation but along the years, its production fell, according to W.M.W. Weerakoon, Director General of the Department of Agriculture. In his view, the current focus

on local production is welcome as it shines the spotlight on local agriculture. But regaining self-sufficiency may take time. "In the case of turmeric, it will be early next year by the time our production grows enough to meet 60 to 80% of our demand," he told *The Hindu*.

Meanwhile, importers and traders point to a growing black market where 1 kg turmeric is sold for LKR 4,500 (roughly ₹1,765), despite the government's price regulation.

A group of turmeric importers has also written to the President and the Prime Minister, seeking release of 1 million kg of turmeric, imported from India earlier, stuck at the Colombo Port, in order to ease the shortage at least temporarily.

GOVERNMENT OF TAMIL NADU
WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
DAM REHABILITATION AND IMPROVEMENT PROJECT PHASE II
(FOR ITEM RATE/ADMEASUREMENT CONTRACTS IN HYDROMECHANICAL WORKS)
REQUEST FOR BIDS (RFB)
NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING
(SINGLE COVER TWO-ENVELOPE BIDDING PROCESS)

Name of Project : Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement Project DRIP Phase-II
Contract Title : Design, Procurement, Fabrication, Corrosion protection, Transportation and Delivery at project site, Local Transportation at project site, Erection, testing and Commissioning of Spillway Gates in Vent No.1 to 9 in Sathanur Dam at Thandarappattu Taluk of Tiruvannamalai District under DRIP Phase - II (Hydro-Mechanical Package - II)

RFB Reference No. : 08/PBC/T.V.Malai/2020-2021/F.187/JDO.4 / Dated : 01.09.2020

1. Through the Government of India or Government of Tamilnadu has applied for financing from the World Bank towards the cost of Dam Rehabilitation and Improvement project and intends to apply part of the proceeds towards eligible payments under the contract for construction of works as detailed below.

2. Bidding will be conducted through national open competitive bidding using a Request for Bids (RFB) as specified in the World Bank's "Procurement Regulations for IFP Bidders, July 2016_Revised August 2018" ("Procurement Regulations"), and is open to all Bidders as defined in the Procurement Regulations.

3. Bidders from India should, however, be registered with the Government of Tamilnadu or other State Governments/Government of India, or State/Central Government Undertakings.

4. The Water Resources Department, Government of Tamilnadu, for and on behalf of Governor of Tamilnadu, the Superintending Engineer, PWD, WRD, Pennaiyar Basin Circle, Tiruvannamalai - 606 603, Tiruvannamalai District, Tamilnadu now invites Bids from eligible Bidders for the rehabilitation of works detailed below in the table. The bidders shall submit bids for any or all of the works indicated therein. Interested bidders may obtain further information and inspect the bidding document at the address given below during office hours. Bidders are advised to note the clauses on eligibility (Section I Clause 4) and minimum qualification criteria (Section III Evaluation and Qualification Criteria), to qualify for the award of the contract. In addition, please refer to paragraphs 3.14 and 3.15 of the "Procurement Regulations" setting forth the World Bank's policy on conflict of interest.

5. Bidding documents (and additional copies) may be purchased from the office of the Superintending Engineer, PWD, WRD, Pennaiyar Basin Circle, Tiruvannamalai - 606 603 from 03.09.2020 upto 24.09.2020 upto 17.45 hours (IST) for a non-refundable fee (for three sets) of Rs. 15,000/- cost of bid documents + Rs. 1800/- (GST @ 12% on cost of Bid documents) Total Rs. 16800/- in the form of cash or Demand Draft on any Nationalized / Scheduled bank payable at Tiruvannamalai in favour of the Executive Engineer, PWD, WRD, Middle Pennaiyar Basin Division, Tiruvannamalai - 606 603 for the work mentioned in the table. Interested bidders may obtain further information at the same address. Bidding documents requested by mail will be despatched by registered post on payment of an amount of Rs. 500/- . The Superintending Engineer, PWD, WRD, Pennaiyar Basin Circle, Tiruvannamalai - 606 603 will not be held responsible for the postal delay if any, in the delivery of the documents or non-receipt of the same. Bidding documents may also be downloaded from website "www.tenders.tn.gov.in" at free of cost. In such case the bidder will be responsible for ensuring that any addenda available in web site, is also downloaded and incorporated.

6. Bid comprise two parts, namely the Technical part and the Financial part, and both parts must be submitted simultaneously on or before 12.00 hours (IST) on 25.09.2020 at the office of the Superintending Engineer, PWD, WRD, Pennaiyar Basin Circle, Tiruvannamalai District, Tamilnadu. The "Technical" part of the bids will be publicly opened on the same day at 12.30 hours, (IST) in the presence of the bidders designated representatives who wish to attend. The "Financial" part will remain unopened. If the office happens to be closed on the date of opening of the bids as specified, the bids will be opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

7. All Bids must be accompanied by a Bid Security of the amount specified for the work in the table below, drawn in favour of Executive Engineer PWD, WRD, Middle Pennaiyar Basin Division, Tiruvannamalai - 606 603, Tiruvannamalai District, Tamil Nadu before the bid submission deadline, either by registered post/speed post/courier or by hand which the bids will be declared non-responsive and will not be opened. If the office happens to be closed on the date of receipt of the bids as specified, the bids will be received and opened on the next working day at the same time and venue.

8. A pre-bid meeting will be held on 14.09.2020 at 11:00 hours (IST) at the office of the Superintending Engineer, PWD, WRD, Pennaiyar Basin Circle, Tiruvannamalai - 606 603, Tiruvannamalai District, Tamil Nadu to clarify the issues and to answer questions on any matter that may be raised at that stage as stated in ITB Clause 7.4 of Instructions to Bidders of the bidding document. Bidders are advised to download the bidding document prior to the pre-bid meeting in order for bidders to have a good understanding of the scope of work under this contract for discussion and clarification at the pre-bid meeting.

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

11. The address for communication is as under:

a. Name & Designation of officer : Er. N. Suresh, B.E., Superintending Engineer, PWD, WRD,

b. Official Address : Office of the Superintending Engineer, PWD, WRD, Pennaiyar Basin Circle, Tiruvannamalai - 606 603,

c. Email : sepcbtvmlai2007@rediffmail

MARKET WATCH

	01-09-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	38,901	0.71
US Dollar	72.87	0.99
Gold	52,963	0.62
Brent oil	46.10	0.41

NIFTY 50

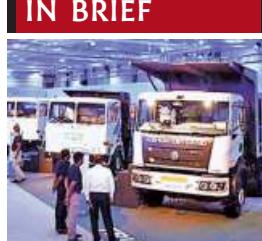
	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	348.80	-6.95
Asian Paints	1979.30	80.20
Axis Bank	485.70	-11.05
Bajaj Auto	2958.40	-8.60
Bajaj Finserv	6359.60	169.25
Bajaj Finance	3643.85	156.05
Bharti Airtel	546.25	33.15
BPLC	407.25	-0.55
Britannia Ind	3771.00	44.95
Cipla	736.55	23.00
Coal India	133.45	-0.90
Dr Reddys Lab	4351.95	87.25
Eicher Motors	2131.10	39.10
GAIL (India)	96.40	0.75
Grasim Ind	684.55	9.70
HCL Tech	689.60	-4.80
HDPC	1851.20	18.60
HDFC Bank	1127.30	11.45
HDFC Life	579.30	4.50
Hero MotoCorp	2995.60	-10.45
Hindalco	194.05	8.80
Hind Unilever	2161.65	44.30
ICICI Bank	390.95	-3.65
IndusInd Bank	627.45	-2.75
Bharti Infratel	188.80	-9.75
Infosys	914.15	-14.45
Indian Oil Corp	84.65	-1.15
ITC	190.20	-0.90
JSW Steel	286.80	17.00
Kotak Bank	1430.65	29.30
L&T	955.20	10.25
M&M	607.55	0.65
Maruti Suzuki	6905.65	65.70
Nestle India Ltd.	16196.90	247.35
NTPC	99.80	3.40
ONGC	79.35	-2.60
PowerGrid Corp	180.40	1.45
Reliance Ind	2087.25	6.55
State Bank	218.10	6.10
Shree Cement	20466.60	183.60
Sun Pharma	521.45	1.20
Tata Motors	143.80	0.60
Tata Steel	428.65	15.65
TCS	2246.35	-10.90
Tech Mahindra	727.85	-13.15
Titan	1120.05	19.55
UltraTech Cement	3912.65	8.80
UPL	505.05	-0.90
Wipro	271.60	0.30
Zee Entertainment	201.80	-1.75

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	72.66	72.98
Euro	86.99	87.40
British Pound	97.67	98.13
Japanese Yen (100)	68.68	69.00
Chinese Yuan	10.65	10.70
Swiss Franc	80.36	80.73
Singapore Dollar	53.49	53.75
Canadian Dollar	55.83	56.09
Malaysian Ringgit	17.53	17.63
Australian Dollar	53.60	53.88

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



Ashok Leyland reports 31% decline in total sales

CHENNAI Commercial vehicles manufacturer Ashok Leyland has reported a 31% decline in total sales volume for August 2020 due to COVID-19 spurred lockdown, the company said in a statement. The flagship company of the Hinduja Group sold 6,325 vehicles in the domestic and international markets, against 9,230 units sold during the corresponding year earlier period.

Inverted to unveil lithium-ion batteries

MUMBAI Inverted Energy, founded by IIT engineers in 2017, has announced the development of 20% more energy efficient lithium-ion batteries which will have applications in electric vehicles, home energy storage, solar plants and utility power segments. Initially, these batteries will be provided to selected electric vehicle manufacturers and solar projects and then rolled out for home use.

Adani arm can recover tariff from discoms: SC

NEW DELHI Adani Power on Tuesday said the Supreme Court had allowed its arm APRL to recover compensatory tariff from Rajasthan discoms for higher coal cost in its order issued on August 31. In September last, the Appellate Tribunal for Electricity had allowed APRL to charge higher cost of coal regarding a 1,200-MW power supply agreement with Rajasthan discoms. PTI

RIL concludes ₹25,215 cr. deal with Brookfield

MUMBAI Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) has announced the closure of the ₹25,215 crore investment deal by Brookfield Infrastructure in its Tower Infrastructure Trusts. In 2019, RIL had entered into an agreement to divest Jio's telecom tower assets housed under Tower Infrastructure Trust to Brookfield for ₹25,215 crore. The proceeds from the deal will be used to repay debt and clear loans extended by RIL.

Auto wholesales rise, firms eye demand

Maruti, Hyundai post jump in August shipments ahead of festival season; Toyota sees 48% decline

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Vehicle despatches by major automobile makers Maruti Suzuki, Hyundai Motor India and Hero MotoCorp, to dealers saw growth last month. This was in anticipation of healthy consumer demand in the upcoming festive season.

Market leader Maruti Suzuki on Tuesday said its wholesale sales in the domestic market grew 20.2% to more than 1.16 lakh units, from 97,061 units in August 2019. Sales of mini segment cars including Alto and S-Presso saw a whopping 94.7% jump to 19,709 units, while compact segment cars such as WagonR, Swift, Celerio, Ignis and Baleno grew 14.2%. Sales of utility vehicles such as Gypsy, Ertiga, S-



Hot wheels: Sales of Maruti Suzuki's compact segment cars such as Swift, Celerio and Ignis grew 14.2%. ■ PTI

cross, Vitara Brezza and XL 6 rose 13.5% to 21,030 units.

Similarly, Hyundai Motor posted an almost 20% increase in domestic sales to 45,809 units last month as compared with 38,205 units in August 2019.

Mahindra & Mahindra's

passenger vehicle wholesale sales stood at 13,651 vehicles in August 2020, a growth of 1% as against 13,507 vehicles in August 2019. In the commercial vehicles segment, the company sold 15,299 vehicles in August 2020, as against 14,684 vehicles in Au-

gust 2019, a growth of 4%.

Tractor sales for M&M's Farm Equipment Sector continued to show strong demand with domestic sales in August 2020 at 23,503 units, a 69% growth from 13,871 units in August 2019.

For Toyota Kirloskar Motor, however, the despatches were lower by about 48% at 5,555 units in August 2020, against 10,701 units in the year earlier period, as the company had faced challenges in supplying vehicles to dealers due to the rising number of COVID-19 cases in Bengaluru and its surrounding areas, where most of its workforce resides.

Honda Cars India sold 7,509 units in August, as against 8,291 units in August as compared with 47,571 units in August 2019. MG Motor India said it sold 2,851 un-

Manufacturing activity returns to expansion in August: PMI

Survey reveals improvement after 4 months of contraction

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Manufacturing activity re-entered the growth territory in August, driven by a rebound in production volumes and new work, amid an improvement in customer demand following the resumption of business operations, a monthly survey showed.

The headline seasonally-adjusted IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose from 46 in July to 52 in August, signalling an improvement in operating conditions across the manufacturing sector following four consecutive months of contraction.

"August data highlighted



Despite an expansion in new orders, job shedding continued in the sector.

positive developments in the health of the manufacturing sector, signalling moves towards a recovery... the pickup in demand from domestic markets gave rise to upturns in production and input buying," Shreya Patel, economist at IHS Markit,

said. Despite an expansion in new orders, job shedding continued in the sector.

The survey noted the decline in foreign exports weighed slightly on overall new orders as firms cited subdued demand conditions from abroad.

On prices, higher raw material costs due to supplier shortages and transportation delays stemming from the pandemic, resulted in rising input prices in August.

Looking ahead, Indian manufacturers remained optimistic for the next 12 months.

Infosys to hire 12,000 more Americans by 2022

U.S. hiring commitment totals 25,000

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BENGALURU

Infosys on Tuesday announced plans to hire 12,000 American workers over the next two years, bringing its hiring commitment in the country to 25,000 over five years.

In 2017, the technology major committed to hire 10,000 American workers over two years and has exceeded that goal by creating 13,000 jobs in the U.S. to date, Infosys said.

Infosys will now hire an additional 12,000 workers by 2022 across a variety of roles. It will target experienced professionals as well as recent graduates.

Training programmes

Infosys said it would prepare workers for the 21st century careers by utilising the training and reskilling

programmes it had built with partners.

"Infosys has been intensely focused on creating jobs in the U.S. for the past three years," said Salil Parekh, CEO.

"We are excited to grow our presence in the U.S. as the digital transformation journeys of our clients accelerate."

Back home, Infosys has made pre-placement interview offers to over 3,200 engineering graduates.

'MSMEs need extension of moratorium'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

The Consortium of Indian Associations (CIA) has called for extension of loan moratorium, waiver of interest on such loans and complete waiver of statutory payments till March 2021.

Failure to do so would lead to 80% of its members representing MSMEs turning defaulters in the next three months, CIA Convenor K.E. Raghunathan said in a statement.

The CIA has been urging the RBI to extend the moratorium period, which ended on August 31, as most MSME units had remained inactive for the last five months. However, the central bank was yet to respond, he said.

its last month, a growth of 41% from 2,018 units in August 2019. Kia Motors said it sold 10,845 units in the month of August 2020 owing to the recovery of demand in the domestic market as against 6,236 units in the same month last year.

Hero MotoCorp said it sold 5,68,674 units of motorcycles and scooters in the domestic market, about 8.5% up from over 5.24 lakh units in the year earlier month. TVS Motor said its domestic two-wheeler sales stood at over 2.18 lakh units in August 2020 as against about 2.19 lakh units in Au-

Appliance makers bet on festive season sales

'Uptick post lockdown gives hope'

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA

NEW DELHI

Reeling from the significant drop in spending amid the pandemic, consumer-focussed brands are betting on the festive season to help recover losses of the past few months. Seeing steady growth post the lockdown, the brands expect an uptick of up to 30% in business, led by home and kitchen appliances on the back of work-from-home trends and strong demand from semi-urban and rural markets.

"Driven by a gradual up-tick in demand for value-based products, we are expecting steady growth. We are hopeful the festive season will help recover losses incurred in the past few months," Suguru Takamatsu, divisional head, CSD, CE, Panasonic India, said.

Festive sales, in general, account for 35-40% of annual business for most consumer durable firms.

Panasonic saw 10% growth in July, as opposed to a contraction in May, owing to pent-up demand, first-time buyers and rising rural contribution due to a favourable monsoon.

He added that growth in tier-2 markets was 13% in June and 19% in July, driven by accelerated demand for microwaves, semi-automatic washing machines, LED TVs and refrigerators.

TV PICKS

US Open: SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 8.30 p.m.; SS Select 2 (SD & HD), 9.30 p.m.
Tour de France: Eurosport (SD & HD), 4.40 p.m.

IN BRIEF



Butler shines as Heat overpowers Bucks

ORLANDO

Jimmy Butler scored 27 of his career playoff high 40 points in the second half as Miami Heat beat Milwaukee Bucks 115-104 in the opening game of their Eastern Conference semifinal playoff series on Monday.

The results: EC semifinals: Heat 115 (Butler 40, Dragic 27) bt Bucks 104 (Middleton 28, Lopez 24). **Miami 1-0.**
WC first round: Thunder 104 (Paul 28, Gallinari 25) bt Rockets 100 (Harden 32).
Series tied 3-3.

Real Sociedad's David Silva tests positive

Former Manchester City midfielder David Silva has tested positive for COVID-19, his new club Real Sociedad said on Monday. AFP



Sevilla re-signs Barcelona's Rakitic

MADRID
Barcelona said on Tuesday it had agreed to sell Croatia midfielder Ivan Rakitic back to Sevilla. Under the deal, the southern side will pay the Catalan outfit €1.5 million plus €9 million in variables for the 32-year-old. AFP

Fluent start for Djokovic; Osaka struggles

Pliskova has it easy in the opening round, but Gauff and Isner fall at the first hurdle

Day One in numbers

1 The 16-year-old Gauff's first loss in the opening round of a Major. She had reached the third round or better in all three previous attempts

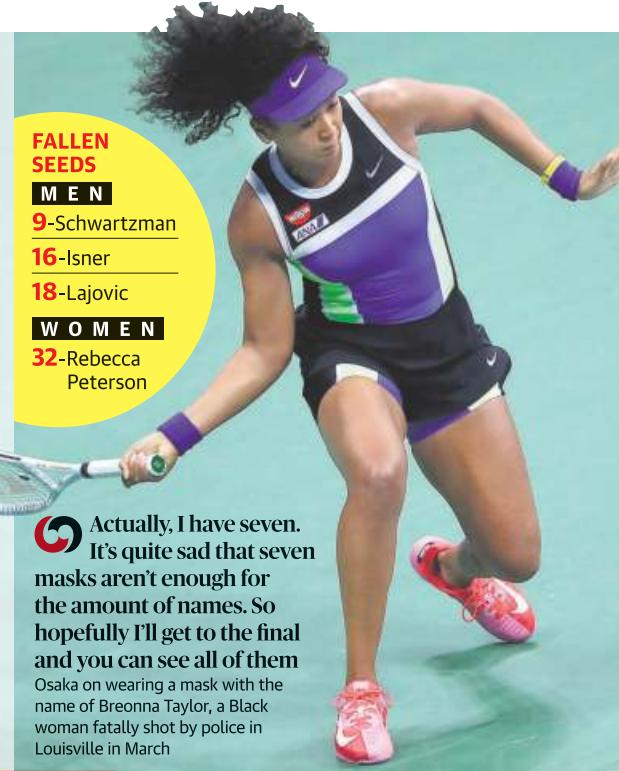
6 Zverev has now beaten Anderson in all six meetings

8 Cecchinato, who famously beat Djokovic en route to the French Open semifinals in 2018, has lost in the first round of all eight Majors since then

24 Djokovic has won all 24 matches he has played in 2020

WEDNESDAY'S PICKS

MEN
1-Djokovic vs. Edmund
4-Tsitsipas vs. Cressy
5-Zverev vs. Nakashima



FALLEN SEEDS
MEN
9-Schwartzman
16-Isner
WOMEN
18-Lajovic
32-Rebecca Peterson

Actually, I have seven. It's quite sad that seven masks aren't enough for the amount of names. So hopefully I'll get to the final and you can see all of them

Osaka on wearing a mask with the name of Breonna Taylor, a Black woman fatally shot by police in Louisville in March

No one really brought it to my attention. The lack of communication is something that worries me once again

Djokovic on the chair umpire starting the shot clock earlier than on the ATP Tour

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

NEW YORK

Top seeds Novak Djokovic, Karolina Pliskova and Naomi Osaka were among the big names to shrug off the deathly quiet at Flushing Meadows and progress to the second round as "weird," spectator-free US Open started on Monday with heightened safety protocols for some players following a positive COVID-19 test.

Several competitors were placed in what one of them

described as a "bubble within a bubble" after France's Benoit Paire was withdrawn from the men's draw on Sunday for testing positive for coronavirus.

Djokovic defeated unheralded Damir Dzumhur of Bosnia-Herzegovina 6-1, 6-4, 6-1 as he launched his bid for an 18th Grand Slam with a win at an Arthur Ashe Stadium devoid of 23,000 screaming fans.

The women's top seed Pliskova made light work of

145th-ranked Ukrainian Anhelina Kalinina 6-4, 6-0 in one of the early matches.

Making a statement
Black Lives Matter banners are on display in the main arenas and fourth seed Naomi Osaka wore a Breonna Taylor mask, days after she threatened not to play a semi-final to protest the police shooting of Jacob Blake, a Black man, while defeating Japanese compatriot Misaki Doi 6-2, 5-7, 6-2.

Rahul first choice 'keeper: Kumble

Kings XI Punjab coach impressed with speedster Shami

WRIDDHAAN BHATTACHARYYA
KOLKATA

If a player is keeping wickets for 50-over games at a stretch, he ought to sight the ball better while batting. And K.L. Rahul is exactly doing that. Today, he is the first choice wicketkeeper for Team India in limited-overs and Kings XI Punjab (KXIP) in the Indian Premier League (IPL) 2020.

It will also be Rahul's first IPL season as captain.

"I think K.L. will obviously take up 'keeping' and then, we will take it from there," former India captain and Kings XI head coach Anil Kumble told *Sportstar* on Tuesday.

West Indies international Nicholas Pooran – who scored a 45-ball 100 in the Caribbean Premier League on Sunday – is the second 'keeper in the side.

Good equation
Kumble also feels his equation with Rahul will help in decision-making.

"It was very important to choose the captain [for the season]. I have known K.L., seen him as a young kid growing up in Bengaluru, and as a cricketer. It's his first season as skipper but



Good rapport: Anil Kumble feels his equation with Rahul over the years will help in decision-making. ■ TWITTER/LIONSENKXIP

he knows the team better than me. He has played here for two seasons. I think we have all the ingredients to build a solid team," he said.

Rahul had kept wickets for Karnataka in the past but it was perhaps Kings XI that tuned him up as a smooth operator. The franchise had not picked a specialist 'keeper' in 2018 and the gloves were handed over to the explosive batsman instead.

India speedster Mo-

hammed Shami will lead the Kings XI pace attack in the IPL. Kumble is impressed with the right-arm's net sessions in Dubai.

Experience
"Shami is the experienced guy here. He has been brilliant over the last five or six days. He will be able to pass on his thoughts to the youngsters. I am looking at him not just for his skills, but also for his thoughts and information," he said.

IPL teams ask for warm-up games

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

The IPL for the first time is likely to witness warm-up games between the participating franchises ahead of this season's scheduled start on September 19.

At least five franchises are understood to have requested the BCCI to organise warm-up games in the week leading up to the tournament. According to a franchise executive, the BCCI has said it will respond "in a day or two".

Departing from the norm in the Western world, coach Marco Seruca of Portugal stressed that meditation and mental training should begin right at the start, along with forearm and backhand drills, for a bright career in tennis.

In a lively online interaction with coach Devinder Bhusari of Shaishya Tennis Academy, Seruca felt that

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
NEW DELHI

make life difficult. Confinement and isolation can give rise to 'cabin fever', where decreased motivation, lethargy and depression are companions. The pandemic, where large portions of the world's population have been confined indoors, has caused much stress. Cabin fever is common, but seldom commented on.

Marco Seruca.

course and had to undergo a further period of quarantine.

If Raina broke the bubble, it should have made clear for two reasons: to send out a message to the others in the bubble, and to give the tournament greater credibility for taking a tough call. It is never easy to send back a player of Raina's ability from a tournament where he has been one of the stars.

Tough choices
Raina is 33, a father of two children, and might have put on the balance matters of family and safety on one side and on the other, money and future prospects. And decided that the latter was less important.

Even before teams come out to perform in empty stadiums, there is the matter of quarantine in hotel rooms,

and a slew of do's and don'ts that can

their real personality in crunch situations, and so it was important to mould the personality for a better game. "The stress is on physical skills. Most of the time, there is no attention to the mental aspect," said Seruca, referring to the general eagerness of coaches to look for aggression and killer instinct in their athletes.

"I feel exactly the opposite," he said, before explaining his outlook. "There are two ways to success. One is to

be rough, tough and ruthless. The second is to be fluid, natural, and go with the flow. It is much easier to do it the second way, as you don't expend much energy."

Stating that being natural, adding good qualities to one's personality and removing negative traits were the key to holistic development, Seruca pointed out that trying to do one's best and "not trying to impose one's game on the opponent" was the foundation of a good game.

Seruca said that a performance-oriented approach was better than being focused on the target and being desperate to achieve it. He revealed that Germany had stopped its under-14 national competition to ensure better growth of the players.

"Sometimes, parents don't know how to help their kids. There is a need to educate parents about the right path," he said, adding that a positive personality is needed to emerge stronger.

Understanding cabin fever is crucial to the IPL bubble

Players and captains need to be made aware of extraordinary cases in these extraordinary times



BETWEEN WICKETS

SURESHE MENON

There are two issues arising from Sunil Raina's return to India before the commencement of the IPL in the UAE that are important: communication, and empathy.

Officially, we don't know why Raina, who has retired from international cricket (attracting a letter of appreciation from the Prime Minister who also recommended that he spend more time with his family), is back.

"Personal reasons" is a hold-all that carries reasons ranging from personal

angst to the professional heave-ho. The latter theory gained credence when in a section of the media, CSK owner N. Srinivasan reportedly said Raina had acted like a prima donna. Later he clarified that he had been misquoted and that Raina's contribution to CSK is phenomenal and he needed to be given space to deal with his issues. Perhaps Srinivasan and CSK are being kind.

But that phrase "personal reasons" tends to cause confusion and as television has shown us in recent weeks, when there is a lack of information, ill-founded theories rush in to fill the vacuum.

Did Raina break the bio-secure bubble? Bubble-breaking isn't unusual. England's Jofra Archer took a detour to go home while the team was in the bubble during the West Indies series. Pakistan's Mohammad Hafeez tweeted a picture of himself with an elderly lady at a golf

course and had to undergo a further period of quarantine.

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Tough choices
Raina is 33, a father of two children, and might have put on the balance matters of family and safety on one side and on the other, money and future prospects. And decided that the latter was less important.

Even before teams come out to perform in empty stadiums, there is the matter of quarantine in hotel rooms, and a slew of do's and don'ts that can

make life difficult. Confinement and isolation can give rise to 'cabin fever', where decreased motivation, lethargy and depression are companions. The pandemic, where large portions of the world's population have been confined indoors, has caused much stress. Cabin fever is common, but seldom commented on.

In fact, most variations from normal behaviour in bio-secure bubbles can be put down to cabin fever, and that calls for sympathy and understanding. We don't know enough.

There hasn't been enough cricket played in the bubble – West Indies and Pakistan played in England without any major mishaps – to arrive at conclusions that hold true for all such competitions. And that's why the IPL experiment is important. There are more players in more teams playing over more days than anywhere or at any other time during the pandemic. Cricket cannot afford to get it wrong. The IPL cannot afford to get it wrong.

Players are human
Initially 13 people, including two players, tested positive for COVID-19 in the CSK outfit and we don't know how that is affecting the others mentally.

Josh Hazlewood, the Australian pace bowler, who is expected to arrive in the UAE later has said that he is "a little bit concerned." With over two weeks to go before the start of the 53-day tournament, there's a lot of time to worry. Players are human, and might profit from counselling in that period.

Awareness of mental issues in sport have, in recent years, removed the stigma attached to them. Cricket boards have begun to treat the public like adults, explaining the problem a player might have just as they would have spo-

ken of an injury to the body.

Three months in a bubble is a long time, and it can do things to your mind and emotions. As mental conditioning coach Paddy Upton told *ESPNcricinfo*, "Funny things could happen". Teams which handle these situations well will do better than teams which rely only on the basic skills of batting, bowling and fielding.

There is the virus itself which is worrying, and then there is the potential for getting affected, which causes worry too. To handle personal issues without damaging the player or disrespecting the pain is a big responsibility. Players and captains need to be made aware of extraordinary cases in these extraordinary times. Empathy can only come from awareness.

That cricket is a mental game is one of its enduring clichés. That is truer now than ever before.

Farewell to one of Bharat's brightest Ratnas...



Pranab Mukherjee
1935-2020

daCunha/AB/708

Sindhu to skip Uber Cup for 'personal reasons'

V.V. SUBRAHMANYAM
HYDERABAD

World champion P.V. Sindhu has decided to pull out of the Thomas and Uber Cup badminton championships to be held from October 3 to 11 in Aarhus (Denmark).

"Sindhu has informed the Badminton Association of India about her decision to skip the event because of some personal reasons," a senior BAI official told *The Hindu* on Monday.

Sindhu's original plan to return to competitive sport was through the Thomas and Uber Cups. She has been extra cautious post the pandemic having separate training sessions at the SAI-Gopi Chand Academy here daily under the supervision of Korean coach Park Tae-Sang with chief national coach P. Gopi Chand also having a close look at the sessions.

P.V. Sindhu.
■ FILE PHOTO: K. PICHUMANI

The ongoing National camp meant for the eight Olympic probables from August 3 has been attended only by Sindhu, former World No. 1 K. Srikanth, and World championship bronze medallist B. Sai Praneeth.

London Olympics bronze medallist Saina Nehwal has been training at a private academy with husband P. Kashyap taking care of the sessions.

First Clasico on Oct. 25

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MADRID

Barcelona will play Real Madrid in the first Clasico of the season at Camp Nou on October 25, after the La Liga fixtures were announced on Monday.

The first games of the new season will be played on the weekend of September 12.

The two will then face each other at the Santiago Bernabeu on April 11, with Zinedine Zidane's side looking to defend the Spanish league title it won in July.

Summit skirmish



Perfect day: After a 160.5km rolling run to the 1850m altitude finish line in stage four of the Tour de France on Tuesday, Primoz Roglic pipped Tadej Pogacar at the post while Guillaume Martin was third. Julian Alaphilippe retained the leader's yellow jersey. ■ REUTERS