



Hindi played a role in uniting the country, says Amit Shah
page 10



Finance Commission chief N.K. Singh hints at relook at States' share
page 11



Yoshihide Suga wins party vote, set to be next Japan PM
page 12



Thiem claws back to outlast Zverev in U.S. Open final
page 14

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NEARBY



Prashant Bhushan pays fine and files review plea
NEW DELHI
Advocate Prashant Bhushan filed a review petition in the Supreme Court on Monday against its decision finding him guilty of criminal contempt by "scandalising the court" with his tweets. Mr. Bhushan was punished with a ₹1 fine. He paid it by draft.
NEWS ▶ PAGE 10

'30% recovered patients did not have antibodies'
NEW DELHI
Seventy nine of 257 people who underwent antibody test after recovering from COVID-19 did not have antibodies, said a report of the second serological survey done in August by the Delhi government. Experts, however, said that there was no need to panic.
CITY ▶ PAGE 4

Ex-IPS officers ask Delhi CP to ensure 'fair probe'
NEW DELHI
Nine retired IPS officers have written to Delhi Police Commissioner S.N. Shrivastava decrying "flawed investigation" into the riots that erupted in February, and called for a free and fair probe. They argued that a "majoritarian attitude" in police leadership would lead to "travesty of justice".
CITY ▶ PAGE 2

On day 1 of monsoon session, 25 MPs test COVID-19 positive

Battle against the virus is far from over, says Health Minister Harsh Vardhan



By the rule book: Members keeping distance outside Parliament House on the opening day of the monsoon session in New Delhi on Monday. ■ PTI

Question Hour goes

The Lok Sabha on Monday adopted a motion to do away with Question Hour and private members' business this session citing curtailed hours, much to the resentment of the Opposition parties. PAGE 9

sured consistently to control the spread of COVID-19 infection and break its chain of transmission."

Currently, the maximum

'No data on migrants'

The Ministry of Labour and Employment does not have any data regarding migrant workers who lost their jobs and lives during the lockdown, Minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar informed the Lok Sabha. ■ PAGE 9

DMK protests against NEET

DMK MPs staged a protest on the Parliament premises on Monday, demanding that the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) be scrapped. They later raised the issue in both Houses.

► PAGE 9

COVID-19 cases and deaths have been reported from Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, West Bengal, Bihar, Telangana, Odisha, Assam, Kerala and Gujarat.

CONTINUED ▶ PAGE 8

+ Centre opposes move to recognise same-sex unions

Legal system, society don't recognise it, govt. tells Delhi HC

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Centre on Monday opposed before the Delhi High Court a petition seeking recognition of same-sex marriages, saying, "our legal system, society and values do not recognise marriage between same sex couples".

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, said the 2018 judgment of the Constitution Bench of the Supreme Court "merely decriminalises homosexuality or lesbianism, nothing more, nothing less".

Struck down in 2018
On September 6, 2018, a five-judge Constitution Bench, led by then Chief Justice Dipak Misra, unanimously held that criminalisation of private consensual sexual conduct between adults of the same sex under

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

thinking is whether a PIL [Public Interest Litigation] should or should not be entertained... At the moment, we are trying to understand whether we should get into the issue or whether we have to wait."

"Worldover, today things are changing. Those changes may be applicable in our country or they may not be," the Bench said, adding that for "our country we have to see what our constitutional values say".

Later, the Bench asked if any of the petitioners or others have faced difficulties while trying to register same-sex marriages. "If these petitioners are well-educated and their marriage registration is denied, they can surely come to the court," the Bench said.

Contrary to provisions
The Solicitor General said the petition was not permissible as it was asking the court to legislate and also that any relief granted "would run contrary to various statutory provisions".

Responding to the sub-mission, a bench of Chief Justice D.N. Patel and Justice Prateek Jalan said, "As far as maintainability part is concerned, today what we are

The Centre informed the Supreme Court on Monday that no immediate action will be taken to demolish 48,000 slum clusters situated within safety zones along the rail tracks in Delhi.

Appearing before a Bench led by Chief Justice of India Sharad A. Bobde, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said consultations were on among the Railways, the Delhi government and the Union Ministry of Urban Development to reach a solution, taking into consideration the fact that any immediate move would cause the displacement of over two lakh families living in these clusters amid the COVID-19 pandemic. The court scheduled the case for hearing after a month.

The dispute is based on an order issued by the Supreme Court itself. On August 31, a Bench led by Justice Arun Mishra, who is now retired, ordered the removal of the

clusters within three months along with garbage piled up near the rail tracks. The court said no interference would be brooked from politicians or otherwise against the order. It also said that any order of stay by any court would be deemed ineffective.

It is in this background that Congress leader Ajay Maken and several residents of these clusters urgently approached the court, challenging

No immediate action against Delhi slums'

Centre tells SC over 2 lakh families living near rail tracks would be affected

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI



Residents protesting over the issue of removal of slums along railway tracks, in New Delhi on Monday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

the blanket order of destruction of their homes passed without even hearing them first. Mr. Maken called the August 31 order a "devastating" one.

The former Union Cabinet Minister and the residents informed the court that the Ministry of Railways, the Delhi government and local authorities had already initiated the process of identification and removal of 'jhuggis' and

ASSEMBLY RESOLUTION ▶ PAGE 3

Retail inflation + eases to 6.69% in August

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Retail inflation softened slightly to 6.69% in August, even as food prices continued to rise high, official data showed on Monday.

The government has revised downwards the retail inflation for July to 6.73% from the earlier estimate of 6.93%. Food inflation during the month stood at 9.62%.

Food inflation in August fell marginally to 9.05%, according to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) data.

The retail inflation, mainly taken into account by the RBI to arrive at its policy decisions, has been above the regulator's comfort level.

The government has mandated the central bank to restrict the inflation at 4% (+/- 2%).

GOVT. LOOKS TO SPEND 1.67 LAKH CRORE MORE ▶ PAGE 13

T.N. creates Assembly replica to meet COVID-19 challenge

Almost everything has been reproduced, but with more spacing, at a theatre-cum-convention hall

DENNIS S. JESUDASAN
CHENNAI

When the Tamil Nadu Assembly met on Monday, the historic chamber looked just the same. Only, it was not at Fort St. George. Over 150 workers worked for nearly 10 days and nights and multiple departments of the Tamil Nadu government coordinated to recreate a replica of the House a few kilometres away.

Kalaivanar Arangam, a theatre-cum-convention venue managed by the Information and Public Relations (I&PR) Department on Wallajah Salai here, was chosen for the Assembly's three-day session in view of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was

spacious enough to ensure physical distancing norms for legislators and officials.

After Speaker P. Dhanapal announced the session on September 1, the Public Works Department (PWD), along with the I&PR Department and the Assembly Secretariat, swung into action to create the replica in the multi-purpose hall on the third floor of Kalaivanar Arangam, which offers over 10,000 sq ft of space. Except for the chandelier in the Assembly, almost everything else was reproduced.

One original remains
Yet, one original piece was retained - the historic Chair of the Assembly Speaker,

which has been shifted to the temporary venue. This Chair, resembling the Speaker's Chair in the British House of Commons, was presented in March 1922 by Lord Willingdon, Governor of Madras Presidency and Lady Willingdon, to the President of the Madras Legislative Council as a personal gift.

The PWD's collection of wooden chairs and furniture in the MLAs' hostel, near the Arangam, came in handy. "It is a mix of own property and hired furniture," a PWD official said. But if everything was replicated,

then what was different to ensure safety norms against COVID-19? "The spacing between rows and columns of chairs. Also, we have installed ceiling fans to circulate air-conditioned air and will not close the doors," he pointed out.

The PWD had some portraits of leaders and historical personalities in the traditional Hall at Fort St. George and that came in handy, while others were made afresh.

Apart from the Speaker, legislators, seven Secretary-level IAS officers and over 50 journalists, there is no room, including for visitors. Chambers for the Speaker, the Chief Minister and others were also created.

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Umar Khalid remanded in 10-day police custody in Delhi riots case

Former student leader was arrested on Sunday under UAPA

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Monday sent former JNU student leader Umar Khalid, who was arrested late on Sunday under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, to police custody for 10 days in a case related to the communal violence in north-east Delhi in February.

Mr. Khalid was produced before Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat through videoconferencing. The police had sought his custody for 10 days saying they wanted to confront him with documents running into 11 lakh pages. They said the Computer Emergency Response Team had extracted

40 GB data from Mr. Khalid's mobile phone and they wanted to question him on it.

Mr. Khalid was arrested on Sunday night over allegations of conspiracy in the riots. His counsel opposed the remand application saying he was not in Delhi during February 23-26, when the riots broke out.

In the FIR, the police has claimed that the communal violence was a "premeditated conspiracy" which was allegedly hatched by Mr. Khalid and two others. Mr. Khalid has also been booked for the offences of sedition, murder, attempt to murder, promoting enmity between different groups on grounds of religion and rioting.

According to the FIR, Mr.

Khalid had allegedly given provocative speeches at two different places and appealed to the citizens to come out on streets during the visit of U.S. President Donald Trump to spread propaganda about how minorities in India are being tortured. In this conspiracy, firearms, petrol bombs, acid bottles and stones were collected at numerous homes, the FIR claimed.

Several activists, academics, prominent personalities decried the arrest. "It's a conspiracy by the police to frame peaceful activists in the guise of Investigation," advocate Prashant Bhushan tweeted.

BID TO SUPPRESS DISSENT ▶ PAGE 2

Members of the T.N. Assembly paying homage to former President Pranab Mukherjee, MP H. Vasantha Kumar and MLA J. Anbazhagan, who passed away recently.

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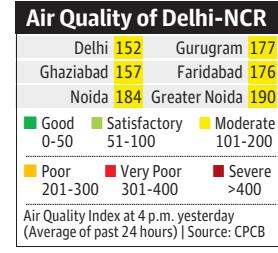
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DUTA calls for 3-day strike

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI
The Delhi University Teachers' Association (DUTA) has called for a three-day strike starting Wednesday to protest the non-release of funds to 12 colleges under the government.

The union has been demanding the release of funds to these colleges for several months now. It has also demanded that the university and government resolve issues among them so that the employees and institutions are spared. While grants have been released to six colleges recently, employees at the rest of these colleges have allegedly not been paid salaries for nearly five months. As part of the strike, teachers will boycott online classes.

THE HINDU
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NGT asks CPCB to come up with SOP for eateries on highways

Plea sought directions against illegal dumping of garbage

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Following a plea alleging illegal dumping and burning of waste by restaurants on GT Road, Murtthal, the National Green Tribunal has directed the Central Pollution Control Board to finalise a standard operating procedure (SOP) for eateries along highways, within two months.

Referring to the existing policies regarding the same, a Bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said, "While the policy acknowledges serious environmental issues in the operation of restaurants and other such establishments on the

roadsides, particularly the generation and handling of waste and extraction of groundwater, the remedial action by way of the policy does not meet the mandate of the law."

'Polluter pays'
Stating that existing environmental norms cannot be diluted or relaxed by any authority, the Bench said, "The compensation regime has to be as per 'polluter pays' principle which requires the compensation to be adequate to cover the cost of restoration of the environment and has to be deterrent."

The Bench further took note of previous judgments and said, "Let the CPCB fi-

nalise an appropriate SOP integrating its guidelines already prepared and incorporating such of the provisions in the policy as are found appropriate so that the SOP prepared by CPCB will cover the entire field."

"If no change is required in the guidelines already prepared by the CPCB, then it may continue," the Bench added.

The directions came when the green panel was hearing a plea moved by petitioner Abhay Dahiya seeking directions against illegal dumping and burning of garbage. The plea had also contended that untreated waste water was being discharged by eateries along the highway.

The Bench further took note of previous judgments and said, "Let the CPCB fi-

Rai to conduct meeting today to discuss pollution

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai will hold a crucial meeting with senior officials on Tuesday to discuss ways to deal with extreme levels of pollution in the city in winters, said officials.

They said the Minister will review progress of the annual plantation exercise. The issue of stubble burning in neighbouring states will also be taken up during the meeting. The Delhi government has set a target of planting 31 lakh saplings during the year 2020-21.

Around 19 lakh saplings have already been planted in the city by various agencies since March this year, according to government data.

Two stabbed to death after fight in west Delhi

No arrests made so far, say police

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Two persons were killed following a fight in west Delhi's Khyala in the small hours of Monday, the police said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (West) Deepak Purohit said the deceased have been identified as Rohit and Ashish. They both held criminal records.

The police said they received two PCR calls around 1 a.m. regarding quarrel in Ragubir Nagar JJ Colony. On reaching the spot, they were told that Rohithad an argument with a man named Naveen. Next, Naveen thrashed Rohit and left the spot.

Rohit then in a drunken state started looking for Naveen. A while later, Ashish – who Rohit knew because they lived in the same area – came to the spot with his friends Abhinav and Sahil.

"When Ashish saw Rohit, he asked him his whereabouts following which the duo got into a fight. Next, Ashish and his friends left the spot," Mr. Purohit said.

However, they returned a few minutes later and confronted Rohit, who was carrying a knife. The police said Rohit stabbed Ashish and Sahil.

The officer said Sahil then stabbed Rohit. At the time, Rohit's mother Meena reached the spot and called the police. All three injured were rushed to hospital where Ashish and Rohit succumbed to injuries; Sahil sustained minor injuries.

Mr. Purohit said a case under Section 302 (punishment for murder) of the IPC has been registered. Teams are looking for Abhinav to ascertain the sequence of events.

Office of Superintending Engineer 1 st Circle PWD Almora NATIONAL COMPETITIVE BIDDING (E-Tendering) E-TENDER NOTICE					
The superintending Engineer, 1 st Circle, Public Works Department, Almora invites tender through E-Tendering (Two Bid System) on behalf of Honourable governor of Uttarakhand for following works. All other information will be available from dated 16/09/2020 & onwards on website http://www.uktenders.gov.in					
S. Name of work					
1 BM/SDBC work in Barechana-Berinaag-Aksot Motor Road (S.H-3) in Almora District Or Constituency Almora At Km. 31 to 42 Under CM Ghosna No 468/2019 (Length 12,000 Km)	Cost of Tender Form	Earnest Money (Rs in lakh)	Validity of Tender	Time of Submission	Contractor's Category for tendering
Rs. 5000.00+ 18% GST	4.25 lakh	120 Days	12 Months	Category "A" & above (Road Works)	DIPR/UK/13079

'Umar Khalid's arrest a brazen attempt to suppress dissent'

Activists say police action not related to riots but linked to anti-CAA protests

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Several activists, academics, and others on social media have come out in support of former Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) student Umar Khalid, who has been arrested by the Special Cell of Delhi Police in connection with the riots that broke out in north-east Delhi in February this year.

Members of the civil rights society condemned Mr. Khalid's arrest and said that the probe being carried out by the police is not about the communal violence.

"With deep anguish we have no doubt in saying that this probe is not about the violence in February, but about the peaceful and democratic protests across the country against the unconstitutional Citizenship (Amendment) Act," read a statement signed by 36 people, including Delhi University professor Apoorvanand and JNU professor Jayati Ghosh – who have been named in a supplementary chargesheet filed by the police in relation to a riot case.

The repeated attempts by the Delhi police to implicate him [Mr. Khalid] in a number of fictitious cases of conspiracy for the Delhi violence are part of a brazen attempt to try to suppress his



Umar Khalid being detained by the police during an anti-CAA protest at Red Fort last year. • FILE PHOTO

voice of dissent," it added.

'Cong. supported UAPA'

Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) social media head Ankit Lal said the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act was also supported by Congress. "What is being done to @UmarKhalidJNU by BJP will happen to each of us if we don't raise our voice to protect democracy. Never forget that the UAPA, under which Umar has been arrested, was also supported by Congress in Rajya Sabha. BJP and Congress are two sides of the same coin [sic]," he tweeted.

Former IAS officer Kannan Gopinathan tweeted: "Mr. Khalid is a brilliant, brave and a strong guy. A tall leader of India of tomorrow. His arrest by some yes-men of @delhipolice who can't

ded that Mr. Khalid had been questioned by the police before and had written an open letter to the Delhi Police Commissioner regarding intimidation of one of his acquaintances in the name of questioning.

'Criminalising protest'

"The JNUSU condemns the continuing witch-hunt and targeting of activists. We reiterate that all these actions are means to criminalise democratic protests against the CAA, the National Register of Citizens, and the National Population Register, which are divisive, discriminatory and the communal agenda of the BJP-RSS, implemented by the Union government," read a statement by the students, adding that the Delhi Police reports to the Union Home Ministry and "not only has a tactical understanding with the real perpetrators of the riots but has ensured that activists are incarcerated and maligned to shift attention away from the real culprits".

Indian Youth Congress leader Srivatsa Y.B. said the arrest was motivated. "Kapil Mishra screamed 'Goli Maaro' in his hate speech which had a big role to play in the riots. Forget arrest or UAPA, there was not even a FIR against him. What has Umar Khalid done? BJP govt is purposefully hounding him. Will judiciary uphold liberty [sic]?" he tweeted.

The JNU Students' Union (JNUSU) said the Delhi police have falsely implicated Mr. Khalid in the riots after 11 hours of interrogation. It ad-

ded that Mr. Khalid had been questioned by the police before and had written an open letter to the Delhi Police Commissioner regarding intimidation of one of his acquaintances in the name of questioning.

After former Jawaharlal Nehru University student leader Umar Khalid was arrested under UAPA for his alleged role in the riots.

Ex-IPS officers ask Delhi Police chief to ensure free, fair probe

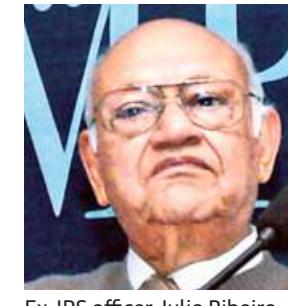
They condemn 'majoritarian attitude' in police leadership

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Up to nine retired IPS officers have written to Delhi Police Commissioner S.N. Shrivastava decrying "flawed investigation" into the riots that erupted in north-east Delhi in February, and called for a free and fair probe.

Endorsing a letter recently written by retired IPS officer Julio Ribeiro, members of the Constitutional Conduct Group – a retired government servants' group – wrote: "It was a sad day in the history of Indian Police that investigations and challenges submitted in the court by the Delhi Police are being widely believed to be partisan and politically motivated [sic]."

They argued that a "majoritarian attitude" in police leadership led to a "travesty



Ex-IPS officer Julio Ribeiro

fundamental rights to freedom of speech and peaceful protests as guaranteed by the Constitution," they wrote, adding that such type of investigations would make people "lose faith in democracy, justice and the Constitution" and could lead to the "breakdown of law and order".

The retired officers included K. Saleem Ali, former Special Director, CBI; Mohinder Singh Aulakh, former DGP (Jails), Punjab; A.S. Dulat, former OSD on Kashmir, PMO's office; Aloke B. Lal, DG (Prosecution), Uttarakhand; Amitabh Mathur, former director, Aviation Research Centre; Avinash Mohanhanan, former DGP, Sikki; PGJ Namoothiri, former DGP, Gujarat; and A.K. Samanta, former DG (Intelligence) West Bengal.

Producer, filmmaker quizzed

Their names came up while probing February riots: officer

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police Special Cell questioned film producer Rahul Roy and filmmaker Saba Dewan for over eight hours on Monday in connection with the north-east riots.

They were called in a day

after former Jawaharlal Nehru University student leader Umar Khalid was arrested under UAPA for his alleged role in the riots.

They were called for questioning at 1 p.m. and were allowed to go at 8 p.m. If required they will be again asked to join investigation," said another officer.

They were asked about their presence at anti-CAA protests, said an officer.

"They were called for questioning at 1 p.m. and were allowed to go at 8 p.m. If required they will be again asked to join investigation," said another officer.

Khalid always cooperated whenever police called him

Friend of former JNU student recalls how police repeatedly summoned the activist on short notice

HEMAMI BHANDARI

NEW DELHI

He always cooperated with the police whenever they called him in for questioning and returned to Delhi on short notice before his arrest on Sunday, Umar Khalid's friend Banjoysana Lahiri told *The Hindu*.

Ms. Lahiri, a former Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) student who now works as a researcher, said Mr. Khalid was in Rajasthan on September 11 when he received separate summons from Delhi Police's Crime Branch and Special Cell.

Ms. Lahiri said that Mr. Khalid received two summons from Special Cell and one from Crime Branch on Friday and Saturday. "On Saturday, he finally decided to return and appear for questioning," she said.

Mr. Khalid went in for questioning at the Special Cell of office. "Around 11 p.m., his family was informed that he has been formally arrested," she added.

Speaking about the last few months, Ms. Lahiri said that Mr. Khalid learned that he had been booked under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act through media reports in March. "For the next four

months till July, he did not get any calls. In August, he got the first call saying that they [the police] wanted to question him. He was in Kolkata at the time and he got stuck there because of the lockdown," she said, adding that despite travel restrictions, he returned to Delhi on a single-day notice and cooperated in the first round of enquiry.

Next, he was called in by Crime Branch and again by Special Cell on August 31. "The larger point here is that the police did not call him at all for four months and whenever they did, he cooperated with the enquiry," she said.

Reacting to the arrest, Ms. Lahiri said that the way the investigation is being conducted is "bizarre". "No one can anticipate anything. One can only speculate," she said. When asked how Mr. Khalid's parents reacted to the arrest, Ms. Lahiri said that "they are now getting used to this".

In June, after his name appeared in a chartsheet as being part of a larger conspiracy in riots, Mr. Khalid had said there was not an iota of truth in the police's claim. On September 1, he had written to Delhi Commissioner of Police S.N. Shrivastava stating he was being falsely implicated.

Commuters following social distancing norms inside a Delhi Metro train on Monday. • SANDEEP SAXENA

Floor markers placed in 800 coaches Move aimed at strengthening social distancing, says DMRC

STAFF REPORTER

NEW DELHI

Besides pasting stickers on alternate seats in metro coaches, the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) has also started to place floor markers to further strengthen the signs for social distancing inside the trains.

The DMRC on Monday said the floor markers, intended to ensure social distancing among commuters who are not seated, were placed in 800 coaches.

"With a week, floor markers will be placed in the remaining 1,400 metro coaches," it said.

Peak hours

The DMRC also advised commuters traveling on the network to stagger their journeys so that adequate social distancing can be maintained in the metro," the DMRC said.

The nearly 400-km-long Delhi Metro network be-

came fully operational on September 12 day. Ridership on the network was recorded at 2.49 lakh till 7.30 p.m.

The yellow line (Samaypur Badli - HUDA City Centre) saw the highest footfall at 76,266 followed by the Blue line (Dwarka Sector

Timings
DELHI

TUESDAY, SEP. 15	
RISE 06:06	SET 18:26
RISE 03:26	SET 17:19
WEDNESDAY, SEP. 16	
RISE 06:07	SET 18:25
RISE 04:33	SET 18:01
THURSDAY, SEP. 17	
RISE 06:07	SET 18:24
RISE 05:41	SET 18:41

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	37	28
Safdarjung	37	28
Palam	36	28

Delhi Paliom Today
37°C Dry weather with warm and humid day and light winds. Mainly partly cloudy sky.

Delhi Paliom Tomorrow
38°C Day would turn hot and humid with partly cloudy sky. Evening also would remain slight warm.

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Kasturba Hospital nurses begin protest over salary

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Nurses at the North Delhi Municipal Corporation-run Kasturba Hospital, starting Monday, will hold two-hour demonstration daily, in protest against the non-release of salaries for the past three months.

Healthcare workers at hospitals run by the Corporation have been repeatedly protesting against delays in the release of their salaries. Last week, in a notice to the North body Commissioner, the nurses' union said that it would be undertaking daily agitation for two hours to demand the release of their salaries.

Despite not being paid salaries, "in the interest of patients, we have worked silently and with complete devotion till date," they wrote. They said that financial obligations and difficulties had become intolerable. During the agitation, they said they would ensure that emergency services continued running smoothly.

30% recovered COVID-19 patients have no antibodies: govt. survey

'No need to panic as memory cells will trigger immune response in most cases'

NIKHIL M BABU
NEW DELHI

Seventy-nine of 257 people who had COVID-19, recovered, and later tested for antibodies against the virus, did not have the antibodies, according to a report of the second serological survey done in August by the Delhi government.



A second sero survey was held in Delhi in August.

* FILE PHOTO

Experts, however, said that there was no need to "panic", as the neutralising antibodies (IgG) tend to vanish after three months, but in most cases the memory cells will remember the virus and trigger an immune response if the person who recovered from COVID-19 is again attacked by the virus.

"The people who had COVID-19 and recovered and did not show antibodies during the survey might have contracted the disease four or five months back at the initial stage of infection. Now their antibodies (IgG) might have disappeared. We will have to study their individual cases deeper to understand it better," an official source

Under the survey, blood samples of about 15,000 random people were collected from August 1-7 and tested for antibodies (IgG) against the virus.

The report was prepared by Maulana Azad Medical College (MAMC), which provided technical support for the survey.

Biological mechanism
"IgG falls and it is a normal biological mechanism. But if the virus attacks the body again, then the memory cells

will kick in and they will trigger IgG, which will give immunity in most people, with some exception and people with immunodeficiency [inability to produce an adequate immune response]," said Jayaprakash Muliyil, epidemiologist and former principal of Christian Medical College, Vellore.

"The virus may revisit you and be transiently present in your throat, but it will be almost never able to produce a disease," Dr. Reddy said.

K. Srinath Reddy, epidemiologist, and president of Public Health Foundation of India (PHFI), Delhi, also had a similar opinion.

Memory cells
"In most cases, the antibodies (IgG) decline by three months, but memory B cells and memory T cells store the memory of the virus. They activate the immune mechanism when there is a re-infection. So, antibodies vanishing doesn't mean that you are totally vulnerable to the virus," Dr. Reddy said.

As testing drops, no. of fresh COVID-19 cases falls below 4,000 in the Capital

Deputy CM Manish Sisodia tests positive for the virus

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

After reporting more than 4,000 daily new cases for five days in a row, the Capital on Monday witnessed only 3,229 cases as the number of tests fell by about 23%, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government. The total number of cases stood at 2,21,533.

Though the past five days had seen an average daily tests of 58,000, only 44,884 tests were done in the past 24 hours. The drop in tests have been happening on bulletins on Mondays, as it re-

ports Sunday's data.

Out of the total 14,409 beds available for COVID-19 treatment in the city, 54.2% were vacant, as per government data on Monday.

But 62.2% of the ICU beds with ventilators have been occupied and 71.6% of the ICU beds without ventilators are full. The number of containment zones in the city was 1,279. The positivity rate has come up slightly to 7.1% from 7.4% on Sunday. Delhi has done 1,14,964 tests per million of the population, which is one of the highest in the country.

"After having a mild fever, corona test was done today and the report has come positive. I have isolated myself. Right now there is no fever or any other problem, I am completely fine. With all your blessings, I will soon be healthy and return to work,"

COVID-19

flects Sunday's data. Also, 26 more deaths have been reported, taking the total number of deaths to 4,770. Of the total cases, 1,88,122 people have recovered and there are 28,641 active cases.

"IgG falls and it is a normal biological mechanism. But if the virus attacks the body again, then the memory cells

BJP stages demonstration with residents of slums

They demand allotment of vacant flats

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Opposition BJP, along with residents of slum clusters near railway tracks which are scheduled to be cleared, staged a demonstration at the Chandgi Ram Akhada near the Assembly demanding that vacant flats available with the government be allotted to them.

Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Assembly, Ramvir Singh Bidhuri, along with BJP MLAs and slum dwellers demonstrated at the Chandgi Ram Akhada near the Assembly demanding that vacant flats available with the government be allotted to them.

"The AAP government has demolished thousands of slums in the last six years, but not shifted a single slum dweller in a permanent

house," Mr. Bidhuri alleged.

"Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal did not allow the public welfare schemes of the Central government to be implemented in Delhi because he thought that if these schemes were implemented, then the Prime Minister would get all the credit," he also alleged.

Mr. Bidhuri alleged that the Kejriwal government was deliberately "ignoring" the possibility of shifting families living in 48,000 slums along the railway tracks to over 50,000 vacant houses.

As soon as the work of removing slums starts, Mr. Bidhuri said, BJP workers will "respectfully shift" them along with their belongings to these vacant houses.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The CPI(ML) on Monday started a 48-hour hunger strike in Wazirpur slum as a warning against the order to demolish jhuggies near railway tracks.

Ravi Rai, State secretary of CPIML, Delhi, along with Shakuntala Devi, Sita Devi, Rameshwari Devi, Rinku and Sita, all residents of Wazirpur slum, have started the strike and said that the four-week moratorium on slum demolition that the Supreme Court ordered on Monday is only an eyewash and demanded a complete revocation of the order.

"The pandemic and the subsequent lockdown have destroyed livelihood of the

poor and workers of Delhi. The misery of the slum dwellers and migrant workers have been witnessed by the entire country. And in this situation, the order to demolish jhuggies is utterly inhuman," the party said.

Ms. Shakuntala said, "We have been staying here for 28 years now. We work in the city. The government should tell us where we will stay if our house is demolished." Ms. Sita, who is staying in the jhuggie for last 22 years, said: "We have not been given a pucca house till now by the government and now they are trying to demolish our jhuggie. Will they give us house in next four weeks that they have not done in the last 22 years?"

AAP govt. shedding crocodile tears for slums facing demolition'

Issue not figuring on special session agenda shocking: Cong.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Delhi Congress on Monday said that it was shocking that the AAP government has not listed the issue of the JJ clusters facing demolition, in its agenda, for the one-day session of the Delhi Legislative Assembly on Monday.

Delhi Congress chief Ch. Anil Kumar said that this clearly shows that the Arvind Kejriwal-led government was "merely shedding crocodile tears for the JJ clusters without meaning

to help them".

Lip service

"If the Kejriwal government was serious about stopping the demolition of the JJ clusters along railway tracks, it would have put this item on top of the agenda of the Session. However, the Delhi government has neither put the JJ cluster issue nor the surge in COVID-19 cases in the agenda for discussion, which means that they are merely doing lip service on both these matters without

showing any seriousness," Mr. Kumar said in a statement.

The Delhi Congress also pledged its support to senior Congress leader and former MLA Mateen Ahmed whose name has been added by Delhi Police in its supplementary charsheet to probe his role in the north-east Delhi riots.

Mr. Kumar said that Mr. Ahmed has unquestionable secular credentials, and no one would believe that he played any role in the riots.

AAP on Monday attacked the BJP over the law and order situation and also alleged corruption in procurement of equipment to fight COVID-19 in U.P.

AAP MP Sanjay Singh said that in U.P., a businessman was killed who has complained to the CM that the SP and DM of the district had been taking money from him and his life was in danger. Mr. Singh said the businessman was killed as he did not give money.

AAP alleges corruption in procurement of equipment of

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to the CM

Transparent body covers for virus victims

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GHAZIABAD

In his first visit to Lala Lajpat Rai Memorial Hospital after taking charge, Meerut District Magistrate K. Balaji told health officials to procure transparent body covers immediately to pack bodies of persons who succumb to COVID-19. Notably, it was at LLLRM hospital that the bodies of two virus victims got interchanged earlier this month.

The inquiry committee formed after the incident held a class IV employee for the blunder. "The medical superintendent and 10 contract workers were removed," said Raj Kumar, Chief Medical Officer, Meerut.

Dr. Sudhir Rathi, In-charge, Corona Ward, said the idea came from the health officials who were mulling over a way to prevent such an incident in future.

"The class IV employee goofed up by interchanging the ID card that carries the details of the deceased. As the body cover was opaque, nobody could catch the mistake," Dr. Rathi said.

Slain U.P. man's family seeks arrest of accused

The businessman was shot last week

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government on Monday came under Opposition criticism after a businessman from Mahoba was shot last week, days after he had accused an IPS officer of threatening to kill him, succumbed to his injuries at a Kanpur hospital.

The family of the deceased, Indrakant Tripathi, who was into the explosives business, demanded that the accused in the case, including IPS officer Mani Lal Patidar, who was recently suspended from the post of Mahoba Superintendent of Police for corruption and extortion, be arrested on charges of murder.

Indrakant's brother, Ravikant Tripathi, demanded the immediate arrest of the accused. "They will tamper with evidence and mess with witnesses," he said.

Mr. Ravikant feared that he could also be murdered.

Last week, Mr. Patidar was booked on charges of allegedly conspiring to murder Indrakant. A case under attempt to murder, criminal conspiracy and various charges was lodged against

Mr. Patidar, then Station House Officer Devendra Shukla, two local businessmen and unidentified police personnel. It is not yet clear if the charges would be upgraded to murder.

Letter to CM
Indrakant, involved in the explosives trade in the mining district, was found shot in the neck in his car last week. Days earlier, on September 5, in a letter to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and through a social media video, Indrakant had alleged that Mr. Patidar was threatening to kill him after he refused to pay him ₹6 lakh per month as extortion sum.

ADG Prayagraj, Prem Prakash, said no arrests had been made and hinted that such a step would be taken after collection of evidence.

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav demanded the arrest of the accused in the case. Calling it a "murder by the state," Mr. Yadav asked the government to refrain from covering up the case through mere suspensions.

"Why such leniency towards the accused SP?" he asked.

Farmers protest against agri ordinances

Demonstrations in Punjab, farmers marching from Haryana and U.P. to Delhi stopped at State borders

VIKAS VASUDEVA
ANUJ KUMAR
CHANDIGARH/GHAZIABAD

Members of several farmer outfits in Punjab, Haryana and western Uttar Pradesh staged demonstrations on Monday to protest against the Centre's agriculture-related ordinances and to demand their immediate withdrawal.

Hundreds of farmers marching from Haryana and western U.P. towards the national capital to participate in a protest called by the Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) at Jantar Mantar were stopped at the State borders.

In Punjab, farmers held demonstration in Amritsar, Moga, Barnala, Patiala and Phagwara by holding sit-ins under the banner of the All India Kissan Sangharsh Coordination Committee, an umbrella body of over 250 farmers and farmworkers' organisations.

Demand withdrawal
Farmers were seen shouting slogans and demanding immediate withdrawal of all the three ordinances.

Rattan Mann, president of the Haryana Bharatiya Kisan Union (Tikait), said farmers on their way to participate in



Farmers blocking the Amritsar-Delhi national highway during a protest in Amritsar on Monday. ■ PTI

the demonstration at Jantar Mantar were stopped by the Delhi police. "We were stopped at Kundli border. We want the government to understand that these ordinances in the present shape are not going to benefit the farming community. A legislation must be brought securing Minimum Support Price (MSP) of all crops, including fruits and vegetables," said Mr. Mann.

"Farmers all over India are opposing these ordinances. The government is trying to present these ordinances as a big step towards agricultural reforms in the form of 'One Nation, One Market', but actually these ordinances will result in 'company rule' in

the agricultural sector. Some of the State governments are also demanding withdrawal of these three ordinances, believing it to be a violation of the federal structure of the country," he said.

Stopped at Ghazipur

Farmers from western U.P., mainly Meerut, Shamli, Muzaffarnagar, Bijnor, Ghaziabad, and Gautam Buddha Nagar, marching towards Jantar Mantar were stopped at the Delhi-U.P. border in Ghaziabad.

Describing the ordinances "anti-farmer", Rakesh Tikait, spokesperson of BKU, said: "Crops purchased at less than MSP must be included in the category of punishable

crime."

After holding a sit-in protest for four hours, which led to a jam at the border, the police allowed senior members to submit a memorandum at Krishi Bhawan.

The memorandum, addressed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said farmers were living in fear that these ordinances would make them captive of corporates.

Terming the ordinances a "violation of the federal structure", senior BKU leader Dharmendra Malik said government *mandis* provided a 'check and balance' to the role of private players in the process of buying and selling of crops.

Similar protests were also held in Meerut and Aligarh.

In Meerut, agitated farmers tried to push tractor trolleys inside the collectorate. Despite heavy police presence, farmers broke the cordon and entered the collectorate. Members of the youth wing of the Samajwadi Party were also part of the protest.

Yogendra Singh, a farmer, said they were already reeling under non-payment of cane dues and rise in electricity rates. "These ordinances will break our back," he said.

Punjab never endorsed ordinances: CM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

Rejecting the Centre's claim that Punjab was taken on board before promulgation of the farm ordinances, presented in Parliament on Monday, Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh urged the Prime Minister not to go ahead with their legislation.

Memo to Governor
The Chief Minister added that he will lead an 11-member delegation of his party on September 16 to submit a memorandum to the State Governor against the ordinances.

Asserting that his government had been consistently opposing the so-called reforms brought in by the ordinances, Captain Amarinder said, in a statement, that at no point did Punjab endorse any such move, contrary to what was being projected by the Central government.

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Note: Post may be Increase or Decrease at the time of Interview.

Chairperson

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PUBLIC NOTICE

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for the general public that a political party is proposed to be registered by the name of "INSANIYAT LOK KARO". The office of the party is located at Plot No. 102/103/104/105/C-2/C-3 Hind Scrap Store, Street No.2, Janta Nagar, Near PNB, Ludhiana-141003, Punjab. This party has submitted application for registration of Political Party under Section 29A of the Representation of People Act, 1951. Name and address of the office bearers of the party are as follows:

President: Amit Kumar Goyal S/o Satish Goyal R/H No.52/8, Near N.M. Jain School, Area Bharat Nagar Chowk, Panchsheel Park, New Delhi.

General Secretary : Manav Kumar Atri S/o Brij Mohan R/H No.48/12, Shanti Nagar, Ludhiana, Tehsil-Ludhiana West, Distt. Ludhiana, Punjab-141001.

Address: 102/103/104/105/C-2/C-3 Hind Scrap Store, Street No.2, Janta Nagar, Near PNB, Ludhiana-141003, Punjab.

Any person having any objection to the registration of "INSANIYAT LOK KARO" may send their objection with reasons to the Secretary Political Party, Election Commission of India, Niranjan Sadan, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001 within 30 days of the publication of this notice.

For Surajbala Exports Pvt. Ltd Director

EDUCATIONAL

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NOTICE is hereby given that our client has negotiated and agreed to acquire and purchase from BPTP LIMITED CIN NO. U45201HR2003PLC08272, PAN NO. AACCB24242A, GARLAND INFRASTRUCTURE PRIVATE LIMITED CIN NO. U45400HR2009PTC082541 PAN NO. AACDG4625K, DIGITAL SEZ DEVELOPERS PRIVATE LIMITED U45400HR2007PTC080941 PAN NO. AACCD6554D, IMPARTIAL BUILDERS PRIVATE LIMITED U47010HR2009PTC083291 PAN NO. AACD12038 and COUNTRYWIDE PROMOTERS PRIVATE LIMITED CIN NO. U70101HR1996PTC082720, PAN NO. AAAAC5280H ("COMPANIES") all having their registered office at OT-14, 3rd Floor, Next Door, Parklands, Sector-76, Faridabad-121004, Haryana, all their rights & interest in the Plot described in the schedule hereunder written ("Plot").

By two Sale Deeds both dated 03.06.2010 Deed Nos. 6016 and 6162 both registered in the Office of Sub Registrar-Gurugram, Haryana, Garland Infrastructure Private Limited has purchased portion of said Plot 1 e. 6 Kanal and 6 Maria in Rectangle No. 9 Killa No. 9/1 10'1 Min and 10'2 Min. By another Sale Deed dated 22.06.2010 Deed No. 8006 registered in the Office of Sub Registrar-Gurugram, Haryana, Digital SEZ Developers Private Limited has purchased portion of said Plot 1 e. 6 Kanal and 17 Maria in Rectangle No. 9 Killa No. 10/1 Min and by Sale Deed dated 28.09.2010 registered in the Office of Sub Registrar-Gurugram, Haryana, Impartial Builders Private Limited has purchased portion of said Plot 1 e. 6 Kanal and 17 Maria in Rectangle No. 9 Killa No. 10/1 Min. Thereafter, Garland, Digital and Impartial assigned and transferred development rights in the said Plot to Countrywide Promoters Private Limited vide Development Agreements dated 02.01.2012 Deed No. 15866, dated 04.01.2012 Deed No. 16010 and dated 04.01.2012 Deed No. 1607 all registered in SR Office Faridabad. The developments rights of said Plot has been transferred and assigned by Garland, Digital, Impartial and Countrywide to BPTP Ltd., vide Master Development Agreement dated 03.08.2007.

Any person having any claim, demand, right, benefit or interest in respect of or against or to the Plot or any part thereof by way of sale, transfer, assignment, exchange, lease, sub-lease, tenancy, sub-tenancy, license, mortgage, gift, lien, charge, trust, encumbrance, occupation, permanent easement, pre-emption, inheritance, bequest, possession, development rights, right of way reservation agreement, its pendents, family arrangement, settlement decree or order of any court of Law, partnership of whatsoever nature or otherwise, however, are required to make the same known in writing supported by authenticated photocopies of valid/effective documents to the undersigned at their office within fourteen (14) days from the date of publication hereof, otherwise the transfer of the Plot in favour of our client will be completed without reference to such claims and the same will be considered as waived.

SCHEDULE

[Description of the Plot]

ALL THAT piece and parcel of land measuring 1 Acre i.e. 4840 sq. yd. i.e. 4046.86 sq. mts. Commercial Plot No. 1, Block-D, Sector-70 and 70A, Gurugram comprised in Rectangle No. 9 Killa No. 9/1 and 10/2 Min (5-9) and Killa No. 10/1 Min (2-11), Village Palkia, Tehsil-Gurugram (presently Tisdis Badshahpur), District Gurugram, Haryana but bounded and bounded as follows:-

On North: 12 meter wide service road;

On South: Astaria Garden Sector 70-70A Gurugram;

On East: Parine Group Housing;

On West: BPTP Plots Commercial

Gurugram, Haryana Dated 14 September 2020

For Kanth and Associates, Attorneys and International Legal Consultants, A9, Nizamuddin East, New Delhi-110013, India

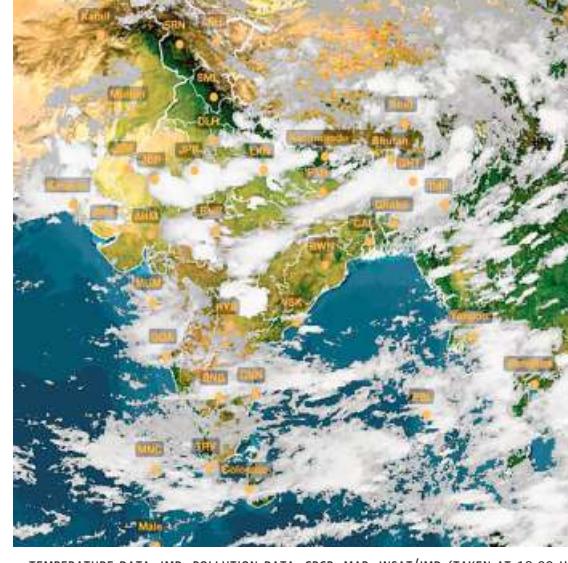
For any objection, please contact the undersigned.

To whomsoever it may concern,

For any objection, please contact the undersigned.

WEATHER WATCH

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



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

Forecast for Tuesday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, Tripura, Mizoram, Sikkim, Bihar, Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Vidarbha, central Maharashtra, Konkan & Goa, Rayalseema, coastal Andhra Pradesh, coastal & north interior Karnataka, Kerala, Mahe and Andaman & Nicobar Islands

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	8.3	35.6	25.4	Kozhikode	24...30.8...	23.8	23.8
Ahmedabad	0.3	34.7	26.3	Kurnool	2...25...	23.2	23.2
Aizawl	-	28.9	20.1	Lucknow	-...37.0...	27.6	27.6
Allahabad	-	34.2	26.9	Madurai	-...34.6...	24.8	24.8
Bangalore	1	26.5	20.4	Mangaluru	45.8...	29.9...	22.8
Bhopal	4.9	33.7	24.2	Mumbai	3.2...	32.0...	25.4
Bhubaneswar	1.3	35.7	26.6	Mysuru	1...	28.0...	21.1
Chandigarh	-	36.0	26.8	Patna	-...36.6...	27.5	27.5
Chennai	24.7	31.8	23.2	Pondicherry	3.4...	34.0...	26.5
Coimbatore	1	31.2	22.5	Port Blair	2.7...	29.5...	25.7
Dehradoon	30.6	32.2	24.2	Rajkot	1.2...	31.7...	23.5
Gangtok	27	19.3	18.1	Pune	1.7...	30.4...	21.6
Goa	16.7	29.4	23.2	Raipur	-...	34.0...	26.5
Guwahati	5	27.8	25.0	Ranchi	-...	33.2...	24.1
Hubballi	-	24.0	21.0	Shillong	1.2...	24.0...	18.1
Hyderabad	16.8	26.7	21.9	Shimla	7.2...	26.6...	19.5
Imphal	7.5	29.5	20.3	Srinagar	-...30.2...	14.1	14.1
Jaipur	-	37.1	25.6	Tiruchirappalliyuram	8.2...	31.6...	24.1
Kochi	25	29.6	23.8	Vijayawada	2.4...	33.1...	24.8
Kohima	5.6	25.5	17.4	Visakhapatnam	16...	32.2...	25.2
Kolkata	-	35.6	27.9	(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)	3...	33.7...	27.8

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES SO₂ NO_x CO PM_{2.5} PM₁₀ CODE

Ahmedabad	21	39	38	20	47	GREEN
Bangalore	10	17	43	54	64	GREEN
Chennai	19	27	49	55	64	RED
Delhi	15	12	53	223	145	RED
Hyderabad	49	23	8	48	54	GREEN
Kolkata	.5	15	54	12	25	GREEN
Lucknow	6	88	21	226	161	RED
Mumbai	22	17	21	57	71	GREEN
Pune	22	9	44	18	18	GREEN
Visakhapatnam	11	17	31	21	27	GREEN

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Amritsar, J&JYOGINI recorded an average air quality index (AQI) score of 233 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Shillong, Meghalaya recorded a healthy AQI score of 9

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

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

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

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

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

Oxygen shortage: Maharashtra moves to ensure steady supply

Committees have been set up under district collectors to monitor demand

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

A day after Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray admitted to shortage of oxygen for COVID-19 patients, the State government on Monday directed all district officials to register expected demand with the departments concerned to ensure uninterrupted supply.

Around 11% of COVID-19 patients require oxygen supply, which comes to around 500 metric tonnes (MT). "At present, the State is producing 1,000 MT oxygen. Despite that there are complaints of shortage. We have set up a special control room where the district administration official concerned will register the demand as per which supply will be ensured," said Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Minister Dr. Rajendra Shingte.

The State has 17,753 jumbo oxygen cylinders, 1,547 type cylinders, 230 dura cylinders, and 14 liquid cryogenic oxygen tanks with work in progress at 16 places. The Health Department has directed all headquarters of revenue divisions to maintain reserves of 50 dura and 200 jumbo cylinders.

"Directions have been given to analyse average necessity of oxygen beds for COVID-19 patients. In addition, district civil surgeons have been asked to compile data on the per day need of oxygen in private and government hospitals in their districts," said Health Minister Rajesh Tope. All public hospitals with a capacity of 100 or more beds have been directed to set up cryogenic oxygen tanks using funds from the District Planning and Development Council.



Words of advice: A healthcare worker gives instructions to a woman who arrived for a COVID-19 test at a medical camp in Prabhadevi on Monday. ■ EMMANUEL YOGINI

Oxygen tankers have now been given emergency vehicle status with siren facility. The State government has given directions to not stop the transport of these tankers, even during the day.

He added that a committee has been set up under every district collector to monitor oxygen supply, which will have officials from FDA, industries, transport and public health departments. The FDA has appointed a nodal officer at every district for the purpose. Similar committees have been formed at the divisional commissionerate and State level too.

Apart from the control room initiated by the FDA at the State level, those formed under disaster management rules at the district level to monitor monsoon will also double up for oxygen supply till December 31, 2020. The FDA control room number is 022-26592364 and toll free number is 1800222365.

Why deny insurance to private doctors: Raj

Urge CM to act on all applications

STAFF REPORTER
MUMBAI

As complaints by families of private doctors, who lost their lives while treating COVID-19 patients, being denied ₹50 lakh insurance cover rise, the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS) chief Raj Thackeray on Monday questioned the sensitivity of the State government to the Chief Minister.

The MNS chief said that applications from doctors and other professionals from health sectors should be immediately acted upon. "I request you to personally look into the matter and order the officials concerned to act irrespective of whether the doctor is from government or private sector," he said.

"The reason being given for denial is that the doctor was in private service. How can State deny the insurance cover at a time when the Central

government has extended the benefits? Isn't it insensitive?" How can the government, which is reminding doctors of their responsibility, forget its own?" he asked in a letter to the Chief Minister.

The MNS chief said that applications from doctors and other professionals from health sectors should be immediately acted upon. "I request you to personally look into the matter and order the officials concerned to act irrespective of whether the doctor is from government or private sector," he added.

Kangana Ranaut calls POK analogy bang on

Actor leaves Mumbai for Himachal Pradesh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI/SHIMLA

Actor Kangana Ranaut on Monday left Mumbai for her home State, Himachal Pradesh, saying she has been terrorised with "constant attacks and abuses" and declaring that her analogy comparing the city with Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) was "bang on".

Ms. Ranaut took a flight to Chandigarh and then travelled by road to reach Manali. In Shimla, Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur said the actor will continue to get the security provided by the State government. Mr. Thakur welcomed her return and accused Maharashtra's Maha Vikas Aghadi government of harassing her.

"With a heavy heart leaving Mumbai, the way I was terrorised all these days constant attacks and abuses hurled at me attempts to break my house after my work place, alert security with lethal weapons around me, must say my analogy about PoK was bang on," she wrote on Twitter.

The actor said the protectors had declared themselves to be "destroyers" and were working towards dismantling democracy. "But they are wrong to think I'm weak. By threatening and abusing a woman, they are ruining their own image," she added.

'Shift from Mumbai'

Maharashtra Transport Minister and Shiv Sena leader Anil Parab said on Monday that Ms. Ranaut should shift from Mumbai if she thinks the city is like PoK and is "bad" to her. Mr. Parab's comments came hours after the actor left Mumbai. "If Mumbai is this bad, then she should live where she finds it right. We had said this earlier too and we continue to hold this view," Mr. Parab said.



Heading back home: Kangana Ranaut arrives at Mohali International Airport on Monday. ■ PTI

told reporters.

The minister said the Sena had no "personal issues" with Ms. Ranaut. "At the same time, the party cannot just listen if someone criticises or says bad things about the city. Kangana Ranaut is not only the Sena's issue, but also of those who love Mumbai and Maharashtra. She has to decide what she wants to do. Maharashtra will decide what it has to do. She should shift from here, if she thinks Mumbai is like PoK," Mr. Parab said.

On Ms. Ranaut meeting Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari on Sunday and raising concerns over the partial demolition of her Pal Hill office by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) last week, Mr. Parab questioned why the Governor met only the actor. "If the Governor meets her after the BMC took legal action, then he should also meet all those, including the poor, whose illegal structures in Mumbai are demolished by the BMC," the minister said.

He asked why an Opposition party was "pained" after her office was razed. "That means the one who was parroting on its behalf suffered and the opponents are pained," Mr. Parab said.

Directorate of Town & Country Planning, Haryana

Plot No.3, Nagar Yojna Bhawan, A-wing, Madhya Marg, Sector-18 Chandigarh, Website: tcpharyana.gov.in
Phone: 0172-2548475, 2707175;
email: topcharyana7@gmail.com

PUBLIC NOTICE FOR INVITING APPLICATIONS FOR GRANT OF LICENCE UNDER DEEN DAYAL JAN AWAS YOJNA-AFFORDABLE PLOTTED HOUSING POLICY 2016 IN THE RESIDENTIAL SECTORS OF FINAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN OF VATSAL VALLEY(GUAL PAHARI)- 2021AD.

- General public is hereby informed that the Government of Haryana has extended Deen Dayal Jan Awas Yojna-Affordable Plotted Housing Policy 2016 to the Final Development Plan of Vatsal Valley(Gual Pahari) 2021-AD. Now the applications are invited for grant of licences in this Development Plan under the provisions of Haryana Development and Regulation of Urban Area Act 1975 and Rules framed thereunder within a period of 30 days from the date of publication of this public notice.
- The interested companies/parties/individuals may submit the application for seeking licence for Affordable Plotted Housing Colony under the DDJAY Scheme - 2016 to Director, Town & Country Planning, Haryana, through online portal <https://ofa.tcpspharyana.gov.in> on any working day within 30 days from the publication of this notice. The hard copies of the applications alongwith supportive documents must be submitted within the validity of this public notice in the office of Director, Town and Country Planning, Haryana, Nagar Yojna Bhawan, Plot No. 3, Sector-18-A, Madhya Marg, Chandigarh. For any query, Senior Town Planner, Gurugram (0124-2305872), District Town Planner, Gurugram (0124-2320573) or District Town Planner (HQ) (0172-2724201) may be contacted during working hours.

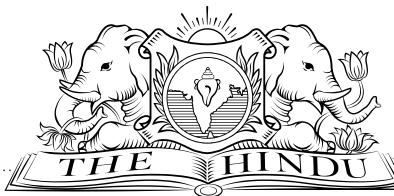
Dated: 14.09.2020

Place: Chandigarh

Sd/-
Director
Town and Country Planning,
Haryana, Chandigarh

PRDH 82782

SR. NO.	NAME OF BOARD/CORP./AUTH	NAME OF WORK NOTICE TENDER	OPENING DATE CLOSING DATE	AMOUNT / END (APPROX.) IN RUPEES	WEBSITE OF THE BOARD CORP./AUTH	NODAL OFFICER/CONTACT DETAILS/EMAIL
1	H.S.A.M. BOARD, GANAUJ	CONSTRUCTION OF OFFICE OF HARYANA INTERNATIONAL HORTICULTURAL MARKETING CORPORATION LIMITED (IHIMC), AT IHIM, GANAUJ (HARYANA) + 4				



The cost of peace

Afghanistan should not lose the democratic gains made in the post-Taliban era

Six months after they were first due to be held, intra-Afghan talks bringing the Taliban face-to-face with representatives of the Ashraf Ghani government and Afghan civil society finally got underway in Doha on Saturday. The talks, which were a key outcome of the U.S.-Taliban and U.S.-Afghanistan agreements signed in February this year, have been delayed for many reasons. To begin with, the Taliban set pre-conditions including the release of all its prisoners, while not accepting the basic requirement of a ceasefire. There were also delays over the composition of the Afghan negotiating team led by chief negotiator Masoom Stanekzai, and differences over appointments between the former rivals, President Ghani and Abdullah Abdullah, who was appointed as the head of the High Council for National Reconciliation. There were even concerns over whether the all-male Taliban team would deal with the negotiating team, which includes four women. However, the biggest obstacle was the release of more than 5,000 Taliban prisoners and about 1,000 Afghan soldiers and others held by Taliban militia, as stipulated in the agreements with the U.S. Last month, President Ghani said that he would release all but about 400 who were wanted for "serious crimes", which led to the Taliban threatening to call off talks, but resolved after a Loya Jirga of representatives approved the release. One final batch of prisoner releases was held up briefly over objections from France and Australia, whose soldiers had been killed by them. The silver lining for India, which otherwise views the reconciliation process with some foreboding, is that the release of all Taliban prisoners has also meant the safe return of three Indian hostages, held since 2018 by the Taliban.

The hard part begins now. While preliminary rounds held since Saturday have dealt with the structure and logistics, the first task for the negotiators is to declare a permanent ceasefire, and stop violence in Afghanistan that has claimed another 1,300 civilian lives in the first half of 2020. More difficult challenges will emerge as they grapple with the Taliban on how to shape Afghanistan's future, and whether they can retain the constitution and political processes while bringing the insurgents into the mainstream. With the Ghani government giving the green signal for the talks in Doha, India has modified its stand, and External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar attended the inaugural ceremony in Doha via videoconferencing; it was the first ever address by an Indian official at a gathering that includes the Taliban (that India still maintains is a terror group). While stating that peace in Afghanistan as a result of an "Afghan-led, Afghan-owned" process is a desirable outcome, he made it clear that India hopes it will not come at the cost of gains made by Afghanistan in the post-Taliban era, including democracy, institutions of governance, and the rights of minorities and women.

More at the top

The US Open was not short on exhibition of top-notch skill and indomitable will

The 2020 US Open, which concluded at New York on Sunday, may not have had its usual star dust, but that should not deflect from the excellence of Dominic Thiem and Naomi Osaka, who won their first and third Grand Slam singles titles, respectively. Injuries and travel concerns owing to the COVID-19 pandemic forced Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal into not making the trip across the Atlantic. World No.1 Novak Djokovic, chasing Federer's all-time record of 20 Grand Slams, took the bait, only to be disqualified in the fourth round for accidentally striking a line judge with the ball. Among women, six of the top eight were missing. But in extraordinary times, strength of the competition must not be the only barometer. The travel, the isolation, lack of fan engagement and the persistent threat of a virus meant that players had to mine every bit of their mental energy. It is a testament to Thiem's and Osaka's supreme abilities that they did not waver, and managed to even summon their best tennis and fight back from the brink against the young Alexander Zverev and seasoned Victoria Azarenka, both players of top-notch skill and indomitable will. Thiem is a first-time men's Major winner, six long years after Marin Čilić (2014 US Open), while Osaka has joined Venus Williams, Serena Williams, Kim Clijsters and Angelique Kerber as the only active women to have won at least three singles Majors.

Statistics aside, the tournament provided the first glimpse of how men's tennis could shape up in the absence of Federer, Djokovic and Nadal. The Thiem-led mid-card, which also includes Zverev, Daniil Medvedev and Stefanos Tsitsipas, made good on its promise and provided three of the four semifinalists. That the 27-year-old Austrian broke through first was no surprise, for he had already reached three Major finals and consistently beaten the big stars. The most recent was in Melbourne early this year, where he came within a set of defeating Djokovic in the final after having already felled the then World No.1, Nadal, in the quarterfinal. While Thiem appears to be the future, Osaka, nearly five years younger, is very much the woman of the moment. The Japanese is the most decorated Asian singles player and her use of the platform of being the most marketable sportswoman on the planet to highlight instances of racial injustice has captured the world's imagination. Serena, who failed yet again in her quest to capture a record-equalling 24th Grand Slam, will remain the top draw as long as she plays. But Osaka has carved out her own identity. The immediate future of tennis may lie in a sequestered world of bio-secure bubbles, but barriers are no doubt being taken down.

India's great silence is the loudest sound

Citizens must unceasingly demand that they be enabled to know the facts of the crises, authoritatively



GOPALKRISHNA GANDHI

Ghosts of the Spanish flu (1918-1920), the four great recessions of 1958, 1966, 1973, 1980, and the Sino-Indian conflict (1962) have come together as one torment to plague India.

And no one really knows how to handle this multi-headed sprite.

In fact no one really knows quite what it really is.

No reasoned explanation

We have no one in public office telling us what-is-what, convincingly, authoritatively on the epidemic. We know that India has, as virologist T. Jacob John tells us, 'surpassed Brazil and the United States to earn the sad distinction of having the fastest-growing novel coronavirus caseload in the world.' And that India has broken world records in the daily new case totals. But there is so much we need to know about the details, and to know about them authoritatively from official, government sources.

Is community transmission happening? If it is, then is the nation to expect testings, beds and ventilators to match the need or are we going to be asked to self-diagnose, treat and deal with the virus from our homes? Is the virus now migrating from the smitten cities to our villages? If yes, does rural India know what is going to descend on it? Are India's villages prepared, even remotely prepared, in terms of health centres,

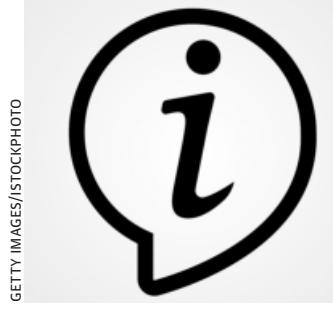
equipment to meet the challenge? What is the thinking – there has to be one – behind un-locking at the height of the rising curve of infections? There has to be a reasoned explanation.

More searching questions

Likewise, we do not know, authoritatively, the scale of the impact of our crippling contraction on salaried jobs and non-salaried livelihoods. We do not know what farmers and agricultural labour are going to do with what has been harvested if the country's purchasing power has dwindled, and its exports have been hit. Will we see the cruel irony of our godowns being full and stomachs empty? Our cities and towns are getting our milk supplies alright, but do we know if the dairy provider is getting paid fairly? There is no financial mastermind in government to educate us, credibly, about this.

But way more important, while there are many commentators, there is no social philosopher of pre-eminence among us, the people of India, to connect the dots of this medico-economic-ecological crisis and help us look behind it to see its global causes. There is no one to tell us with the voice of thunder as the late Anil Agarwal would have, that it is the loot of both natural and human resources for the rank profit of monopolies that has wrought and is deepening this pandemic.

The crisis has hit everyone, the government included, from the blue. And everyone, the government more than anyone else, is learning and un-learning lessons by the day. But the knowledge deficit around is hollowing us out. Very curiously, there are numerous theories on when the vaccine will



come. I have heard "six to twelve months". The latest is "five years to cover 1.3 billion". The new CE – Corona Era – has become the era of guesses.

Eppo varuvaro! (When, o when, will the saviour, if ever, appear?), the opening phrase of Gopalkrishna Bharati's Tamil song, captures this feeling of being un-guided. But it does no credit to either human intelligence or to human self-respect to wait, prayerfully, for the materialisation of such a saviour. In the grip of an epidemic, a recession, a muting of questioning voices, and a possible war-like situation, what is it that needs to be done by us, regular folk?

Pillars of the state

To know is to be able to control. We must unceasingly demand that we be enabled to know the facts of the situation. China is criticised for having kept the truth of the virus and its fallout concealed. We do not have to invite the same charge.

Of the three pillars of the state, knowledge-sharing has to be the executive's duty, privilege. We need to know all that needs to be understood about the epidemic, the economic contraction and the situation on our borders with China. This is ineluctable.

Is the nation ready, or has it been prepared for the cost of a

not-to-be-ruled-out virus plus war challenge?

The agreement reached on September 11 between our External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi is a heartening step and may well have brought the countries back from the brink. But should the Moscow consensus fail to last, ballistics could well boom across the border. War and viruses make a deadly cocktail. World War I, we may remind ourselves, coincided with the 1918-1920 pandemic. Infected Indian troops returning from the front carried the flu deep into towns and villages in India killing 14 million to 17 million Indians.

We need to know, and the Executive needs to tell us, details of the likely cost in terms of public health, public finance of such a war. The situation on the India-China border needs today not the dangerous diversions of jingoism but pragmatic, diplomatic engagement with the country being taken into confidence about it.

In Parliament

And this where the second pillar – the legislature comes in. In a salutary half-step forward, our Parliament is currently meeting, physically, for a fortnight. This amounts to half the duration of the normal session. Still, given our virus concerns, this move is gratifying. But sessions of the House are one thing; the spirit of the House another. The doing away, in our Parliament, of Question Hour, an MP's greatest chance to elicit information, is a matter of great regret.

But other, worse fates can befall Parliament. There was no legislature worth the name during the British Raj. And yet such of it as

there was – the Imperial Legislative Council in Delhi – did grave disservice to *vox populi*. The Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act of 1919, popularly known as the Rowlatt Act passed by that Council on March 18, 1919, was ostensibly to subserve the war effort, but in effect curbed individual liberties, notably those relating to freedom of assembly and speech.

The national emergency 1975-1977, we will recall, got the approval of the Parliament of the day. The greatest vigilance and prudence is required of Parliament today. Rowlatt-like ideas can occur at a time when the country is facing an unprecedented epidemic, a worse-than-ever economic contraction and the growlings of war.

Hush over institutions

This is where the third pillar, the judiciary, comes in. Vital matters before it such as Article 370 of the Constitution, the Citizenship (Amendment) Act and the *habeas corpus* petitions in the Jammu & Kashmir High Court give it the chance to show its autonomous mind, its independence and, in short, to speak up. Few words are needed to say what needs to be heard, like Justice D.Y. Chandrachud's when he said, memorably, "Dissent is a safety-valve of democracy".

A viral stillness hovers eerily over the institutions of state.

It threatens to smother their breath and, by so doing, ours as well.

With the Fourth Estate leading we, the people of India, need to become our freedom's life-support.

Gopalkrishna Gandhi is a former administrator, diplomat and governor

Urban employment as the focal point

Given the structure of the economy and demographic profile, the vulnerabilities of informal jobs must be addressed



M. SURESH BABU &
SAI CHANDAN KOTTU

The contraction of the economy raises concern on the employment situation as the shrinking sectors are those that create the maximum new jobs. While the 'Garib Kalyan Rojgar Abhiyan' launched in June (aimed to provide livelihood opportunities in rural India) could be an immediate relief, the ₹50,000-crore employment scheme cannot be a substitute for decent urban jobs. Given the structure of the economy and demographic profile, it is important to focus on reducing the vulnerabilities of urban informal jobs in the long run.

Economy and employment

Recent data on the contraction of the economy raises concern on the employment situation in India. The shrinking sectors that have been affected the most – construction (-50%), trade, hotels and other services (-47%), manufacturing (-39%), and mining (-23%) – are those that create the maximum new jobs in the economy. In a scenario where each of these sectors is contracting so sharply, it would lead to either a growing number of people losing jobs or failing to get one, or even both. That is, there is a possibility of a decline in employment and a subsequent rise in unemployment. This sharp contraction has to be seen in the light of India having witnessed a wave of massive 'reverse migration' during the early phase of the lockdown, with millions of workers returning to their home States due to a loss of livelihoods. It is doubtful

as to when and whether they would return to their places of work, and it would not be unreasonable to assume that a majority of workers might not go back in the near future.

The abrupt announcement of the lockdown exposed the severe vulnerabilities of urban low-end informal jobs as the share of vulnerable employment is higher in India than that of the world or the South Asia region. Vulnerable employment is characterised by inadequate earnings, low productivity and difficult conditions of work that undermine the basic rights of workers. They are more likely to be informally employed and lack effective representation by trade unions. According to the International Labour Organization, of the 535 million labour force in India in 2019, some 398.6 million will have poor quality jobs. The poor quality of jobs and high informality are key for the high level of "working poor" or those living on incomes of less than ₹198 in a day. Thus, despite higher economic growth in recent years, working poverty in India also remains high. Given the contraction and lack of demand in the economy, it is quite plausible that there would be a significant dip in urban employment generation. Thus, there are two challenges policy interventions in securing the livelihoods of workers in urban areas have to address: first, to generate more jobs and second, to reduce vulnerabilities by providing decent wages and some form of job security.

Situation in India

The high and persistent incidence of vulnerable employment are a reflection of the nature of the structural transformation process, whereby capital and labour transfer from low to higher value-added sectors. India presents a curious case in this regard as capital and

labour are moving from low value-added activities in a sector to another sector, but not to higher value-added activities. This leads to a situation where a large proportion of the jobs being created is of poor quality (and is expected to remain so). The service sector-led growth in recent years has intensified this as there is coexistence of strong job creation in some Information and Communication Technology (ICT)-intensive services, along with a significant portion of the jobs being created in 'traditional' low value-added services, where informality and vulnerable forms of employment are dominant. The outcome of such a process is the high incidence of informality which continues to undermine the prospects of reducing working poverty'. The pandemic and associated policy responses have exposed the vulnerability of these urban jobs.

Steps to take

The present crisis calls for a multi-pronged strategy to tackle the issue of urban jobs. First, given the scale of urbanisation, the focus on urban employment generation programmes should be in coordination with local governments; this is key to 'solving other problems faced by cities. As these problems are daunting, actors at the local level need to have more resources at their disposal. Resource mobilisation could be enabled by the formation of local alliances, involving elected representatives, trade unions, entrepreneurs and community groups'. Second, a

major local initiative would be to design and implement employment-intensive investment policies. These policies should embrace the initiatives of both private entrepreneurs as well as by the government. Private investments need to be facilitated by conducive contractual relations between labour and capital. Enterprise formation needs to be an integral part of the strategy, with converging interests for workers and entrepreneurs on issues related to technology and productivity enhancement. Small and micro enterprises, the fulcrum of industrialisation, need extra support to balance the interests between labour and capital as neither have collective bargaining powers. The third element, would be to prioritise urban infrastructure as it accounts for a large share of total investments in the local economy.

Invest in infrastructure

However, much of these investments rarely benefit 'poor urban dwellers as housing, roads, sewerage and water systems are inadequate for their needs. A labour-intensive approach to building municipal infrastructure can be a cost-effective alternative to capital intensive approach as wage rates are low. Infrastructure investments would spur employment, generate earnings and contribute to small enterprise formation. Construction of low-cost housing is another activity that can be carried out using labour-intensive methods, while yielding substantial collateral benefits for urban dwellers', as an ILO document establishes. The fourth element could be an immediate launch of an urban employment scheme oriented toward building large-scale medical, health and sanitation infrastructure in cities and towns across India. Other immediate employment generation can

be to expand networks of essential services as a part of welfare interventions of State and local governments. The capacity of our rural economy to absorb workers who returned from cities is low and the viability of agriculture to provide these workers with a decent living is questionable. In fact, many of these workers might have left their traditional work in the farm sector because income from agriculture would be insufficient for their survival.

Only NREGA is not enough

Further, under the current circumstances it is not valid to assume that the Mahatma Gandhi Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) or its substitutes can absorb a significant proportion of these workers. It is important that MGNREGA be expanded by both increasing the budgetary allocations and the guaranteed minimum number of days of work.

At the same time, it is very idealistic to conclude that the entirety of the workforce, which has returned to the respective home States, will be accommodated by an expanded MGNREGA or by a close substitute. These workers might have chosen not to take up MGNREGA jobs in the first place and instead opted to migrate and work in other States for higher wages. MGNREGA and rural jobs schemes have to be strengthened and their capacity increased, but only a portion of the workforce might be accommodated in it. There will still be a large number of workers who need to be provided with alternative sources of employment, and generating decent urban jobs looks to be the only way out.

M. Suresh Babu is Professor and Sai Chandan Kottu is pursuing development studies, respectively, at the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences, IIT Madras. The views expressed are personal

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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

LAC stand-off

Coming as it did in the backdrop of a long military stand-off at the Line of Actual Control, the diplomatic dialogue between India and China was no doubt much awaited (Page 1, "Status quo on LAC after Jaishankar-Wang meet", September 14). There is some consolation that there have not been vitriolic statements, but only time will tell if the unpredictable Asian giant will actually follow rules. With winter approaching, it would be inhuman and illogical for

troops to endure the biting weather in one of the most inhospitable terrains of the world. The effort now must be toward continuous dialogue.

NALINI VIJAYARAGHAVAN,
Thiruvananthapuram

what their perception of the LAC is. I sincerely hope that the establishment does not fall into the Chinese trap. As a veteran, I am tired of hearing this absurdity of 'Perceived LAC'. How long can we continue with this defence of a geographical area based on differing perceptions, which even led to the top executive of the country stating on national media that no territory of India has been lost, leaving everyone bewildered? The LAC can no more be a perception. It must be demarcated before any de-escalation can

commence, and this is doable now that the Indian Army is fully mobilised. Indeed it is now or never, as any step back without this precondition being met is fraught with the danger of further episodes of salami slicing by the Chinese, and our officers and men getting involved in unsoldierly (for want of a better word) combat and possible deaths. Additionally, that a demarcated LAC is essential to holding someone accountable for its defence, is plain, basic logic.

R.N. PADMANABAN,
Tripunithura, Kochi, Kerala

Critical voices

The wise have long said that speaking truth to power is the essence of democracy to render power truthful and truth, powerful. I was just revisiting a collection of translated poems in Tamil and was amazed to read the Malaysian poet, Cecil Rajendra's work against the state's crushing of voices of dissent, and circulation of half-truths – mirroring the ongoing sociopolitical scene in India. Bold journalists, creative cartoonists and honest newsmen must continue to enlighten people in a worrying scenario (OpEd, September 14).

Bharatiyar, the charioteer of wisdom

Subramania Bharati's 'Gnanaratham' shows how he was able to transcend a narrow nationalist vision



A.R. VENKATACHALAPATHY

Subramania Bharati's status (1882-1921) as the pre-eminent cultural figure of modern Tamil Nadu rests primarily on his poetry. Unfortunately, the focus on his poetry has translated into the virtual neglect of his prose writings.

As a working journalist, Bharati necessarily employed prose to communicate, and his writings in *Swadesamitran* and *India* made an important contribution to Tamil political vocabulary. He wrote stories, commentaries, and was also the pioneer of column writing in Tamil. Active participation in the day-to-day politics of the nationalist movement notwithstanding, Bharati never lost sight of the future, the dream of how a free India should look like. Aspects of this dream form part of his fantasy story, *Gnanaratham (The Chariot of Wisdom)*, written when he was still in his late 20s.

Sometime in mid-1908, Bharati began to serialise *Gnanaratham* in his political weekly, *India*. But within months, *Gnanaratham* was stopped in its tracks as its author went into exile to French-ruled Pondicherry to escape the British police. In February the next year, *Gnanaratham* was resumed but was suspended after two further instalments, with Bharati promising his readers that it would soon appear in full as a book. But when *Gnanaratham* did come out in January 1910, it was called 'part one'. *Gnanaratham* was never completed and ended up as one of Bharati's several unfinished writing projects.

Entering different worlds
The first person narrator of *Gnanaratham*, undoubtedly Bharati himself, is a journalist wracked with material, everyday worries - a running theme that adds humour while also giving a contemporary dimension to an ostensible fantasy. The story begins in a tenement home on Veeraraghava Mudali Street of Chennai's Triplicane. As the sea breeze wafts in, he desires to take a horse-drawn chariot towards Adyar River. Realis-



ing that he cannot afford such a pleasure, he chooses to ride the chariot of knowledge, a vehicle that can take him anywhere.

The narrator first bids the chariot to go to Upashanti Lokam, the land of no worries. A distressing aspect of an enslaved nation is that worries rob the people of all healthy traits, and they walk around with lustreless eyes, creased foreheads, and sallow skin. Therefore, he is rather eager to enter the world of no worries. But at the gates, he is stopped: for only those who leave behind their mind can enter it. The narrator refuses as this would amount to negating the material world. As a result he finds himself thrown back into his modest home.

Next he proceeds to Gandharva Lokam, the world of happiness. The narrator delves into this world with relish, brushing aside arguments against enjoying worldly pleasures on flimsy moral and philosophical grounds prescribed by false books. A subjugated people have few avenues to enjoy pleasure, and the narrator makes a strong case for hedonism. The narrative is now intercut with Bharati's travails in the real world. His wife harasses him with demands to buy provisions and pay the rent. Physical ailments torment members of the family, and the ruckus created by the neighbours impedes even peaceful sleep. After this comic interlude, *Gnanaratham* then proceeds to Dharma Lokam. Even as he explores this world, he meets Dharmaraja who bears a striking resemblance to Lokmanya Tilak. Dharma

truth. Celebrating the unadorned and unclad human form he remarks that hunger, famine, and slavery had reduced the Indian people to ugliness. The paintings and the statutory in Gandharva Lokam remind him of exhibits in the Calcutta museum that Bharati probably visited at the time of the Congress session in December 1906. Such references give *Gnanaratham* its contemporary appeal.

However, he soon tires of the pleasures, and bids farewell to Parvathakumari with a deep kiss. The forever restless human nature cannot but seek pastures other than pleasure. *Gnanaratham* then moves to the Satya Lokam, the land of truth. It is not a happy place. In stark contrast to the Gandharva Lokam, it is far too demanding. As the narrator struggles, a disembodied voice reminds him that the quest for truth is no sport but a challenging exercise, and directs him to Dharma Lokam that may better prepare him for the task.

Entering Dharma Lokam

The narrative is now intercut with Bharati's travails in the real world. His wife harasses him with demands to buy provisions and pay the rent. Physical ailments torment members of the family, and the ruckus created by the neighbours impedes even peaceful sleep. After this comic interlude, *Gnanaratham* then proceeds to Dharma Lokam. Even as he explores this world, he meets Dharmaraja who bears a striking resemblance to Lokmanya Tilak. Dharma

Lokam presents an idealised form of Varnashrama Dharma where people are differentiated in terms of their qualities and abilities and not by birth; but it's a world that privileges the Brahmin and the Kshatriya. However, in a radical interjection, *Gnanaratham* remarks that, while the social order all over the world is in keeping with a divine mandate, it is in India that it has become corrupt and has collapsed. The tour of Dharma Lokam too doesn't last. As he seeks the sweet embrace of Parvathakumari, the narrator's dream ends. The text ends as he wakes up from a fainting spell in his Triplicane house.

Gnanaratham is a rich text meant to be read in various ways. It is informed by the early nationalist view of India's fallen state, colonised by a rapacious foreign nation. The time of its writing was the peak of the Swadeshi movement even as it was facing the brunt of brutal state repression. Many of Bharati's friends were in prison, and Bharati himself was in exile. But the text is peppered with humour and brims with hope.

Though the objective is a politically free nation, Bharati is able to transcend a narrow nationalist vision. Despite being steeped in an idea of a glorious ancient Indian civilisation, he demonstrates a self-critical attitude towards his own tradition. Bharati is in awe of the achievements of Western civilisation. He celebrates Jesus Christ as a prophet of love. Commenting on Greek art, he exalts the sculptors for discovering a concept of consummate beauty, going so far as to designate them as seers. Bharati endorses the Western quest for material happiness but is critical of its turn to war and violence due to what he calls its innate *tamo guna*. The sharpest barbs are reserved for his own culture and his own people. A redeeming feature of *Gnanaratham* is that for all its author's ideological conviction it has a liberating humour that points to his own infirmities and self-doubts. The call for the rejuvenation of a fallen nation is ultimately to stand shoulder to shoulder with other nations and peoples.

A.R. Venkatachalam is the author of 'Who Owns That Song? The Battle for Subramania Bharati's Copyright'. The death centenary of Subramania Bharati begins this month

An old ideology for new times

It is time for the Congress to rediscover Gandhi and Nehru



BINOJ VISWAM

The outcry in the Congress related to the management of affairs in the party seems to be worsening with each passing day. Yet, for the Congress, a leadership crisis is nothing new. The party has experienced such crises on multiple occasions. During the Tripuri Session in 1939, there was a contest between Subhas Chandra Bose and Pattabhi Sitharamayya for the post of president of the party. Sitharamayya was M.K. Gandhi's choice, whereas Bose represented the new-age thinking of Jawaharlal Nehru and others. The Bose-Nehru camp eventually emerged victorious. However, that was the Congress of the past, where politics and ideology had a say in determining the course of events.

Rise and fall

In contemporary times, especially since its historic split in 1969, the Congress crafted its politics around certain ideological commitments. It sought to represent secularism in the country. It was always keen to emphasise its belief in socialism, democratic values and national sovereignty. It affirmed that it was anti-imperialistic. Under the Congress, India became an accepted voice among the newly liberated countries of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, with a prestigious role to play in the Non-Aligned Movement. That was the time when India championed the cause of South-South dialogue with an intention to resist the early signals of imperialist globalisation. The erosion of the party's eminence began with the declaration of Emergency. A parallel leadership emerged and controlled the party and the government. The high-handedness of those leaders led to the end of Congress monopoly at the Centre in 1977.

The party managed to resuscitate something within a comparatively short span of time. At the same time, a kitchen cabinet consisting of power seekers and 'godmen' found voice in the party. Soon, the secular party started hobnobbing with the power brokers of various religious groups at the cost of weakening its own, and the nation's, secular foundation. The Shah Bano case and the opening of the gates of the disputed structure in Ayodhya in 1986 were formative events. The Congress allowed an aggressive right-wing Hindutva to gain significance. The demolition of the Babri Masjid was a turning point in the history of secular India. The role played by the then Prime Minister, who was

also Congress president, is well known. The Congress lost the confidence of the masses, especially the minorities. A tilt towards soft Hindutva also began to influence its politics. Certain powerful elements even went to the extent of half-heartedly embracing Nathuram Godse's ideology. They failed to understand that secularism is the unifying philosophy of this great nation of vast diversities. When Hindutva forces unleashed an ideological tirade against Nehru, the Congress remained a spectator, not knowing that their blow was aimed at the heart of its ideology.

From the 1990s, the Congress was oriented to neo-liberalism. There was no trickle-down effect. The erstwhile party of 'Garibi Hatao' isolated the masses. Dalits and Adivasis lost trust in the Congress. The party's electoral losses did not take place overnight.

A legacy not to be ignored

From the mid-1960s, the Congress experienced failure in various States and at the Centre. For a political party to overcome setbacks, it must look deep into the causes of such setbacks. That never happened in the Congress. The crisis in the Congress is not only organisational, but also ideological, political and economic. It is high time for the Congress to rediscover Gandhi and Nehru. It is regrettable that this legacy has not found mention in the current debate. Even those who oppose the Congress due to its political and economic policies do not wish its peril. The reason is simple. Notwithstanding its wrongdoings and failures, the Congress is the only party with a pan-India presence which offers the promise of secularism. All other secular forces, including the Left, are limited to their pockets of influence. The response of the masses to multiple issues such as citizenship, abrogation of Article 370, labour codes, the National Education Policy, etc. are indicative of contemporary politics. People have taken to the streets brawling the government's repressive measures. The political opposition to an anti-secular, pro-rich government has to be built based on this energy. This is the challenge before the secular, democratic, Left forces. Unfortunately, in the ongoing power struggle in the Congress, these intentions have not come to the fore. The debate revolves only around the question of a leader. Not one person has uttered a word about the Nehruvian dream of a free India. In the midst of these squabbles, Congresspersons must remember Nehru's 'Tryst with Destiny' speech in 1947 and ask themselves: from this midnight of organisational crisis where will we go? To a dawn of hope or to a dark of ruin?

Binoj Viswam is an MP (Rajya Sabha) and Secretary of the CPI National Council. Views are personal

For a different yardstick

The 'Doing Business' survey needs a revamp as it neglects health and environmental checks

VINOD THOMAS

The World Bank has paused the publication of its 'Doing Business' report because of statistical irregularities. This provides us with an opportunity to examine this flawed survey. The index estimates the cost to business from regulations across areas including dealing with construction permits and paying taxes. But the rankings encourage countries to compete even on cutting vital regulations on health and environment.

Indeed, erratic procedures and delays hamper business in India and simplifying procedures brings economic benefits. But rash deregulation prompts a race to the bottom that the world can ill-afford during a climate and health crises. The World Bank's independent evaluation group (2008) and an external independent panel (2013) together flagged 15 shortcomings in the index, many of which are still relevant.

Curious scores

Among the weaknesses are the lack of transparency and objectivity in scoring. For instance, questions have been raised on Russia's leap in ranking from 120 out of 190 countries in 2012 to 62 in 2015. As a de jure criterion, the survey excludes the informal sector. Curiously, low scores for China and India were associated with high growth in FDI.

The biggest drawback is that the index sidesteps societal costs of deregulating pollution, worker safety, and health risks. China and India improved their scores sharply in 2019 and 2020, though the world's first and third largest emitters increased carbon effluents significantly. Another 2020 Index ranked China 120, and India 168, out of 180 countries on the environment. Slack business safeguards produce tragic results. The 2013 collapse of the Rana Plaza garment factory in Bangladesh, the second deadliest industrial accident after the gas leak in Union Carbide, Bhopal, resulted from slipshod factory regulation. Brazil, India, and the U.S. have slashed environmental standards. These standards have further weakened during COVID-19. The reversal of effluent benchmarks for power plants and automobiles

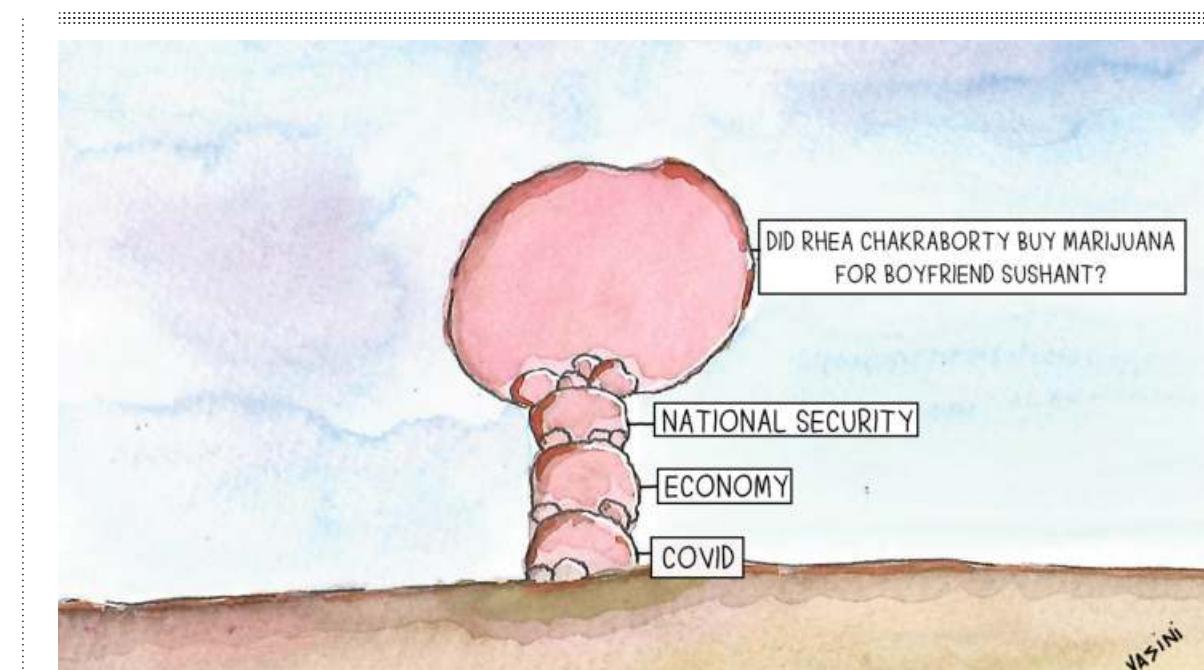
and the boost to fossil fuels in the U.S. has been breathtaking. Yet this has not hurt its Doing Business survey ranking (six in 2020). India's Parliament is considering an Environment Impact Assessment, the draft of which is filled with dilutions of the environmental law.

Several indicators of the Doing Business survey presume that less regulation is better, but ignore the impact on health, ecology, worker protection and right to information. The 2008 global financial crisis resulted from too little banking supervision. Climate change is driven by lax emission control in China, the U.S., etc. The Centre and the States in India must take into consideration workers' well-being while considering changes to labour laws, especially during the pandemic. Global lessons warn India of the pitfalls of diluting the 2005 Right to Information Act.

The survey assumes that lower tax rates are best, which overlooks each country's fiscal requirements. For example, Maldives and Qatar scored high on paying taxes, but are not role models for India as most of their revenue relies on unique assets. The survey supports lighter rules and taxation to encourage shifts from informal to formal sectors. But formalisation per se may not create jobs and cutting obstacles to starting a business will not necessarily expand the formal economy when facing severe capital shortage and a low-skilled workforce. The survey neglects indicators of infrastructure, entrepreneurship, and competition. It is true that overloading with too many variables makes a survey unwieldy. But when a yardstick does not consider pollution abatement or labour standards, an overhaul is in order.

Putting the Doing Business project on hold gives the World Bank a chance to blend liberalisation of unhelpful barriers with fortification of needed regulations. A revamped indicator should reward, not penalise, investments in workers' skills, health and safety, low polluting activities and climate resilience.

Vinod Thomas is Distinguished Fellow, Asian Institute of Management, Manila; and former Senior Vice President, Independent Evaluation, World Bank



DATA POINT

Turning point

LONG SPELL BROKEN | Starting with the 2004 Wimbledon, for 63 consecutive Grand Slams, at least one of the big three entered the quarter-finals – until the 2020 U.S. Open. Djokovic got disqualified in the fourth round in the 2020 U.S. Open. The table lists how many of the big three reached the quarter-finals in each event. For instance, in the 2008 Australian Open, all three entered the quarter-finals, while in the 2009 French Open, only one of them did

Year	Australian Open	French Open	Wimbledon	U.S. Open
2003	0	0	1	0
2004	1	0	1	1
2005	1	2	1	1
2006	1	3	2	2
2007	2	3	3	2
2008	3	3	2	3
2009	3	1	2	3
2010	3	3	3	3
2011	3	3	3	3
2012	3	3	2	2
2013	2	3	1	2
2014	3	2	2	2
2015	2	3	2	2
2016	2	1	1	1
2017	2	2	2	2
2018	2	2	3	2
2019	2	3	3	2
2020	3	NA	NA	0

SOURCE: TENNIS ABSTRACT, ATP TOUR STATS | ^ RANK AT THE START OF THE TOURNAMENT CONSIDERED

A RARE EVENT | Only on four occasions in the last 70 Grand Slam events (the 2020 U.S. Open being the fourth) did neither of the top two ranked players enter the quarter-finals. The table lists the highest-ranked player to have entered the quarter-final stage in an event. For instance, in 2003, the highest-ranked player to enter the Wimbledon quarter-finals was Roger Federer, who was ranked fifth. (The top three – Andre Agassi, Lleyton Hewitt and Juan Carlos Ferrero – lost before the quarter-finals, while Carlos Moya, ranked 4, did not play)

Year	Australian Open	French Open	Wimbledon	U.S. Open
2003	2	2	5	1
2004	1	3	1	1
2005	1	1	1	1
2006	1	1	1	1
2007	1	1	1	1
2008	1	1	1	1
2009	1	2	2	1
2010	1	1	1	1
2011	1	1	1	1
2012	1	1	1	1
2013	1	1	1	1
2014	1	1	2	1
2015	1	1	1	1
2016	1	1	2	1
2017	3	1	1	1
2018	1	1	1	1

FROM PAGE ONE

On day 1, 25 MPs test COVID-19 positive

The Minister said, "As on September 11, a total of about 40 lakh persons have been kept under surveillance and extensive contact tracing of all positive cases is regularly being undertaken through disease surveillance network so as to break the chain of transmission. In our country, about 92% of the cases are reported to be having mild disease. In only about 5.8 % of cases oxygen therapy is required and the disease may be severe enough to require intensive care in only 1.7% cases." Many epidemiological parameters such as mode of transmission, sub-clinical infection, period of virus shedding and role of immunity were being researched.

Lockdown steps
The early lockdown measures were estimated to have prevented approximately 14-29 lakh cases and 37-78 thousand deaths. This time was also utilised to create additional health infrastructure, enhance human resource and produce within the country critical elements such as PPEs, N-95 masks and ventilators.

"A case in point is the increase in dedicated isolation beds 36.3 times and dedicated ICU beds above 24.6 times to what existed in March 2020. Whereas, there was no indigenous manufacturing of PPE, with the requisite standards, at that point in time. We are now self-sufficient and in a position to even export the same," Dr. Vardhan noted.

According to the Minister, as on September 12, a total of 15,284 treatment facilities, with 13,14,646 dedicated isolation beds without O2 had been created. Also, a total of 2,31,093 oxygen-supported isolation beds and 62,717 ICU beds (including 32,575 ventilator beds) had been created. In addition, a total of 12,826 quarantine centres with 5,98,811 beds have been set up.

The government was proactively identifying gaps

and building an Atmanirbhar Bharat that would be able to take challenges of similar pandemics, epidemics and disasters in future.

"An Expenditure Finance Memorandum of ₹65,560.98 crore under the Prime Minister Atmanirbhar Swasth Bharat Yojana for strengthening it is under consideration. This includes investment in research, healthcare and public health infrastructure with particular focus on pandemic management," the Minister asserted.

Repurposed drug use
Speaking about repurposed drug use in COVID-19, he said that 13 clinical trials of repurposed drugs and harnessing of traditional knowledge using the modern medicine approach were building a portfolio of therapeutic options for COVID-19 patients.

"Phase 2 clinical trial of immune modulator Sepsivac has been completed successfully. Phase 2 clinical trial of the first-ever phytopharmaceutical ACQH is underway. One prophylactic trial of Aswagandha and three trials of Guduchi + Pipali; Yashtimadhu; and polyherbal AYUSH drug (AYUSH-64) are planned on moderately ill COVID-19 patients," he stated.

The world was looking at around 145 candidate vaccines in preclinical evaluation and currently 35 vaccines in clinical trials.

"In India, the major focus has been on facilitating the development of COVID-19 vaccine. More than 30 vaccine candidates have been supported and they are in different stages of development; 3 candidates in advanced stage of Phase I/II/III trials and more than 4 are in the advanced preclinical development stage," he observed.

COVID-19 biorepositories have been set up and they have collected more than 40,000 samples which have been made available to researchers.

Centre opposes move to recognise same-sex unions

The court also asked petitioners to bring on record details of people whose application for same-sex marriage registration was denied. The petition was filed by Abhijit Iyer Mitra, a member of the LGBT community, and three others seeking to recognise same sex marriages under Section 5 of the Hindu Marriage Act on the ground that "it does not distinguish between homosexual and heterosexual couples".

The petitioners argued that "despite the fact that there is absolutely no statutory bar under the Hindu

Concern as water leaks from Kondapochamma reservoir

Official says nothing to worry; it is a normal phenomenon

R. AVADHANI
SIDDIPET
Water has been leaking from the Kondapochammasagar reservoir located at the Markook mandal headquarters in Telangana. The leakage has been taking place near the Beerappa temple in the village. It is part of the Kaleswaram Lift Irrigation Project in the Gajwel Assembly constituency represented by Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao.

The locals observed water leakage and tried to arrest it by placing boulders and sand bags. The flow is like a small stream and locals are worried that any damage to the reservoir will put Markook's existence in question. Officials

have not visited the site of the breach. When contacted, an official told *The Hindu*, on condition of anonymity, that 'seepage' from any reservoir is quite natural and there is nothing to worry. "We cannot arrest the

seepage from reservoirs and the number of seepages will be high for the first three months and they settle down gradually," he explained.

This is the third incident involving the Kondapochamma reservoir in the recent past.

New worry: Water leaking from the Kondapochamma reservoir at Markook, Siddipet district, on Monday. • MOHD ARIF

have not visited the site of the breach. When contacted, an official told *The Hindu*, on condition of anonymity, that 'seepage' from any reservoir is quite natural and there is nothing to worry. "We cannot arrest the

Karnataka adds 8,244 cases, testing level dips

A.P. reports continuing dip in positive cases; Telangana again cuts testing on Sunday; Kerala reports 2,540 new cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD

Once again, Telangana's test numbers for COVID-19 dropped on Sunday. While the normal is about 60,000 samples on weekdays, it dropped to about 60% on Sundays, starting from July 26.

On September 13, only 34,427 samples were tested and 1,417 were found to be positive. The death toll

COVID-19

touched 974 with 13 more patients succumbing to the disease. Of the new cases, 264 were from Greater Hyderabad, 133 from Rangareddy, 108 from Karimnagar, 107 from Sangareddy and 75 from Siddipet. There were 30,532 active cases.

Andhra Pradesh reported 7,956 new infections and 60 deaths on Monday. There

was a continuous dip in new infections over the past five days and decrease in positivity rate for two weeks.

In the past day, 61,529 samples were tested with a positivity rate of 12.93%. The overall positivity rate was 12.34%.

New cases showed a dip in Kerala on Monday at 2,540 cases, in proportion to tests on Sunday, which were down to 22,279 samples.

Fifteen more deaths, from August and early September, were added to the State's provisional list of COVID-19 fatalities on Monday. Two deaths had occurred as early as August 3 but were added to the official list only now.

Three deaths each were reported from Thiruvananthapuram, Kollam, Palakkad, and Malappuram and one each from Kozhikode, Kasaragod, and Ernakulam.

Chief Minister, Pinarayi Vijayan said a genomic study in

Handling with care

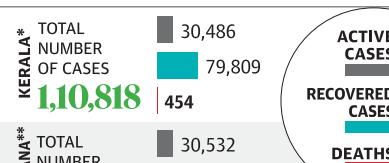
Hospitals across the country have adopted strict measures while clearing waste generated from the COVID-19 wards. The graph shows the spread of the pandemic in the southern States



Safe disposal: Items used by coronavirus patients being taken away for disposal by staff wearing PPE kits at Victoria Hospital in Bengaluru on Monday. ■ SUDHAKARA JAIN

*Kerala has a mismatch of 69 cases due to unaccounted deaths, missing persons *Telangana numbers are as of 8 p.m. on Sunday

**Karnataka has 19 non-COVID deaths



Kerala has a mismatch of 69 cases due to unaccounted deaths, missing persons

*Telangana numbers are as of 8 p.m. on Sunday

**Karnataka has 19 non-COVID deaths

tests were rapid antigen tests.

5,752 test positive in T.N.
Another 5,752 persons tested positive for COVID-19 in Tamil Nadu on Monday, taking the overall tally to 5,08,511. Of this, 991 persons tested positive for the infection in Chennai followed by 498 persons in Coimbatore.

The total number of persons discharged in the State crossed 4.50 lakh as another 5,799 persons were discharged after treatment. The number of active cases stood at 46,912 and 8,434 persons have died in the State.

Chennai's overall tally of COVID-19 cases reached 1,49,583 of which 1,36,155 persons were discharged, 10,436 were active cases and 2,992 persons died.

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

north Kerala done by CSIR Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology, showed virus strains in Kerala belonged to the A2a clade, marked by the D614G muta-

tion, linked to possible higher infectivity potential.

Karnataka added 8,244 new cases and 119 COVID-19-related deaths on Monday.

The Health and Family

Welfare department said 45,961 tests were conducted on Monday. This was a sharp decline from the previous day's level of about 68,000. Of the 45,961 tests, 16,296

Karnataka to seek nod for Mekedatu project

State likely to depute a team, led by CM Yediyurappa, to put pressure on Centre

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

Caught in a row: The Mekedatu balancing reservoir has been proposed to store water for drinking purposes. ■ FILE PHOTO

The ₹9,000 crore project, approved by the State government in 2017, has received approval from the Union Water Resources Ministry for the detailed project report and is awaiting approval from the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MOEF) even as Tamil Nadu has approached the Supreme Court against

the project.

Speaking after visiting the proposed reservoir site near Kanakapura in Ramanagaram district, Major and Medium Irrigation Minister Ramesh Jarkiholi said that with

additional ground reports and data, he would meet Union Minister for Environment and Forests Prakash Javadekar either on September 16 or 17.

"We are thinking about taking a delegation headed

by the Chief Minister," he said, adding that work on the project would commence after getting the Centre's approval.

Mr. Jarkiholi also referred to his meetings in November 2019 and this July seeking approvals from the Union government. The Minister on Monday visited Ontongdu, the proposed reservoir site, in the midst of the Cauvery Wildlife Sanctuary. Mr. Jarkiholi said 5,051 hectares of forests would be submerged and they included 3,181 hectares in the sanctuary and 1,870 hectares in the reserve forest.

"The approval from MOEF is crucial since 63% of the forest area that will be submerged is in the sanctuary," he added.

'Centre is imposing Hindi Divas'

It's not a national language: ex-CM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

H.D. Kumaraswamy

stop before the people of the country rise against it," he said.

"The imposition of one language should not lead to the decline of another. It should not affect the country's culture, diversity."

A.P. panel names Naidu, others for 'insider trading'

Land in capital region purchased violating rules, it tells HC

STAFF REPORTER
VIJAYAWADA

N. Chandrababu Naidu

In its report submitted to the High Court a few days ago, the Andhra Pradesh Cabinet Sub-Committee, which scrutinised the land transactions in the capital region, mentioned several prominent politicians and businessmen as involved in insider trading that allegedly took place between June 1, 2014 and December 31, 2014.

The committee, headed by Finance Minister Buggana Rajendranath Reddy, stated in its affidavit that at least 4,070 acres were purchased by persons who were privy to information on the location of the

capital, and their "benamis" in Amaravathi, Mangalagiri, Pedakakanai, Pedakurapadu, Tadepalli, Tadikonda and Thullur mandals in Guntur district and Chandrapadu, Ibrahimpatnam,

Penamaluru and Vijayawada rural mandals of Krishna district at nominal prices from farmers in the run-up to issuance of notification of the capital.

The committee named former Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu, former Minister Paritala Sunitha, Public Accounts Committee chairman and MLA Payavula Keshav, NRI Vemuru Ravi Kumar Prasad, former MLAs G.V.S. Anjaneyulu and Dhulipala Narendra, Kambampati Rammohan Rao, among a host of others.

The panel said the purchase of land was in blatant violation of the A.P. Assigned Lands (Prohibition of Transfer) Act, 1977.

Report on hospitalisation of Swapna, Rameez sought

They were in Thrissur MCH at the same time

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THRISSUR

Swapna Suresh

six days of treatment, she was discharged on Saturday. But she complained of uneasiness again on Sunday evening.

Opposition parties have alleged a conspiracy. There were allegations that Swapna had called a few people from nurses' phones.



Wadakkanchery MLA Anil Akkara alleged that the purpose was to bring forth clarity and uniformity in their statements to the probe agencies. He also raised the visit of Minister for Local Self-Governments A.C. Moideen to the medical college on September 9 while Swapna was admitted there.

Land in capital region purchased violating rules, it tells HC

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

Complaints of technical glitches marred the re-test of National Law Aptitude Test (NALT) 2020 on Monday with some candidates complaining that they were unable to log in for the second consecutive time.

The National Law School of India University (NLSIU) conducted a re-test following complaints by many candidates about technical glitches during the exam held on Saturday. The announcement of the re-test was made late Sunday night.

NLSIU did not specify how many students appeared for the re-test, but said in a release that nearly 80% of the candidates appeared for it.

Amid high drama, 3 held for killing Mandya temple priests

Police open fire after accused try to flee from hideout

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MYSURU

on the police and attacked them with machetes.

The police eventually opened fire at the accused when they tried to flee. The accused suffered leg injuries and were taken into custody.

The accused were treated at the Maddur Taluk Hospital and later admitted to the Mandya district hospital. Sub-inspector Sharad Kumar and constables Anil Kumar and Krishna Kumar, who suffered injuries in the incident, were provided medical treatment.

One from A.P.
The accused arrested on Monday were identified as Viji from Andhra Pradesh, Manja from Thoppanahalli village in Mandya, and Gandhi from Arekal Doddi village,



Monsoon session kicks off with MPs maintaining distance, sporting masks



Safe House: Rajya Sabha member Mary Kom at Parliament on the opening day of the monsoon session on Monday. ■ PTI

NISTULA HEBBAR
NEW DELHI

Throughout the four hours that the Lok Sabha sat on Monday (less an hour adjournment over obituary references), the phrase most frequently heard and which best described the very act of holding the session was "extraordinary circumstances".

The sweeping pandemic, which shows no signs of abating, has led to many changes in the way business is to be conducted during this session, not least of which was the holding of both the Houses in separate four hour shifts, and seating

spread over both the Houses, and the visitors galleries.

According to an estimate by sources in Parliament, 359 out of 540 Lok Sabha members turned up, despite at least 25 MPs (from both Houses) said to have tested positive for COVID-19.

Veterans in attendance

Veteran lawmakers, including National Conference's Farooq Abdullah and Samajwadi Party's Mulayam Singh Yadav, the latter on a wheelchair, also made it to Day One of the session, despite exemption from attendance being granted to members over 65 years. Prime Minis-

ter Modi entered the Lok Sabha to applause from the treasury benches, and kept his three-ply mask on at all times, an example followed by all MPs.

This sense of participation led Speaker Om Birla to thank all members, even those Lok Sabha MPs ploughing a lonely furrow in the sparsely occupied Rajya Sabha, visible to their colleagues in the Lok Sabha via an LED screen.

"This is possibly for the first time in the history of this Parliament that the Lok Sabha MPs are sitting in the Lok Sabha galleries, some in the Rajya Sabha and in the Rajya Sabha and in the galleries. We always say that

our attempt is to shorten the distance between the people and their representatives, but, under these extraordinary circumstances, we have had to keep distance between ourselves too," said Mr. Birla.

Separate seating

Every party leader had been given a bunch of seats according to their strength and asked to divide the seating by four, some to be seated in the Lok Sabha, some in the Lok Sabha galleries, some in the Rajya Sabha and in the Rajya Sabha galleries. The Telegu Desam Party (TDP) with just three

MPs faced a piquant situation, where one MP was seated in the Lok Sabha, another in the gallery of that House, and a third in the Rajya Sabha.

Those seated in the Rajya Sabha looked a forlorn lot, a presence only via a TV screen, which is why perhaps Union Ministers Piyush Goyal and Dharmendra Pradhan were despatched to keep them company.

Another aspect of this session under "extraordinary circumstances" was that MPs were asked to be seated while addressing the House. A situation that proved difficult to master when the re-

flex is to stand and declaim. A fiery speech while seated possibly doesn't have the same impact.

Parliament is usually a space for much collegial joshing, but MPs mingled only during the break for obituary references and made haste to leave once the day's sitting was done.

However, the government managed to get at least seven Bills introduced and one Bill passed, and the Opposition managed to raise objections to almost every one of them, and thus was parliamentary democracy reinvented for these "extraordinary circumstances".

It's official: Question Hour gone

Opposition slams move; Parliamentary Affairs Minister cites shorter hours of sittings

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Lok Sabha on Monday adopted a motion to do away with Question Hour and private members' business during the current monsoon session of Parliament owing to the special circumstances and curtailed hours of the House, but not without facing a push back from the Opposition benches who termed it the Executive prevailing over the Legislature and violating norms of separation of powers.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi moved the motion in the Lok Sabha citing the extraordinary circumstances amid which the House was being convened, and the allotted four-hour sittings per day.

The Opposition refused to be convinced, however, with Leader of the Congress in Lok Sabha, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, terming Question Hour as the "golden hour" of the House.

"We get a chance to raise issues of common people. Question Hour is simply a golden hour of the House," he said, adding that by doing away with it, the government is trying to suppress this democratic practice which has been followed since Independence.

All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen MP Asaduddin Owaisi said Question Hour and private members' business were the cornerstone of democracy and were essential for the existence of parliamentary de-



Remembering veterans: Lawmakers paying tribute to Pranab Mukherjee and others who passed away this year. ■ PTI

mocracy. "I urge the Speaker not to allow the executive to encroach on the territory of the legislature. It is a shameful day," Mr. Owaisi said. He also requested for a division on the motion, which was not accepted by Speaker Om Birla. Congress MP Manish Tewari said Question Hour was the only time when the Opposition could hold the government accountable.

Integral part' Trinamool MP Kalyan Banerjee said Question Hour is an integral part of the basic structure of parliamentary procedure and "we cannot destroy that part".

"We also have our views to express," he said adding, "Kindly do not take away this advantage. It will take the entire glamour, 50% glamour of running Parliament."

Mr. Joshi, however, pointed out that before arriving at this decision, deputy leader in the Lok Sabha, and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had spoken to almost all leaders of various parties.

"I would like to ask various leaders who questioned the suspension of Question Hour that all State Assemblies, including Punjab, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh and Kerala have run sessions for a day or two and passed several bills, whereas the government of India decided to run for 18 days and hold discussion on bills," he said.

Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said he had discussed the matter with several leaders and noted that this session is being held in an extraordinary situation. He added that Mr. Choudhary had agreed with the proposal to do away with Question Hour.

Mr. Joshi, however, pointed

People's right to question curtailed: Azad

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

By suspending the Question Hour, the government has deprived the people of India of an opportunity to question the government, Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, Ghulam Nabi Azad, said on Monday.

Mr. Azad said that in a democracy the government is answerable to people. "People of the country have no access or means to ask the question to the minister inside Parliament; their representatives are MPs. The people of India have been deprived of asking the question," Mr. Azad said.

Trinamool Congress MP Derek O'Brien moved the amendment against the government decision. "If this government really wanted to make a meaningful suggestion they would not have struck at the very heart of parliamentary democracy," Mr. O'Brien said.

Chairman Rajya Sabha Venkaiah Naidu said Parliament was meeting in extraordinary times. Question Hour would have meant that government of India officials had to be present and that would have led to overcrowding in the officer's gallery.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

DMK MPs held a protest on Parliament premises on the first day of the monsoon session demanding that the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) for medical students be scrapped. They later raised the issue in both the Houses.

In Lok Sabha, former Union Minister T.R. Baalu said students were committing suicide in Tamil Nadu because of NEET. Raising the issue during Zero Hour, Mr. Baalu said it was unfair to expect students who had cleared the Class XII exams from the State Board to prepare for NEET, which is based on the Central Board of Secondary Education syllabus, in a month.

"Bright students, our fu-

ture doctors and medical professionals are being discriminated against just because the Central government wants to implement NEET," he said.

In Rajya Sabha, P. Wilson also flagged the recent

in CBSE schools an upper hand, but also greatly disadvantages the economically weaker sections of the society, Mr. Wilson said.

He added that students studying under the State syllabus needed extra coaching for the entrance test at a considerable cost.

"Education is a matter placed in Entry 25 of List III of Schedule 7 of the Constitution, meaning thereby the State Legislature also has legislative competence over the field and by extension, the Executive of that State.

By unilaterally assimilating to the Central Government the power to conduct such entrance examinations, the basic feature of the Constitution, particularly the federal structure is violated," Mr. Wilson said.

deaths of three aspirants in the State.

"Till date, 13 young students from Tamil Nadu have sadly taken their lives fearing that they will not succeed in NEET," he said. NEET not only gives students studying

+

No data available on deaths of migrants'

Govt. informs House that 1.04 cr. workers returned to home States during lockdown +

DAMINI NATH

NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Labour and Employment does not have any data regarding migrant workers who lost their jobs and their lives during the COVID-19 lockdown, Minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar informed the Lok Sabha on Monday.

The Minister told the House "no such data is maintained" when asked if the government had carried out any assessment of job losses

of migrant workers and also if it was aware of workers who died on their way back to their home States.

In written replies to questions posed by several members, the Minister said 1,04,66,152 workers had returned to their home States, with 32,49,638 returning to Uttar Pradesh and 15,00,612 to Bihar.

Relying to a question from BJP member Kaushal Kishore, the Minister said "No such data is maintained."

VID-19 has not been reported" when asked for "details of reasons to withhold the migrant labourers in these States itself due to corona and non-availability of prompt facility of their shelter and food".

Mr. Kishore asked for the details of migrant workers, labourers and daily wagers "for whom the arrangement of job has been made". To this, the Minister replied,

"No such data is maintained."

Activists have been raising their concern over the lack of a database of migrant workers, which is supposed to be maintained under the Inter-State Migrant Workers Act, 1979. "Since the government now has the data of a large number of workers who returned to their home States, they can continue the process of registration and then real-time tracking. They need to take this as an opportunity," said Asif Shaikh, director, Jan Sahas.

Will PM speak in Parliament on China issue, asks Congress

Party slams government on agriculture ordinances

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The government should provide a clarification on the India-China border issue, the Congress said on Monday, the first day of the monsoon session of Parliament.

Speaking to mediapersons, Deputy Leader of Congress in the Lok Sabha, Gaurav Gogoi, said the government had so far not said a word on when this subject would come for a debate in the Lok Sabha or the Rajya Sabha. Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi has been questioning Prime Minister Narendra Modi's silence. "Will the Prime Minister speak on this issue? These are clarifications, we did not want de-

bate, but, at least a clarification should be given on day one as the entire country is watching," Mr. Gogoi said.

The party also once again objected to the way Question Hour had been suspended and Zero Hour curtailed. "This is nothing but an attack on the dignity of the Indian Parliament, curtailing the rights of legislatures and taking away the accountability of the Government of India towards the people of India," he said.

Ramesh have spoken out on the subject. The issue was raised again in the Lok Sabha on Monday. "These three legislations will give freedom to corporates to brutally exploit the farmers and take away the protection that the Minimum Support Price and the various State Mandi Acts give them," Mr. Gogoi said.

The party also once again objected to the way Question Hour had been suspended and Zero Hour curtailed. "This is nothing but an attack on the dignity of the Indian Parliament, curtailing the rights of legislatures and taking away the accountability of the Government of India towards the people of India," he said.

Three agri reform Bills introduced

Members of Opposition parties call legislations 'draconian' and 'anti-farmer'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Three Bills on agriculture reforms were introduced in Parliament on Tuesday to replace the ordinances issued during the lockdown.

Opposition parties and farmers groups are opposing the move to enact amendments to the Essential Commodities Act, new laws to bypass the State APMC Acts and to facilitate contract farming.

The Centre introduced the Bills on food and agriculture reform in the Lok Sabha on Monday, amid vehement protest from the Opposition parties and the farmers groups.

The proposed legislations will replace the ordinances promulgated during the lockdown and will bring about changes to the marketing and storage of farm produce and agri commodities



vehement protest: Activists led by Swaraj Abhiyan's Yogendra Yadav staging a protest at Jantar Mantar. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPKAR

outside registered markets, as well as the facilitation of contract farming.

Introducing The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, and The Farmers'

Produce and Storage of Farm Produce and Agro Commodities Bill, and The Farmers'

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Bhushan pays fine, files review plea

Payment of penalty does not mean accepting guilty verdict in contempt case, says the advocate

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Advocate Prashant Bhushan filed a review petition in the Supreme Court on Monday against its decision finding him guilty of criminal contempt by "scandalising the court" with his tweets.

Mr. Bhushan was punished with a ₹ fine. He paid it by draft on Monday.

Speaking to the media outside the Supreme Court complex, Mr. Bhushan said the payment of the fine did not mean he had accepted the judgment finding him guilty.

In his petition, Mr. Bhushan said the judgment finding

him guilty of contempt had a sweeping effect. In fact, the verdict made "any and all criticism on the institutional role of the Supreme Court an offence of criminal contempt".

The review is a limited and rare remedy against a Supreme Court verdict. The two grounds for review are apparent errors in the judgment and factual or legal mistakes.

Mr. Bhushan said the *suo motu* contempt was taken on the basis of a petition filed by a lawyer about one of the tweets. The petition seeking contempt action against him,



Prashant Bhushan

however, did not receive prior approval from the Attorney General. Besides, the Attorney General was not heard extensively.

The contempt proceed-

ings conducted through video conferencing failed the "fundamental due process requirements". The court neither took into account nor allowed Mr. Bhushan an opportunity to prove his statement that truth was his defence. He argued that the power of contempt of the Supreme Court under Article 129 was not absolute.

The review petition referred to a letter from Mr. Bhushan to the CBI about his reservations of having Justice Arun Mishra on the Bench hearing the contempt case. However, no action was taken.

"On several occasions, Justice Arun Mishra has orally accused Prashant Bhushan of committing contempt of court when he had merely mentioned that it may be inappropriate for a particular judge to hear a particular case in circumstances where conflict of interest was involved," it stated.

Besides the review plea, a writ petition had been filed in the Supreme Court challenging the lack of an "intracourt appeal" mechanism against a judgment in a *suo motu* contempt case under Article 129 of the Constitution.

Truth Fund to provide legal aid in fight for free speech

It will amplify the voices of those facing criminal charges'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

With hundreds of people wanting to support advocate Prashant Bhushan by symbolically contributing Re.1 – or more – towards his fine in the contempt of court case in the Supreme Court, a fund has been set up to use the money to help others fighting for free speech.

"The Satyamev Jayate or Truth Fund will be used to provide legal support and amplify the voices of those facing criminal charges for standing by their conscience and speaking truth," said activist Anjali Bhardwaj at a webinar organised by Swaraj Abhiyan and the Campaign for Judicial Accountability and Reforms (CJAR) on freedom of speech and the judiciary.

Participating in the discussion, retired Supreme Court judge Madan Lokur said,

C The State is using an iron hand to curb free speech. Suddenly you have a lot of cases charging people with sedition.

Common citizens who say something are charged with sedition. Already 70 cases of sedition this year

JUSTICE MADAN LOKUR,
FORMER SUPREME COURT JUDGE



JUSTICE MADAN LOKUR,
FORMER SUPREME COURT JUDGE

N. Ram, Director, The Hindu Group of Publications, said the Prashant Bhushan case had instilled a stimulating effect on free speech and expression. The contempt judgment against Mr. Bhushan was a "fierce" one and contained "strong language, "the punishment (₹1) was certainly incongruous... something very odd. There was no real substantiation for this kind of punishment".

There was an unequal application of the law, he noted, referring to Kafeel Khan of Uttar Pradesh being held in preventive custody for months for giving a speech on unity and integrity of the country, even while others who openly called for violence went free.

Mr. Ram also referred to reports of a Madras High Court judge wanting to initiate action against Tamil actor Suriya for his comments on NEET. It was time that the "hue and cry factor" was raised louder in this issue, he observed.

Citizens empowered

Activist Aruna Roy said ordinary citizens had been empowered by Mr. Bhushan's fight for his constitutionally protected right to free speech. Condemning the recent charges slapped on Sitaram Yechury, Yogendra Yadav, Umar Khalid and others in the Delhi riots case, she observed, "The real intent is to shut these voices down. This intent to spread fear will not work. We will not be silenced. The more people are sent to jail, with that much more courage, we will stand."

Disciplinary proceedings stayed in Budgam 'friendly fire' case

Action on Court of Inquiry report kept in abeyance till Sept. 30

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH

NEW DELHI

The Armed Forces Tribunal on Monday stayed all disciplinary proceedings against two Indian Air Force officers facing court martial for their alleged role in the 'friendly fire' incident of an IAF Mi-17 helicopter after the Balakot strikes last year.

The Tribunal's Principal Bench at Delhi headed by Justice Rajendra Menon directed that till the next date of hearing on September 30, "further action on the report of the Court of Inquiry" shall be kept in abeyance.

"...We find that various statutory provisions of the Air Force Rules and the regulations are prima facie demonstrated to have been violated in the matter of conducting the Court of Inquiry (CoI) particularly non-

compliance with the statutory requirement of Rule 156 (2) of the Air Force Rules," the Tribunal noted.

The order came on pleas by Wing Commander Shyam Naithani, who was senior air traffic controller, and Group Captain Suman Roy Chowdhury, who was chief operations officer, at Air Force Station Srinagar when the incident took place on February 27, 2019. Their pleas stated that following the IAF's Balakot air strikes in which camps were demolished and several militants killed, the Air Force Station in Srinagar was put on high alert against attack from the other side of the border.

Subsequent to the 'friendly fire' incident of the IAF Mi-17 helicopter at Budgam, which left six IAF personnel onboard dead, a CoI was con-

vened by the Chief of the Air Staff in March 2019.

'Flaws in process'

Advocate Ankur Chhibber along with advocate Karn Deo Baghel, representing the two IAF officers who are facing court martial in connection with the incident, argued that the very composition of the CoI to investigate the Mi-17 accident was bad in law as it was in contravention of the Air Force Order.

"However, despite the fact that the CoI was not even competent to investigate the accident, it continued to conduct the proceedings," the advocates contended. They also submitted that the CoI did not have a specialised investigation of the ATC aspect of the accident, which was a mandatory requirement.

Rajasthan to give help, credit to urban poor

MOHAMMED IQBAL

JAIPUR

The urban poor are being identified in Rajasthan for the State government's assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic with the emphasis on creating livelihood opportunities for them.

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has given instructions for releasing institutional credit to enable the urban poor households to access gainful self-employment.

Mr. Gehlot, who reviewed the progress of various projects of the Local Self Government Department here, said the street vendors residing in the urban and Municipal Council areas would get the highest priority in the schemes. "The government will address livelihood concerns of the urban poor by facilitating their access to social security and skill development," he said.

Mr. Gehlot suggested that the Prime Minister's Svanid-

hi Yojana, in which loans up to ₹10,000 were provided at low interest rate, could be utilised for helping the street vendors by launching a campaign for them. The National Urban Livelihood Mission should also be implemented effectively in the State, he said.

The administration in several districts had prepared lists of street vendors during the COVID-19 lockdown in April this year.

The State government proposes to get correct information about vendors from these lists and give them an interest subsidy of 7% for the credit.

The Chief Minister also gave instructions for speeding up works under the smart city project in Jaipur, Udaipur, Kota and Ajmer, and expanding the coverage areas of the Indira Rasoi Yojana launched recently for providing food at subsidised rates to the poor people.

Participating in the discussion, retired Supreme Court judge Madan Lokur said, "The State is using an iron hand to curb free speech. Suddenly you have a lot of cases charging people with sedition. Common citizens who say something are charged with sedition. Already 70 cases of sedition this year.

He said the arbitrary use of preventive detention, the increase in sedition charges, the labelling of opinion as "fake news" and the misreading of statements such as Mr. Bhushan's tweets have all resulted in the curbing of free speech in unconstitutional ways. Justice Lokur noted that there were 3.4 crore cases pending in district courts and a crisis of vacancies in the judiciary.

"The courts need to introspect or our justice system is in danger of complete collapse," he asserted.

Mr. Ram said he was encouraged by the public response to the case against Mr. Bhushan. "We often say that contempt cases have a chilling effect on free speech. Paradoxically, Prashant Bhushan's case has had a stimulating effect. It has put the Supreme Court under a spotlight, and will put its judgments under intense scrutiny... On the whole, I am optimistic that this has led to an awakening, perhaps even within the judici-

IN BRIEF



Shah pushes for use of Hindi in official work

He says the language unites India

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI



Amit Shah

di was that it was scientific and known for its originality and simplicity as well, he stated.

"Hindi has strengthened other Indian languages and it should be amply clarified that Hindi doesn't compete with any other language... Hindi should be made attractive for the younger generation and they should be provided with all help. I want to request parents to use Indian languages while speaking to their children," he said.

The greatest strength of Hin-

di was that it was scientific and known for its originality and simplicity as well, he stated.

He said the new education policy provided for parallel development of Hindi and other Indian languages.

Hindi was an unbreakable part of Indian culture and it had been an effective and powerful medium of national unity and identity since the freedom struggle.

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INTERVIEW | N.K. SINGH

'The pandemic has necessitated a reconsideration of the 42% devolution'

Unlike in the past, we may not have the luxury of assuming constant rates of growth throughout the period 2021-22 to 2025-26, says FFC Chairman

Puja Mehra
NEW DELHI

The Fifteenth Finance Commission (FFC) will submit its report, containing recommendations on the sharing of tax revenues between the Centre and the States, for the period 2021-22 to 2025-26 to the President on October 31. FFC Chairman N.K. Singh spoke with Puja Mehra about the challenges posed by the COVID-19 crisis. Edited excerpts:

The FFC was supposed to submit its final report last year but didn't because it was a year of unusual revenue trends. 2020 is even more unusual.

■ Yes, 2020-21 is undoubtedly an unusual year with attended uncertainties and unpredictabilities. Whatever award the FFC had to give for 2020-21 that was already in the report submitted to the President for 2020-21. It was accepted by the government. Also placed in Parliament with Action Taken Report on recommendations. Therefore, 2020-21 doesn't matter from the point of view of the award. But it is relevant because we need to make projections.

Although everyone tells me to treat it as a non-year, and that for the base we should go back to 2019-20, I don't think that is possible. The FFC is of the view that we cannot evade making predictions. In the Economic Advisory Council (EAC) of

the FFC, there are differences of opinion on the decline in both the nominal and the real GDP growth.

We will look at what will be a realistic and appropriate number. Their rebound estimates also vary ... for example... Chief Economic Advisor [Dr. Krishnamurthy Subramanian] believes that the rebound might be in the region of +1%. Others feel that the rebound would be slower.

The pandemic will have lasting impact on deficits, consolidation plans and fiscal balance of the Centre and the States.

■ There are multiple ways of looking at this. First is that, unlike in the past, we may not have the luxury, if I may say so, of assuming constant rates of growth throughout the period – both in nominal and real GDP numbers. A judgement call will be necessary. The EAC members have given the variations in the

patterns which can be adopted for the award period. From out of those, the FFC will decide to finally adopt one. Second, the variability in the revenue assumptions. Again, we have received a multiplicity of advice and will need to adopt tax buoyancy numbers which may vary during the award period.

Third, as a consequence of this, on the issue of fiscal numbers and the path of fiscal consolidation and the path of debt – for the Centre, the States, as well as, more importantly, for the general [that is Centre plus States] government. We will have to select a path which recognises the fact that the arrangement which earlier existed may have to be re-adapted taking into account the issue of the pandemic.

Finally, under our Terms of Reference (ToR), we have to look at the issue of performance-based criterion and in appropriate cases sector-specific considerations. The issue of the health sector is a prominent aspect of the overall consideration of this FFC – not only by means of a health chapter but factor in the liability on account of this. Particularly with regard to those States where the health infrastructure is rather weak.



■ The FRBM has been a valuable instrument to ensure a macroeconomic stability framework

How will you ensure fiscal space for the Centre's defence budget and allocations for reviving growth, and at the same time States' public health expenditure, when revenues are far from buoyant?

■ It would be naive to pretend that these can be reconciled perfectly. There will be attempts at reconciliation. It will have to be both by way of enhanced public outlays, both by the Centre and the States, and reprioritisation of expenditure patterns to address the issues of the pandemic and health. For instance, under the National Health Mission by 2017, the States were expected to spend a certain proportion

of their public outlay on the health sector which has eluded most of the States. As far as the Central government is concerned, it has too to be consistent with the policy of 2017.

Is the option of increasing States' share in the divisible tax pool beyond 42% on your table at all?

■ You will have to wait till you see the report. What all FFCs have to do is to recalibrate. Recalibration can be both upwards and downwards. Our report for the first year [2020-21] of the six-year award period, had stayed the course with 42%. Taking off Jammu & Kashmir, [it] came to 41%. The caveat in that report is that for all the numbers, the FFC reserves the right to reconsider, re-adapt, modify them in a manner considered appropriate based on the ensuing situation.

When we were submitting this report, around this time October last year, there was no sign of the pandemic whatsoever. It appeared as a completely exogenous variable from nowhere in February. Therefore, it has necessitated us to go back to the drawing board to reconsider whatever we had assigned in

the 2020-21 report.

What have the States and the Centre told you about the extent of the damage to their finances on account of the pandemic?

■ Almost all the States have emphasised that 41 or 42% was too low; the sharing should be on the basis of fifty-fifty. The Central government has not told me what number they would be comfortable with on the vertical [devolution] but have emphasised what pressures are going to be on their own finances.

It is for the FFC to make up its mind on the demands of the States. Not only on account of the States' own normal committed liabilities and committed revenue expenditure but more so on account of the shortfall of revenues triggered both by the decline in the State GST [Goods & Services Tax] and by the fact that other sources of State revenues are proving to be somewhat inelastic.

Their revenue numbers have fallen. The Central government's own revenue projections are below expectations in the BE [Budget Estimates].

Borrowings are likely to be the only option. Will the overall government debt be

sustainable? Are you suggesting that the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act needs to be updated and that we should forget about fiscal consolidation till 2023?

■ Many members of the EAC have promoted that the FFC take the view that the FRBM Act, as it was amended in 2018, by placing equal emphasis on debt as an important macroeconomic anchor in addition to the fiscal deficit, may need a significant modification in light of the current situation. Introducing the amendments in 2018, the then Finance Minister did mention the possibility of the range instead of a fixed point in the fiscal target. Implied in a range is the element of cyclicity. The EAC have commented on this. To say, like the old saying, 'The king is dead, long live the king'; Equally of the FRBM.

The FRBM, both in the earlier version and in the subsequent version, has been a valuable instrument to ensure a macroeconomic stability framework. In the pre-FRBM scenario, fiscal rectitude was not a key policy parameter.

Recognising the continued long-term value of macroeconomics

economic stability of fiscal deficit and debt as an anchor, we will certainly look at the possibility of both the issue of fixed versus range for fiscal targets. Equally the direction of the debt more than in particular fine point in the debt.

Do you endorse the Centre's move to place conditionalities on the States for increasing their borrowing limits as fair? All FFCs ask States to undertake structural reforms but what about the Centre?

■ The States' borrowing has to be circumscribed within the framework of Article 293 of the Constitution. There are no constitutional limitations on levels of borrowings of the Central government wish to contract. But the Central government has been wise and sagacious and has learnt from the past to follow policies which are broadly embedded in fiscal rectitude than fiscal profligacy.

You do require a framework for anchoring both your debt and fiscal deficit in broad conformity with the purpose and objective of continued macroeconomic stability.

(Puja Mehra is a Delhi-based journalist)

IN BRIEF



Families of gas tragedy victims begin protest

BHOPAL A group of women who lost their husbands in the Bhopal gas tragedy began a relay fast here on Monday demanding the resumption of ₹1,000 a month pension pending disbursal since December last year. They have threatened to go on an indefinite hunger strike from Wednesday in the Jeevan Jyoti colony, if no one acted.

Prime Minister is busy with peacocks: Rahul

NEW DELHI Taking a dig at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over the rise in COVID-19 cases, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday said the government had asked the people to become "atmanirbhar", which means that they should save themselves as Mr. Modi was "busy with peacocks".

PDP seeks permission to hold youth meet

SRINAGAR The youth wing of the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) has approached the Divisional Commissioner, Kashmir, for permission to organise a party meeting on September 16, weeks after the administration denied it.

Meet gives impetus to ease tensions, says China

Jaishankar, Wang agreed on a '5-point consensus' in Moscow

ANANTH KRISHNAN



The September 10 meeting between the Foreign Ministers of India and China will provide the "political impetus" to ease the tensions along the Line of Actual Control (LAC), China's envoy to India Sun Weidong said on Monday.

External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and his counterpart Wang Yi agreed on a "five-point consensus" in their meeting in Moscow on Friday, including to quickly disengage troops and abide by existing agreements.

Tensions, however, have still remained high on the LAC with troops still in close proximity, particularly on the heights south of Pangong Lake and in the Chushul sector. The south bank had witnessed firing incidents on August 30 and September 7, the first incidents of firing along the LAC since 1975. Since the September 10 meet, there has been a freeze on movement and activity along the LAC, *The Hindu* reported on Monday, though there are, as yet, no signs of disengagement.

in the border areas. The way ahead for solution is very clear." Besides the five-point consensus, both sides issued separate statements following Friday's talks that underlined differences remained on several issues. China has continued to blame India for "illegal trespassing" and for firing first – claims Mr. Sun repeated in Monday's statement, that have been strongly denied by Delhi.

Delhi has said that since May, it was China that has violated several past border agreements by mobilising a large number of troops and seeking to unilaterally redraw the LAC in several areas in Ladakh, from the Depsang plains and Galwan Valley to Pangong Lake and the Gogra-Hot Springs area. A June 15 clash in Galwan Valley led to the deaths of 20 Indian soldiers and an unknown number of Chinese troops.

Friday's five-point consensus did not mention a return to the status quo prior to May's transgressions, which India has made clear has to be fulfilled to fully restore peace on the LAC.

'Expedite work'

"Regarding the future development," he said, "the two Foreign Ministers agreed that as the situation eases, the two sides should expedite work to conclude new confidence-building measures to maintain and enhance peace and tranquillity

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NAHLA NAINAR

Truth has perhaps been the most obvious casualty of the Internet age, as copy-paste culture has permeated the creative process. And nowhere has this been more visible than in mass media.

With the lockdown adding to the woes of an already economically stressed sector, the print industry has become the victim of fly-by-night operators who duplicate copyrighted material, often within seconds of its publication online.

After the lockdown, copyright and trademark violations have increased in the virtual world, says N Karthikeyan, cyber law advocate at the Madras High Court. "These days anyone with a mobile phone can start a YouTube channel. With no legitimate source for content, creators are stealing copyright-protected material," he says in a phone interview. He also cites the growing incidence of fake domains being created during the lockdown.

These domains, which have names similar to the original versions, can divert the traffic from the real brands. Criminals use Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) techniques to ensure that the spurious sites get a higher Google ranking. "We are filing these cases separately under the Uniform Domain-Name Dispute-Resolution Policy (UDRP) at the Domain Name Dispute Centre, against the offender and the domain registrants," says Karthikeyan.

Know your IP rights

Ignorance of the law can no longer be an excuse for content creators, says Tarun Khurana, co-founding partner and patent attorney of Khurana & Khurana (K&K) and of its Patent Research and IP Asset Management Firm, IIPRD, headquartered in Delhi.

"Copyright is not just with respect to your written content, but also to numerous other form-factors such as using images, lyrics, soundtracks, videos, or parts of it, without legal permission or authority," says Khurana in an email interview. "The law of copyright protects your work and gives you legal recourse to prevent people from copying it and/or distributing copies without your permission. Social media platforms like Instagram, Facebook, Pinterest and Twitter lay down, in their terms and conditions,

Copy-paste? Think twice

that when anyone creates an account on these platforms, they give away a licence for the handlers to use any content shared, royalty-free throughout the globe. Most users do not see these terms but content creators have to be aware, to understand their IP rights. All content must be in accordance with the relevant sections of the Information Technology Act."

Plagiarism and follow-throughs

"There are different kinds of plagiarism happening right now," says R Prabhakar, vice president, Legal, General Administration, *The Hindu*, in Chennai. "One is the



• GETTY IMAGES / ISTOCK PHOTO

No, the Internet is not like international waters. We take a deep dive into the world of online plagiarism and share where netizens should be vigilant

instantaneous process. The increased amount and variety of information available online has however been accompanied by a loss of attribution.

"Trying to figure out who is ultimately responsible for lifting content is a challenge," says Prabhakar. "The registered owners of the website say they aren't responsible for the content. Or they will ask for paperwork which takes a lot of time for both sides to sort out. Many people often claim that they are only the 'intermediary' in the equation, and point us to others who supplied the material. When you look closely, these digital companies are based abroad in countries like Russia or China," he says.

The lockdown has hastened the use of e-paper formats among print media companies in the absence of physical printing. It has also made the unofficial 'borrowing' of material more common. In May this year, the Delhi High Court directed owners of the Dubai-based messaging app, Telegram, to disclose the identity of users who were running channels on its platform to illegally share the e-paper version of the *Dainik Jagran* newspaper on a daily basis.

"If you are going to court, you have to figure out if it is a single person or the so-called intermediary who is the culprit. Many companies will try to seek the protection of the Intellectual Property Rights Act, saying that they have no control over the content. But then, they are supposed to have due diligence over what they are doing, just like any other company. These concepts have to be developed in the IT field," says Prabhakar.

Borderless crime

Cybercrime has always been borderless, says NS Nappinai, advocate, Supreme Court of India and founder of the non-profit organisation Cyber Saathi. A specialist in IPR since 1991 and cyber laws since 1995, Nappinai says that data theft and cybercrime in general have been evolving in nature and impact.

Despite the slow pace of the law, there are legal provisions to deal with cybercrime. "Many times remedies in law are missed even by professionals merely because they may not have the headings 'ransomware', 'revenge

porn' or 'cyber extortion', but there are legal remedies," says Nappinai over phone from Mumbai. "Headings are not relevant to interpret law. It is what is contained in the provisions that matter. If you are going to spread a wrong message, then you are also emboldening the criminal."

In 2019, the Delhi High Court introduced the 'dynamic injunction' that allows rights holders to engage the Joint Registrar of the Delhi High Court (an administrative position), to extend an injunction order already granted against a website, against a similar 'mirror/redirect/alphanumeric websites etcetera.'

While this may speed up redressal, it also has some caveats. "Copyright often has been used as a tool by people who want to censor speech. So even if they don't see a copyright violation, they may still approach the court. More often than not companies are willing to take down the content because they also have some liability on the website owner in case the infringement is upheld by the court," says Anubha Sinha, senior programme manager and trained lawyer, at the non-profit Centre for Internet and Society (CIS), in Delhi.

System reboot required

Nappinai feels that overhauling the system including the laws and judicial process will make law enforcement stronger. "The simplest and most immediate change you can bring is to the intermediary guidelines, which clearly set down *inter alia* that you cannot post content which violates copyright or any other proprietary right of intellectual property. But the remedy available now is that a take-down can happen only through a court or Government order. Where does that leave the victim?" she asks, adding that long-winded legal proceedings are now mandated to take down offensive content.

"If we are inviting Make in India programmes, we also have to strengthen our enforcement against intellectual property rights violations, not just posture with more laws. I hope that India will lead the effort to bring international cooperation to combat cybercrime and international enforcement mechanisms," Nappinai says.

When Big B meets Alexa



India's Alexa users have a bit of Bollywood to look forward to in their voice assistant experience. Amitabh Bachchan has partnered with Amazon to serve up voice assists through Alexa.

Bachchan says, "Technology has always allowed me to adapt to new forms. Be it in movies, TV shows, podcasts and now, I am excited to create this voice experience in partnership with Amazon and Alexa." The Amazon Alexa team will work with Bachchan to deliver jokes, weather reports, *shayaris*, motivational quotes, advice and more. One will be able to access Bachchan's famous baritone on Alexa by purchasing the Amitabh Bachchan voice experience, and stating 'Alexa, say hello to Mr Amitabh Bachchan.' However, this feature will only be available next year.

Alexa, the AI voice service powering the Echo range of devices, is available on the Fire TV Stick with Alexa Voice Remote, Fire TV Edition, the free Alexa app as well as the Amazon shopping app (Android only). Additionally, several third-party devices like mobile phones, Bluetooth speakers, headphones, wearables and smart TVs also come Alexa-ready.

Amazon further confirms with *The Hindu* that this is an India-only feature which may leave out Big B fans outside of India.

Bachchan is not the first celebrity to work with Amazon to provide Alexa's voice; in 2019, Samuel L Jackson was the first celebrity to sign on. At the user command of 'Alexa, introduce me to Samuel L. Jackson,' his voice commands include trivia about him, the weather reports, play music, and even sings happy birthday.

The experience even comes with an explicit option which is more true to the actor's on-screen work but users can tone it down by accessing the Alexa app settings menu.

Compiled by Divya Kala Bhavani

CM YK

ND-NDE

REVIEW

ASUS ROG Phone 3

ASUS' ROG Phone 3 upsets benchmarks previously set by mobile gaming devices by a good margin, but does it have the appeal for customers not part of its niche base?

PRADEEP KUMAR

Since the days of Nokia N-Gage, a handful of gadget makers have tried to crack the code to designing a true, mean gaming mobile phone. Most wound up short; the few 'success stories' barely influenced R&D patterns in mobile technology due to the niche market this product caters to.

Under its sub-brand Republic of Gamers (ROG), ASUS is, perhaps, the only notable manufacturer at present to focus its energies on exploiting this niche market. With the ASUS ROG Phone 3, the company seeks to push the benchmarks it set with the phone's previous iterations. How well does it fare?

A bar, raised

ROG Phone 3 is a beast. Performance lag is an alien concept in a device that is powered by the latest Qualcomm Snapdragon 865 Plus chipset. The phone also supports 5G tech-

Flick, tap and repeat

ASUS' ROG Phone 3 upsets benchmarks previously set by mobile gaming devices by a good margin, but does it have the appeal for customers not part of its niche base?

nology although that makes little difference in the Indian market.

While flagships of other brands continue to explore curved edge displays, ROG Phone 3 sticks to a classic design sans even the punch hole for the front shooter. The 6.59-inch HDR AMOLED display is crisp, and offers superlative contrast that helps you discover the natural hues of a colour with the naked eye. True to its purpose, the phone also comes equipped with front-facing speakers that provides loud and clear audio, a necessary component to the immersive gaming experience.

The phone's partially transparent back panel is attractive. Turning on the 'X mode' optimises the phone's GPU and processing capacity to work at maximum (ROG Phone 3 supports games with 144Hz). It also turns on the LED strobe lights on the back panel – a novelty feature with



little practical value.

There is a mild heating issue, but the phone handles it well owing to a graphite film placed closer to the display pa-

SPECIFICATIONS

PROCESSOR: 3.1GHz Qualcomm Snapdragon 865 Plus with 7nm, 64-bit Octa-core

GPU: Qualcomm Adreno 650

USER INTERFACE (UI): Android 10 with ROG UI

DISPLAY: 6.59", 144Hz/1ms 10-bit HDR AMOLED with front 2.5D Corning Gorilla 6 Glass

DIMENSIONS & WEIGHT: 171mm x 78mm x 9.85mm ; 240 grams

STORAGE: 8GB/128GB or 12GB/256GB

REAR CAMERA: (triple camera) 64MP Sony IMX686 sensor, 13MP ultra wide and 5MP macro (with 8K and 4K HDR video recording)

FRONT CAMERA: 24MP (with 1080p video recording)

SPEAKER: Dual front-facing speakers with GameFX and Dirac HD sound

MICROPHONE: Quad mic with ASUS noise reduction technology

BATTERY: 6,000mAh, supports fast charging with output up to 30W

nel and a copper vapour chamber. This is part of its GameCool 3 heat dissipating system, helping reduce short or long term damages to the chip-set due to overheating.

For the hardcore mobile gamer, the phone offers side-mounted Type C ports to help charge the device without having to take a break. More nuanced features such as the Air Trigger 3 (a motion sensor trigger) requires you to connect with the nerd in you, a potential problem point for the average smartphone user.

Beyond recess? And that is the area where the ROG Phone 3 is likely to split opinions: jargon and cool gaming features aside, does it hold the potential to be the flagship model an average smartphone user would love to flaunt? For a purpose-built device, the ROG Phone 3's cameras produce above-average output.

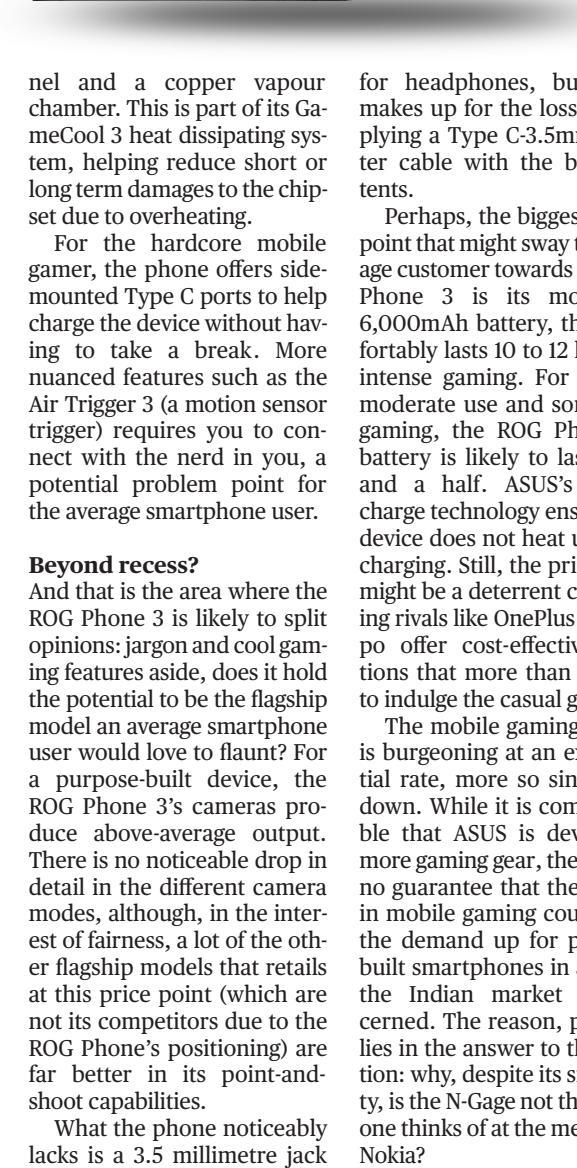
There is no noticeable drop in detail in the different camera modes, although, in the interest of fairness, a lot of the other flagship models that retail at this price point (which are not its competitors due to the ROG Phone 3's positioning) are far better in its point-and-shoot capabilities.

What the phone noticeably lacks is a 3.5 millimetre jack

for headphones, but ASUS makes up for the loss by supplying a Type C-3.5mm adapter cable with the box contents.

Perhaps, the biggest selling point that might sway the average customer towards the ROG Phone 3 is its monstrous 6,000mAh battery, that comfortably lasts 10 to 12 hours of intense gaming. For mild to moderate use and some light gaming, the ROG Phone 3's battery is likely to last a day and a half. ASUS's Hypercharge technology ensures the device does not heat up while charging. Still, the price point might be a deterrent considering rivals like OnePlus and Oppo offer cost-effective solutions that more than manage to indulge the casual gamer.

The mobile gaming market is burgeoning at an exponential rate, more so since lockdown. While it is commendable that ASUS is developing more gaming gear, there is still no guarantee that the growth in mobile gaming could drive the demand up for purpose-built smartphones as far as the Indian market is concerned. The reason, perhaps, lies in the answer to the question: why, despite its singularity, is the N-Gage not the device one thinks of at the mention of Nokia?



CM YK

ND-NDE

On Agatha Christie's birth anniversary, a look at the book that started it all, *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*, which was published in October 1920

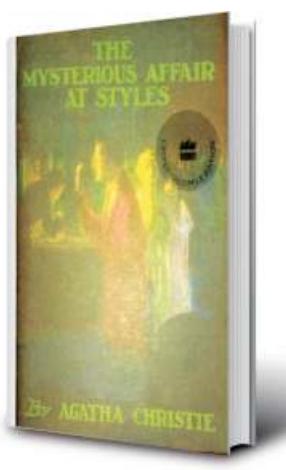
MINI ANTHIKAD CHHIBBER

In Agatha Christie's *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*, John Cavendish's trial for the murder of his stepmother, Emily Inglethorp, starts on September 15, which as Christieheads know is the Queen of Crime's birth anniversary – she was born on September 15, 1890. Christie started to write the novel in 1916 as a challenge to create a whodunit where the reader will not be able to guess the murderer even though presented with the same clues as the detective.

All the reviews when the book was published (1920 in the US and in January 1921 in England) lauded Christie for succeeding in keeping the reader guessing till the very end. The novel is narrated by Captain Arthur Hastings. Hastings is wounded in the First World War and comes to Styles Court in Essex to convalesce, on the invitation of his childhood friend, John.

Hastings is surprised to learn of Emily's marriage to the much-younger Alfred. Also staying at Styles Court are Mary, John's wife; Lawrence, his brother; Cynthia, Emily's ward and the brusque Evelyn Howard, Emily's companion. When Emily is killed by strichnine poisoning (a particularly horrid way to die), Hastings decides to enlist the help of Hercule Poirot, a celebrated Belgian policeman. Poirot and his fellow Belgians are refugees at the village of Styles St Mary. Inspector James Japp from Scotland Yard is the investigating officer. Toxicologist Dr Bauerstein, who was at the scene, first raises suspicions about Emily's death.

The Mysterious Affair at Styles set the template for the golden age of detective fiction from the large manor house where the crime is committed, the lock-door mystery, the colourful bunch of suspects all of who have something to hide and would gain from the crime, and of course, the eccentric private detec-



(Clockwise from left) Christie with a manuscript; an early edition of the book; actor David Suchet as detective Hercule Poirot

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

A 100-year affair

FULL A CIRCLE

Hastings and Poirot return to Styles Court in *Curtain: Poirot's Last Case*. Though the novel was published in 1975, Christie wrote the book in the 1940s during the Second World War and kept the manuscript locked in a bank. In the novel, Poirot is in a wheelchair and has a new valet Curtiss. Hastings is recently widowed and his daughter, Judith (the youngest of four children) is also at Styles Court, which is now a hotel. Even though weak and infirm, Poirot's grey cells are in great form. The ending is markedly poignant but an excellent swansong for the little Belgian detective.

tive. In Emily, there is also Christie's archetypal benevolent dictator.

Peter Ustinov, who played Poirot in *Death on the Nile*, (1978) said in the "making of" the featurette that

Christie created Poirot to be as different as possible from Sherlock Holmes. So where Holmes is tall, Poirot is small; Poirot is Belgian to the decidedly English Holmes; and there are the magnificent military mustaches.

In *The Mysterious Affair at Styles*, Hastings describes Poirot as "an extraordinary looking little man. He was hardly more than five feet, four inches but carried himself with great dignity. His head was exactly the shape of an egg and he always perched it a little on one side. The neatness of his attire was almost incredible."

Even the detectives' methods differed – not for Poirot were the rushing about, disguises and identifying the many kinds of cigarette ash. He believed in order and method and employing the "little grey cells". When the solution presented itself, his eyes would shine a bright green.

From

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Yoshihide Suga set to become Japan PM

Ruling Liberal Democratic Party elected him as its leader; Parliamentary vote likely on Wednesday

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TOKYO

Japan's Chief Cabinet Secretary Yoshihide Suga is set to become the country's next Prime Minister after the ruling party on Monday elected him successor to outgoing leader Shinzo Abe.

Mr. Suga easily won the vote, taking 377 of the 534 valid votes cast by Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) lawmakers and regional representatives, significantly ahead of his two rivals.

Given his party's legislative majority, he is expected to handily win a parliamentary vote on Wednesday and become Prime Minister, succeeding Mr. Abe, who is resigning for health reasons.

Unlike many in the conservative LDP, Mr. Suga is not a political blue blood. He is the son of a strawberry farmer in rural Akita, in northern Japan. He moved to Tokyo after high school and worked odd jobs to put himself through night college, before being elected to his first office in 1987, as a municipal assembly member in Yokohama outside Tokyo.



Rise to the top: Yoshihide Suga at his office at the LDP headquarters in Tokyo on Monday. • AFP

Experts say Mr. Suga is driven by pragmatism and he is seen by lawmakers along the political spectrum within the LDP as a neutral figure.

The 71-year-old repeated his pledge to continue Mr. Abe's policies as he accepted the party's nomination as leader.

"In order to overcome the crisis and give the Japanese people a sense of relief, we need to succeed in what Prime Minister Abe has been implementing," he added. "This is my mission."

Even before he formally announced his run, the 71-year-old Suga had won the support of key factions within the ruling party, with his candidacy viewed as promising stability.

The LDP chose to poll only its lawmakers in parliament and three representatives from each of the country's 47 regions, eschewing a broader ballot including rank-and-file members that officials said would have taken too long to organise.

Mr. Suga beat off the competition of former Defence Minister Shigeru Ishiba and LDP policy chief Fumio Kishida.

A shining Japan'

Mr. Abe, who smashed records as Japan's longest-serving Prime Minister with more than eight years in power, declined to endorse any one candidate. But he pledged to "fully support" Mr. Suga after his win, saying he had watched him "working hard and quietly for the nation and people" in his role as Chief Cabinet Secretary. "Let's build a shining Japan by overcoming the coronavirus crisis, with new LDP chief Suga at the helm," he added.

Mr. Abe made the shock announcement he would step down with a year left in his mandate in late August, saying a recurrence of the ulcerative colitis he has long battled made it impossible for him to stay on.

The next PM will face a raft of complicated challenges.

The country was already

in recession before the coronavirus pandemic, and many of the gains of the signature Abenomics economic policy are now in danger.

Mr. Suga has said kick-starting the economy will be a top priority, along with containing the virus – essential if the postponed Tokyo 2020 Olympics are to open as planned in July 2021.

There are also diplomatic challenges on the agenda, including protecting the U.S. alliance and navigating ties with China as global opinion hardens against Beijing after the coronavirus and unrest in Hong Kong.

"Simply following the path Washington is pursuing and raising tensions with China is not in Japan's interest," said Makoto Iokibe, a professor of political and diplomatic history at the University of Hyogo.

One key unknown is whether Suga will decide to call a snap general election to consolidate his position and avoid being seen as a caretaker facing a new vote in a year – when Mr. Abe's mandate would have ended.

U.S. Ambassador to China to step down next month

Terry Branstad's three-year tenure was marked by trade war

ASSOCIATED PRESS
BEIJING

The U.S. Ambassador to China will step down early next month, ending a three-year tenure marked by a trade war and increasingly bitter relations between the world's two largest economies.



Terry Branstad

has contributed to rebalancing U.S.-China relations so that it is results-oriented, reciprocal, and fair," Mr. Pompeo wrote in a tweet.

Mr. Branstad became embroiled in a recent controversy when China's official *People's Daily* newspaper rejected an opinion column that he had written.

Word of his departure leaked out earlier in the day when Secretary of State Mike Pompeo thanked Mr. Branstad on Twitter for his service.

"Ambassador Branstad

spokesperson Zhao Lijian responded that Mr. Branstad's article was "full of loopholes, seriously inconsistent with facts and wantonly attacks and smears China."

The U.S. Embassy had contacted the *People's Daily* on August 26 about the piece, asking that it be printed in full without any edits before September 4, the *People's Daily* said.

Mr. Branstad, 73, was Republican Governor of Iowa for 22 years over two spans. Soon after arriving in Beijing in June 2017, Mr. Branstad welcomed American beef back to the Chinese market after a 14-year ban, saying "I know it is a key priority of the President to reduce the trade deficit, and this is one of the ways we can do it."

But trade relations quickly soured, as the U.S. imposed tariffs on Chinese products and China retaliated in kind. Other disputes followed over technology, human rights and the response to the pandemic.

Navalny's allies claim symbolic win in polls

Pro-Kremlin party says exit polls favour it

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
NOVOSIBIRSK

Russia's political opposition on Monday claimed a symbolic victory in regional elections while the ruling party said exit polls showed it was headed for a win in a vote observers said was marred by fraud.

The elections were overshadowed by the alleged poisoning of opposition leader Alexei Navalny in the Siberian city of Tomsk ahead of the vote. Germany said on Monday that lab tests in France and Sweden confirmed the Kremlin critic was attacked with a Novichok nerve agent. He is regaining mobility and able to leave his bed, the Berlin hospital treating him said.

Russians in dozens of the country's 85 regions voted over several days for governors and lawmakers in regional and city legislatures as well as in several by-elections for national MPs.

The polls came a year ahead of parliamentary elections and were seen as a test for President Vladimir Putin as the ruling United Russia party faces sinking popularity and public anger over economic woes.

In an effort to fight Mr. Putin's electoral machine, Mr. Navalny urged voters back candidates against the ruling party.

The 44-year-old lawyer and Kremlin critic had been in Siberia to promote a "smart voting" campaign



Ksenia Fadeyeva, right, along with Alexei Navalny in this file photo. • AP

when he was poisoned last month.

Two allies of the opposition leader won local Parliament seats in the Siberian city of Tomsk, where Mr. Navalny fell ill, according to early poll results.

United Russia suffered heavy losses in the city of some 5,000,000, winning just 24.46% of the overall vote compared to 52.27% in 2015.

Ksenia Fadeyeva, the 28-year-old head of Navalny's Tomsk office who won a city council seat, put her success down to the opposition leader's voting strategy, saying "we really campaigned under the Navalny brand".

United Russia lost 11 seats and their majority on the city council securing 22 places out of 50, with Navalny-backed candidates picking up five spots.

United Russia chairman Dmitry Medvedev said that exit polls showed it was heading for victory.

Afghan govt. presses Taliban for truce

Militants urged to agree to a ceasefire in exchange for the release of more prisoners

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
DOHA

The Afghan government on Monday pressed its calls for a truce with the Taliban, reiterating its desire for a long-term ceasefire at historic talks in Qatar.

The two sides are in the early stages of meetings in Doha as they try to hammer out a deal that would bring 19 years of bloodshed in Afghanistan to a close.

The Afghan government and its allies, including the

U.S., called for the warring sides to lay down their arms at Saturday's opening ceremony. But the Taliban, who fought a years-long guerrilla campaign against American and Afghan forces after they were toppled in a 2001 U.S.-led invasion, did not mention a truce as they came to the negotiating table.

The head of the peace process for the Afghan government, Abdullah Abdullah, suggested, however, that the Taliban could offer a cea-

sefire in exchange for the release of more of their prisoners.

Afghan presidential spokesman Sediq Seddiqi tweeted on Monday that the presence of government negotiators at the talks "is aimed at achieving a ceasefire, ending the violence and ensuring lasting peace and stability in the country."

The U.S. struck an agreement with the Taliban in February that will see it withdraw troops from

Afghanistan. The deal, which paved the way for the Doha negotiations, did not commit the insurgents to any reduction of violence, only requiring that it be "an item on the agenda" in negotiations.

But Crisis Group analyst Andrew Watkins told AFP "the Afghan government needs a ceasefire because without current levels of U.S. support, it would very likely continue to lose ground to the Taliban".

Scientists find 'life harbouring' gas on Venus

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
PARIS

The atmosphere of Venus contains traces of phosphine gas – which on Earth is associated with living organisms – scientists said on Monday, in fresh insight into conditions on our nearest planetary neighbour.

Conditions on Venus are often described as hellish with daytime temperatures hot enough to melt lead and an atmosphere comprised almost entirely of carbon dioxide.

A team of experts used telescopes in Hawaii and Chile's Atacama Desert to observe Venus' upper cloud deck, around 60 km from the surface.

They detected traces of phosphine, a flammable gas that on Earth occurs from the breakdown of organic matter.

Writing in *Nature Astronomy*, the team stressed that the presence of phosphine alone did not prove the presence of life on Venus.

Sri Lanka revisiting draft 20th Amendment

Prime Minister Rajapaksa appoints nine-member committee to study the proposed Amendment

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

The Sri Lankan government is revisiting the draft 20th Amendment to the Constitution, gazetted earlier this month, in the light of "public concerns", according to government sources.

Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa on Saturday appointed a nine-member committee chaired by G.L. Peiris, a Cabinet Minister and a former professor of law, to study the proposed Amendment.

United Russia suffered heavy losses in the city of some 5,000,000, winning just 24.46% of the overall vote compared to 52.27% in 2015.

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Mahinda Rajapaksa
miliar with discussions within the government, the committee has been tasked with reviewing the draft Amendment, "in the light of public concerns". "Depending on the findings of this committee, the government may ga-

zette a revised draft of the proposed amendment," the source, who did not wish to be named, told *The Hindu* on Monday.

It follows the ruling Rajapaksa brothers' election pledge to repeal the preceding 19th Amendment – introduced by the former government in 2015 – that imposed curbs on presidential powers, while empowering Parliament and independent commissions.

Both President Gotabaya Rajapaksa and Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa promised to get rid of the amendment they blame for the power struggle between President Maithripala Sirisena and PM Ranil Wickremesinghe in the former govern-

ment that led to serious lapses, including in intelligence sharing ahead of the Easter Sunday blasts. However, the proposed Bill has drawn criticism from the political opposition and civil society organisations, who have raised concern over the President wielding unbridled power, with few checks in the legislature or the judiciary.

Criticism and concern
While opposition parties are mulling going to court on the proposed amendment, the Bar Association of Sri Lanka (BASL) has appointed a special committee to study the 20th Amendment to the Constitution.

The Amendment also

found mention in the statement made by Michelle Bachelet, UN High Commissioner for Human Rights at the ongoing Human Rights Council in Geneva on Monday.

Referring to Sri Lanka in her global human rights update, High Commissioner Bachelet said: "I am troubled that the new government is swiftly reneging on its commitments to the Human Rights Council since it withdrew its support for resolution 30/1. Among other developments, the proposed 20th Amendment to the Constitution may negatively impact on the independence of key institutions, including the National Human Rights Commission."

Big chunk of Greenland's glacier crashes into sea

COPENHAGEN

A massive chunk of ice has broken off from the Arctic's largest ice shelf because of warmer temperatures in Greenland. The 113-sq-km block broke off the Nioghalvfjordur glacier in Northeast Greenland. AFP

Palestinians to mourn 'black day'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
RAMALLAH

The signing of normalisation accords between Israel and two Gulf states in Washington will amount to another "black day" for the Arab world, the Palestinian Premier said on Monday.

Both the Palestinian Authority (PA) based in the West Bank and Islamist movement Hamas which rules Gaza have condemned the U.S.-brokered accords as a "stab in the back" of their people.

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and the top diplomats of the UAE and Bahrain are to sign the deals on Tuesday.

"Tomorrow, we will witness a black day in the history of the Arab world, of defeat for Arab League institutions, which are not united but divided," Mohammed Shtayeh said at the weekly meeting of his PA Cabinet.

What's next for Palestine after UAE, Bahrain deals with Israel?

With Gulf countries making peace with Israel on a bilateral level, the Arab Peace Initiative is in crisis, leaving the Palestinians further isolated

STANLY JOHNY



No quick fix: Palestinians carrying placards to protest against the normalisation of Israel-Bahrain ties. • AFP

forming one of the oldest conflicts in modern West Asia. There are speculations that more Arab countries, from Morocco to Sudan and Oman, might follow the footsteps of the UAE and Bahrain. These deals, which have formalised years of back-room contacts between the Gulf kingdoms and Israel, suggest that the pan-Arab-Israel conflict is turning the page. Where does it leave the Palestinians? Till the UAE-Israel deal

was announced on August 13, the official Arab position on the question of Palestine was rooted in the Arab Peace Initiative, proposed by Saudi Arabia in 2002, and endorsed by the Arab League in the same year. The proposal calls for normalising relations between the Arab world and Israel, in exchange for full Israeli withdrawal from the territories it captured in the 1967 war, including the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights, a

"just settlement" of the Palestinian refugee issue and the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital.

"Since 2002, both the UAE and Bahrain have supported the Arab Peace Initiative. However, the recent agreements made by Bahrain and

the UAE break with this consensus. The Abraham Accords [Israel-UAE deal] require Israel only to 'temporarily halt' its formal annexation of the West Bank [settlements]. The agreement between Bahrain and Israel dispenses with the preface altogether, making no mention of Palestinian land," said Elham Fakhro, senior Gulf analyst at the Brussels-based International Crisis Group (ICG).

This has angered the Pal-

estinians, who have "strongly rejected" the agreements. "The Palestinian leadership considers this step to blow up the Arab Peace Initiative and the decisions of the Arab and Islamic summits, and international legitimacy, as an aggression against the Palestinian people, and as neglecting Palestinian rights and sacred things, especially Jerusalem and the independent Palestinian state on the borders of June 4, 1967," the Palestinian leadership said in a statement issued after the UAE deal was announced.

The Palestinians have further called for "an immediate emergency session" of the Arab League and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, after the Bahrain agreement "to reject this declaration".

The Palestinians Liberation Organization (PLO) has rejected the Bahrain-Israel deal as well. "If you really wish to advance the cause of peace, dignity

MARKET WATCH

	14-09-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	38,757	-0.25
US Dollar	73.48	0.07
Gold	52,465	0.02
Brent oil	39.81	-0.48

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	351.65	9.15
Asian Paints	2031.20	-4.75
Axis Bank	440.55	-6.65
Bajaj Auto	2957.70	41.35
Bajaj Finserv	6112.15	-16.25
Bajaj Finance	3440.70	-102.70
Bharti Airtel	474.10	-17.55
BPCL	417.15	-11.60
Britannia Ind	3719.50	-52.75
Cipla	721.60	-4.35
Coal India	124.95	-0.15
Dr Reddys Lab	4364.10	-37.50
Eicher Motors	2159.40	-0.90
GAIL (India)	91.95	1.20
Grasim Ind	707.00	-13.95
HCL Tech.	794.95	73.30
HDFC	1738.00	-30.15
HDFC Bank	1057.95	-20.70
HDFC Life	599.45	-5.35
Hero MotoCorp	3028.50	36.25
Hindustan	175.80	-2.85
Hind Unilever	2123.50	-35.75
ICICI Bank	363.70	-6.80
IndusInd Bank	609.35	-1.00
Bharti Infratel	202.60	0.75
Infosys	978.40	32.70
Indian Oil Corp	82.70	-0.40
ITC	183.35	-0.60
JSW Steel	289.85	2.05
Kotak Bank	1304.70	-25.65
L&T	902.10	-15.30
M&M	615.30	1.05
Maruti Suzuki	7128.85	-64.75
Nestle India Ltd.	16083.30	-242.05
NTPC	90.85	0.75
ONGC	73.65	0.35
PowerGrid Corp	171.50	-3.65
Reliance Ind	2302.55	-17.20
State Bank	198.50	-4.20
Shree Cement	19789.50	287.00
Sun Pharma	495.80	-9.75
Tata Motors	148.55	4.25
Tata Steel	404.65	-2.85
TCS	2491.40	117.30
Tech Mahindra	790.75	25.60
Titan	1188.00	20.25
UltraTech Cement	3914.10	10.00
UPL	515.90	16.90
Wipro	307.20	13.90
Zee Entertainment	216.20	-1.90

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	73.28	73.60
Euro	86.88	87.27
British Pound	94.16	94.58
Japanese Yen (100)	69.13	69.43
Chinese Yuan	10.74	10.79
Swiss Franc	80.70	81.05
Singapore Dollar	53.63	53.88
Canadian Dollar	55.61	55.86
Malaysian Ringgit	17.67	17.76
Australian Dollar	53.31	53.54

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



Ashok Leyland unveils light truck 'Bada Dost'

CHENNAI Commercial vehicles manufacturer Ashok Leyland Ltd. (ALL) has rolled out 'Bada Dost', a light truck, in two versions. "It is the first company-made LCV product to be rolled out on a brand new platform developed in-house. Code named 'Phoenix', the project was conceived and developed within 24 months," said COO Nitin Seth.

Infosys to pay up to €30 mn for GuideVision

NEW DELHI Infosys said it would acquire the Czech Republic-based GuideVision for up to €30 million. The acquisition is being carried out by Infy Consulting Company Ltd., a step-down subsidiary of Infosys Ltd., as per a filing. The cost of acquisition could go up to €30 million, including earn-out and bonuses. The acquisition is expected to close in the third quarter of FY21. PTI

Dream Sports closes \$225-mn investment

MUMBAI Dream Sports has completed primary and secondary investment led by Tiger Global Management, TPG Tech Adjacencies, Chryscapital and Footpath Ventures worth \$225 million. Bhavit Sheth, COO and co-founder, Dream Sports, said, "I am proud of our team that has been the driving force behind the creation of 'sports tech' as a new industry category in India."

HDFC Bank's Aditya Puri bags Euromoney award

MUMBAI Aditya Puri, MD, HDFC Bank, has been conferred with the Lifetime Achievement Award by Euromoney Awards of Excellence 2020. The publication has recognised Mr. Puri for his skills in building a world-class Indian bank at a time when there were no similar institutions in existence. The award comes just ahead of his retirement next month, HDFC Bank said in a statement.

CMYK

Govt. looks to spend ₹2.35 lakh cr. more

FM tables supplementary demand for grants; net outgo may be ₹1.67 lakh cr; States to get big chunk

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Centre has sought Parliament approval for a gross additional expenditure of ₹2.35 lakh crore, including ₹20,000 crore for recapitalisation of public sector banks, for 2020-21.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman tabled the first batch of Supplementary Demands for Grants for this financial year in the Lok Sabha on Monday.

Out of the ₹2.35 lakh crore gross additional expenditure, the proposals involving net cash outgo add up to almost ₹1.67 lakh crore. The rest of the money will come either through savings or reallocation of funds allocated to other ministries.

The supplementary demand for grants is needed for government expenditure



Digging deep: The additional funds for MGNREGA take the scheme's budget for the year up to ₹1 lakh crore. ■ KIRAN BAKALE

over and above the amount for which Parliamentary approval was already obtained during the Budget session.

The emergency situation caused by the COVID-19 pandemic means that this year's supplementary demand in-

cludes additional allocations to pay for relief measures announced as part of the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana in March, and the Aatmanirbhar Bharat stimulus package in May.

The biggest chunk goes to

wards the State governments, including ₹44,340 crore in post-devolution revenue deficit grants, and ₹2,262 crore as grants-in-aid for the State Disaster Response Funds, in accordance with the interim recommendations of the 15th Finance Commission

MGNREGA gets more

The other large allocation is for the ₹40,000 crore additional funding promised to the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MGNREGA) scheme.

The additional funds, which take the scheme's budget for the year up to ₹1 lakh crore, were announced as a highlight of the Aatma-

nirbhar package. The Health Ministry included demands worth ₹6,852 crore for containment of the pandemic, plus additional grants for procurement of materials and machinery, equipping government hospitals, and research.

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GST compensation due to States is ₹1.51 lakh cr.

Maharashtra leads pack for April-Aug.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
NEW DELHI

The GST collection during April-August declined on account of the COVID-19 induced lockdown, and the compensation due to States stands at over ₹1.51 lakh crore, Minister of State for Finance Anurag Singh Thakur said on Monday.

The provisional GST compensation due to States and Union Territories (UTs) for 2020-21 was highest for Maharashtra at ₹22,485 crore, followed by Karnataka (₹13,763 crore), Uttar Pradesh (₹11,742 crore), Gujarat (₹11,563 crore) and Tamil Nadu (₹11,269 crore).

In reply to a separate question, Mr. Thakur said the total net GST target for the Centre has been pegged at ₹6,90,500 crore for 2020-21 in the Union Budget.

shared in a written reply to a question in the Lok Sabha.

In the current fiscal year, States are staring at a staggering ₹2.35 lakh crore Goods and Services Tax (GST) revenue shortfall.

The Centre late last month gave two options to States to borrow either ₹97,000 crore from a special window facilitated by the RBI or ₹2.35 lakh crore from the market.

It had also proposed extending the compensation cess levied on luxury, demerit and sin goods beyond 2022 to repay the borrowing.

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HCL-T July-Sept. revenue may be higher than expected'

Growth in excess of 3.5% estimated due to 'strong execution'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

HCL Technologies on Monday said it expected the revenue for the July-September 2020 period to grow in excess of 3.5% quarter-on-quarter, "meaningfully better" than the top end of the earlier forecast for the quarter.

In a communique to the exchanges, the company said, "We expect revenue and the operating margin for the current quarter to be meaningfully better than the top end of the guidance we had provided in July 2020."

Stating that it had seen strong execution during the



quarter to date, the firm said revenue growth for the current quarter was expected to exceed 3.5% quarter-on-quarter in constant currency, enabled by momentum across all service lines, verticals and geographies. In July, at the announcement of

"The EBIT% for the current quarter is expected to be between 20.5% and 21%," the company said, adding that good booking momentum continued this quarter.

"The pipeline continues to look healthy across service lines, verticals and geographies," HCL said.

Oracle beats Microsoft in TikTok U.S. bid

REUTERS

Oracle beat Microsoft in the battle for the U.S. arm of TikTok with a deal structured as a partnership rather than an outright sale to try to navigate geopolitical tensions between Beijing and Washington, people familiar with the matter said.

ByteDance, TikTok's Chinese owner, had been in talks to divest the U.S. business of its popular short-video app after U.S. President Donald Trump ordered the sale last month.

While TikTok is best known for dancing videos, U.S. officials are concerned user information could be passed to China's Communist Party government.

'Regulatory set-up for OTT players not required now'

Matter being examined globally: TRAI

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) on Monday said the time was not opportune to recommend a comprehensive regulatory framework for various aspects of OTT services such as WhatsApp, Skype and Hike.

In its recommendation on 'Regulatory Framework for OTT Communication Services', the regulator said that market forces may be allowed to respond without prescribing any regulatory intervention.

"However, developments shall be monitored and intervention as felt necessary shall be done at appropriate

time," the regulator said.

"This matter is under examination of various international jurisdictions and no satisfactory solution has emerged as yet. As such, the authority is of the view that no regulatory interventions are required at the moment," the telecom regulator said.

Jensen Huang, CEO of Nvidia, the biggest U.S. chip firm by market capitalisation, said Arm would retain its neutral licensing model and expand it by licensing out Nvidia intellectual property for the first time.

Awareness of immunity driving chicken prices up'

Suguna, Venky's say prices are back at pre-COVID-19 levels

LALATENDU MISHRA
MUMBAI

Chicken prices at the farm gate across India have returned to pre-COVID-19 levels of ₹85-90 a kg, as consumption of poultry has risen again as an immunity booster to counter the virus, according to major poultry firms.

Following rumours in February linking poultry with COVID-19, chicken prices had crashed to ₹5-10 a kg, forcing poultry farmers to release the birds into the open as they could not afford their maintenance.

"March and April were the [worst]," said S. Vignesh, ED, Suguna Foods, a large poultry player in the south

gate prices have bounced back to pre-COVID-19 levels and demand has returned to 70% of the pre-pandemic time. "Chicken is

Thiem scripts incredible comeback to win title

The Austrian is fourth time lucky in a Major final; Zverev squanders two-set lead and a chance to serve out the match

US OPEN

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Dominic Thiem produced a historic comeback to beat Alexander Zverev in a nervy five-setter and win the US Open on Sunday for his first Grand Slam title. The second-seeded Austrian outlasted the fifth seed 2-6, 4-6, 6-4, 6-3, 7-6(6) in a four-hour two-minute thriller.

Several firsts

It marked the first time in the Open era that a US Open finalist recovered from losing the opening two sets to win the title. It was also the first time the final was settled by a tie-break. "I wish we could have two winners today. I think we both deserved it," said Thiem. The title is the 27-year-old's maiden Grand Slam trophy after three previous defeats in summit clashes.

Zverev, 23, smashed four aces and 16 winners in the first set as he displayed an impressive serve-and-volley game to take a 1-0 lead in just 30 minutes. The German was helped by some sloppy serving from Thiem, who hit three double-faults as he was broken twice, in games three

and seven. In set two, Zverev wasted three set-points while 5-1 up but held on to take a 2-0 lead on his fifth set-point.

The tide was beginning to turn, though, as Zverev's play became increasingly cagey as his suspect second serve got slower and his forehand, another weakness, became more defensive. After Thiem took set four, Zverev found himself serving for the championship at 5-3 in the fifth set.

But he could not hold and soon Thiem was 6-5 ahead. He took a medical time-out before it was his turn to serve for the championship. However, like Zverev moments earlier, Thiem failed to clinch the match and it went to a tie-break.

Thiem found himself 5-3 up after two double-faults by Zverev but the Austrian, by now exhausted and limping, blew two championship points. He won the title and the winner's cheque of \$3 million on his third after Zverev hit a backhand wide.

Zverev smashed 15 aces to Thiem's eight. But the German also hit 15 double-faults, with Thiem hitting eight. Zverev hit more winners (52 to 43), but also had more unforced errors (65 to 55).

GUTS AND GLORY

- Second Austrian to win a Grand Slam after Thomas Muster (1995 French Open)

- A first-time Slam champion has been crowned in men's tennis six years after Cilic won the 2014 US Open

- After Pancho Gonzales in 1949, Thiem is the first player since Gaston Gaudio at the 2004 French Open (vs. Guillermo Coria) to capture a major title after being two sets down in the final. The other three men to have done this in the Open Era: Bjorn Borg vs Manuel Orantes (1974 French Open); Ivan Lendl vs John McEnroe (1984 French Open); Andre Agassi vs Andrey Medvedev (1999 French Open)

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- The Thiem-Zverev final was the fourth straight summit clash to stretch to five sets after Novak Djokovic-Thiem (2020 Australian Open), Rafael Nadal-Daniil Medvedev (2019 US Open) and Djokovic-Roger Federer (2019 Wimbledon)

- Zverev lost a match from two sets up for the first time in his career

THIEM ON WHAT WINNING HIS MAIDEN SLAM MEANS

THIEM AFTER BEING TOLD OF ZVEREV'S FEARS THAT HE MAY NEVER GET A BETTER OPPORTUNITY THAN THIS ONE

QUOTE SIDE

I [have] achieved a life goal. I put in a lot of work. I dedicated basically my whole life until this point to win one of the four Majors. Now I have done it. It's a great accomplishment, not just for me, but for my team, my family. I can give back huge amounts of what they did for me

THIEM ON WHAT WINNING HIS MAIDEN SLAM MEANS

ZVEREV AFTER BEING TOLD OF THIEM'S FEARS THAT HE MAY NEVER GET A BETTER OPPORTUNITY THAN THIS ONE

I was super close to being a Grand Slam champion... a few points away! What upset me the most was not the third set, but the fifth. I had a lot of chances but didn't use them. [But] I'm 23. I don't think it's my last chance. I do believe that I will be a Grand Slam champion at some point

ZVEREV AFTER BEING TOLD OF THIEM'S FEARS THAT HE MAY NEVER GET A BETTER OPPORTUNITY THAN THIS ONE

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