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Coman's header helps Bayern beat PSG in Champions League final  
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## NEARBY



**Haryana Chief Minister, Speaker test positive**  
CHANDIGARH  
Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal and Assembly Speaker Gian Chand Gupta on Monday tested positive for COVID-19. Both the leaders confirmed it on Twitter. The Assembly session, slated to start on August 26, will be presided over by Deputy Speaker Ranbir Gangwar.

NORTH & EAST ▶ PAGE 4

## Tax collection in Delhi 57% less than expected

NEW DELHI  
The different phases of lockdown and unlock has taken a toll on the Delhi government's tax collection. According to data accessed by *The Hindu*, tax collection for the April-June period is about 57.2% less than what was expected as per the annual budget 2020-21.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

## Police used voter data in Delhi riots cases

NEW DELHI  
The Election Commission in March allowed the Delhi police to check electoral rolls for the North East Delhi Lok Sabha constituency to identify those involved in the riots in February, according to a letter to the Chief Electoral Officer.

NEWS ▶ PAGE 9

## + Metro rail services likely to resume

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI  
The Ministry of Home Affairs is likely to allow resumption of Metro rail services when it issues Unlock 4.0 guidelines later this month, a senior official said on Monday.

Many States had demanded resumption of services. "Domestic flights that sometimes span over three hours are operating; there is a thinking in the government that Metro services can also be resumed since a passenger will not spend more than an hour at a stretch inside the train," the official said.

Educational institutions and cinema halls would remain shut and all kinds of congregations barred.

## Rajasthan HC asks Speaker to decide on plea

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
JAIPUR  
The Rajasthan High Court on Monday asked the Assembly Speaker to decide afresh a plea on merit against the merger of six Bahujan Samaj Party MLAs with the ruling Congress within three months. Speaker C.P. Joshi had on July 22 rejected a plaint filed by BJP MLA Madan Dilawar in this connection amid the political turmoil in the State.

A Single Judge Bench of Justice Mahendra Goyal set aside the Speaker's order in which he had refused to disqualify the six MLAs, while partially allowing a writ petition moved by Mr. Dilawar challenging the merger. Another writ plea moved by the BSP seeking a similar relief was also disposed of by the court.

# Sonia to stay on as interim Cong. chief

At stormy CWC session, Gandhi loyalists close ranks; AICC to start process of electing new party chief

SANDEEP PHUKAN  
NEW DELHI

Sonia Gandhi will continue to be the interim president of the Congress until the All India Congress Committee (AICC) holds its next session, the Congress Working Committee (CWC) said in a resolution on Monday, after a marathon virtual meeting.

The seven-hour meeting witnessed high drama, with Ms. Gandhi reiterating her intention to step down, Rahul Gandhi questioning the timing of a letter from a section of party leaders seeking a leadership change and calling it "an insult to his mother", sharp comments against the dissenters, Leader of the Opposition Ghulam Nabi Azad offering to resign over barbs from colleagues, and Ahmed Patel asking Mr. Gandhi to take back the reins of the party.

### Personal barbs

The meeting also witnessed verbal exchanges between members supporting the Gandhis and the dissenters, with the party's leader in the Lok Sabha, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, accusing Mr. Azad of "defending the indefensible", forcing Ms. Gandhi to intervene.

The CWC session was prompted by the letter, written by 23 senior Congress leaders, including Mr. Azad, Rajya Sabha Deputy Leader Anand Sharma and Lok Sabha members Shashi Tharoor



Show of support: A man holds a placard as Congress supporters gather outside the party headquarters in New Delhi on Monday. ■ REUTERS

and Manish Tewari, among others, which questioned the party's style of functioning, demanded collective leadership and talked of a "full time and visible party president".

At least four signatories to the letter – Mr. Azad, Mr. Sharma, Mukul Wasnik and Jitin Prasada – are members of the CWC and were present at the meeting.

Though some of them expressed regret for hurting sentiments, they maintained that they did not speak against the Gandhis. They said they were ready to face any penal action, but would always remain in the Congress.

The resolution at the end of the meeting sought to paper over the rifts. "The CWC, reflecting the overwhelming view and desire of the rank and file of the Congress, unanimously resolved to strengthen the hands of Smt. Sonia Gandhi and Shri. Rahul Gandhi in every possible way. The CWC makes it clear that no one will be or can be permitted to undermine or weaken the party and its leadership at this juncture,"

party general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal and chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said, reading out a resolution at a press conference.

The CWC also authorised Ms. Gandhi to carry out organisational changes and accordingly a committee will be constituted to assist her in day-to-day functioning.

In her concluding remarks, Ms. Gandhi said, "The Congress is one big family and I don't hold anything against anyone. But all, especially senior leaders, should raise concerns at the party forum only."

The stormy meet got under way with Mr. Venugopal reading out an August 20 letter in which Ms. Gandhi had asked the general secretary to start the process of appointing the next party chief.

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

## Will fight for return of our rights, says Farooq Abdullah

Kashmir but will have people of Jammu, Leh and Kargil with us. It's a fight for our rights," Dr. Abdullah, also the Srinagar MP, told *The Hindu* in an exclusive interview.

Dr. Abdullah, who was detained for several months after August 5 last year, said, "The goal will be achieved in which the honour of our people and of this (erstwhile) State is restored. It's not a fight for power."

He did not rule out the new grouping turning into an electoral alliance in the future.

Recounting his days in de-

tention, Dr. Abdullah said he was "treated like a criminal".

"I was slapped with a draconian law. I was called a thief. That I am a terrorist. I was an MP but without a phone line. I wonder whether I would have been better off as a terrorist," Dr. Abdullah added.

Dr. Abdullah said he blamed "the Prime Minister for the new chapter of alienation" in J&K. "Every decision is taken at his level. There is no other man," he said.

FULL INTERVIEW ▶ PAGE 11

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## SC to study 'effect' of Bhushan's statement

Lawyer won't offer 'insincere' apology

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

A three-judge Bench of the Supreme Court, led by Justice Arun Mishra, will on Tuesday examine the "effect" of a statement filed by advocate Prashant Bhushan that an insincere apology for his tweets, which are an expression of his bona fide beliefs, would amount to "contempt of my conscience and of an institution that I hold in highest esteem".

If I retract a statement before this court that I otherwise believe to be true or offer an insincere apology, that in my eyes would amount to the contempt of my conscience and of an institution that I hold in highest esteem.

PRASHANT BHUSHAN

about Chief Justice S.A. Bobde astride a bike and another on the role of the SC in the past six years. He quoted Mahatma Gandhi to say that he neither asked for mercy nor magnanimity and would cheerfully accept whatever punishment the court deemed fit.

In the supplementary statement, Mr. Bhushan said "an apology cannot be a mere incantation and any apology has to, as the court has itself put it, be sincerely made".

"If I retract a statement before this court that I otherwise believe to be true or offer an insincere apology, that in my eyes would amount to the contempt of my conscience and of an institution that I hold in highest esteem," he stated.

On August 20, while serving the *suo motu* contempt case for order on sentencing, the Bench gave Mr. Bhushan an opportunity to tender an unconditional apology by August 24. The court said it would schedule a hearing on August 25 in case Mr. Bhushan filed a statement by August 24.

In his statement read out to the court on August 20, Mr. Bhushan refused to apologise for his tweet

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

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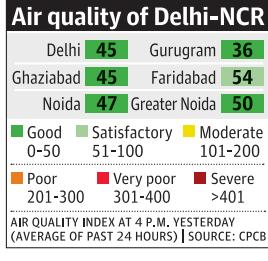
## IN BRIEF

## Assembly panel to meet to discuss inaction by FB

NEW DELHI  
A Delhi Assembly committee on Peace and Harmony will hold a meeting on Tuesday in which journalists and an activist will be called witnesses on alleged "deliberate and intentional" inaction by social media platform – Facebook – to contain "hateful content".

## Zakir Khan appointed as new DMIC chairperson

NEW DELHI  
The Delhi government on Monday appointed Zakir Khan, a social worker, as the chairperson of Delhi Minorities Commission, said a Delhi government spokesperson. It also appointed Kawaljit Singh and Nancy Barlow as its members.



## HC extends stay on probe in criminal case against Dua

Case posted for hearing on Sept. 22

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH  
NEW DELHI

spreading rumours and misinformation about Delhi riots.

The complaint stated that Mr Dua's his comments in the webcast – The Vinod Dua Show – contain communal overtones, which during the current COVID-19 crisis, was causing public disaffection, which shall cause hatred and ill-will between different communities. The webcast aired on March 11, 2020. This is the second FIR registered against Mr Dua based on the webcast.

Justice Anup Jairam Bambhani highlighted that a similar matter relating to an FIR against Mr. Dua is pending before the Supreme Court and hence it was proper to wait for the top court's decision. The court noted that the decision of the Supreme Court on the case could have bearing on the plea before it. It has posted the case for hearing on September 22.

The court was hearing Mr. Dua's a plea seeking quashing of the FIR lodged against him by the Delhi Police Crime Branch on a complaint by a Delhi BJP leader.

The FIR was lodged on June 4 on the complaint of BJP spokesperson, Naveen Kumar, alleging Mr. Dua of

## Proceed with hearing in Chief Secy assault case: HC

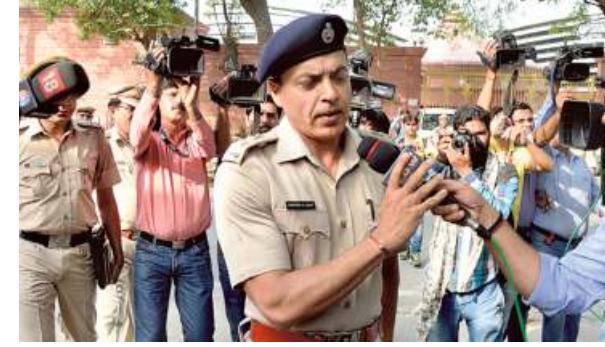
Trial court arguments on charges against CM, others allowed

SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday allowed a trial court here to proceed with hearing arguments on framing of charges in the then Chief Secretary assault case in which Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his Deputy Manish Sisodia were made accused.

Justice Vibhu Bakru allowed an application by then Chief Secretary Anshu Prakash and modified its March 14, 2019 order by which the trial court was directed not to hear arguments on the charges.

Mr. Prakash has also sought a direction for an early hearing of the petition filed before the High Court by Mr. Kejriwal and Mr. Sisodia challenging the trial court's October 22, 2018 order permitting two other advocates to conduct the prosecution on behalf of the officer of Delhi Police, instead of a regular Public Pro-



Delhi police officers at Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's residence to question him about the alleged assault on the then Chief Secretary. ■ FILE PHOTO: SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

secutor attached to the court concerned.

The High Court, however, noted that the petition is listed for hearing on November 2 and it was not feasible to hear it at an earlier date.

During the hearing, senior advocate Siddharth Luthra, appearing for Mr. Prakash, said in order to save time, he had no objection if the arguments on charges are heard and the case is prosecuted by

the regular Public Prosecutor. Senior advocates Dayan Krishnan and N. Hariharan,

appearing for Mr. Kejriwal and Mr. Sisodia, also said they do not have any problem on regular prosecutor conducting the case before the trial court.

The criminal case relates to alleged assault on Mr. Prakash during a meeting at Mr. Kejriwal's official residence on February 19, 2018.

to reopen. Among the markets that do open, strict compliance of standard operating measures and directions issued by the corporations and the government are to be followed.

A zonal official has been identified for each market. He is required to ensure strict compliance of DDMA directions, an SDMC order states. These include ensuring adequate distancing between vendors and buyers, face covering or mask is worn, proper marking for maintaining distance must be undertaken with a distance of at least six feet maintained between two stalls. If any case is reported in the market then the ill person is to be placed in a room or area where they are isolated from others. No instance of crowding or congregation should take place, spitting is to be strictly prohibited and proper demarcation of weekly market regarding starting point to ending point should be ensured.

## Weekly markets open on trial basis with norms

One market a day per zone allowed

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Weekly markets in various parts of Delhi that have been shut since the beginning of the lockdown reopened on a trial basis on Monday with strict norms for maintaining social distancing, following directions of the Delhi Disaster Management Authority last week.

In South Delhi, about 25 markets have been identified by the area municipal corporation to set up shop on different days of the week.

Only one weekly market per day per zone is being allowed till August 30. These include the ones at Nizamuddin, Bhogal, Kalkaji, Govindpuri, Sarita Vihar, Badarpur, Shiv Nagar, Tilak Nagar, Janakpuri, Hari Nagar, Khayala, Ashok Nagar among other places.

Similarly, markets in north and east Delhi have also been opened. Markets falling in containment zones, however, have not been given the permission

## Duo held for robbing cashier of over ₹6 lakh

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

Two men were arrested for allegedly robbing a cashier in a Bawana industrial area of ₹6.5 lakh, the police said Monday.

The accused have been identified as Manish Kumar and Karan Kumar (22). The incident happened on August 17 at 1.30 p.m. when the cashier of a private company was going to his workplace on a motorcycle after collecting ₹6,49,350 from Chandni Chowk. When he reached Yamuna Bazar, he was intercepted by two-wheeler-borne miscreants, who forcibly took the bag and sped off.

A case was registered at Kashmere Gate police station. Later a team of Delhi Police Crime Branch started working on the case. DCP (Crime) Rakesh Pawariya said: "With the help of technical intelligence, we developed information about the culprits and nabbed them from Yamuna Bazar on Sunday night."

During interrogation, the accused confessed to the crime. Manish told the police that earlier, he worked as a taxi driver and in 2008, when an NRI hired his taxi from Delhi Airport, he along with his accomplice robbed and killed him.

He was convicted for life in that case.

In jail, he had come in contact with another convict, who was granted parole in July 2020. In March, after coming out from jail on parole, Manish contacted him and planned robberies. The police said they have recovered a car, two mobile phones, ATM card and a two-wheeler from the accused.

## 21-year-old man arrested for killing dairy owner

The two had a fight over salary: police

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 21-year-old man was arrested for allegedly killing his employer after an argument broke out between them over salary, the police said on Monday.

Tasleem, a worker at a dairy owned by 45-year-old Om Prakash, attacked the latter with a wooden stick and also slit his neck with a knife, they said. The accused then packed the body in a gunny bag and threw it in a well nearby.

Tasleem from Uttar Pradesh's Shamli was working at a hotel in Bahadurgarh for last two years. He was introduced to victim in June, 2020 by a relative and started working at the dairy with a monthly salary of ₹15,000.

**Victim goes missing**  
On August 12, the victim's police approached the police stating that his uncle had been missing since the intervening night of August 10 and 11 and he was last seen with his servant.

A few days later, the victim's body was recovered from a nearby well in a decomposed state following

## Man held for assaulting minor

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

A 42-year-old man has been arrested for allegedly sexually assaulting a 12-year-old girl in a park in Rajouri Garden, the police said on Monday.

The accused had also shot a video of the act, they said. A passer-by stopped the accused and called the

police. A team came to the spot and nabbed the accused, said an officer, adding that his mobile phone has also been seized. The minor has been handed over to her parents.

A case under relevant sections of the POCSO Act has been registered and further investigation is under way.

**Letter to Kejriwal**  
In a letter to Mr. Kejriwal, Mr. Bidhuri demanded that the area and the location of schools for registration should be clearly stated and the government should also ensure the smooth operation of the website.

"In the absence of the clear addresses of the

## HC seeks govt. response on PETA plea

STAFF REPORTER  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Monday sought response of the city government on an application by People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), seeking to implement the Prevention and Control of Infectious and Contagious Diseases in Animals Act, 2009, to prevent spread of glanders disease among horses, mules, ponies and donkeys here.

PETA India, in its application, also sought implementation of the National Action Plan for Control and Eradication of Glanders. Justice Najmi Waziri has posted the case for further hearing on October 6.

## Gupta seeks Hazare's support against Kejriwal

AAP doesn't respond to BJP allegations

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

planned by AAP. AAP has become a machine to form fake companies in the name of political donations and converting black money into white money... it is no longer a party of the common people but has become a party of people with black money," the BJP leader alleged.

Mr. Gupta wrote, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), which came to power in the name of clean and fair politics had demolished all the parameters of "political purity."

"After coming back to power on the basis of false promises, false intentions and communal politics, the people of Delhi have suffered the communal riots

and the Capital for it.

Mr. Gupta said Mr. Hazare was requested to come to Delhi and help the BJP in fighting the battle against the corrupt Kejriwal government which supports the rioters."

When contacted, both AAP and Delhi government did not respond to allegations raised by the BJP.

## SEARCH FOR MISSING BOY



General public is here by informed that one boy namely Manish, S/o Shri Chander Bhushan Chaudhary, R/o H.No. 181/1B, 2nd Floor, Gali No. 10, Bholanath Nagar, Shahdara, Delhi, Age 22 years, Height 5'2", Complexion Shallow, Long Face, Thin Built, Wearing Black colour jacket, navy blue colour jeans pant and grey colour slippers in feet has been missing from his house since 25.11.19. In this regard a vide DD No. 73-A dated 17.02.20 has been lodged at PS Farsh Bazar, Delhi.

Any person having any information or clue about this missing boy may kindly inform to the following.

E-mail ID:cic@cbi.gov.in  
SHO  
Tele: 011-24368638, 24368641 PS: Farsh Bazar, Delhi  
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The detailed tender document containing specifications, tentative quantity of Fogging Solution and Surface Disinfectant along with the terms and conditions, is available on www.jktenders.gov.in and complete bidding process will be online on said e-tender portal, as per following schedule:

S. No.	Description	Schedule
01	Tender fee in the shape of Demand Draft favouring Director Finance SKIMS.	Rs. 1000/-

02	Earnest Money Deposit (EMD) in the shape of CDR/FDR (pledged to Director Finance) or a Bank Guarantee pledged to Director & EOSG SKIMS	Rs. 20,000/-
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03	Date & time for downloading of tenders	From 22/08/2020 to 14/09/2020 upto 4:00 p.m.
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04	Last date & time for submission of online tender	From 01/09/2020 to 14/09/2020 upto 4:00 p.m.
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05	Date & time for opening of technical bids	16/09/2020 at 2:00 p.m.
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Any clarification will be entertained from 22/08/2020 to 31/08/2020 on all working days during office hours.

The tender notice is also available on SKIMS website www.skims.ac.in (for reference only)

Complete bidding process will be online at www.jktenders.gov.in (Technical and Price bids shall have to be submitted in electronic format on the said tender portal and in no case be submitted in physical form, unless demanded by SKIMS).

Director SKIMS reserves the right to accept/reject or cancel any tender or all tenders in full or part thereof without assigning any reason.

The tenders should be submitted strictly in accordance with the provisions of the detailed eNIT.

No: SIMS 325 12/2020-1507-15-5190-93  
Dated: 21/08/2020

Sd/-  
Asstt. Materials Management Officer (Purchase-II)  
Dated: 24.08.2020

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Timings  
DELHI

TUESDAY, AUG. 25
RISE 05:56 SET 18:50
RISE 12:23 SET 23:26
WEDNESDAY, AUG. 26
RISE 05:57 SET 18:49
RISE 13:29 SET 00:00
THURSDAY, AUG. 27
RISE 05:57 SET 18:48
RISE 14:31 SET 00:13

Delhi Weather	max	min
Delhi City	33	26
Safdarjung	33	26
Palam	32	27

**Delhi Pilm Today**  
35°C Short spell of drizzle and rain likely at some places with partly cloudy sky and warm day.

**Delhi Pilm Tomorrow**  
35°C A spell of light rain and thunderstorm with cloudy sky would affect the area.

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## Senior staffer at BJP office tests positive for COVID-19

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

A section of the Delhi BJP office on Pant Marg has been cordoned off after a senior staffer tested positive for COVID-19, the party said.

The area is located on the campus where the party's senior State leaders operate from.

The staffer, aged around 60, undertook a test on Sunday and his report stated that he was COVID-19-positive.

Delhi BJP media cell head Ashok Goel said the office block where he used to sit has been closed for disinfection, while other staffers who sat there have undergone tests.

## HC tells North body to release April pension

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi HC on Monday directed the North Corporation to release pension for the month of April immediately, taking into account the plight of retired civic employees.

Thousands of retired North Delhi Municipal Corporation officials have not been disbursed the pension due to them for the last five months, Nagar Nigam Seva Nirvit Karamchaari Kalyan Samiti said.

"For the remaining pension, the Government of NCTD and North Corporation have been directed to file status report within two weeks with liberty to the petitioner to submit reply to the same. There are 12,000 retired employees," it said. The case has been posted for September 21.

# Tax collection in the Capital 57% less than expected in April-July

Revenue is down by 44% compared to last year; govt. has cut expenses by 21%

**NIKHIL M BABU**  
NEW DELHI

The different phases of the lockdown and unlock has taken a toll on the Delhi government's tax revenue collection. According to data accessed by *The Hindu*, the total tax revenue collection has gone down by 57.2% than the expected collection for the April-June period as per the annual budget 2020-21. Moreover, the collection this year is down by 44.3% compared to last year for the same period.

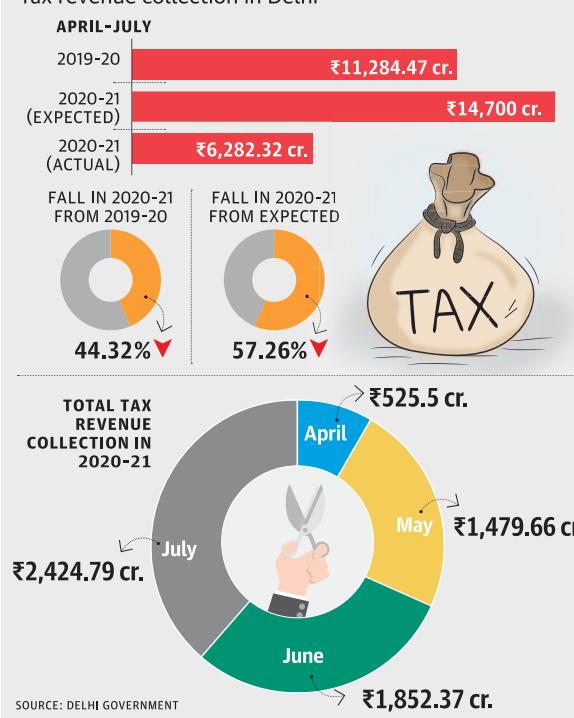
The collection from five streams – VAT, GST, Excise Tax, stamps and registration, and motor vehicle tax – was expected to be ₹14,700 crore. But the amount the government received was only ₹6,282.32. Also, the amount is 44.3% less compared to the same period last year, when the total tax revenue collection was ₹11,284.47 crore.

But the monthly tax revenue collection from the five streams, though lesser than last year and the prediction, has been increasing over the months. In April, it was ₹525.50 crore, it increased to ₹1,479.66 crore in May, ₹1,852.37 crore in June and ₹2,424.79 in July.

Apart from the tax from the five sources, the government also gets money from

### Diminishing returns

Tax revenue collection in Delhi



the Central government in the form of GST compensation and loans. Including this, the total receipts or earning of the Delhi government was ₹18,033.19 crore from April to July in 2019 and it has reduced to ₹11,376.44 crore for the same period this year – a reduction of 21%.

But after the pandemic

struck, the government has cut down its expenses, reducing the effect of the fall in revenue. The expenditure of the government was ₹14,411.94 crore from April to July in 2019 and it has reduced to ₹11,288.67 crore this year – a reduction of 21%.

"The total income includ-

ing contributions from the Central government] for the period has fallen by about ₹6,000 crore compared to last year. But during the same time, the expenditure has reduced by about ₹3,000 crore. So, the net effect is a loss of about ₹3,000 crore," a Delhi government official told *The Hindu*.

### Strict watch

The Delhi government is monitoring expenses and currently, all expenses above ₹1 crore need the Cabinet's approval, which was not required before the pandemic.

"Already the earnings are less by about ₹6,000 crore and this is expected to increase over the year in all likelihood. It is safe to assume that the revised budget will be much lesser than the budget of ₹65,000 crore," the official said.

On July 2, the Delhi government had formed a 12-member committee headed by Dialogue and Development Commission (DDC) Vice-Chairperson Jasmine Shah to explore economic reforms to help businesses recover from the impact of COVID-19.

The committee has not submitted any solutions and is expected to do so in the coming months.

## 1,061 fresh virus cases take city's tally to 1,62,527

People in home isolation above 6,000

**STAFF REPORTER**

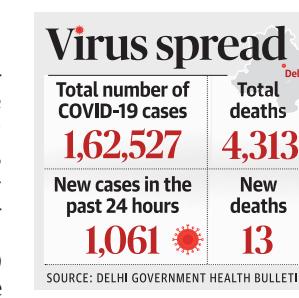
NEW DELHI

With 1,061 new cases reported in the past 24 hours the total number of COVID-19 cases here stood at 1,62,527, according to a health bulletin released by the Delhi government on Monday.

The number of COVID-19 positive people under home isolation in Delhi crossed 6,000 for the first time in August. Of the total number of cases, 1,46,588 people have recovered and there are 11,626 active cases in Delhi at present. Also, 13 more deaths were reported, taking the total number of deaths due to the virus to 4,313.

The number of new cases has been less than 1,500 for the past 39 days.

The number of tests conducted in the past 24 hours were only about 60% of the average daily tests done in July. The positivity rate, which is the percentage of people who test positive, has increased to a 45-day high of 8.9%, as per the bulletin. This is the highest since July 10, when the positivity rate was 9.09%. The positivity rate, which was 12.2% on July 1 had stayed below it since then and even dropped to 5.2% on August 17. Though Delhi has a capacity to conduct around 11,000 RT-PCR tests a day, only 3,826 such tests were done in the past 24 hours.



Process to pay allowance to mid-day meal beneficiaries on'

**SOIBAM ROCKY SINGH**  
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government on Monday informed the Delhi High Court that it was in the process of completing the exercise of payment of Food Security Allowance (FSA) to the beneficiaries of mid-day meals at the earliest.

In an affidavit, the Delhi government stated that the exercise of obtaining bank account and other details of mid-day meal beneficiaries has faced several impediments due to the lockdown, as families of migrant students left for their hometowns.

The process of FSA through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) in lieu of mid-day meal has been undertaken for the first time from March 2020 due to closure of schools following the outbreak of COVID-19.

Mid-day meals are provided to schoolchildren reading between Classes I and VIII. For March 2020, total eligible beneficiaries for FSA were 8,24,164. Of these, payment of FSA were made to 8,21,768 students at ₹85 per beneficiary per month for primary school (Classes I to V) and ₹78 per beneficiary for upper primary student (Classes VI to VII).

## Kejriwal launches mobile app and online OPD registration system

Application's key features include no-queue appointment

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday launched a mobile app and online OPD registration system for Shri Dada Dev Matri Avum Shishu Chikitsalaya. The app will be a convenient solution, especially for pregnant women during the time of COVID-19 pandemic as they will no longer be required to stand in queues for registration.

He said that the Delhi government would launch the Hospital Management Information System (HMIS) to bring all hospitals in Delhi on one platform and then integrate the features of the app with HMIS to improve its efficiency.

"Shri Dada Dev Matri Avum Shishu Chikitsalaya conducts 10,000 deliveries across the year. This hospital has only 106 beds now, but the capacity of the beds will be increased to 281 in the coming days, the inauguration of which was held in January this year and will be completed soon," Mr. Kejriwal said.

According to the Delhi go-

vernment, the key features of the app include no-queue appointment, no waiting time, online Flu Clinic Registration for COVID-19 and helping prevent COVID-19 infection by ensuring minimal contact with healthcare providers and other patients.

"The Delhi government is bringing together all hospitals in Delhi through the HMIS, including Mohalla Clinic, polyclinic, multi-specialty and super-specialty hospitals. This is a very ambitious project and will be completed within one year," Mr. Kejriwal also said.

bring all hospitals in Delhi on one platform and then integrate the features of the app with HMIS to improve its efficiency.

Third-party app

The plea stated that Google India launched 'Tez', a mobile payments service targeted at users in India which later folded into the new 'Google Pay' app. It said 'Google Pay' is a third-party app which facilitates payment in the UPI ecosystem and is able to do the same by partnering with various PSP acquirer banks.

"Further, 'Google Pay' is regulated by respondent number 2 [National Payment Corporation of India] which is responsible for granting permission to Payment Service Provider [PSP] as banks and to third-party apps to operate under the UPI net-

work," it said.

The plea claimed that the company was storing personal sensitive data in contravention of UPI procedural guidelines of October 2019, which allows such data to be stored only by PSP bank systems and not by any third-party application.

The plea sought direction to the RBI to take appropriate punitive action against the NPCI and revoke its authorisation to operate and regulate the UPI payment system, on account of risking customer payments data, its failure to audit Google India Digital Service Pvt Ltd and take any steps against it despite its acts of flagrant and serious non-compliance of applicable laws.

Congress leader hits out at ruling party, says it has done little for the district

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GURUGRAM

Deputy Leader of Congress Legislative Party Aftab Ahmed has held the "misrule" of the BJP for six years responsible for the plight of Gurugram and said that the ruling party had done little for the district except changing its name.

In a press statement, Mr. Ahmed said Gurugram had a decisive role to play in the development of not just Haryana but the entire country

and it attracted investment from across the world, but the city was suffering due to wrong policies of the BJP government.

Recent flooding

Referring to the recent flooding, Mr. Ahmed said Gurugram had a decisive role to play in the development of not just Haryana but the entire country

and it attracted investment from across the world, but the city was suffering due to wrong policies of the BJP government.

Rampant corruption

He said an under-construction elevated corridor recently collapsed on Sohna Road had exposed the poor

wrong reasons on the law and order front.

Mr. Ahmed said the city was flooded every time it rained and the people were caught in the traffic for hours, adding that flyovers on NH-48 had developed cracks, just a few months after the construction.

Quality of infrastructure in the city and also raised serious questions over the working of the government.

He alleged that corruption and mismanagement are rampant during the BJP rule.

Mr. Ahmed alleged that the Haryana government had also proved ineffective in preventing the spread of COVID-19 in Gurugram.

He said that the government must wake up from its slumber and stop pushing the city towards devastation.

**DMC riots report lacks credibility: Delhi Congress**

Party chief calls fact-finding committee 'weak', demands judicial investigation

**SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI

An 11-member committee of the State Congress set up to study the Delhi Minorities Commission fact-finding report into the north-east Delhi communal violence said the report lacked credibility.

Delhi Congress chief Ch.

Anil Kumar said that the panel constituted by the DMC to probe the communal violence was a "weak and sham committee" which did not have any legal rights, either to call the Delhi police or force them to appear before it for recording their statements.

Mr. Kumar demanded a judicial inquiry to unr-

avel the truth and punish the guilty.

Mr. Kumar said that the Delhi government's sole purpose in constituting the fact-finding committee via the DMC seemed to be to ab-

solve the Aam Aadmi Party from any blame for the violence and destruction.

Mr. Kumar alleged that the Delhi government had stayed silent during the riots and if it had intervened, many lives and property could have been saved.

### Deliberate attempt

"It was a deliberate attempt to exclude a member of the DMC from the fact-finding committee, as the DMC enjoys quasi-judicial powers under Section 10(5) of the DMC Act, and the Delhi police was rule-bound to respond to the summons of the fact-finding committee, if a

Hight Court judge.

The Delhi Congress questioned why FIRs were not filed against the BJP leaders who "incited communal violence", and why the roles of the elected representatives of the BJP and the Aam Aadmi Party were not investigated by the fact-finding committee, if a

Hight Court judge.

The Delhi Congress questioned why FIRs were not filed against the BJP leaders who "incited communal violence", and why the roles of the elected representatives of the BJP and the A

## OBITUARY &amp; REMEMBRANCE

## DEATH

## SAD DEMISE



**Mr. RAJAGOPALAN RAMADURAI**  
Attained heavenly abode on 17-08-2020  
Loving husband, beloved father, revered eldest brother, great friend to many and social leader. Will be deeply missed and remembered.  
Geetha Ramadurai  
Sons: Vijay & Sriman  
Ph: +91 94433 81384

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**PUBLIC NOTICE**  
The general public is hereby informed that my client is intending to purchase the below mentioned schedule of property from its owner Mrs. Sangita Jain w/o Shri Vineet Jain R/o NIL-19 B, Mahiya Nagar New Delhi -110017. If any body has any objection, claim, interest, dispute for the above intended sales transaction, he/she may contact undersigned with the documentary proof substantiating his/her objection claims details of dispute within 7 days from date of this publication failing which my client will proceed to complete the sale transaction with the above owner as if there are no third party claims objections dispute in respect of the scheduled property and thereafter no claim /objection / disputes will be entertained.

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If anyone has any objection to the registration of "BHARATIYA ASHA PARTY" they may send their objection with reasons thereof, to the Secretary (Political Party), Election Commission of India, New Delhi-110001 within 30 days of the publication of this notice.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for notice of the general public that a political party is proposed to be registered by the name of "BHARATIYA ASHA PARTY". The office of the party is located at: H.No.590, Vill. Bhawan, Near Govt. High School, Sector-10, Mohanpur, Dist. Rohilkhand, Haryana-124111. This party has submitted application to the Election Commission of India, New Delhi for its registration as Political Party under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951. Name/Address of the office bearers of the party are as follows:-

President : Deepak S/o Sh. Rai Singh R/o H.No. 590, Village Bhawan, Tehsil-Meham, District-Rohilkhand, Haryana.

General Secretary : Smt. Meenakshi Arora S/o Sh. Sattar R/o H.No.365, Bharat, Tehsil-Meham, District-Rohilkhand, Haryana.

Treasurer : Sandeep Kumar S/o Sh. Rajender Singh R/o H.No. 935, Village Bhawan, Tehsil-Meham, District-Rohilkhand, Haryana.

Advocate : Amitabh Singh, Legal Remid Law Firm

H-23, Lajpat Nagar Part 1,

In Front of Gurudwara, New Delhi -24

M: 9971177170

If anyone has any objection to the registration of "BHARATIYA ASHA PARTY" they may send their objection with reasons thereof, to the Secretary (Political Party), Election Commission of India, New Delhi-110001 within 30 days of the publication of this notice.

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This is for notice of the general public that a political party is proposed to be registered by the name of "HARYANA HITKARI PART". The office of the party is located at: G-109, Block-3, Sector-10, Mohanpur, Dist. Rohilkhand, Haryana-124111. This party has submitted application to the Election Commission of India, New Delhi for its registration as Political Party under Section 29A of the Representation of the People Act, 1951. Name/Address of the office bearers of the party are as follows:-

President : Brahma Singh S/o Sh. Har Kesh, R/o H. No.148, Village, Brahma Majra, Block-3, Tehsil Panipat, Dist. Panipat, Haryana.

If anyone has any objection to the registration of "HARYANA HITKARI PART" they may send their objection with reasons thereof, to the Secretary (Political Party), Election Commission of India, Nirvachan Sadak, Ashoka Road, New Delhi-110001 within 30 days of the publication of this notice.

## EASTERN RAILWAY

Cancellation of Tender No. PE-

05-RR-RPH-Old-New (Open

Tender), Closing date/time :

26.08.2020 at 14.00 hrs.

published earlier by the Sr.

Divisional Mechanical Engineer

(Power), Eastern Railway,

Howrah. The above tender has

been cancelled by the competent

authority due to administrative

grounds. (HWH-94/2020-21)

# Haryana Chief Minister, Speaker test positive

Deputy Speaker to preside over upcoming Assembly session

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHANDIGARH/BHUBANESWAR

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal and Assembly Speaker Gian Chand Gupta on Monday tested positive for COVID-19.

Both the leaders confirmed it on Twitter.

"I was tested for Novel Corona Virus today. My test report has returned positive. I appeal to all colleagues and associates who came in my contact over the last week to get themselves tested. I request my close contacts to move into strict quarantine immediately," Mr. Manohar Lal tweeted.

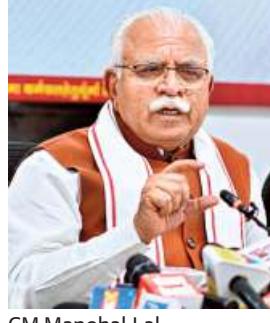
Mr. Gupa, in a tweet, said: "Yesterday [Sunday] I got my COVID-19 test done and the report has come positive. My health is fine, but I am getting home quarantined on the advice of doctors.

I request that everyone who have come in contact with me in the last few days to please isolate themselves and get examined."

The Assembly session, slated to start on August 26, will be presided by Deputy Speaker Ranbir Gangwar.

Earlier Mr. Gupta's political

secretary and spokesperson



CM Manohar Lal

tested positive. Following this, the Speaker got himself tested for the virus.

## Shibu hospitalised

Former Jharkhand Chief Minister and Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM) supremo Shibu Soren, who had tested positive for COVID-19, was hospitalised in Ranchi on Monday.

Mr. Soren, father of Chief Minister Hemant Soren, and his wife Roopi Soren were found to be infected on Friday (August 21).

"Guruji (as the septuagenarian leader is known popularly) has been admitted in Medanta Hospital at Ranchi for precautions only. His health conditions are absolutely fine," said Supriyo Bhattacharya, party general secretary and spokesperson.

'Punjab's rural economy will crash if they are implemented'

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHANDIGARH

Ahead of the Punjab Assembly's one-day session on August 28, the Aam Aadmi Party on Monday said it has sought permission from the Speaker to table a motion for repealing of the Centre's three agriculture-related ordinances and Power Amendment Bill-2020.

Senior party leader and Sunam MLA Aman Arora said he has sought permission from the Speaker to table a motion in this regard under Rule 71 of the Vidhan Sabha rules during the session.

## Federal set up violated

Mr. Arora said the three agriculture-related ordinances and the Power Amendment Bill-2020 by the Union government were



Senior AAP leader  
Aman Arora. ■ FILE PHOTO

contrary to the federal structure of the country, besides impinging on the rights of the States.

He said the farmers would be left at the mercy of big corporate houses and rural economy of Punjab

would be shattered if the ordinances were implemented.

"Similarly, if the Power Amendment Bill-2020 be-

came a law, the entire gamut would go into the hands of big corporate houses and different rates of electricity would be charged from rural and urban consumers and the powers vested with State Electricity Regulatory Commission would go to the Centre and the State government would not be able to protect its own interests," he said.

The Centre had recently promulgated the three agriculture related ordinances – Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Ordinance, Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Ordinance and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Ordinance.

came a law, the entire gamut would go into the hands of big corporate houses and different rates of electricity would be charged from rural and urban consumers and the powers vested with State Electricity Regulatory Commission would go to the Centre and the State government would not be able to protect its own interests," he said.

The Centre had recently promulgated the three agriculture related ordinances – Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Ordinance, Farmers (Empowerment

**WEATHER WATCH**

RAINFALL, TEMPERATURE & AIR QUALITY IN SELECT METROS YESTERDAY



TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD; POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 16.00 HRS)

**Forecast for Tuesday:** Heavy/very heavy rainfall likely at a few isolated places over Assam, Meghalaya, Gangetic West Bengal, Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Uttar Pradesh, west Rajasthan, Gujarat, Bihar, Jharkhand, Odisha, Chhattisgarh, coastal Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry, Karaikal, Kerala and Mahe

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	... 34.2	26.1	26.1	Kozhikode	... 32.2 ... 26.4		
Ahmedabad	40.4	27.2	24.5	Kurnool	... 32.9 ... 24.6		
Aizawl	12	27.2	18.6	Lucknow	1.3 ... 33.8 ... 25.2		
Allahabad	1.6	33.3	25.6	Madurai	17.6 ... 38.0 ... 25.7		
Bangalore	2.1	28.4	20.9	Mangaluru	14.4 ... 30.6 ... 23.8		
Bhopal	... 28.4	23.0	23.0	Mumbai	7.7 ... 31.0 ... 25.2		
Bhubaneswar	... 30.6	23.1	23.1	Mysuru	... 29.9 ... 21.8		
Chandigarh	... 34.2	27.8	27.8	New Delhi	2 ... 32.7 ... 26.2		
Chennai	... 33.1	26.6	26.6	Patna	... 36.0 ... 26.6		
Coimbatore	... 33.9	23.9	23.9	Pond Blair	5.6 ... 31.9 ... 25.6		
Dehradoon	7	31.8	24.2	Puducherry	... 32.2 ... 25.5		
Gangtok	36	27.6	17.5	Pune	0.7 ... 28.2 ... 22.2		
Goa	26.6	30.0	24.3	Raipur	... 32.6 ... 24.8		
Guwahati	... 35.8	25.4	25.4	Ranchi	14.8 ... 31.2 ... 22.5		
Hubballi	... 27.0	22.0	22.0	Shillong	0.4 ... 24.0 ... 17.0		
Hyderabad	5.5	32.0	22.2	Shimla	... 24.9 ... 20.1		
Imphal	... 28.6	22.5	22.5	Srinagar	... 34.6 ... 20.1		
Jaipur	3.6	28.8	24.5	Thiruvananthapuram	... 32.6 ... 25.1		
Kochi	2.4	31.8	24.2	Tiruchi	32.3 ... 36.6 ... 23.2		
Kohima	4.4	26.8	17.0	Vijayawada	... 35.4 ... 26.2		
Kolkata	3.4	33.7	26.0	Visakhapatnam	0.8 ... 31.8 ... 27.2		

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

**Pollutants in the air you are breathing**

CITIES	SO <sub>2</sub>	NO <sub>x</sub>	CO	PM <sub>2.5</sub>	PM <sub>10</sub>	CODE
Ahmedabad	16	45	31	... 37	54	GREEN
Bangalore	10	35	35	... 93	... 93	GREEN
Chennai	14	12	82	... 16	... 16	GREEN
Delhi	40	32	70	22	63	GREEN
Hyderabad	7	44	21	11	21	GREEN
Kolkata	7	37	64	34	59	GREEN
Lucknow	5	31	93	... 111	... 111	RED
Mumbai	18	2	54	13	24	GREEN
Pune	18	6	53	18	18	GREEN
Visakhapatnam	15	49	19	51	77	GREEN

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

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

**NO<sub>x</sub>:** Nitrogen Dioxide. 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<sub>2.5</sub> & PM<sub>10</sub>:** Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 pm, Palanpur, Odisha recorded an air quality index (AQI) score of 122 indicating a moderate level of pollution. In contrast, Shillong, Meghalaya recorded a healthy AQI score of 14

# 80 feared trapped as building collapses in Mahad

One dead; 15 residents rescued; green corridor opened for NDRF teams to reach crash site; CM assures support for rescue work

RAINA ASSAINAR  
NAVI MUMBAI

One person was killed and 80 people are feared trapped after a five-storey building, Tarique Garden, at Mahad in Raigad district collapsed at 6.45 p.m. on Monday.

The building in Kajalpura area housed around 45 flats. At the time of going to press, 15 people had been rescued. Of them, seven were injured and admitted to hospital.

Raigad Collector Nidhi Chaudhary said, "Three National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams are on their way from Pune. Fire brigade officers and local authorities are carrying out rescue operations. The building was constructed just 10 years ago, so the quality of construction could be behind the collapse."

A green corridor has been opened for the NDRF teams and personnel from police

stations in Mahad, Srivardhan and Mangaon have reached the spot.

Mahad MLA Bharat Gogawale said most residents are trapped under the debris. He said, "Some managed to escape as the building started shaking. They fled to safety on their own. We need more machinery and manpower for the rescue work. We are doing our best."

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray is in touch with Ms. Chaudhary and Mr. Gogawale and has assured them of all possible help. An information officer from Raigad said, "It has been learnt that Yunus Shaikh and Patel were the contractors of the building. Around 25 workers, one gas cutter, one generator, two earthmovers, two dumpers, and three ambulances have been deployed. A team of doctors has reached the site from Mangaon."



Reduced to rubble: The 10-year-old building collapsed at Kajalpura in Mahad tehsil on Monday evening. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

## Aaditya writes to PM for postponement of exams

He bats for new academic year from Jan.

ALOK DESHPANDE  
MUMBAI

Maharashtra Tourism and Environment Minister and Shiv Sena leader Aaditya Thackeray has urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to postpone physical and online examinations for all professional courses, including entrance exams, across the country.

He has suggested that the Centre consider starting the academic year from January 2021, instead of June/July 2020, so that no student loses the academic year.

"... Whenever in the world schools and colleges have reopened, a large number

COVID-19 cases have been found. In our country, most students live with their parents and grandparents, and the infections, if at all, can be fatal," Mr. Thackeray said in his letter on Monday.

"I request you to postpone all academic activity related to physical or online examinations for all professional courses. For non-professional courses, most of their academic assessment has been carried out and the final exam wouldn't amount to more than 10% of the assessment. Hence, the students may be passed on a marking system devised by the universities," it said.

Yester others expressed disaffection with the party organisation. "There has absolutely been no effort to reach out to the youth. The same old ineffective faces, be it All India Congress Committee general secretary Mallikarjun Kharge or [current Maharashtra party chief] Balasaheb Thorat or senior Congressman Digvijay Singh are being responsible

## Divisions at regional level too: Cong. leaders

'Young faces repeatedly sidelined by top brass, party riven with sycophancy'

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE  
PUNE

The split within the central Congress leadership mirrors the sharp division within the Maharashtra Congress and the Pune unit, party leaders said on Monday.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, a Congress leader from Pune said the party had not done any introspection following its losses in the 2014 and the 2019 Lok Sabha and the Maharashtra Assembly polls. "Young faces in the party have been repeatedly sidelined by the top brass. The party is riven with sycophancy," said the leader.

Yester others expressed disaffection with the party organisation. "There has absolutely been no effort to reach out to the youth. The same old ineffective faces, be it All India Congress Committee general secretary Mallikarjun Kharge or [current Maharashtra party chief] Balasaheb Thorat or senior Congressman Digvijay Singh are being responsible

## Congress minister asks dissenters to apologise

Kedar supports Sonia as president

ALOK DESHPANDE  
MUMBAI

Maharashtra minister and senior Congress leader Sunil Kedar on Monday criticised dissenters within the party and warned them that party workers would not let them travel within the State unless they apologised to the Gandhi family.

Naming three senior leaders from Maharashtra – Mukul Wasnik, former

rich legacy, it has failed to tap the resources and the potential of the young electorate. This is reflected today in form of an enfeebled National Students' Union of India, which has lost its vibrancy. How can one expect youth to be attracted to the Congress if there are no incentives for their growth? The same Pradesh Congress Committee delegates have held sway in the Pune and Maharashtra Congress for the last two decades."

### Refuting allegations

However, senior Pune Congress leader Mohan Joshi refuted suggestions of the leadership or the party organisation being in a state of disarray. "One must bear in mind that at this stage, only Rahul Gandhi can be a strong alternative to [Prime Minister] Narendra Modi. I do not think anywhere in the alleged letter the 23 leaders have expressed displeasure with the style of the Gandhi's leadership," he said.

ties which they have not been able to handle efficiently," said another local leader.

He said it was dispiriting that Mr. Kharge, despite being defeated during the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, had been

'promoted' by being offered a Rajya Sabha berth.

City-based analyst Rajendra Pandharpure said major sections of the youth had shifted towards the BJP. He said, "Despite the Congress's

IG of Police (Provision), Jharkhand Police Headquarters Ranchi, invites sealed Technical & Commercial Bids on behalf of Office of the D.G. & I.G. of Police, Government of Jharkhand For "Annual Maintenance Contract" of the IT Equipments To Jharkhand Police.

'Annual Maintenance Contract' of IT equipments as per the given in the bill of materials in the tender documents. A complete set of Bid Documents may be purchased by any interested eligible Bidder on the submission of a written application to the IG Provision Jharkhand Police Head Quarter, Dhurwa, Ranchi-834004 upon payment of a non-refundable fee of **Rs. 2500/- (Rupees Two Thousand Five Hundred only)** in the form of Demand Draft in favor of IG Provision Jharkhand Police, Ranchi, payable at Ranchi. The Bid Document may be purchased personally during office hours on all working days from 01.09.2020. Bidder can also download the Tender document from Jharkhand Police Web-site [www.jhpolice.gov.in](http://www.jhpolice.gov.in) in case the tender downloaded the bidder has to enclose a demand draft of Rs. 2500/- (Rupees Two Thousand Five Hundred only) in favour of IG of Police (Provision) along with the tender document.

Interested and eligible Bidders are required to submit the Technical and Commercial Bids in two separate sealed envelopes. The Technical and Commercial Bids should be accompanied by a bid security as specified in this Bid Document. The Bid Security (In the form of Demand Draft or Bank Guarantee) should be included in the same envelope containing the Technical Bid. The Technical and Commercial Bids along with the Bid Security must be delivered to IG Provision Jharkhand Police Head quarter, Dhurwa, Ranchi-834004 on or before **11.09.2020 till 3.00 pm**.

The envelope containing the Technical Bid and the Bid Security will be opened on the specified date & time in the presence of the Bidders or their authorized representatives who choose to attend. In the event of the date specified for bid receipt and opening being declared as a holiday for the Office, the due date for submission and opening of bids will be the following working day at the appointed times. The summary of various activities with regard to this invitation of bids are listed in the table below:-

**BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE**  
Office of the Executive Engineer, SWD-Dasarahalli Zone, BBMP, 9th Floor, 4th Block, Jayanagar, Bengaluru - 560 011.  
No.: EE/SWD/DHZ/TEND/03/2020-21 Date: 24-08-2020  
**INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER (IFT)**  
(Through Gok e-Procurement Portal only) - KW4  
Two Tender Document System

The Executive Engineer, SWD, Dasarahalli Zone, BBMP, Bengaluru on behalf of the Commissioner, BBMP invites tenders from eligible Registered contractors for the below mentioned works.

**SI. No.** Name of the Work Approx. Amount Put to Tender (Rs. in lakhs) EMD (Rs. in lakhs)

1 Construction of SWD U-Shape Drain at Abbigere Police Station Road to Juice Factory in Ward No.12 609.75 Rs.09.15 Lakhs (02.00 Lakh through e-payment and Rs.07.15 Lakhs Balance in the form of BG) or (Rs.09.15 Lakhs through e-payment

**Calendar of Events:** (1) Tender Documents may be downloaded from GoKe-Procurement portal <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in> from 27.08.2020.



## Back and forth

Pakistan must fulfil its FATF obligations by acting against terrorists

Pakistan's moves to tackle terrorism on its soil, particularly cross-border terrorism, have often been described as "one step forward and one step back", when it comes to the broader support terror groups have enjoyed within the country. Thus, it would come as little surprise that within days of issuing a "Statutory Regulatory Order" (SRO) listing (that included Dawood Ibrahim, the LeT's Zaki Ur Rahman Lakhvi, and about 85 other designated terrorists) directing officials to implement the UNSC committee resolutions against them, Pakistan's Foreign Affairs Ministry (MFA) denied that the listing was new. The listing had UNSC and Interpol information on at least five Pakistani passports and three Karachi addresses that belonged to Dawood, the former underworld don and the accused mastermind of Mumbai's 1993 blasts. However, the MFA says that the SRO did not imply an admission that he lives there. Instead, it argues, the move was a routine one, as a part of Pakistan's international commitments. Accordingly, Pakistan is required to align its domestic terror listings with those issued by the UNSC's ISIL and Al-Qaeda Sanctions Committee (under UNSC Resolutions 1267/1989/2253). Thus far, the domestic listing, maintained under the country's Anti-Terrorism Act by the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), had not included either Dawood or Lakhvi, who was tried briefly for the 26/11 attacks but was granted bail in 2014. In contrast, LeT chief Hafiz Saeed and JeM chief Masood Azhar, who was designated by the UNSC in May 2019, have been added to the domestic NACTA list. The MFA also claims that the listing that included Dawood and Lakhvi had been issued earlier, a claim countered by Indian government sources, who say this is a first.

The confusion over the SRO and Pakistan's disclaimer give credence to the belief that its government lacks a seriousness of purpose when it comes to its actions against all terrorists. If, in fact, the SRO had named these terrorists in past orders, then why has it failed to add them to its domestic listing? If it has included Dawood's addresses and passports on its own SRO, directing officials to ensure everyone on the list does not have access to funding, arms or travel, then for the Foreign Ministry to say it is paying lip service to the FATF directives, is a matter of concern. Finally, regardless of which list Pakistan places any of the terrorists named, and when it did so, the question is what has Pakistan done to investigate, prosecute and apprehend them? In October, Pakistan is expected to face some of these questions at the FATF plenary session, which will decide if its actions merit a reprieve from the grey or "increased monitoring" list, or be downgraded to the black or "high-risk jurisdiction" list and face sanctions. Pakistan needs to show proof of its actions on the ground, rather than going back and forth on the paperwork.

## People's parties

Resumption of political activity, and restoration of statehood are a must in J&K

Six mainstream parties of Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday vowed to work together for the restoration of its special status under the Indian Constitution. On August 5, 2019, the Centre hollowed out Article 370 and dismembered J&K into two Union Territories through a dubious legislative route. Saturday's joint declaration is a reiteration of their Gupkar Declaration a day before the Centre's move last year. Still, this signals a slow return of political activity in J&K which had been stalled for over a year. With leaders in jail and curbs on communication and gatherings, mainstream politics has been under lockdown even as militancy showed an uptick. Several leaders have since been released, but many still remain in detention, including former Chief Minister Mehbooba Mufti. Besides the PDP's Ms. Mufti, the declaration was signed by NC president Farooq Abdullah, People's Conference chief Sajad Lone, J&K Congress president G.A. Mir, M.Y. Tarigami of the CPI(M) and Muzaffar Shah of the Awami National Conference. They have said their "political activities will be subservient to the sacred goal of reverting to the status of J&K as it existed on 4th August 2019". Regional parties, the JKPM and the PDF, also supported the declaration.

The Centre's Kashmir strategy apparently assumed that mainstream parties had no popular support and would wilt once the heavy restrictions on their leaders stayed long enough. It also tried, rather naively, that a new cadre of politicians could be raised and a dramatic change in political culture achieved through external stimulants. Defectors from the PDP and panchayat leaders who won in an election boycotted by most parties completely failed to build any alternative politics. The Kashmir policy has been a mix of reckless audacity and ignorance, laced with the BJP's brand of unitary nationalism. Asymmetric power sharing with several regions and the Centre has been critical to the formation and stability of the Indian Union. The current government itself, which is ostensibly opposed to special arrangements, negotiated on one with Naga rebels. The Centre has also reiterated there would be no alteration in any of the existing arrangements in the Northeastern region. In the case of J&K, the mainstream parties with deep social roots have always welded the region close to India. The BJP and the Centre sought to delegitimise them all as 'soft separatists.' They were immobilised and rendered vulnerable before their own people. These moves undermined all elementary principles of democracy and federalism, but also impaired what the Centre claimed it was doing – closer integration of J&K with India. There is a need for immediate course correction. J&K's statehood must be restored and political activities should be freely allowed, for a start.

# India does need a Fiscal Council

Though it is not a silver bullet, it is an important institution needed to complement the rule-based fiscal policy



M. GOVINDA RAO

**T**he fiscal situation in India has been under severe stress even before COVID-19 and the novel coronavirus pandemic has only worsened it. The fiscal deficit of the Centre in 2019-20 as estimated by the Controller General of Accounts (CGA) was 4.6%, 0.8 percentage point higher than the revised estimate. For the current year, even without any additional fiscal stimulus, the deficit is estimated at about 7% of GDP, as against 3.5% estimated in the Budget due to a sharp decline in revenues. The consolidated deficit of the Union and States could be as high as 12% of GDP and the overall debt could go up to 85%. When off-Budget liabilities are considered, the situation looks even more alarming.

While the prevailing exceptional circumstance warrants loosening of purse strings, it is necessary that the government must return to a credible fiscal consolidation path once the crisis gets over.

### Need for transparency

Besides large deficits and debt, there are questions of comprehensiveness, transparency and accountability in the Budgets. The practice of repeated postponement of targets, timely non-settlement of bill payments and off-Budget financing to show lower deficits has been common. The report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) of India in 2018 on the compliance of the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act for 2016-17, highlights various obfuscations done to keep the liabilities hidden.

These include special banking arrangements for covering arrears

of fertilizer subsidy, issuing short-term bonds, unsecured loans and borrowing from the National Small Savings Fund (NSF) by the Food Corporation of India towards meeting food subsidy and its arrears, financing irrigation projects from the Long Term Irrigation Fund (LTIF) created by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD), and financing of railway projects through borrowings from the Indian Railway Finance Corporation (IRFC) are just some examples. We are familiar also with the cases of the Life Insurance of India buying out the Industrial Development Bank of India and the Power Finance Corporation buying out the Rural Electrification Corporation (REC) and remitting the money to the government as disinvestment proceeds.

In order to make the Budgets comprehensive, transparent and accountable, the 13th Finance Commission recommended that a committee be appointed by the Ministry of Finance which should eventually transform itself into a Fiscal Council to "...conduct an annual independent public review of FRBM compliance, including a review of the fiscal impact of policy decisions on the FRBM roadmap" (Paragraph 9.65). The FRBM Review Committee too made a similar recommendation underlining the need for an independent review by the Finance Ministry appointing the Council.

The problem is that a Council created by the Finance Ministry and reporting to it can hardly be expected to be independent. Therefore, the 14th Finance Commission recommended the establishment of an independent Fiscal Council which should be appointed by and reporting to Parliament by inserting a new section in the FRBM Act. Former Deputy Governor of the Reserve Bank of India, Viral Acharya, in his recent book, *Quest for Restoring Financial Stability in India*, also makes out a



case for a bipartisan, independent Fiscal Council.

### The mandate

A Fiscal Council is an independent fiscal institution (IFI) with a mandate to promote stable and sustainable public finances. Robert Hagemann ("How Can Fiscal Councils Strengthen Fiscal Performance?", OECD Journal: Economic Studies, Vol. 1, 2011; p.76) defines a fiscal council as, "...a publicly funded entity staffed by non-elected professionals mandated to provide nonpartisan oversight of fiscal performance and/or advice and guidance – from either a positive or normative perspective – on key aspects of fiscal policy". These institutions assist in calibrating sustainable fiscal policy by making an objective and scientific analysis.

First, an unbiased report to Parliament helps to raise the level of debate and brings in greater transparency and accountability. Second, costing of various policies and programmes can help to promote transparency over the political cycle to discourage populist shifts in fiscal policy and improve accountability. Third, scientific estimates of the cost of programmes and assessment of forecasts could help in raising public awareness about their fiscal implications and make people understand the nature of budgetary constraint. Finally, the Council will work as a conscience keeper in monitoring rule-based policies, and in raising

awareness and the level of debate within and outside Parliament.

### Diverse role, more acceptance

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), there were 36 countries with IFIs in 2014 and more have been established since. While most of the IFIs are in advanced countries, emerging economies too have also shown growing interest in them. Although their common agenda has been to function as watchdogs, there is considerable diversity in their structure and functions. The important tasks of these IFIs include: independent analysis, review and monitoring and evaluating of government's fiscal policies and programmes; developing or reviewing macroeconomic and/or budgetary projections; costing of budget and policy proposals and programmes; and presenting policy makers with alternative policy options. Over the years, monitoring compliance with fiscal rules and costing policies and programmes have become major tasks of these councils.

The OECD (2013) has documented the important principles needed for successful fiscal councils under nine broad heads and these are: local ownership; independence and non-partisanship; mandate; resources; relationship with legislature; access to information; transparency; communication and external evaluation. These principles are important, ensure autonomy, being unbiased, transparency, and effective and accountable Councils.

How effective have these institutions been? A study by the IMF ("The Functions and Impact of Fiscal Councils", July 2013), documents that the existence of IFIs is associated with stronger primary balances; countries with IFIs tend to have more accurate macroeconomic and budgetary forecasts; IFIs are likely to raise public awareness and raise the level of public debate on fiscal policy. Case

studies in Belgium, Chile and the United Kingdom show that IFIs have significantly contributed to improved fiscal performances.

In Belgium, the government is legally required to adopt the macroeconomic forecasts of the Federal Planning Bureau and this has significantly helped to reduce bias in these estimates. In Chile, the existence of two independent bodies on Trend GDP and Reference Copper Price has greatly helped to improve Budget forecasts. In the U.K., the Office for Budget Responsibility has been important in restoring fiscal sustainability. Cross-country evidence shows that fiscal councils exert a strong influence on fiscal performances, particularly when they have formal guarantees of independence.

### The final word

When the markets fail, governments have to intervene. What do we do when the governments fail? It is here that we need systems and institutions to ensure checks and balances. In that respect, a Fiscal Council is an important institution needed to complement the rule-based fiscal policy.

That is also true of the FRBM Act. While we cannot state that the FRBM Act has been an unqualified success, it has also not been an abject failure either. The counterfactual will show that things would have been much worse without it, and it has helped to raise the awareness of government, legislators and the public at large. Similarly, the Fiscal Council will help in improving comprehensiveness, transparency and accountability.

*M. Govinda Rao was Member, Fourteenth Finance Commission, and former Director, National Institute of Public Finance and Policy, New Delhi, India. The views expressed are personal*

# Reversing health sector neglect with a reform agenda

India cannot afford to be complacent in thinking that the pandemic alone will change the health-care landscape



SOHAM D. BHADURI

**T**wo countries which lead in the COVID-19 cases tally in the world today, namely the United States (first) and India (third), are also the ones where the need for health-care reform post COVID-19 has been most keenly felt. This is due to the lack of effective universal health coverage (UHC) in these countries, which has broadened concerns beyond the frontiers of an epidemic response into the larger domain of access, equity, and quality in health care.

**Legacy implications and UHC**  
This lack of UHC has a long legacy in both these countries, which they owe to multiple long-standing factors and historical reasons that have put a damper on the UHC agenda. This long legacy has two important and inter-related implications when it comes to health-care reform. First, certain entrenched characteristics of these health systems that have accrued over decades tend to dictate the terms of further evolution and lead to a number of compromises. Second, the long legacy itself comprises a path-dependent trajectory that precludes far-reaching health-care reform.

The US Affordable Care Act (ACA) can be an example of the first implication. It envisaged a

number of overarching measures to expand health insurance and improve access, including Medicaid expansion, essential health benefits, and discouraging risk selection in insurance. However, the foundational aspects of U.S. health care, such as a fragmented private insurance landscape and a love for expensive specialised care, could hardly be altered due to their entrenched nature. The ACA reforms were thus superimposed on such largely non-negotiable elements, which in turn constrained the nature and scope of those reforms. It is little wonder that the ACA has been not very successful on multiple fronts, such as ensuring access commensurate with insurance levels, and checking the rise of premiums and out-of-pocket costs. A similar set of entrenched and non-negotiable fundamentals, including weak public and pervasive private health care, will also impinge health-care reform in India.

### India's attempts

The government has looked poised to employ Ayushman Bharat-Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (AB-PM-JAY) health insurance as the tool for achieving UHC, and such calls have only grown stronger in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Plans are reportedly under way to extend coverage to the non-poor population under AB-PM-JAY, which currently covers the bottom 40% of the population. Taking the health insurance route to UHC driven by private players, rather than strengthening the public provisioning of health care, is reflective of the non-negotiability of private health care in India. This



could have several unwanted consequences, which merits attention.

Stark maldistribution of health-care facilities (almost two-thirds of corporate hospitals concentrated in major cities) and low budgetary appropriations for insurance could mean that universal insurance does not translate to universal access to services, much akin to what was seen under the ACA in the U.S. Thus far, insurance-based incentives to drive private players into the rural countryside have been largely unsuccessful, and experience suggests that the public sector could be the only effective alternative. Further, the Indian story has traditionally been one of aiming high with little homework. Envisaging universal health insurance without enough regulatory robustness to handle everything from malpractices to monopolistic tendencies is a case in point. This could have major cost, equity, and quality implications. For example, shouldn't there be a potent 'Clinical Establishments Act' before embarking on a universal scheme involving large-scale public-private collaboration?

A similar argument can be made about the National Digital

Health Mission (NDHM) conceived by the Centre. Integration and improved management of patient and health facility information are very welcome. However, in the absence of robust ground-level documentation practices and its prerequisites, it would do little more than helping some private players and adding to administrative complexity and costs like the electronic health records did under the US ACA.

One possible advantage for India over the U.S. could be a relative ease of integrating fragmented schemes into a unified system. The AB-PM-JAY has this ability, but it would require mobilising sufficient and sustained political consensus.

The second implication concerns path-dependent resistance to reform. The bigger and deeper the reform, the more the resistance. Covering the remaining population under the AB-PM-JAY presents massive fiscal and design challenges. Turning it into a contributory scheme based on premium collections would be a costly and daunting undertaking, given the huge informal sector and possible adverse selection problems. Meeting requirements through general revenue financing would greatly strain the exchequer and looks very unlikely especially in the immediate aftermath of the pandemic. In either case, an effective roll-out of UHC would require a robust regulatory and administrative architecture, entailing huge administrative expenses and technical capabilities. Harmonising benefits and entitlements among various beneficiary groups, and a

formalisation and consolidation of practices in a likely situation of covering outpatient care, are formidable additional challenges. While these would need to be pursued incrementally, the question arises as to how to push such a thorough-going reform agenda, especially against a backdrop of decades of frail capacities and neglect of the health sector.

### Upheaval yes, but also action

While upheavals offer windows for pushing reform, as Johnson notes, "the weight of past and pre-existing schemes strongly constrain and limit the impact of the most radical ruptures". We cannot afford to be complacent and think that the pandemic will automatically change the Indian health-care landscape. This is particularly important since the presence of the pandemic in the country could undermine its gravity and the perceived urgency for major reform. It will require mobilising concerted action from all quarters. Civil society would need to utilise this opening to generate widespread public consensus and pressure for health-care reform.

The fact that States with higher per-capita public spending on health have fared better against COVID-19 can be invoked to back the reform argument. At the same time, politics would need to recognise the unprecedented populist significance of health and marshal enough will to negotiate organised opposition to change.

*Dr. Soham D. Bhaduri is a Mumbai-based physician, health-care commentator, and editor of *The Indian Practitioner**

## 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.

### On Sputnik V

Major critics of the Russian vaccine also suffer from vaccine nationalism (OpEd page, "Russia is jumping the gun with its vaccine", August 24). The pandemic is swallowing precious lives globally in an unprecedented manner. While everybody is desperately trying out solutions, skipping bureaucratic processes and accelerating phases of the vaccine trial is understandable. It is not a crime. While Phase I for safety among 76 volunteers is perfectly acceptable,

Phase 2 for Immunogenicity and Efficacy among a minimum 100 is lacking as it falls short by 24 volunteers (in Russia). Further, Russia's Phase 3 trial for Impact and Effectiveness recommended among a minimum 300 volunteers is also definitely lacking. We should not deny the potential benefits of this vaccine in terms of immunogenicity and protection to the global community on the flimsy ground of "manufactured hurriedly in Russia". WHO and global researchers may

monitor the results of the ongoing Phase 3 trial and peer review the data before WHO's Prequalification for Global Procurement. Uncertainty of how long immunity will last and whether future mutations of the virus can be tackled by this vaccine hold good too for the Oxford, Moderna, COVAX and other vaccine competitors. There were similar objections orchestrated by pharmaceutical and the vaccine manufacturing corporate lobby of the western world whose eye is on profits more than

welfare. This was seen against anything Oriental. For example, initial objections in the West raised against the Chinese discovery of Artemisinin for Malaria, and a vaccine for Japanese B Encephalitis melted following demand by countries burdened with those diseases. This trend is not new.

**Dr. ANTONY K.R., Kochi**

### State of the INC

It is gratifying that a few in the Congress have gathered the courage to bell the cat to try and get the Congress

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Gandhi can hardly be expected to rejuvenate the party. The old guard should give way to young leaders who should be given a free hand to strengthen the party at the State level.

**V. SUBRAMANIAN, Chennai**

### CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:

In the article, "Thinking though the Nepal policy" (Editorial page, August 24, 2020), a sentence in the third paragraph should read: "A relatively minor dispute involving ... to claim a large wedge of Indian territory towards the west ... 400 square kilometres." (instead of east). A sentence in the fifth paragraph, "Nepal is now claiming that the main tributary of the Kalapani river rises east of the Lipu Lekh pass...", should be corrected to say 'west...'.

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# The challenge of catching elusive taxpayers

Various reforms have been introduced over the years, but none of them has worked



ARUN KUMAR

India's tax collection is set to decline sharply this year because of the decline in national income and fall in employment due to COVID-19. Simultaneously, expenditures related to the pandemic are ballooning. Thus, the fiscal deficit in the budget is set to rise unless other expenditures are cut. However, there are committed expenditures which cannot be curtailed and the deficit in the budget is set to climb to a new high for 2020-21. So, there is no option but to try and collect more taxes.

The Prime Minister unveiled income tax reforms to make the system faceless, painless and seamless. He stated that 15 million people pay income tax out of a population of more than 1.35 billion. This is the number for the financial year 2018-19. For 2019-20, the number of taxpayers may be similar given that the economy was slowing down and unemployment was at a record high. In 2020-21, the number would drop sharply due to the impact of COVID-19 and massive unemployment in the organised sector.

#### Drop in number of taxpayers

The number of tax filers has increased but the number of taxpayers has dropped. This is a result of the tax concession offered in the Budget – those filing a return up to ₹5 lakh do not have to pay a tax. Interestingly, in 2012-13, a year for which the government had released detailed data in 2016, the number of effective tax payers was 16 million. So, in spite of an increase in population and the laws introduced in the last six years to bring the rich into the tax net, there has been little change in the number of taxpayers. The fact that the direct tax to GDP ratio in percentage terms is stagnating at about 5.5% is another indication of this.

There are two categories of the well-off in the country: those who file a tax return and those who completely escape the tax net. If the former had declared more of their incomes, the tax to GDP ratio would



have risen. If those who were outside the tax net had come into the tax net and started filing their returns, there would have been a rise both in the tax to GDP ratio and the number of taxpayers.

A 2016 report says the top 10% of Indians earned 55% of the nation's incomes. If these people could be brought under the income tax net and they paid their taxes honestly, at current tax rates, income tax to GDP ratio alone would have been about 18%. Add to that the collection from other direct taxes, like corporate tax, and the figure would be more than 20%. This figure of 55% does not take into account the black income generation in the country. Clearly a lot of taxes are not paid out of white incomes and none from the black incomes.

Demonetisation was supposed to bring out the black incomes and turn them white so that the tax to GDP ratio could sharply rise. The government made repeated announcements about how many more people had come into the tax net after demonetisation and about how more tax would be collected. No such thing has happened as the Prime Minister's statement implies.

The government has been trying hard to tackle the large black economy. As soon as it started its innings in 2014, the NDA set up a special investigation team under court orders. It renegotiated the tax treaty with Mauritius to get back to India the money held abroad. But nothing seems to budge the rich (say, the top 1% in the income ladder) to pay more tax. Actually, the rich are fleeing the coun-

try. More than 23,000 high net worth individuals left the country in five years up to 2019. Embarrassingly, when the Defence Minister was in France last year to receive the first Rafale fighter jet, the CEO of Dassault Aviation said in a speech that India should not terrorise them with its tax and custom rules.

A considerable part of the tax filing process was computerised when e-filing and, earlier, PAN were introduced. These measures tried to catch people into filing honest returns.

Former Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha introduced the scheme of honouring honest tax payers. The government is again talking of it. The Vivad se Vishwas scheme was introduced to settle tax disputes. But none of these schemes seem to have delivered.

#### A new system

The government is able to trust neither the tax department officials nor the rich. So, it has decided to hand over the process of taxation to computers. The computer will decide who will assess the tax return of an individual. During the different stages of a case, different officers will be involved. That is why the new scheme is said to be faceless and anonymous so that no nexus can be formed between the taxpayer and the officer involved in passing the return, and money cannot be paid to evade taxes.

The department is being reorganised into assessment units, verification units, review units and technical units. There will also be a small unit to take care of past matters. Appa-

rently a pilot project was run last year to assess the efficacy of the new scheme of things. However, there is worry that the software can be manipulated by those who know the system.

There is an administrative problem. The department is grossly understaffed and officers have inadequate time to scrutinise cases. A few thousand officers have to deal with lakhs of cases. What takes a clever Chartered Accountant a few months to prepare cannot be deciphered by an officer in a few hours. Incomes of salaried employees are simple to estimate but the problem lies with estimating business incomes. To estimate them one needs to know the revenue and costs. Both are fudged through under-invoicing and over-invoicing. Businessmen declare their entire household expenditure as business costs. Even if a lot of computerised data are available it may prove to be inadequate. In 2016, before demonetisation, the government had initiated an Income Declaration Scheme. To scare people, the department announced that it had data on 93 lakh high-value transactions and would use it to catch people but this had little impact.

The highest tax rate has been brought down from 97.5% in 1971 to 30% (plus surcharge) now. After 1991, with new economic policies, the controls and regulations were sharply curtailed - the Monopolies and Restrictive Trade Practices Act, the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, etc. were removed. But the well-off have constantly complained that tax rates are high and there are too many controls; that they pay all the taxes but get nothing in return. This lament is rather unfair since they have gained the most out of the country's development. So, at what level would there be satisfaction that tax rates and regulations are fine?

This is an important pointer to the feeling of social injustice in every section of the population. The well-off who have gained the most complain of it and the poor live with injustice. There is massive alienation in society. The pandemic also points to this - the way vast numbers have suffered and why they do not heed the authorities.

*Arun Kumar is Malcolm Adiseshiah Chair Professor, Institute of Social Sciences*

## Reality on the big screen

While cinema doesn't have to be utilitarian, it can remind us of the need for empathy and public action

#### KUNAL RAY

Recently, the unfortunate crash of an airplane in Kozhikode shook the entire nation. It was widely discussed in the media as it should have been. Twenty people have died in the accident, including the pilot and the co-pilot of the aircraft. The tragedy felt even more acute because the aircraft carried people who were stuck abroad waiting to return home in these trying times. Kerala has had to deal with landslides and floods in several pockets of the State besides the ongoing COVID-19 crisis. The airplane crash added to its woes. However, more than 50 passengers injured in the crash have already been discharged from hospitals and are on their way home.



successfully contain the Nipah outbreak. Another film, *Trance*, though not based on a particular event, poses a warning about the pitfalls of blind faith. Several events interwoven into the film, about dubious 'godmen' and their pseudo miracles, are regularly reported in the media. There is thus a discernible tradition or, if I may say, a contemporary trend of turning recent encounters into films. Though this is not peculiar to Malayalam cinema alone, very few film traditions manage to do it as effectively as the Malayalam film industry. Screen adaptations like any other work of art are not free from artistic manipulations. Thereby they largely depend on the individual helming the project.

#### The task of movie-making

Having said that, cinema as an image-based medium has a wide reach which cannot be disputed. While cinema doesn't have to be always utilitarian, it surely has a role and responsibility in a film-loving nation like ours where audiences often attempt to memorialise their present and the past through films. People also express resentment and anger when films touch a raw nerve, ask difficult questions or seemingly offend their religious sentiments. This makes the Indian film audience a rather peculiar and vulnerable film-watching lot.

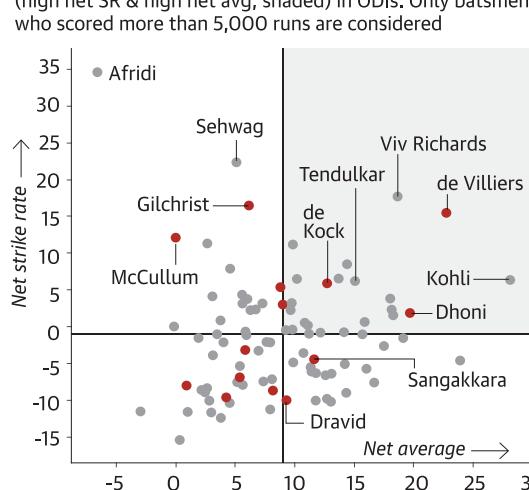
The purpose of a film should be determined by its maker but many of these choices are also guided by the times we live in and the sociopolitical climate that prevails in the nation. This makes movie-making an even more onerous task. For instance, if someone were to turn the Kozhikode incident into a film, not only will it document the rescue operation, it would also serve as an important reminder of human empathy in a world that has largely endangered such emotions. Cinema could do so much in such divisive and strife-ridden times and most importantly, remind us of the need for collective empathy and public action.

Kunal Ray teaches literary & cultural studies at FLAME University, Pune

#### DATA POINT

## The Dhoni distinction

**ODI record** | In terms of net average and net strike rate\*, Dhoni was among only three wicket-keepers (●) in the elite (high net SR & high net avg, shaded) in ODIs. Only batsmen who scored more than 5,000 runs are considered



**Captaincy** | The tables list the five players with the most matches as captains in ODIs, T20Is and Tests, and the five captains with the best win % in T20Is (at least 25 matches), ODIs (50 matches) and Tests (40 matches). Dhoni had a high workload, featuring in the top 5 for most matches as captain in both ODIs and T20Is. In terms of win %, he ranks among the top 10 in T20Is

Matches as captain	Win %	Matches as captain	Win %	Matches as captain	Win %
R. Ponting (230)	77.71	M.S. Dhoni (72)	80.61	G. Smith (109)	71.92
S. Fleming (218)	76.14	W. Porterfield (56)	78.37	A. Border (93)	62.33
M.S. Dhoni (200)	73.7	A. Stanikzai (49)	66.66	S. Fleming (80)	60.0
A. Ranatunga (193)	71.83	D. Sammy (47)	65.71	R. Ponting (77)	54.0
A. Border (178)	70.42	E. Morgan (46)	61.25	C. Lloyd (74)	52.27
	17. M.S. Dhoni (59.52)		9. M.S. Dhoni (59.28)		15. M.S. Dhoni (45)

SOURCE: ESPNCRICINFO | \* NET AVG/SR= PLAYER AVERAGE/SR DURING CAREER - OVERALL AVERAGE/SR OF ALL BATSMEN DURING THAT PERIOD

## Palestine, now a footnote

The Israel-UAE friendship shows how the substantive political issues of the Palestinian people have withered away



KHINRAJ JANGID

In an agreement brokered by the U.S., Israel and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have agreed to establish full diplomatic relations. This is a historic moment for Israel. For a long time, Israel was a state that no country in West Asia was to recognise, negotiate with or broker a peace with until statehood was granted to the Palestinians. However, Israel managed to achieve full diplomatic relations with Egypt in 1979 and then with Jordan in 1994. This is the third significant win for Israeli foreign policy where it has managed to keep the precondition of Palestinian statehood off the table and establish full diplomatic ties.

#### An unconventional statesman

Soon after U.S. President Donald Trump announced the joint statement from Washington, the Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, said it was a "historic day". This sudden development has surprised the world of diplomacy. Mr. Netanyahu has been

an unconventional politician. He has always been convinced that Israel can achieve peace with the Arab states on its own terms, without using the old-school formula of 'land for peace'. His Gulf diplomacy began a few years ago. He sought the participation of Israeli sports teams in international tournaments held in the UAE. The Israeli Culture and Sports Minister, Miri Regev, visited Abu Dhabi on an official state visit in 2018. On an invitation from the U.S., Mr. Netanyahu met Arab leaders at a conference in Warsaw in 2019. A video of this meeting, leaked by the Prime Minister's Office, showed Ministers of the Gulf countries defending Israel while speaking about the Iran issue.

Indeed, it is the Iran factor that has facilitated this friendship between Israel and the UAE. In fact, since the time Mr. Netanyahu announced that he would extend Israeli sovereignty over parts of the West Bank, there has been rhetoric against it. But because of Iran's rising regional influence, the UAE considers full diplomatic ties with Israel acceptable. Iran has sustained its nuclear ambitions and has been politically resilient despite regional and international coercion. Also, led by Saudi Arabia, the Gulf monarchies have been making desperate attempts to have a strategy with the U.S. and Israel for maintaining the status quo.

This diplomatic win comes for Mr. Netanyahu in the middle of a legitimacy crisis. He has been facing protests from the public in Jerusalem for more than a month. In the middle of the COVID-19 pandemic, thousands of Israelis have been demanding his resignation. The Jewish diaspora in the U.S. has also protested against him in solidarity with the Jews at home. In addition, he stands on trial on charges of fraud, bribery and breach of trust. Just when everything appeared to be out of control, he has surprised his supporters with this major diplomatic breakthrough. What makes this victory sweeter for him is the vindication of his decade-long policy that Israel will achieve peace on its own terms instead of making compromises and painful concessions.

#### Palestine, a non-issue in the region

The substantive political issues of the Palestinian people have withered away. For a long time, the Palestinian issue has become a non-issue in the region. When she got the news of Israel-UAE deal, Hanan Ashrawi, member of the executive committee of the Palestine Liberation Organization, tweeted: "We are nobody's fig leaf!" She also tweeted to the UAE leader, Mohamed Bin Zayed, "May you never experience the agony of having your country stolen... May you never be sold out by your 'friends'."

The question of Palestine was not a precondition or part of the deal that Egypt signed with Israel in 1979. Under Gamal Abdul Nasser's leadership, Egypt was the leader of the Arab world, but after Nasserism and the wars in 1967 and 1973, it realised that it did not have enough leverage to compel Israel to accept the two-state solution. This was the case with Jordan too, when it established full bilateral ties with Israel in 1994 leaving the Palestinian cause in the hands of Yasser Arafat.

The Palestinian issue is a non-issue for the Arab rulers because it is not an existential matter. There is solidarity among the Arab people with the Palestinians, but that's about it. The ruling class is not accountable to the public as most of the Arab rulers are not democratically elected and often make decisions depending on the situation in the region. That's how the Iranian factor has moved them closer to Israel. Yasser Arafat was right in believing that it is childish for the Palestinians to sit behind the autocratic Arab leaders. The agreement shows that the Palestinian national movement needs to be reawakened, but there is no Arafat to lead it.

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## The Hindu

### FROM THE ARCHIVES

FIFTY YEARS AGO AUGUST 25, 1970

#### India can take it

(From an editorial)

Foreign reporters tend to flock to trouble spots all over the world which are in the news. The Government of India seems to have taken strong objection to the British Broadcasting Corporation's coverage of Calcutta which has been the storm-centre of political strife for some time now. The External Affairs Ministry has gone so far as to ask the B.B.C. correspondent in India to leave the country, because his headquarters Organisation has been showing a series of documentaries of life in Calcutta by the French photographer, Louis Malle. Evidently, what has displeased the officials in New Delhi is that the B.B.C. took no notice of their protests and continued to show a series of Malle films on television which seemed indirectly to justify the rise of naxalite outrages in Calcutta. It is, of course, painful for any nation to have its defects described at great length in foreign papers or foreign films. But it is only in totalitarian countries that unfavourable reports are banned and correspondents expelled at short notice. We should be able to tolerate distortions and indictments since we ourselves engage in criticisms of other countries.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO AUGUST 25, 1920

#### Non-Co-operation

(From an editorial)

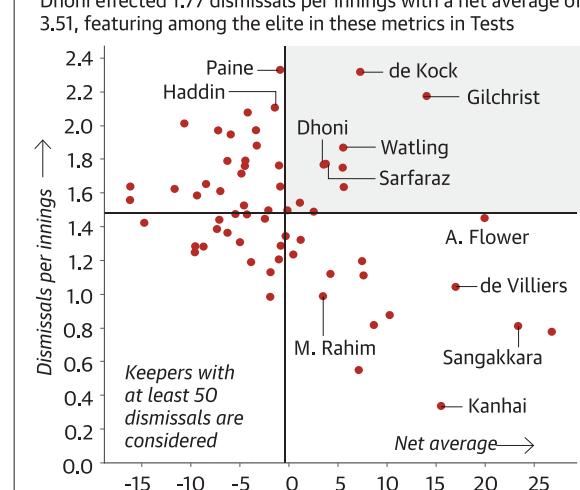
We desire to draw the earnest attention of our readers to the account published elsewhere of an interview with the Hon. Mr. V.J. Patel, Joint General Secretary to the Indian National Congress, who has just returned to India after ably championing the cause of this country in the land of its rulers. His opinions are entitled to particular respect because to an intense patriotism he has now added the weight of his experiences in England where he has been in touch with progressive circles, while there of the movements for self-determination in other lands such as Ireland and Egypt. His outlook on politics is not bounded by the parish-pump, neither does his patriotism run to impracticable extremes. That Mr. Patel's enthusiasm takes a more severely practical turn than that of others, we submit, is no reason for thinking that he is trying to move with the current. Mr. Patel was naturally impressed with the views upon the Indian situation held by our friends of the Labour Party.



#### DATA POINT

## The Dhoni distinction

**Test record** | The chart plots the number of stumpings and catches by a player per innnings against his net average in Tests. Dhoni effected 1.77 dismissals per innnings with a net average of 3.51, featuring among the elite in these metrics in Tests



**T20I record** | The tables list the five players with the most matches as captains in ODIs, T20Is and Tests, and the five captains with the best win % in T20Is (at least 25 matches), ODIs (50 matches) and Tests (40 matches). Dhoni had a high workload, featuring in the top 5 for most matches as captain in both ODIs and T20Is. In terms of win %, he ranks among the top 10 in T20Is

Matches as captain</th
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FROM PAGE ONE

## Sonia to stay on as interim Congress chief

Former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh then called the letter from the 23 senior leaders 'unfortunate' and asked Ms. Gandhi to continue until the next AICC session. Echoing him, senior Kerala leader and former defence minister A.K. Antony called "the contents of the letter cruel" and asked how could party leaders write a letter that weakens the High command as well as the party.

### Rahul counters

Speaking after them, Rahul Gandhi questioned the timing of the letter when the Congress was vulnerable, fighting the BJP in Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh and his mother was unwell and hospitalized.

"Rahul ji said the BJP attacks the Gandhi family because of ideology but he was surprised to see our own leaders doing so and that too leaked in the media. He said it was an insult to his mother," a CWC member said who didn't wish to be identified.

Talking about the letter episode, former Union minister Bhanwar Jitendra Singh, known to be close to Mr. Gandhi, said there are *jaihanda* or traitors in the Congress party.

Later the party clarified that Mr. Gandhi had not ac-

cused the dissenting leaders of 'colluding with the BJP' as was initially reported by a section of the media.

Senior leader Ahmed Patel said he never expected Mr. Azad, Mr. Sharma and Mr. Wasnik to write a letter since he had told them that all of them could meet the Congress president. Referring to media leaks, he pointed out that several media outlets were giving a 'running commentary' of the closed-door CWC proceedings.

### Selective leaks

Mr. Azad asserted that selected portions of the letter were leaked to the media, and that the group had never uttered a word against the Gandhi family. He offered his resignation over accusations that the senior leaders had acted at the behest of the BJP.

Mr. Azad was the target of many CWC members, with A Chella Kumar going to the extent of wondering why one former Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) Chief Minister was never detained by the Centre post dilution of Article 370 when all others were.

Mr. Azad responded that one should see parliamentary records to know how much he attacked the Modi government.

## SC to study 'effect' of Bhushan statement

Mr. Bhushan said he had never stood on ceremony for offering his apology for a mistake or wrongdoing on his part.

"It has been a privilege for me to have served this institution and bring several important public interest causes before it. I live with the realisation that I have received from this institution much more than I have had the opportunity to give it. I cannot but have the highest regard for the institution of the Supreme Court," he said.

**'Last bastion of hope'**  
He stated that he believed the Supreme Court to be the last bastion of hope for the protection of the fundamental rights, the watchdog institutions and indeed the

constitutional democracy itself.

The hopes of the people vested on the Supreme Court in "these troubling times" to ensure rule of law and not the untrammeled rule of the Executive, he said.

"This casts a duty, especially for an officer of this court like myself, to speak up, when I believe there is a deviation from its sterling record. Therefore, I expressed myself in good faith, not to malign the Supreme Court or any particular Chief Justice, but to offer constructive criticism so that the court can arrest any drift away from its long-standing role as a guardian of the Constitution and custodian of peoples' rights," he noted.

## Rajasthan HC asks Speaker to decide on plea

The court had earlier refused to grant an interim relief through a stay on the participation of the six MLAs in the Assembly proceedings as the Congress legislators. On Monday, the court gave liberty to the BSP to file a disqualification petition with the Speaker, while disposing of its writ petition.

The six legislators – Sandeep Yadav, Wajib Ali, Deepchand Kheria, Lakan Meena, Jogendra Awana and Rajendra Gudha – had contested the 2018 Assembly election on the BSP symbol and defected to the Congress in September last year. All of them supported the Ashok Gehlot government in the voting on the confidence motion moved in the House on August 14.

The MLAs had submitted an application for merger on September 16, 2019, on which the Speaker issued an order on September 18, 2019. Mr. Dilawar had filed the plaint seeking disqualification of the BSP MLAs on March 16 this year, which was rejected by the Speaker on technical grounds on July 22.

With the BSP legislators defecting to the ruling party, the tally of the Congress in the 200-member Assembly had increased to 107. The BSP maintained that the merger of MLAs was unconstitutional because the par-

ty did not merge with the Congress at the national or State levels and the legislators could not merge with another party on their own.

After the Speaker rejected his plaint in the matter, Mr. Dilawar challenged the decision in the High Court through a writ petition on July 28.

The BSP also filed a writ petition the next day. The matter was later taken to a Division Bench, which directed that the Single Judge's notices be served on the six MLAs who were staying along with other Congress legislators at a resort near Jaisalmer.

**'Victory of the truth'**  
Reacting to the court's verdict, BSP-turned-Congress MLA Mr. Jogendra Awana said all the legislators were confident about the legality of their merger with the Congress, which they had done for strengthening the State government. "The High Court's judgment is victory of the truth," he said.

Meanwhile, the Assembly was adjourned sine die on Monday after the passage of 13 Bills in the session, which also witnessed a trust vote won by the government on its opening day on August 14 following a patch-up with dissident Congress MLAs led by former Deputy Chief Minister Sachin Pilot.

With the BSP legislators defecting to the ruling party, the tally of the Congress in the 200-member Assembly had increased to 107. The BSP maintained that the merger of MLAs was unconstitutional because the par-

## Infection rates hold steady in southern States

Cases in Telangana correspond to testing levels; local transmission affects Kerala health workers; 130 deaths in Karnataka

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD

Andhra Pradesh reported 86 COVID-19 deaths and 8,601 new infections on Monday taking the toll to 3,368 and tally to 3,61,712.

There were 89,516 active cases. So far 32.92 lakh samples had been tested, including 54,563 in the past day and the overall positivity rate was 10.99%. The tally of infections in East Godavari stood at 50,686.

Kerala had a total of 59,504 positive cases, with the addition of 1,242 cases on Monday. Active cases were at 20,323. The Health Department, confirming 11 more deaths, said the cumulative toll was 234. Three deaths were reported in Kasaragod, two each in Kollam and Thiruvananthapuram, and the rest from Ernakulam, Malappuram, and Kottayam.

Nearly 90% of Monday's cases were locally acquired infections, including 34 health care workers. No in-

### Back in business

As part of the unlock measures, several States have allowed public places to reopen. The graph shows the spread of the pandemic in the southern States

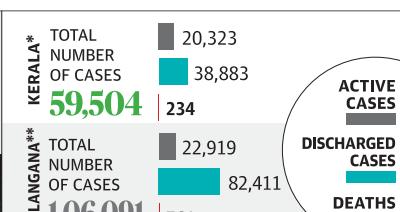


Fish eye: The Champakkara market, one of the busiest fish markets in Kerala, has been thrown open to public on Monday. ■ H. VIBHU

\*Kerala has a mismatch of 64 cases due to unaccounted deaths, missing persons | \*\*Telangana numbers are as of 8 p.m. on Sunday

\*\*\*Karnataka has 19 non-COVID deaths

fection source was known in 95 cases. Thiruvananthapuram reported 182 cases, including 17 health care workers, Malappuram 169 cases, Alappuzha 60, Ernakulam



165, Malappuram 186, Kannur 76, Kollam 112, Kozhikode 81, Thrissur 46, Kotayam 82, Pathanamthitta 6, Kasaragod 118, Palakkad 99, Idukki 19, and Wayanad 10.

Tests conducted in a 24-hour period stood at 26,186. Karnataka's case additions on Monday stood at 5,851 and total at 2.83 lakh. On mortality, 130 new COVID-19

deaths were reported.

Of 81,211 active cases, 768 patients were in intensive care. Bengaluru Urban had 1,918 cases. On Monday, 39,817 tests were conducted, 11,586 of rapid antigen type.

### 5,967 new cases in T.N.

Tamil Nadu recorded another 5,967 cases COVID-19 and 97 deaths on Monday. Of this, Chennai accounted for 1,278 cases (including one imported), while four other districts reported 300-plus cases each.

The fresh cases took the State's overall tally to 3,85,352. Another 6,129 persons, including 1,234 in Chennai, were discharged from hospitals. Till date, a total of 3,25,456 persons were discharged. Presently, 53,282 persons were under treatment.

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

## Veerendrakumar's son elected to RS

Shreyams bags 88 of 130 votes polled

STAFF REPORTER  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Loktantri Janata Dal (LJD) Kerala State president M.V. Shreyams Kumar was on Monday elected to the Rajya Sabha where he will fill the seat that had fallen vacant following the death of his father and former Union Minister M.P. Veerendrakumar.

Mr. Shreyams, who contested the poll as the Left Democratic Front (LDF) candidate against Congress leader Lal Varghese Kalpakavadi of the United Democratic Front (UDF), secured 88 of the 130 votes that were polled.

While Mr. Kalpakavadi garnered 41 votes, one vote was declared invalid. With only 69 first preference votes required for a win, Mr. Shreyams' victory remained a foregone conclusion.

Polling to the lone seat got under way at 9 a.m. and concluded at 4 p.m. Adhering to the COVID-19 protocol, only one legislator was allowed to enter the booth at a time. All members were subjected to COVID-19 test



M.V. Shreyams Kumar

prior to arriving at the Assembly.

### Fissures in KC(M)

While V.S. Achuthanandan, C.F. Thomas, and George M. Thomas abstained from voting for health reasons, those who decided against voting were BJP leader O. Rajagopal, and the Kerala Congress (M) legislators Roshy Augustine and N. Jayaram.

The KC(M) members, associated with the Jose K. Mani faction, defied the whip issued by the P.J. Joseph faction of the party to vote in favour of the UDF. Their abstention is likely to worsen the faction's strained relations with the UDF.

## Pinarayi weathers no-trust vote, slams Opposition

LDF defeats no-confidence motion by 87 votes to 40

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

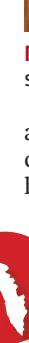
Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan predictably weathered a no-confidence vote against his government in the Assembly on Monday.

The Left Democratic Front (LDF) rallied behind Mr. Vijayan. It defeated the no-confidence motion moved by the opposition Congress-led United Democratic Front (UDF) by 87 votes to 40.

The UDF appeared diminished on the floor of the House after two MLAs aligned to the Jose K. Mani faction of the Kerala Congress (M) stayed away from the voting.

The 11-hour marathon debate saw the opposing fronts wrangle bitterly over a range of political hot potato talking points centred on the Chief Minister's Office (CMO).

Leader of the Opposition Ramesh Chennithala hovered over the alleged corruption at the CMO. He said



KERALA

He said Mr. Vijayan was at a loss to explain how Swapna Suresh, the second accused in the gold smuggling case, came to represent the

a cabal of corrupt bureaucrats and gold smugglers had held sway in the CMO since 2016. They had circumvented the due process of governance to earn kickbacks. At least three Central agencies were at Mr. Vijayan's doorstep.

"The Chief Minister has to clarify whether he colluded with Swapna and his former Principal Secretary M. Sivasankar or was beguiled by them. Either way, Mr. Vijayan has lost the right to continue in office," he said.

Mr. Vijayan's reply to the debate was simultaneously a progress card on governance and a strong indictment of the Opposition.

## 'Church takeover may lead to COVID-19 spread'

Kerala government files report in HC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
KOCHI

The State government on Monday informed the Kerala High Court that in the event of a forcible takeover of the Kothamangalam church, now located in a containment zone, the public, driven by religious fervour, are likely to gather, leading to a breach of physical distancing norms and super spread of COVID-19.

In a report filed in response to a contempt of court petition filed by the vicar of the Orthodox faction,

the government said the take-over of a church at Mullarangad in Idukki district had resulted in an assembly of 250-odd people belonging to the parish and the police had to forcibly remove them. The incident had resulted in a super spread of COVID-19 in the Mullarangad area of Vannappuram panchayat.

The Kothamangalam church is located in ward 17 of Kothamangalam municipality that had been declared as a containment zone.

It would become the first State to implement the poli-

## Karnataka to amend laws to implement education policy

Govt. going ahead with specific goals and agenda: Dy. CM

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
BENGALURU

The Karnataka government is making all preparations to bring in administrative reforms and amendments to the laws, which are essential to implement the national education policy 2020, said Deputy Chief Minister C.N. Ashwath Narayan, who also holds the Higher Education portfolio.

A high-level task force was constituted which has already

held several meetings, he said. The committee has already come out with suggestions to implement the policy in a phased manner. Only the recommendations of the final stage are awaited. The administrative and legal steps would be taken as soon as the final recommendations are made, the Deputy Chief Minister said.

The new policy would make high-quality education available to all students, he said.

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The new policy would make high-quality education available to all students, he said.

### IN BRIEF



#### Toll in Kozhikode plane crash rises to 21

A 37-year-old woman, injured in the Air India Express plane crash at the Kozhikode airport on August 7, died at a hospital here, taking the death toll in the accident to 21, government sources said on Monday. The woman died on Sunday night, the sources said. The flight from Dubai with 190 people onboard overshot the tabletop runway and fell into a valley.

#### Jagan for time-bound trial in corruption cases

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Monday said the government would invite reverse tenders in all sectors wherever the tender amount exceeds ₹1 crore and also bring in a legislation to fix a time line for completing the trial in corruption cases. At the review meet, a team from IIM-Ahmedabad submitted its report on good governance.

#### Lungs flown down to Hyderabad from Kolkata

Lungs harvested from a young brain-dead patient in Kolkata was flown down to Hyderabad in Telangana on Monday for transplantation. The recipient is an individual suffering from end-stage lung disease. Green corridors were formed in the two cities with the assistance of

## IN BRIEF



## Maoist material dump found in Odisha

BHUBANESWAR  
The BSF and the District Voluntary Force of Odisha's Malkangiri district have stumbled upon a material dump of the CPI(Maoist) in a forested area. The materials were stored for making country-made guns. "It is suspected that these products might have been used for illegal manufacture and repair of arms and ammunition to be used for anti-national activities," said the police. Meanwhile, a young Maoist, Mahadev Madkami, surrendered before the police on Sunday.

## NSG group conferred COAS unit appreciation

NEW DELHI  
Army Chief General Manoj Naravane on Monday conferred the COAS (Chief of Army Staff) Unit Appreciation to 51 Special Action Group (SAG) of the National Security Guard (NSG) in recognition of the group's outstanding achievements in combating terrorism, the Army said on Monday. The NSG was raised in 1984 and functions under the Union Home Ministry. The group's most noteworthy operation is the Operation Black Tornado, during which it eliminated eight terrorists during the 2008 Mumbai terror attack, freeing over 600 hostages.

## G. Satheesh Reddy gets extension as DRDO chief

NEW DELHI  
Dr. G. Satheesh Reddy, Head of the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO), has been given a two-year extension as the Secretary, Department of Defence Research and Development and Chairman of DRDO, beyond his current tenure of August 26, 2020. This was approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet on Monday. Dr. Reddy took over the post in August 2018.

## India and China prepare for fresh talks

Little progress in restoring *status quo ante* as the stand-off along the LAC enters 17<sup>th</sup> week

DINAKAR PERI  
NEW DELHI

As the stand-off along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh entered the 17<sup>th</sup> week, India and China are preparing for another round of military talks in an attempt to resolve the tensions, a defence source said.

"Both sides agreed to hold the next round of military talks. Discussions are under way on the issue but dates have not been fixed yet. Even the level at which the talks would be held has not been fixed yet," the defence source said. It could be either at the Corps Commander level or at the Major General



**Tight corner:** Army trucks moving towards Ladakh on the Manali-Leh highway on August 1. ■ PTI

level, the source stated.

This follows the diplomatic-level talks at the Joint Secretary level last week of the

Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination (WMCC) on India-China Border Affairs.

Following the WMCC talks, over the weekend Defence Minister Rajnath Singh reviewed the situation with National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, Chief of the Defence Staff Gen. Bipin Rawat and the three service chiefs.

## Five rounds so far

So far, five rounds of Corps Commander-level talks have been held but there has been little progress on the ground to restore *status quo ante* of pre-May positions beyond the initial steps taken for disengagement and de-escalation.

The last round of military talks were on August 8 at the

Major General level at Daulat Beg Oldie (DBO), specially to discuss the strategic Depsang plains where China has undertaken massive buildup of forces on its side of the LAC, and PLA troops have also been blocking Indian Army patrols from reaching the patrolling points.

Depsang Plains and Pangong Tso remain major areas of concern with Chinese troops continuing to occupy the ridgelines of Finger 4, about 8 km inside from Finger 8, up to which India's claim extends. There has been no change in situation on the ground, the source added.

## DRDO lists 108 defence items for Indian firms

It will help in development, design

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

A list of 108 military subsystems and components has been identified for development by the Indian industry and the Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) will provide support for the process, the Defence Ministry said on Monday.

"A DRDO delegation met Defence Minister Rajnath Singh to apprise him about 108 systems and subsystems which have been identified for designing and development by the Indian Industry only," the Ministry said in a statement. The DRDO would also provide support to industries for design, development and testing of these systems on requirement basis. All the requirements of these systems by research and development establishments, armed forces and other security agencies could be met through development contracts or production orders on suitable Indian industry, the Ministry said.



The Pinaka rocket launcher system was also developed with the DRDO's aid.

Medium Enterprises (MSME) along with Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs), ordnance factories and large-scale industries. The DRDO already offers its technologies to industry for manufacture at a nominal cost and has been providing free access to its patents.

## Negative import list

The announcement follows the 101 items on the negative import list issued by the Defence Ministry on August 9, which have to be domestically procured in a phased manner. This was part of a series of measures announced by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman in May to promote domestic defence manufacturing as part of the "Atmanirbhar Bharat" initiative. These include the negative import list, separate budgetary allocation for domestic procurements, indigenisation of spares and components and raising the FDI cap in defence through automatic route from 49% to 74%.

The development of the subsystems and components would be done over the next couple of years. The DRDO has been partnering with industry for many years, including the development of full systems like the Advanced Towed Artillery Gun System (ATAGS) and Pinaka rocket launchers, among others.

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Collaborating with DRDO in the development of major weapon systems the Indian industry has matured to a stage where they can develop systems on their own. Indian industry has progressed from a 'build to print' partner to 'build to specification' partner," the Ministry stated.

The present industry base for the DRDO consists of 1,800 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) along with Defence Public Sector Undertakings (DPSUs), ordnance factories and large-scale industries. The DRDO already offers its technologies to industry for manufacture at a nominal cost and has been providing free access to its patents.

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## SC rejects plea against merger of BSP MLAs

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday dismissed a plea filed by a BJP leader challenging the approval granted by Rajasthan Assembly Speaker C.P. Joshi to the merger of six BSP MLAs in Rajasthan with the ruling Congress party.

On Monday, a Bench led by Justice Arun Mishra found the petition filed by BJP MLA Madan Dilawar to be infructuous after it learnt that the Rajasthan High Court had, earlier in the day, given the Speaker three months to decide a petition filed by Mr. Dilawar for the disqualification of the six MLAs for defection. On August 13, the court had refused to stay Speaker Joshi's September 18, 2019 decision to recognise the merger.

Mr. Dilawar said in his plea that the Speaker, instead of accepting the merger, ought to have disqualified the MLAs.

+



**Sticky situation:** Congress leaders K.C. Venugopal and Randeep Surjewala addressing a press conference in New Delhi on Monday. ■ PTI

four are part of the CWC – Mr. Azad, Mr. Sharma, Mr. Wasnik and Jitin Prasada. Also, another CWC member, Deependra Hooda's father Bhupender Hooda, signed the letter.

These four were bitterly attacked during the meeting with many personal remarks directed at them. Gandhi family loyalist Ambika Soni said Mr. Azad is the only person who is holding a consti-

tutional position, as Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, after the 2014 debacle. Ms. Soni also raked up the subject of Mr. Prasada's father, Jitendra Prasada, having fought against Ms. Gandhi. According to sources, Mr. Prasada said it was unfortunate that the letter got leaked, but it was not to undermine the Gandhi family or weaken the party. He also said that he would welcome

any action that the CWC decides to take against him and other signatories.

Mr. Sharma, it is learnt, proposed during the meeting that the letter should be made public to clear the air that it did not target any individual. The suggestion was not agreed upon.

Senior party leaders indicated that there will be no immediate repercussion or disciplinary action.

## DNA Bill can be misused, flags draft report

House committee says provisions could lead to caste or community-based profiling

SOBHANA K. NAIR  
NEW DELHI

The Bill that proposes DNA sampling and profiling of citizens accused of crime or reported missing and storing their unique genetic information for administrative purposes has some alarming provisions that could be misused for caste or community-based profiling, a draft report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Science and Technology has flagged.

The committee, headed by Congress leader Jairam Ramesh, met on Monday, but for want of quorum, the draft report, which has been circulated among the members, was not finalised.

The DNA Technology (Use and Application) Regulation Act, 2019, has been in the



The report also red-flagged disregard to an individual's privacy and other safeguards. \*

ceptibility to diseases.

"Under the provisions of the Bill, access to such intrusive information can be misused to specifically target individuals and their families with their own genetic data. This is particularly worrying as it could even be used to incorrectly link a particular caste/community to criminal activities," the report noted.

## DNA database

The report also red-flagged disregard to an individual's privacy and other safeguards. The Bill proposes to store DNA profiles of suspects, undertrials, victims and their relatives for future investigations. "While there is a good case for a DNA database of convicts, so that repeat offenders may be easily identified, there is no legal or

moral justification for a database with DNA of the other categories as noted above, given the high potential for misuse," the report noted.

In the Bill, if a person is arrested for an offence that carries punishment up to seven years, investigation authorities must take the person's written consent before taking the DNA sample. But this consent is only "perfunctory", the report said.

"The Bill refers to consent in several provisions, but in each of those, a magistrate can easily override consent, thereby in effect, making consent perfunctory. There is also no guidance in the Bill on the grounds and reasons when the magistrate can override consent, which could become a fatal flaw."

(Bill premature Page 10)

works for 15 years now. Nearly 60 countries have enacted similar legislation, with the U.S. bringing in a law as far back as 1994.

The committee, in its draft report, pointed out that DNA profiles can reveal extremely sensitive information of an individual such as pedigree, skin colour, behaviour, illness, health status and sus-

ceptibility to diseases.

"Under the provisions of the Bill, access to such intrusive information can be misused to specifically target individuals and their families with their own genetic data. This is particularly worrying as it could even be used to incorrectly link a particular caste/community to criminal activities," the report noted.

A top EC official said the decision was in accordance with the Commission's rule not to hand over the photo electoral database as the police were allowed to view it at the CEO's office.

In a statement, the EC said its 2008 guidelines regarding sharing the electoral roll with government agencies were followed.

The guidelines state that the database with photos can be shared with government departments by special permission of the EC on a case by case basis due to "citizen privacy issues".

"It is hereby clarified in view of the anecdotal reports which are not based on empirical facts that the Commission has not in any way deviated from the original guidelines of 2008 and clarificatory orders of 2020 in any manner," the EC statement said.

## Criminal investigation

The poll body said criminal investigations could be challenged in court.

"It also needs to be stated that as far as criminal investigations by regulatory departments/enforcement agencies is concerned, it is under their own extant Acts, Rules and guidelines, which in any case can be challenged in the Hon'ble Courts of law. In fact, the entire super structure of criminal justice system is erected on this," the EC said.

However, keeping in mind the request by the Delhi police for electoral roll

with photos of electors of Northeast, Shahdara and East Delhi districts to match with the images of culprits as seen in CCTV footage, the EC allowed the CEO to 'display' the electoral roll with photos in his office to the investigating officers.

A top EC official said the decision was in accordance with the Commission's rule not to hand over the photo electoral database as the police were allowed to view it at the CEO's office.

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## TIRUMALA TIRUPATI DEVASTHANAMS: TIRUPATI NOTIFICATION

## Allotment of OLD REST HOUSES for RECONSTRUCTION / RENOVATION at TIRUMALA UNDER COTTAGE DONATION SCHEME

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh is inviting applications from the aspirant donors for Donor Constructed Rest Houses at Tirumala. All relevant details and documents can be downloaded from [www.tirumala.org](http://www.tirumala.org). The filled in application complete in all respects may be dropped in the sealed box kept in the office of FA & CAO, TTD, Tirupati during working hours on working days w.e.f. date of publication of notification till **03.00 PM on 24-09-2020**.

Sealed box will be opened at **04.00 PM on 24-09-2020** in the same premises.

Rec.No.PRA/13921/Adv.No./109/PR/2020; Dated:24-08-2020

EXECUTIVE OFFICER

## Infrastructure Corporation of Andhra Pradesh Ltd. (Under the control of Infrastructure &amp; Investment Dept., GoAP)

## Request for Proposal (RFP) - International Competitive Bidding

RFP Notice No. INCAPP/PI/bheemunipatnam to BIA Road/DPR/13/2020 Date: 24-08-2020

Proposals are invited from reputed national / international firms for Preparation of Detailed Project Report for providing Road Connectivity from Bheemunipatnam to Bhogapuram International Airport (6 Lane / 8 Lane) in Visakhapatnam & Vizianagaram Districts of Andhra Pradesh.

Interested firms may download the RFP document from the Website: [www.incap.co.in](http://www.incap.co.in). The firms may submit their proposal(s) to the address as mentioned below and shall be delivered in hard copies no later than 15.00 IST, 09 September, 2020. (Proposal Due Date).

All other details including any Proposal Due Date extensions, clarifications, amendments, addenda, corrigenda, etc., will be uploaded only to the website of INCAP and will not be published in newspapers. Hence, bidders are requested to regularly visit the website of INCAP to keep themselves updated.

Address for communication : The Vice Chairman and Managing Director, Infrastructure Corporation of Andhra Pradesh Ltd., D.No.7-104, Anjaneya Towers, 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, 'A'-Block, Ibrahimpatnam, Vijayawada. Email: [incap@incap.co.in](mailto:incap@incap.co.in), website: [www.incap.co.in](http://www.incap.co.in)

For further details and queries please contact Chief General Manager (Technical) INCAP, Ph: 09154143314, email: [cgmt@incap.co.in](mailto:cgmt@incap.co.in)

DIPR/273PP/CL, Dt:24.08.2020 Sd/- Vice Chairman & Managing Director, INCAP

DIPR/C/6586

## KERALA STATE SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY MUSEUM

VIKAS BHAVAN (PO), THIRUVANANTHAPURAM-33

Ph. No.: 0471 230624, 2306025 Fax: 0471 230426

E-Mail: [directorkstm@gmail.com](mailto:directorkstm@gmail.com)

No. B/1775/2020

17/08/2020

## Exploratory Meeting

Globally reputed manufacturers/suppliers/solution providers are requested to attend exploratory meetings for the following projects to be implemented at the Science City, Kottayam as mentioned below:

- (i) Motion Simulator : 08/09/2020 - 11 AM
- (ii) Enhanced Reality/Virtual Reality : 08/09/2020 - 11 AM
- (iii) Musical Fountain, Laserium, Light & Sound show : 09/09/2020 - 11 AM

Venue - Kerala State Science and Technology Museum, Thiruvananthapuram

For further details please visit our website [www.kstmuseum.com](http://www.kstmuseum.com)

Director-in-charge

Nirm

# 'Consider online NEET from next year'

SC refuses to order authorities to set up centres abroad; entrance exam fixed for September 13

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday asked the Medical Council of India (MCI) to consider providing an online option for taking the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance (NEET) from next year.

"If Joint Entrance Examination [JEE] is allowed online, why not NEET? It is the same National Testing Agency [NTA] conducting both exams. Why can't you think of something next year... You can think about it," Justice L. Nageswara Rao, heading a three-judge Bench, orally addressed MCI counsel Gaurav Sharma during the virtual court hearing.

But the court refused to order authorities to set up exam centres abroad or have the NEET held online this year to facilitate candidates abroad, especially those in West Asia.



The entrance exam is fixed for September 13.

"Unless there is something arbitrary, how can we pass orders? You [candidates] live in Dubai, you have studied there. You want to come to India to write NEET, who is stopping you... Take the Vande Bharat flights. This year it is too late," Justice Rao said.

Advocate Haris Beeraan, representing the interests of the candidates, said it was hard for students to travel to India amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Besides, they would be quarantined once

they reach here.

In response, the court said there was still enough time to take a Vande Bharat flight to India and complete quarantine here. The court requested Solicitor-General Tushar Mehta to consider facilitating travel for NEET candidates in these flights.

#### Quarantine norms

The court refused to order easing of quarantine norms for NEET candidates coming from abroad.

Both the court and the Centre said the fixing of a quarantine period was en-

tirely the prerogative of the State.

Mr. Beeraan had said the quarantine in some places in Kerala extended to 28 days.

"We have to take care of the health and welfare of the public too. Mr. Beeraan, you are in Kerala? There are 2,500 cases reported every day... Tell them [candidates] to catch the flights now itself and write the exams here. There are still days left," said Justice Rao.

The court, however, acquiesced to Mr. Beeraan's plea that students could approach the respective State governments to relax quarantine.

Mr. Beeraan had argued that a large number of students were appearing for both the JEE and the NEET. It would be impossible for these students to take the JEE, which is held between September 1 to September 6,

fly to India, observe quarantine and then appear physically for the NEET on September 13.

"Sixty percent of students who take the NEET are also aspirants of the JEE. The JEE has both online and exam centres in various places, including Dubai and Doha," the lawyer submitted.

But Justice Rao reasoned that only a "minuscule" number of candidates appeared for both the exams.

"People who write the NEET would be from the medical branch of studies like physics, chemistry and biology... A large number of people start preparing for the NEET when they are studying in Class 10 or earlier," he observed orally.

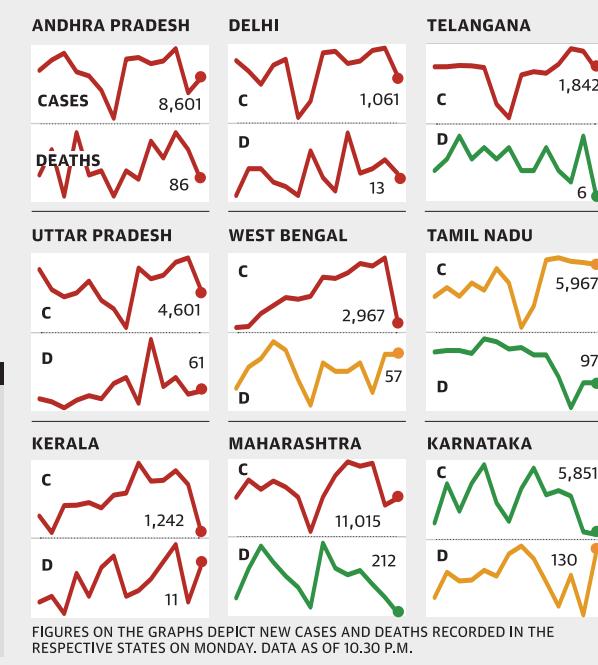
The court said the petition had not shown any arbitrariness in the conduct of the NEET. Hence the scope of judicial review was limited.

#### Viral tracker

With a surge of 58,377 new cases on Monday, India's COVID-19 tally stood at 31,63,513. As many as 1.9 lakh fewer samples were tested on Sunday, compared to the day before. Graphs depict new cases and deaths in the last 14 days across select States. The States are classified based on where cases/deaths are rising red; falling green; or flattening orange.

#### NEW CASES AND DEATHS

	CASES <b>58,377</b>	7 DAY-CHANGE <b>-7.9%</b>
	DEATHS <b>838</b>	7 DAY-CHANGE <b>-23.3%</b>



FIGURES ON THE GRAPHS DEPICT NEW CASES AND DEATHS RECORDED IN THE RESPECTIVE STATES ON MONDAY. DATA AS OF 10.30 P.M.

# Virus breaches another wall, four Bondas test positive

Pandemic reaches the tribal community in Malkangiri

SATYASUNDAR BARIK  
BHUBANESWAR

The COVID-19 pandemic has reached the Bondas, a tribal community residing in the hill ranges of Malkangiri district in Odisha. Four members of the community have tested positive for COVID-19. They have been isolated from the rest of the community members.



**Virus spread:** Bondas live in settlements in the hills of Khairaput block of Malkangiri. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

Bondas, a particularly vulnerable tribal group (PVTG), live in settlements comprising small huts in the hills of the Khairaput block. Their population is around 7,000.

"Three persons from the Bonda community from Muldilipada village and one from Bandhaguda village have tested positive. They have been sent to COVID-19 hospital. We have already declared villages as containment zones. Movements to Bonda hamlets have been restricted. We will send ambulance to carry out COVID-19 tests," Hrudaya Ranjan Sahoo, Khairaput Block Development Officer, told *The Hindu*.

Bissamcuttack and Kalyansinghpur blocks of the Rayagada district, having the Dongria Kandha tribal population, have so far reported 64 and 40 positive cases respectively. Similarly, 171 persons have been found infected in Lanjigarh block of Kalahandi district, where the Dongrias live. Cases were also detected in Luhunipada (Sundargarh), Barkot (Deogarh) and Pallahara (Angul) blocks, where Paudi Bhuyans live. Patrapur block, where the population of Saura is scattered, has reported 551 COVID-19 cases. Gajapati's Gamma block, which is home to the Lanjiasura community, had 295 persons infected by the COVID-19.

The government has translated COVID-19 awareness leaflets in 10 tribal languages to ensure that they are effectively utilised in the villages.

Meanwhile, Odisha on Monday reported 2,949 cases. With this, the State's tally jumped to 81,479.

## Bhushan files questions of law in SC on contempt

Bench to hear the case on August 25

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Advocate Prashant Bhushan on Tuesday filed a series of questions of law in the Supreme Court, including whether an expression of a bona fide opinion about the extent of corruption in any section of the judiciary would amount to contempt of court.

The questions have been filed in connection with a 2009 contempt case against him for his remarks about judicial corruption during an interview to *Tehelka* magazine. A three-judge Bench led by Justice Arun Mishra is scheduled to hear the case on August 25.

The Bench in the last hearing on August 17 had decided to launch a detailed examination into the circumstances under which a

## 'Substantial amount disbursed under OROP'

Plea says Centre reneged on promise

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday said the government had already disbursed ₹10,794 crore towards the One Rank One Pension (OROP) scheme for retired defence personnel.

"We cannot say the government has not done anything. It is not that they have not acted. They have disbursed substantial amounts," Justice D.Y. Chandrachud observed orally.

The petition filed by the Indian Ex-Servicemen Movement, represented by senior advocate Huzeifa Ahmadi and advocate Balaji Srinivasan and Shadan Farasat, accused the government of renegeing on its promise to implement OROP.

The bone of contention in the petition is that equalisation of pension would happen every five years.

It wanted automatic equalisation, whenever there is disparity.

## Plea for equal compensation to families of victims dismissed

State governments pay as per their financial power, says SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday declined a plea seeking formulation of a national policy for providing uniform compensation to families of those who died of COVID-19.

A Bench led by Justice Ashok Bhushan dismissed the plea saying every State has a policy and gives compensation as per its financial power.

#### National policy

Advocate Deepak Prakash, appearing for petitioner Hashik Thayikandy, said all he is asking for is a national policy.

He said in some cases, the Delhi government has given ₹1 crore as compensation while some States are giving ₹1 lakh.



**On tenterhooks:** People waiting to be tested for COVID-19 in New Delhi on Monday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

The Bench said it is dismissing the plea, after which the counsel sought to withdraw it.

#### Essential workers

The petitioner had also sought a direction to the Centre and the State governments to formulate an appropriate "compensation plan" to provide *ex gratia* to the kin of essential workers and healthcare workers who

have succumbed to the pandemic.

"The said citizens are also tax payers. In such a structure, whereby the death rate is only increasing at an alarming rate per day, it is imperative for the State to formulate appropriate guidelines, on compassionate grounds, for compensation to families of the COVID-19 casualties," the plea had said.

The Bill proposes DNA sampling and profiling of citizens accused of crime or reported missing and storing their unique genetic information for administrative purposes. The committee said in the absence of a robust data protection legislation, the security of a huge number of DNA profiles that will be placed with the National DNA Data bank and its regional centres is questionable. The draft report also red-flagged certain provisions of the Bill.

The Bill permits retention of DNA found at a crime scene in perpetuity, even if conviction of the offender has been overturned. The committee urged the government to amend the provisions to ensure that if the person has been found innocent his DNA profile must be removed immediately from the data bank.

The committee recommended that independent scrutiny must be done of the proposals to destroy biological samples and remove

conviction of the offender has been overturned. The committee urged the government to amend the provisions to ensure that if the person has been found innocent his DNA profile must be removed immediately from the data bank.

The Bill also provides that DNA profiles for civil matters will be stored in the data banks, but without a clear and separate index. The committee questioned the necessity for storage of such profiles, pointing out that this violates the fundamental right to privacy and does not serve any public purpose.

## Parliamentary panel calls DNA Bill premature

DNA profiles from the database.

The Bill also provides that DNA profiles for civil matters will be stored in the data banks, but without a clear and separate index. The committee questioned the necessity for storage of such profiles, pointing out that this violates the fundamental right to privacy and does not serve any public purpose.

#### BRUHAT BENGALURU MAHANAGARA PALIKE

Office of the Executive Engineer, Kengeri Division, R.R. Nagar Zone, No.144, 2nd main, Jagajyothi Layout, Bengaluru - 560 056.

No: EE/KNG/TEND/16/2020-21 Date: 24.08.2020

#### INVITATION FOR SHORT TERM TENDER (IFT)

(Two Cover System) Call-1 (Through GOK e-Procurement Portal only)

The Executive Engineer, Kengeri Division invites tenders on behalf of the Commissioner, BBMP, Bengaluru from eligible Tenderers for the Construction of works detailed in the table below.

SL. No.	Name of the Works	Approx. Value of Work (₹. in Lakhs)	Amount Put to Tender (₹. in Lakhs)	EMD (in ₹.)
1.	Comprehensive Development of Roads and Drains in Ward No-130.	500.00	416.63	6,30,000
2.	Drilling of Borewells and Providing Water Supply Yashwanthapur Constituency.	500.00	416.63	6,30,000
3.	Improvements to Roads and Drains in Ullala Upangara and Ambedkar Nagar Cross Roads and Surrounding Areas in Ward No-130.	350.00	291.64	4,40,000
4.	Improvements to Roads and Drains in Satyasa Layout, Meenakshi Layout and Surrounding Area in Ward No-198. Hemigepura.	200.00	166.70	2,51,000
5.	Improvements to Roads and Drains in Vinayaka Layout, Police Layout and Surrounding Area in Ward No-198. Hemigepura.	200.00	166.68	2,51,000
6.	Improvements to Roads and Asphalt Resurfacing Patch Repairs and Asphaltating to Bad Reaches in Nagadevanahalli and Surrounding Areas in Ward No-130.	90.00	75.75	1,60,000
7.	Improvements to Roads and Asphalt Resurfacing Patch Repairs and Asphaltating to Bad Reaches in Jnanabharathi Layout and Surrounding Areas in Ward No-130.	90.00	75.75	1,60,000

**Calendar of Events :** (1) Tender documents may be downloaded in the e-procurement portal GOK from 01.09.2020 from 4:00 pm. (2) Last Date and time for Receipt of Tenders is 09.09.2020 upto 4:00 pm. (3) Opening of Bids on 11.09.2020 at 4:00 pm. (4) Pre-Bid Meeting will be held on 04.09.2020 at 4:00 pm in the office of the Chief Engineer, RR Nagar Zone, RR Nagar. Further details may be obtained from the above office during office hours on working days or from website: <https://eproc.karnataka.gov.in>

**Executive Engineer - Kengeri Division**  
**Pay Development Charges - Help to Develop Bengaluru**

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

Scheduled Caste and tribal organisations in Assam's Biswanath have upped the ante against the authorities after coming to know belatedly that nine boys accused of raping and killing a 12-year-old have been granted bail.

The girl was reported missing from her village near Gohpur on February 28. Her body, hanging from a tree, was recovered from a forest near the village the following night. The police subsequently arrested the nine boys from the same village. One of the boys was granted bail on May 23. The others were also released on bail within the next four days.

"We are not happy with the way the police handled the case and the sluggishness of the local court," said Bipul Hira, secretary of the Gohpur unit of All Assam Scheduled Caste Students' Union.

#### KARNATAKA POWER CORPORATION LIMITED

CIN : U85110KA1970SGC001919  
No: KPCL/2020-21/PS/WORK/INDENT/10334 Date: 20.08.2020

#### NOTICE INVITING BID-DOMESTIC COMPETITIVE BIDDING

## INTERVIEW | FAROOQ ABDULLAH

# 'People governing Delhi believe in no Constitution'

I never thought I would be repaid in this fashion... We never revolted against India, says former J&K Chief Minister

PEERZADA ASHIQ  
SRINAGAR

As National Conference president Farooq Abdullah takes the lead by rallying parties around the Gupkar Declaration to revive politics in J&K, which has by and large remained suspended after August 5 last year, he speaks of the bitter past and the tough future ahead.

Two political events – on August 9, 1953 and August 5, 2019 – have reshaped J&K's course. Are there any parallels?

■ August 9, 1953 was the first blow to the autonomy of the State. My father was arrested and was taken to the Udhampur Palace.

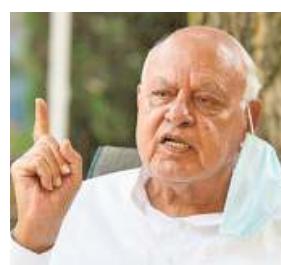
Our own Prime Ministers and Chief Ministers have betrayed the people. The erosion of Article 370 had taken place by our own people. Delhi was behind it but we were the instruments of theirs to do that. This time, the change was that they did not find our people to betray. They tried with the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) but couldn't do it. That is why this lady [PDP president Mehbooba Mufti] is suffering as they want to punish her. Yes, they tried to persuade a

splinter group of the PDP to implement changes on the ground. They failed. Thus they took this thing [revoking J&K's special status] to Parliament and their own Governor, with no Assembly or Chief Minister to back it. The people governing Delhi believe in no Constitution. I am sure one day if they have their way, they will throw the Constitution into Ganga or Jamuna. There is every possibility. These fascists can do anything.

Do you regret the decision to return to politics in 1996 on the persuasion of New Delhi at a time when J&K was facing the peak of militancy?

■ We sought guarantees from the Prime Minister of the day, P.V. Narasimha Rao. On the floor of Parliament,

he announced that "we will restore autonomy of the State to the sky, sky is the limit but no freedom or *azadi*". We never asked for *azadi* but for our rights to be returned. He promised. It's on that promise [that] I went to the polls and carried people with me. I was in London when Delhi sent me an emissary, Harkishan Singh Surjeet of the CPI(M), to see me. Before that George Fernandes came to see me and kept on telling me that the State is going downhill... I said I will come but first we will have to talk to the PM. Let him listen to us. Our senior colleagues met the PM and pointed out how it was for (NC founder) Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah that J&K chose for India because we have Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists. I never thought I would be repaid in this fashion. I always thought they would increase our degree of autonomy. We never revolted against India. My people died, my Ministers and workers died holding the tricolour. Did they realise this before they did August 5? Who



■ We never asked for *azadi* but for our rights to be returned

was here in 1996? Was the BJP here or any party? I was alone.

How were you treated during your detention?

■ I was treated like a criminal. That I am a thief and the three families have looted the place. That I am a terrorist. I wonder whether I would have been better off as a terrorist. It reminds me of an English saying "I wish I had served my lord more than I served the king, this would not have been my fate". I wish I could have served my people better and thought of them.

Did you meet former RAW chief A.S. Dulat as Delhi's emissary during detention?

■ Yes. He came to see me and he must have been sent by them to see whether I have come down, I have compromised and if I was ready for this or that. He had lunch with me. I said no. He later gave an interview, which they didn't expect him to do. That exposed them that they gave him a special plane. I don't think they talk to him any more.

Is the Gupkar Declaration also about an electoral alliance? The Declaration has a line in it "Nothing about us without us".

■ Elections are not. When announced, every party will decide first. And then collectively we will think about it and take a final decision.

People are accusing you of changing the goal post from the restoration of pre-1953 position to pre-August 5 position.

■ The National Conference (NC) stands for pre-1953 position and the Gupkar Declaration stands for August 4, 2019. The NC's fight will continue for that.

The Lt. Governor's administration claims a number of development projects are under way in J&K for the first time

■ The L-G sits in the palace and his great advisers click pictures of meeting with people. Could they show guts to go and meet ordinary people in a village or go to Jamia Masjid without security bandoobast and with every street blocked? They are living in the cuckoo world.

Why did you stay away from the official August 15 function?

■ We were invited for the LG's swearing-in when all of my people were locked up. How will Farooq Abdullah go and have tea when people are dying and suffering. I didn't go to August 15 as we celebrated it as a black day.



A cess will fetch funds and also force people to stop tobacco use, says the group

India has the second largest number of tobacco users (268 million) in the world – of these at least 12 lakh die every year from tobacco-related diseases, said the group.

Rijo John, health policy analyst, said that unprecedented financial resources would be needed for the country to recover from the economic shock COVID-19 had created. "A ₹1 compensation cess per stick of bidi and significant cess increases on cigarettes and smokeless tobacco products are expected to generate additional tax revenue to the tune of ₹50,000 crore."

## Delimitation Commission gets new office

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

The Delimitation Commission headed by Justice (retired) Ranjana Desai had already held four meetings and with the opening of its new office premises on Monday, it could start deliberations with associate members soon, the Election Commission said in a statement.

Justice Desai inaugurated the office located at Ashoka Hotel in the presence of Chief Election Commissioners Sunil Arora and Election Commissioners Ashok Lavasa and Sushil Chandra, who is also a member of the Delimitation Commission. "The Delimitation Commission has already started functioning since March 2020. All associate members have already been nominated for each State/Union Territory concerned," the EC said.

The Commission is in the process of redrawing Assembly constituency boundaries in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, among others. "The Commission has kept June 15, 2020 as the date for freezing of administrative districts in these States/UTs. With the opening of this office, it is hoped that deliberations with associate members would start soon to expedite the process of delimitation," the EC statement said.

# Guwahati gets India's longest' river ropeway

People dependent on ferries can now cross river in a jiffy

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
GUWAHATI

India's 'longest' passenger ropeway across a river was unveiled in Guwahati on Monday, almost a year after it was completed.

The 1.82-km bi-cable jib-back ropeway connects a forest campus near the Kamrup (Metro) Deputy Commissioner's office in the city on the southern bank of the Brahmaputra and a hillock behind the Doul Govinda temple in north Guwahati on the other.

The ropeway passes over the mid-river Peacock Island that houses Umananda, a medieval Shiva temple.

## Scenic ride

"The long wait for a ropeway is over. People dependent on ferry services to travel between the two banks now have an alternative that also offers a view," Assam's Finance and Health Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said after unveiling the ropeway with Guwahati Development Department Minister Siddhartha Bhattacharya.

The ₹56.08-crore ropeway project was assigned to the Guwahati Metropolitan Development Authority (GMDA) in 2006. The foundation stone was laid in December 2009, a year after a Kolkata-based firm was



**Rope trick:** Work on the ropeway connecting Guwahati city with north Guwahati began in 2009. ■ RITU RAJ KONWAR

awarded the construction work. A Swiss firm designed the cabins later.

The ropeway was scheduled to have been commissioned in May 2011 but an objection from the Archaeological Survey of India stopped the work in February that year. GMDA received the permission to restart the project in 2015 on the condition that a pillar on a heritage island be realigned.

"We are not sure about the second longest river ropeway, but engineers who worked on the project said

the Guwahati-North Guwahati ropeway is India's longest in its category. The longest on land, of course, is the one in Gulmarg, Kashmir," GMDA's chief executive officer Umananda Doley told *The Hindu*.

"We have installed CCTV cameras strategically to ensure security of the ropeway system," he said, adding that the trial run for the ropeway was done in 2019.

Each cabin could carry 32 people, including the operator, and the ride took about nine minutes one way, officials said.

# RSS organ pats Aamir, pans Devgn

Magazine lauds stars who continue making films based on nationalist sentiments

NISTULA HEBBAR  
NEW DELHI

Bollywood has come under the scanner of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's mouthpiece *Panchayta* with the cover story of its latest edition making a frontal attack on certain film stars, including Aamir Khan, as not being nationalist enough.

Magazine editor Hitesh Shankar told *The Hindu* that while it was true that Mr. Khan had made films such as *Lagaan*, *Sarfarosh* and *1857: The Rising*, his current actions were not of the nationalist hue.

"The meeting between Aamir Khan and Turkey's first lady Mrs Erdogan hurt feelings in India as the Erdogan government has been opposing India's legitimate actions in Jammu and Kash-



Aamir Khan

mir. We also wanted to decode why Aamir Khan was so popular in China compared with other Indian film stars, why *Dangal* did better there than *Sultan* (starring Salman Khan) which had almost the same content. Aamir Khan also endorses particular Chinese brands, and no one

flourishes in China till the Chinese state decides to promote them," Mr. Shankar said.

## Lost tradition'

The title of the write-up, *Dragon Ka Pyara Khan* ("The Khan beloved of the dragon"), is self-explanatory and lauds stars like Akshay Kumar, Kangana Ranaut and Ajay Devgn for continuing the "lost" tradition of making films based on nationalist sentiments or brave deeds of the armed forces.

"After Indian and Chinese forces faced off in Galwan Valley, film star Ajay Devgn announced a film on the incident. This was enough for a few English-speaking intellectuals on Twitter to mockingly state that after Akshay Kumar, the bug of nationalism seems to have bitten

Devgn. It seems Devgn's move sparked some vested interests," the piece says.

Streaming platforms have been lauded for a number of web series on issues of "nationalism" such as the Manoj Bajpayee-starrer *The Family Man* that the same magazine criticised when it first came out, on the grounds that some dialogues indicated a sympathetic view of the origins of terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir.

The criticism of Mr. Khan also mentions his comments at a journalism award function a few years ago where he spoke of growing intolerance in India and fears for his family's safety. At that time too, his remarks had created a controversy and Sangh Parivar outfits had termed them politically motivated.

The criticism of Mr. Khan also mentions his comments at a journalism award function a few years ago where he spoke of growing intolerance in India and fears for his family's safety. At that time too, his remarks had created a controversy and Sangh Parivar outfits had termed them politically motivated.

# Author puts the blame on Bloomsbury UK

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI

Advocate Monika Arora, one of the authors of a book on the Delhi riots that was dropped by its publisher, Bloomsbury India, on August 22, said on Monday that the decision was taken under "pressure from Bloomsbury UK". "Long live colonialism. The white man is indeed still ruling us," she wrote in a statement.

Ms. Arora said the book arose out of a report on the riots by Group of Intellectuals and Academicians that

was presented to Union Minister of State for Home Affairs G. Kishen Reddy on March 11.

"We worked on draft after draft, taking inputs from Bloomsbury editors and legal experts. The final draft was approved by Bloomsbury editors," she wrote. Without reading the book, she said the critics on social media said it blamed minorities. The book would now be

published by Garuda Prakashan, an Indian publisher.

"The book is based on thorough ground research. The authors interviewed persons belonging to both communities. The book documents the way that political forces and ideologically radicalised persons created a communal rift in the city from December 2019 over the issue of the Citizenship [Amendment] Act," she said.

## FAITH

# He obeys His devotees

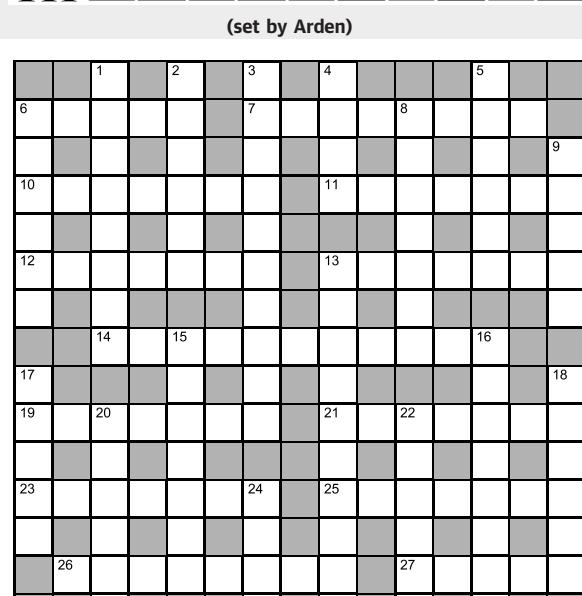
In Parasara Bhatta's commentary for Vishnu Sahasranama, name 626 is vijitamta. Sankara Bhagavadpada interpreted this to mean – He who has controlled His mind. Parasara Bhatta explained this as the One who lowers Himself for the sake of those who surrender to Him, despite Himself being the wealth of Lakshmi Herself. The next name is videyatma. Sankara took this as avideyatma, and gave the meaning as One who is subordinate to none. Parasara Bhatta, on the other hand, said videyatma means One who obeys His devotees. We see the Lord doing so even in His archa form, in which He should not move. But He broke this rule to obey His bhaktha, said M.A. Venkatakrishnan, in a discourse.

When Kani Kannan was banished by the King, Thirumazhisai Azhvar sang that since Kani Kannan was leaving, he too was leaving, and that the Lord of Thiruvekka should roll up His serpent-bed and follow them. The Lord obeyed Thirumazhisai Azhvar's order, and left! The King, realising his mistake, asked Kani Kannan to return, and Thirumazhisai Azhvar sang that since Kani Kannan was returning to Kanchi, he too was returning to Kanchi. "So, unroll your snake bed," he said to the Lord, and the Lord at once did as He was told. Thus the name videyatma is justified. We again see this when Krishna becomes Arjuna's chariooer. The warrior in the chariot would be seated while the chariot was being driven, and in the din in the battlefield, he would not be able to give orders. So, to indicate the direction the chariooer was to take, he would press his feet against the driver in different ways, to indicate the directions. The warrior was the one giving commands and the driver was the one who obeyed. Krishna submitted Himself to such treatment for the sake of His bhaktha Arjuna.

## TH CROSSWORD + 13023

(set by Arden)

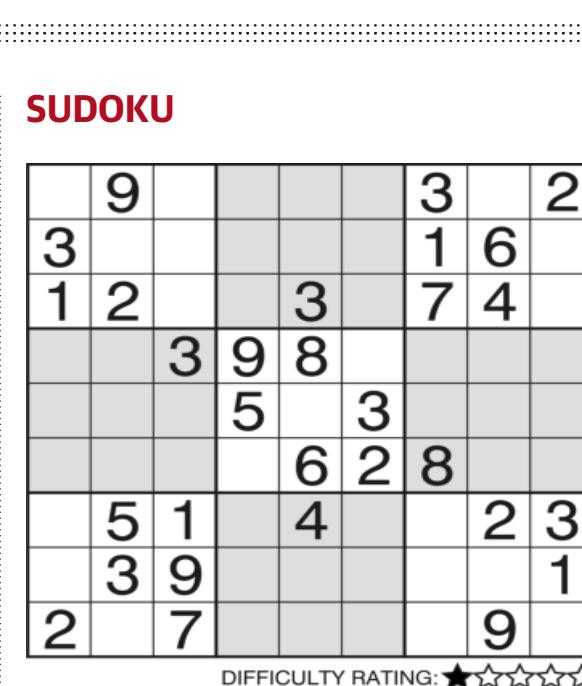
Are you good with numbers or better with words? Pick from Sudokus and crosswords.  
at <https://qrgo.page.link/jipTn>



## ACROSS

- Game covered by some fanatic (5)
- Central fund for one settled outside, is it fair? (8)
- Reduced work, drinking wine – that's relaxation in France (7)
- Wayward boy has to tell (7)
- A three-D representation is grounded (7)
- Vigilant about British incursion, one backs Canadian province (7)

## SUDOKU



DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

## Solution to puzzle 13022



## Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

## REVIEW



The Samsung Note20 Ultra 5G offers a distinct design and smooth function, complete with a stylus experience

## Pretty powerhouse

DIVYA KALA BHAVANI

In the early 2000s, we often laughed at the suits in the airport or at cafés who tapping away at their smartphones with little wand-like devices. It all looked ostentatious, and we knew it would take some special technology to make the stylus even seem cool. Then the S Pen from Samsung – a stylus for the Note range of devices – came along and things started looking up for the seemingly vestigial accessory. In fact, for this range of smartphones, it was not just an accessory, it was a part of the device's ecosystem.

Having taken the Note20 Ultra 5G for several good spins over the past couple of weeks, one of the biggest gaze-pullers is the design. I had the Mystic Bronze model. Thanks to the chrome rose-gold curved sides and the sleek side buttons with the flat top and bottom edges, the Note20 Ultra 5G has a luxurious feel.

If you thought the S20 Ultra was speedy, the Note20 Ultra 5G is a few levels up. One can

opt for either the 90Hz or 120Hz frame refresh rate. This device is also equipped with clever adaptive behaviours in refresh rate depending on your activity; streaming and gaming will occupy higher refresh rates while more monotonous activity such as basic browsing or texting will demand lower ones.

The aforementioned is helped by the Exynos 990 processor, which is manufactured on Samsung's new 7nm LPP EUV (extreme ultra-violet) process. The Exynos 990 has a triple-cluster CPU core set-up bettering power distribution and graphics improvement. It prevents annoying screen tearing and/or glitches for smoother animations. Thanks to this form of Machine Learning in the Note20 Ultra 5G, for a 4500mAh battery, the device is optimised to run all day and half-way through

**SPECIFICATIONS**

**DISPLAY:** 6.9" edge Quad HD+ Dynamic AMOLED 2X ; Infinity-O Display (3088x1440) ,496ppi, HDR10+ certified ; 120Hz refresh rate

**DIMENSIONS & WEIGHT:** 164.8 x 77.2 x 8.1mm, 208g ; S-Pen: 5.8 x 4.35 x 105.08mm, 3.04g

**S PEN:** Bluetooth enabled, Lithium Titanate Battery: Up to 24 hours of battery standby time ; Pressure levels: 4096, Pen tip diameter: 0.7 mm, IP68

**SENSOR:** Ultrasonic Fingerprint sensor, Accelerometer, Barometer, Gyro sensor, Geomagnetic sensor, Hall sensor, Proximity sensor, Ambient Light Sensor

**BATTERY & CHARGING:** 4500mAh ; Fast Wireless Charging 2.0, USB PD 3.0 (PPS) certified Fast Charging for wired charging (AFC and QC2.0 compatible)

ly and even if there is, it is not really noticeable.

The 0.7 millimetre-tipped S Pen is neatly tucked away on the right side bottom of the device for easy access. While I did not exactly end up like one of the aforementioned suits with their PDAs, I adapted to using a stylus fairly

quickly. There is a quick tutorial to understand the newer quirks to the S Pen as well as the existing basics. I found the S Pen helpful in getting precise shorthand done during interviews, and the Note 20 Ultra 5G quickly learned to keep that on hand for me as a go-to note-making option. The no-touch screen commands using the stylus also added some whimsy to my experience. The responsiveness of this gadget is strengthened by the Exynos 990, and has impressive standby power.

And the cameras: as usual, Samsung does well with the camera setups, barring one major drawback. With the weather changes heading towards more humid – even by Hyderabad standards – I caught a little condensation in the gaps between the lenses and device body. I often had to wait for the condensation to ride itself out, which was a little frustrating. However, as with our previous review of the S20 Ultra, the Telephoto, Portrait modes and Space Zoom produce quality results, with little to no compromise. Video recording is a delight as is audio capture with the in-device Dolby Atmos tech.

Ultimately, the Note 20 Ultra 5G is pricey at ₹10,499; you have to be sure this is the phone you want for the long haul. For those wanting a similar experience but not ready to commit just yet, opt for one of its less pricey counterparts such as the Note 9 or the Note 10.



### Second-life graduation?

Getting your certificate in the post can be anti-climactic to years of hard work. To alleviate this feeling for their students, IIT-Bombay's 58th annual convocation ceremony on August 23 took place in Virtual Reality to keep up with the physical distancing measures during the COVID-19 pandemic. "The Institute thought it best to arrange such a VR convocation for the graduating students so as not to put their health at risk but at the same time, not deprive them of the sense of achievement and pride of passing out of India's premier engineering Institute," IIT-Bombay said. The personalised avatar of each graduate received the degree certificate from the personalised avatar of the Director, Professor Subhasis Chaudhuri.

Speaking on the occasion, the director said in a statement, "Providing a Virtual Reality experience to all our graduates needed not only highly innovative steps but also a tremendous effort by our professors and staff. They did it for the students. Hopefully this will enthuse our graduates as well as other engineers in the country to think big and innovative."

"Producing top quality graduates who would be future leaders in industry, research and academia is the primary goal of IIT-Bombay. The skill they developed, the work culture they picked up and the peers they made during their studies at IIT-Bombay will help them achieve success in their lives. The entire nation will be looking forward to their contributions in taking our country ahead," he adds.

### GAMESPOT



## Homegrown epic

From a small studio in Pune comes Raji: An Ancient Epic, a superb indie game that captures the essence of India's rich mythology

JULIAN ALMEIDA

Mythology has always been a rich source to tap into for video games. Japan has done it time and time again, with games such as Okami, Nioh and countless more; India, too, has rich mythologies and its concepts and influences can be seen across several games. However, there have not been many that completely encompass our cultures, even from an Indian studio – until Pune-based Nodding Heads Games released Raji: An Ancient Epic, which is strong on story and gameplay, while

respectful in its representation of Hindu and Balinese mythologies.

### Rooted in fantasy

Raji is a classic tale of good versus evil, with gods and demons in an endless battle for control. The last great war had pushed the demons into the shadows but they have resurfaced again, led by the demon lord asura Mahabalsura, the invasion to take over the lands of humans has begun.

Raji, a nimble acrobat and tightrope walker and her brother Golu, a puppeteer, are street performers who are



caught and separated in the onslaught. Days later, Raji wakes up with powers, chosen by the gods to take on the demons as she sets out to find her lost brother, ultimately learning more of these mysterious powers.

The story is told through

### RAJI: AN ANCIENT EPIC

**DEVELOPER:** Nodding Heads Games

**PRICE:** Approx. ₹1800 on Nintendo Switch; coming soon on PC, Steam.

stunning 2D puppetry instead of traditional high concept rendered videos. The *tholu bommala* style of shadow puppets as cutouts are detailed, complete with the puppeteering sticks, artfully setting the stage for the story. Raji is a strong central character reminding me of Prince of Persia.

The voice acting is great, but it would have been even better with a Hindi voice over, with subtitles for international audiences, to complete the immersion into Ancient India.

*The writer is a tech and gaming enthusiast who hopes to one day finish his sci-fi novel*



## On war and wisdom

Offering a detailed virtual museum tour, the app TheRamayana.com is a modern way to explore the epic

NEERAJA MURTHY

freshers interested to work on this idea," Bhawan explains.

The team stuck to the Valmiki and Tulsidas' *Ramayana*, and guidelines were formulated. Eight students researched the locations and places mentioned in *The Ramayana*; different maps available online were searched and the team created their own to show locations that were believed to be associated with it and how they look now. "Hampi is Kishkindha, the kingdom of the Vanara King Sugriva. Dandakarna Forest (Rama passed through it in search of Sita) is in Chattisgarh. We also had to map according to the seven *Kandas* and ensure no story is missed out," informs Bhawan.

The perspective poll to different stories was added, to challenge the user's viewpoint on the story. The short stories with only 70 to 80 words (two minutes) are crisp and informative. The audio was created by students with theatre experience in college plays. "We have added no emotions or interpretations to what has happened. It is up to the reader to interpret and take the story the way they want," adds Bhawan.

The app was launched on July 20 after a month of its beta launch; it had crossed 850 downloads across iOS and Android till August 21.

*TheRamayana.com* is available for Android. The iOS version costs ₹299 while the Android version is free with in-app purchases.

Brinda Singh, head of the content research team, reached out to college students through social media. "Since the colleges were shut due to lockdown, many students were looking for internships. I could sense an opportunity and roped in talented

Cultural trip The Ramayana app screenshots

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



Raji's gameplay has several influences that bring it all together into one coherent experience, a multiplane platformer very much in the vein of the original God of War. The main character is graceful as she skilfully jumps over obstacles, manifesting magical weapons, to dispatch demons thrice her size. Each strike hitting with sparks and fireworks.

On the smaller Switch screen it is easy to lose Raji in the fray, as the camera seems to zoom out, making it very Diablo-like at times, with little arenas tailored to give you freedom with Raji's agile fighting style.

Not a very long game, there is a handful of well-crafted levels, that feels more a first step into creating a world that would hopefully span more games. The platforming also feels like Ubisoft's side-scrolling Assassin's Creed games, one of which was also set in India. Yet, the detailing and style in Raji feels a lot more historical in its setting, inspired by royal Rajasthan architecture.

A rare gem, Raji is a stunning game, lovingly hand-crafted with excellent art: towering statues lit in shafts of light, glowing illustrations on the walls, ancient wall murals and carvings, palaces lit with moody lanterns, the city in the distance, and even beautiful ornate doors with sunlight filtering through stained glasses.

If you own a Nintendo Switch, Raji lends itself well to hand-held gameplay which has us looking forward to seeing more releases from Nodding Heads.

For best results, however, it is recommended you play it connected to a TV. If you don't own a Switch, Raji is slated to launch on PC too, so hopefully it will make a jump into other consoles as well.

*The writer is a tech and gaming enthusiast who hopes to one day finish his sci-fi novel*

# Not missing a BEAT

Apart from standing in for offices and classrooms, homes now also have a dance studio avatar

APARNA NARRAIN

Fourteen-year-old Netanya Joel settled into a routine fairly quickly. Since March-end, after finishing her online classes (on school days), eating lunch and resting for a bit, she gets into dance mode: jazz on Fridays and Saturdays, and ballet on Sundays.

With nearly everything moving online, it is not surprising that many students have also taken to dancing in their own homes as their instructor watches and guides them via the computer.

While admitting that in-person classes are better because she gets to meet and chat with her teacher and friends, Netanya is pragmatic as she adds, "Since it doesn't look like dance classes will open any time soon, online classes are the only solution for us to keep up with our dance."

It is a lot harder for students and teachers to see just what the other is doing by focussing on a small box on the screen. Netanya says that in her case, the students are given the instructions and if they are not doing it right, the teacher shows them how to.

Her teacher Prerna Yadav, founder of The Movement Studio in Chennai, who also holds classes in contemporary dance, says: "I follow a syllabus for all the dance styles I teach. I realised it couldn't be entirely adapted to the online medium, that too immediately." So, the first thing she did was to come up with a new curriculum, depending on the class level and age group.



## Just dance

Lourd Vijay Dance Studio (9845239123)  
The Movement Studio (9884029319)  
Tarantismo (8884761444)  
Shiamak Davar's Institute for Performing Arts (022 61543000)



five and under to not taking new students. Apart from students dropping out, these measures also led to a drop in numbers: 55 students to 30 now.

Well-known dancer and instructor Lourd Vijay who runs the Lourd Vijay Dance Studio in Bengaluru, closed the space two weeks before the lockdown was announced on March 25 and started online classes soon after.

The studio has announced Latin ballroom classes for juniors in addition to an online party on Friday evenings. The studio offers classes in about 11 styles, including jive and swing.

### Silver linings

While they continued the old schedules online, by May-end, he says, people had realised that the situation was

not going to end and many were also facing lay-offs. "There was a huge lull in April till the beginning of June. Now, people have started enrolling in classes again (we have lost all our old students though). The June to August period has been a fresh start for dance schools all across the world."

According to Lourd, while an in-person class is irreplaceable, people have begun to realise the many benefits that online classes offer: "There is no hassle of travel. Parents especially faced a logistical nightmare when their children come for in-person classes, such as who will pick up the child and so on. It is also beneficial for people working from home; a perfect way to get some cardio in."

He adds, "From my perspective, if it is a huge group, I can't give personal attention to each individual. I think that online classes are a little more personalised because I can look at a screen, zoom in on a person, figure out how they are doing and tell them if it is wrong or can be better. The class is also recorded so we can go back to it."

Since it is online, the reach extends far beyond Bengaluru. "We have students from the US, parts of Southeast Asia, Dubai, Oman, and across India." It also opens up options for people from small towns.

While several dances such as jazz, ballet and hip-hop, can be learnt individually, others, like Latin ballroom rely on having a partner. Lourd explains, "All the dances right now are focussed on footwork. Every couple dance has a solo element to it. That is learnt first and then it is put together with the partner work. We are focussing on the solo element for the next few months. However, there are many couples who have joined. So that works well."

For Netanya, who has been dancing since she was six, there is nothing quite like it. "I love dancing. If you are angry or sad, you can just put everything in your dance and let it all out. You feel good," she says.



## The story of Kaathadi

Kaathadi, a YouTube channel built by teachers and students from the tribal communities in the Nilgiris, demystifies concepts of Science and Maths

K JESHI

How do camels walk so easily on desert sand? A two-minute video on the YouTube channel Kaathadi gives the answer using a simple experiment. Four identical glass bottles taped tightly are placed on a tray of sand, with some books on top for weight. Though the bottles begin to sink in an inverted position, they do not when placed upright. "Many concepts in science are difficult to visualise," says Maya Nathan, resource person of Kaathadi. "The



children inferred from the activity that camels' feet have large surface area, which exerts lesser pressure, and hence their feet don't sink."

Over 90 such videos on Kaathadi, in English and Tamil, teach Maths and Science concepts to primary and middle school children of Vidyodaya School at Gudalur in the Nilgiris. The School, started in 1996 by Viswa Bharati Vidyodaya Trust (VBVT), caters only to Adivasi children from Paniya, Bettakurumba and Kattunaikan communities.

"Learning by doing is the best way to understand concepts. We ask children to use any scrap, bottles, broomstick, or balloons that they find in their homes to experience



Think different Children at the campus ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

riment," says B Ramdas, founding trustee of VBVT. "Learning should not be confined inside the walls of the classroom."

The Vidyodaya Maths and Science Resource was set up to popularise the subjects among rural children, and eventually

Kaathadi came into existence about a year ago.

"Our videos feature on the Tamil Nadu Teachers platform, an e-resource for teachers in Government and Government-aided schools," says Deepak Chandra, resource person of the channel.

He says in most schools, subjects like Maths and Science are taught in an abstract manner. "We started with activities and experiments that could be done with easily available low-cost materials. Adivasi children bring rich experiences from their environment to the school."

All the activities uploaded on the channel have been tried in the school camps and then made into videos. Children learn about concepts like how air occupies space with an activity using a plastic bottle and balloon. In one of the videos, chickpeas and green peas are used to teach negative and positive integers respectively.

What is central is to get students to question and listen to them. Deepak gives an example.

"To get started off, we had a lesson on what causes day and night. Once the children understood the earth's rotation is the reason for

change from day to night, they started asking more questions like 'why does the earth rotate?' 'Even if it rotates why don't we feel it,' 'what about seasons'?"

To reach out, the videos are now dubbed in Adivasi languages. Two Adivasi youth: Karalan and Vishnu are currently dubbing Kaathadi videos to Paniya language.

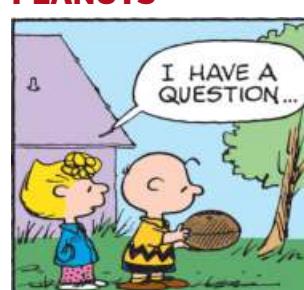
"The school has evolved as an Adivasi school with incorporation of Adivasi history, culture, songs and stories into the school's curriculum," says Shanti Kunjan (from Paniya tribe), correspondent, Vidyodaya School. "Children are encouraged to speak their languages."

Maya says the feedback has been encouraging. "In pandemic times, where teaching has been pushed to online learning, teachers say that these videos help engage with children."

## POOCHE CAFE



## PEANUTS



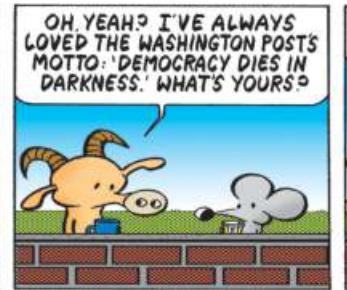
## HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



## TIGER



## PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



## HOMING IN

True crime is probably a genre not many podcast listeners would accept as their favourite. But, there are some wonderful true crime **Podcasts** that have scrupulous reportage, high-level investigative journalism as well as gripping narration

PRAVEEN SUDEVAN



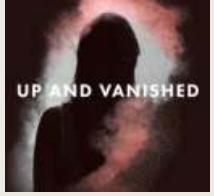
## Believed

When the Larry Nassar case unfolded in 2016, it rocked the sporting world, in the US (Larry, the official physician of the US

National gymnastics squad, was accused of sexually assaulting young women and girls for over two decades). In NPR-Michigan Radio's, journalists Lindsey Smith and Kate Wells attempt to answer significant questions of a heinous crime.

**Episode length:** 20-plus minutes on average

**Available on:** Google Podcasts, Apple Podcasts, believed.michiganradio.org



## Up and Vanished

This one belongs to the classic true crime genre. For, it involves a cold case, on-site investigation and a narrator, who would remind one of a crime-show detective. Host Payne Lindsey, a documentary filmmaker, in 2016, investigated the disappearance of an American high school teacher. He recorded his findings in a podcast. In 2018, Up and Vanished returned with a second season.

**Episode length:** 20 to 60 minutes

**Available on:** Google Podcasts, Apple Podcasts, upandvanished.com



## Dirty John

Conman John Michael Meehan's story is too dark and dramatic to be ignored by television. You can catch the series Dirty John on Netflix. But before the series came the podcast (of the same title).

And, within six weeks, it garnered over 10 million downloads. LA Times reporter Christopher Gofford stumbled upon the story during a trial that had a history of deceit and abuse.

**Episode length:** 40-plus minutes on average

**Available on:** Google Podcasts, Apple Podcasts, latimes.com and more

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

# Hong Kong reports first virus reinfection

Findings indicate COVID-19 may continue to spread among people despite herd immunity: researchers

REUTERS  
HONG KONG

A Hong Kong man, who recovered from COVID-19, was infected again four-and-a-half months later in the first documented instance of human re-infection, researchers at the University of Hong Kong said on Monday.

The findings indicate the disease, which has killed more than 8,00,000 people worldwide, may continue to spread among the global population despite herd immunity, they said.

The 33-year-old male was cleared of COVID-19 in April, but tested positive again after returning from Spain via Britain on August 15.

The patient had appeared to be previously healthy, researchers said in the paper, which was accepted by the international journal *Clinical Infectious Diseases*.

He was found to have contracted a different coronavi-



**Saving lives:** A woman donating blood plasma after recovering from COVID-19 in Washington. ■ REUTERS/FILE

rus strain from the one he had previously contracted and remained asymptomatic for the second infection.

"The finding does not mean taking vaccines will be useless," Dr. Kai-Wang To, one of the leading authors of the paper, told Reuters. "Immunity induced by vaccination can be different from those induced by natural infection," To said. "Will need

to wait for the results of the vaccine trials to see if how effective vaccines are."

World Health Organization (WHO) epidemiologist Maria Van Kerkhove said that there was no need to jump to any conclusions.

Instances of people discharged from hospitals and testing positive again for COVID-19 infection have been reported in mainland China.

## U.S. nod to plasma treatment

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
WASHINGTON

The U.S. announced an emergency authorisation to use blood plasma from recovered coronavirus patients as a treatment for the disease, which has killed more than 8,00,000 people globally.

The plasma therapy shows "an incredible rate of

success" and "will save countless lives", President Donald Trump claimed on Sunday – but that went much further than his own health officials' cautious welcome of the treatment.

Plasma is believed to contain powerful antibodies that can help fight COVID-19 faster.

However, in those cases it was not clear whether they had contracted the virus again after full recovery – as happened to the Hong Kong patient – or still had the virus in their body.

The preliminary number of patients in China who tested positive again once being discharged from hospital was 5%-15%, Wang Guiqiang, an infectious disease specialist in China said during a press briefing in May.

One explanation was that the virus still existed in the lungs of patients but was not detected in samples taken from upper parts of the respiratory tract, he said. Other possible causes were low sensitivity of tests and weak immunity that could lead to persistent positive results, he added.

# White House counsellor Kellyanne Conway to resign

Her husband, a Trump critic, also reveals change in plan

SIRRAM LAKSHMAN

Senior White House counsellor Kellyanne Conway has announced that she is stepping down from her position at the end of the month to focus on her family. Ms. Conway's announcement came after a weekend tweet from her daughter Claudia Conway, that said her mother's job had "ruined my life".



Kellyanne Conway

remotely from home for at least a few months. As millions of parents nationwide know, kids 'doing school from home' require a level of attention and vigilance that is as unusual as these times."

Ms. Conway said the past four years at the White House had allowed her "blessings beyond compare," and that she was "deeply grateful" to U.S. President Donald Trump. First

Lady Melania Trump and the Vice Presidential couple. "In time, I will announce future plans. For now, and for my beloved children, it will be less drama, more mama," Ms. Conway wrote.

Mr. Conway, a Republican lawyer and highly vocal critic of Mr. Trump, said he would be stepping back from Twitter as well as the Lincoln Project, a political action committee of Republicans seeking to defeat Mr. Trump at the ballot box.

"So I'm withdrawing from Project Lincoln to devote more time to family matters. And I'll be taking a Twitter hiatus. Needless to say, I continue to support the Lincoln Project and its mission. Passionately," Mr. Conway tweeted minutes before Ms. Conway released her statement.

# German doctors say Alexei Navalny was poisoned

Siberian hospital says no such finding; long-term effects, especially to the nervous system, could not be ruled out

REUTERS  
BERLIN

German doctors said on Monday that medical examinations indicated that Russia opposition figure Alexei Navalny, who is in a Berlin hospital after collapsing on a plane in Russia last week, had been poisoned.

Mr. Navalny, a critic of Russian President Vladimir Putin, had been flown to Germany for treatment on Saturday.

The Kremlin has said it was unclear what caused Mr. Navalny to fall ill and that initial tests did not show he was poisoned, as his aides charged.



**Ensuring safety:** Police officers standing guard outside Berlin's Charite hospital, where Alexei Navalny is being treated. ■ AFP

Berlin's Charite hospital said a team of doctors there had examined him in detail after his arrival.

"The clinical findings indicate poisoning by a substance from the group of active substances called

cholinesterase inhibitors," the hospital said in a statement.

### Cholinesterase inhibitors

The specific substance was not yet known, they said. The outcome remains uncertain but long-term effects, especially to the nervous system, could not be ruled out, it said.

Cholinesterase inhibitors are drugs that can increase communication between nerve cells in the brain. They are sometimes used to temporarily improve or stabilise the symptoms of people with dementia.

Common side effects of

cholinesterase inhibitors include vomiting, muscle cramps, headache and hallucinations.

Certain chemical classes of pesticides work against bugs by interfering with, or 'inhibiting' cholinesterase but they can also be poisonous, or toxic, to humans in some situations.

Mr. Navalny collapsed on a plane on Thursday last week after drinking tea while on his way to campaign in Siberia.

Early on Monday, the German government said it was "fairly likely" that Mr. Navalny was poisoned.

"We are dealing with a pa-

tient who it is fairly likely was poisoned," Chancellor Angela Merkel's spokesman Stefan Seibert said at a press briefing.

Doctors at the Siberian hospital that first treated Mr. Navalny said earlier on Monday they had saved his life but they had not found traces of poison in his system. They had not come under pressure from authorities while treating Mr. Navalny, they said.

Mr. Navalny has been a thorn in the Kremlin's side for more than a decade, exposing what he says is high-level graft and mobilising crowds of young protesters.

# Taliban delegation in Pakistan for Afghanistan peace process

Islamabad is playing a facilitating role on the Afghan issue'



Shah Mahmood Qureshi

A high-level delegation from the Taliban's political office in Doha arrived in Pakistan on Monday to discuss the way forward in the Afghan peace process with the Pakistani leadership.

The Taliban delegation led by their political chief Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar is visiting Islamabad at the invitation of the country's foreign office.

Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi told reporters that he would meet the Taliban delegation on Tuesday.

Initial pictures seen by showed soldiers carrying a man from the scene of the explosion near an Army truck while another victim lay on the road. The wreckage of a motorcycle and body parts were seen on the road.

He said that Pakistan was playing a facilitating role on the Afghan issue, which led to a peace agreement between the U.S. and the Talib-

an and now it's up to Afghans to decide the way forward.

The next logical step is intra-Afghan dialogue, which should be started at the earliest, he said, adding that China was also supporting the Afghan peace process.

The majority of Afghans believe the only way forward

is through reconciliation but the decision to reconcile has to be taken by Afghans themselves, Mr. Qureshi said.

He said the people in Afghanistan desire peace and stability but there are some spoilers, who want to disrupt peace in Afghanistan.

The Afghan Taliban spokesperson also confirmed that a delegation led by Mullah Baradar is visiting Islamabad and other capitals to discuss the Afghan peace efforts.

This is the second visit of Mullah Baradar to Pakistan in the last 10 months.

He visited Islamabad in October last year when President Donald Trump abruptly called off the peace talks with the Taliban.

The majority of Afghans believe the only way forward

# China launches warship for Pakistan Navy

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
BEIJING/ISLAMABAD

China has launched first of the four advanced naval warships it is building for Pakistan, amid deepening defence ties between the two all-weather allies.

The launching ceremony for the first warship was held at the Hudong Zhonghua Shipyard in Shanghai on Sunday.

The Afghan-Taliban defence ties turn a new chapter with the launch of the first ship of Type-054 class frigate, Pakistan's state-run APP news agency reported.

The Type-054 class, equipped with the latest surface, subsurface, anti-air weapons, combat management system, and sensors, will be one of the technologically advanced surface platforms of the Pakistan Navy fleet, the report said.

Pakistan signed a con-



Type-054 class frigate is set to be a surface platform of the Pakistan Navy.

tract with the China Shipbuilding Trading Company Ltd. (CSTC) on Monday, as it had agreed with the French government to pay €106 million in back taxes for its French operations over a 10-year period from 2009. It has also agreed to pay €8.46 million in taxes in the current year, a 50% increase from last year. AFP

Pakistan-China defence ties turn a new chapter with the launch of the first ship of Type-054 class frigate, Pakistan's state-run APP news agency reported.

The launching of the ship coincided with the second strategic dialogue between Foreign Minister of China Wang Yi and his Pakistani counterpart Shah Mahmood Qureshi at the Chinese holiday resort of Hainan on August 21.



### FB to pay €106 mn in back taxes to France

PARIS U.S. social media giant Facebook on Monday said it had agreed with the French government to pay €106 million in back taxes for its French operations over a 10-year period from 2009. It has also agreed to pay €8.46 million in taxes in the current year, a 50% increase from last year. AFP

### Austria to expel Russian diplomat over 'spying'

VIENNA Vienna will expel a Russian diplomat, Austria's Foreign Ministry said on Monday, as media reported he had been involved in economic espionage for years. "We can confirm that a Russian diplomat will be expelled," the Ministry said. AFP

# Threatened by disinformation, a monk flees Cambodia

Luon Sovath, who had spent decades fighting for human rights in the country, was targeted in a Facebook smear campaign

HANNAH BEECH  
SUN NARIN  
BANGKOK

In just four days, the reputation of a Buddhist monk who had spent decades fighting for the human rights of Cambodians was destroyed.

First, grainy videos appeared on a fake Facebook page, claiming that he had slept with three sisters and their mother. Then a government-controlled religious council defrocked the monk for having violated Buddhist precepts of celibacy. Fearing imminent arrest, the monk fled Cambodia, destined for a life in exile, like so many people who have stood up to Asia's longest-governing leader.

The monk, Luon Sovath, was the victim of a smear campaign this summer that relied on fake claims and hastily assembled social me-



**Frame-up:** Facebook has been criticised for being too slow in removing problematic accounts and pages. ■ NYT

dia accounts designed to discredit an outspoken critic of the country's authoritarian policies. A New York Times investigation found evidence that government employees were involved in the creation and posting of the videos on Facebook.

Under Prime Minister Hun Sen, the Cambodian government has repeatedly used

falsified Facebook posts or manipulated audio to defame and imprison politicians, activists and other human rights defenders.

Facebook has come under fire in the U.S. for disseminating hate speech and disinformation. It has been criticised for failing to detect Russian influence in the 2016 election.

But its influence is even greater in places like Cambodia, where the social media platform is the only digital interface for millions of people. Since civil liberties are often constricted in such countries, Facebook can be a powerful tool for autocrats to bolster their grip on the state, even as it provides a rare space for free expression and activism.

During his nearly 35-year rule, Hun Sen – a one-time soldier for the genocidal Khmer Rouge – has decimated Cambodia's political opposition. He has cozied up to China, eschewing aid from the West that was conditioned on improving human rights. Many high-profile activists and opposition politicians have been assassinated, their cases rarely investigated properly.

As scandals proliferate on

Facebook, Facebook has been criticised for being too slow in removing problematic accounts and pages, many fake. It took almost a month for Facebook to take down the page on which the videos smearing the monk first aired. "As a company, you would think they would want to be more vigilant and not allow their platform to be misused," said Naly Pilorge, director of the Cambodian League for the Promotion and Defense of Human Rights. "Facebook's reaction has been like little drops from a sink, so late and so little."

## MARKET WATCH

	24-08-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	38,799	0.95
US Dollar	74.32	0.69
Gold	53,040	-0.08
Brent oil	44.81	1.20

## NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	349.00	-5.35
Asian Paints	1962.15	4.15
Axis Bank	445.80	5.35
Bajaj Auto	3039.35	-13.80
Bajaj Finserv	6400.45	118.05
Bajaj Finance	3492.05	102.75
Bharti Airtel	526.90	6.65
BPCL	409.75	-0.35
Britannia Ind	3908.35	25.60
Cipla	751.75	-9.00
Coal India	139.80	0.30
Dr Reddys Lab	4472.55	-17.20
Eicher Motors	2176.45	6.21
GAIL (India)	101.60	-0.15
Grasim Ind	671.55	-5.80
HCL Tech	705.70	-0.20
HDFC	1829.85	25.80
HDFC Bank	1117.05	31.40
HDFC Life	598.75	-0.65
Hero MotoCorp	3015.05	-18.40
Hindustan	193.30	-2.95
Hind Unilever	2194.40	-7.65
ICICI Bank	380.35	9.20
IndusInd Bank	529.15	15.60
Bharti Infratel	199.50	0.00
Infosys	947.40	-1.40
Indian Oil Corp	88.35	-0.50
ITC	196.70	-0.10
JSW Steel	285.75	3.85
Kotak Bank	1387.25	47.85
L&T	991.35	-2.80
M&M	601.95	-7.85
Maruti Suzuki	7082.50	109.50
Nestle India Ltd.	16478.80	-83.15
NTPC	105.40	-0.55
ONGC	81.25	0.20
PowerGrid Corp	185.25	-3.85
Reliance Ind	2095.75	13.90
State Bank	201.45	3.05
Shree Cement	22210.75	-107.00
Sun Pharma	533.45	1.10
Tata Motors	121.20	0.30
Tata Steel	429.50	0.65
TCS	2246.10	-0.50
Tech Mahindra	722.50	-10.10
Titan	1126.65	-11.45
UltraTech Cement	4189.60	1.80
UPL	497.40	4.00
Wipro	272.70	-0.65
Zee Entertainment	201.60	9.55

## EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	74.11	74.43
Euro	87.73	88.12
British Pound	97.29	97.71
Japanese Yen (100)	70.08	70.38
Chinese Yuan	10.72	10.77
Swiss Franc	81.52	81.88
Singapore Dollar	54.13	54.38
Canadian Dollar	56.34	56.60
Malaysian Ringgit	17.73	17.83
Australian Dollar	53.28	53.51

Source: Indian Bank

## IN BRIEF



**Ashwani Bhatia takes charge as SBI's MD**  
MUMBAI  
The State Bank of India (SBI) on Monday said Ashwani Bhatia has taken charge as its MD. Mr. Bhatia is the fourth MD of SBI, with Dinesh Khara, Arjit Basu and C.S. Setty being the other three. He will be responsible for the IT and Stressed Assets Resolution Group (SARG) in the new role, the bank said in a release. He would be holding this position up to his superannuation, that is May 31, 2022, the bank said.

**Granules arm's insomnia tablets get USFDA nod**  
HYDERABAD  
The US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) has approved the abbreviated new drug application (ANDA) filed by Granules Pharmaceuticals Inc. for Ramelteon tablets, 8 mg. The product is bio-equivalent to the reference listed drug product, Rozerem tablets 8 mg of Takeda Pharmaceuticals and are used to treat insomnia characterised by difficulty with sleep onset.

**FDI in LLP construction development firms likely**  
NEW DELHI  
The government is considering a proposal to permit foreign direct investment (FDI) in limited liability partnership (LLP) firms engaged in construction development with a view to attracting overseas fund inflows, sources said. At present, FDI is permitted under the automatic route in LLPs operating in sectors where 100% FDI is allowed through the automatic route.

**Soota's Happiest Minds gets nod for ₹110-cr. IPO**  
BENGALURU  
ITfirm Happiest Minds Technologies has received SEBI approval to float initial share sale. The offer comprises a fresh issuance of shares aggregating up to ₹110 crore and an offer for sale of up to 3.56 crore equity shares. The firm proposes to use the proceeds from the fresh issue to meet long-term working capital requirements and for general corporate purposes.

# 'Agri profit growth may not aid rural demand'

With non-farming jobs lost, too many people dependent on farm income this year; individual workers' income may dip'

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Agriculture is one of the few bright spots in an economy ravaged by COVID-19, with good rains expected to boost production and profits, especially in the paddy crop. However, economists said individual farmers are unlikely to see any hike in their own income. The rise in COVID-19 cases in rural India is an additional cause for concern.

Presenting their outlook for the kharif or summer crop season on Monday, economists from rating agency Crisil forecast a 3.5% growth in farm gate profits this year, to an average of about ₹10,000 per hectare across 25 crops. However, reverse migration due to COVID-19 may have resulted in the



**Diminishing returns:** Surplus production and lower demand will push down prices for most crops except paddy.

number of people employed in the agriculture sector this summer rising by up to 16% over last year's overall farm employment, according to data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy. As a result, despite a hike in overall profits, per capita income may see a dip, some other economists opined.

"Because of the COVID lockdown, large numbers of people have gone back to rural areas, and apart from MGNREGA, there is not much work to be had apart from agriculture," said Himanshu, a rural economist from Jawaharlal Nehru University. "At least till the sowing season ends in August, there is demand for farm labour," he added. "This means, even if there is an increase in farm profits, it will not help in reviving rural demand, as too many people are dependent on farm income this year. At the end, what is important is the individual workers' income, and that is likely to go down."

CIMIE data shows that 111.3 million people declared their occupation as farming in 2019-20. By March 2020, this

had increased to 117 million, shooting up to 130 million in June. "There is never any loss of employment in farming," said CIMIE's Mahesh Vyas in an analysis of the data. "People just migrate out of farming, mostly voluntarily, in search for better paying employment. But, people who can, do migrate into farming when they lose non-farming jobs," he added.

## Breaching 120-mn mark

"Good rains and the consequent aggressive sowing absorbed a lot of the labour that was losing jobs in the non-farm sectors because of the lockdown. This was the first time that farm employment breached the 120 million mark, and it did so by a huge margin."

**Mittal hints at mobile service rate hike**

## PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

NEW DELHI

Bharti Airtel chairman Sunil Bharti Mittal hinted at an increase in mobile service prices in the next six months, saying that data at low rates is not sustainable for the telecom industry.

He said 16 GB data consumption a month for ₹160 was a tragedy.

"You either consume 1.6 GB of capacity per month either at this price point or may prepare to pay a lot more. We do not want ₹50-\$60 like the U.S. or Europe but certainly \$2 for 16 GB a month is not sustainable," Mr. Mittal said.

He also said average revenue per user may cross ₹200 in six months on digital content consumption.

## Axis to buy 17% in Max Life, instead of 29%

Regulatory hiccups led to the decision

## REUTERS

BENGALURU

Axis Bank said on Monday it has reduced the size of the stake that it plans to buy in Max Life Insurance to 17% from 29%.

The private-sector lender's move comes months after media reports said the deal, announced in April, ran into a regulatory road-block over certain clauses in the agreement.

## Terms not disclosed

The lender and the insurer did not immediately respond to requests for comment. The financial terms of the revised deal were not disclosed.

Axis Bank, which already



holds a minority stake in Max Life, will own an 18% interest in the insurer after the deal, the Mumbai-based lender said in a regulatory filing.

It had initially planned to raise its stake in the insurer to 30% for about ₹1,590 crore (\$214.54 million).

## Tough for Indian pharma to sustain Q1 performance: Ind-Ra

API prices to normalise with unlocking, says the rating firm

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD

Strong revenue growth in the active pharmaceutical ingredients (API) business segment and lower operational expenses that perked up the April-June performance of the Indian pharmaceutical companies are unlikely to be the same for them amid global unlocking, says India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra).

"With global unlocking, operational expenses and API prices would normalise. Ind-Ra does not expect Indian pharmaceutical companies to sustain the healthy operating performance reported during Q1," it said on Monday.

Growth in API business was primarily attributable to the export business. Indian API players benefited due to a thrust on supply chain conti-

nuity from customers and better inventory management in view of supply disruptions from China and the run up in the prices of API. Channel stocking also contributed to the growth.

Procurement strategies, however, are now gradually being recalibrated by customers as they look at diversifying sources away from China or seeking alternative sources for the same API.

There may also be price correction, as the sudden demand had led to prices of some APIs rising significantly.

## Big leap in mobile transactions during lockdown: SBI chairman

'Only nine out of 100 transactions being made at branches'

## SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

Mobile banking may become the most-preferred banking channel, superseding Internet banking, in the days to come, SBI Chairman Rajnish Kumar said.

"Out of 100 transactions at SBI, only nine transactions are being made at branches. While transactions at ATMs at the time of demonetisation stood at about 55%, these are down to about 30% now. Mobile banking has risen to 55% now," Mr. Kumar said, addressing the seventh G. Ramachandran Memorial Lecture organised by the Southern India Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

On the Centre's decision to bring down its stake in select PSUs, he said it was the governance and not the ow-

nership of a bank that mattered. Closure of any enterprise, be it public or private, is against the interest of the common man and the taxpayers of the country, he said.

**Cost vs revenue battle**  
Padmaja Chunduru, MD & CEO said over the next few quarters, the banking sector would face a misalignment between short-term costs and revenues due to the economic impact of COVID-19.

She also said that banks needed to review and prioritise current projects to ensure allocation of resources to the most pressing needs. Banks should also focus on investing in areas that will outlive the pandemic.

According to him, transactions via digital banking

had risen due to the lockdown. "During the pandemic, SBI delivered all its services without any interruption. Mobile transactions were almost on a par with Internet banking," he said.

The plan to open the next one in Hosur, Tamil Nadu by August/September has got delayed by a few months," he added.

"However, the civil works are on and we will start production by end-December," he said. In December 2019, Ather entered into an MoU with the Tamil Nadu government to set up the ₹635 crore plant in Hosur.

The new plant will have a capacity to manufacture

## EV maker Ather's plan to open Hosur unit delayed

₹635-cr. plant may commence by Dec.

## N. ANAND

CHENNAI

Ather Energy Pvt. Ltd., an electric vehicle (EV) maker, said its plans to open a second manufacturing facility in the South by September 2020 has got delayed by a few months following the outbreak of COVID-19.

"We have our first plant up and running in Bengaluru," Tarun Mehta, co-founder and CEO, Ather Energy, told *The Hindu*.

"The plan to open the next one in Hosur, Tamil Nadu by August/September has got delayed by a few months," he added.

"However, the civil works are on and we will start production by end-December," he said. In December 2019, Ather

## TV PICKS

**NBA:** Sony Six (SD & HD), 6.30 a.m.

**England vs Pakistan:** Third Test, Sony Six (SD & HD), 3.30 p.m.

**Tennis:** Cincinnati Open, Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 8.30 p.m.

## IN BRIEF



Doncic nails it on the buzzer for Mavericks

MIAMI

Luka Doncic nailed a game-winning three-pointer on the buzzer to lift the Dallas Mavericks to a 135-133 overtime playoff win over Los Angeles Clippers on Sunday.

**The results:** Boston Celtics 110 (Walker 32, Tatum 28) bt Philadelphia 76ers 106

(Embiid 30, Harris 20) **Celtics win series 4-0;** Toronto Raptors 150 (Powell 29, Ibaka 27) bt Brooklyn Nets 122 (LeVert 35) **Raptors win series 4-0;** Dallas Mavericks 135 (Doncic 43, Burke 25) bt LA Clippers 133 (Williams 36, Leonard 32) **2-2;** Utah Jazz 129 (Mitchell 51, Conley Jr. 26) bt Denver Nuggets 127 (Murray 50, Jokic 29) **Jazz 3-1.**

**Reprising 2013**  
Bayern also became a treble winner, as in 2013, by adding this crown to the Bundesliga trophy – won for an eighth successive season – and the German Cup.

# Bayern's season of joy is complete with a grand treble

Coman heads home the decisive goal in the 59th minute; Paris Saint-Germain pays the price for wastefulness in the first-half

## CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kingsley Coman headed Bayern Munich to a sixth European Cup title, scoring against boyhood club Paris Saint-Germain to seal a 1-0 victory in the first Champions League final to be played without fans.

As the costly front three of PSG – Neymar, Kylian Mbappe and Angel Di Maria – were frustrated in front of goal, it was a winger who was born in Paris and started his career at PSG who inflicted the blow.

The 24-year-old Coman ghosted in at the far post unchecked by the PSG defence and was ready to meet a cross from Joshua Kimmich in the 59th minute.

**Reprising 2013**  
Bayern also became a treble winner, as in 2013, by adding this crown to the Bundesliga trophy – won for an eighth successive season – and the German Cup.

Bayern joined Liverpool as

## German powerhouse

Bayern Munich set numerous records as it capped off a fantastic season with the Champions League title on Sunday



With 11 wins, Bayern is not only the first team to win all games in a Champions League (CL) campaign but also the first to win as many matches in a row in CL history

six-time champion of Europe, only behind AC Milan (seven) and Real Madrid (13). PSG's footballing super-

stars were subdued at a final which lacked the usual pre-match entertainment from pop stars.

Not that PSG lacked chances to take the lead at a final that should have been played in Istanbul in May,

rather than the Portuguese capital in late August when seasons usually begin not end.

COMPILATION BY ANANTAAJITH RA

## Poor weather frustrates England

Anderson still agonisingly short of 600 Test wickets

## PAKISTAN IN ENG

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
SOUTHAMPTON

James Anderson's bid to become just the fourth bowler to take 600 Test wickets was hampered by yet another dropped catch on Monday as poor weather frustrated England in the series finale against Pakistan.

Anderson, who started the fourth day's play in the third Test with 598 wickets, induced an edge from Shan Masood but wicketkeeper Jos Buttler floored a routine chance.

It was the fourth dropped catch in 37 balls off Anderson and the closest either he, or England, came to a wicket in the session in Southampton.

Pakistan was 41 for no loss after being made to follow on when rain stopped play and the players took an early lunch. Masood was on 13 and Abid Ali on 22, with Pakistan still 269 runs adrift of England's mammoth first-innings total of 583 for eight declared.

## Pakistan 80 for one

■ Pakistan was 80 for one in 43 overs with Abid (41) and Azhar (14) at the crease



**Ready to pouch:** Joe Root about to take the catch to dismiss Asad Shafiq off James Anderson's bowling on Sunday. ■ AP

A huge downpour during the interval then threatened to keep the players off the field for several hours.

With more rain forecast for Tuesday and no certainty

as to when England will next play a Test due to the coronavirus pandemic, Anderson could be left stranded on 598 Test wickets for some time yet.

## SCOREBOARD

**England – 1st innings:** 583 for eight decl.

**Pakistan – 1st innings:** Shan Masood lbw b Anderson 4, Abid Ali c Sibley b Anderson 1, Azhar Ali (not out) 141, Babar Azam lbw b Anderson 11, Asad Shafiq c Root b Anderson 5, Fawad Alam c Buttler b Bess 21, Mohammad Rizwan c Buttler b Woakes 53, Yasir Shah c Root b Broad 20, Shaheen Afridi c Buttler b Broad 3, Mohammad Abbas run out 1, Naseem Shah c Sibley b Anderson 0; Extras (b-2, lb-7, nb-2, w-2); Total (in 93 overs): 273.

**Fall of wickets:** 1-6, 2-11, 3-24, 4-30, 5-75, 6-213, 7-241, 8-247, 9-261.

**England bowling:** Anderson 23-3-56-5, Broad 20-5-40-2, Archer 17-3-58-0, Woakes 15-2-42-1, Bess 18-2-68-1.

**Pakistan – 2nd innings:** Shan Masood lbw b Broad 21, Abid Ali (batting) 31, Azhar Ali (batting) 2; Extras (lb-7); 7; Total (for one wkt. in 32 overs): 58.

**Fall of wicket:** 1-49.

**England bowling:** Anderson 9-3-14-0, Broad 7-2-19-1, Woakes 5-1-7-0, Archer 8-5-7-0, Bess 3-1-4-0.

## Call it a run out: Karthik



**Sounding out:** Ashwin running out Buttler.

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA  
ABU DHABI

Kolkata Knight Riders captain Dinesh Karthik finds it extremely unfair that the legendary Vinoo Mankad's name is used in a negative manner for a dismissal which is absolutely legal.

"There are two issues I have with this. First is the implementation of it. Second is the name 'Mankad' run out," Karthik was quoted by cricketnext website.

"All the way from Don Bradman to Sunil Gavaskar, everyone has said it's completely within the rules. The ICC and MCC have also taken a stand that it is okay. So I don't see the reason why bowlers or any team that does it is looked at in a negative way."

Karthik said the dismissal should not be called 'Mankading', especially when the ICC and MCC call it just a run out.

"If we get harmed by his absence, then the whole

team, system, and culture

loses. I want everyone to understand the repercussions if someone violates any of the rules," Kohli stated.

RCB, or indeed any franchise, will be keen to avoid a repeat of a breach that occurred in England recently.

The England-West Indies Test series, held in a similar

bio-secure bubble setting,

saw England pacer Jofra Archer being fined and warned for making an unauthorised visit to his home in Hove. An in-form Archer was forced to miss the second Test as he had to undergo five days of isolation and testing.

RCB Director of Cricket

Operations Mike Hesson explained that a wilful breach of the rules "will be dealt with very seriously", while an accidental breach will result in the player going into a seven-day isolation period.

The player will have to repeat the COVID-19 testing before he can re-enter the bubble, Hesson added.

As Kohli alluded to, "if someone breaks this bubble – that we have worked incredibly hard to put in place – it affects the whole tournament. It's not just about RCB, it's about the tournament's television rights... So there will be strong consequences if players break the rules," Hesson said.

## Women's top seeds make their way out

Red-letter day for Kudermetova, Cornet



**Giant-killer:** Veronika Kudermetova will always remember the day she toppled World No. 3 Karolina Pliskova. ■ AP

## TENNIS

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
NEW YORK

Top-seeded Karolina Pliskova and No. 2 Sofia Kenin crashed out of the Western & Southern Open on Sunday, falling in their opening matches at the National Tennis Center here.

Russia's Veronika Kudermetova, ranked 41st, toppled World No. 3 Pliskova of the Czech Republic 7-5, 6-4 in the second round. France's Alize Cornet notched up her first win over a top-five player in two years when she shocked Australian Open champion Kenin 6-1, 7-6(7) to reach the round of 16.

It was a stunning turn of events on a day that saw men's fourth seed Stefanos Tsitsipas lead the way into the round of 16 with a 6-1, 6-3 victory over two-time Grand Slam finalist Kevin Anderson.

**Important results:**  
**Men: Second round:** David Goffin bt Borna Coric 7-6(6), 6-4; Stefanos Tsitsipas bt Kevin Anderson 6-1, 6-3. **First round:** John Isner bt Hubert Hurkacz 7-5, 6-4; John Millman bt Adrian Mannarino 4-6, 6-4, 7-6(2); Grigor Dimitrov bt Ugo Humbert 6-3, 6-4.

## Arjuna snub 'not pleasant news', says Abhishek

But shooter happy for teammates who were honoured

KAMESH SRINIVASAN  
NEW DELHI

Being ignored for the Arjuna Award was "definitely not pleasant news" for Abhishek Verma. But instead of ruminating about the miss, the air pistol ace was "very happy" that his friends and teammates, Manu Bhaker and Saurabh Chaudhary, got the nod.

The 31-year-old, who has a list of achievements to feel proud of, was also pleased with his mentor Jaspal Rana being honoured with the Dronacharya Award.

After the Asian Games bronze in 2018, Abhishek won World Cup gold medals in Beijing and Rio last year. He also won the mixed air pistol gold with Manu Bhaker in the Asian Championship. He had made the

World Championships final and won the team silver.

"My name was not in the list. It was definitely not pleasant news for me, especially in this pandemic situation, where I am already struggling to keep myself busy," observed Abhishek, an engineer and a lawyer rolled into one.

"I am very happy that Manu Bhaker and Saurabh Chaudhary got the Arjuna award. Also, my mentor Jaspal Rana sir is being honoured with the Dronacharya award," he said.

Tough situations and disappointments have not disturbed Abhishek's focus on Olympic preparation. With the support of Olympic Gold Quest (OGQ), he has been able to set up an electronic target at his home in Chandigarh and a mini gym.

**Buses**  
Apart from doing the 'Art of Living' course online for yoga and meditation, Abhishek has kept himself busy with "cycling, learning to play the guitar, 3D drawing, German language and video calls with cousins and friends".

## Johnson is new No. 1



Dustin Johnson with the Northern Trust trophy. ■ AP

## GOLF

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE  
NEW YORK

Dustin Johnson seized the World No. 1 ranking in emphatic style on Sunday, firing an eight-under final-round 63 to win the US PGA Northern Trust by 11 strokes. Johnson finished with a 30-under 254 at TPC Boston, with Harris English a distant second on 265 after a closing 69.

**The scores:** 254: Dustin Johnson 67, 60, 64, 63, 265: Harris English 64, 66, 66, 69, 67, 267: Kevin Kisner 65, 66, 70, 66, Scottie Scheffler 70, 59, 67, 71; 268: Jon Rahm (Esp) 69, 67, 67, 65, Webb Simpson 70, 64, 68, 66.

## BFI optimistic about Big Bout season

Confident of hosting it by end of this year or early 2021, says Ajay Singh

## BOXING

Y.B. SARANGI  
KOLKATA

The Boxing Federation of India (BFI) believes that the second edition of the Big Bout Indian Boxing League can be staged by the end of this year or early next year.

As of now, the Sports Authority of India (SAI) has not allowed sparring to resume in the National camp due to the pandemic.

However, the BFI is optimistic of squeezing in the Big Bout ahead of the Olympics.

"We are confident of hosting the second season either by the end of this year or early next year. We will be considering all the guidelines and health safety protocols laid out in the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) while the Big Bout league gets staged this season," BFI president Ajay Singh told The Hindu.

**Good viewership**  
Notwithstanding the hiccups in its inaugural edition last year, Ajay said the Big Bout made an impact and



had good television viewership.

The primary objective was to identify and put together credible team owners along with boxers of calibre like Rio Olympic bronze medallist Ingrit Valencia and renowned British boxer Scott Forrest.

"Airing it on Star Sports was also a big boost and ensured Big Bout made a confident start in its maiden year," said Ajay.

According to the BFI president, the league can only get better and become financially more viable. "The experiences of the first season will be valuable in putting together a stronger foundation for the coming seasons," said Ajay.