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Trump actions sending damaging message to the world, says Biden
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Nadal knocks out Tsitsipas, meets Medvedev in semifinal
page 15



City shivers in coldest Nov. night in 14 years

NEW DELHI
Delhi experienced the coldest November night in over a decade early on Friday with the mercury settling at 7.5 degrees Celsius, which is five degrees below normal for the season. The weatherman has forecast clear skies and cold wave-like conditions till November 22. Meanwhile, the air quality continued to be in the 'poor' category.

CITY ▶ PAGE 3

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Jaish plot to target democratic exercise in J&K foiled, says PM

Modi praises security forces, says efforts by terrorists to wreak havoc thwarted

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said the security forces had defeated a "nefarious plot to target grassroots level democratic exercises in Jammu and Kashmir" by killing "four terrorists" belonging to the Pakistan-based terrorist organisation Jaish-e-Mohammed.

The terrorists, who recently infiltrated from Pakistan, were killed in a gunfight at the Bar Toll Plaza near Nagrota on the Srinagar-Jammu National Highway on Thursday. The four had huge quantities of ammunition and explosive materials on them. Two policemen were injured in the incident.

The Prime Minister held a

Our security forces have once again displayed utmost bravery and professionalism. Thanks to their alertness, they have defeated a nefarious plot to target grassroots level democratic exercises in Jammu and Kashmir
NARENDRA MODI, Prime Minister

detailed review of the Nagrota encounter on Friday. Union Home Minister Amit Shah, National Security Adviser Ajit Doval, Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla and top intelligence officials were present at the meeting.

Ministry of External Affairs officials said the government was likely to summon Pakistan High Commission

officials to protest against the continued acts of terrorism against India being planned on its soil.

'Something big planned'
A senior government official said the Pakistan-based terrorists were "planning something big on the anniversary of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks".

In a tweet after the meeting, Mr. Modi said, "Neutralising of 4 terrorists belonging to Pakistan-based terrorist organisation Jaish-e-Mohammed and the presence of large cache of weapons and explosives with them indicate that their efforts to wreak major havoc and destruction have once again been thwarted."

In another tweet, he said, "Our security forces have once again displayed utmost bravery and professionalism. Thanks to their alertness, they have defeated a nefarious plot to target grassroots-level democratic exercises in Jammu and Kashmir."

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8



New home: Trees uprooted from near Parliament as part of the Central Vista redevelopment project in New Delhi being taken for replantation on Friday. ■ SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Police collect ₹26 cr. in COVID-19 fines

Over 5 lakh Delhiites penalised so far

SAURABH TRIVEDI
NEW DELHI

The Delhi police have collected ₹26.72 crore in fines from people not wearing masks or following social distancing rules in public places from June 15 until November 19.

A total of 5,35,167 people have been fined for violating social distancing norms, not wearing masks or spitting in public places. The maximum number of violators were those found roaming in marketplaces or travelling in cars without wearing a mask. A senior police officer clarified that people travelling alone in a car have to wear mask as well – something upheld recently by the Delhi High Court as well.

"We have not only fined people for not wearing mask but also distributed more than four lakh masks to needy Delhiites. We always ensure that underprivileged people do not get harassed while enforcing mask violation rules. We have undertaken drives to spread awareness and held several meetings with market welfare associations and resident welfare associations," said Eish Singh, PRO, Delhi Police. The police have also run awareness campaigns on radio, newspapers and other media.

"Apart from fining people, we also register an FIR in case there is a violation of social distancing rules be-



Most violators were found travelling without a mask.
■ FILE PHOTO

cause of any protest march or a gathering of people larger than the permitted number," he said.

Old fine amount
The Delhi Police PRO said that they haven't received any notification regarding the city government's November 18 decision to create greater deterrence by enhancing the fine from ₹500 to ₹2,000 and are continuing to enforce the earlier amount as of now.

On June 14, ₹500 on-the-spot penalty was fixed for not wearing a mask in public place under a rule passed by the Delhi government under the Delhi Epidemic Diseases, COVID19 Regulations, 2020, duly approved by the L-G.

The police have been solely entrusted with the responsibility of enforcing COVID-19 rule violations after the Delhi Traffic Police was withdrawn from such duties on September 8 and asked to focus again on their core role.

Haryana shuts all schools till Nov. 30

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

In the wake of an increasing number of students testing positive for COVID-19, the Haryana government on Friday decided to shut all public and private schools in the State

till the end of this month.

Premises of all schools will be sanitised during this period, read a letter by the director of Haryana Secondary Education to all District and Block Education Officers.

The directions came in the

wake of media reports suggesting that over 100 students and teachers across three Haryana districts got infected since schools reopened two months ago.

DETAILS ON ▶ PAGE 3

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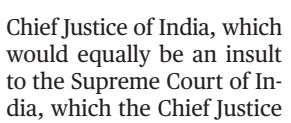
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Kunal Kamra



Chief Justice of India, which would equally be an insult to the Supreme Court of India, which the Chief Justice heads," the Attorney General reasoned.

Mr. Venugopal said the tweet, posted on November 18, tended to lower the authority of the Supreme Court and undermined public confidence in it.

"The depiction of the two fingers, with the legend that he means the middle one, is to deliberately insult the

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

Namgyel, emphasising that the settlement is near the site of 2017 confrontation between Indian and Chinese troops on the Doklam plateau.

The confrontation, which was triggered by the detection of Chinese construction near the India-Bhutan-China trijunction, lasted for approximately 70 days but the details of the ultimate withdrawal of the Chinese troops and heavy machinery remained sketchy.

"There is no Chinese village inside Bhutan. Satellite images show some settlement near the stand-off point (Doklam). The village is not on the Bhutanese side," said Ambassador Namgyel, emphasising that the settlement is near the site of 2017 confrontation between Indian and Chinese troops on the Doklam plateau.

The statement from Ambassador Vetsop Namgyel came a day after sections of the Indian media reported the presence of a Chinese-built village approximately 2 km inside the Bhutanese border.

"There is no Chinese village inside Bhutan. Satellite images show some settlement near the stand-off point (Doklam). The village is not on the Bhutanese side," said Ambassador

CONTINUED ON ▶ PAGE 8

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IN BRIEF

'Withdraw ₹2,000 fine for not wearing masks'

NEW DELHI
Leader of Opposition in the Delhi Legislative Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri termed the Delhi government's decision to impose a fine of ₹2,000 on those not wearing masks "anti-poor" and demanded its withdrawal. This happened after party workers led by Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta distributed masks to shoppers at the busy Gaffar Market. "A large number of poor live in Delhi and the fine of ₹2,000 is too much for them," Mr. Bidhuri said.

Three arrested with ganja worth ₹30 lakh

NEW DELHI
Three men have been arrested and a total of 313 kg of ganja worth ₹30 lakh recovered from them, the police said on Friday. DCP (Crime Branch) Bhisham Singh said that the accused have been identified as Dharmender Yadav (30), Rahul Behera (22) and Naveen Mishra (44), who used to procure marijuana from Odisha and brought to Delhi in truck. The police said that the accused were arrested on Thursday morning from near Indraprastha Park following a tip-off.

Girl shot at by minor brother for chatting

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A minor girl was shot at by her elder brother for chatting with her friend on WhatsApp in Welcome area, said a senior police officer on Friday.

Police said that around 11.46 a.m. on Thursday, a PCR call was received regarding admission of a 16-year-old with gunshot injury in Jag Parvesh Chandra Hospital. A police team was sent to the hospital. "The victim stated that she was in contact with one Amir for some time by using the mobile of her father. Amir is a resident of Babarpur and brother-in-law of her elder sister. Her younger brother had objection over her friendship," said the officer.

On Thursday morning, her brother, who is a minor, got into an argument with the victim over the issue. During the argument, her brother fired at her with a countrymade weapon and injured her.

CM meets market associations, allays fear of another shutdown

Kejriwal requests traders to distribute masks for free to those who don't have one

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday met representatives of market associations from across the Capital to seek their cooperation in controlling rising COVID-19 cases.

On their part, the government said the market associations had assured the Chief Minister that they would support the government in preventing infection at market places.

Mr. Kejriwal clarified that the government does not want to shut markets and requested the associations to provide masks to shoppers, who are without masks.

At the same time, he also appealed to all political parties to send volunteers to distribute masks. He also called on Aam Aadmi Party MPs, MLAs, councillors and volunteers to distribute masks free of cost to the people.



Shoppers at a weekly bazaar in Jahangirpuri.

• FILE PHOTO: SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Let us stop the spread of corona by joint effort [sic]," he stated in another tweet.

Commendable effort

The Chief Minister said that despite the rapid spread of COVID-19 in Delhi, doctors, nurses, and medical staffers had done commendable work and were constantly treating patients without tiring, for which they needed to be appreciated.

The Delhi government stated it was taking "all measures" to control the spread of the pandemic and provide better treatment to patients. Constant efforts were being made to ensure that Delhi residents do not suffer due to the shortage of ICU beds in hospitals, it said.

While 663 additional ICU beds will be increased in Delhi government hospitals within the next few days, 750 ICU beds have been provided by the Central government.

Delhi reports 6,608 cases, virus tally reaches 5,17,238

There are currently 40,936 active cases in the Capital

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The national capital recorded 6,608 new COVID-19 cases and 118 new deaths on Friday, taking the total number of cases to 5,17,238 and total deaths to 8,159.

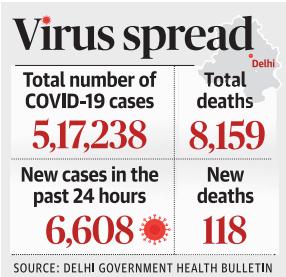
The health bulletin released by the Delhi government said that 62,425 tests were conducted over the past 24 hours with a positivity rate of 10.59%. Of the total tests, 23,507 were RT-PCR tests and 38,918 were rapid antigen. It added that 8,775 people have recovered, taking the total recoveries to 4,68,143. There are currently 40,936 active cases in the Capital.

Earlier in the day, Delhi Health Minister Satyendar Jain said that gradual reduction in the number of new COVID-19 cases and the positivity rate is a "clear indicator" that the spread of the virus is decreasing in the Capital.

"The positivity rate was 15.26% on November 7. It is less than 11% now. The maximum number of cases [8,593] were reported on November 10," Mr. Jain said.

He announced that government rates would apply for the normal, non-ICU beds reserved in private hospitals by the Delhi government for COVID-19 patients.

Additional 2,644 normal beds and 260 ICU beds have been made available for COVID-19 patients after the government issued directions



on Thursday to reserve 80% ICU beds in private hospitals and increase the percentage of non-ICU COVID-19 beds to 60%.

A day after the government announced an increase in the fine for not wearing a mask to ₹2,000, Mr. Jain asked people to not step out of their houses without a mask.

Out of a total of 17,083 beds in the city, the bulletin said, 7,592 were vacant, adding that 24,042 people are under home quarantine.

The number of containment zones in Delhi now stands at 4,560.

Case filed against Pitampura hotel for flouting COVID-19 guidelines

Cancelling invitations at last moment was impossible; organiser

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi police have registered a case against a hotel in north-west Delhi's Pitampura for allegedly organising a marriage function by violating the pandemic norms, said a senior police officer on Friday.

On Wednesday, the Delhi government had reverted the order of the Central government's Unlock guidelines that allowed 200 guests at weddings. In the fresh order issued by the Delhi government, the limit of guests who can attend an event has been scaled down to just 50.

Complaint by visitor

According to the police, a visitor to the City Park Hotel at K.P. Block, Pitampura, on Thursday informed the police about the alleged violation of COVID-19 norms at the hotel. A marriage party was organised

• A police team reached the hotel and found that more than 150 people were attending the function and most of the guests were not even wearing mask and were not following pandemic norms

POLICE OFFICER

at the hotel and more than 50 people were present at a time in the hall, the visitor said. The complainant submitted a complaint and also a video of the event as proof.

"A police team reached the hotel and found that more than 150 people were attending the function and most of the guests were not even wearing mask and not following the COVID-19 guidelines," an official said.

Thereafter, a case under

Section 188 (disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant) of the Indian Penal Code has been registered at Maurya Enclave police station, a senior police officer said, adding that further investigation into the matter is under way.

The hotel management refused to comment on the matter.

A police officer said that the organiser of the marriage party told the police personnel, who had gone to the hotel after receiving the complaint, that the marriage was scheduled on Thursday.

After the government issued COVID-19 guidelines that allow invitation of 50 people for an event instead of the earlier limit of 200, the invitation cards had already been distributed and it was impossible to cancel the invitations, the organiser said.

Mirror image



An illuminated Central Vista, Rashtrapati Bhavan, South Block and North Block on the occasion of World Children's Day, in New Delhi on Friday. • SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

Riot-affected students get 3 months to submit documents

It comes as a breather for ones who lost certificates

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Delhi government has provided a relaxation of three months to students from riot-affected north-east parts of the city for submission of original documents, such as mark-sheets and certificates, for admission to colleges and universities under the government.

The admissions will be done following verification of original documents and provisional admission may be given on the basis of mark-sheet/certificate available on Digi Locker, a circular said.

It added that it took the step as "there are chances that many students may have lost their mark-sheets and certificates during the north-east Delhi riots and they may not be allowed admissions on non-availability of original documents. The process for issuance of duplicate marksheet/certificate is cumbersome and time-taking."

It added that students are unable to get time to get duplicate certi-



Riots broke out in north-east Delhi in February this year.

• FILE PHOTO: SANDEEP SAXENA

cates as they are busy rebuilding their homes and lives.

The circular instructed all education institutions, including Delhi universities to give at least three months' time to the affected students to submit original documents.

"Additionally, the students may be asked to submit an undertaking that they will show the original documents within three months, failing which their admission may be cancelled," the circular said.

Man killed after intervening in fight over public urination

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 30-year-old man was stabbed to death when he intervened in a fight between two people over urinating in public in north-east Delhi's Sundar Nagri on Thursday evening, police said on Friday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (North East) Ved Prakash Surya said that the victim has been identified as Prem Pal. Three persons identified as Shahrukh (27), Gurd and Riyazuddin, all residents of Sundar Nagri, were arrested.

Prem Pal and a few others intervened to stop the fight but Prem Pal was stabbed in the mele. He was rushed to a nearby hospital where he was declared dead, police said.

The DCP said that a case under Section 302 (punishment for murder) of the Indian Penal Code has been registered and further investigation is under way.

Three arrested for killing rickshaw-puller in Delhi

Accused tried to falsely implicate another man

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 40-year-old man and his two accomplices were arrested for allegedly killing a rickshaw-puller here, the police said on Friday. The accused also tried to make it look like a suicide in order to falsely implicate another man, who he suspected had an affair with his wife, the police said.

The accused have been identified as Ajimuddin, a resident of Bihar, Nandan Kumar (22) and Habib (48), both residents of Loni in Ghaziabad, they said.

The police received an information on Tuesday that a person had fallen from the roof of a house. The injured was admitted in BJRM Hos-

pital where he died during treatment. The deceased was later identified as Alalam, a resident of Geeta Colony. He was a rickshaw-puller, the police said, adding that a post-mortem was also conducted.

The police also recovered a note from the spot. However, on the basis of names written in the letter, the police investigated the matter and found that the incident was not a suicide. A case under Section 302 (murder) was registered at Mahendra Park police station, a senior police officer said.

"Ajimuddin and Nandan were arrested on Thursday and Habib on Friday," DCP (North West) Vijayanta Arya said.

उत्तराखण्ड पावर कारपोरेशन लिमिटेड
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इस कार्यालय से प्रकाशित निविदा संख्या 16/17-2020-21 विद्युत मण्डल ने जिला जिला की तिथि 18/11/2020 पर यह जारी किया है। इस विद्युत कारपोरेशन कार्यालय की तिथि 19/11/2020 पर यह जारी किया जाता है। विद्युत मण्डल निविदा संख्या 16/17-2020-21 के क्रमांक पर्याप्त जारी की तिथि 08/12/2020 तक यह जारी की तिथि 09/12/2020 की जारी है। उत्तराखण्ड कारपोरेशन की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 10/12/2020 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 11/12/2020 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 12/12/2020 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 13/12/2020 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 14/12/2020 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 15/12/2020 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 16/12/2020 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 17/12/2020 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 18/12/2020 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 19/12/2020 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 20/12/2020 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 21/12/2020 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 22/12/2020 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 23/12/2020 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 24/12/2020 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 25/12/2020 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 26/12/2020 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 27/12/2020 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 28/12/2020 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 29/12/2020 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 30/12/2020 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 31/12/2020 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 01/01/2021 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 02/01/2021 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 03/01/2021 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 04/01/2021 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 05/01/2021 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 06/01/2021 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 07/01/2021 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 08/01/2021 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 09/01/2021 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 10/01/2021 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 11/01/2021 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 12/01/2021 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 13/01/2021 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 14/01/2021 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 15/01/2021 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 16/01/2021 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 17/01/2021 की विद्युत मण्डल की जारी की तिथि 18

Timings
DELHI

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SUNDAY, NOV. 22	RISE 12:35 SET 23:31
MONDAY, NOV. 23	RISE 06:50 SET 17:26
TUESDAY, NOV. 24	RISE 13:13 SET 00:00
Wednesday, NOV. 25	RISE 06:50 SET 17:25
Thursday, NOV. 26	RISE 13:46 SET 00:27

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Delhi Palam Today
24°C A cold morning with mist/haze. Pleasant dry day with cool winds likely.

Delhi Palam Tomorrow
24°C Morning remain cold with mist and shallow fog. A Pleasant sunny day with light winds likely.

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HC rejects plea against temple demolition

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court on Friday declined a plea by Shri Manokamma Siddh Shri Hanuman Seva Samiti challenging North Delhi Municipal Corporation's decision to demolish a Hanuman Temple in Chandni Chowk here, saying such request has to come from the Delhi government.

"Once such a liberty was granted to the GNCTD, and so far, the GNCTD has not approached this court for any relief. We see no reason to entertain that application for intervention which is nothing but an attempt to re-agitate the same issue that has been considered and rejected by an earlier order dated November 14, 2019," the court said.

HEMANI BHANDARI
NEW DELHI

"I still don't feel safe walking on that road alone," recalled a 30-year-old entrepreneur living in Sector 11, Dwarka. It has been six months since the alleged abduction attempt on her but she is still struggling to come out of the trauma.

After a Delhi police sub-inspector was arrested for allegedly molesting four women, including a minor, on a stretch connecting Sectors 11, 12, 5 and 6 of Dwarka, women have come out to share how unsafe they feel in and around that road and the adjoining areas.

No police action

Recalling the April incident, the entrepreneur said she was walking with her mother in the service lane around 5.30 p.m. when some men in a white van followed them. "When the car came close to us, my mother sensed something amiss. We ran as the car stopped and they started shouting 'bhag gai... bhag gai [she ran]'," she said. The mother-daughter duo approached a police officer whom they found a few metres ahead. "We asked him to send an alert on the wireless system but his attitude was casual. He just asked us to safely reach home."

A 43-year-old woman shared how she was flashed at in Sector 12 when she was in her car on a February evening. A resident of the same area, she said she was getting into the car while talking on her mobile phone when an e-rickshaw driver stopped his vehicle in front of her and started masturbating. "When I shouted, he left," she said, adding that she didn't approach the police because she "didn't think they would take it seriously because I couldn't catch him or identify him".

Traumatic experience
Another traumatic experience was shared by a 40-year-old IT professional and resident of Sector 10. She

Haryana shuts schools again after over 100 kids, teachers test positive

All premises will be sanitised before educational institutions reopen in December

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GURUGRAM

In the wake of an increasing number of students testing positive for COVID-19, the Haryana government on Friday decided to shut all private and government schools in the State till the end of this month.

The Director of Haryana Secondary Education, in a letter to all District and Block Education Officers, said the government had decided that all schools in the State will remain closed till November 30 due to a rise in cases and keeping in mind the well-being of the students.

All the school premises will be sanitised during this period to disinfect them, the letter stated.

The officers concerned have been asked to ensure the implementation of the



The directions came in the wake of media reports stating that many students and teachers tested positive after schools reopened. ■ FILE PHOTO

directions in their respective districts. The school heads and managers would be responsible for

the violation of the direction, said the letter.

The directions came in the wake of media reports

suggesting that more than 100 students and teachers across three districts of Haryana had tested positive for COVID-19 since the schools were reopened two months ago.

Around 50 students in Rewari and Jhajjar have tested positive in the last fortnight.

School for Class IX-XII
The Haryana government had allowed the government and private schools to hold guidance classes for Class IX to XII students in the last week of September.

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In October last week, the State Education Department directed holding of regular classes for three hours daily.

North-east riots: court extends custody of Umar and Sharjeel till November 23

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Friday extended the judicial custody of former JNU student Umar Khalid and JNU student Sharjeel Imam, who were arrested under Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) in connection with the north-east riots here, till November 23.

Additional Sessions Judge Amitabh Rawat gave the direction on the request made by the Special Public Prosecutor in the case. Special Public Prosecutor, Amit Prasad,

appearing for the police, said the mandatory time period of 90 days to complete the probe in the case will be completed on November 23 and also the chargesheet has to be filed.

When the Judge asked if he was facing any problems as he had mentioned in earlier hearings, Mr. Khalid replied that besides "curbing my liberties and a malicious investigation, I am not facing any other issues".

On previous hearings, Mr. Khalid had complained that he was not allowed to step

out of his cell similar to "solitary confinement". Advocate Trideep Pais, appearing for Mr. Khalid, opposed the remand application.

Mr. Khalid was arrested on

September 13, 2020 in an FIR registered by Crime Branch

and remanded to police custody for 10 days. Thereafter, he has been remanded to judicial custody which is being extended from time to time. During this judicial custody period, Mr. Khalid was arrested again in another FIR registered at Khajuri Khas police station.

for her prosecution. The case relates to a complaint filed against Ms. Gandhi and two others over an alleged sanction of ₹50 lakh to Gandhi Rural Welfare Trust (GWRT) for construction of a Nursing College Building at Pilibhit, when she was Union Minister of State (Independent Charge) Social Justice and Empowerment from 1998 to 2001.

Justice Yogesh Khanna also stayed the trial court's February 4, 2020 order to the extent it directs the CBI to place the material it has before the Sanctioning Authority

who has indulged in making false and frivolous allegations against her.

The trial court, in its order, had rejected the closure report filed by the agency in the case noting that "on the basis of the record which is before the court, it appears that there was a conspiracy amongst the accused". The trial court had also asked the investigating agency to, during the course of probe, place before the Sanctioning Authority the record of the present case to consider the issue whether to grant sanc-

tion or not for the prosecution of the public servant under the Prevention of Corruption Act.

In her petition, Ms. Gandhi contended that the trial court had directed the investigating agency to place the matter before the Sanctioning Authority, despite the fact that the CBI investigators themselves have come to a categorical conclusion that there is no criminal culpability on her part in two consecutive and successive closure reports – one in 2010 and last one in 2015.



A nearly-deserted road in Dwarka. ■ V.V. KRISHNAN

The road less travelled

Repeated incidents of molestation on a stretch connecting Sectors 11, 12, 5 and 6 of Dwarka have forced women residents to keep off the area

was being followed by a group of five men who were making lewd comments looking at her. "I pretended I was calling the cops and noting numbers of their motorbike. When they realised this, they fled. I was sure they were going to assault me," she said, adding that the incident happened in August. "That was the last day I went out alone for a walk. Now, I only visit public parks for walks where senior citizens and children are also present," she said.

On October 17 and 20, four women were molested allegedly by a sub-inspector posted in Delhi Police Special Cell. He was driving around in a car without number plate, flashing at women and making lewd comments. One of the four victims, a 28-year-old MNC employee who was molest-

ed when she had gone out for a run, said she hasn't gathered the courage to step out since. "I never used to run in Dwarka earlier. It was only during the lockdown that I started running here and this happened. It feels extremely unsafe here and I don't have any other

option but to go to the parks now," she said. The woman also said that she felt fortunate to get help from the Delhi Commission for Women, which arranged a counsellor for her. "I shared the incident on social media. Because of that post and the DCW counsellor I was taken seriously. I am not sure if a person who is unaware of the procedure would get any help," she said.

Repeated criminal inci-

dents have prompted a group of women – all resi-

dents of Dwarka – to come

together and form a collective and ask other women about their horrid past experiences – reported or not – to be able to chart out the shortcomings for the authorities to work on. "Ob- scene behaviour has normalised enormously and that's why we need to raise

this issue and know the

crime pattern in such areas.

It's ironic that Dwarka has

the widest roads and there's

no safe space to move," said Anuradha G.R., 46, former defence officer and a resident of Sector 3.

Lack of trust*

The lack of response from the police is another "road-block", the women said. The collective said women are discouraged from reporting a crime and approaching the police. "The lack of trust has increased to the point that women are not even trying to report such incidents. This needs to change," said another member, Shillpi Singh (42), a journalist and a resident of Sector 9. She added that there are innumerable desolate spots where vehicles are parked and people drink inside, which is another cause for concern.

Seema Joshi, a member of the group, said they had organised a programme in October, right after a spate of molestation incidents, and invited several senior police officers. "Instead of joining, they cancelled our programme in the wake of the pandemic and sent force to ensure the event did not take place. All we wanted was for them to come and tell women that they are safe," Ms. Joshi said. The police, on the other hand, said they have taken several measures for the safety of women in the area. DCP (Dwarka) Santosh Kumar Meena said that emergency response vehicle and motorbike patrolling has been increased on routes taken by women while coming back from malls and work.

"Dark stretches where

light is required have been

identified and beat patrolling

has also been increased

in crowded areas. Officers

have been asked to draw a

list of habitual stalkers and

keep a check on the list," he

said, adding that other ne-

cessary measures have also

been taken.

"Dark stretches where

City sees coldest Nov. night in 14 yrs

Air quality in Delhi continues to be 'poor', likely to improve

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

It was the coldest November night in over a decade on Friday with the minimum temperature settling at 7.5 degrees Celsius, which is five degrees cooler than the normal for the season.

Around 50 students in Rewari and Jhajjar have tested positive in the last fortnight.

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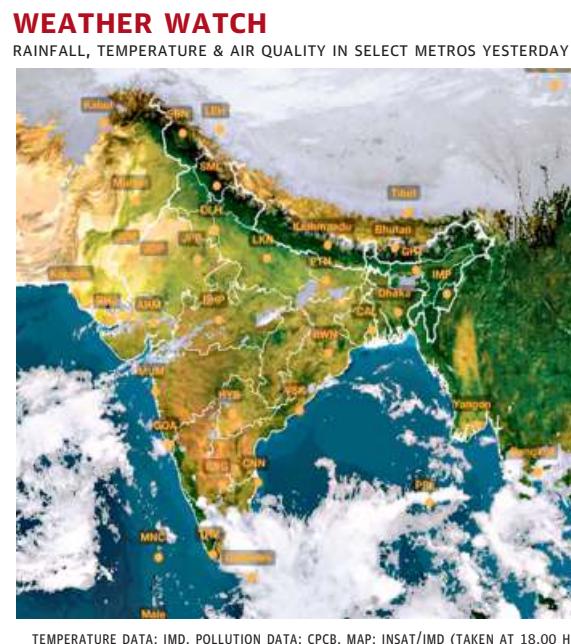
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Kids warm themselves around a fire on a cold November morning.

hour average air quality index was 296. It was 283 on Thursday, 211



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

Forecast for Saturday: Heavy rainfall likely at isolated places over Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Thunderstorm with lightning/hail likely at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh and Andaman & Nicobar Islands. Cold wave likely at isolated places over Haryana, Chandigarh, Delhi, west Uttar Pradesh and north Rajasthan

CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN	CITY	RAIN	MAX	MIN
Agartala	—	31.2	18.8	Kozhikode	—	33.9	25.5
Ahmedabad	—	30.3	16.1	Kurnool	—	34.7	21.0
Aizawl	—	23.8	13.5	Lucknow	—	26.4	15.8
Allahabad	0.8	28.1	18.1	Madurai	14.4	31.4	23.1
Bangalore	—	28.9	19.0	Mangaluru	—	35.5	25.0
Bhopal	—	25.8	16.8	Mumbai	—	33.0	22.5
Bhubaneswar	—	34.4	22.2	Mysuru	—	29.0	18.6
Chandigarh	—	23.5	9.7	New Delhi	—	25.4	7.5
Chennai	—	31.1	24.5	Patna	—	28.7	16.0
Coimbatore	—	31.2	22.4	Pond Blair	—	31.2	24.1
Dehradun	—	25.0	9.1	Puducherry	0.8	31.4	23.1
Gangtok	—	15.3	8.5	Pune	—	33.0	21.6
Goa	—	34.0	24.1	Raipur	—	35.0	20.0
Guwahati	—	25.4	17.1	Ranchi	—	1.8	29.0
Hubballi	—	31.0	20.0	Shillong	—	18.0	10.2
Hyderabad	—	32.2	19.4	Shimla	—	17.3	6.5
Imphal	—	23.6	8.7	Srinagar	—	9.8	0.3
Jaipur	—	25.2	13.6	Tiruvananthapuram	—	33.4	24.1
Kochi	12.2	31.2	25.2	Tiruchi	—	32.3	24.0
Kohima	—	19.0	8.6	Vijayawada	—	32.9	22.4
Kolkata	—	32.7	23.9	Visakhapatnam	—	30.7	24.0

(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)

Pollutants in the air you are breathing

CITIES	SO ₂	NO _x	CO	PM _{2.5}	PM ₁₀	CODE
Ahmedabad	21	92	.22	..116	..121	■■■■■
Bangalore	12	44	.60	..45	..67	■■■■■
Chennai	10	3	.25	..97	—	■■■■■
Delhi	21	99	102	..310	255	■■■■■
Hyderabad	5	76	—	..62	..90	■■■■■
Kolkata	20	18	.12	..261	..158	■■■■■
Lucknow	18	74	.45	..292	..214	■■■■■
Mumbai	10	30	.24	..226	..124	■■■■■
Pune	—	..56	.48	..76	—	■■■■■
Visakhapatnam	—	33	.42	..133	..136	■■■■■

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

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

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

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

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

Yesterday

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Fatehabad, Haryana recorded overall air quality index (AQI) score of 360 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh recorded a healthy AQI score of 28

Maharashtra records 5,640 new cases, 6,945 recoveries

State's recovery rate inches towards 93%; Mumbai reports spike of 1,031 cases

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PUNE

Maharashtra reported 6,945 more COVID-19 recoveries on Friday as opposed to 5,640 new cases as the active cases dipped to 78,272.

The total case tally stands at 17,68,695, while cumulative recoveries have risen to 16,42,916, with the State's recovery rate incrementally rising to 92.89%. With 155 fatalities, the total death toll has climbed to 46,511.

"Of a total of 10,035,665 laboratory samples tested thus far, 17,68,695 (case positivity rate of 17.62%) have returned positive with nearly 70,000 samples being tested in the last 24 hours," said State Surveillance Officer Dr. Pradeep Awate, adding that the State's case fatality rate currently stands at 2.63%.

Pune district reported 711 new cases to take its tally to 3,44,750, while 60 deaths, of which 50 are from an earlier period, saw its toll climb to 7,266. According to district administration figures, the active cases have risen to 9,593, while the recovery rate has dipped to 94.69%.

Mumbai recorded 1,031 cases to take its tally to 2,73,486, of which 11,822 are active. Twelve fatalities saw the city's toll rise to 10,639. Nagpur district reported 463 new cases, taking the tally to 11,094, of which 2,707 are active. Thirteen deaths saw the toll reach 2,909.

Satara reported 15 deaths to take its death toll to 1,593. As many as 130 cases saw the tally rise to 50,813, of which 2,399 are active. Neighbouring Sangli, however, reported 61 cases and two deaths as the district's case load



Staying still: A health worker collects a swab sample amid rows of mannequins at a cloth market in Dadar on Friday. ■ EMMANUEL YOGINI

reached 48,079, of which 1,159 are active. Its death toll has risen to 1,713.

Kolhapur recorded 41 cases and a single death as its total case tally reached 48,316. Its active case tally stands at 336. The total death toll has reached 1,668.

In north Maharashtra, Nashik district reported 379 cases as its total case tally to 2,73,486, of which 11,822 are active. Only 1,848 are active. With eight more deaths, the district's total death toll has now touched 1,673.

Neighbouring Jalgaon reported just 50 cases and two deaths as its total case tally reached 54,439, of which only 936 are active, while its death toll stood at 1,380.

Dr. Awate said a total of 5,58,090 people across the State are in home quarantine and 4,883 are in institutional quarantine facilities.

Night curfew imposed in Surat, Vadodara, Rajkot

MAHESH LANGA
AHMEDABAD

After imposing a weekend curfew in Ahmedabad, the Gujarat government on Friday decided to impose night curfew from 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. in Surat, Vadodara and Rajkot as authorities intensified efforts to contain the surge in COVID-19 cases.

Deputy Chief Minister Nitin Patel, who also holds the Health portfolio, told mediapersons that all four major cities would observe night curfew. The State saw its highest single-day surge of 1,420 cases on Friday.

Gehlot slams BJP on proposals for 'love jihad' law

'Laws to curb the freedom to marry are unconstitutional'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Friday slammed the BJP over the "love jihad" controversy, saying it was a term manufactured by the party to divide the nation and disturb communal harmony.

With several BJP-ruled States going ahead with moves to bring in legislation on the issue, Mr. Gehlot said marriage was a matter of personal liberty and bringing a law to curb it would be "completely unconstitutional".

The BJP governments in Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Madhya Pradesh have announced plans to enact a

law. The senior Congress leader said in a series of tweets that such a legislation would not stand in any court of law and Jihad had "no place in love".

He said BJP leaders were creating an environment in the country where consenting adults would be at the mercy of the State.

"Marriage is a personal decision and they are putting curbs on it, which is like snatching away personal liberty," Mr. Gehlot said.

In similar comments, Chhattisgarh's Health Minister T.S. Singh Deo also lambasted the BJP for coining the "exhaustingly bigoted term". He added that the "brazen plans" of the BJP-ruled States to bring laws against consensual inter-faith marriages had shown how deeply intolerance had crept in.

Haryana Minister gets trial dose of COVID-19 vaccine

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

AMBALA

Haryana's Health Minister Anil Vij was on Friday administered a trial dose of potential coronavirus vaccine Covaxin here, becoming the first volunteer for the phase three trial of the vaccine. He is stated to be the first Cabinet Minister of any State govt.

State on Friday and the 67-year-old senior BJP leader was administered the dose at the Civil Hospital at Ambala Cantt. Mr. Vij said he is the first volunteer in the country to take the dose in phase three trial of the vaccine across the country.

The trial of Bharat Biotech's Covaxin began in the

WESTERN RAILWAY TO RUN ADDITIONAL SPECIAL TRAINS BETWEEN AHMEDABAD - MGR CHENNAI CENTRAL VERAVAL - THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

AHMEDABAD — MGR CHENNAI CENTRAL DAILY SUPERFAST SPECIAL TRAIN

Train No.	Departure	Arrival	Date of Service
02655	Ahmedabad	MGR Chennai Central 04:45 hrs. (On Third Day)	w.e.f. 23/11/2020
02656	MGR Chennai Central 10:10 hrs. (Daily)	Ahmedabad	w.e.f. 22/11/2020

Halts: Maninagar, Nadiad, Anand, Vadodara, Ankleshwar, Surat, Udhana, Vyara, Nandurbar, Dondaicha, Amalner, Jalgaon, Bhusaval, Malkapur, Nandura, Shegaon, Akola, Murtajapur, Badnera, Dhamangaon, Wardha, Warora, Balharshah, Sirpur Kagaznagar, Mancherl, Warangal, Mahububabad, Khamman, Vijayawada, Tenali, Bapatla, Chirala, Ongole, Kavali, Nellore, Gudur and Sularpetta stations in both directions.

Train No. 02655 will not halt at Maninagar station.

Composition: First AC, 2 AC, 3 AC, Sleeper class and General second class seating.

VERVAL — THIRUVANANTHAPURAM WEEKLY SPECIAL TRAIN

Train No.	Departure	Arrival	Date of Service
06333	Veraval	Thiruvananthapuram 04:00 hrs. (On Third Day)	w.e.f. 10/12/2020
06334	Thiruvananthapuram 15:40 hrs. (Monday)	Veraval 15:45 hrs. (On Third Day)	w.e.f. 07/12/2020

Halts: Keshod, Junagadh, Navagadh, Gondal, Rajkot, Wankaner, Surendranagar, Viramgam, Ahmedabad, Maninagar, Anand, Vadodara, Ankleshwar, Surat, Navsari, Valsad, Vapi, Boisar, Vasai Rd, Bhivandi Rd, Panvel, Khed, Ratnagiri, Kudal, Karmali, Madgaon, Karwar, Ankola, Byndoor, Kundapura, Udupi, Mangalore Jn, Kasaragod, Kanhangad, Payyanur, Kannapuram, Kannur, Telicherry, Vadak



Digital nation

The true measure of digitalisation would be seamless delivery of all citizen services

Affordable smartphones and Internet access have made India a digital nation with an estimated 750 million connections and a thriving financial technology sector. Citizens inured to queues at dingy utility offices even to pay routine bills find this a major leap, thanks to fintech. Digital platforms providing goods and services, including online education and telemedicine, have grown vigorously during the COVID-19 pandemic, while many professionals have maintained productivity by working from home. Yet, it would be premature to declare digital as a way of life in India, as Prime Minister Narendra Modi put it at the Bengaluru Tech Summit. The true measure of digital nations is the readiness of governments to use technology to create open, participatory public systems that citizens consider trustworthy. What governance must achieve is a reliable system of digital welfare. A beginning has, no doubt, been made through government-to-citizen services using Common Service Centres, advice to agriculturists, digital payments of welfare benefits through bank accounts and, even legal advice online to four lakh people under the Tele-Law scheme. These represent a welcome advance, but if digital methods were applied to other sectors, such as road safety, the results could be dramatic – potentially reducing the accident mortality rate of about 1,50,000 deaths a year.

In the ongoing pandemic, Mr. Modi's forecast for enhanced adoption of technology in health and education will have resonance, although this was always a priority. In fact, successive governments failed to grasp the promise of achieving universal health coverage (UHC) by 2022, for which the erstwhile Planning Commission presented a road map a decade ago. Now, the nucleus plan is Ayushman Bharat, with a digital health identity for all. With the emphasis on digitalisation, it should be possible to achieve measurable progress early on at least on one UHC component – access to free, essential prescription drugs. A digital health ID would help prescribe and dispense essential medicines free. The Planning Commission estimated that the public procurement cost for this, in 2011, would be 0.1% to 0.5% of GDP. If this is a medium-term goal, the more immediate task of distributing COVID-19 vaccines looms as a test for the government. At a broader level, efficient digital government depends on transforming internal processes, and fixing deadlines for service delivery. The UPA could not see its electronic delivery of services legislation through, and it remains forgotten. If digital has to become a way of life, redefining the labyrinthine functioning of citizen-centric services would be a good place to start, with deadlines for government departments.

Scorched earth politics

Trump's effort to sabotage the transition process will harm U.S. recovery prospects

The ferment in U.S. politics appears unabated weeks after one of the most controversial election campaigns, with outgoing President Donald Trump refusing to concede to his victorious rival, Democratic President-elect Joe Biden. The irony is that this outcome, which is inflicting damage on the fabric of U.S. democratic systems, was all but a foregone conclusion, given the impact of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic on mail-in voting, and Mr. Trump's repeated and ominous warnings that he would not accept such votes as legitimate. The tectonic shift toward mail-in voting in the 2020 election presumably stemmed from voters' desire to abide by social distancing norms through the pandemic, which has had a far worse impact in the U.S. than elsewhere. Yet apparently the same world view that led Mr. Trump and his supporters to deride mask-wearing, social distancing and a ban on large gatherings has led them to dismiss the pandemic as a Democratic conspiracy to "steal the election" from the incumbent, allegedly through massive voting fraud. The truth is that even before this election, the rate of voting fraud was statistically insignificant, according to non-partisan studies. It is therefore unsurprising that despite Mr. Trump and his supporters firing off a string of election-related lawsuits, most legal manoeuvres of this sort have failed, leaving ever fewer avenues for the Trump team to finagle the result from certification.

However, even if all legal challenges foisted by Mr. Trump peter out, the losers of this election may sabotage the transition process to such an extent that it hobbles the Biden administration taking charge on January 20, 2021, an act of calculated vindictiveness aimed at throwing cold water on a democratically elected successor. It appears that the Biden transition team is not taking this possibility lightly, and is expeditiously seeking a critical sign-off from the head of the General Services Administration, the so-called "ascertainment" that is required, recognising the "apparent successful candidate" in a presidential election as a precursor to disbursing critical funds and infrastructural resources to the next administration. To date, GSA chief Emily Murphy has not officially recognised Mr. Biden's win, potentially denying his team up to \$6.3 million that Congress has appropriated for the transition process. Even if this barrier is somehow transcended, Mr. Biden has a tough road ahead because if Republicans hold the Senate, it is only through tireless cat-and-mouse negotiations with Senate Republican leader Mitch McConnell that Mr. Biden will be able to get his legislative agenda and Cabinet and other government nominees passed in the Upper House. Mr. Trump is doubtless emboldened by the 10 million-vote increase in his tally over 2016, but his final act of intransigence is scorching the landscape of the incoming administration, and thus harming the recovery prospects of the country he claims to love.

India's no to RCEP could still be a no

The circumstances under which New Delhi had distanced itself from the RCEP negotiations have hardly improved



BISWAJIT DHAR

Last week, 15 East Asian countries agreed to take their economic integration several notches higher by forging the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), the largest free trade agreement (FTA) ever. In 2019, RCEP members accounted for about 30% of world output and population and 28% of world trade. But more importantly, about 44% of their total trade was intra-RCEP, which is a major incentive for the members of this agreement to agree to the deal for this could contribute to the strengthening of the regional value chains. This may well prove propitious for the RCEP member countries in their efforts to recover from the downturn.

The objectives

The initiative to establish RCEP was taken by the member-states of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 2011. These countries had adopted a resolution "to establish an ASEAN-led process by setting out principles" that would allow ASEAN members to "engage interested ASEAN FTA partners in establishing a regional comprehensive economic partnership agreement". The "Guiding Principles and Objectives" (<https://bit.ly/2UGGOdQ>), the de facto negotiating mandate for RCEP, spoke of "progressively eliminating tariff and non-tariff barriers on substantially all trade in goods" and achieving "high level of tariff liberalization, through building upon the existing liberalization levels between RCEP participating countries and through tariff elimination on a high

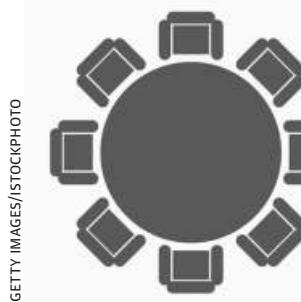
percentage of both tariff lines and trade value". As regards services, RPCs agreed to conclude a comprehensive and high quality agreement that would "substantially eliminate restrictions and/or discriminatory measures".

And, finally, RCEP negotiations on a framework for investment "to cover the four pillars of promotion, protection, facilitation and liberalization". It was, therefore, quite clear that the RCEP participating countries (RPCs) had given themselves an ambitious agenda of trade and investment liberalisation.

A comparison with the TPP

Several commentators have observed that RCEP is not likely to usher in comprehensive economic integration in East Asia. It appears that this view has arisen by comparing RCEP with the Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP), which would have been the world's most extensive FTA in terms of market opening had the Trump Administration decided not to abandon it. But there have always been doubts whether the TPP was promoting "free trade" or a highly discriminatory "managed trade". This was because the TPP included several regulatory issues including the controversial labour and environmental standards and issues such as "anti-corruption", all of which could raise regulatory barriers and severely impede trade flows.

In contrast, RCEP includes traditional market access issues, following the template provided by the World Trade Organization (WTO). However, it also includes issues that are currently being discussed by several groups of WTO members as a part of their agenda to "reform the multilateral trading system". These issues are electronic commerce, investment facilitation, which seems to be the first step towards a multilateral agreement on investment and creating an enabling environment



for the participation of small and medium enterprises in global trade.

While India has been opposed to the inclusion of all these issues in the WTO, the formation of RCEP could provide serious momentum to the discussions in Geneva, especially after the Organization convenes under its new Director General.

Progress made and problems

The question is, would RCEP be able to realise its primary objectives of trade and investment liberalisation? In case of trade in goods, RCEP members have taken big strides towards lowering their tariffs. For instance, China has agreed to cut its average tariffs from 9.4% in 2014 (adopted as the "base year" for tariff cuts) to 1.2% for Australia and all ASEAN members, by the 10th year of implementation of RCEP, and has also committed to reduce tariffs on almost 90% of its imports from these two RCEP members to 5% or less. Further, less than 4% of its products figure in the exclusion list, implying that their tariffs will not be reduced. Vietnam's tariff offers to China look similar: average tariffs would drop from 10% in 2014 to 2% by the 10th year, and nearly 90% of its imports from China will be tariff-free.

Moreover, Vietnam does not have an exclusion list. Among the major economies in the region, Malaysia has had the lowest levels of protection and this will be reduced as it implements its com-

mitments under RCEP.

In contrast to their market access commitments under goods, commitments made by RCEP members for services trade liberalisation do look shallow in terms of the coverage of the sectors. Movement of natural persons, an area in which India had had considerable interest, is considerably restricted. RCEP members have allowed relatively limited market access only to individuals in managerial positions or those having high levels of skills. The areas of investment and electronic commerce, in both of which India had expressed its reservations on the template adopted during RCEP negotiations, the outcomes are varied. The text on investment rules shows that it is a work-in-progress. The rules on dispute settlement procedures are yet to be written in, and, therefore, it will be interesting to see whether the controversial investor-state-dispute-settlement (ISDS) mechanism is included.

In case of electronic commerce, RCEP members have agreed not to "prevent cross-border transfer of information by electronic means where such activity is for the conduct of the business of a covered person". However, a member can deny transfer of information if it is necessary to "achieve a legitimate public policy objective, provided that the measure is not applied in a manner which would constitute a means of arbitrary or unjustifiable discrimination or a disguised restriction on trade". In addition, members are free to adopt a "legal framework which ensures the protection of personal information of the users of electronic commerce".

Re-engaging India

In the months following India's disengagement from RCEP negotiations, several RPCs had expressed their strong desire to get India re-engaged. These efforts are

now "official": prior to the signing of the deal, RCEP Ministers adopted a Declaration on India's Participation in the agreement through which the door has been left open to India to join RCEP Agreement as an original signatory. Further, India has been invited to participate in RCEP meetings as an observer and in economic cooperation activities undertaken by RCEP members. And, finally, RCEP members have agreed to commence negotiations with India once India submits a request in writing of its intention to accede to the agreement. The question is, have the circumstances under which India had distanced itself from the RCEP negotiations become any better for it to join the agreement in the near future?

The answer seems to be unambiguously in the negative on two counts. The first is that during the RCEP negotiations, India had raised a number of concerns, two of which, namely, the levels of market access it was expected to provide, especially the deep cuts in tariffs on imports from China, and provisions relating to the investment chapter, have become even more significant over the past several months. Since the border clashes, India has imposed a number of import restrictions on Chinese products and has also subjected investment flows from its northern neighbour to greater scrutiny. Both these measures would have been infructuous if India were a party to the RCEP.

Second, India's initiative for its economic turnaround, the Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan, is primarily focused on strengthening domestic value chains, while RCEP, like any other FTA is solely focused on promoting regional value chains.

Biswajit Dhar is Professor, Centre for Economic Studies and Planning, School of Social Sciences, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

The 'Time Use Survey' as an opportunity lost

Gaps in the Indian version's data will impact Sustainable Development Goal 5.4 and the ILO's resolution on defining work



INDIRA HIRWAY

The all India Time Use Survey, 2019 has just been published by the Government of India. As a survey that has covered the entire country for the first time, the National Statistical Office needs to be complimented for accomplishing the task.

The "Time Use Survey, or TUS, provides a framework for measuring time dispositions by the population on different activities. Its primary objective is to measure participation of men and women in paid and unpaid activities... TUS is an important source of information on the time spent in unpaid care-giving activities, volunteer work, unpaid domestic service producing activities of the household members. It also provides information on time spent on learning, socializing, leisure activities, self-care activities, etc., by the household members" (<https://bit.ly/36T8elZ>).

The data collection was done for one day – normal or other day in a 24-hour time diary, beginning at 4 a.m. and till 4 a.m. the next day. In developed countries where literacy is high, time use is recorded in a 24-hour time diary by the respondents themselves, using 10-15 minute time slots.

In India, where literacy is low, the time diary was filled in by interviewers in 30 minute time slots through face-to-face interviews. The International Classification of Activities for Time-Use Statistics of the United Nations Statistics Division

was used for classification of activities.

Key developments

Two recent developments which have pushed up the demand for TUS globally are the commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by 2030, and the path-breaking Resolution of the 19th International Conference on Labour Statistics, on "Statistics of Work, Employment and Labour Underutilization – International Labour Organization 2013"; <https://bit.ly/35PkLKW>. The Government of India is fully committed to the SDGs and has also indicated its inclination to implement the second. TUS data are also required for understanding and monitoring major socioeconomic concerns of countries. Somehow, both these developments have not been incorporated in this first time use survey.

Time use data are needed for implementing not only the SDG 5.4 on unpaid work, but also for implementing the SDG-1 to the SDG-10. Even for the SDG 5.4 – considered to be the most important SDG for measuring and valuing unpaid domestic services and unpaid care by women and men, and reducing unpaid work through public services and infrastructure – the Indian TUS data are not adequate. Unpaid work is usually valued using the input method, i.e. valuing the labour input in unpaid work using suitable prices (minimum wages of workers, housekeeper's wages, opportunity costs or specialised wages).

However, this valuation is not adequate, because it values only the labour input and leaves out the capital and technology used. Satellite accounts of unpaid work, however, takes into consideration



capital/technology while computing the accounts. Satellite accounts of unpaid work use the principal functions concept, which can be compared with the national accounts functions. Under this approach, unpaid work is presented in terms of this classification of the functions, similar to the classification of the functions under the national accounts. These accounts would be comparable with the national income accounts, and measure the correct contribution of unpaid work to the GDP.

This accounting requires information on the assets of a household that includes assets used in domestic services, vehicles used in travel and commuting, and consumer durables, etc. The accounting also requires wage rates prevailing in different locations. Unfortunately, this information is not collected by this TUS in the background questionnaire. In the absence of this information, valuation will not be feasible in satellite accounts. Since there is no data collected on the ownership of the assets by gender, valuation by gender will not be feasible.

Defining work

The ILO's Resolution – referred to above – presents a new definition of work, new forms of work and a new labour force status classification. It defines "work" as "any activity performed by persons of any

sex and age to produce goods or provide services for use by others or own use". "Work" is divided into five categories: employment (production of goods and services for pay, profit or barter); own use production of goods and services by households; unpaid trainee work, volunteer work; and other work (compulsory work performed without pay to produce goods/services for others). Unpaid domestic services and unpaid care are now formally recognised as "work" for the first time.

Clearly, the Resolution cannot be implemented without time use data. Several countries have initiated its implementation, and the ILO has also undertaken pilot studies in several countries. It was a good opportunity for India to implement the Resolution. However, the Standing Committee on Labour Force Statistics that designed the time use survey decided to keep the Resolution out and conducted an independent TUS. The TUS does not even have employment as one of the objectives of the TUS.

Breaks in Indian surveys

Experts have always argued that Indian Employment/Unemployment Surveys, or EUS, tend to under-report informal workers, due to the nature of informal employment. Being frequently intermittent, scattered, temporary, short term or unstable, it is frequently not reported accurately by the EUS. Again, women frequently view work as a part of household work and under-report it. Also, the EUS are not equipped to collect data on multiple jobs performed by people, the time spent on work (i.e. intensity of work), the scattered nature of work, subsistence work, and work performed under simultaneous activi-

ties. The TUS, which collects comprehensive information on all human activities, provides improved estimates of the workforce as well as shed light on important characteristics of the workforce. The TUS can thus provide critical information to add the richness of the EUS. The Expert Committee on the 62nd Round of the NSSO on EUS therefore recommended that a national TUS should follow an EUS.

A TUS collects data only for one or two days per person in a week, while according to the ILO, "a person is a worker if she/he has spent at least one hour on work in the reference week". As informal work is frequently intermittent and irregular, the TUS information on one day's work (for less than one hour) or non-work cannot qualify the person to be a worker or non-worker. It is quite likely that the person reporting as a non-worker on one day may be working on other days, or one reporting work may not work for one hour totally in the week. Thus, the TUS cannot provide information on the workforce/employment status of persons. It is necessary, therefore, to draw the TUS sample (which is always smaller) from the same sampling framework that is used by the labour force survey (EUS), with some common units. The TUS can complement the labour force survey (LFS) information. The independent TUS cannot provide estimates of the workforce/labour force.

In short, the Indian TUS has missed two important opportunities – of implementing the SDG 5.4 and the ILO's important resolution.

Indira Hirway is Director and Professor of Economics, Center For Development Alternatives, Ahmedabad

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.

Media regulation
The 'excesses' of India's broadcast media are on the rise as seen in the shrill tone over the Tablighi Jamaat event, the mystery around a young Bollywood actor's passing and another actor's tirade against the system she is in. These are only a few examples. Though there is a self-regulatory mechanism in the country to deal with departures from normative journalism, it is startling

that even the highest court of the land is unconvinced of its effectiveness. The crux of the problem is that neither the government nor courts have succeeded in drawing a line between 'free' speech and 'hate' speech. Consequently, a hate speech culture has been making inroads. The top court needs to prescribe stringent guidelines for the broadcast media (Editorial, "Curbing

on-air bigotry", November 20).
K. RAMMOHANDAS,
Malappuram, Kerala

Bank bailout
Effectively, the presence of NPAs beyond the tolerable level in the loan portfolios of banks are the pivotal triggers for financial distress. NPAs are considered major impediments to priority sector lending by banks. Further, various studies

have established that a chunk of NPAs are high value loans. The recent Yes Bank fiasco points to this. Hence, there must be a regulatory surveillance mechanism to preemptively capture these debilitating trends in a bank's functioning and to alert its clientele before it actually slips into the critical stage of a moratorium. Supervisory oversight should be 24X7. Arguably, frequent

incidents of financial distress will impact depositor confidence.
G. RAMASUBRAMANYAM,
Kanuru, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh

■ In the current atmosphere of financial uncertainty and insecurity, if reputed banks

too are unable to guarantee investors as being totally safe and trustworthy investment channels, confidence in the banking system will vanish.
A. MOHAN,
Chennai

CORRECTIONS & CLARIFICATIONS:
The author credit for the Friday Review page story titled "The music of grief" (Nov. 20, 2020) should have read: "The author is consultant, World Bank Group", and not communications consultant, as published.

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A fragile peace amid persisting conflict

As the Army finds success in checking infiltration, ceasefire violations by Pakistan have gone up. **Dinakar Peri** reports on the woes of the people of Jammu and Kashmir living in fear of shelling, facing loss of income from trade and tourism and carrying on without 4G Internet

On the afternoon of July 8, 2020, Sadaqat Hussain, 23, and Zameer Ahmed, 26, were hit by sniper fire from the Pakistani side of the Line of Control (LoC) in Simari Panchayat, Tangdhar sector of Kupwara district in Jammu and Kashmir, while they were helping construct a community bunker. Ceasefire violations along the LoC and the International Border (IB) have increased in the last few years; this year, they have reached a new high. This increased exchange of fire, involving small arms, mortars and medium artillery, and causing injuries and deaths, has led to a scramble to build bunkers for villages along the border. The incident in Tangdhar occurred during one such construction effort. Army officials said the workers were probably mistaken for military personnel. Hussain and Ahmed received some assistance from the Army but are still sometime away from full recovery. One has been injured in the leg and the other in the stomach.

According to official data, in 2018, there were 1,629 ceasefire violations along the LoC and IB. This number increased to 3,168 in 2019 and has touched a new high of 4,052 so far this year, including major exchange of fire just before Deepavali. There have been over 128 incidents already this month and 396 in October. Ceasefire violations have resulted in 20 civilian deaths this year; 47 people have sustained injuries. A bulk of the ceasefire violations were in the Jammu region. "Shelling had reduced after 2012, but it increased again from last year," a local villager said during an interaction with a small group of journalists who visited the place in mid-October.

The Tithwal border crossing point on the LoC, which was open till November 2018, has remained shut since. With recent developments, there is no scope of it being opened for the public again. Originally built in 1931 and destroyed and rebuilt since, the bridge is open only during emergencies now. Dogs squeeze through the barbed wire and cross freely under the watchful gaze of the guards and surveillance cameras. "Who will stop them?" said one jawan laughing.

Possibility of escalation of tensions
Tithwal has a population of about 1,100 people, while Simari has a smaller population of 750 people. Villagers reminisced about their visits across the border to see their relatives during better times. "Shelling began in and around Tithwal in 2018," said Izaz Ahmed, a teacher, and chairman of the Chinar Youth Committee. Ahmed has relatives on his father's side across the border and has been to Pakistan several times. He said those who wished to travel used to obtain a permit from Srinagar. "It took about one or two months to get the permit. They would let us travel up to 15 days and would extend that by up to two months on a case-by-case basis," he explained. Several villagers complained that not only could they no longer go across the border, but even mobile connectivity had stopped 50 to 100 metres short of their village.

"Tangdhar was active last year," said an officer talking of ceasefire violations after the Balakot airstrike in February that heightened tensions between India and Pakistan. In Tangdhar sector, 60 old bunkers which had fallen into disuse over time are now being converted into 120 community bunkers, according to government specifications. These bunkers are spread across 32 panchayats consisting of 42 revenue villages with a population of over 70,000 people. Work on 75 bunkers is complete; the rest are at an advanced stage of completion. Each bunker costs around ₹20 lakh and can accommodate 50-60 people.

Lolab Valley in Kupwara district, once a hotbed of terrorist activity, is now largely quiet. "There is a possibility of escalation of tensions here, so we are keeping watch," said an officer. At the Army Goodwill School, Chandigam, in Lolab Valley, located a few kilometres from the LoC, the number of students has increased over the years. "Most of them come from poor backgrounds. There is a growing awareness about educating children," said Zahida Maqbool Shah, the school principal. Except for a few threats in the past to shut down the school, the situation has been peaceful. The fee is subsidised by the Army. During the pandemic, however, payment has been deferred as many have not been able to afford even the subsidised fee.

The school was established in 2000 under the Army's Sadbhavana initiative. It has 697 students: 472 boys and 225 girls. The school admits students up to Class XII and was recognised by the Jammu and Kashmir Board of Education in 2015-16. This is one of the 28 Army Goodwill Schools set up by the Army in Kashmir Valley. Talking about the school, Lieutenant General B.S. Raju, 15 Corps Commander, said, "What people here want is just a good quality of life, a



Army personnel stand guard while children gather on the school grounds at the Army Goodwill School in Chandigam, Lolab Valley, some 25 km from the Line of Control, in Kupwara district of Kashmir on October 13.

(Below): A soldier on guard in Tangdhar sector close to the LoC. • AFP, DINAKAR PERI



We will be doing more work on the issue of surrenders because for us, getting a man back is more important than neutralising him. And that is a work in progress.

LIEUTENANT GENERAL B.S. RAJU
15 Corps Commander

decent life, like everyone else in the world. This is the common man's aspiration in the Valley."

Preventing infiltration attempts

Lt Gen Raju said the first tier of the anti-infiltration grid has been strengthened. "If the first grid is strong, it will help in stopping infiltration. This also gives us a chance to detect infiltration of terrorists," he said. "We have been able to stop infiltration substantially. We have given troops on the ground additional surveillance and technology," he said in Srinagar. "The scale of ceasefire violations went up and then came down slightly. We have managed to limit calibre escalation." Data show that infiltration has been effectively curtailed. Twenty-seven terrorists infiltrated the border this year till mid-October, compared to 130 in 2019 and 129 in 2018.

There are an estimated 22 terror launch pads active along the LoC with around 300 terrorists waiting to infiltrate the border. While infiltration remains low, there are innovative attempts being made to smuggle in weapons. Even drones have been used on a few occasions in Jammu. There has also been an increase in the recovery of arms and ammunition including U.S.-origin M4 rifles and Chinese rifles. This year, over 143 of the AK series, five M4s and two M16s were recovered, among other weapons.

The Army is also in the process of upgrading the border fence. The existing fence, called the anti-infiltration obstacle system, is located about 700 m from the LoC. It is a double row fence consisting of concertina wire and was constructed between 2003 and 2005. Keeping in view the annual wear and tear of the fence due to snowfall, the Army has decided to adopt a hybrid model which will cost around ₹10 lakh per km. The

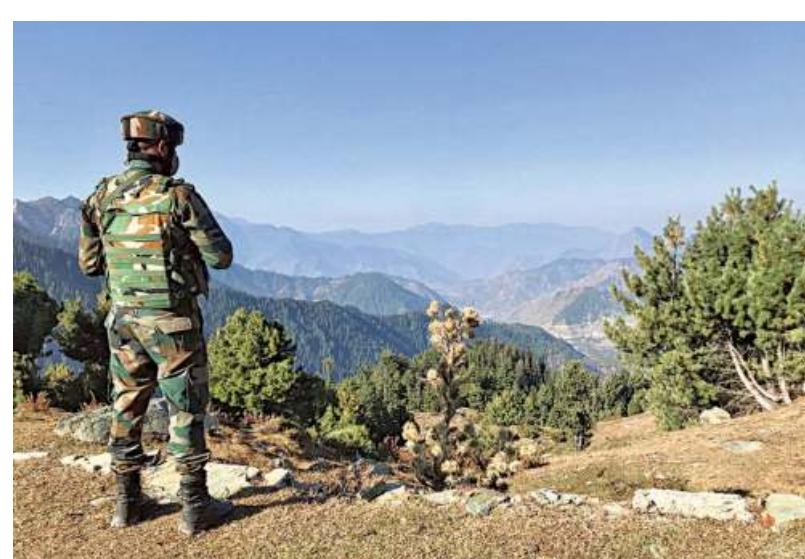
Army is attempting to construct 60 km this year, an officer on the LoC said. There is heavy snowfall in many areas which makes the metal brittle. As a result, the fence has to be repaired every year. The Corps Commander has suggested that the sensors installed should be modular with a plug and play option to prevent their damage, another officer said. Charging and maintenance facilities will be available at the local posts.

Since he took over command of 15 Corps in March, Lt Gen Raju has also decided to do away with the point system for recovery of weapons in the Valley (a system by which units earn citations and rewards in an attempt to discourage deviations). He said the system has seen too many discrepancies and also gives the wrong message.

Pitch for connectivity

While the Army is busy at the border, the residents in Tangdhar have their own woes. They have been appealing for a tunnel, as the region gets cut off during winters. This has been promised but hasn't been approved yet, they said. "A tunnel will ensure connectivity all year and bring development. In February, a representation was made to the Union Minister of Road Transport and Highways, Nitin Gadkari," said Wali Ahmed, chairman of the tunnel coordination committee. "In winter, it is a challenge to stock up essential supplies and prices go up," said Mansor Ahmed, principal of the local school.

A local official said a feasibility study was supposed to have been taken up in February but has been delayed due to COVID-19. It is not yet clear when the study will take place. A senior Army officer said the duration for which the Sadhna Pass, earlier called the Nastachun Pass, on the Kupwara-Tangdhar highway is cut off has been significantly reduced in the last few years.



CThe job of the government is to work on easing tensions and finding a solution to the problem of terrorism. If that is sorted, we will be able to conclude that Kashmir's renaissance or makeover is complete.

MIR JUNAID
President of the Jammu and Kashmir Workers Party

However, the risk of avalanches and hazards remains significantly high. In April this year, the sub-divisional magistrate, Bilal M. Bhat, and two of his staff had a narrow escape after their vehicle was hit by a big avalanche as they were returning after monitoring the COVID-19 situation. Timely rescue by the Army saved their lives. The tunnel is one option but given the high cost, other options like a ropeway should also be explored, the officer said.

Many residents also raised the issue of 4G Internet service, which has not been restored after being suspended in August last year. Since the COVID-19 lockdown, this problem has caused a lot of displeasure as professionals and students have been working and studying from home.

A year since the abrogation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status and the conversion of the State into two Union Territories, cross-border firings have increased and infiltration and incidents of stone throwing have decreased. An eerie silence has descended on the Valley, said an official who did not wish to be identified. "Despite restrictions, some flare-up was expected, but all indices point to normalcy. There is an uneasy calm here," he said.

People around Srinagar and up Tangdhar sector identified 4G, roads and connectivity as the main issues affecting the people. After the abrogation

of special status, people want to see tangible changes on the ground, said Army and government officials.

An uneasy calm on the ground

Though strong counter-infiltration measures are in place, local recruitment remains a concern. The activity has shifted from north Kashmir to south Kashmir. According to data from the Army, 219 terrorists were locally recruited in 2018, 119 in 2019, and 135 as of October 6 this year. An estimated 207 terrorists are active in the Valley of which 90 are Pakistanis. Data show that recruitment of people for terrorist activities, which was 24 in 2011 and 19 in 2012, has steadily gone up. In 2017, a year after the Army's 'surgical strikes' on terror camps in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (POK) and the killing of Burhan Wani, recruitment went up to 128 from 88 the previous year.

Given this trend, the Army's focus has shifted to promoting surrenders by involving families, said both Lt Gen Raju and Major General Rashid Bali, General Officer Commanding of the Victor Force covering South Kashmir. "We are advocating minimum use of force and minimum collateral damage so that loss of lives and damage to property are avoided," they said. There has been an increase in surrenders too, they said. "We will be doing more work on the issue of surrenders because for us, getting a man back is more important than neutralising him. And that is a work in progress," said Lt Gen Raju.

The Army wants to reach out to people in such a manner that "there will be little reason for people to take up arms," he said. It is important to stop recruitment, he emphasised. Lt Gen Raju said that they want to break the barrier between the Army and the people. "It is important for us. We need to do more. We have intensified our youth outreach programme," he said.

Early this year, security forces decided not to allow public funerals for terrorists killed in encounters in order to avoid major congregations and recruitment. "We told them that it is essential to avoid collateral damage and also peer pressure," said Maj Gen Bali. Family members are taken along and the burial is held elsewhere, not in the native village.

Impact of the pandemic

As restrictions imposed after the August 5, 2019, were eased and a semblance of normalcy returned to the Valley, there was expectation that tourism would pick up. But the situation once again went into a tailspin due to COVID-19 and the resulting lockdown. Both last year and this year, tourism was affected due to lockdowns, said a local vendor. As a

result, tourism, a major revenue generator for the summer months, as well as apple cultivation, the biggest revenue generator, were both badly hit. Dal Lake in Srinagar, a major draw for tourists, remained largely devoid of crowds. Boat operators could be seen offering discounted rides for people walking on the pavements along the lake. Several pleaded with tourists to take a ride at ₹200. "It has been a very tough season," one operator said.

Mir Junaid, president of the Jammu and Kashmir Workers Party and a Sarpanch in Kupwara district, said Kashmir is going through a paradigm shift. With the "political confusion of the past one year" erased, people now want to lead a normal and happy life, but the speed of Internet bothers them, he said. "The job of the government is to work on easing tensions and finding a solution to the problem of terrorism. If that is sorted, we will be able to conclude that Kashmir's renaissance or makeover is complete," he said to *The Hindu*. The social isolation caused post the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits is another important point that needs resolution for the re-colouring of the faded cultural fabric of Kashmir, he added.

Kashmiri apples, known for their quality and taste, suffered a twin blow this year. While yield remained much lower than normal due to the pandemic and the lockdown, fewer quality control checks led to fake pesticides flooding the market, endangering the crop. The result is that a majority of the produce has been marked 'lower grade' and is being sold at a lower price.

Normally 80% of the produce is categorised as 'Grade A', said Ashraf Wani, president of the fruit mandi in Shopian district of South Kashmir. "Last year, half the lot got spoiled due to the unrest. This year, due to the lockdown, there were spurious pesticides in the market. Those spoiled the apples. There was also fungal infection caused by *Venturia inaequalis*," Wani said. "About 60-70% of the produce got spoilt and was given a lower grade." This problem persists throughout the Valley and the Departments of Horticulture and Enforcement should act, he said. There is only one laboratory in Jammu and Kashmir to check pesticides, and it is located in Srinagar, he said. Testing in the lab takes six months. There is demand for two more labs.

As we stopped at an orchard near the mandi, damaged apples could be seen in significant numbers hanging from trees all around the small orchard. The apples are spoilt, there are no tourists and the people of the Valley are hunkering down for a long, bitterly cold winter. The hope is that there will at least be peace.

FROM PAGE ONE

Jaish plot to disrupt polls in J&K foiled: PM

A senior government official said that other than the huge quantity of arms and ammunition, a digital mobile radio manufactured by a Pakistani company - Micro electronics - was also recovered from the terrorists.

The messages exchanged on the device show that the intruders were continuously in touch with their handlers in Pakistan. One of the messages on the device said "Kaha phnche kia sorte hal hai koi mushkil to nahi?" [where have you reached? Hope you are not in any trouble?] the official said. Shoes manufactured in Pakistan were also recovered. A smartphone Q mobile that is made in Pakistan, a wireless set and a GPS device were also found on them.

However, Pakistan denied Mr. Modi's statement, calling the details of the Na-rota plot "groundless allegations". In a statement re-



A device retrieved from the Pakistani terrorists.

U.P. govt. denies confining Kerala journalist illegally

"You told us in the last hearing that you did not know where he was and you were not allowed to meet him... He [Mr. Mehta] is now saying he [Kappan] was duly produced before a court?" Chief Justice Bobde turned to ask senior advocate Kapil Sibal for the KUWJ.

Mr. Sibal responded, "But what is said in the FIR is ex-facie false... Whenever we went to the jail authorities, they would tell us to go get a judicial order... We want to meet this man... Let a lawyer go to meet him and get his signature for a *vakalatnama*."

The CJI responded, "We will enable that for you."

Mr. Mehta, in turn, said the State government had no objection to a lawyer meeting Mr. Kappan in jail to sign a *vakalatnama*.

The court recorded the statement made by the law officer. "There was no objection and there is no objection," Mr. Mehta said.

During the hearing, the CJI said the court was concerned about the "inaccurate reporting" of the top court proceedings held on

Nod for fresh contempt action against comedian

"The tweet is grossly vulgar and obnoxious, and I have no doubt that it would tend to lower the authority of the Supreme Court as well as undermine the confidence that the litigant public have in the institution of the Supreme Court itself," the top law officer wrote.

This is the second consent given by Mr. Venugopal for contempt action against Mr. Kamra in November. The earlier one was for Mr.

Kamra's tweets on the decision of the Supreme Court to grant interim bail to Republic TV Editor-in-Chief Arnab Goswami.

Mr. Kamra had refused to apologise or retract the tweets. Instead, he tweeted that he wished to "volunteer" the time that may be allotted for hearing his contempt case to others "who have not been as lucky and privileged as I am to jump the queue".

Bhutan says no Chinese village on its territory

The settlement consists of a neat housing locality, clean roads and other amenities next to a stream. The presence of the Chinese village is the first time since 2017 that a Chinese residential area has been noticed near the Doklam region, which is strategically important for India.

Pandemic links
In recent months, India has maintained close coordination with Bhutan and has included the Himalayan country in plans for containment of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Launching the second phase of the RuPay card in Bhutan electronically on Friday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi assured his

ED sees 'hit job' on its integrity

The agency may file a complaint to verify voice clip's authenticity

G. ANAND
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has reportedly come to the view that a voice clip attributed to gold smuggling case accused Swapna Suresh is a well-crafted "hit job" to portray the agency in an unflattering light to "stall" its ongoing high-profile investigations in Kerala.

The ED is exploring the possibility of seeking the legal recourse against what officials believe to be a brazen attempt to cast aspersions on the agency's integrity and hobble the prosecutorial process.

Sources said the ED may prefer a police complaint to unearth the provenance of the questionable voice recording that accused it of coercing suspects to incriminate Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan in a false case. The ED

suspects that a website with a pronounced political bias had released the voice recording initially. Soon, other news outlets had picked it up. The agency feels the recording surfaced in the public domain shortly after it summoned C.M. Raveendran, private secretary to Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, for questioning in connection with the anti-money-laundering probe into the LIFE Mission-UAE Red Crescent contract.



M. Sivasankar, the former Principal Secretary to Kerala CM.

that the creative work that went into the meme points to a measure of deliberation and possible conspiracy to tarnish the agency's public and legal standing. It is of the view that the audio recording is patently false and fabricated. At no point did the narrator name the ED.

Moreover, Swapna had not complained in court that the agency had made her at-test misleading statements.

The ED also denied having persuaded Swapna to turn approver.

Sources point out that Swapna is the prime accused in the gold smuggling related money laundering case. Legally, it is inexpedient for the ED to make her an approver in the case, officials point out.

Sivasankar files bail plea in Kerala High Court

KOCHI

M. Sivasankar, former Principal Secretary to Kerala Chief Minister, has filed a bail application in the High Court. Earlier, a special judge, considering the case the Enforcement Directorate (ED) had filed against him under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act, had rejected his bail petition. Mr. Sivasankar said the ED could not produce any material to prove his involvement in the crime. Though it had obtained eight signed statements of Swapna Suresh, she had not implicated him.

NIA conducts searches in Kozhikode, Malappuram

KOZHIKODE

Selehets of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Friday carried out searches in five locations in Malappuram and Kozhikode districts in connection with the case of smuggling of gold through the UAE consulate in Thiruvananthapuram.

Officials said in a statement that the searches were conducted on the residences of five accused, namely Mohammed Aslam, Abdul Latheef, Nazarudeen Sha, P. Ramzan and Muhammed Mansoor.

Power TV head gets anticipatory bail

Court refers to Arnab Goswami case

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The Karnataka High Court has granted anticipatory bail to Rakesh Shetty, managing director of Power TV news channel, in a criminal case that was registered against him by a civil contractor after the channel telecast a series of programmes "exposing alleged corruption" involving family members of Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa.

Justice B.A. Patil passed the order while allowing Mr. Shetty's petition on the condition that he should surrender before the investigating officer within 20 days and should cooperate with the probe as required.

While citing various decisions of the apex court on proposition of law for grant of bail, the High Court also referred to the recent decision in Arnab Manoranjan Goswami vs The State of Maharashtra & Others. The case against the petitioner was registered on a complaint lodged by Chandrananth Ramalingam, director of Ramalingam Construction Company Pvt. Ltd.,

whose communications with the family members of the Chief Minister was telecast by the channel beginning September 2. The case against the channel's head was registered on September 24.

Apart from furnishing a bond for ₹2 lakh with two sureties of like sum to the satisfaction of the investigation officer, the petitioner has also been directed not to tamper with the investigation. While referring to allegations made by the complainant and counter-allegations by the petitioner, the court said it was to not only keep in mind the antecedents of accused persons while granting anticipatory bail but also the need to weigh the antecedents of complainant.

Observing that the complainant, Mr. Ramalingam, has also "not come up with clean hands and it appears that all is not well", the court expressed doubt over his claim that he was tutored by the petitioner considering the complainant's position as a director of a big construction company.

Virus claims 42 more lives in three southern States

Kerala adds 28 deaths to pandemic toll; Telangana claims 2.27% positivity; A.P. positivity rate at 1.85%

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala tested 60,365 samples and registered 6,028 new cases of COVID-19 on Friday, with a test positivity rate of 9.9%.

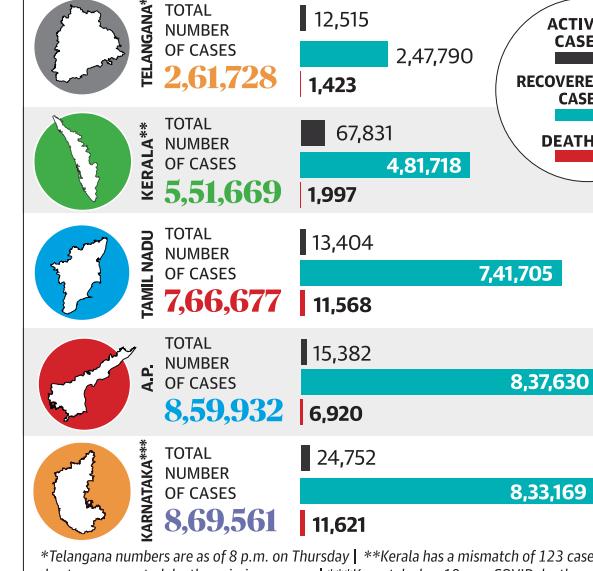
The State's official toll from the virus rose, as 28 more deaths were added.

COVID-19

Many asymptomatic

In Telangana, 894 cases were reported on Thursday, and positivity was claimed to be low at 2.27% based on 39,448 tests. As four more deaths were reported on Thursday, the total number of fatalities had gone up to 1,423.

Of the total positive cases reported in the State so far, 70% were asymptomatic cas-



es.

Andhra Pradesh added 1,221 new infections and 10

new deaths on Friday. While the overall test positivity rate for 9.47 lakh

samples was 9.08%, daily samples of 66,002 had a positivity rate of 1.85%.

With two new deaths each, Chittoor and Krishnna continued to have highest death rate among the districts. East Godavari, Guntur, Kurnool, Nellore, Prakasam and Visakhapatnam reported one new death each.

As many as 1,781 fresh cases of COVID-19 were reported in Tamil Nadu to 7,66,677. However, in the last 24 hours 2,173 more persons were discharged after treatment.

As on date 7,41,705 have been discharged, according to public health officials.

Chennai district recorded 489 fresh cases and eight deaths.

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

IN BRIEF



AMMA to seek Bineesh Kodiyeri's explanation

KOCHI

The Association of Malayalam Movie Artistes (AMMA) on Friday decided to seek an explanation from its member Bineesh Kodiyeri, who is in judicial custody in Bengaluru for his alleged links to an accused in a narcotics case and for allegedly funding illegal activities. At the executive committee

+ meeting, a section demanded his suspension, while those backing him opposed it.

High command may send final list in 2-3 days: BSY

BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa on Friday expressed confidence that the party high command would send him the final list of names to be inducted into the Cabinet in the "next two to three days". To a question on whether it would be a Ministerial expansion or reshuffle, the Chief Minister said he was awaiting directions from the party high command on the same too.

Jagan inaugurates 12-day Tungabhadra Pushkaralu

KURNool

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy offered flowers, 'harathi', and 'vastrams' to the statue of Tungabhadra Thalli on the banks of the Tungabhadra, marking the beginning of the 12-day Pushkaralu at the Sankal Bagh Pushkar Ghat here on Friday amid tight security and COVID-19 protocol. Mr. Reddy was accompanied by his Cabinet colleagues.

Digital health mission ready for nationwide roll-out soon

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The National Digital Health Mission will soon be ready for a nationwide roll-out, said Dr. Indu Bhushan, Chairman, National Health Authority and CEO of Ayushman Bharat.

Speaking at the Bangalore Tech Summit 2020, Indu Bhushan said the digital health mission has been launched in six Union Territories and was set for an all-India launch.

"Healthcare sector is emerging as one of the largest sectors in India, as the

country is on the threshold of becoming a digital health nation. The mission of the new digital health programme is to provide affordable medical health facilities to the citizens," he said.

Dr. Bhushan said around 500 million people were covered under the Ayushman Bharat Universal Health Insurance scheme in the last one year. A health coverage up to ₹5 lakh per household has been provided across 24,000 networked hospitals under the scheme. Also

the IT framework was further being strengthened and made scalable as the country got ready to go for the National Digital Health Mission.



Ancient Kali idol found damaged near Hassan

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
HASSAN

A Kali idol at the historic Mahalakshmi Temple, an important temple of the Hoyasala period at Doddagaddavalli, near Hassan, was found damaged on Friday.

The temple is an Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) protected monument, and the incident occurred at a time when the organisation is observing World Heritage Week.

Locals and the temple priest noticed the damaged idol on Friday morning and informed ASI and the pol-



ice. It is said that there was no one on night duty at the monument site when the incident occurred.

HC rejects plea in actor rape case

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
BENGALURU

The plea for change of trial court in the sensational actor rape case was rejected by the High Court on Friday.

Justice V.G. Arun said the court needed to look at whether the apprehension of judicial bias was reasonable or not. The prosecution had complained that the trial court was acting in a biased manner and claimed the survivor may not get justice from the trial court.

The abduction and rape case is being heard by Hon. M. Varghese, special judge, additional special sessions court (SPE/CBI-3), Ernakulam.

Bill against cow slaughter likely in coming session: Ravi

He says Karnataka will also enact a law to tackle 'love jihad'

STAFF REPORTER
BENGALURU

BJP national general secretary C.T. Ravi on Friday said "cow slaughter ban would be reality in Karnataka in the near future," and a Bill in this regard might be presented in the coming Assembly session, scheduled to start on December 7.

He tweeted on Friday, "I have asked Animal Husbandry Minister Prabhud Chavan to get 'The Karnataka Prevention of Slaughter & Preservation of Cattle Bill' passed in the Cabinet and present the same in the upcoming Assembly session." Given that Mr. Ravi is not part of the Cabinet as well, this has raised eyebrows.

Addressing presspersons earlier in the day, Mr. Ravi said in line with the recent resolution at the BJP's State executive meet in Mangaluru, the State government would soon enact laws banning cow slaughter and to tackle "love jihad".

Consent not given
"The BJP government had passed the Karnataka Prevention of Slaughter and Preservation of Cattle Bill in 2010, but the Governor did not give his assent and later the Congress government withdrew the Bill. We will reintroduce it with certain amendments that provide for stringent punishment for violators of the ban," he said.



Sonia in Goa to avoid Delhi air pollution

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Friday afternoon moved to Goa following medical advice to avoid smog and avoid air pollution in Delhi.

Accompanied by her son and former Congress chief, Rahul Gandhi, Ms. Gandhi, 73, is likely to be in Goa till the air quality in Delhi improved, a Congress functionary said.

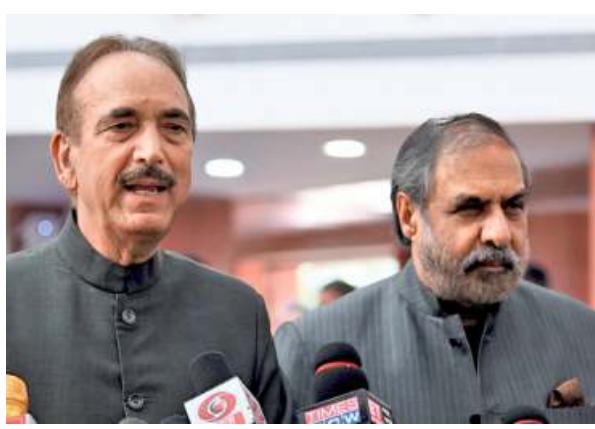
"The Congress president has been advised by doctors to shift out of Delhi to a place with cleaner air. The polluted air in Delhi has taken a toll on her health and has aggravated her asthma and chest condition, which has not shown much improvement despite medication", said the functionary.

Ms. Gandhi was hospitalised in July for a chest infection and has been on medication since. On September 12, she went abroad for a routine medical check-up with Mr. Gandhi and skipped the monsoon session of Parliament.

Azad, Sharma on Cong. panels

Sonia Gandhi signals a more broad-based decision-making process in the party

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI



Key appointments: Ghulam Nabi Azad, left, is on the national security panel and Anand Sharma on the foreign affairs one.

with Mr. Khurshid as the convener.

Mr. Azad, Leader of the Opposition in the Rajya Sabha, will be part of the committee on national security, which will also include Mr. Moily, Vincent H. Pala and V. Vaithilingam. Mr. Pala will be the convener of this committee.

The latest changes are meant to signal a more broad-based decision-making process in the party.

Earlier this week, senior leader Kapil Sibal's com-

ments that the Bihar election showed that voters did not consider the Congress a "viable alternative" and the leadership (the Gandhis) may be taking it as "business as usual" triggered a war of words.

Senior party leaders, including Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, Mr. Khurshid and Mr. Kharge, defended the leadership. Lok Sabha member Karti Chidambaram endorsed Mr. Sibal's views.

In a separate interview, the former Finance Minister acknowledged that the Congress may have contested more seats than its "organisational strength" in Bihar allowed, and expressed concern over the by-election losses across several States.

However, in a series of tweets on Friday, he said the "decline" in the BJP's performance after the 2019 Lok Sabha election was "visible and significant" despite the Bihar win.

'Small difference'

"Even after the Bihar Assembly election, the decline in BJP's performance after 2019 Lok Sabha elections is visible and significant. Of the 464 Assembly segments that the BJP contested both in 2019 and in subsequent Assembly polls and bypolls, the BJP has won only 218 segments. On the contrary, in 2019 the BJP had won 392 segments," Mr. Chidambaram said. "As I have pointed out, the MGB lost to the NDA by a whisker of 0.03%. The elections turned on 8 seats," he added.

To defeat BJP, it is necessary to defeat Trinamool: Yechury

No confusion about the primary adversary: CPI(M) leader



The Trinamool had prepared the road of entry for the BJP in Bengal

SITARAM YECHURY
CPI(M) general secretary

"long way away," he said. The Congress and the Left parties recently had a meeting in Kolkata. However, the leadership on both sides maintained that it was only to prepare for the nationwide strike of trade unions protesting against new labour laws.

"So far, we have only initiated political discussions to mount a fight against the BJP and the Trinamool and to create conditions for us to emerge as the largest political force in the State. To this end, we will have joint political movements. The seat-sharing arrangements have not been discussed yet. Before that, we have to first consult with the party leadership," senior Congress leader Pradip Bhattacharya said.

He dismissed reports that the Congress is vying to be the face of the alliance.

"We don't have any intention to insist that we be given more seats than the Left parties," Mr. Bhattacharya said.

Complaint draws J&K L-G's attention to campaign issue

Some candidates kept away from constituencies: CPI(M)

PEERZADA ASHIQ
SRINAGAR

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor (LG) Manoj Sinha on Friday passed "necessary instructions" in view of the concern raised over the campaigning by local parties for the upcoming maiden District Development Council (DDC) polls in the Union Territory (UT).

"The issue is already in my notice and necessary instructions stand conveyed to the concerned. I am sure the coming elections will go a long way in strengthening the Panchayat Raj institutions," he said in response to a complaint raised by CPI(M) leader M.Y. Tarigami.

In his letter to the LG, Mr. Tarigami, also general secretary of the mainstream parties' amalgam Peoples Alliance for the Gupkar Declaration, claimed that a good number of candidates were being kept away from their constituencies and bundled into cluster accommodations.

"Even in some cases, they are not allowed to attend party meetings. Opposite

The DDC elections are commencing in the next few days and to make the process credible, the participation of voters is imperative. However, after filing nomination papers, the candidates are not allowed to hold campaigning in their respective segments due to a perceived threat to their lives

M.Y. TARIGAMI, CPI(M) LEADER

next few days and to make the process credible, the participation of voters is imperative. However, after filing nomination papers, the candidates are not allowed to hold campaigning in their respective segments due to a perceived threat to their lives," Mr. Tarigami's letter reads.

Movement restricted' He said confining candidates against their wishes had severely restricted their movement and ability to campaign.

"Even in some cases, they are not allowed to attend party meetings. Opposite

Article 370 can never be restored

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR

BJP leader Syed Shahna-waz Hussain on Friday campaigned for the District Development Council (DDC) polls in Jammu and Kashmir and reiterated that the provisions of Article 370 could never be restored.

"The 'Gupkar Gang' is deceiving people by making promises over its restoration. The atmosphere in Jammu and Kashmir has changed after the abrogation of Article 370 last year. Jammu and Kashmir will see a new dawn of development," Mr. Hussain, recently appointed Kashmir in-charge for the elections, said.

The former Union Minister and BJP national spokesman targeted the National Conference (NC) and the Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) on the issue of dynasty politics. "Most leaders in Jammu and Kashmir are those who have a family background and did not allow others to grow," he said.

The DDC polls are due to start on November 28.

In a first, govt. approves study on 'status of radicalisation'

Researchers to arrive at definition, suggest changes to UAPA

VIJAYA SINGH
NEW DELHI

The Union Home Ministry has, for the first time, approved a research study on "Status of radicalisation in India". The study will attempt to legally define "radicalisation" and suggest amendments to the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

The Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPR&D), the police think tank of the Ministry, had invited research proposals from academics and legal experts in 2018. It received 75 proposals, and two topics, "Status of radicalisation in India: an exploratory study of prevention and remedies" and "Functioning and impact of open prisons on rehabilitation of prisoners" were shortlisted by the Ministry in September.

G.S. Bajpai, Director of the Centre for Criminology and Victimology, National Law University (NLU), Delhi, will conduct the research on radicalisation.

Speaking to *The Hindu*,

he said, "The study will be religion-neutral and will go by facts and the reported cases. Radicalisation is yet to be defined legally, this leads to misuse by the police. It should be defined and necessary amendments made to the UAPA."

Field visit

Mr. Bajpai, who is also the member-secretary of the Committee on Criminal Reforms constituted by the Ministry to overhaul the British-era Indian Penal Code (IPC), said that the study would take a year to conclude as it required field visits and interviews.

"Radicalisation has to be addressed in a systematic manner and a policy should be devised by the Centre. It is not merely a policing issue. In India, people are sensitive about religion, what we are attempting is correct interpretation of holy books such as the Koran, Gita or Bible," he said.

Aggressive policing measures could be counter-productive as the youth who

were radicalised were "misguided" and not the culprits. "We have studied the Maharashtra model, where several youth were de-radicalised. Merely sending young men behind the bars will not solve the purpose, right thinking people in the community will have to be mobilised," he added.

The United Nations' 26th report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team concerning the IS (Islamic State), Al-Qaeda and associated individuals and entities had pointed out "significant numbers" of IS and Al-Qaeda members in Kerala and Karnataka.

"Direct the Saharas to forthwith deposit the balance amount of ₹62,602.90 crore as on September 30, failing which the contemorsmay be directed to be taken into custody as directed by the Supreme Court in a judgment on June 15, 2015," the 59-page SEBI application said. SEBI informed the court of the increasing liability of the companies towards investors.

End relief to Sahara group, SEBI tells SC

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (SEBI) has asked the Supreme Court to cut short the "long rope" given to the Sahara group and direct it to cough up ₹62,602.90 crore in dues or send its chief, Subrata Roy, to jail for contempt.

SEBI, represented by law firm M/S K.J. John & Co, has filed a contempt petition in the top court. The companies, Sahara India Real Estate Corporation Ltd. (SIRECL) and Sahara Housing Investment Corporation Ltd. (SHICL), are respondents in the case along with Mr. Roy.

"Direct the Saharas to forthwith deposit the balance amount of ₹62,602.90 crore as on September 30, failing which the contemorsmay be directed to be taken into custody as directed by the Supreme Court in a judgment on June 15, 2015," the 59-page SEBI application said. SEBI informed the court of the increasing liability of the companies towards investors.

At UNSC, India calls for immediate Afghan ceasefire

SIRRAM LAKSHMAN
SUHASINI HAIDAR
WASHINGTON DC

India has told the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) that it calls for an "immediate comprehensive ceasefire" in Afghanistan, while welcoming all opportunities to bring peace to the country.

India's position was articulated

by its Permanent Representative to the United Nations, T.S. Tirumurti, at a UNSC meeting on Friday, convened under the Arria Formula (informally convened at the request of a UNSC member). Current and incoming members of the UNSC spoke on how the Council could support the Afghan peace process.

"For durable peace in Afghani-

stan, we have to put an end to terrorist safe havens and sanctuaries operating across the Durand Line," Mr. Tirumurti said, in a reference to Pakistan.

India has been concerned that the Afghan peace process and premature withdrawal of NATO/ U.S. coalition forces could leave opportunities for terrorist networks that

could target both Afghanistan and India. "The report of the Analytical Support and Sanctions Monitoring Team under the Al-Qaeda/ Daesh Sanctions Committee has also highlighted the presence of foreign fighters in Afghanistan. For violence to end in Afghanistan, these terrorist supply chains must be broken," Mr. Tirumurti said.

The 30th edition of India-Thailand Coordinated Patrol (CORPAT) concluded in the Andaman Sea close to the strategic Strait of Malacca. It saw the participation of indigenous-built missile corvette INS Karmuk and Thailand Frigate HTMS Kraburi, along with Dornier maritime patrol aircraft.

Navy also carried out a coordinated patrol with Thailand in the Andaman Sea



Show of strength: Ships taking part in the second phase of the Malabar naval exercise in the Arabian Sea. ■ AFP/INDIAN NAVY

was conducted in a 'non-contact at sea only' format.

In addition to 'Dual Carrier' operations, advanced surface and anti-submarine warfare exercises, seamanship evolutions and weapon firings were also undertaken during both phases of Malabar 2020, demonstrating the

synergy, coordination and inter-operability between the four friendly navies," the Navy said.

For Phase-II, Indian and the U.S. deployed aircraft carrier groups INS Vikramaditya and USS Nimitz respectively and P-8 long-range maritime reconnaissance

MANGALORE ELECTRICITY SUPPLY COMPANY LIMITED

(A Government of Karnataka undertaking)
Corporate Office, MESCOM Bhavan, Kavoor Cross Road,

Bejai, Mangalore - 575004, Ph: 0824-2887595 E-mail: mescom@rediffmail.com

CIN: U40109 KA 2002 SGC 030425 Date: 19.11.2020

L No. 1686/Actt/E-Tender/NM/2020-21 E - Procurement Notice

The Uttarakhand Sheep and Wool Development Board Dehradun is inviting bids in two bid system, (Technical Bid and Financial Bid) through e-procurement portal <https://uktenders.gov.in> from the eligible bidders for laborious Equipment and biological for artificial insemination in Sheep & Goats etc. for more details and information, tender notice and tender documents are also available on above website. Details of Tender reference and 07 Schedule Tender ID are given below:

Tender Ref. No. 1676, Acct. AL SHEEP_and_GOAT

Tender ID 2020_CEOSW_27605_1 to

Tender ID 2020_CEOSW_27605_7

Chief Executive Officer / USWDB

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(A Govt. of Kerala Undertaking)

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CIN: U40199 KERALA 2002 HOU 00239

DN414199K2002HOU00239

TENDER NOTICE

Competitive Tenders are invited for following. For more details please visit the E-Tendering Portal <https://etenders.kerala.gov.in> or www.kmml.com.

No. Tender ID Items

1 2020_KMML_399378_1 Global tender for the supply of 20000MT of RAW ILMENITE

2 2020_KMML_399572_1 For the supply of PLATE INCONEL

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e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

Tenders are invited through e-tendering process (Two bid system) for Medical equipment from Manufacturers, Importers and Distributors. For details visit <https://tender.e-procurement.gov.in>

D

INTERVIEW | SETH BERKLEY

'Initial vaccine support will cover 92 low- and middle-income economies'

Gavi the Vaccine Alliance, which has already secured up to 700 million doses, will announce deals with manufacturers to get more doses, says its CEO

RAMYA KANNAN

Seth Berkley, CEO of Gavi the Vaccine Alliance, says over \$2 billion has been raised for the Gavi COVID-19 Vaccines Advance Market Commitment (COVAX AMC) so far. A public-private global partnership, GAVI aims to increase access to immunisation in poor countries and has extended its services to handle the biggest immunisation crisis imminent, he says.

Gavi's COVAX AMC is an effort to jumpstart countries' ability to deliver COVID-19 vaccines. Do we have details of the assistance programme that aims at equitable access, yet? When do you plan to roll it out?

■ Initial, catalytic support will be made available to 92 low- and middle-income economies eligible for participation in the Gavi COVID-19 Vaccines Advance Market Commitment (COVAX AMC), to assist them in planning for delivery of COVID-19 vaccines, including support for technical assistance and strengthening cold chain equipment, according to a decision taken at the Gavi Board in October. This amount builds on the \$200

million re-allocated by Gavi in the initial stages of the pandemic to help Gavi-eligible countries respond and protect health systems.

Following briefings with AMC-eligible participants, Gavi and its Alliance partners – WHO and UNICEF – are finalising details on the operationalisation of this support, to be implemented as soon as possible, as well as planning for longer-term support for country readiness and delivery.

What will be the specifics with reference to India? Also, what is your requirement from the Indian government?

■ We are currently in discussions with economies, in-

cluding India, that are eligible for the Gavi COVAX AMC on detailed terms of participation in the COVAX Facility including their need for technical assistance – we will be able to provide more specifics on India's engagement later this year.

In the estimation of Gavi, how have nations been performing, in terms of their response to the pandemic, in particular in LMIC countries. Are you looking at a certain robust response or demonstration of a commitment before countries get on the COVAX bandwagon?

■ It is not Gavi's role to grade countries on their performance in these unprecedented conditions: what is important is that we make sure that every country in the world that needs access to COVID-19 vaccines is able to access them for their most at-risk populations at the very earliest opportunity.

In addition to the 92 eco-



Covid-19 has adversely impacted immunisation programmes nearly everywhere

nomies eligible for AMC support, another 94 have joined as self-funding members of the COVAX Facility. This brings us up to 186 economies around the world.

At the same time, we are negotiating deals with manufacturers for doses to be supplied upon licensure or pre-qualification: here, we have already secured up to 200 million doses of a vaccine for lower-income countries with the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, under their tech transfer agree-

ments with AstraZeneca and Novavax, to be produced at the Serum Institute of India.

A Memorandum of Understanding between AstraZeneca and Gavi, announced in June also commits an additional 300 million doses of AstraZeneca's candidate vaccine to the wider COVAX Facility. We have recently announced an additional agreement with GSK and Sanofi for 200 million doses. We will be announcing future deals and doses secured in due course.

In terms of access to regular vaccines, as part of the immunisation programme, has there been a disruption the world over as a result of the pandemic? Would you care to point to nations where there seems to be a deep impact? What are the ramifications in terms of child health?

■ The COVID-19 pandemic is having a major impact on continuity of primary health care services, particularly

immunisation. Disruption of immunisation services due to COVID-19 increases the risk of vaccine-preventable diseases and outbreaks. Existing health and economic inequities are being exacerbated, putting the most disadvantaged and poorest communities at even greater risk. Despite the variable trajectory of COVID-19 in different countries, it has adversely impacted immunisation programmes nearly everywhere.

Out of 68 Gavi-supported vaccine introductions and campaigns projected to take place in 2020, several have been impacted due to COVID-19: 39 are confirmed delays, and a further four are at risk of delay. A number of Gavi-eligible countries have resumed campaigns and vaccine introductions: Burkina Faso, Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Nepal, Solomon Islands, Uganda, Uzbekistan, Yemen and Zambia.

Eighteen Gavi-eligible countries have reported

shipment delays, while approximately six countries are reporting stock-outs at central or subnational level due to COVID-19. UNICEF has been reporting that the overall shipment trend has been stabilising, with approximately 45–50 vaccine shipments delivered per week. Both the number of shipments and the number of countries reached per week are within the range of pre-COVID-19 pandemic levels. This has led to a progressive reduction of the backlog of shipments, with only a handful of long-standing shipments pending; these are being booked and consolidated as required.

There are some delays in cold chain equipment optimisation platform (CCEOP) implementation. Where additional costs have been incurred due to COVID-19, these costs have been covered under the CCEOP buffer.

Immunisation is an essential health service that should be prioritised for the

prevention of communicable diseases and maintained during the COVID-19 pandemic. A recent study suggests that if people were to avoid going to the health centres and miss immunisation to avoid COVID-19, for every death prevented from COVID-19, over 80 vaccine-preventable deaths would occur, highlighting the importance of identifying strategies to continue to deliver immunisation.

The pursuit towards SDGs – is the journey going to be disrupted? Are there going to be setbacks in the achievement of goals, as a consequence of the pandemic?

■ If we do not rise to the challenge, there is a substantial risk – COVID-19 has taken an unprecedented toll on health systems and economies. We must do everything we can to ensure that our world's path towards sustainable development remains on track.

IN BRIEF



Petrol price up 17 paise, diesel 22 paise

NEW DELHI

Petrol price on Friday was hiked by 17 paise per litre and diesel by 22 paise, as firming international oil prices broke a nearly two-month hiatus in price revision. Petrol price in Delhi was hiked to ₹81.23 per litre from ₹81.06, as per a price notification from oil marketing companies. Diesel rates went up from ₹70.46 to ₹70.68 per litre. PTI

CBI begins probe into sale of waqf properties

NEW DELHI

The CBI has taken over two cases alleging illegal sale, purchase and transfer of properties by the Uttar Pradesh Shia Central Waqf Board and the Uttar Pradesh Sunni Central Waqf Board. Among those named as accused are the then Shia Waqf Board chairman Wasim Rizvi and its former administrative officer Ghulam Sayyed Rizvi and Waqf inspector Waqar Raza.

CAG Murmu elected to Geneva body

NEW DELHI

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India, Girish Chandra Murmu, has been elected External Auditor of Inter Parliamentary Union, Geneva, for a three-year term. He will take charge of this position from the Supreme Audit Institution of Switzerland.

Meghalaya groups renew demand for ILP curbs

GUWAHATI

Seven Meghalaya-based organisations have renewed their movement for the implementation of the British era inner-line permit (ILP) for entry into the State and the scrapping of the Citizenship (Amendment) Act. The agitation prior to the COVID-19 pandemic had led to communal violence between a section of the tribal and non-tribal people, primarily Bengali speakers. The groups, led by the Khasi Students' Union, have warned of an intensified stir.

BJP may end ties with BPF before Assam polls

GUWAHATI

The BJP in Assam has indicated that the two-phase Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) polls in December would be the beginning of the end of its alliance with the Bodoland People's Front (BPF). The BJP has been ruling Assam in alliance with the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP) and the BPF since 2016. The BJP and BPF have been drifting apart over the former's bid to take control of the council that the latter has for 17 years.

Health Ministry pushes for more COVID-19 tests

Plan to track undetected and missed-out patients

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry has advised the States and Union Territories to conduct more COVID-19 tests to track undetected and missed-out patients.

In an order on Friday, the Ministry advised them to adopt an aggressive and widespread testing strategy for prompt detection of the infection for effective tracing, containment and treatment.

The order comes a day after the Centre rushed high-level teams to Haryana, Rajasthan, Gujarat and Manipur to visit districts reporting high number of cases and support those States' control efforts.

Stating that India had conducted 10,83,397 in the past 24 hours, the Ministry said high levels of testing had ensured that the cumulative positivity rate was sustained at low levels and followed a downward trajectory.

"The cumulative national positivity rate, which was 7.48% on October 31, stands at 6.95% currently. Bihar (1.81%), Uttar Pradesh (2.95%), Jharkhand (2.99%), Gujarat (3.09%) are among the top 20 States/UTs to

from COVID, Kerala saw the most number of recoveries followed by Delhi with 6,685 daily recoveries, Maharashtra reported 5,860 new recoveries," the release said.

Ten States and Union Territories contributed 77.2% of the new cases. Delhi reported 7,546 cases, Kerala 5,722 and Maharashtra 5,535. Of the 584 fatalities, 81.85% have been reported from 10 States and Union Territories, with 154, or 26.32%, from Maharashtra, 93 from Delhi and 53 from West Bengal.

New cases It said 45,882 persons were found to be newly infected in the 24 hours. Ten States and Union Territories accounted for 78.2% of the active case load.

India registered 44,807 new recoveries, taking the total recovered cases to 84,28,409. "The recovery rate has improved to 93.6% on Friday and the gap between recovered cases and active cases stands at 79,84,615. 78.02% of the new recovered cases is contributed by ten States/UTs. With 6,860 persons recovering

A health worker collecting samples for COVID-19 test in Delhi. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPAKAR

have COVID-positivity rate less than the current national average," the release said.

e-Sanjeevani The Ministry said e-Sanjeevani, the national telemedicine initiative, completed 8 lakh consultations on Friday. "Over 11,000 patients are seeking health services on a daily basis in 27 States/UTs," the Ministry said.

The 10 States which registered highest consultations are Tamil Nadu (2,59,904), Uttar Pradesh (2,19,715), Kerala (58,000), Himachal Pradesh (46,647), Madhya Pradesh (43,045), Gujarat (41,765), Andhra Pradesh (35,217), Uttarakhand (26,819), Karnataka (23,008), and Maharashtra (9,741).

Children account for one in 9 cases: UNICEF

'COVID-19 impacting critical services'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

ty and inequality. Unless the global community urgently changes priorities, the potential of this generation of young people may well be lost," the report titled "Averting a Lost COVID Generation" says.

Much worse though is the impact of disruption of critical services that support and safeguard children such as vaccination and maternal and newborn care, which could aggravate mortality and morbidity, which will further increasing their vulnerability to COVID-19 and other diseases.

As a result, there could be an estimated 20 lakh additional child deaths under age 5, and 2 lakh additional stillbirths in the first year of the pandemic.

The UNICEF calls upon governments to implement a six-point plan to secure the future of children, which include bridging the digital divide to ensure all children are able to access school learning and guaranteed nutrition and health services. It also appeals that measures be taken to curb rise in child poverty.

Marriage between first cousins illegal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has stated that marriage between first cousins is illegal. The assertion came after a youth moved the High Court against the State of Punjab for anticipatory bail.

The petitioner, a 21-year-old youth, had sought anticipatory bail in a case filed under Sections 363 (kidnapping), 366A (Procuration of minor girl) of the Indian Penal Code at Khanna city-2 in Ludhiana district.

The counsel for petitioner submitted that his client had also filed a criminal writ petition, along with the girl, praying for grant of protection to their life and liberty. The State argued that the duo were first cousins and their fathers were real brothers. Hence they fall in the prohibited 'sapinda' under the Hindu Marriage Act (HMA).

Justice Arvind Singh Sangwan said, "...the submission in the present petition that as and when she [the girl] attains the age of 18 years, they will perform marriage is per se illegal."

Govt. sought FB data of 57,294 users

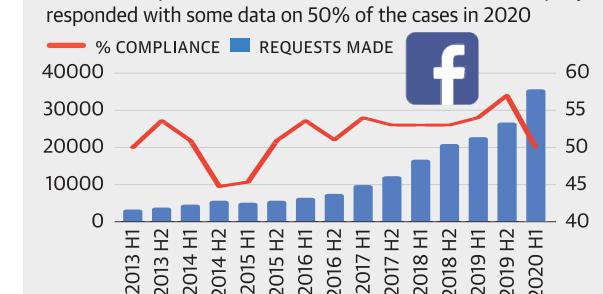
35,360 requests made in first half of 2020, the second highest globally: report

YUTHIKA BHARGAVA
NEW DELHI

Facebook received 35,560 requests from the Government of India for user data during the first half (January-June) of 2020 compared with the second half of 2019. The company responded with some data on 50% of the cases in 2020

Information check

Requests for user information sent to social media giant Facebook by Indian government grew by 33% in the first half of 2020 compared with the second half of 2019. The company responded with some data on 50% of the cases in 2020



to people's information, he said. In the first six months of 2020, government requests for user data globally increased 23% from 14,085 to 17,359. Of the total volume, the U.S. continued to submit the largest number of requests (61,528), followed by India, Germany (11,211), France (11,086), the U.K. (9,185), Brazil (7,517), Turkey (6,171) and Poland (4,572).

Hate speech

The social network giant also released its report for 'community standards enforcement', November 2020.

It said it had included in the report the prevalence of hate speech on its platform globally for the first time.

"In Q3 2020, hate speech prevalence was 0.10% -

0.11% or 10 to 11 views of hate speech for every 10,000 views of content," Guy Rosen, vice-president of integrity at Facebook, said in a separate post.

As per available data, in Q3, 2020 (July-September 2020), the company took action on 22.1 million pieces of content on Facebook for hate speech, of which 94.7% was found and flagged by it before users reported the content. Additionally, it acted on 6.5 million pieces of hate speech content on Instagram during the quarter.

Mr. Rosen said the company acted on 19.2 million pieces of violent and graphic content on Facebook, 12.4 million pieces of child nudity and sexual exploitation content on Facebook, 1 million

Poll bonds worth ₹280 cr. sold in Bihar

KRISHNADAS RAJAGOPAL
NEW DELHI

Electoral bonds worth ₹282.29 crore were sold in October ahead of the Bihar Assembly election, the State Bank of India said on Friday in response to a Right to Information (RTI) query.

The bank was responding to an application by Commodore Lokesh K. Batra (retired). He had sought a "branch-wise and denomination-wise" information on the sale of electoral bonds between October 19 and October 28.

The RTI reply showed that bonds worth ₹282,29,01,000 were sold from nine SBI branches.



Instapick

GucciFest: Can the Italian luxury house's week-long festival of film and fashion change the Fashion Show? The seven-part series, titled *Overture of Something that Never Ended*, has been co-directed by Gus Van Sant and Alessandro Michele. Also, short films by designers, including Priya Ahluwalia and Shanel Campbell, and appearances by singers Harry Styles and Billie Eilish. [@gucci on Instagram](#)



Talking point

Thanksgiving and Black Friday: While the US may be rethinking Thanksgiving (November 26), the weekend after signals the start of Christmas shopping and hope for retailers. E-commerce giants in India are getting on board as well. Shop the deals on electronics, apparel and more on Amazon's Global Store. Check out deals for Black Friday at [Grabon.in](#) and for Cyber Monday at [Lenovo.com](#).

Pick of the week

Concerts, stand-up, shopping and other events you just can't miss



Dose of funny

Known for his Telugu standup, comic [Saikiran Rayaprolu](#) takes his English show, *Rolling New Jokes*, virtual this weekend. On November 21 at 9.30 pm. At ₹249 on [bookmyshow.com](#). If you're up for some Tamil comedy, there is an hour-long special featuring [Comicstaan Tamil](#) contestants [Mayandi Karunanithi](#) and [Yogesh Jagannathan](#). The former will talk about college life and house hunting experiences, while the latter will highlight humour in everyday experiences. Today at 7.45 pm. Tickets at ₹99 on [insider.in](#).



Quality at 80

Kvality restaurant in Connaught Place is now 80 years old, having been opened in 1940 by PL Lamba. Even after its relaunch two years ago, its Villeroy & Boch and Narumi bone China, silver service, live piano music, and high tea stayed. Behind the heavy velvet curtain at the entrance is a strong colonial feel, with an equestrian and polo theme. On the walls are photographs by Madan Mahatta that span a period of 40 years. At 7, Regal Building, Parliament Street; Noon to Midnight.



Finalists on stage

Finalists of the [Good The@ter Festival 2020](#) are all set to perform virtually this weekend and the next. The lineup features *A Little Bit Closer* (USA /India), *Emperor's New Clothes* (Finland) and more. Details: [theredcurtaininternational.org](#). Chandan Roy Sanyal, Aarti Aney, Abhishek Saha, among others, come together for the live streaming of their play, *In Between*. Filmed in one single shot, it's a slice-of-life, fly-on-the-wall peek into an actor's mind and day. On November 29 at 7.30 pm. Tickets at ₹199 on [bookmyshow.com](#).



Museums come home

Tour India's museums virtually this month with The Art X Company's second edition of [Ghar Se Museum](#). Experience Art Walks Mumbai, DAG Museums, Piramal Museum of Art, Ashvita's and others. Also in store are virtual walkthroughs, talks and workshops on art appreciation and archaeology. On November 27 and 28. Tickets on [insider.in](#). This weekend, AstaGuru's annual *Vintage & Classic Car Auction*, presented by Favre Leuba will be on preview at Mumbai's High Street Phoenix. [@astaguru on Instagram](#).



The Micro Beauty Awards

Former fashion and beauty journalists [Aishwarya Subramanyam](#) and [Vasudha Rai](#) are curating a cheeky reply to the industry's commercialised beauty awards. Micro influencers including Vandana Verma, Komal Basith and Arjun Sudhir will handpick skincare products they bought, and were not gifted. Look for an IGTV video that details recommendations and one product each hated. The bloggers will also vote for 10 best Indian skincare products. Tomorrow @otherwarya and @vasudha.rai.



Home special

The Dinner Box is a new pop-up gourmet delivery service in Delhi that has chefs from across the country curate menus in their individual styles. Up first for four weeks is chef Aminder Sandhu, who in keeping with the season has warm, hearty dishes, made in traditional cooking techniques. Sample Stuffed Chicken Tangri, with cashewnut, shahi jeera, and Kalimpong cheese; and Theechha Lotus Stem, with *jwala* green chilies, garlic and cilantro, for instance. Wednesday to Sunday; call 9560288633 or log onto [Theinnerbox.in](#).



Piece of Paris

The French landmark can now take pride of place in your home. A segment of the original spiral staircase from the [Eiffel Tower](#) goes under the hammer next week. Paris auction house Artcurial is putting up a 2.6 m piece as part of their [Parisian Art Deco and Design Sale](#). It is one of 24 existing segments. While the lot estimate is ₹30,000 to ₹40,000 (₹26.5 lakh to ₹35.3 lakh), earlier auctions have sold at close to ₹2 crore. The closed-door auction takes place on December 1. Details: [artcurial.com](#)

These kids are alright

Designer Anamika Khanna's sons step up the game with their young label, AK-OK



SUSANNA MYRTLE LAZARUS

A couple of years ago, when Anamika Khanna was unwell and separated from her twin sons, Viraj and Vishesh, who were then studying at the University of Southern California, they developed a code. Drawing from NASA's 'A-OK', the boys made it their own love language by adding their mother's initials, resulting in AK-OK. This touching narrative also lends its name to a new pret/RTW brand from the Kolkata-based designer's eponymous label.

The first collection in 2019 included a line of *lehengas* designed by Anamika. However, keeping in mind the changing needs of customers in a post-pandemic world, they have now shifted focus to athleisure and an e-commerce only approach. The website was launched early this month, with a drop that included wraps, quilted skirts and sweatshirts. Actor Malaika Arora had sported one of their silk, floral-printed pyjama sets to a party recently.

Although Anamika dabbled in athleisure back in 2016, Viraj says that the AK-OK aesthetic is com-

pletely different from the main label, as their mother leaves the design process to them. "I studied business, while my brother opted for economics and psychology. Our design education came from years of observing and growing up in a fashion-friendly environment," he laughs. Though they were involved in the finance and management side of their mother's business, this was the first time the 25-year-olds took to the drawing board.

Viraj was largely involved in designing this collection, and the prints featured are collages he made during the lockdown. The site's minimalist white background highlights these prints, and details of each outfit and pricing are displayed prominently.

The brand also includes chunky necklaces and embroidered earrings. Viraj is working on a line of sculptures and painting which will be available soon. Meanwhile, Vishesh is involved in a menswear collection that is set to drop next year. "It has been quite challenging to launch a label, especially in terms of sourcing fabrics and production. We're working at half capacity," says Viraj.

Like many design houses that had to reinvent to bring in business, AK-OK was their way of pivoting and opening the brand to a larger market. Meanwhile, speaking for the Anamika Khanna label, Viraj says they are launching a new store in Kala Ghoda, Mumbai, this week. While this was in the works before the pandemic, changes have been made to keep up with market trends. "Customers are focussing on bridal wear and accessories. So, we have moved from Indo-western silhouettes to traditional outfits. We have also been cutting costs and are not overspending on non-essentials," he concludes.

From ₹8,000 on [shop.akok.in](#)



(Left) From the AK-OK womenswear collection and (above) Viraj and Vishesh Khanna • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

YARN IT!

Is AI getting more human?

What machine learning really thinks about your app usage

JANE DE SUZA

So you want your Artificial Intelligence to be more human? Say no more, we've made it more surly, snarky, shifty... Meet your new bots.

Search engine: Seriously, am I the only one who has to remember where everything is? You spend half your life searching for something – go get checked for early onset memory loss. Here, 5,77,239 results. Great, you've misspelt the key word 'mammary search'? Now, we'll have to do it all again! Phew!

Photo app: You really think that pouty duck-face is going to make your cheekbones stick out? Like 33 different selfie angles with filters will help! Ha! Excuse me! Do not call me rude. Just having a bad hair day. Not you. Me! Like everything is about you.



Food delivery app: Gorgeous profile pic, but your face looks sooo thin! Your cheeks are all sucked in. Must be those stupid diets. Come on now, order extra cheese, fries and fudge brownies. Yay, that's better!

Shopping website: Not judging, but you really think you'll get into that M size? After all that you ordered on the food app last night. Yes, of course, we talk about you behind your back. What were you thinking ordering fudge? But lucky for you, we go up to XXXL sizes – just saying. Aren't you feeling better already?

Messaging service: Pssst, haven't you been messaging this number a little too often lately? Anything we

should know about? Or that your spouse should know about? Not that we will mention it of course, we have the strictest security protocols for gossips, erm, information...

Internet banking: Sorry, but refreshing your page every 10 minutes won't magically change your bank balance. Remember that online buying frenzy? And how will you pay for a medical emergency? With skinny jeans? Wait, let us send some insurance guys your way. Don't worry, sweet chaps.

Insurance ad: OMG, you haven't insured against XY or Z? You are totally going to die! Only of XY or Z! And then what will your poor dependents do? Don't you love them? Don't cry, we've already mailed you the relevant forms. We're sweet chaps that way.

Fitness app: I know you cheated last night. Extra fries! How do you think that makes me feel? Come back later when you're done flirting with those other apps and are serious about me.

Job portal: Not our fault we couldn't find you a job. We've been working hard at it day and night, but we're only human. We will not only get you a job, but plan for your retirement too. We'll send our partners, the insurance guys, over. Sweet chaps!

Digital advertising: We see you're buried in something important, so here are a few pop-ups just to annoy you. The most alarming diseases you may not know you have!!! With gross pictures! Go on, click. Now, here are five glamorous filmstars caught in private moments. Gotcha! If you liked that, you will like...

Where Jane De Suza, author of *Flyaway Boy*, pokes her nose into our perfect lives.



Queer eye for the lit club

The second edition of Rainbow Lit Fest goes digital

SML

When the first queer lit fest was held last December in New Delhi's Gulmohar Park Club, there was much excitement. The two-day event drew people from across the country, age groups and identities. This year, like most other events, the team behind Rainbow Literature Festival goes online, with over 50 leading authors and poets, as well as scholars, filmmakers and business leaders. Titled *Digital & One*, the event takes place on December 5 and 6.

The buzz has been building over the last few months – back in May, they released a short film called *Breaking Notions*, followed by a poetry competition in June. Festival director Sharif D Rangnekar says,

"Being as young and small as we are, the dig-



ital world isn't easy to navigate, particularly given the intersections we engage with." The human rights activist credits partners Oxford Bookstore, British Council and others for their help in organising this edition.

Similar events, like the ongoing Tata Literature Live, have opted for half-hour-long chats, while earlier in

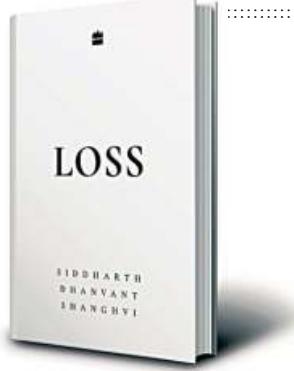
(Left) Filmmaker Onir and (below) author Devdutt Pattanaik with visitors at RLF 2019 • @RAINBOWLITFEST

the year, Jaipur Lit Fest's Brave New World had videos released on social media platforms. *Digital & One* has an interesting schedule, with Matinee, Evening and Night sessions. "I think we are all dealing with digital fatigue. Since the morning grind often ends by 10.30 am, we decided to kick things off at 11.30 am," explains Rangnekar.

The lineup this year includes author and poet Akhil Katyal, filmmaker Onir, chef Ritu Dalmia, with author and drag artist Kareem Khubhchandani (USA) and scriptwriter Amani Saeed (London). Economist Bibek Debroy and Parliamentarian Shashi Tharoor will deliver keynote addresses. There's music by queer indie artists as well as a puppet show, poetry recitals and stand-up comedy by Navin Naronha. Cinephiles can look forward to films like *The Men Who Speak Gayle* by Nathan Kennedy and *Nowhere* by Christopher Manning.

"Last year, I choked up while introducing the people who organised India's first pride march. This time, I think it will be the session with three queer couples – we need examples that reassure us that those who don't have a partner or love, need not give up," concludes Rangnekar.

Streamed on Zoom and Facebook. Details: [rainbowliteraturefestival.com](#)



'What can I do to die better? Live urgently'

Author Siddharth Dhanvant Shangvi spent eight months alone in a village in the pandemic. Some observations from his diary

Downy jasmine, in cement pots, were on either end of stone steps leading to my cottage; white flowers bloomed as quickly as they withered. Even with me in the cottage, it felt empty. This was in the early days of the lockdown, when we believed normal life was around the corner. After my 34th day in isolation – it was April then, hot, hard summer – I sat by jasmine fallen on red laterite stone steps. Because I had lived, the most vital question before me was: how must I die? The flowers, meanwhile, bud and bloom, wilt and shed, as if it were all the same thing.

I live alone, in a north Goa village; I am a professional isolationist. But at lockdown, time paused, and I with it. On the days I felt like I wanted to kill myself, I thought of errands I had to run next week, the letters I had to write, weeds that needed pulling

out. Like trapeze artist, one foot came after the other. An observation of one's despair thins it. To prevent a train from falling off the tracks, the inside of its wheel has a larger circumference than the outside. In his novel *Sputnik Sweetheart*, [Japanese writer] Haruki Murakami wonders, 'Was the Earth put here just to nourish human loneliness?' Perhaps an epilogue to his question, as I discovered, was: stick around with your loneliness long enough and it begins to keep you company.

Proximity and patience
The black-throated *munia* made a nest in the Cycas, a plant so ancient it dates to Cretaceous times. A Russell viper on the veranda, unflappable from venomous power. The quivering tegmina of a grasshopper signalled the end of a monsoon. How silly to



have forgotten the spiritual nutrition of wild things. What I might have simply found in leaves and stones, in a stream, I had looked for in museums. [Russian-French artist Marc] Chagall believed that art began where nature ended (but nature never ends). The best thing in the lockdown were my dogs, Kora and Lila. The dignity of companionship without the burden of conversation. Every single pet is an emotional support pet. Here's the funny thing about

being so bored that you think you will lose your mind: there's a hole in the centre of your boredom and if you enter it fully, and cross over without fear, it rewards you with sentience for everything around you. [Dutch artist] Vermeer made a painting of a kitchen maid at her task, and unlike the smug nobility of Mona Lisa, her investment in her daily job paid tribute to the idea that bearing witness was high art. And that the everyday, made specially for your attentiveness of its existence, is original and holy.

When I am alone, I am often visited by a loneliness that makes me pull out my hair. When I am with someone, I sometimes want to pull their hair out. The jury is out there on the virtue of annihilation by solitude versus annihilation by company. 'My marriage is over,' a friend said to me over the phone. 'What do you mean?' I asked. She said: 'It means that I finally saw him.' He had been cheating on her. 'I saw him.' Proximity involved all kinds of nakedness. The pandemic, sparing

become death's disciple. What can I do to die better? Live urgently, of course, and mindfully, but also in a way that lays vigil to the conclusion. The miracle of being alive is lost in the exhaustion of staying alive. Now I know that I want to enter my death as if it were a garden of beautiful trees, or a bench I had sat on before the sea, or a train I had boarded to a destination of no known address except that it was home, some place where I might be finally myself. I am writing this on Diwali, I am alone and unspeakably happy, with one family secret to share with you: everything is just right.

Shangvi's new book, *Loss*, (HarperCollins) launching on November 24, is a collection of essays on death, grief and unexpected pathways to recovery. If you are in crisis, call Aasra (9820466726).

There's a hole in the centre of your boredom. If you enter it fully, it rewards you with sentience for everything around you

FOOD SPOT



RAHUL VERMA

It all started with a bowl of soup. The weather was a bit nippy, and we wanted to have something that was light but hot. We'd have soup for dinner, we decided, and I started surfing the Net to see where I could order from. To my great joy I found that Fa Yian was delivering to my part of town.

I have old and fond memories of Fa Yian. Among all that I miss in these pandemic times are a Mumbai friend's Delhi visits. He used to follow a pattern that we had to stick to, no questions asked. We would go for a meal to one of his favourite restaurants, and order the dishes he loved. 'Have something else if you wish to,' he'd say, but he looked so sad when he said this that we never went beyond the script. One of his haunts for a long spell was Fa Yian, in Connaught Place (A Block 25/5, Middle Circle; Ph: 9899358888 011-41516788).

The good thing about the pandemic is that Fa Yian's food is coming home, so we can order what we wish to, without having to contend with the friend's sorrowful look. We'd originally thought of just ordering mixed hot and sour soup (₹235), but then we decided we could do with some mixed Chinese chop suey (₹415), too. And since a healthy meal calls for greens, I asked for a plate of stir-fried vegetables (₹395).

I had an excellent Chinese meal after a long time. The restaurant didn't scrimp at all on ingredients. The soup, for instance, had juicy pieces of chicken and prawns, and little veggie chunks in it. It was hot and deliciously sour, and cleared up my sinuses.

The stir-fried vegetable consisted of broccoli, baby corn, water chestnuts, bamboo shoots, pok choy, mushroom, Chinese cabbage, and other greens, all lightly sautéed and sauced. They were neither mushy, nor hard.



Stir-fried greens from Fa Yian

• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The cherry on top

Here's to happy food memories and to the friends who make them

I moved on to the Chinese chop suey. This has been a favorite of mine ever since I had my first taste of it at a Manali restaurant in 1980.

without added condiments. What I really liked were the strips of omelette the dish had to be garnished with.

The prices are reasonable. I paid a total of ₹1,227 for the three dishes (including Swiggy's delivery charges). The menu includes various kinds of soups, vegetable, lamb, chicken and fish dishes.

I was also happy to see that one of our Mumbai friend's favorite dishes – honey chicken (crispy chicken strips tossed with honey and garnished with a cherry) – is still going strong.

Perhaps, the next time I order from Fa Yian, I shall toast the friend (a much awarded journalist, by the way) with some honey chicken.

They had sent some sauces, but the dish was good enough

The writer is a seasoned food critic

How Anjaleka Kriplani worked across formats to stay relevant and thrive

SUNALINI MATHEW

Twenty-three years ago, when Anjaleka Kriplani decided to enter the interior design space, after graduating from New York's Fashion Institute of Technology with a degree in Interior Architecture, there were hardly any women setting up businesses. Entrepreneurship was not the idea it has grown into now, despite the fact that her family had been exporting home accessories to the likes of Bloomingdale's, Pottery Barn and Harrods, for two generations. "It's difficult to sit at home and do lunches and teas after you're exposed to working," she says, of her year-long internship at Ralph Lauren, New York.

Back in India, she set up her interior design business, and went on to have clients like Lalit Suri, Kokil Ambani, and the Jindals. Alongside, she also launched stores by the brand name Renaisance Homez, across five cities, importing home décor items. "I've seen the evolution of the space and the industry," she says, talking of how people in 1997 were willing to buy imported sofas for ₹5 lakh and a metre of cloth for ₹10,000.

It's not the same today, and that's not just because of the pandemic. "Then duties were as high as 150% and people were

willing to pay that. Today, people are price shopping, despite duties falling to between 22% and 25%. They know what is available all over the world, and are



looking for the best deal," she says, adding that the same industrial family is sometimes willing to spend only half of what they did a decade ago.

The pandemic brought its own woes: "The home segment was one where people felt the need to see, feel, and touch, but now, people are happy to shop online," she says. Recognising the shift in the market, she has started a slew of services, to be accessible in the affordable luxury segment.

In May this year, with on-ground retail declining overall, online purchases picking up, and only one store in Delhi remaining, she launched her online store (*Angiehomes.co*) as

a one-stop destination for home furniture and accessories, with an international and a made-in-India segment (under Angie's India). "India has old, ethnic motifs, but a *dohar* or blanket can show them in a contemporary way

Anjaleka Kriplani offers interior solutions and home accents through *Angiehomes.co*

• SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



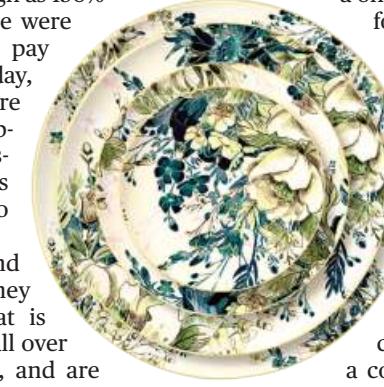
The most popular are tableware, followed by carpets (both wool and silk), with the aesthetic leaning towards the semi-formal and the functional rather than the purely ornamental.

In terms of art, "There has been a transitional shift," she says, with both ends of the spectrum (photographs and lithographs at the lower end and the masters and traditional art like Tanjore at the high end) becoming popular. "There's a slump in the mid-segment."

Besides traditional interior design, she has also introduced styling services so that customers can experiment with buying furniture and home accents under the guidance of a professional, or even use their existing ones to refashion even a single room. There's also a tie-up with Axis Bank, to help people fund their dream home interiors through an EMI.

In a still nascent sector, Anjaleka has also introduced a bridal and kids' registry, for those who want to book objects and have people who'd like to gift, pay towards them online.

"We want everyone to feel welcome," she says.



The most popular products are tableware, followed by carpets (both wool and silk), with a leaning towards the semi-formal and the functional rather than the purely ornamental.

that's not ultra modern, while keeping our culture alive," she says, adding that there are about 1,800 products under ₹50,000 on the website, and over 1,500 under ₹25,000, sourced from across India.

me personal betrayal, had been a gift beyond measure. Small mercies add up.

The other side of failure

With patience, that most ridiculously essential of traits, all questions are answered; patience is the under skin of prayer. In the monsoon, the paint on my bedroom walls began to slake. Beneath it, moss formed. I'd look out the window, trying to think of the marine sound the wind made. When we wait – and wait without reward or the assurance of an answer – things solve themselves. I'd snap back into the moment – the whirring of the fan above me or a squirrel on a lintel might be triggers. Nothing had changed except that the big wins of my life now registered only as insights into my failures.

In a worst-case scenario, I might be dead today; in the best, I'd be dead later. Even with a blanket of white flowers at my feet, I had been thinking about death. I don't mean this in either a wallowing or morbid way – as the end – but as an invitation to prepare myself: to

Trump is sending 'damaging messages'

President-elect Joe Biden says Americans are witnessing President's 'incredible irresponsibility'

SIRIRAM LAKSHMAN

WASHINGTON

President-elect Joe Biden said incumbent Donald Trump's refusal to concede the election and cooperate with the Biden-Harris transition team was sending a very wrong message to the world.

"I think they're [Americans] witnessing incredible irresponsibility. Incredibly damaging messages being sent to the rest of the world about how democracy functions," Mr. Biden told reporters after a COVID-19 response meeting he and Vice-President-elect Kamala Harris held with a bipartisan group of State Governors.

Coordinated response
Mr. Biden and his team are seeking access to the current administration's pandemic and vaccination plans (titled, 'Operation Warp Speed') so they are prepared on day 1 (January 20) of the new administration to coordinate a national response to the pandemic. However, the General Services Administra-



Tough job: Joe Biden speaking after a meeting with State Governors in Wilmington, Delaware, on Thursday. ■ AFP

tion (GSA) of the Federal Government needs to provide an "ascertainment" that Mr. Biden won the elections and this has not happened.

Mr. Biden said that for now, he preferred to work with Republican Governors and those in the House and Senate directly instead of taking legal action – but had not ruled out taking the Trump administration and GSA to court.

Mr. Trump has reportedly invited leading State lawmakers from Michigan to the White House on Friday to discuss ways to overturn the certification process that is progressing in the State which Mr. Biden won by over 1,50,000 votes.

Mr. Biden was confident the results would not be overturned.

"We won Michigan. It's going to be certified," Mr. Biden

said. "It's hard to fathom how this man [Mr. Trump] thinks."

Mr. Biden and Ms. Harris' discussion with 10 State Governors included the implementation of a national mask mandate, federal government financial assistance and the distribution of the vaccine.

Mr. Biden also said categorically that while there may be constraints to the degree to which business can be open depending on the prevailing viral conditions, he was not planning a nationwide economic shutdown. "I'll say it again. No national shutdown. No national shutdown... so there's no circumstances that I can see that would require total national shutdown," he said.

The President-elect, who has announced several Cabinet picks, said he had made a decision on who would be his Treasury Secretary and that it was a choice which progressive and moderate Democrats would accept. He planned to announce the

name before or after Thanksgiving (next Thursday).

On China

In response to a question on whether, after becoming President, he would want to "punish" China with tariffs or economic sanctions, Mr. Biden said, "It's not so much about punishing China. It's about making sure China understands that they got to play by the rules. It's a simple proposition."

He said this was one of the reasons the U.S. was going to rejoin the World Health Organisation (WHO) on the first day of his administration. Mr. Biden also reiterated that the U.S. would rejoin the Paris Climate Accord.

The coronavirus death toll in the country has just crossed the quarter of a million mark. The White House held its first coronavirus briefing in months on Thursday and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) urged Americans not to travel and gather with their families over the Thanksgiving holiday.

Trump bid to overturn poll unparalleled in U.S. history

His actions eclipse use of political force in 1876 election

DAVID E. SANGER

WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump's attempts to overturn the 2020 election are unprecedented in American history and an even more audacious use of brute political force to gain the White House than when Congress gave Rutherford B. Hayes the presidency during Reconstruction.

Mr. Trump's chances of succeeding are somewhere between remote and impossible, and a sign of his desperation after President-elect Joe Biden won by nearly 6 million popular votes and counting, as well as a clear Electoral College margin. Yet, the fact that Mr. Trump is even trying has set off widespread alarms, not least in Mr. Biden's camp.

"I'm confident he knows he hasn't won," Mr. Biden said at a news conference in Wilmington, Delaware, on Thursday, before adding, "It's just outrageous what he's doing."

Mr. Trump has only weeks to make his last-ditch effort work: most of the States he needs to strip Mr. Biden of votes are scheduled to certify their electors by the beginning of next week. The electors cast their ballots on December 14, and Congress opens them in a joint session on January 6.

Even if Mr. Trump somehow pulled off his electoral vote switch, there are other safeguards in place, assuming people in power do not simply bend to the President's will. The first test will be Michigan, where Mr. Trump is trying to get the State Legislature to overturn Mr. Biden's 1,57,000-vote margin of victory. He has taken the extraordinary step of inviting a delegation of



Set for retest: A worker moving supplies to aid in recounting of ballots from the November 3 election in Wisconsin. ■ AFP

state Republican leaders to the White House, hoping to persuade them to ignore the popular vote outcome.

Uncharted territory

"That's not going to happen," Mike Shirkey, the Republican leader of the Michigan state Senate, said on Tuesday. "We are going to follow the law and follow the process."

NEWS ANALYSIS

Beyond that, Michigan's Democratic Governor, Gretchen Whitmer, could send Congress a competing electoral slate, based on the election vote, arguing that the proper procedures were ignored. That dispute would create just enough confusion, in Mr. Trump's Hail Mary calculus, that the House and Senate together would have to resolve it in ways untested in modern times.

Federal law dating to 1887, passed in reaction to the Mr. Hayes election, provides the framework, but not specifics, of how it would be done. Edward B. Foley, a constitutional law and election law expert at Ohio State University, noted that the law only required Congress to consider

all submissions "purporting to be the valid electoral votes." But Michigan alone would not be enough for Mr. Trump. He would also need at least two other States to fold to his pressure. The most likely candidates are Georgia and Arizona, which both went for Trump in 2016 and have Republican-controlled legislatures and Republican Governors.

Governor Doug Ducey of Arizona has said he will accept the State election results, although only after all the campaign lawsuits are resolved. Governor Brian Kemp of Georgia, where a hand recount reaffirmed Mr. Biden's victory on Thursday, has not publicly said one way or another who wins the State.

Mr. Trump has said little in public apart from tweets endorsing wild conspiracy theories about how he was denied victory. Yet his strategy, if it can be called that, is to pull off his electoral vote switch, there are other safeguards in place, assuming people in power do not simply bend to the President's will. The first test will be Michigan, where Mr. Trump is trying to get the State Legislature to overturn Mr. Biden's 1,57,000-vote margin of victory. He has taken the extraordinary step of inviting a delegation of

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MARKET WATCH

	20-11-2020	% CHANGE
Sensex	43882	0.65
US Dollar	74.16	0.14
Gold	49551	0.32
Brent oil	44.20	0.14

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	375.85	-6.05
Asian Paints	2166.55	4.85
Axis Bank	607.85	-3.65
Bajaj Auto	3058.55	24.30
Bajaj Finserv	8542.60	719.20
Bajaj Finance	4715.85	179.30
Bharti Airtel	483.70	15.15
BPCL	383.30	-0.40
Britannia Ind	3552.10	40.75
Cipla	739.90	-2.20
Coal India	121.45	-0.60
Divis Lab	3469.10	-34.05
Dr Reddys Lab	4670.95	-36.75
Eicher Motors	2590.65	39.40
GAIL (India)	97.45	3.80
Gasim Ind	856.00	19.25
HCL Tech	819.25	14.70
HDFC	2334.80	10.20
HDFC Bank	1403.65	29.30
HDFC Life	663.90	17.85
Hero MotoCorp	2998.65	10.15
Hindalco	215.55	1.70
Hind Unilever	2120.25	-10.50
ICICI Bank	480.20	1.45
IndusInd Bank	811.00	-7.00
Infosys	1103.35	6.60
Indian Oil Corp	84.85	0.15
ITC	191.70	3.80
JSW Steel	336.15	4.95
Kotak Bank	1889.40	63.05
L&T	1132.30	-1.95
M&M	715.60	11.70
Mauriti Suzuki	6965.85	2.55
Nestle India Ltd.	17460.40	526.25
NTPC	91.80	2.00
ONGC	71.65	-0.50
PowerGrid Corp	191.85	2.05
Reliance Ind	1899.50	-73.65
SBI Life	845.45	-1.30
State Bank	242.75	3.00
Shree Cement	23948.70	287.05
Sun Pharma	503.25	-4.10
Tata Motors	169.10	1.15
Tata Steel	532.90	9.30
TCS	2660.25	23.35
Tech Mahindra	837.55	14.65
Titan	1365.15	72.70
UltraTech Cement	4862.55	84.55
UPL	420.40	3.90
Wipro	346.30	3.70

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	73.96	74.28
Euro	87.71	88.09
British Pound	98.24	98.67
Japanese Yen (100)	71.25	71.56
Chinese Yuan	11.26	11.31
Swiss Franc	81.19	81.55
Singapore Dollar	55.04	55.29
Canadian Dollar	56.61	56.88
Malaysian Ringgit	18.06	18.16
Australian Dollar	53.89	54.16

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



ALL sets up arm to build coaches; offers VRS

Ashok Leyland Ltd. (ALL) on Thursday incorporated a wholly owned subsidiary 'Vishwa Buses and Coaches Ltd.' for building coaches. VBCL is incorporated with an initial share capital of ₹60 crore divided into six crore equity shares of ₹10 each, ALL said in a filing. In another communiqué, ALL said it had approved a Voluntary Retirement Scheme for all eligible employees.

EPFO sees 14.9 lakh net new enrolments in Sept.

Net new enrolments with retirement fund body EPFO rose to 14.9 lakh in September from 8.8 lakh in August 2020, according to its latest payroll data. Provisional data released last month had shown that net new enrolments stood at 10.05 lakh in August this year. The figure has now been revised down to 8.8 lakh. The net enrolments had dropped to 5.72 lakh in March from 10.21 lakh in February. PTI

Competition Commission clears Reliance-Future deal

The Competition Commission has approved Reliance's proposed acquisition of retail, wholesale, logistics and warehousing businesses of Future Group. In a tweet, the regulator said it has approved "acquisition of retail, wholesale, logistics & warehousing businesses of Future Group by Reliance Retail Ventures Limited and Reliance Retail and Fashion Lifestyle Limited." PTI

Vodafone Idea, Bharti Infratel shares soar

Shares of Vodafone Idea Ltd. (VIL) and Bharti Infratel surged on Friday on completion of the Bharti Infratel and Indus Towers merger deal. The scrip of debt-ridden VIL jumped over 8% while that of Bharti Infratel soared 19%. Bharti Infratel closed 17.73% higher at ₹218.50 on the BSE, while VIL shares gained 8.31% to close at ₹10.04. PTI

CMYK

Raise private bank promoter cap to 26%

RBI panel moots allowing large corporates to start private banks after amending bank regulation law

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

MUMBAI

An Internal Working Group (IWG) of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has recommended raising the cap on promoters' stake in private sector banks to 26% in the long run (15 years). The holding is currently mandated at 15% of the paid-up voting equity share capital of the bank.

The IWG, set up in June, has also suggested that large corporate or industrial houses be allowed as promoters of banks only after necessary amendments to the Banking Regulation Act, 1949 (to prevent connected lending and exposures between the banks and other financial and non-financial group entities); and strengthening of the supervisory mechanism for large conglomerates, including consolidated supervision.



Easier path: For Payments Banks wanting to convert into an SFB, a 3-year track record should be sufficient, it said. • AFP

Also, well-run non-banking financial companies (NBFCs), with an asset size of ₹50,000 crore and above, including those owned by a corporate house, may be considered for conversion into banks subject to completion of 10 years of opera-

tions, meeting due diligence criteria and compliance with additional specified conditions, the panel said.

As regards non-promoter shareholding, it has suggested a uniform cap of 15% of the paid-up voting equity share capital of the bank for

all types of shareholders.

The IWG was constituted to review the extant ownership guidelines and corporate structure for private sector banks in India.

The terms of reference of included review of the eligibility criteria for individuals/entities to apply for banking license; examination of preferred corporate structure for banks and harmonisation of norms; review of norms for long-term shareholding in banks by the promoters and other shareholders.

The IWG also suggested that the minimum initial capital requirement for licensing new banks be enhanced from ₹500 crore to ₹1,000 crore for universal banks, and be raised to ₹300 crore from ₹200 crore for SFBs.

It said non-operative financial holding company (NOFHC) should continue to be the preferred structure for all new licenses to be issued for universal banks.

However, it should be mandatory only in cases where the individual promoters, promoting entities or converting entities have other group entities, the panel added.

The panel also recommended that for Payments Banks intending to convert to a Small Finance Bank (SFB), their track record of three years should be considered sufficient and Small Finance Banks and Payments Banks may be listed within 6 years

Fosun-backed Gland surges 23% on debut

Stock closes at ₹1,820.45 on the BSE

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD

Gland Pharma, a drugmaker backed by China's Fosun Pharma, jumped as much as 23% on its market debut on Friday reflecting the strong investor interest in pharmaceutical companies.

The stock, which was priced at ₹1,500 in the country's largest pharma IPO, rose to an intraday high of ₹1,850 on the BSE before closing at ₹1,820.45.

The Hyderabad-based injectables firm had opened its share sale earlier this month with a price band of ₹1,490-₹1,500 per share to raise almost ₹6,500 crore through a combination of fresh issue of equity and off-

er for sale of shares by existing shareholders.

The Nifty Pharma Index has gained more than 43% so far this year, outpacing the 5.7% rise in the benchmark NSE Nifty 50 index.

"(Gland) has never received a negative USFDA report," Reuters cited Hemang Jani, equity strategy head, broking and distribution, at Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd, as saying. "The future prospects are bright as it has 267 ANDA filings of which 215 are approved."

Gland's customers include Novo Nordisk and Viastra, John Christopher, practice head of business intelligence, pharma, at GlobalData told Reuters.

Borrowers have started repaying, post moratorium'

Customers' cash flows, a concern, says Chola's Arulselvan

K. BHARAT KUMAR

CHENNAI

With the moratorium winding down, almost all the borrowers have started repaying loans, according to a senior official of the Chola-mandalam Investment and Finance Company (Chola).

"More than 95% of our customers have started servicing loans, post moratorium," said Arulselvan D., executive VP and CFO. "Other NBFCs also seem to have seen the trend. So, the industry hit rate is about 80-90%."

For the quarter ended June, Chola's assets under management had grown 13%

taken the loan, as well as maintain good credit profile for future loans. "Credit behaviour has improved considerably," he said.

However, from a cash-flow perspective, borrowers' businesses were still not back to pre-pandemic levels.

"Our customers are still facing challenges, running at 60-70% capacity. Only if they cross 70-75% capacity, would they have something left after they pay their EMIs," said Mr. Arulselvan.

On disbursements, the Chola CFO said the second quarter saw improvement but they were still slower than the year-earlier period.

TMB first-half net rose 60% to ₹241.5 crore

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

CHENNAI

Tamilnad Mercantile Bank Ltd. (TMB) reported net profit for the six months ended September jumped almost 60% to ₹241.5 crore.

No-interest income at the unlisted private lender rose to ₹294.3 crore (₹229.2 crore) and net interest income increased to ₹733.6 crore (₹634.7 crore).

Gross NPAs, as a percentage of total advances, declined to 3.4%, from 4.9%, while net NPAs halved to 1.2%, the bank said.

Total business rose 9.7% to ₹66,765 crore with deposits accounting for ₹37,161.4 crore and advances ₹29,603.9 crore.

For the full fiscal year ending in March, TMB aims to cross ₹72,500 crore in total business and register a net profit of ₹480 crore.

Currently, Mr. Pradeep's holding in the lender – as well as that of the rest of the

'RBI spurned DBS offer to buy 50% of LVB in 2018'

Promoter group may approach SEBI



promoters and other shareholders, including retail shareholders who own about 45% of equity – has no value. Apart from Mr. Pradeep, there are three other promoter families – N. Ramamirtham, N.T. Shah and S.B. Prabhakaran – who collectively own 2%.

The promoters were also looking at approaching markets watchdog SEBI but would wait for the final merger scheme, he said.

E-com ushering in faster digitisation: Amazon India

More small businesses embracing tech for online presence'

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

BENGALURU

India's e-commerce currently accounts for a mere 3% of its total retail transactions but is ushering in faster digitisation across the consumption value chain, said Amit Agarwal, global senior vice-president and country head, Amazon India.

Addressing the Bengaluru Tech Summit, Mr. Agarwal said technology and mobile Internet had transformed daily life globally and they were likely to have profound impact on India.

"E-commerce is blurring the line between online and offline and between local and global," he said.

According to him, the pandemic had particularly highlighted the resilience

up points, logistics partners, and experience centres, for e-commerce and truly becoming digital entrepreneurs, he pointed out.

"India must grab this rare opportunity with both hands,

Krishna swings it ATKMB's way

His 67th-minute strike gives Habas' side a winning start to its campaign

ISL 2020-21

SPORTS BUREAU

Roy Krishna was a clinical finisher and the joint top-scorer of the Indian Super League with 15 goals last season.

On Friday night, he looked a different player early on as he wasted three good chances.

But the 33-year-old from Fiji had the last laugh, scoring the match-winner shortly after the hour-mark, as ATK Mohun Bagan defeated Kerala Blasters 1-0 in the ISL opener at the GMC Stadium in Bambolim.

Krishna, who had shot over the bar once and was denied by a fine slide by the Blasters' defender Costa Nhamoinesu in the first half, produced the one moment of magic that sealed the tie in the Kolkata outfit's favour.

Perfect cross

Manvir Singh, playing on the left, appeared to be searching for Krishna and when he spotted the Fijian just outside the box, he sent a cross in. Krishna raced into the box and slotted the ball into the bottom corner with a cool finish, giving goalkeeper Alibino Gomes no chance.

Blasters, who finished seventh last season, had superior ball possession in the opening half but could not create enough opportunities.

The Kerala team's star striker Gary Hooper failed to connect a header properly



Decisive blow: Roy Krishna's clinical finish – the first goal of this edition – helped ATKMB earn full points against Kerala Blasters. •ISL/SPORTZPICS

from close range in the 37th minute. Shortly after the break, young Sahal Samad missed a golden chance. He was well placed as he met a Jessel Carneiro cross from the left but messed up the finish.

Both sides struggled to keep the ball, but ATKMB edged the contest to start its campaign on the right note.

Hit by the global pandemic

ic, the teams had short pre-seasons this time and it showed early in the second half as the game slowed down.

The result: Kerala Blasters 0 lost to ATK Mohun Bagan 1 (Roy Krishna 67).

SATURDAY'S MATCH
NorthEast United FC
vs
Mumbai City FC, 7.30 p.m.
STAR SPORTS 2 (SD & HD) & 3

According to the channel, the recently concluded edition saw an impressive viewership growth of 24% among women and 20% among children respectively.

IPL 2020: TV viewership rises 23%

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA MUMBAI

Star India, the official broadcasters of Indian Premier League, claimed that there has been a 23% rise in TV viewership with a staggering 31.57 million average impressions during the marquee T20 event.

The data has been sourced from Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) India and the coverage in five regional languages – Hindi, Bengali, Telugu, Tamil and Kannada – has only helped the rise in viewership.

Season 13 witnessed innovative programming, world-class production – both remote and on-ground

SANJOG GUPTA

Head - Sports, Star India

According to the channel, the recently concluded edition saw an impressive viewership growth of 24% among women and 20% among children respectively.

Fantastic work

"This wouldn't have been possible without the fantastic work done by the team at BCCI in staging the tournament under extenuating circumstances and seamless functioning from our teams inside the bio-secure bubbles in India and UAE."

Djokovic sets up Thiem clash

Nadal dethrones Tsitsipas, plays Medvedev in semifinals

ATP FINALS

REUTERS LONDON

London's farewell edition of the ATP Finals could still have its dream climax after World No.1 Novak Djokovic easily beat Alexander Zverev 6-3, 7-6(4) to seal a last-four spot on Friday.

The data has been sourced from Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) India and the coverage in five regional languages – Hindi, Bengali, Telugu, Tamil and Kannada – has only helped the rise in viewership.

Djokovic finished second in the Tokyo Group, and with Spanish World No.2 Rafael Nadal finishing second in the London Group, they have avoided a semifinal clash.

Nadal had kept alive his hopes of winning the year-end event for the first time as he beat Greek defending champion Stefanos Tsitsipas 6-4, 4-6, 6-2 on Thursday.

Djokovic was quickly into

game-mode and when World No. 7 Zverev double-faulted to drop serve in his first service game, he seized control, winning the first set 6-3.

Zverev dug in his heels and Djokovic looked frustrated at times and twice had to hold serve to stay in the second set.

Raising his game

The 17-time Grand Slam champion raised the intensity level in the tiebreak, edging 5-3 ahead with a fizzing backhand pass. He brought up two match points with a hefty first serve before pressuring Zverev into an error to complete the victory.

Meanwhile on Thursday, Nadal appeared the better player despite a lapse that allowed Tsitsipas to extend the

contest into a decider. After a flurry of service breaks at the start of the third set, the 34-year-old Nadal pulled away to reach the semifinals for the first time in five years.

The results:

Group Japan 1970: 1-Novak Djokovic (Srb) bt 5-Alexander Zverev (Ger) 6-3, 7-6(4).

Group London 2020: 2-Rafael Nadal (Esp) bt 6-Stefanos Tsitsipas (Gre) 6-4, 4-6, 6-2.

Doubles: **Group Bob Bryan:** 1-Mate Pavic (Cro) & Bruno Soares (Bra) bt 6-John Peers (Aus) & Michael Venus (NZ) 6-7 (2), 6-3, [10-8].

Group Mike Bryan: 2-Rajeev Ram (USA) & Joe Salisbury (GBr) bt 3-Kevin Krawietz (Ger) & Andreas Mies (Ger) 7-6(5), 6-7(4), [10-4].

Semifinal line-up: Novak Djokovic v Dominic Thiem and Rafael Nadal v Daniil Medvedev.



Cruising through: Novak Djokovic posted a comfortable win over Alexander Zverev to reach the semifinals for the ninth time in 13 appearances at the year-end. •GETTY IMAGES

Australia a different kettle of fish with Smith and Warner back: Gavaskar

But the former India captain backs the ability of the touring fast-bowlers to dismiss top batsmen, picks out Shami's 'fabulous' skiddy bouncer for special praise

AYAN ACHARYA

India great Sunil Gavaskar feels Steve Smith and David Warner will be key to Australia's chances in the upcoming four-Test series against India. In an interview with Sportstar, Gavaskar also praised India's pace attack, adding that he expects the Border-Gavaskar Trophy to be a thrilling face-off.

On his expectations from the Test series

Australia will be a different kettle of fish with the return of Steve Smith and David Warner. Marnus Labuschagne, having made the progress that he has in the last one year, will be a big challenge, too.

So, the Australian batting this series will be much stronger compared to 2018-19 when not one Australian batsman scored a hundred. But our bowlers have got the capability of getting these top batsmen out also. It should be a thrilling face-off.

On Smith daring India's pacers to bowl short

No one is ever ready for the short ball! A good short ball will trouble the best of batsmen. Nobody can say, "I'm ready." Mohammed Shami in particular has a fabulous bouncer. If he gets it right on target, then you can be pretty certain that not too many batsmen will be able to negotiate him.

He is not very tall and his short ball will come skidding at you around your shoulder and head, and that's the most difficult delivery to play.

On which pace attack has the edge

I would think Australia, with the left-right combination in the pace department, offers a lot more variety.

India, on the other hand, has four right-arm pacers. So, that's a big plus for the host.

On whether the lack of game time will hinder Pujara

Ideally, the Indian team plays two-three First Class games before the first Test, [which] helps everybody get into the groove. Cheteshwar Pujara played competitive cricket

since March. So for him to get ready for the series, those two or three matches would have been a big plus.

But he is the kind of player who doesn't get affected by

anything... He would've done everything to prepare for these four Tests.

On Rohit's significance in the Tests

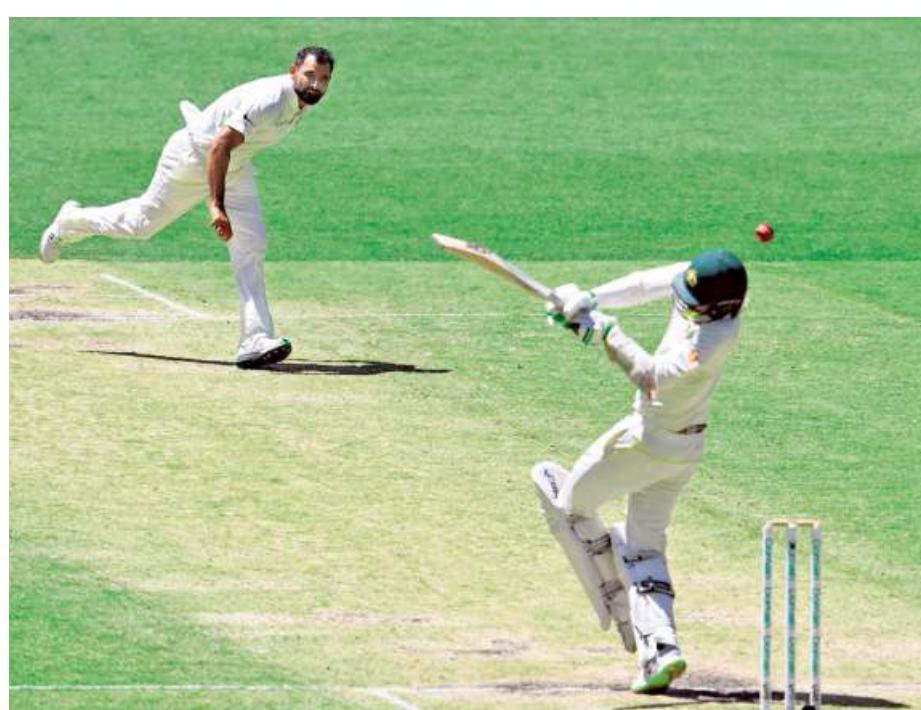
It will be very important because he is going to open the batting.

For the Indian team to get off to a good start, he is going to be crucial. If he gets going

and if Mayank Agarwal... can bat the way he did against the South Africans at home last year, then it makes the job that much easier for the batsmen to follow.

With the return of Smith and Warner, and the presence of Labuschagne, the Australian batting this series will be much stronger compared to 2018-19

India's first One-Day International against Australia will be telecast live on November 27 from 8 a.m. on Sony Ten 1, Sony Ten 3 and Sony Six channels



SUDOKU

9									
4	5	8					2		
7	2	6						5	
3		2			4				
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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★★

Solution to puzzle 13098

RING TAIL EELANE T
E A A N O A H
VAIPOROUS OSPREY
O H O R S T R M
CITE REPURCHASE
A H S N A T
BEAUTIFUL UVEAL
L I A I S U
EGGON LETTERBOX
A D C S U
ELLIPSODIDS CZAR
ALLOONRSZI
GRAVID CARACARA
LNNWGRTE
ESTATE UNSADDLE

Solution to yesterday's Sudoku

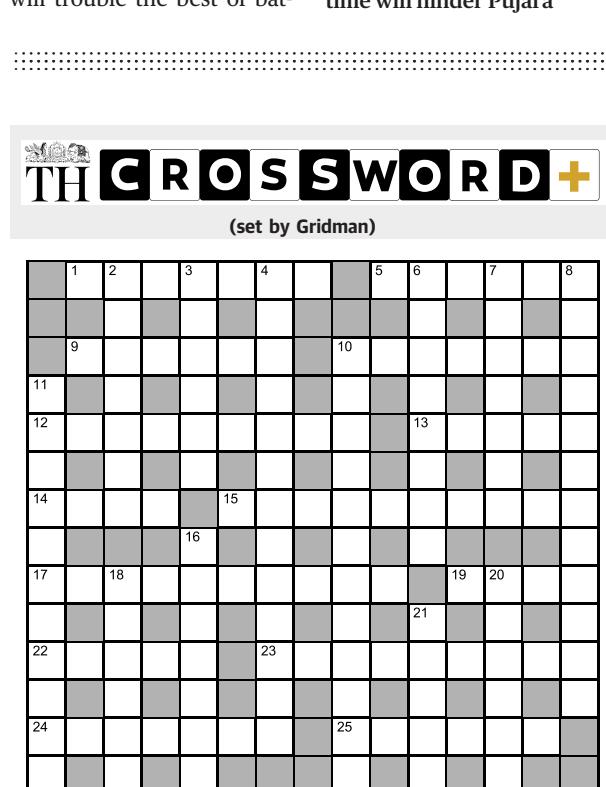
FAITH

Freedom from poverty

In the concluding verse of Deivamani Malai, Vallalar refers to Lord Muruga of Kanda Kottam as a 'vallal – a generous one. In his introduction to Ozhivil Odukkam, Vallalar defines who a generous person is, said M.A. Manickavelu, in a discourse. One whose grace is unending, who is impartial, who never tires of giving, who has no desires, who never loses his temper, who is full of love for others, who gives to those who come to him for help even before they ask him for succour – such a person alone qualifies to be called generous. God is forgiving of our faults, and offers His protection to those who seek His feet.

Sundaramurthy Nayanan, singing of the God of Thiruvotriyur, says he himself does not know what his shortcomings are. He says he will not think of any God but Lord Siva, for the Lord is sure to get rid of his bondage to samsara and will liberate him. There is a verse about Thirumurugatruppadai, where the poet says he will worship none but Lord Muruga of Thiruchendur, who destroys sorrows of the devas. In Deivamani Malai, in the last verse, Vallalar says he has undertaken a vrata. His vrata is to seek the feet of Lord Muruga and to seek no one else. Vallalar likens the vrata to a mango, but he says it has been snatched away by a dog. And this dog is poverty. He is unable to drive the dog away with a stick.

Poverty makes it difficult for a person to have uplifting thoughts, because the person is preoccupied with making a living. When a man suffers due to poverty, how can his mind focus on anything but making ends meet? Thiruvalluvar refers to poverty as a sinner. Thirugnanasambandar, while worshipping the Lord of Thiruvamathuram, prays that His devotees should never suffer for want of food, thus indicating the importance of freedom from poverty.



ACROSS

- 1 While searching, three of the users oddly leave secretly (2,3,1,1)
- 5 Royal's reported reproductions (6)
- 9 Schedule to hear a question of sex (6)
- 10 Italian pastry No. 1 clan cooked (7)
- 12 What a buttonholed listener might do... (3,3,3)
- 13 Two young boys make a small vessel (5)

- 14 Expel some dubious title-holders (4)
- 15 With this sign, your travel will become slower (5,5)
- 17 Best parts that are mountaineers' target (4,6)
- 19 The garment with which a woman may put on airs? (4)
- 22 Feel sad with doctor having a terrible run (5)
- 23 Willing to change, father and lawyer return to board (9)
- 24 It doesn't look good! (7)
- 25 Painting held back by university scholar causes agony (6)
- 26 Using devious ways, wily Yanks capture head of evildoers (6)
- 27 Wise, quiet, like Gray's forefathers. going by the books (7)
- DOWN
- 2 Renders ineffective revolutionary seen holding gun (7)
- 3 Contacting no leader for perfecting (6)
- 4 Fold fold fold (13)
- 6 Can opener produce sound draw? (4-4)
- 7 Nota bene: – starts giving abbreviation for a silver-white element (7)
- 8 Record I obtained: about fifty troubled sites for mouthpieces (12)
- 10 Concrete and smart contract for leading first-violin player (7,6)
- 11 Specially created rooms for sound reflections (4,8)
- 16 Apparently start reading book describing the activity of the archaeologists (4,4)
- 18 Fellow in this place not starting to eat rare cheese (7)
- 20 Protein – all but mine never-ending! (7)
- 21 Beach where redhead's seated in market booth (6)

TV PICKS

Premier League: SS Select 1 (SD & HD), 6 p.m. onwards
ATP Finals: Sony Six (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m. & 1.30 a.m. (Sunday)
ISL: Star Sports 2 (SD & HD) & Star Sports 3, 7.30 p.m.
Serie A: Sony Ten 2 (SD & HD), 7.30 p.m. onwards

IN BRIEF



Clutch of birdies gives Popov flying start

TAMPA
 Sophia Popov rolled in five straight birdies on the front nine for a career-best 18-hole score of 64 and a two-stroke lead after the first round of the LPGA Tour's inaugural Pelican Women's Open. The reigning British Women's Open champion had six birdies and was 29 on the front nine. Ashleigh Buhai of South Africa was lone second on four-under 66. AFP

Tvesa finishes T-39 as Pedersen triumphs

KAC (SAUDI ARABIA)
 Tvesa Malik finished as the best Indian golfer at Tied 39, with a total of three-over 219, after a 69 on the third and final day of the Saudi Ladies Team International here on Friday. Aditi Ashok scored 75 to slip to T-47 with 221, while Diksha Dagar (76, 225) ended T-76 and Astha Madan (81, 242) was 109th. Emily Kristine Pedersen's final round of 67 sealed victory for her at 14-under 202. PTI

Gangjee squeezes into weekend action in Japan
 MIYAZAKI
 Rahil Gangjee carded a one-over 72 and made it into the weekend rounds of the Dunlop Phoenix Open here on Friday. At one-over 143, Gangjee, winner of the Panasonic Open Japan in 2018, is T-47. Tomohiro Ishizaka (67, 66) was nine-under and one ahead of Thai pro Gunn Charoenkul. Meanwhile, first-round leader Atomu Shigenaga (65, 74) slipped to T-20. PTI



Forgettable day for Shubhankar

JOHANNESBURG
 Shubhankar Sharma's streak of 11 par or better rounds ended in the first round of the Joburg Open, a tournament he won in 2017 and which is being held for the first since then. He finished the day at five-over 76. South Africans Wilco Nienaber and Shaun Norris lead the field on 63. Welshman Rhys Enoch and Brazilian Adilson da Silva were the nearest challengers on 65. PTI



Injured Thompson out for another season

SAN FRANCISCO
 Golden State Warriors star Klay Thompson has been ruled out of the entire 2020-2021 season after suffering a torn Achilles tendon, the team said on Thursday. The five-time All-Star was bidding to return after a year-long injury absence. Thompson limped out of a workout on Wednesday with an injury to his right leg. An MRI scan early confirmed Thompson's season-ending torn right Achilles. AFP

Injury will keep Ramos out for three games

MADRID
 Sergio Ramos is likely to miss three games after Real Madrid confirmed on Thursday the defender had sustained a hamstring injury, during Spain's 6-0 victory over Germany in the Nations League on Tuesday. He is expected to be out for 10 days, meaning he would miss the Champions League game at Inter Milan, as well as La Liga matches against Villarreal and Alaves. AFP

Divij Sharan looking ahead with confidence despite struggle

Picks the Arjuna Award and playing with Sriram Balaji as the season's highs

TENNIS

KAMESH SRINIVASAN
 NEW DELHI

Divij Sharan was one of the early birds to venture out to gather prey, post lockdown. By competing in tournaments in the United Kingdom in the summer, and later in a Challenger in Prague in August, he seemed well prepared to salvage whatever was left of the tennis season.

However, even his best preparations did not suffice, as Divij struggled to put together a streak of wins. Reaching the final of the Challenger in Prostejov with Sriram Balaji was his best fare in four months.

Tough times
 Back home in the Capital after spending the lockdown with his wife Samantha in Manchester, the 34-year-old



Best fare: Divij Sharan reached the final of the Challenger in Prostejov in the company of Sriram Balaji.

Divij put things in perspective.

"It has been a tough time for me post lockdown.

"It was great to be competing but I didn't have much success," said Divij, who had to manage everything on his own, without a

coach or trainer, and competed with eight partners in ten tournaments.

"I lost all my matches against seeded teams in all the ATP Tour events and Grand Slams.

"So, I didn't have any luck with the draws also. But I

really enjoyed playing with Balaji.

"We had some good practice sessions that week. I felt very comfortable with him on court," said Divij.

Award high

Despite the struggles, being conferred the Arjuna Award was a high. Divij had won the Asian Games gold with Rohan Bopanna in 2018.

"I was super excited to hear about the Arjuna award. I was away in the US when the award was given," the left-hander said.

Divij now plans to rest and get ready for the season ahead. "I will take a short break, and start training again. I have plans about what I need to work on and I am motivated to start stronger in January. I am also excited about the Olympic year," he said.

Humpy to skip Gibraltar leg of Grand Prix series

Not worth the risk, says the World rapid champion

CHESS

V.V. SUBRAMANYAM
 HYDERABAD

World rapid chess champion Koneru Humpy has decided to skip the FIDE Women's Grand Prix Series' fourth and final legs to be held in Gibraltar from January 17 to 29 next year.

"In view of the prevailing pandemic, I thought it not worth taking the risk to travel."

"Hence I will not be playing in what is actually a very important event," World No. 3 Humpy told *The Hindu* on Friday from her home in Vijayawada.



Koneru Humpy.

■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"And, to make it to the Candidates, for which this series is a qualifying event, I have to finish in the top two in the final standings," explains the Humpy (Elo 2586).

"Right now, Russian Aleksandra Goryachkina is ahead of me, having played three."

The one big change in Humpy's preparations now is that she is on her own with her father-cum-coach Koneuru Ashok being more of an 'advisor'.

Gavaskar foundation's gesture to M.P. Singh

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
 NEW DELHI

Sunil Gavaskar's 'The CHAMPS Foundation', which has been helping a lot of sports personalities under financial distress for more than two decades, has come to the aid of ailing hockey Olympian Mohinder Pal Singh.

M.P. Singh has been suffering from kidney ailment and the 58-year-old is on dialysis, waiting for a donor for transplant.

"I had been reading in the media about the hard times that our earlier Olympians and (international) medallists were facing in their later years," Gavaskar said.

"The information about Shri M.P. Singh's health also came out, thanks to the print media," Gavaskar said.

"Since there are many Foundations for Education, Health, Child and Senior citizens, but none for former international sportspersons, I thought of setting up a Foundation with a personal contribution," Gavaskar said.

Siddhant in doubles final



Siddhant. ■ FILE PHOTO

SPORTS BUREAU
 SHARM EL SHEIKH (EGYPT)

Siddhant Bantia and Aidan Mchugh of Britain beat fourth seeds Kelsey Stevenson and Sidharth Rawat 6-3, 6-4 in the doubles semifinals of the \$15,000 ITF men's tennis tournament here on Friday.

Siddhant and Mchugh, who had earlier beaten the top seeds Vladislav Orlov and Arjun Kadhe, will play the final against Aldin Setkic of Bosnia & Herzegovina and Yaroslav Shyla of Belarus.

The results: \$15,000 ITF men, Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt: Doubles (semifinals): Aidan Mchugh (GBR) & Siddhant Bantia bt Kelsey Stevenson (Can) & Sidharth Rawat 6-3, 6-4. Quarterfinals: Aidan Mchugh (GBR) & Siddhant Bantia bt Vladislav Orlov (Ukr) & Arjun Kadhe 6-2, 6-2.

\$15,000 ITF women, Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt: Doubles (semifinals): Elina Avanesyan (Rus) & Iryna Shymonovich (Uzb) bt Laris aBekmetova (Uzb) & Saumya Vig 6-2, 6-1.

NEW DELHI ROUND-UP

Sangwan shines in Youth Cricket XI's win

Delhi Under-19 opener Sanat Sangwan (90) and Ankit Chhillar (50 n.o.) helped Youth Cricket XI beat Sethi Sports by six wickets in the inaugural match of the 30th All India Om Nath Sood Memorial tournament.

The scores: Sethi Sports 218/7 in 40 overs (Arvind Verma 69, Vinayak Gupta 31, Lokesh Gait 3/32, Vipul Chaudhary 3/50) lost to YC XI 222/4 in 39 overs (Sanat Sangwan 90, Ankit Chhillar 50 n.o., Avinash Thapa 2/41).

Deepak Punia shines

Deepak Punia (68 and 3/32) shone as Rann Star Club beat Kurushreshth University by five wickets to enter the quarterfinals of the Ganaur Premier League. In another game, half-century by Delhi's Kunal Chandela 78 and four wickets by Dev Lakra helped Bal Bhawan Academy beat Wonders Club by six wickets.

Unbeaten ton by Ishan

Ishan Beniwal's unbeaten 100 and Sahil Tada's 54 n.o. saw Titiksha Academy beat DC Raghav Academy by nine wickets in the BR Sharma memorial tournament.

The scores: RGC Academy 187 in 39.4 overs (Rahul Chaudhary 54, Vishesh Kapoor 3/39, Mayank Malhotra 3/53, Divij Mehra 2/29) lost to UGA 188/1 in 27.5 overs (Aryan Arora 103 n.o., Ekansh Gulati 45 n.o.).

Aryan slams century

Aryan Arora's unbeaten 88-ball 103 helped Uday Gupte Academy trounce RCC Academy by six wickets in the Satish Sharma memorial under-16 tournament.

The scores: City Academy 77 in 35.1 overs (Tanisha Singh 32, Priyanshu Pal 3/12) lost to ANA 80/4 in 11.2 overs (Pawan Kumar 30 n.o.).

Rajiv slams century

Rajiv Arora's unbeaten 100 and Sahil Tada's 54 n.o. saw Titiksha Academy beat DC Raghav Academy by nine wickets in the BR Sharma memorial tournament.

The scores: DCR Academy 172 in 36.2 overs (Subodh Kumar 86, Aditya Bhandari 3/18) lost to Titiksha Academy 173/1 in 32.3 overs (Ishan Beniwal 100 n.o., Sahil Tada 54 n.o.).

It's Jindal Panther vs Sahara Warriors

Jindal Panther will take on Sahara Warriors in the final of the Velocity-48 Maharaja Hari Singh Cup 10-goal polo tournament on Sunday.

The results (semifinals):

Sahara Warriors 8 (Padmanabh Singh 5, Daniel Otamendi 2, Kuldeep Singh Rathore) bt 61st Cavalry 1/2 (handicap 1/2).

Jindal Panther vs Achievers

Jindal Panther 5 (Simran Shergill 3, Siddhant Sharma, Naveen Jindal) bt Achievers ONN 4 (Shamsheer Ali 2, Abhimanyu Pathak, Dhananjay Singh).

The last time I spoke to

Spurs face tough test against City

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
 LONDON

PREMIER LEAGUE

Tottenham's title credentials face a thorough examination when it hosts Manchester City as the Premier League returns on Saturday after the international break.

Spurs are just a point behind early pace-setter Leicester, but only three points separate the top six, with Chelsea and Aston Villa also having the chance to claim top spot for a few hours at least when they face Newcastle and Brighton respectively.

Packed schedule

With the international fixtures done, a gruelling winter schedule awaits England's top-flight with nine rounds before January 2.

Mohammed Siraj's father passes away

V.V. SUBRAMANYAM
 HYDERABAD

Mohammed Ghous, father of India pacer Mohammed Siraj, passed away here on Friday.

He was 53 and was suffering from a lung ailment.

Siraj, who is now in Australia with the Indian team will not be able to attend the funeral.

Siraj lost his elder brother when he was just seven and now has only his mother, Shabana, as next of kin.

Lasting wish

"My dad always used to say 'mere beta, desh ka naam roshan karna' (my son, make the country proud). And, I will, for sure!" said an emotional Siraj.

"The last time I spoke to

him was before I left for Australia," he said.

"I am aware of the hardships my dad faced, driving an autorickshaw so that I could pursue my passion,"

said the lad who rose from the by-lanes of Toli Chowki to don National colours.

Biggest support

"I have lost the biggest support of my life. It was his dream to see me play for the country and I am glad I could realise that and bring him joy," a distraught Siraj said.

"Coach (Ravi) Shastri Sir and captain Virat Kohli were informed about the news.

"They told me to be brave and are lending all support," Siraj added.

If Australia can bowl us out, so can we'

Harbhajan hopes India replicates 2018-19 series success



their shoulders," said Harbhajan.

Harbhajan is also impressed with the way the fast bowling department has evolved over the years.

Revelation

"Our fast bowling has been a revelation of sorts. We never had the luxury of having four fast bowlers who could bowl at 140kmph/150kmph all the time. That was (one of) the reasons we won last time.

"If Australia can bowl us out, so can we – that was the belief. This series will be intense, and hope they win," Harbhajan said.

A member of the Chennai Super Kings, Harbhajan mis-

Gujrathi thrilled to be part of Skilling Open

RAKESH RAO
 NEW DELHI</