



Exclusive: Sonia calls for a stop to dismantling of environmental rules
page 6



Former President Pranab Mukherjee's health remains critical
page 9



Soldier, Hizb militant killed in encounter in J&K's Pulwama
page 9



I have not spoken to Nitish Kumar in almost a year, says Chirag Paswan
page 9

PRINTED AT • CHENNAI • COIMBATORE • BENGALURU • HYDERABAD • MADURAI • NOIDA • VISAKHAPATNAM • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • KOCHI • VIJAYAWADA • MANGALURU • TIRUCHIRAPPALLI • KOLKATA • HUBBALLI • MOHALI • MALAPPURAM • MUMBAI • TIRUPATI • LUCKNOW • CUTTACK • PATNA

NEARBY



Rajasthan Congress MLAs return to Jaipur

JAIPUR
Congress MLAs sequestered at a resort near Jaisalmer for the last two weeks during the political turmoil in Rajasthan returned to Jaipur on Wednesday, two days before the crucial Assembly session beginning from August 14. The MLAs were taken to a hotel on the city's outskirts.

NEWS ► PAGE 9

BJP legislator alleges assault by U.P. police

GAZIABAD
BJP MLA from Igls constituency in Aligarh district, Rajkumar Sahyogi, alleged on Wednesday that he was beaten up by policemen, including the SHO, and his clothes were torn off when he went to protest over an FIR registered against a VHP worker.

NORTH & EAST ► PAGE 4

Delhi riots probe officer gets excellence medal

NEW DELHI
A Delhi police officer, who is heading the Delhi riots probe team, and an NIA officer leading the Bhima Koregaon (Maharashtra) investigation are among the 121 recipients of the Union Home Minister's Medal for Excellence in Investigation that was announced on Wednesday.

NEWS ► PAGE 10

Kamala Harris to be Biden's running mate

She is the first woman of colour on a major party ticket in U.S.

SRIRAM LAKSHMAN

U.S. Senator from California Kamala Harris has been named running mate of presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden, as per an announcement from Mr. Biden on Tuesday.

Ms. Harris, 55, is the first woman of Indian descent and black woman to be on the presidential ticket of a major political party in the U.S. The move puts Ms. Harris in a powerful position to lead the Democratic party in the near future and with a shot at the presidency in four to eight years.

Chennai connection

Born to Shyamala Gopalan, a cancer researcher originally from Chennai, and Donald Harris, an economics professor from Jamaica, Ms. Harris has decades of public service to her name. In 2010, she became California's Attorney General – the first black woman to hold the position. In 2016, she was elected to the U.S. Senate.

The announcement ends months of speculation, as Mr. Biden worked through a list of close to a dozen potential Vice-President candidate choices, zeroing in on a fellow moderate. Ms. Harris, herself a former contender for the Democratic nomina-

Big ticket contest

A look at the record of U.S. Senator from California, Kamala Harris, who was named running mate of Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden

- First black woman and first Asian American woman to run for vice president on a major-party ticket
- Born in San Francisco to Donald Harris, a Jamaican, and Shyamala Gopalan, originally from Chennai
- Criticised by progressives for her prosecutorial record with her 'tough-on-crime' policies
- Proposed a medicare-for-all plan that also allowed role for private insurers
- Dropped out of presidential race after funds dried up
- Co-sponsored legislation in the senate for justice reform after killing of George Floyd



▲ Kamala Harris

Served as:
District Attorney of San Francisco (2004-2011); Attorney General of California (2011-2017); U.S. Senator from California (2017-till date)

tion to the White House, dropped out of the race in December after campaign funds dried up.

Differing views

Ms. Harris did not always see eye to eye with fellow moderate Mr. Biden. In a dramatic clash at a primary debate last year, Ms. Harris attacked Mr. Biden for opposing mandatory busing of children across school districts, a poli-

cacy that would desegregate schools.

Ms. Harris said she was honoured to be on Mr. Biden's ticket. "Joe Biden can unify the American people because he's spent his life fighting for us. And as President, he'll build an America that lives up to our ideals," she said on Twitter.

A SUPPORTER OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM ► PAGE 14

'Mega labs' to boost COVID-19 testing

CSIR plans to use advanced genome sequencing device

JACOB KOSHY

NEW DELHI

The Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) is working on developing "mega labs" to ramp up testing for COVID-19 as well as improve the accuracy rate.

The labs will be repurposing large machines, called Next Generation Sequencing machines (NGS), which are normally used for sequencing human genomes, to sequence 1,500 to 3,000 viral genomes at a go to detect the SARS-CoV-2 virus.

Used optimally and with

Genome study | A look at Next Generation Sequencing works

■ Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) involves scanning the entire virus genome

■ This can help identify more places where the SARS-CoV-2 virus differs from related viruses and can also help develop new diagnostic tests

■ Two lineages of the virus, never seen before in Indian genomes, were also found

■ The sensitivity (ability to confirm those who have virus as 'positive') of NGS was 97.53%

the virus in question is indeed the particular coronavirus of interest.

It can also trace the evolutionary history of the virus and track mutations more reliably. Unlike the RT-PCR that needs primers and probes – a key hurdle in operationalising such tests on a mass scale early on in the pandemic – the NGS only needs custom reagents.

Meanwhile, India's COVID-19 death toll reached 47,148 on Wednesday, with 948 new fatalities. The country now has the fourth highest death toll in the world, surpassing the U.K.'s figure of 46,791.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

appropriate modifications, these machines can substantially detect the presence of the virus even in several instances where the traditional RT-PCR (reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction) tests fail.

3 killed as police open fire to quell mob in Bengaluru

Inflammatory post triggered violence

DAMINI NATH

NEW DELHI

The Central Public Works Department on Wednesday asked the three firms it has shortlisted for the new Parliament project to sign affidavits saying they would keep the drawings secret before submitting financial bids by September 16. If they fail to complete all formalities, they would face action under the Official Secrets Act.

On Wednesday, the CPWD issued a corrigendum telling the three firms to submit the earnest money deposit of ₹9.5 crore each to access the tender document.

The CPWD on Monday selected Larsen and Toubro Limited, Shapoorji Pallonji and

and Co. Ltd. and Tata Projects Ltd. from the seven companies that applied for pre-qualification to bid for the project. The firms would be eligible to submit their financial bids online.

Three people were killed and three more injured after the police opened fire to quell a mob that went on a rampage in DJ Halli and adjoining areas in east Bengaluru on Tuesday night over an inflammatory Facebook post against Islam.

As many as 2,000 people were on the streets vandalizing and setting property afire. The rioting was brought under control in the early hours of Wednes-

day. Prohibitory orders have been put in force and the situation is tense but under control, said the police.

A total of 146 people, including a few local leaders of the Social Democratic Party of India, have been arrested.

At least 38 policemen were injured and several vehicles and properties, including a police station, torched. Two media personnel were also injured.

CONTINUED ON ► PAGE 8

Vajiram & Ravi

Institute for Civil Services Examination

We are happy & proud to announce that over 350+ students have been selected in the CSE 2019 and 5 candidates in the top 10 (1, 4, 6, 8 & 9) ranks and 17 candidates in the top 30 and 27 candidates in the top 50.



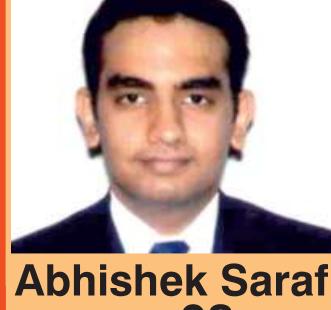
Pradeep Singh
AIR 01



Himanshu Jain
AIR 04



Vishakha Yadav
AIR 06



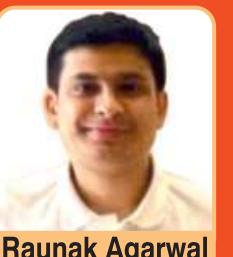
Abhishek Saraf
AIR 08



Ravi Jain
AIR 09



Nupur Goel
AIR 11



Raunak Agarwal
AIR 13



Anmol Jain
AIR 14



Gunjan Singh
AIR 16



Swati Sharma
AIR 17



Lavish Ordia
AIR 18



Shrestha Anupam
AIR 19



Nidhi Bansal
AIR 23



Abhishek Jain
AIR 24



Pradeep Singh
AIR 26



Chandra Jyoti Singh
AIR 28



Pari Bishnoi
AIR 30

CLASSES FOR NEXT YEAR'S CSE WILL COMMENCE AS SOON AS GOVERNMENT REGULATIONS PERMIT IT.

VAJIRAM AND RAVI IAS STUDY CENTRE LLP

Delhi Address: 9-B, Bada Bazar Marg, Old Rajinder Nagar, New Delhi-110060; Phone: 011-4100 7400, 4100 7500
Chennai Address: No. 43, 2nd Floor, Haddows Road, Nungambakkam, Chennai - 600006; Phone: 044-43302121

www.vajiramandravi.com

IN BRIEF

'International Elephant Day' celebrated at zoo

NEW DELHI
The Delhi zoo on Wednesday celebrated 'International Elephant Day' with a special feast for the elephants, an official said. "We also conducted a talk for the keepers and mahouts about taking care of elephants. We have three elephants, one of them is African and the rest two are Indian," the official said. The zoo also organised an online competition for school students.

Air Quality of Delhi-NCR			
Delhi	63	Gurugram	58
Ghaziabad	70	Faridabad	79
Noida	95	Greater Noida	70
■ Good	■ Satisfactory	■ Moderate	
0-50	51-100	101-200	
■ Poor	■ Very Poor	■ Severe	
201-300	301-400	>400	
Air Quality Index at 4 p.m. yesterday (Average of past 24 hours) Source: CPCB			

Man found dead at home, no note recovered

NEW DELHI
A 30-year-old man was found dead at his rented accommodation in north Delhi's Jahangirpuri area, the police said on Wednesday. The incident took place on Tuesday. No note was recovered from the spot, a senior police officer said. The family alleged that the victim ended his life as he was unable to pay his rent. The police said that inquest proceedings have been initiated into the matter. Suicide prevention helpline: Sanjivini, Society for Mental Health, 011-4076 9002, Monday-Saturday (10 a.m.-7.30 p.m.)

Student groups condemn FIRs against them

NEW DELHI
Student groups, who protested against the arrest of DU Professor Hany Babu, on Wednesday condemned FIRs registered against them. Students who belonged to the AISA and other groups were detained and had FIRs registered against them, the students said, demanding the charges be dropped and Mr. Babu and other "political prisoners" be released.

In quarantine, DU student anxious about online exams

Without a stable Net connection, she has been unable to take part in mock tests

SIDHARTH RAVI
NEW DELHI

When Narola Dhar, a final-year MA computer science student at Delhi University booked her tickets to Shillong in June, she assumed her exams would be over before she returned home. Now, she finds herself in a 28-day institutional quarantine, which ends on August 17, a day before her first online open book exam.

"I broke down when everyone started talking about the exam on our WhatsApp group after the High Court order," said Ms. Dhar, who reached out to a friend to calm her nerves, while she was alone in the middle of

II just hope I'll be able to fix something by Sunday so that I don't miserably fail in the OBE

NAROLA DHAR
DU final-year MA student

her quarantine on August 7. Given her situation, she has not been able to take part in the mock tests that the university held. "I just hope I'll be able to fix something by Sunday so that I don't miserably fail in the OBE," she said.

No centre nearby Attempts to reach out to her local Common Service Centre, which Delhi University had tied up with, to assist students with poor connections, had also been futile as she couldn't locate a nearby centre.

Ms. Dhar tried to convey her issues to her depart-

ment and university officials but had not received a response, and wasn't able to get through the helpline number, she said.

Pressure to vacate
A resident of the Northeast Women's Hostel, she along with some other students had initially been granted extensions on their stay, here.

However hostel administration had continued to put pressure on them to vacate, she alleged, which forced her to leave.

"I wanted to stay but the situation pushed me to go," she said.

ASI dies, constable sustains minor injuries as building roof collapses

They were on tenant verification rounds when it occurred

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

A 49-year-old Assistant Sub-Inspector died and his colleague sustained minor injuries after the roof of a building collapsed on Wednesday, police said.

According to the police, around 10.20 a.m., they reached a building on Ram Bagh Road and during tenant verification, they noticed some illegal construction being carried out on the third floor.

When they went to the third floor to collect details and take photographs of the ongoing illegal construction work, the roof collapsed.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (North) Monika Bhardwaj said: "We have registered a case under section 288 (negligent conduct with

respect to pulling down or repairing buildings) and 304 A (causing death by negligence) of Indian Penal Code."

Hussain joined Delhi Police in 1993. He is from Ganwara village in Meerut and was staying in Wazirabad with his wife, two sons and a daughter, the DCP said.

AAP demands probe
AAP demanded an immediate probe against local councillor and North Municipal Corporation Mayor Jai Prakash after the death of Hussain. Addressing a video briefing, AAP leader Durgesh Pathak alleged that the three-story "illegal" building was being constructed with the involvement of Mr. Prakash.

On Wednesday morning,

STOP
USE OF METAL COATED THREAD



SHANTI SEWA NYAYA



IT MAY CAUSE ELECTROCUTION IF COMES IN CONTACT WITH ELECTRIC CABLES.

Delhi Police is maintaining a strict vigil on its use.

'Manja', string coated with glass and metal powder and used for flying kites, poses a threat to life.

The threads are also causing injury to birds and animals.

E-mail to CP, Delhi at: cp.snsrivastava@delhipolice.gov.in
Write to CP, Delhi at P.O. Box No. 171, GPO, New Delhi

FOR IMMEDIATE POLICE HELP CALL: 112

TO SHARE INFORMATION CALL: 1090

DPM9247/2020

DDA ties up with CSCs to speed up ownership rights registration

Residents of illegal colonies can register at the nearest centre

SHINJINI GHOSH
NEW DELHI

In a bid to facilitate residents of unauthorised colonies register for grant of ownership rights, the Delhi Development Authority (DDA) has tied up with Common Service Centres (CSCs).

Senior officials of the urban body explained that partnering with the CSCs will be beneficial to residents of unauthorised colonies as they will be able to walk into the nearest centres and get registered.

While earlier there were around 30 functional help desks set up by the DDA, officials said that with nearly 2,500 CSCs in the city, access

to the registration process will get widened.

Conveyance deeds

So far, the DDA has seen approximately 2.9 lakh registrations with around 20,000 completing the process. Over 1,000 conveyance deeds and authorisation slips have also been handed out by the land-owning agency.

The online portal for the grant of ownership rights was launched in December last year and as of February, the DDA received around 2.32 lakh registrations, according to data.

DDA Vice-Chancellor Anurag Jain told *The Hindu* that work on granting of owner-

ship rights has "picked up speed" in the last month with around 200 registrations handed out per month.

The work has really picked up and each step has reasonably quickened. There are several levels to the registration, including GIS mapping, verification of the same and so on. The project is being monitored at every level regularly. Once the CSC service is rolled out we are hopeful that more registrations will follow," said Mr. Jain. Residents of illegal colonies who have completed the entire application process are likely to be granted ownership rights within 180 days.

Sealed market to get new lease of life

Traders at Meharchand Market hope redevelopment plan will increase footfall

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

With footfall having drastically fallen at Meharchand Market since the partial sealing of over 135 buildings in 2018, most traders here are hopeful that plans to redevelop the market, approved by the South Delhi Municipal Corporation's (SDMC) Standing Committee on Tuesday, would give it a new lease of life.

"I have been here since this place was a jungle," said Gurubak Singh, 85, who arrived here from Sargoda in Pakistan during the Partition. Having started off as a street vendor to setting up a small makeshift store and later his current establishment, Mr. Singh said, he has seen this market through thick and thin.

Property ownership
Stores here, which line one side of the broad 5th Avenue, Road in the middle of Lodhi Colony, were allotted to refugees after the Partition. While initially small *kholhas* were allotted, erstwhile Union Minister Mehr Chand Khanna was reportedly instrumental in setting up a



At Meharchand market, which is to be redeveloped by the SDMC. ■ SHIV KUMAR PUSHPKAR

brick mortar market here.

Over the years, property ownership changed hands from the Land and Development Authority to some of the owners and to municipal corporations, said Om Prakash, a property dealer. His father arrived at the market about 40 years ago. Many owners started constructing multiple floors even though building bylaws had limited their floor area ratio (FAR), he explained.

The market hosts a large number of high-end boutique stores and plush eateries, alongside long-time shopkeepers. However, several stores and large brands had to exit the market follow-

ing the sealing drive to penalise illegal constructions, said market association president Ashok Sakhija.

SDMC approval

Currently, with only high-end stores dotting the market, shopkeepers such as Santosh Kumar who runs a tailoring business laments at the dip in footfall. "As soon as people hear Meharchand Market, they get scared and don't even come here," he said. With the redevelopment plan, he hopes the market will become akin to Connaught Place or Khan Market and rival the best in the city.

New rules approved by the SDMC have now allowed

for greater FAR, as well as basements, first and second floors, which had been sealed during the drive. Approving the redevelopment of the market, the SDMC Standing Committee chairperson Raj Dutt Gehlot said that all existing structures would be demolished and new construction would be started.

Not all traders here are okay with plans to demolish buildings. Mini Kaur, who recently opened a boutique garments store here said, "I just paid a bomb for this, I hope it's not coming down!" While she welcomed plans to beautify the market, she said that the lack of footfall wasn't as much of an issue as stores had their select clientele.

Municipal officials also said that the market may be declared a "pedestrian shopping street" but most traders here opposed the idea, arguing that the availability of ample parking was one of the main features of the market.

With redevelopment plans in the works, Mr. Sakhija is hopeful that properties here, including his own, will soon be de-saled and the market is soon up and running.

EIA studies needed prior to construction, says NGT

STAFF REPORTER
NEW DELHI

Following a plea challenging the proposed construction of commercial complex by the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) above the Bhikaji Cama metro station, the National Green Tribunal (NGT) has held that an Environmental Impact Assess-

ment (EIA) and carrying capacity studies need to be carried out prior to the construction.

An NGT Bench said, "We find it necessary that before the proposed constructions are carried out, EIA and carrying capacity studies must be conducted by a joint committee."

This office e-tender specification No. CCP-I/20, 21, 22 & 23/2020-2021 invited previously, for supply of GI Strip 35x6mm, 9 Meter Long Steel Tubular Pole SP-33 (Bottom Portion Hot Dip Galvanized), Cable AL 1x630Sq.mm XLPE 11 KV & Cable AL 3x120Sq.mm XLPE 33KV respectively are hereby extended due to unavoidable reasons. The e-tenders can be purchased and submitted upto 17:00 hrs of 20.08.2020. Part-I of the e-tender shall be opened on 21.08.2020 at 15:30 hrs, 15:45 hrs, 16:00 hrs & 16:15 hrs respectively. Other terms & conditions will remain same as per original tender notice. For further details, please visit our website www.utktenders.gov.in.

SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER CORPORATE (C&P)
No. : 380/EE(CM)/UPCL/A-2, Dt. 11.08.2020
SAVE ELECTRICITY IN THE INTEREST OF THE NATIONS. Use LED Bulb Save Electricity. (Toll Free No. : 1800 419 0495 OR 1912) Pay Electricity bill online 24x7 from www.upcl.org/ (For information on Electricity theft, informer may report to Toll Free No. : 1800 180 4183/ Fax No. 0135-2760289)

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, JAL SHAKTI (PHE) DEPARTMENT, DIVISION, PULWAMA
Email: xenphepulwama@gmail.com

Notice Inviting E-TENDER E-NIT S. NO. 22/PEPH OF 2020-21

For and on behalf of the Lt. Governor of UT of J&K e-tenders (Two cover System) on Item Rate Basis are invited from reputed and resourceful un-employed Degree/Diploma Holder Engineers (who are registered under Self Help Groups) whose registration cards are valid in terms of standing rules with sufficient financial resources dealing with design and civil engineering works. The e-tender notice is issued in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Public Procurement web portal <http://jtktenders.gov.in> for subject work(s) referred below to be received by the Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Department, Division Pulwama and as per the details mentioned in this e-tender notification and to whom all the terms and conditions of detailed E-NIT / Tender Documents/ PWD Form No.: 25 double are accepted. The detailed tender document and Specifications etc. can be downloaded on the e-procurement portal <http://jtktenders.gov.in>. The cost of tender documents (Non-refundable/Non-Transferable) should be in the shape of e-Challan or Treasury Challan/Receipt in favour Executive Engineer Jal Shakti (PHE) Department, Division Pulwama

S. No. **Name of Work** **Estimated Cost** **Cost of Tender Document** **Earnest Money Deposit** **Time of completion** **Tender Opening Authority** **Class of contractor**

1 Providing and laying of pipes for shifting of PHE utilities at Dogripura-Reshipora and Ghat Tokina along Tokina-Naina road (affected due to road widening programme by PMGSY) ₹ 57.92 lacs ₹ 500/- (Favoring Executive Engineer under (MH 02/5) ₹ 57.92/- (Pledged to the Executive Engineer (JSD) PHE Division Pulwama 02 Months Executive Engineer (JSD) PHE Division Pulwama Self Help Groups/Joint Venture of Repute

Position of Funds:- Available: Major Head of Account: Deposit Contribution The Bidding documents consisting of eligibility criteria, specification, drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q) set of terms & conditions of contract and other details can be seen/ downloaded from the e-procurement Portal "<http://jtktenders.gov.in>" as per schedule of dates given below:-

S.No. **Description** **Date** **Time**

1 Publishing date of NIT 13 08 2020 900 Hrs.

2 Download Start Date 13 08 2020 900 Hrs.

3 Bid Submission Start Date 13 08 2020 900 Hrs.

4 Bid Submission End Date 07 09 2020 1600 Hrs.

5 Bid opening date (Technical Cover) 08 09 2020 1000 Hrs.

I. The validity of the offer shall be 90 days from the date of opening "Price Bid".

ii. For any clarification the Bidders can contact divisional office or can email the Department at the email :- xenphepulwama@gmail.com

iii. In case of any disputes /differences, the jurisdiction shall be to the Courts situated in Srinagar only. Supplies, if involved any, will be deducted at prevalent stock rates at the time of tender for such material.

Six psychiatric patients still untraced

SYED SAJJAD ALI
AGARTALA

Six patients who fled with nine others from the State's main psychiatry hospital remained untraced three days after the incident. They were inmates of the Modern Psychiatry Hospital at Narsinagar, near MBB Airport here.

Fifteen patients gave the guards a slip before dawn on Sunday last to flee from the hospital.

They broke the iron grill of a toilet window to make their way out.

Airport police station was alerted after hospital officials came to know of the incident. Police tracked down nine patients from nearby localities within 24 hours of their escape, but are yet to rescue the remaining six. Police stations across west Tripura were put on alert.

BJP MLA alleges assault by U.P. police, party workers protest

'Rajkumar Sahyogi was angry over FIR being registered against a VHP worker'

ANUJ KUMAR
GHAZIABAD

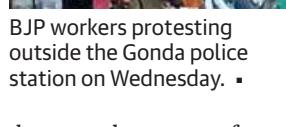


The Bharatiya Janata Party MLA from Iglsas (reserved) constituency in Aligarh district, Rajkumar Sahyogi, alleged on Wednesday that he was beaten up by policemen, including the SHO, and his clothes were torn off when he went to protest over an FIR registered against a VHP worker at the Gonda police station in Iglsas tehsil.

Senior police officers said they were checking the CCTV footage before taking any action.

Scores of local BJP workers assembled at the Gonda police station and raised slogans against the police. The local market was shut and police presence increased on Wednesday evening.

Local sources said a few



BJP workers protesting outside the Gonda police station on Wednesday.

We are looking into CCTV footage before arriving at any conclusion. The police station has two cameras and one of them was working at the time of the incident

ATUL SHARMA
Superintendent of Police (Rural)

days ago there was a fracas between members of two communities in Gonda over a minor issue and the MLA was angry why an FIR was registered against his man.

Earlier, Mr. Sahyogi told reporters that he went to the police station to ask officers why an FIR was registered against Rohit Varshney, a VHP worker, in the case. He

alleged that the local police had taken money from the other party. "In the fight, Rohit was beaten up still the police lodged an FIR against him. When I raised the issue, three officers, including SHO Anuj Saini, beat me up and used casteist slurs against me," he said.

Responding to the allegations, Atul Sharma, SP (Ru-

ral), Aligarh told *The Hindu*, "In the said case, the FIR was registered against both the parties after the complaint came from both Rohit and Saleem. A medical was done and none of them had serious injuries. Preliminary investigation reveals that the MLA raised an objection on why the second FIR was lodged."

A khanda posted at the station told reporters that he was present at the spot at the time of the incident and it was Mr. Sahyogi who lost his cool first and slapped a police officer.

"We are looking into the CCTV footage before arriving at any conclusion. The police station has two cameras and one of them was working at the time of the incident," Mr. Sharma said.

Licencing system for tobacco sellers sought

It will restrict sale and curb consumption by the youth, say voluntary groups

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
JAIPUR

Voluntary groups working for tobacco control in Rajasthan on Wednesday demanded a licencing mechanism for retail tobacco sellers which would restrict the sale of tobacco products and curb their consumption by the youths. Activists said this would protect the health of youths during the COVID-19 pandemic and ensure the success of a de-addiction campaign starting here shortly.

Though the State government had authorised municipal bodies in 2018 to regulate the sale of tobacco products, the vendors violating the rules pay a petty fine

and go back to selling tobacco. Activists have been pressing for enforcement of a vendor licensing system with the framing of rules under the Cigarette and Other Tobacco Products Act, 2003.

Vulnerable section

Young tobacco users were vulnerable to catching influenza-like infections and they could expose non-users to the tobacco products, besides spreading contagious diseases by the habits such as spitting in the open, said the activists on the occasion of the International Youth Day.

Jayesh Joshi, secretary of Banswara-based Vaagdhara group, said here that the

youths were getting addicted to tobacco "faster than ever before" and the projected number of deaths from tobacco far exceeded than those of COVID-19. He said the State government had failed to take any concrete step to curb the menace even after accepting the high number of fatalities by tobacco-related diseases.

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has announced the launch of a comprehensive de-addiction campaign from August 15 with the focus on the youth vulnerable to substance abuse. As part of its steps to discourage youths from addiction, the State government had banned e-cigarettes on May 30, a day before World No Tobacco Day, in 2019.

The spitting of betel leaf and chewable tobacco and non-tobacco products or sputum in public places and institutions was also banned under the Rajasthan Epidemic Diseases Act, 1957, in April this year.

Bold step' sought

Mr. Joshi said the State government should take a "bold step" to stop unregulated tobacco sales by allowing only licensed sellers through the municipal bodies in order to curb the access to tobacco products and shield the youths and children from the biggest cause of preventable death.

Keep Arunachal out of any Naga peace deal'

All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union says there are no Nagas in their State

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

rious Naga groups by September.

Keep Arunachal Pradesh out of the purview of the push for a solution to the Naga political problem, the apex students' body in the Frontier State has told the Centre.

The

All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union (AAPSU) also rejected claims that there were Nagas living in their State while making it clear that any "territorial changes" while finding a solution would not be tolerated.

"The decades-old Naga

peace process should not affect Arunachal Pradesh and its people in any way," the AAPSU said in reaction to the Centre's purported decision to conclude the talks with va-



BJP leader Kapil Mishra

claim to the three general secretary posts in the Delhi BJP. Among the other leaders being considered for the posts are Rajiv Babbar, Harsh Malhotra, Virinder Sachdeva, Rajendra Tiwari, Ashok Goel Devraha, Ashish Sood, Aditya Jha, Rekha Gupta and Kamaljeet Sehwat, said sources.

BJYM choices

Leaders such as Impreet Bakshi, Ram Khiladi Yadav, Shivam Chhabra and Vasu Rukhad are among the choices for the leadership of the party's State youth wing, the Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha.

The reorganisation of the unit is currently under way and the names of its new office-bearers are scheduled to be announced later this month.

Party sources said Mr. Mishra, who was unsuccessfully fielded from the Model Town segment in the Delhi Assembly elections earlier this year, checks all the right boxes in this regard given his popularity, Poovranchali background and caste.

"He is young, popular, and is just the kind of face the party needs in the city in the run-up to the civic elections [which are around the corner]. These factors have also made him one of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak

"We have already submitted representations regarding the matter to President Ram Nath Kovind and former Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh besides the Arunachal Pradesh Governor and the State government," the union said.

"We welcome the initiative for resolving the Naga issue. But we will strongly oppose any attempts made to change the territorial jurisdiction of the State or any kind of administrative, political or other interventions," the AAPSU said.

Mr. Ravi had during a meeting with the AASU in 2015 promised that the interest of Arunachal Pradesh would not be compromised when the final draft of the Naga Peace Accord is executed.

Skateboarding heralds social change in M.P.

Children of a tribal village in Panna district see the sport as a way out of poverty



Young skateboarders of Janwaar village in Panna district.

• MATJAŽ TANČIČ

boys. But when I won medals, they were ok with it," said Ms. Gond, who shares her salary with her parents.

'On same platform'
The sport has brought the village's two communities – tribals and the dominant Yadavs – on the same platform. "Most importantly, a conversation ensued between the two communities who could hardly see eye-to-eye in the past," said Ms. Reinhard.

Initially, only Yadav boys took part, but slowly tribal children were absorbed, creating an equitable space. When you want to change a closed system, a disruptive factor is required, she added. "You have to confront the predominant mainstream with a counter-culture. And in Janwaar, skateboarding was the perfect counter-culture, standing for open-ended development," she said.

Skateboards, shoes and trips to tournaments are crowd-funded. "We are yet to receive any support from the government," she said. She demanded that the government cover expenses while organising championships, provide medical support and offer training.

dren find hope in skateboarding to pull their households out of penury.

Inspired by a similar initia-

tive in Afghanistan, German

national Ulrike Reinhard

asked artists worldwide to

transform skateboards into

art, and auctioned them

online raising \$17,000 to build

the park in 2015. Currently,

two such parks cater to

around 50 children, the sec-

ond one owned by Barefoot

Skateboarder, which is man-

aged Ms. Gond.

Ms. Reinhard's non-profit

organisation, the Rural Chan-

gemakers, has helped locals

build skateparks in Andhra

Pradesh, Odisha and Rajas-

than.

Young skaters must stick

to three non-negotiable

rules: 'No school, no skat-

ing', 'Everyone is equal' and

'Girls first'.

"This has im-

proved school attendance,"

said Ms. Reinhard. From 30,

the attendance had jumped

to 55-60 at the local school

before the lockdown. Boys

share their boards with girls

during practice hours from 7

a.m. to 9 a.m. and in the

evening after school.

"There are around 20-25

girls practising every day,"

said Ms. Gond, who said they

learnt mostly by watching vi-

deos online and peer-learning.

When she started off, vil-

lagers told her parents she

must stay home, do chores

like other girls. "They told

them I roamed around with

Accused in Hapur child rape case identified

Police announce reward for his arrest

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GHAZIABAD

The police on Wednesday released the photograph of the alleged rapist of a six-year-old child in a Hapur village and also announced a reward of ₹50,000 for his arrest.

The police took her to a local hospital from where she was referred to Meerut Medical College where the doctors confirmed that she was brutally raped. After a surgery, the girl is said to be stable.

Mr. Mishra said they could identify the culprit through the motorcycle he had borrowed from his brother-in-law.

The girl was abducted from her village in Garhi area

एसजे वीएन लिमिटेड SJVN Limited

(भारत सरकार एवं बिहार सरकार का संयुक्त उपयोग)

(A Joint Venture of Govt. of India & Govt. of H.P.)

CIN No. L40101HP1988G01008409

LUHRI HYDRO POWER PROJECT-1

Notice Inviting Tender

(Through e-tendering process only)

Open e-tender under two bid system are hereby invited on behalf of

SJVN Limited from the eligible Contractors/Firm registered in State

Govt./PSU/any other Govt./Semi Govt. Organization as per description

given below:

Name of work: Field Groutability Test at Dam drift at EL 737 m on Left

and Right bank—LHEP Stage-II.

Tender No. LHEP-PCD-236. Estimated cost: Rs. 2,71,46,290/- Cost

of Tender Document: Rs. 5900/- Tender cost Rs 5000/- + GST

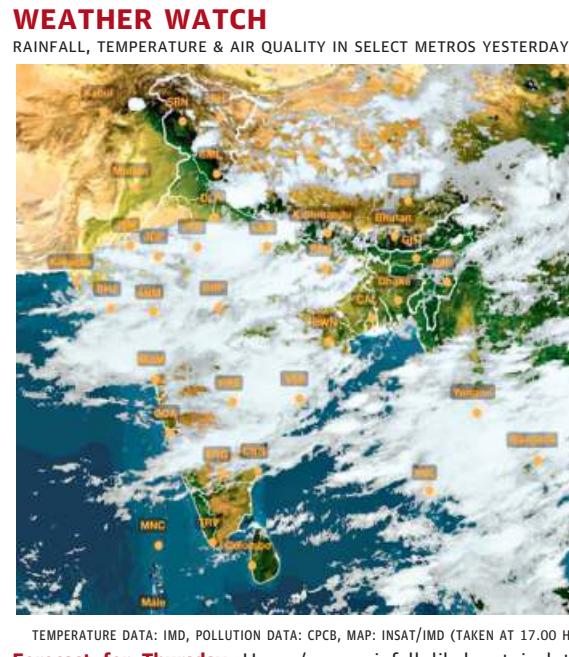
Rs. 900/-, EMD: Rs. 6,4,660/- Date of Availability/ Downloading of

bidding: 12.08.2020 (1000 hrs.) to 02.09.2020 (1200 hrs.) Date of

submission/uploading of bid: 03.09.2020 (1300 hrs.) Date of opening

of bid: 03.09.2020 (1400 hrs.) Completion period: 07 Months.

Detailed Notice Inviting E-Tender shall be available on websites



Parth is immature, says Sharad Pawar

Young leader had demanded CBI probe into actor's death

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

In a rare public snubbing of a family member, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar on Wednesday termed his grandnephew Parth Pawar, the son of Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, as 'immature' and someone whose words are not taken seriously.

Mr. Pawar's public display of anger over the young leader's actions also hints that all is not well within the Pawar family.

Mr. Parth had written a letter to State Home Minister Anil Deshmukh demanding a Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) inquiry into the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput. His position was different than that of party's which has expressed confidence in the Mumbai Police. Opposition Bharatiya Janata Party has already demanded a CBI inquiry in the case.

When asked about the demand made by the young leader, who contested the 2019 Lok Sabha polls from Maval as an NCP candidate, but lost to the Shiv Sena, Mr.



Sharad Pawar

Pawar said, "He is immature. There is no value to what he says. I have 100% trust in the Maharashtra and Mumbai Police. But if anyone wants to make a demand, then nobody can object."

The young leader was also in the news after he showed Hindutva leanings via his letter welcoming construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya, calling it the re-installation of Hindu faith. The NCP chief, however, had said in a statement that the temple would not help the country overcome the pandemic.

The public snubbing of Mr. Parth is also seen as an indication to the Deputy CM, who had switched sides before forming the MVA government to join hands with



Parth Pawar

the BJP. His rebellion could not muster support within the party and he had to back down. Over the past week, rumour mills have been abuzz with news of 12 NCP MLAs planning to switch sides and join the BJP to dethrone the MVA government. However, the party had disbanded such reports.

Meanwhile, Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut held a meeting with the NCP chief and announced that there was no threat to the government. "I met Mr. Pawar and discussed all developments within the State and the country. No one has any reason to worry," he said.

Mr. Parth has, however, not reacted to his grandfather's statement.

'No ban on Ganesh idol immersion in sea'

ALOK DESHPANDE
MUMBAI

The Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Wednesday clarified that it had not banned immersion of Ganesh idols in the beaches, and added that artificial pond was only an added service for those living in areas far from the sea.

"The civic body has already issued directions and guidelines to celebrate this year's Ganesh festival with-

out crowding and taking necessary precaution. The reports about banning visarjan in the sea are wrong. There are no such orders. However, the civic body has set up 167 artificial ponds under its jurisdiction to help people immerse idols by maintaining physical distancing," a BMC statement.

It further said that those living within a radius of one to two km from the sea could immerse idols in sea-

water. "It is advised by the civic body that those who do not live near the sea should immerse at home or in the artificial ponds," it said.

Last month, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray had held a meeting with several public Ganesh mandals in Mumbai and appealed to them to cut down on celebrations in the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic. He had also requested them to limit the height of the idol.

After a few days, Nykaa received an email from an ID which had the name of the coordinator from Omnicos, along with omnicos.it, followed by the domain of gmail. The email said that due to the lockdown, its regular bank account was facing issues and a new invoice was being issued with a new bank account and all the payments henceforth would have to be made on that account.

"Due to the imposition of

COVID-19-induced lockdown since March 22, the company could not import the material ordered," the complainant in his FIR said. However, in April, Nykaa informed the Italy-based company that the procedure to make the payment had been initiated. The email ID of the Italian firm had the domain name as omnicos.it.

After a few days, Nykaa received an email from an ID which had the name of the coordinator from Omnicos, along with omnicos.it, followed by the domain of gmail. The email said that due to the lockdown, its regular bank account was facing issues and a new invoice was being issued with a new bank account and all the payments henceforth would have to be made on that account.

In May, the firm from Italy enquired about the payment to which Nykaa said it was

done on its new account. After verifying the transaction details sent by Nykaa, Omnicos confirmed that neither the email ID belonged to it nor the bank account.

"After conducting an internal enquiry, they realised that they have been duped. The accused made a look-alike email ID with a different domain and cheated them. At this stage, it is difficult to conclude if any internal employee from either of the companies is involved. With the help of a technical team, we are investigating the matter and trying to find the origin of the email sent," senior police inspector Pandit Thorat from N.M. Joshi Marg police station said.

A Nykaa spokesperson said that there was no breach in customer data. "We filed a complaint with the police after detecting fraudulent activity targeting Nykaa."

been delayed for various reasons," said an official from the Housing Department. It has been delayed, stopped or left half-way by developers. The issues include non-payment of rents of tenants, or rules and conditions within the no-objection certificate being violated.

The redevelopment projects that are being delayed or not undertaken, if undertaken by MHADA, will have to be completed within three years since taking the commencement certificate. The Cabinet decision is likely to benefit at least 14,500 cessed buildings.

Ceded buildings are those for which the government collects tax for a repair fund. These buildings were mainly built before Independence, and the concept is limited to the island city and not the suburbs. "A number of redevelopment projects of ceded buildings have

Nashik in north Maharashtra reported a sharp surge of 28 fatalities, taking its total death toll to 616. The district also witnessed a record-high surge of 1,138 fresh cases taking its total tally to 22,577, of which 7,621 are active cases.

Mumbai city reported 1,132 new cases as its total case tally reached 1,26,356 of whom only 19,047 are active. With 50 new deaths reported on Wednesday, the death toll has risen to 6,943.

After Mumbai and Pune,

the Maharashtra government has set up a committee headed by State Tourism Minister Aaditya Thackeray to recommend names of eminent personalities for the Padma awards to be declared next year. A GR published on August 11 said the Centre had directed the State government to recommend names for the awards that will be declared on January 26, 2021.

Accordingly, a nine-member committee headed by Aaditya Thackeray has been constituted.

Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council Praeved Darbar said that their research proved that the inhibition of seedling growth by ABA is much stronger in darkness as compared to light conditions.

The Maharashtra government has set up a committee headed by State Tourism Minister Aaditya Thackeray to recommend names of eminent personalities for the Padma awards to be declared next year. A GR published on August 11 said the Centre had directed the State government to recommend names for the awards that will be declared on January 26, 2021.

Leader of Opposition in the Legislative Council Praeved Darbar said that their research proved that the inhibition of seedling growth by ABA is much stronger in darkness as compared to light conditions.

Maharashtra records highest single-day recoveries at 13,408

State adds 12,712 COVID-19 cases; 1,132 reported in Mumbai

SHOUMOJIT BANERJEE
PUNE

Maharashtra reported a spike of 12,712 new COVID-19 cases on Wednesday, taking the State's total case tally to 5,48,313. A high fatality surge of 344 took the death toll to 18,650.

However, the increase in number of cases – the State's second-highest single-day spike so far – was offset by the highest number of recoveries in a day, with 13,408 patients being discharged in the last 24 hours taking the cumulative recoveries to 3,81,483.

The State accounts for nearly 20% of the country's total cases. This is the third time in less than five days that it has recorded a single-day jump of over 12,000 cases, with 12,822 cases being recorded on August 8.

The State's active case tally currently stands at 1,47,513 with the recovery rate rising to 69.74%, said State Health Department officials.

"Till date, of 29,08,887 laboratory samples, 5,48,313 (18.84%) have tested positive, with nearly 71,000 samples being tested across the State in the last 24 hours," said State Surveillance Officer Dr. Pradeep Awate, adding that the State's case fatality rate stood at 3.4%.

Surge in Pune

As per State health department figures, Pune district reported another surge of nearly 3,000 new cases and 41 deaths, taking its total case tally to 1,19,628 while its death toll reached 2,865. The district administration, however, said the number of active cases had come down to less than 26,000 with the district's recovery rate rising above 75%.

Mumbai city reported 1,132 new cases as its total case tally reached 1,26,356 of whom only 19,047 are active. With 50 new deaths reported on Wednesday, the death toll has risen to 6,943.

After Mumbai and Pune,



Low-key: A boy breaks a dahi handi at Dadar on Wednesday. Janmashtami celebrations across the State were muted in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. ■ EMMANUEL YOGINI

Govt. okays speed boat ambulance between Mandwa and Gateway

RAINA ASSAINAR
NAVI MUMBAI

The Maharashtra government has cleared a speed boat ambulance service between the Gateway of India in Mumbai and Mandwa jetty in Raigad district.

The demand for the speed boat was made by Nationalist Congress Party MLA Aditi Tatkare, this year, after she was appointed as the Guardian Minister for Raigad. "This request, made seven months ago, was for this ambulance service as a pilot project to help critical patients from Raigad reach Mumbai hospitals

in a short time. A speed boat can cover the distance between the jetty and the Gateway in 20 minutes," Ms. Tatkare said. The journey by road takes at least three hours.

If this pilot project is successful, more boats could be added and the service could be extended to Ratnagiri and Sindhudurg. It will, however, take at least six months before the service becomes operational.

The budget for the speed boat ambulance is expected to be approximately ₹6 crore. It will be the first waterway ambulance in the State.

IMD forecasts heavy rain in Mumbai

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Wednesday predicted heavy rainfall at isolated places in Mumbai and intense showers in neighbouring districts for the next 24 hours.

A brown alert of heavy to very heavy rainfall has been issued for Raigad, Nashik and Pune, an IMD official said.

Isolated places in Mumbai are likely to receive heavy rain, while Thane, Raigad and Ratnagiri will witness more intense showers for the next 24 hours, the official said.

"Mumbai, western suburbs, parts of Thane and Navi Mumbai received more than 60 mm rainfall in the last six hours



Running mate matters

If the Democratic leaders on the ticket learn from each other, they can find a way to win

Presumptive U.S. Democratic nominee and former Vice-President Joe Biden has picked Kamala Harris, Senator from California of Indian descent, as his vice-presidential running mate, a fillip to his party's connect with African-Americans, the Indian-American community, women and its core base of mainstream liberals. Ms. Harris – her late mother and cancer researcher Shyamala Gopalan hailed from a Chennai-based family, and Jamaican father Donald Harris, a retired Stanford professor – made a name for herself as a tough lawyer, politically ambitious enough to throw her hat in the ring as a Biden challenger in the Democratic primaries. In a close parallel to former President Barack Obama picking his Democratic primaries rival Hillary Clinton for Secretary of State, Mr. Biden chose Ms. Harris from amidst a cohort of strong candidates, including former NSA Susan Rice and Senator from Massachusetts Elizabeth Warren. In picking Ms. Harris, Mr. Biden has consolidated his position at the helm of the Democratic Party mainstream, ensuring a convergence of views with his vice-presidential nominee on race relations, policing and criminal justice reform, immigration, the health-care insurance industry and education policy. The timing of her selection could not be better – as an outspoken leader on racism and a woman of colour, the symbolism of Mr. Biden picking her will offer hope to many, including 'Black Lives Matter' activists.

Ms. Harris will not only bring to the Biden ticket her broad appeal across the Democratic spectrum, but at 55, will help tip the overall age profile of a potential future Democratic White House in the right direction. However, if her 2020 presidential campaign was indicative, she will need to up her game on critical talking points including her record as a prosecutor in her home State, and on specifics regarding the complex question of health-care reform. More broadly, she and Mr. Biden will have to be prepared for an unusual campaign end-game scenario, with less than three months before Election Day and the COVID-19 pandemic slashing a swathe of economic misery. Will they be able to go beyond the standard Democratic campaign playbook and adroitly craft a fresh approach to take on a politically weakened President Trump, who will nevertheless likely come out guns blazing? Have they pondered the deep lessons of Ms. Clinton's loss to Mr. Trump in 2016 and come up with robust ideas to alleviate the economic pain of working-class Americans perceived to be the result of policies supporting globalisation and immigration? Will she be able to go toe-to-toe with incumbent Vice-President Mike Pence and yet avoid alienating independent and undecided voters? If the two Democratic leaders on the ticket learn from each other, there is a chance that they might arrive at a winning formula.

Mayhem in Minsk

Belarus is at the crossroads after a disputed election triggered protests and violence

Belarus has seen dramatic political developments over the past few days. First, the Election Commission announced that long-term President Alexander Lukashenko was the winner of Sunday's election. His main rival, Svetlana Tikhanovskaya, rejected the results and called for a recount. Protests broke out in the capital, Minsk, which was met with a violent security crackdown. At least 2,000 people were detained and dozens injured. Then, as the country was slipping into chaos and anarchy, she fled to neighbouring Lithuania, saying she made "a very difficult decision". But her campaign committee has said that it would continue to support the protests against the "election fraud". This was the hardest fought election in Belarus, a former Soviet republic, since the USSR's disintegration. There has been widespread anger against the government over a stagnant economy. Mr. Lukashenko, often touted as Europe's last dictator, had cracked down on the Opposition even before the election. Ms. Tikhanovskaya entered the race after her husband and a popular YouTuber, Sergei Tikhanovsky, who was to contest against Mr. Lukashenko, was detained and barred from contesting for allegedly inciting unrest. Throughout the campaigning and the election, the Opposition accused the government of intimidation, cracking down on journalists and activists, and prohibiting independent observers. All these raised doubts about the fairness of the election.

It is too early to say if Ms. Tikhanovskaya's departure would remove the hurdles Mr. Lukashenko faces in extending his term further. If the protests questioning the legitimacy of his presidency continue, at a time of growing economic troubles, it could substantially weaken him. The crisis has already derailed his plans for a strategic realignment in Eastern Europe. In recent years, Belarus, a geopolitical ally of Russia with cultural links, has shown a willingness to work closer with the West. His bet was to raise the strategic profile of his landlocked country at a time when the contest for influence in Eastern Europe between Moscow and Washington was hotting up. But many western countries have condemned the handling of the election and the protests, and called for a peaceful settlement. Moscow immediately sensed an opportunity to cement ties with Belarus, which is an important transit route of Russian gas to Europe as well as a buffer between Russia and European powers. Mr. Lukashenko has nowhere to turn to other than Moscow. He has to decide whether he wants to extend his 26-year reign at any cost or ensure the formation of a legitimate government that could address the country's vital problems. If he chooses the last, he has to rein in the police, reach out to the Opposition and offer talks to find a peaceful settlement to the crisis.

Stop the dismantling of environmental rules

The government has a social obligation to protect the environment; it must withdraw the Draft EIA 2020 Notification



SONIA GANDHI

The Sanskrit words, 'Prakruti Rakshati Rakshita', greet visitors at the Indira Paryavaran Bhawan, the home of the Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change, (MoEF&CC). They mean 'nature protects, if she is protected'. This ancient Indic wisdom inspired Indira Gandhi throughout her life, as referenced in many of her letters and files. She shared a deep kinship with nature. She was also cognisant that the environment cannot be protected without eradicating poverty. The origins and spread of the global novel coronavirus pandemic and its catastrophic impact are a warning to the entire world. The protection of the environment must go hand in hand with promoting public health and access to dignified livelihoods for all.

Erosion of the framework

India with its rich biodiversity and widespread inequality must especially pay heed now. Our nation has all too often sacrificed the environment and the rights of our people while chasing the chimera of unbridled economic growth. Of course, progress requires trade-offs, but there must always be boundaries that cannot be transgressed. But over the past six years, the government has thoughtlessly – or worse, with intent – eroded our environmental protection framework. The biennial Global Environmental Performance Index report has consistently put India at the bottom of its rankings. We were an alarming 177th out of 180 countries in 2018, faring badly on virtually all indicators – environmental health policy, biodiversity and habitat, air and water pollution and climate change.

The pandemic should have made the government reflect and reconsider its environmental and public health governance. Instead, the Ministry is handing out clearances during the lockdown without proper public consultations. The announcement of coal auctions by the Prime Minister in previously declared 'no go' areas, signals that the government is in no mood to course-correct. The disastrous Draft Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), 2020 Notification, which among other provisions, gives a clean chit to polluters violating environmental regulations through ex-post facto approvals, will unleash unprecedented devastation on our environment.

Opaque reviews

It was apparent that a Narendra Modi-led Bharatiya Janata Party government would be destructive to India's environment going by Mr. Modi's track record in Gujarat as Chief Minister. During the 2014 election campaign, Mr. Modi slandered the United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government and the Environment Ministry for being an impediment to the nation's growth. From the very start, the government has desperately sought to project an image of 'Ease of Doing Business' to the world, mindless of consequences. It formed multiple committees, diluted laws and regulations across the board, and opened up vast tracts of forest land to a select few in the private sector.

In 2014, the T.S.R. Subramanian Committee was set up to review six major environmental laws. Another committee was formed to amend the Coastal Regulation Zone (CRZ), 2011 Notification. Both faced immense criticism for opacity and not consulting a wide range of stakeholders. The TSR Committee Report was never released, but some of its recommendations were surreptitiously implemented. On similar lines, the 2018 CRZ Notification was rejected by the National Fishworkers Fo-



rum and other stakeholders, for threatening the livelihoods of fishing communities and destroying coastal ecology along India's 7,500-km long coastline. These communities contribute more than ₹50,000 crore annually to the Indian economy. They are severely impacted by climate change and natural disasters and are left to fend for themselves by the government. Likewise, the National Board for Wildlife, the Forest Advisory Committee and Expert Appraisal Committees are approving projects in and around protected wildlife areas without following due process.

The North Indian plains and the National Capital Region are engulfed in a debilitating smog year after year. According to a study in the British journal, *The Lancet*, 12.4 lakh deaths i.e. 12.5% of all deaths in India in 2017, could be attributed to air pollution. Yet, there has been no concerted action to address this public health emergency. Instead of stringent measures to control emissions from thermal power plants, the government extended deadlines for compliance and has made a U-turn on clean coal.

Attack on Adivasis

The government's greatest assault has been reserved for the land and the rights of Adivasis and other traditional forest dwellers. The historic Forest Rights Act (FRA), 2006 was passed by the UPA government to undo centuries of injustice. Our deep cultural traditions as well as experience from all over the world have demonstrated

that well-defined land rights to forest dwellers are beneficial for both marginalised populations and the environment. The twisted interpretation and shoddy implementation of the FRA, 2006, has led to Adivasis and forest-dwelling communities being harassed by the Forest Department. Their legal claims to land are buried in bureaucracy. The FRA link to project approvals has been abandoned in practice, and the curtailment or elimination of public hearings means that civil society and independent or concerned voices are muzzled.

Indira Gandhi had once said that forest development corporations had become forest destruction corporations. The veracity of her observation is borne out by several proposals or actions that militate against the interests of forest dwellers.

For example, there is a proposal to overhaul the colonial Indian Forest Act, 1927 to give enhanced policing and quasi-judicial powers of the forest officials. It gives forest officials powers to use firearms with unjustified levels of immunity from prosecution. Earlier, the Compensatory Afforestation Fund Act, 2016 was passed by the government in both Houses of Parliament, ignoring the Opposition which pointed out that it bypasses the FRA, 2006, and disempowers Adivasis, forest dwellers and gram sabhas.

Promote public health

In the name of reforms, the government rolled out the red carpet for crony capitalists, systematically disenfranchised the marginalised and vulnerable populations, and abandoned its responsibility to both domestic and international commitments on climate change and environmental protection. This is a completely wrong way to go about things.

The government should recognise it has a social obligation to protect the environment and promote public health. India's environmental protection framework

is not a regulatory burden and the government must incentivise industry to shift its mindset from clearances to compliance. The Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) sector must be subsidised to follow green norms. Nobody denies that India needs a modern EIA framework. But it must be based on best available scientific knowledge, enhanced public participation and regular social audits. The concept of cumulative impacts of projects in a region or ecology – on the Ganga, for example, must be adopted. You cannot have 'Nirmal Ganga' without 'Aviral Ganga'.

India as a green hub

Simply put, the government must stop dismantling India's environmental regulations. An essential first step is to withdraw the Draft EIA 2020 Notification. What is essential is widespread public consultation to shape a national agenda that will place India at the forefront of the battle against global warming and pandemics. We have an incredible opportunity to reset our economy and demonstrate leadership to the world with a growth strategy that transforms India into a green manufacturing hub. The erstwhile Planning Commission's expert group report on low carbon growth strategy and the many suggestions in the 2019 Congress Manifesto can be a starting point. In times of mass reverse migration, environment protection through public works programmes including afforestation and watershed development, can be turned into a grass-roots movement involving youth, women, communities, gram sabhas and non-governmental organisations. Indira Gandhi was the first major world leader to recognise the environmental crisis confronting the world in Stockholm in June 1972. Can India once again rise to the greatest challenges of the 21st century?

Sonia Gandhi is the President of the Indian National Congress

More than a vaccine, it is about vaccination

As a COVID-19 vaccine is for all age groups, putting in place an innovative delivery platform in time is a must



T. JACOB JOHN & M.S. SESADRI

Everyone eagerly asks: will we get a COVID-19 vaccine this year or only next year? During a pandemic, expecting vaccines the same year or the next, illustrates the power of technology, human hope, media hype – all at unprecedented frenzy.

Where India stands

Globally, innumerable vaccine trials are progressing; in India, two candidates have advanced considerably. An inactivated coronaviruses vaccine was created by Hyderabad's Bharat Biotech. It is safe and immunogenic (stimulates anti-coronavirus antibody) in laboratory animals and humans, to be re-confirmed in a phase 2 trial; phase 3 will assess the vaccine's safety and protective efficacy against COVID-19.

Pune's Serum Institute of India (SII) is testing Oxford University-AstraZeneca's vaccine using a Trojan horse approach – spiking chimpanzee adenovirus type 5 with coronavirus spike glycoprotein genes. When injected, adenoviruses are detected and devoured by immune system cells patrolling for invading microbes. The smuggled genes force these cells to synthesise and spew out spike protein that is immunogenic. This adenovirus is harmless in humans. The SII is ready to upscale production after regulatory clearances in the basis of need.

Define policy for clarity
The first step is policy definition leading to a plan of action blueprint. The time to create them is now – it costs nothing, but will

United Kingdom and India.

Both company-owners have invested heavily, without extramural research support, or advance purchase contract by the government. Both seem to have the best interests of fellow Indians first in their hearts; profit comes second. Risks are a part of the game. Neither company has all its eggs in one basket – confidence in their flagship antigens is not absolute, both are pursuing alternate vaccine candidates also.

Some wealthy nations made bilateral financial agreements with manufacturers in order to hog vaccines. Such vaccine nationalism is 'measles of the world', borrowing the phrase from Einstein. Global public good should not be hijacked by wealthy nations. Gavi, the global vaccine alliance, created COVAX – a funding facility to ensure up-scaling vaccine production and its access to low income countries as soon as regulatory approvals emerge. COVAX will support the SII with funds to bring down selling price to \$3 per dose.

With good news on supply side, what about the delivery side? India's Universal Immunisation Programme is a vaccine-delivery platform for children and pregnant women, funded by the central government but implemented by State governments. However, the COVID-19 vaccine is for all age groups, necessitating an innovative platform, prioritised on the



save time when a vaccine becomes available.

Policy emerges from objective(s) for vaccine use in individuals and community. Priority for individual need is to protect those at high risk of death (senior citizens and those with medical co-morbidities) and front-line workers who expose themselves to infection while providing health care. Children may be vaccinated before schools reopen to protect them and prevent infection from being carried home.

Vaccine availability will be limited at first, when we must ensure that those on the priority list receive it. Those who already had COVID-19 or novel coronavirus infection require no vaccination; but how can we ascertain that? Past COVID-19 or infection cannot be readily identified unless we track archival information of all laboratory tests and medical records. Information should be made available to the individual and the health management system, for which computerised data are critical. A nationwide database with unique identification details already exists, a valuable resource to identify those who need not be vaccinated.

Identifying past asymptomatic

infections requires systematic screening for IgG antibody. Antibody positives need not be vaccinated (no harm if vaccinated). All data should be saved permanently. Area-wise estimates of the numbers who need vaccination on a priority basis are necessary. Now is the time for State governments to capture all such data.

A community's need for vaccination is two-fold. All those who must rebuild essential activities, i.e. economic, educational, trade, transport, sociocultural and religious, must be protected. A more ambitious aim is to break the novel coronavirus transmission and eradicate the disease altogether. With India's notable representation in decision-making bodies of the World Health Organization, India is uniquely positioned to play a crucial role in advocating global eradication of COVID-19.

Getting a plan ready

We need a vaccine-delivery platform to fulfil all such needs. A practical method is vaccination camps, supervised by a medical officer, staffed by health management and local government, and having the list of people who need vaccination. Information should be updated regularly, deleting those who got infected recently. Enumeration and registration of eligible persons can be started now. Vaccination by appointments will ensure that vaccination is without overcrowding and with minimum waiting time. Post-injection, vaccinated subjects should wait for half-an-hour in case of immediate side effects; emergency drugs to tackle side effects should be readily available.

Vaccine trials document the absence of serious side effects. Minor and inconsequential reactions are self-limiting fever, pain and swelling at the injection site. As it would be a new vaccine, all side effects must be documented for first and second doses; medical events during the month following each dose must be captured through phone calls, and analysed to check full safety of the vaccine.

Phase 3 trial is usually in healthy volunteers, hence efficacy and safety profile in others will not be available when a vaccine is rolled out. However, senior citizens and those with co-morbidities must be vaccinated by/on priority. Some countries require that a proportion of volunteers should be the elderly and the vulnerable. In India, careful documentation of all side effects in all individuals, senior citizens, those with co-morbidities, and children must supplement trial data on vaccine safety. This 'post-marketing surveillance' must be built into the vaccine roll-out.

The vaccine regulatory agency should take a call on the special question of vaccine safety during pregnancy. One vaccine is an inactivated virus and the second is a live virus but non-infectious. Both may be assumed to be safe; yet safety in pregnancy must be ascertained in bridge studies that must be conducted as soon as possible.

T. Jacob John is retired Professor of Clinical Virology, CMC Vellore, and Past President, Indian Academy of Pediatrics. M.S. Seshadri is retired Professor of Medical Endocrinology, CMC Vellore, and Medical Director, Thirumalai Mission Hospital, Ranipet, Tamil Nadu

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.

No communication gap

As a nation where many languages are spoken, it is impractical to expect all citizens to know Hindi nor should the language be linked to a misplaced enthusiasm for Hindi. Now that the CISF is making changes after the incident at Chennai airport recently (Page 1, "CISF to deploy personnel with 'working knowledge of local language' at airports", August 12), the force must ensure that personnel with

some knowledge of the local language of the area of posting or at least training in the basics of the language concerned should be posted in non-Hindi speaking States. The CISF also needs to ensure its personnel have some customer skills. There are many voluntary groups willing to teach the basics of a local language, often free of cost. There are voluntary organisations in Bengaluru teaching Kannada to non-Kannada

groups especially for those working in the IT sector where a large migrant population is employed. I am sure similar institutions exist in Tamil Nadu, West Bengal or Maharashtra. The government talks of a three-language formula but often in practice it is two languages to the disadvantage of the local language. Learning another language is always a benefit.

H.N. RAMAKRISHNA,
Bengaluru

Sputnik V
At this critical time, when scientists the world over are working day and night to develop the most effective vaccines for COVID-19, it is difficult to understand why some scientists seem so very cynical when it comes to Russia and its 'Sputnik V' vaccine. Of course, all the mandated vaccine protocols would have to be gone through, like any other nation, before the final approvals. However, this is also the time when

the global scientific community needs to come together as one. The world is waiting for a vaccine.

A. MOHAN,
Chennai

India's steel frame
While it may be true that the older batches of civil servants would find it difficult now in passing the coveted current civil services examination, (Editorial page, "The main bricks to use in India's steel frame", August 10), veteran

bureaucrats would definitely pass the test of ethics, public probity, being unyielding to undue political pressure and upholding principles. There are numerous anecdotes of older generation civil servants calling a spade a spade. Transfers and being shunted to lesser-known posts did not deter them. But is it possible now?

C. RAGHAVAN,
Chennai



To read more letters online, scan the QR code

How the tiger can regain its stripes

Tiger conservation needs a reboot to match the scale of India's aspirations in other domains



K. ULLAS KARANTH

On International Tiger Day, July 29, authorities proudly declared that India should "celebrate" the increase in tigers from about 2,000 in 1970 to about 3,000 now. This is an annual growth rate lower than 1% after 50 years of incredible, sometimes heroic, efforts. Clearly, India has done better than other tiger range countries, but at what cost and what efficiency needs deeper scrutiny.

On the same day, a functionary of the Delhi-based Global Tiger Forum admonished us not to aspire, ever, to have more than 3,500 wild tigers. In a country with such an expansive land base, a robust economic foundation, and a rapidly urbanising educated population cheering for the tiger, this dismal projection cannot be our vision. Even a back-of-the-envelope calculation can show that India has the potential to hold 10,000 to 15,000 wild tigers. What is lacking is a pragmatic plan to get to that goal.

In contrast to the above dismal scenario, I can report what I witnessed in the Malenad landscape of about 25,000 sq km in Karnataka. Field observations over 50 years and research suggest that there were only around 70 tigers in this landscape in the early 1970s. I had feared they would all be gone soon. The substantial increase of tigers that followed, against all odds, was due to the work of dedicated foresters and conservationists under the leadership of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. There are now about 400 wild tigers in Malenad. My own estimates, based on long-term research, show that the Malenad forests can potentially harbour about 1,300 cats. Clearly my experience is at odds with the current bureaucratic projections.

Mission drift in tiger protection
Two legal instruments that enabled tiger recoveries in India were the Wildlife Protection Act of 1972 and the Forest (Conservation) Act of 1980, which reinforced Project Tiger. The political leadership and field efforts behind this recovery had to overcome very difficult social challenges:



Tiger cubs at the Tadoba Andhari Tiger Reserve near Nagpur in Maharashtra on July 29, 2019. ■ K.R. DEEPAK

slow growth of the economy, excessive reliance on forest exploitation for livelihoods and government revenues, dire poverty, and protein dependency on wild meat that drove massive local hunting. These challenges were overcome and tiger recoveries occurred, but only sporadically in a few reserves.

Around 2000, things began to change. There was a decline in political commitment to conservation and the gradual transition of the field-oriented Forest Department to one whose primary aspiration was to be like the multitasking Indian Administrative Service. This was followed by unnecessary and massive borrowings from the Global Environment Facility-World Bank combine to create new models for tiger recovery.

Some of us conservationists, including Valmik Thapar and the late Sanjoy Debroy, wrote to the World Bank to abandon the proposed eco-development model, but to no avail.

This mission drift in tiger protection overlapped with the upsurge of emancipatory political movements for the release of wildlife habitats for cultivation and exploitation by loosely defined "forest-dwellers". This populist movement led to the implementation of the Forest Rights Act of 2006, which has turned into an open-ended process of forest conversion even within wildlife reserves. Impacts on tiger habitats have been severe.

At the end of the 20th century, accompanying these broader social changes, personnel changes too played a part in weakening tiger conservation. When Prime Minister Atal

Bihari Vajpayee promoted his capable and enterprising Environment Minister Suresh Prabhu, the portfolio landed in the lap of garden-varietiy politicians of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam. When one of the most capable leaders of Project Tiger, P.K. Sen, retired, he was replaced by a bureaucrat who managed to game the system to stay on for an unprecedented 13 years.

The tiger extinction in Sariska Reserve caused a public outcry in 2005, leading to the appointment of a Tiger Task Force (TTF) by Prime Minister Manmohan Singh. Unfortunately, the TTF turned out to be unequal to the task. Its politically correct ideologies and muddled science resulted in a report that created a tiger management model that benefited the forest bureaucracy more than it did the tigers.

Based on TTF recommendations, the United Progressive Alliance government began investing heavily, but not very intelligently, in tiger conservation. Excessive funding of a few reserves while neglecting large areas with greater recovery potential became the norm. Progress on voluntary village relocation schemes from within reserves slowed down (except in Madhya Pradesh and Maharashtra, where major initiatives funded by these States greatly helped tiger recoveries). Tiger reserve managers were soon attracted to the massively funded eco-development activities originally formulated by the World Bank. In reality, they needlessly replicated the rural development work already being done by several other agencies and NGOs.

Another feature of this emergent

government monopoly over tiger management was the lack of data transparency and rigorous, independent tiger monitoring.

Bound in red tape

The tiger was fully bound in red tape. One had hoped when the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) took over in 2014 and began to wind down bureaucracies in favour of new initiatives and enterprise, that the red tape strangling the tiger would also be unwound. But there was no such luck: within two weeks of the NDA assuming power, the same national and international bureaucratic apparatuses that ran the show after 2005 performed a trapeze act and clasped the hands of the new masters.

Therefore, the show goes on: One prime example is the aforementioned Global Tiger Forum, an international bureaucracy snugly entrenched in Delhi. It has done so in defiance of its own original charter and attempts by multilateral aid institutions to pry it loose and park it in Southeast Asia. Another case in point is the National Tiger Conservation Authority. It has bloated in size, swallowing up schemes totally unrelated to tigers, such as the recovery of snow leopards and translocation of African cheetahs to India.

India needs to get out of this tiger circus. The role of the forest bureaucracy should be once again restricted to wildlife law enforcement. Merging Project Tiger with other Central schemes for wildlife conservation would be a good first step. Government monopoly over domains of tiger conservation such as tiger research, monitoring, nature education, tourism and possibly even conflict mitigation should be erased. The vast reservoir of talent and energy in society should be drawn in to engage with these diverse domains, by involving private enterprises, local communities, NGOs and scientific institutions.

India's tiger conservation needs a reboot to match the scale of the country's aspirations in other domains – a new vision that encompasses the talents and aspirations of a growing number of citizens who want to save tigers without turning the clock back on material progress.

K. Ullas Karanth is Director, Centre for Wildlife Studies, Bengaluru. Views are personal

Shutting the door on Huawei

China's decision to weaponise trade and technology ties might now come back to haunt it



HARSH V. PANT

In a dramatic reversal of its decision in January allowing Huawei to have a limited role in its telecommunications network, the U.K. has finally decided to ban the Chinese company. This entails banning U.K. mobile providers from buying new Huawei 5G equipment after the end of this year as well as removing all of Huawei's 5G kit from their networks by 2027. The U.K.'s Secretary of State for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport, Oliver Dowden, put the blame on U.S. sanctions imposed on Huawei in May. "Given the uncertainty this creates around Huawei's supply chain, the U.K. can no longer be confident it will be able to guarantee the security of future Huawei 5G equipment," he said.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo praised the U.K.'s decision and urged other like-minded countries to "push back" against Beijing's actions. For its part, China

"strongly opposed" the U.K.'s "groundless" ban and warned that it would "take measures to safeguard" the "legitimate interests" of Chinese companies as "any decisions and actions must come at a cost". The British government has been forthright about the delay in 5G's roll-out as a consequence of its policy shift and the costs of its decision. At a time when London is looking to engage with major global powers in a post-Brexit environment to enhance its trade ties, this decision, which is likely to alienate China, will come with some serious strategic costs as well.

A domino effect across Europe

The U.S.'s imposition of sanctions on Huawei in May, which disrupted the company's global supply of semiconductors, altered the cost calculus for the U.K. The U.K. government had to go in for another round of security review which resulted in the National Security Council's decision to finally phase off Huawei's involvement in the country's 5G network. But the U.S.-U.K. relationship was also facing a moment of reckoning after the U.K.'s January decision to allow Huawei. At a time when the U.S.-China relationship is entering a phase of Cold War 2.0, the Trump administration had made it clear that the U.K.'s "special relationship" with the U.S. was under the scanner. Not only would their security and intelligence ties have been in jeopardy but crucial trade negotiations would have been hampered too. For the Trump administration, the U.K.'s change of stance is a

major diplomatic win as it might also convince fence sitters to make a final decision.

For Huawei, a domino effect across Europe might pose a serious challenge given that almost a quarter of its sales come from the European market. France also decided to limit the use of Huawei's 5G kit by issuing limited term licences. This is widely seen as a de facto ban on the Chinese company though the French government has not said it in so many words. Germany too is reducing its reliance on Huawei as the mood against China has soured across Europe. After years of kowtowing to the Chinese, the European Union is becoming more explicit than ever in challenging China. The issues range from China's initial mishandling of COVID-19 and Beijing's disinformation campaign in Europe to the new national security law in Hong Kong. China is viewed as a "systemic rival" that is hell bent on challenging the extant global order with all its concomitant treaties, norms and institutions. And Huawei is the latest flashpoint with individual countries shunning the company and the European Commission warning in a recent report that "most Member States have not yet established or communicated clear plans to effectively address existing situations of dependency on high-risk suppliers and prevent future dependencies."

Awaiting India's response

So what once looked like a battle which the U.S. was waging on its own has suddenly been joined by a number of other players. The Indian response is being closely watched. Last year, India had allowed Huawei to participate in 5G trials which could not happen because of the disruptions caused by the pandemic. Today, India-China ties have altered due to the border crisis and Chinese insensitivity to Indian concerns. New Delhi is toughening its posture across domains and it looks rather unlikely that Huawei would get to participate in the 5G network roll-out in India. India is signalling that it is willing to bear economic and technological costs if it means limiting Chinese involvement in critical infrastructure. But what would not be lost on Beijing is that losing such a large market might be a devastating blow to Huawei as well. It is becoming increasingly clear that the decision on Huawei is not merely a technological or economic decision but a fundamentally political decision for most countries. China's decision to weaponise trade and technology ties might now come back to haunt it as other nations begin to pay back in the same coin.

Harsh V. Pant is Director, Studies at the Observer Research Foundation and Professor of International Relations, King's College London

A self-reliant foreign policy

In a multipolar world order, this means having variable combinations with like-minded partners

SREERAM CHAULIA

Self-reliance is the theme of India's 74th Independence Day. This concept is commonly associated with the economy and production of key goods and services within the country in light of the global 'supply shock' caused by the pandemic. But it also has a parallel dimension in the domain of foreign policy. If the domestic goal is to reduce dependence on imports for critical commodities, the foreign policy corollary is to recalibrate the time-tested axiom of 'strategic autonomy'.

India has historically prided itself as an independent developing country which does not take orders from or succumb to pressure from great powers. Whether the world order was bipolar (1947 to 1991), unipolar (1991 to 2008, when the U.S. entered a long cycle of economic crises and China caught up with it in overall power), or multipolar (present times), the need for autonomy in making foreign policy choices has remained constant.

Showing flexibility

Yet, strategic autonomy has often been adjusted in India's history as per the changing milieu. In moments of crisis, India has reinterpreted freedom and shown flexibility for survival. During the 1962 war with China, the high priest of non-alignment, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, had to appeal to the U.S. for emergency military aid to stave off the Chinese from "taking over the whole of Eastern India." In the build-up to the 1971 war with Pakistan, Prime Minister Indira Gandhi had to enter a Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation with the Soviet Union to ward off both China and the U.S. And in Kargil in 1999, India welcomed a direct intervention by the U.S. to force Pakistan to back down. In all the above examples, India did not become any less autonomous when geopolitical circumstances compelled it to enter into *de facto* alliance-like cooperation with major powers. Rather, India secured its freedom, sovereignty and territorial integrity by manoeuvring the great power equations and playing the realpolitik game.

The essence of self-reliance
In the threat environment marked by a pushy China, which the U.S. is now beginning to confront frontally, India should aim to have the proverbial cake of American support and also eat the cake i.e., stay as an independent power centre by means of intensified cooperation with middle powers in Asia and around the world.

For India, which values freedom, placing all its eggs in the U.S. basket to counterbalance China would be an error, as that can constrict India's options in other theatres of national interest such as its ties with Iran and Russia and efforts to speed up indigenous defence modernisation.

Diversification is the essence of self-reliance. A wide basket of strategic partners, including the U.S., with a sharper focus on constraining China, is the only viable diplomatic way forward in the current emerging multipolar world order.

It is no longer a question of picking one out of two titans or oscillating between them. In an era of dense networks, India must reconfigure autonomy to mean what the American scholar Joseph Nye calls 'power with others' to accomplish joint goals.

We are free and self-reliant not through isolation or alliance with one great power, but only in variable combinations with several like-minded partners. India is familiar with the phrase 'multi-vector' foreign policy. It is time to maximise its potential.

In the threat environment marked by a pushy China, which the U.S. is now beginning to confront frontally, India should aim to have the proverbial cake of American support and also eat the cake i.e., stay as an independent power centre by means of intensified cooperation with middle powers in Asia and around the world.

For India, which values freedom, placing all its eggs in the U.S. basket to counterbalance China would be an error, as that can constrict India's options in other theatres of national interest such as its ties with Iran and Russia and efforts to speed up indigenous defence modernisation.

Diversification is the essence of self-reliance. A wide basket of strategic partners, including the U.S., with a sharper focus on constraining China, is the only viable diplomatic way forward in the current emerging multipolar world order.

It is no longer a question of picking one out of two titans or oscillating between them. In an era of dense networks, India must reconfigure autonomy to mean what the American scholar Joseph Nye calls 'power with others' to accomplish joint goals.

We are free and self-reliant not through isolation or alliance with one great power, but only in variable combinations with several like-minded partners. India is familiar with the phrase 'multi-vector' foreign policy. It is time to maximise its potential.

Sreeram Chaulia is Dean, Jindal School of International Affairs



DATA POINT

Behind the moves

HOW TO READ THE TABLES |

The survey is based on face-to-face interviews with 963 migrants in rural households between May 30 and July 16 across 179 districts. Each table lists the % share of different responses given by the migrants to a set of questions. For instance, in response to question 1, 51.7% of the migrants said they returned to their villages by some form of motorised transport such as train or motorcycle

1. How did you return from the city to the village?

Walking/bicycle/rickshaw/ thela	25.3
Any motorised transport	51.7
Walking plus a vehicle	6.9
Other	6.2
No response	10

2. After the announcement of the lockdown, did your boss give you the entire salary or wages for your work?

Yes	48
No	28.4
Only one month pay	19.6
No response	4.1

The most common reason that migrant workers gave for returning to their village from the city was COVID-19, according to the Gaon Connection and Lokniti-CSDS COVID Rural Survey 2020. One in four migrants either walked, cycled or travelled back to their village in hand-pulled rickshaws. More than half the respondents went a whole day without eating at least once before leaving their city. A significant share of the migrants said they would return to the city once the lockdown ended

3. Why did you deem it fit to return from the city to the village? What is the major reason?

No money/salary	28.9
Fear of COVID-19	35.6
Hunger/fear of dying of hunger	7.7
Wanted to be with family back home	7.5
Landlord was asking for money/evicted us	2
Work had stopped/lost job	5.3
I'm a student, had no money	1
No response	12

4. Were you ill-treated by a police person or a government official while coming here?

Yes	12.7
No	87.3
Yes	14.4
No	85.6

SOURCE: COVID RURAL SURVEY 2020, BY GAON CONNECTION AND CSDS-LOKNITI

7. When you were in the city during the lockdown, how often did you or any member of your household not eat anything at all the entire day due to lack of money or resources – often, sometimes, not much or never?

FROM PAGE ONE

'Mega labs' to boost COVID-19 testing

The CSIR has partnered with the U.S.-based Illumina, a company that specialises in the manufacture of NGS machines. Five such sequencers, costing ₹4 crore each, are currently available in India.

"From our pilot tests so far, we found that 99% of confirmed RT-PCR positive samples were identified so by the NGS method. More importantly, nearly half of the samples that the RT-PCR termed 'inconclusive' were identified as either positive and negative. So this can also be used as a confirmatory test," said Sridhar Sivasubbu, senior scientist at the CSIR-Institute of Genomics and Integrative Biology (IGIB) and among the leaders of the collaboration.

Researchers there have also published the results of their analysis on Monday, on bioRxiv, a preprint server where scientific results

are up for public viewing. These have not been peer-reviewed.

Scaling up testing

Though India has tested 24 million samples so far, it only works out to about 17,000 tests per million. With about 7.5 lakh tests conducted per day, the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) says it aims to scale up testing to at least a million per day. NGS could help with that, said Dr. Sivasubbu, but would also serve a larger purpose of continuous surveillance. "While RTPCR is 70%-80% accurate and antigen tests 50% so, it implies that there would be a sizeable population that is falsely negative. Regular surveillance of a large pool in, say industrial hubs, commercial establishments or places where an outbreak is likely would help catch new infections," he said.

COVID-19

While 22,972 tests were performed on Tuesday with results of 1,221 awaited, 18,035 tests were performed on Monday. August 11 case additions included 479 from Greater Hyderabad, 172 from Medchal-Malkajgiri, 162 from Rangareddy, 107 from Sangareddy, and 87 from Warangal Urban. Nine more patients died on Tuesday. Of the total 84,544 cases, 22,596 were active.

Andhra Pradesh added 9,597 new infections and 93 deaths in the 24 hours as of Wednesday morning. It took only about six days for the State's tally to go up to 2.5 lakh from 2 lakh reported on August 7. Since then 57,357 new cases and over 500 deaths were reported.

Telangana recorded 1,897 cases on Tuesday, not very different from the previous day, taking the total to 84,544.

Four districts reported 10 or more deaths in the past day.

Kerala's cumulative case burden rose to 38,144 with 1,212 fresh cases on Wednesday. Of the 1,212 new cases, 1,097 were locally acquired infections, including that of 22 health-care workers. In 45 cases, the source of infection could not be identified.

Six deaths – two in Kasaragod, one each in Thiruvananthapuram, Ernakulam, Idukki and Kottayam – took the toll to 126.

While the cumulative case burden was 38,144, there were 13,045 patients under treatment. Thiruvananthapuram again was at top slot for fresh cases. The district reported 266 cases, of which all except two were locally acquired infections. Malappuram reported 261 cases, 237 due to local transmission.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said with coastal clusters in Thiruvananthapuram showing a downward case trend, more relaxations would be allowed in the containment zone.

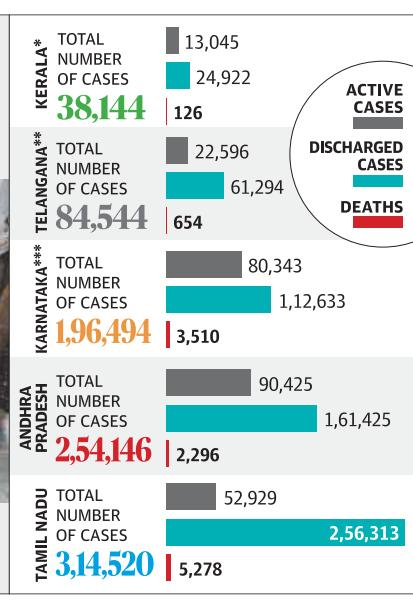
He said that women fish vendors who buy fish from

Innovative ideas

Though Vinayaka Chaturthi celebrations are likely to be a low-key affair this year, artisans have come up with topical ideas to sell their idols. The graph shows the spread of the pandemic in the southern States



Eliminating the virus: An idol of Lord Ganesh destroying the novel Coronavirus has been put up for sale in Hyderabad on Wednesday. ■ NAGARA GOPAL



*Kerala has a mismatch of 51 cases due to unaccounted deaths, missing persons. **Telangana numbers are as of 8 p.m. on Tuesday. ***Karnataka has 8 non-COVID deaths.

Tuesday was 53,326, of which 27,250 tests were RT-PCR, and the remaining rapid antigen tests.

While 2,802 positive cases were detected in Bengaluru on Wednesday, nine other districts reported over 200 cases.

119 deaths in Tamil Nadu

A little over half of the 5,871 new cases of COVID-19 in Tamil Nadu were recorded in Chennai and other northern districts on Wednesday.

As the surge continued, another 5,633 persons were discharged and 119 persons succumbed to the infection.

Chennai accounted for 993 new cases.

The fresh cases took the State's overall tally to 3,14,520 of which 52,929 were active. A total of 2,56,313 persons were discharged, while the toll stood at 5,278.

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

3 killed as police open fire to quell mob in Bengaluru

Chief Minister B. S. Yediyurappa held a review meeting on Wednesday and ordered a probe by a district executive magistrate into the incident. Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai said that, *prima facie*, the violence "seems organised".

P. Naveen Kumar, a nephew of Pulikeshi Nagar Congress MLA R. Akhanda Srinivasa Murthy, had allegedly put up an inflammatory post on his Facebook account on Tuesday evening. As word spread, a crowd of nearly 200 persons gathered outside the DJ Halli police station demanding his arrest. Muzammil Pasha, a local SDPI leader, lodged a complaint.

Simultaneously, at least 1,000 people gathered outside the house of Mr. Srinivasa Murthy. At both sites, the mob turned violent, demanding Mr. Naveen Kumar be handed over to them,

even as the police arrested him and shifted to an undisclosed location.

The mobs set fire to several vehicles, vandalised and torched the DJ Halli police station, and tried to unsuccessfully enter the police quarters in KG Halli. The rioters also torched the MLA's house and Mr. Naveen Kumar's residence, both in Kaval Byrasandra. Mr. Srinivasa Murthy was not at home at the time.

The police initially lobbed tear gas shells to control the mob, but they failed. They opened fire around midnight. Three men were killed and three others sustained bullet injuries. "It is sad that we had to open fire to bring the situation under control," said Bengaluru Police Commissioner Kamal Pant. The deceased have been identified as Yasin Basha, 19, Wajid, 18, and Sheikh Sadique, 26.

K.V. ADITYA BHARADWAJ BENGALURU

With prohibitory orders in place and residents staying indoors on Wednesday morning, the heavy deployment of police personnel and the charred remains of several vehicles and structures reveal the story of the violence that unfolded in DJ Halli, Kadugondana Halli and Kaval Byrasandra – a cluster of areas in east Bengaluru – on Tuesday night.

While a derogatory Facebook post against Islam, allegedly put up by P. Naveen Kumar, nephew of local Congress MLA R. Akhanda Srinivasa Murthy, triggered the riots, the mob, which was over 2,000 strong, turned against the police and the MIA.

The Social Democratic Party of India (SDPI), whose members were the complainants and also now accused



Burnt down: Police and private vehicles that were torched by a mob in Bengaluru late on Tuesday. ■ K. MURALI KUMAR

of a role in the riots, has blamed lack of prompt action against Mr. Kumar for the escalation, a charge denied by the police. "Within

hours of receiving the complaint, we arrested Naveen Kumar," said a senior police official.

"The fact that the crowds

gathered at multiple locations simultaneously indicates that the riots were not organic," a senior police official said.

Muslim youth stand guard at local temple

They form a human chain to protect it

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT BENGALURU

While mobs went on a rampage in DJ Halli and the neighbouring KG Halli in Bengaluru, a group of residents from minority community worked towards ensuring that the violence did not take a communal turn.

A group of Muslim youth formed a human chain around a temple near Mr. Srinivasa Murthy's house in Kaval Byrasandra late Tuesday night. A video of this has gone viral on social media.

"The riots of Tuesday night were not communal. But the mob was very violent and directionless. If it had attacked the temple, it could have descended into a communal riot. So some of the youths who were trying

to pacify the crowds formed a human chain around the temple," said a resident.

Meanwhile, Congress MLA Akhanda Srinivasa Murthy has appealed for peace and said there had been no incident of this nature in the last 25 years in the locality.

His house was set on fire when he and his family members were away. The rioters carried machetes and petrol bombs and looted jewellery and all other material at home, he said. "Not even pillows were spared in my house," he said. "I have been living in that house for the past 50 years. I was born and raised in that house. Even my brother's house was burnt. Where do we go now?" he asked.

NGT distance norm not for licensed quarries: HC

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT KOCHI

The Kerala High Court has ruled that quarries during their valid period of licence or lease need not fulfil the distance norm of 200 metres from residential and inhabited areas set by the National Green Tribunal (NGT).

They only need to maintain the distance norm of 50 metres as contemplated in Kerala Minor Mineral Concession Rules.

However, the court made it clear that licence or lease of quarries whose period has expired and which did not follow the distance norms set by the NGT should not be renewed. Neither should fresh licence or lease be granted to quarries that did not maintain the NGT-set distance norm.

The court ordered that fresh or renewal applications may be processed and such applications need not be rejected solely on the ground of non-fulfilment of the new distance norm stipulated by the NGT.

Justice Alexander Thomas passed the directive on a petition filed by a quarrying firm from Kozhikode seeking to restrain the Central and Kerala State Pollution Control Board (PCB) from taking any action against the petitioner for violation of the distance norm prescribed by the NGT.

The petitioner challenged the NGT order prescribing a new distance norm for stone quarries.

Indians having any valid visa can now fly to the UAE

Centre lifts curbs imposed for pandemic

S. ANIL RADHAKRISHNAN THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

With the Union government lifting the pandemic-induced curbs on tourist and visit visas for travel to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) after five months, airlines can now carry any Indian national holding any type of valid UAE visa to the seven emirates.

Till now, only Indian and UAE nationals having resident visa, fresh job visa or student visa were allowed to travel on flights operated by Air India Group and Air India Express and on chartered flights to the UAE.



A file photo of people stranded in the UAE arriving at the Calicut International Airport in May. ■ SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

"It would be for the airlines concerned to ensure that there is no travel restriction for Indian nationals to enter the UAE with the particular visa category before issuing ticket and boarding pass," the Civil Aviation Ministry said in a communication.

The Centre was under pressure to allow everyone with valid UAE visas to travel after the General Directorate of Residency and Foreign Affairs in Dubai started issuing new visit visas for Indians. Relatives of NRIs were not able to fly to the seven emirates due to the restrictions.

Air India Express says efforts on to retrieve baggage

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA NEW DELHI

Air India Express on Wednesday said 85 passengers injured in the plane crash in Kozhikode had been discharged from hospitals after "obtaining complete fitness."

The airline said its contract service provider, Keen International, arrived at Kozhikode on Monday and started the process of "search and retrieval" of the baggage belonging to the crew and passengers.

The U.S.-based company was conducting its process with the help of Air India of



The Air India Express flight that skidded off a runway while landing at the airport in Kozhikode on August 7. ■ AP

officials, it added. Air India Express is a wholly owned subsidiary of the national carrier, Air India.

"We will ensure that the baggage retrieved is handed over to the passengers and family in due course, after the cleaning and sanitisation process," the airline noted.

The Air India Express flight from Dubai with 190 people on board, including a six-member crew, overshot the tabletop runway during landing at the Kozhikode airport in heavy rain on Friday night. It fell into a valley and broke into pieces, killing 18 people, including two pilots.

A Division Bench of the Kerala High Court on Wednesday ordered the Ernakulam District Collector to take over the Mulanthuruthy Church and its premises, lock them and keep their keys under his custody. The Bench passed the order on an appeal filed by the State government against a single judge's directive on Tuesday to take possession of the church and hand over it to the Orthodox faction vicars.

IN BRIEF



5 charred to death as bus catches fire in Karnataka

Five persons – three children and two women – of a family were charred to death in a private bus that caught fire on NH-4 near K.R. Halli Gate in Karnataka on Wednesday. Around 4 a.m., smoke was spotted in the engine. A passenger alerted the driver, who stopped the bus and jumped out. Even as other passengers got out by breaking windows, five people, who were unable to come out of the bus, died.

Take over Mulanthuruthy church, HC tells Collector

A Division Bench of the Kerala High Court on Wednesday ordered the Ernakulam District Collector to take over the Mulanthuruthy Church and its premises, lock them and keep their keys under his custody. The Bench passed the order on an appeal filed by the State government against a single judge's directive on Tuesday to take possession of the church and hand over it to the Orthodox faction vicars.

Jagan launches YSR Cheytha scheme

GUNTUR
Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy launched the 'YSR Cheytha' scheme on Wednesday. "Under this scheme, each woman in the age group of 45-60 years, will get an annual financial assistance of ₹18,750, which amounts to ₹75,000 in four years," said Mr. Jagan. Nearly 23 lakh women would be benefited by the scheme, the Chief Minister said.

Three more bodies recovered at Pettimudy

Idukki landslip toll has gone up to 55

A CORRESPONDENT IDUKKI

Three more bodies were recovered from Pettimudy, near Munnar, on Wednesday taking the death toll in the landslip at the Nayamakkad tea estate to 55. The bodies were identified as that of Laksmansree, 9, Nadhya, II, and Sunmathi, 50.

The bodies were buried in a mass grave at Pettimudy after autopsy at a makeshift mortuary there. As per the Revenue Department, 15

Sexual assault victim dies in Hyderabad

The girl had been suffering from an infection; her brain had a blood clot

SWATHI VADLAMUDI HYDERABAD

A minor orphan girl, reported to have been sexually assaulted by a 'benefactor' of the protection home where she had stayed, breathed her last while undergoing treatment at the Niloufer Hospital here on Wednesday.

The girl's condition worsened during the last 48 hours, and doctors could not save her. While the post-mortem report is yet to be shared, sources from the Women and Child Development Department said the girl's brain had a blood clot, probably caused by an injury on the

head. Besides, she had been suffering from vaginal infection for the past four months owing to the sexual assault, without any medical attention whatsoever.</



Pranab's health continues to be critical

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Former President Pranab Mukherjee's health condition continues to remain critical, the Army's Research and Referral (R&R) Hospital said on Wednesday.

"Presently, he is haemodynamically stable and on ventilator," the hospital said in a bulletin. Mr. Mukherjee underwent a life-saving surgery for a brain clot on Monday. On Tuesday, his health worsened by evening. Mr. Mukherjee was also found to be COVID-19 positive.

Congress MLAs return to Jaipur

Resentment among them is 'natural' after the return of dissidents, says Gehlot

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

JAIPUR

Congress MLAs sequestered at a resort near Jaisalmer for the last two weeks during the political turmoil in Rajasthan returned to Jaipur on Wednesday, two days before a crucial session of the Assembly beginning on August 14. The MLAs were taken to a hotel on the outskirts of the city, where they had stayed for several days last month.

The legislators were flown back to the State Capital after the dissident MLAs, led by Sachin Pilot, called truce and came back to the party fold. The MLAs, who were supporting Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, will go straight from the hotel to the Assembly for attending the session. They are likely to return to their respective constituencies after the session is over.

Sources in the ruling Congress said the government



Homecoming: Congress legislators arriving at the Jaipur airport on Wednesday. ■ PTI

would go in for a floor test despite having the numbers in its favour and Mr. Pilot and his band of 18 rebel MLAs having returned to the party fold. The Business Advisory Committee, expected to meet on Thursday, will decide the timing of the floor test.

Gehlot's camp upset

The MLAs supporting Mr. Gehlot were reportedly upset over the return of Mr. Pi-

lot and dissident legislators and demanded that their feelings be conveyed to the party's top leadership. Several MLAs said before leaving Jaisalmer that the rebels should not be accommodated in the party positions and posts.

However, all the MLAs, including the rebels, are likely to attend a Congress Legislative Party (CLP) meeting to be held here on Thursday. Mr. Gehlot and Mr. Pilot are

expected to come face-to-face at the meeting for the first time after the crisis erupted last month following the rebellion staged by the latter.

Mr. Gehlot told reporters in Jaisalmer that the resentment among the Congress MLAs, lodged in hotels for a month, was "natural" after the return of dissidents to the party fold, but said he had asked them to "forgive, forget and move on" in the interest of democracy and for the welfare of people of the State.

He said all the legislators, including the "colleagues who had left and come back," would work together to fulfil their commitment to serve the State. "More than 100 MLAs stayed together for such a long time... If the democracy is alive in the country, it is because of the contribution of the Congress leaders," he said.

Last week, Vice Chief of the Air Staff Air Marshal Harjit Singh Arora took part in

IAF deploys two light combat helicopters in Leh

They have been pressed into service at short notice

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI



Battle ready: The light combat helicopter deployed for operations in Leh on Wednesday. ■ ANI

one such operation along with HAL test pilot Wing Commander Subash P. John (retd.), by taking off from a high-altitude location to a forward area for a simulated attack on a high-altitude target.

"This was followed by a landing at one of the most treacherous helipads in the region. The LCH successfully demonstrated its quick deployment prowess to for-

ward locations in extreme temperatures," HAL stated.

The IAF and the Army need 160 LCHs and the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) has approved an initial batch of 15. The IAF has since issued the Request for Proposal (RFP) for 15 limited series production (LSP) helicopters, 10 for itself and five for the Army, and HAL has submitted its response.

Tussle for more seats in poll-bound Bihar

LJP's attacks on Nitish have widened the rift between the NDA partners ahead of election

AMARNATH TEWARI

PATNA

With the Election Commission asserting that the Assembly election in Bihar would be held on time in October-November, political parties are now vying for more seats and exploring new formations to suit their electoral prospects.

Opposition parties and the ruling National Democratic Alliance (NDA) partner, the Lok Janshakti Party, have long been demanding that polls be deferred due to the spike in COVID-19 cases and floods, which have inundated 16 districts of north-



Nitish Kumar

east Bihar. Only the ruling Janata Dal(U) has been in favour of holding the election. Even its ally, the BJP, has been mum on the issue, saying "holding elections is the Election Commission's prerogative". However,

some BJP leaders say that in such difficult times, only Yadav and Muslim voters will come out to vote. "We all know for which party that would go," one of them said.

The LJP's demand for the deferment of elections and its attack on Chief Minister Nitish Kumar widened the rift between the NDA partners in Bihar. JD(U) leader Rajeep Ranjan Singh, alias Lalan Singh, said, "He [Mr. Paswan] is cutting the branch of the tree he sits on."

However, NDA sources said the reason for the rift was the seat-sharing bet-

ween the three NDA partners. The JD(U) wants to contest in at least 120 seats and the BJP no less than in 102 seats, leaving only 21 for the LJP in the total 243 seats.

Better options

"Ahead of polls, parties, particularly smaller ones, explore better political options to contest more and more seats," political analyst Ajay Kumar told *The Hindu*.

Meanwhile, State Congress leader Sadanand Singh said his party would contest 80 seats, triggering murmurs among the *Mahagathbandhan* allies. However,

INTERVIEW | CHIRAG PASWAN

+ I have not spoken to Nitish in almost a year'

He refused to answer my phone calls, did not respond to any letters, says LJP president

SOBHANA K. NAIR

In an open admission about the discord in the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), in Bihar, Chirag Paswan, Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) president, says he had not met or spoken to Bihar Chief Minister and Janata Dal (JD) leader Nitish Kumar for a year now. The State goes to the polls in November.

Your party, in a letter to the Election Commission, had urged it to defer the Bihar Assembly election, but the panel has maintained that the polls will be held on schedule.

■ At the end of the day, the Election Commission has to take the call. The number of COVID-19 positive cases are spiralling in the State even when the testing figures are very low, an issue that Prime Minister Narendra Modi too flagged in his meeting on Tuesday. You can't put the lives of people in danger for elections. In addition, parts

of the State are ravaged by floods. Should the limited resources be diverted for elections? What is the Constitutional urgency? Our Constitution provides the alternative of President's Rule. Remember, the elections are not a one-day affair. We have days of campaigning, public meetings and so on. And on the polling day itself, what if the voters do not turn up because of the pandemic? Democracy is all about people's participation!

You have been the biggest critic of Nitish Kumar. Why have you resorted to public criticism in spite of being an ally. Is there no space within the NDA for you to raise these issues?

■ Exactly, I do not have any space or platform. For a very short period, in 2017, the LJP was a part of the Nitish Kumar government with our then State president Pushpati Nath Paras being Minister in the State Cabinet. In 2019, he fought the Lok Sab-

ha election. Since then, despite many requests, Nitishji did not give us a berth in the Cabinet. When I started the 'Bihar first, Bihari first' yatra, he absolutely refused to have any kind of communication with me.

When was the last time you met Nitish Kumar or spoke to him over phone?

■ It has been almost a year now. I wanted to convey the feedback that I got from my 'Bihar first, Bihari first' yatra but he refused to answer my phone calls. He has not spoken to me or any leader of my party. He did not respond to any of my letters... I had no other option but to go public.

And these were merely suggestions, not really criticism. For example, every child is taught to dial 100 to reach the police, but in Bihar it doesn't work. Why should students from Bihar go to Kota coaching institutes to study, when in fact the teachers and even the heads of va-

rious coaching institutes there are from Bihar? I have nothing personal against the Chief Minister

process. Let me categorically say – the LJP has not had any meeting on the seat sharing arrangement so far. I do not need to discuss the number of seats because it had already been finalised way back in 2014 when we joined the NDA. We fought on seven Lok Sabha seats and 42 Assembly seats. I am not going to negotiate the number of seats year after year.

There was a buzz that the Congress had approached you and that the LJP could shift base to the *Mahagathbandhan*?

Many claim that you are working as a proxy of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to keep the JD(U) on a tight leash. And this whole façade of criticising the Nitish government is just a way of cornering more number of seats for the LJP... ■

My party is in an alliance with the BJP but it has its own ideology and thought

Accused in Bikru ambush arrested

Police recover four crude bombs

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

LUCKNOW

An accused who allegedly hurled two crude bombs at the police team in Bikru village in July when eight policemen were killed, was arrested from Chitrakoot, police said.

Identified as Balgovind Dubey, he carried a reward of ₹50,000, said the Kanpur police. The Special Task Force that arrested him recovered four crude bombs hidden by him after the Bikru incident, police said. The bag which contained the bombs was recovered near

Shivli road in Kanpur, said the police.

After his arrest from Karvi area in Chitrakoot, Balgovind Dubey allegedly told police that on the night of July 2, Vikas Dubey, the main accused, summoned him to his house and gave him crude bombs, telling him that police were coming to arrest them and that they should not let them escape alive.

Dubey and Mishra were earlier gunned down by the police in separate incidents in days after the Bikru ambush.

Punjab sees 39 new deaths due to COVID-19

CHANDIGARH

Punjab recorded 1,020 fresh COVID-19 cases on Wednesday and 39 more deaths, taking the toll to 675, according to an official statement. The total number of cases reached 26,909, of which 9,022 are active.

ELECTRONICS CORPORATION OF TAMILNADU LIMITED
692, Anna Salai, Nandanam, Chennai - 35
e - TENDER NOTICE
Tenders are invited for "Providing covered walkway with tensile roof and solar panels with anti-skid tiles for footpath on both side of road from entry gate to exit gate of ELCOSEZ at Sholinganallur, Chennai".
Tender Reference Number : ELCOT/ITPD/SHO-SEZ/COVERED WALKWAY/2020
Tender Release Date : 13-08-2020
Pre-Bid Meeting Date & Time : 17-09-2020 at 3.00 P.M.
Tender Closing Date & Time : 17-09-2020 at 3.30 P.M.
Earnest Money Deposit : ₹ 5,00,000/-
E- Portal Charges : ₹ 10,000/-
ELCOT is a Developer under SEZ Act and rules. All supplies made to ELCOT are Zero rated under GST. Therefore the quoted price to exclude all output taxes on supplies to ELCOT. Bidder should submit their bid through ELCOT's e-Tender portal <https://tenders.elcot.in>. The tender documents can also be downloaded from <https://tenders.elcot.in> and www.elcot.in.
DIPR/3021/TENDER/2020
MANAGER (ITPD)

INSTITUTE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY KOTTAYAM
(A Institution of National Importance under the Act of Parliament)
Valiyoor P.O. Pala, Kottayam (Dt). Kerala-686635
Email: register@iitkottayam.ac.in, Website: www.iitkottayam.ac.in
Advt No. Admn/HR/OSM/ITK/2020-21

RECRUITMENT OF FACULTY POSITIONS IN MATHEMATICS
Indian Institute of Information Technology Kottayam invites applications for the Recruitment of Faculty positions in Mathematics
Eligibility & Other Conditions: Kindly refer to the detailed advertisement at <https://www.iitkottayam.ac.in>.
Closing date of application: 26th August 2020 | 18.00 IST |
Registrar

Soldier, Hizb militant killed in Pulwama

Arms, ammunition recovered: police

PEERZADA ASHIQ

SRINAGAR

A Hizbul Mujahideen "commander" and a soldier were killed and two soldiers were injured in two gun battles in the Kashmir Valley on Wednesday.

The 'commander' killed in the encounter is Azaad Lalhari of the Hizbul Mujahideen. He was involved in the killing of a police head constable, Anoop Singh, in May 2020 in Pulwama," Inspector-General of Police Vijay Kumar said.

The buzz, though, is that Mr. Manjhi may switch to the NDA, while the LJP could come to the *Mahagathbandhan* fold. But it is still too early to say anything, says Mr. Kumar.



The slain militant was involved in a constable's killing, the police said.

"One of the jawans succumbed to his injuries," the spokesman said.

Attack in Baramulla
In a separate incident, militants injured a soldier in an attack in Baramulla.

An Army spokesman said terrorists fired at a quick reaction team of the Army when it was moving from Baramulla towards Gulmarg on the Srinagar-Baramulla National Highway near the Trungund Hygam crossing.

"A soldier was injured. A search operation is in progress," the Army spokesman said.

Meanwhile, a Lashkar-e-Taiba militant was held in Bandipora.

The police identified him as Aquib Ahmad Rather, alias Jana, a resident of Sajipora, Handwara.

BJP workers in J&K to get more security

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

SRINAGAR

Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) Lieutenant Governor (L-G) Manoj Sinha on Wednesday assured a better security cover for grassroots representatives and workers of the BJP, in the wake of rising attacks on them.

"Political workers and panchayat representatives were killed recently. Measures to protect them have already been taken, but we will ensure better security arrangements in the days ahead," L-G Sinha said at the launch of Coffee Table books highlighting developmental works carried out in the J&K in the past one year, in Srinagar.

He said the administration stood with the victims' families. Around six political leaders were killed by militants in Kashmir this year.

Mr. Singh said his administration would ensure J&K's development without any disparity. "Prime Minister Narendra Modi is committed to it. He told me that I should work for the speedy development of J&K. Development has taken place, but I feel there is a need to speed up the process at the ground level."

He said J&K's Panchayati Raj Act was stronger than in other States and UTs.

Govt. of Odisha Office of the Engineer-in-Chief, Water Resources, Odisha, Bhubaneswar	
1st Corrigendum to 'e-Procurement Notice No.CELMB 01 of 2020-21	
Name of Work	: Protection to scoured bank of KSD Right Embankment from RD 7.20 Km. to 8.35 Km. (Working RD 7.650 Km. to RD 8.670 Km)"
Bid Identification No.	: CELMB PRD 01 of 2020-21
Availability of Tender online for bidding is rescheduled i.e.	: From 20.08.2020, 10.00 hours to 04.09.2020, 17.00 hours.
Date of Opening of Technical Bid	: 05.09.2020, 11.00 hours.
All other terms and conditions remain unchanged.	
Chief Engineer FC & Basin Manager, Lower Mahanadi Basin	
OIPR-32252/11/0002/2021	

Nepal to seek ID cards from Indian visitors

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Nepal will seek identity cards from visitors from India, Home Minister Ram Bahadur Thapa has said. He told a parliamentary panel that Nepal will use the data to better deal with the COVID-19 situation.

"Archiving is under way. The government will focus on developing it in a system that will make it permanent," Mr. Thapa told the State Management and Good Governance Committee of Parliament. Nepal's *Ekantipur* reported that the Minister said Kathmandu will implement the identity cards and registration system and will try to formalise record-keeping process to better manage movement of people and the pandemic.

Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli has recently blamed India for the spread of COVID-19 in the country.

India and Nepal have an open border which is demarcated but for Kalapani in Uttarakhand's Pithoragarh district and Susta in the Uttar Pradesh-Bihar region. Nepal has increased deployment of armed personnel on the border with India since the Kalapani dispute intensified in May.

On Tuesday, Russia's President Vladimir Putin announced that his country had given regulatory appro-

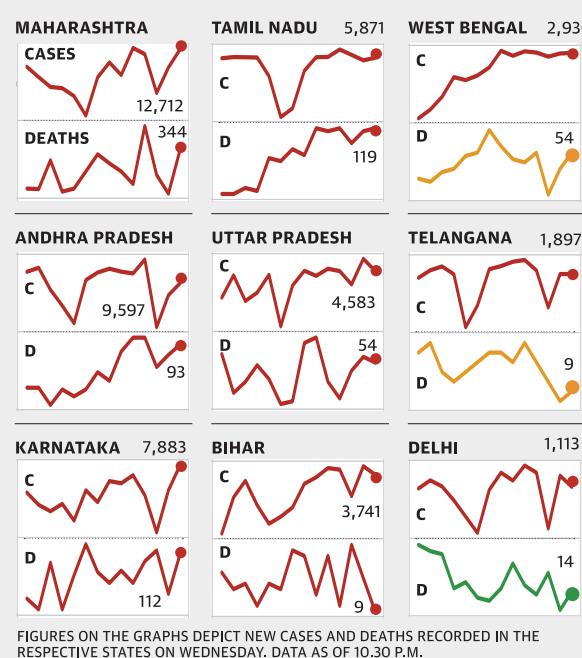
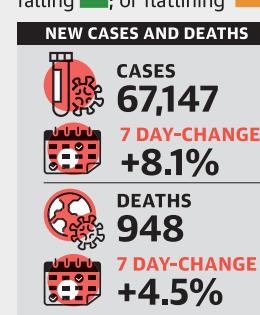
Vaccine panel mulls early access

Committee to decide on how COVID-19 shot will be made available to Indians

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Viral tracker

With a surge of **67,147** new cases and **948** fatalities, India's COVID-19 tally stood at **23,95,529** and **47,148** respectively. As many as **7,33,449** samples were tested the previous day. The graphs depict new cases and deaths in the last 14 days in select States. The States are classified based on where cases/deaths are rising red; falling green; or flatlining orange.



Available to Indians

Though there are several groups on vaccine development, this group is significant as it is expected to deliberate on how a vaccine, whenever it is available, will be practically made available to Indians. Though there are reports on the Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII) readying 100 million doses by the year-end, it is not exactly clear how many of them will be available to Indians.

On Tuesday, Russia's Pre-

sident Vladimir Putin an-

nounced that his country

had given regulatory appro-

val to a home-grown vaccine. However, details on its performance in early trials are not available and Indian officials declined to comment on whether there was any partnership involving India and Russia to either test or procure the vaccine.

The expert group on Wednesday deliberated on a "conceptualisation and implementation mechanism" to create a digital infrastructure for inventory management and delivery mechan-

ism of the vaccine, including tracking of the vaccination process, with particular focus on the last mile delivery.

Financial resources

"The expert group discussed on the financial resources required for procurement of COVID-19 vaccine and various options of financing the same. Available options in terms of delivery platforms, cold chain and associated infrastructure for roll out of COVID-19 vaccination

were also taken up," the statement added.

"India's support to its key neighbours and development partner countries for COVID-19 vaccines was deliberated upon. The expert group discussed that India will leverage domestic vaccine manufacturing capacity and will also engage with all international players for early delivery of vaccines not only in India but also in low and middle income countries."

SC to hear plea on COVID-19 'mismanagement' by Centre

Six ex-bureaucrats have sought a Commission of Inquiry

LEGAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday will hear a writ petition filed by six former bureaucrats, represented by advocate Prashant Bhushan, seeking a Commission of Inquiry to be set up into the "gross mismanagement" of the COVID-19 pandemic by the government.

The petition has already been listed for hearing before a Bench led by Justice L. Nageswara Rao on August 14.

The petition contends that mismanagement occurred at multiple levels, from not stocking enough protective and medical equipment to combat the health crisis to lack of early checking of incoming international passengers to the handling of the exodus of migrant workers during the lockdown.

Devastating effect
The extensive lockdown, which was imposed overnight, had a "devastating effect" on the jobs of ordinary people and violated their fundamental right to live with dignity by earning their livelihood. The lockdown has had a crippling effect on



The petition alleges mismanagement at multiple levels. ■ K.V.S. GIRI

the economy.

The plea said about six crore people between the age of 20 and 39 years lost their jobs in April itself. The lives of 40 million migrant workers were abruptly disrupted by the national lockdown. Many died in the efforts to reach home, walking for thousands of miles due to lack of public transport.

The petition filed by the former bureaucrats, which include M.G. Devasahayam and Amit Bhaduri, said the Centre's response to the pandemic and its "deleterious impact" on the lives and livelihoods of the citi-

zens was a "definite matter of public importance and warrants appointment of an Inquiry Commission."

National lockdown

It alleged the nationwide lockdown, which was announced on March 24, was "arbitrary, irrational and without due consultation with experts or State governments."

"In spite of being the harshest and most restrictive lockdown in the world, it has failed to arrest the spread of the disease," the plea said.

The bureaucrats contend that the government failed to draw up a national plan and guidelines for providing minimum standards of relief to vulnerable sections of the society under the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

There was delay in ensuring adequate supplies of personal protective equipment for safety of healthcare workers during the pandemic. The Centre failed to undertake effective measures for containing the transmission of virus even after being notified about it by the World Health Organization (WHO) in early January this year.

Study finds poor access to abortion drugs

Severe shortage in Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Tamil Nadu, Haryana and Delhi

JAGRITI CHANDRA
NEW DELHI

Over-regulation of drugs to curb gender-biased sex selection such as through government programmes like 'Beti Bachao, Beti Padhao' has hindered access to safe, legal and cost-effective abortion, according to a survey across six States which found an "overwhelming shortage" of abortion pills or medical abortion drugs.

A study conducted among 1,500 chemists in six States by the Foundation for Reproductive Health Services India (FRHSI) indicated a severe shortage of medical abortion (MA) drugs in five out of the six States surveyed, with abysmal stocking in Madhya Pradesh (6.5%), Punjab (1%), Tamil Nadu (2%), Haryana (2%) and Delhi (34%). The only State that seemed to be better was Assam (69.6%).

Legal barriers

The findings show that State-wise regulatory and legal barriers are the key reasons why 79% of the chemists surveyed refrained from stocking these drugs. As many as 54.8% of chemists also reported that medical abortion drugs were over-regulated as compared to other prescription drugs. "The regulatory



Short supply: As many as 79% of the surveyed chemists did not stock abortion pills. ■ GETTY IMAGES/ISTOCKPHOTO

hurdles are due to a misunderstanding that easy availability of medical abortion drugs will be misused for sex selection. But this drug is approved for use only up to nine weeks, whereas an ultrasound can detect a foetus only at around 13-14 weeks. Moreover, these abortions are allowed under the Medical Termination Act. The law on abortions allows termination of pregnancy in the first nine weeks and in some cases even in the second trimester, such as in sexual assault cases as well as due to foetal anomalies," V.S. Chandrashekhar, chief executive officer, FRHSI and Pratigya Campaign Advisory Group member told *The Hindu* in a telephonic interview.

Abortion pills are different from emergency contraceptive pills. The latter are taken 72 hours after unprotected sex to prevent an unintended pregnancy. Abortion pills or MA drugs are abortifacients which terminate a pregnancy by expelling an embryo or foetus.

Mr. Chandrashekhar adds that the regulatory crackdown has resulted in abortion services on the whole becoming inaccessible, especially those during the second trimester, but there is little ground for restricting MA drugs.

The lack of availability of MA drugs forces many women to seek a surgical abortion from a facility, reducing her choice.

It will also reduce access to safe abortion and force

them to seek services from unsafe providers as there are only 16,296 approved abortion facilities in the private sector in the country, whereas MA drugs can be provided by an obstetrician or a gynaecologist, who are estimated to number about 60,000-70,000, the study highlights.

A *Lancet* study on the incidence of abortion and pregnancy in 2015 estimated that 81% of abortions annually are medical abortions and nearly 90% of abortions are sought in the first trimester.

Cost effective

Moreover, MA drugs are also cost-effective. The cost of first trimester surgical abortion varies from ₹2,000-5,000 in Tier 2 and Tier 3 towns and smaller nursing homes or clinics. In these towns, the cost of abortion pills plus the consultation fee is in the range of ₹700-1,000.

During COVID-19, the lack of access to abortion services is likely to have worsened as not only travelling to a surgical facility is challenging, but the cost of such a procedure may have gone up as clinics charge for PPE (personal protection equipment) and require a mandatory COV-19 test.

It will also reduce access to safe abortion and force

Cong. leader dies after TV debate

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Minutes after he appeared on a TV debate, Congress party's national spokesperson Rajiv Tyagi collapsed and was pronounced dead in a Noida hospital on Wednesday evening.

Mr. Tyagi was participating in the debate from his home in Vasundhara, Ghaziabad.

Congress president Sonia Gandhi, former party chief Rahul Gandhi, and the party's general secretary for Uttar Pradesh Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, spoke to Mr. Tyagi's family over phone to express their condolences. "They remembered Rajiv Tyagi's contribution to the Congress party and paid their homage," the party said in a statement.

Youth Congress President Srinivas B.V. on Twitter alleged Mr. Tyagi suffered a heart attack after his religion was questioned and he was called a "fake Hindu". The Youth Congress president also posted a video clip of a doctor who said the Congress spokesperson was given emergency medication for 45 minutes but could not be revived.

Inspector Pervez Alam solved the rape and murder of an engineering student Jaya Bharti. The person involved in the case was sentenced to death.

Home Minister's medal for 15 CBI officials

Among them is Dabholkar case officer

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

Officers belonging to the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) have bagged 15 'Union Home Minister's Medal for Excellence in Investigation' awards ahead of the Independence Day celebrations this year.

Among the officials is Assistant Superintendent of Police Subhash Ramrur Singh, who was instrumental in getting the firearm allegedly used in the Narendra Dabholkar murder case retrieved by a Norwegian team of deep-sea divers from the Kharegaon Creek in the Arabian sea.

The probe also led to clues to the murders of M.M. Kalburgi, Gauri Lankesh and Govind Pansare.

Inspector Vibha Kumari probed the sexual abuse of minors in Bihar's Muzaffarpur shelter home. It resulted in the conviction of Brajesh Thakur and 11 others, who were sentenced to life in jail.

Superintendent of Police Cephas Kalyan Pakerla, who investigated the i-Monetary Advisory (IMA) scam; Deputy Superintendent of Police Mukesh Sharma, who solved the rape and murder of a minor girl in Uttar Pradesh's Lakhimpur Kheri; Inspector Dul Chandi Yadav, who cracked the BITS Pilani examination paper leak case; and Inspector Jyotirmoyee Majhi, who probed chit-fund scam cases, have also been awarded.



The Central agency's officers have bagged 15 medals.

Delhi riots probe officer gets medal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

A Delhi police officer, who is heading the February last Delhi riots probe team, and an National Investigation Agency (NIA) officer leading the Bhima Koregaon (Maharashtra) investigation are among the 121 recipients of the Union Home Minister's Medal for Excellence in Investigation that was announced Wednesday.

Deputy Commissioner of Police Rajesh Deo heads the Special Investigation Team constituted to probe the riots in northeast Delhi, where more than 50 people were killed. Mr. Deo was reprimanded by the Election Commission of India (EC) in February. The officer was pulled up by the EC for linking an accused who had opened fire at Shaheen Bagh protesters with a political party, days ahead of the Delhi Assembly elections on February 8.

The NIA officer, Superintendent of Police Vikram Khalate, is leading the probe into the Bhima Koregaon riots of 2018.

The Ministry did not provide details of the cases for which the officials received the medals.

SUDOKU

			1				4		
2	5			7			9		
4	8						2		
3				2				9	
5							1	3	
			5	7					
3		4			8	5			
	1				9				

DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★★★☆

Solution to puzzle 13012

B	A	F	F	L	D	I	S	P	U
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Punjab begins distribution of smartphones

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHANDIGARH

The Punjab government on Wednesday launched a 'Smart Connect Scheme', pegged at ₹92 crore, to distribute smartphones to students of Class XII in government schools across the State.

Chief Minister Amarinder Singh launched the scheme by handing over smartphones to six Class XII students in a symbolic gesture. Simultaneous distribution of phones was done at 26 places by various Ministers and MLAs.

Captain Singh said that when the Congress listed 'smartphones' as a poll promise (2017 Assembly elections), it was to provide global connectivity and empower the poor youth who could not afford them but in the present pandemic situation, these phones had assumed a bigger importance as they had become a necessity for education.

Campus reopening
Primary and secondary education will fundamentally change because of the pandemic, according to 80% of Indian respondents. Almost the same proportion says that online learning is going to become bigger part of schooling for young people.

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

NEW DELHI

Three out of four Indians say the COVID-19 pandemic will deepen inequalities among primary and secondary students, according to a survey by global education firm Pearson. Almost 80% fear the pandemic will continue to disrupt education until a vaccine is found.

The global online survey was conducted for Pearson in May by a market research firm, with results weighted for age, gender, education and socio-economic status so that proportions are representative of national demographics. Over a thousand Indians were included.

With three-fourths of respondents recognising a widening digital divide, they were asked what solutions public education needs to invest in. About 45% felt the need to equip schools to switch to online learning, while 33% felt the top priority is to increase access to technology for underserved learners.

With regard to higher education, about two-thirds of the respondents felt that Indian colleges and universities were prepared for the pandemic. The survey re-

Festival fervour



Team spirit: A boy trying to break the *dahi handi* (pot of curd) using a ladder on Janmashtami at Girgaum, Mumbai. Many organisers kept the event low-key and avoided forming human pyramids to break the *handi* due to the pandemic. ■ VIVEK BENDRE

AASU rails against CAA, EIA in Assam

Protesters slam BJP-led government

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

The All Assam Students' Union (AASU) on Wednesday protested against the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA) and demanded the scrapping of the draft Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) 2020.

Members of the union formed human chains and demonstrated across the State against the "anti-indigenous people" CAA and the "environmentally disastrous" EIA notification.

The demonstrators also lashed out at the Bharatiya Janata Party-led coalition government in Assam for "playing with the emotions of the people of the State". This was in reference to the recommendation of a high-

Pune factory builds grenade launcher

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
PUNE

The city-based Ammunition Factory at Khadki has produced an indigenous 40 mm Under Barrel Grenade Launcher (UBGL) for the Border Security Force (BSF) following Prime Minister Modi's call for an 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' (self-reliant India).

The first consignment of the 40 mm UBGL, designed and manufactured by the Ammunition Factory at Khadki with components sourced from Indian industries, has already been sent to the BSF on Tuesday, said the Ministry of Defence in a release on Wednesday.

This ammunition, which comes in four variants, is fired from a launcher fitted under the barrel of a 5.56 mm Rifle INSAS (Indian Small Arms System).

The advantages of the 40 mm UBGL ammunition vis-a-vis a traditional hand grenade is that it is light weight, with a range of 400 meters as compared with only 30 meters of the hand grenade.

This ammunition used to be imported by the Army and the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) units. Thus, there was a perceived need to indigenise the design and manufacture of this ammunition, said the release.

"Inspired by the Prime Minister's clarion call for an Atmanirbhar Bharat, the Ammunition Factory at Khadki wrote a new chapter on self-reliance by producing and sending the first consignment [of the 40 mm UBGL] to the BSF," said the MoD's statement.

Pandemic will hit education'

Most respondents in a survey feel it will deepen inequalities among students



Digital divide: Children of the Bakarwali community at an open-air community school in Doodpathri, J&K. ■ NISSAR AHMAD

vealed mixed opinions with regard to the physical reopening of campuses. Although 75% of Indian students believe that colleges and universities are risking the lives of students if they reopen in the fall, 71% also believe that reopening them is vital for the economy and society. Almost 80% said they would be less likely to travel overseas for their studies.

Blended learning, a hybrid between digital and face-to-face classes, seems to be the most popular option for the immediate future,

with 86% of respondents accepting that online learning will be part of the university experience.

Soft skills

With the pandemic-exacerbated economic insecurities, 84% of Indian respondents made it clear that schools need to focus more on preparing students for the world of work, not just examinations.

Only 51% feel that a university degree is essential, and 62% said that their own higher education experience did not prepare them for their careers. In fact, only 46% say that if given the choice again, they would still go to college.

Most respondents called for more soft skills and hands-on training in higher education, with more than 80% saying that while colleges and universities are good places to make professional connections, work-based experience outweighs what is being taught.

Forest loss threatens hornbills

Study based on satellite imagery was published in forest journal

RAHUL KARMAKAR
GUWAHATI

A study based on satellite data has flagged a high rate of deforestation in a major hornbill habitat in Arunachal Pradesh.

Using fine-scale satellite imagery, a trio of ecologists assessed the changes in forest cover of the 1,064 sq.km. Papum Reserve Forest (RF) adjoining the Pakke Tiger Reserve as well as a part of Assam affected by illegal felling and ethnic conflict.

Papum RF is a nesting habitat of three species of the large, colourful fruit-eating hornbills: Great, Wreathed and Oriental Pied. The 862 sq.km. Pakke reserve houses a fourth species, the Rufous-necked.

The study by Chintan Sheth of the Bengaluru-based National Centre for Biological Sciences and Aparajita Datta and Devathri Parashuram of the Mysuru-based Nature Conservation Foundation was published in Silva Fennica, a forest journal of



An oriental pied hornbill.
■ RITU RAJ KONWAR

Finland. "The satellite data pointed to alarming deforestation rates in Papum RF with annual loss rates as high as 8.2 sq.km. as per estimates from 2013-2017 where forest cover declined to 76% of the total RF area," Mr. Sheth said.

The ecologists assessed the habitat loss due to illegal logging within a 1 km radius of the birds to a large extent.

Hornbills used to be hunted for their casques – upper beak – and feathers for headgear despite being cultural symbols of some ethnic communities in the northeast, specifically the Nyishi of Arunachal Pradesh. But a 20-year-old conservation programme entailing the use of fibre-glass beaks reduced the threat to the birds to a large extent.

Illegal logging, however, has however led to fewer tall trees where the birds nest. While the protected areas such as Pakke are better guarded, the forests are often under pressure due to agricultural expansion, conversion to plantations or logging. According to the Global Forest Watch 2020 report, the State lost 1,110 sq.km. of primary forest from 2002-2019.

Nagaland divided over Ravi's stand

Apex tribal body wants him to stay on

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI

Traditional tribal groups in Nagaland and some extremist groups do not appear to be on the same page as the Isak-Muivah faction of the National Socialist Council of Nagaland, or NSCN (IM) over Governor R.N. Ravi's continuation as the interlocutor for the ongoing peace talks.

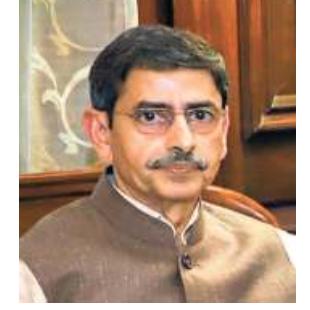
The NSCN (IM) calls itself the National Socialist Council of Nagaland. While Nagaland has a territorial limit, Nagaland refers to all Nagaland-inhabited areas in the Northeast as well as the adjoining Myanmar.

The Naga Hoho, the apex body of 14 tribes and the Lotha (tribe) Hoho, on Tuesday said in separate statements that replacing Mr. Ravi would "delay the peace process and lead to endless negotiation while remaining in one's comfort zone at the cost of peace and tranquillity".

They said "this is not the time for negative campaign" when the "voices and aspirations of the Nagas have grown louder each day" for a peaceful solution to the protracted Naga political issue. The Hohos also appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to "demonstrate his magnanimity and address one of the oldest political conflicts" soon.

The conflict that began soon after India's Independence subsided when the government and the NSCN (IM) inked a ceasefire in mid-1997. Older armed groups and factions of the NSCN followed suit although the Myanmar-based NSCN (Khaplang) reneged on the truce in March 2015.

The views of the Hohos coincided with a statement issued by the NSCN (IM) accusing Mr. Ravi of creating hurdles in the final settlement of the Naga political issue and justifying the demand for his removal as the interlocutor.



"The peace process is in a state of simmering tension and reaching tipping point because of Mr. R.N. Ravi's vicious attack on the Naga issue" that Mr. Modi had entrusted with for "an honourable and acceptable" solution, the NSCN (IM) said.

'Armed gangs'
The outfit had taken offence to Mr. Ravi's use of "armed gangs" and "underground groups" while referring to the Naga extremist organisations in a letter to Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio on June 16.

Before the Hohos, the Nagaland Gaon Burah Federation had opposed the "campaign by a section of people" seeking the removal of Mr. Ravi as the interlocutor which, it said, would not be in the interest of the people.

The Naga National Political Groups, a conglomerate of seven armed political groups that rival the NSCN (IM), have said replacing the interlocutor would turn the "clock back to zero."

1 lakh loans sanctioned for street vendors

Scheme targets 50 lakh beneficiaries

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI



The PM SVANidhi scheme provides street vendors working capital loans.

The MoHUA statement said the scheme was meant to benefit 50 lakh street vendors across the country resume work after the lockdown.

DGGI raids cement manufacturer after tax evasion is detected

It was caught supplying large quantities without paying GST

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI

The Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGII) conducted 28 searches in Delhi, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh after a major cement manufacturer was caught allegedly supplying large quantities without paying taxes.

One company director has been arrested, while the other has not joined the investigation. The missing director was earlier convicted in a coal block allocations case by a Delhi court in 2017.

The DGII found that more than 12 lakh cement bags were short in the stocks when compared with the

formal records maintained by the company.

The enforcement arm of the Central Board of Indirect Taxes & Customs carried out the operation from August 5 to 11 at premises linked to the manufacturers at Maihar and Satna in Madhya Pradesh, and their registered dealers and distributors.

Mismatch found
As it turned out, substantial quantities of cement and clinker were supplied clandestinely to dealers and units... in this process, as per preliminary estimates, about ₹15.1 crore of GST is suspected to have been evaded during the 7-month period," said the DGII.

Searches were also conducted in Allahabad, Kushtia, Agra and Kanpur. Preliminary findings revealed that over four lakh tonnes of

limestone had been procured in excess of what was declared in the formal records of the company from January to July.

During a factory search on August 8, after DGII team was surrounded by a mob, M.P. police provided security to the team. "By suppressing the procurement of limestone, the firm appears to have manufactured the cement and clinker which have been supplied clandestinely to dealers and units... in this process, as per preliminary estimates, about ₹15.1 crore of GST is suspected to have been evaded during the 7-month period," said the DGII.

Patients shifted to safety after fire at Gujarat COVID-19 hospital

No one was injured and blaze was brought under control

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
BODELI

A fire broke out in the COVID-19 ward of a two-storey hospital in Bodeli town of Gujarat's Chhotaudepur district on Wednesday morning.

The Clause 6 committee had defined "Assamese people" as those who have been living within the geographical confines of Assam on or before January 1, 1951. The definition of Assamese people has been eluding political, social, cultural and literary groups for decades primarily because of the ethnic and linguistic diversity in the State.

The Clause 6 committee had defined "Assamese people" as those who have been living within the geographical confines of Assam on or before January 1, 1951. The definition of Assamese people has been eluding political, social, cultural and literary groups for decades primarily because of the ethnic and linguistic diversity in the State.

VID-19 ward following short-circuit in the morning. The blaze was controlled immediately by the staff with the help of fire extinguisher," Chief District Health Officer Mahesh Chaudhary said.

"As a precaution, the staff also shifted all the 10 patients to the lower floor," he added.

Later, after a health check, three patients were discharged as they tested negative for COVID-19 while seven were shifted to other hospitals in Chhotaudepur town, said Dr. Chaudhary.

"A minor fire occurred in the switchboard of the CO-

sualty or damage to property, it will take time to check and replace the electric wiring on the second floor. Thus, we have decided to shift the coronavirus patients elsewhere," Dr. Chaudhary said.

Out of the seven patients, two were admitted to the district hospital while five were shifted to a COVID-19 care centre set up in the Polytechnic College in Chhotaudepur town, the official added.

On August 6, eight COVID-19 patients died in a fire in the intensive care unit of a hospital in Ahmedabad.

Worst may be behind us: Assam Minister

Himanta Biswa Sarma expects a clearer picture on COVID-19 after August 15

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
GUWAHATI



A health worker carrying out COVID-19 tests in Pandu area of Guwahati in this file photo. ■ RITU RAJ KONWAR

picture after August 15," he said, adding that the COVID-19 death rate of 0.24% in the State had been lower than the national and international averages.

Till Tuesday evening, 64,406 people had tested COVID-19 positive in Assam.

"But we will get a clearer

out of whom 155 died.

Panel report leak
The Minister also took a swipe at the All Assam Students' Union for leaking the confidential report of the high-powered committee on the implementation of

"A minor fire occurred in the switchboard of the CO-

Sassy and know it

Meet inspiring nonagenarians who have been active through lockdown, from helming films to teaching music, between video calls with the grandkids

What is your 'Stay At Home', lockdown schedule? Before you languidly say 'telly, eat and sleep' and embarrass yourselves, take a look at what these sprightly 90 somethings are up to

SN Bhatt, 93, Chennai

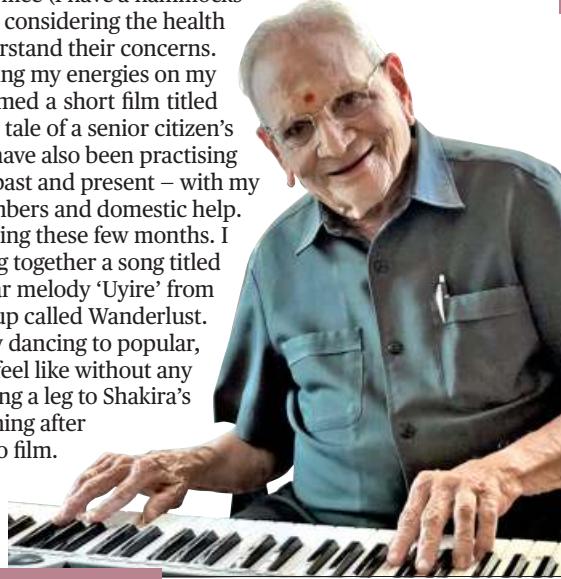
being a nonagenarian my fault? Ever since March, I have been at loggerheads with my family. Whenever I wish to go out, even if it is for a short while, I face opposition. Initially, I felt miserable spending time at home as I am generally used to going to my office (I have a hammocks business) on an everyday basis. But considering the health and risk factors, I understand their concerns.

I have thus started concentrating my energies on my other passions: film and music. I helmed a short film titled *Corona Droham*, which is a fictional tale of a senior citizen's travails during lockdown. Besides, I have also been practising several of my film dialogues – both past and present – with my family members and domestic help.

Music has also kept me going these few months. I completed scripting and putting together a song titled 'Corona Prayer', based on popular melody 'Uyire' from *Bombay*, for a Chennai-based film group called *Wanderlust*. Whenever I feel a little down, I also try dancing to popular, fast numbers; I just make up steps I feel like without any practice. My last attempt was shaking a leg to Shakira's 'Waka Waka' that I tried out one evening after dinner and asked my grandson to film.

Everyone loved it!

As told to Srinivasa Ramanujam



A Saradamma, 93, Thiruvananthapuram

Crocheting is an ideal pastime. It helps you forget your worries and keeps you engaged. Tablecloths are my speciality. I like creating figures of children in my pieces. All the patterns are in my head. I learnt to crochet from my classmates when I was in Class IV or V, just the basic stitches.

I left crocheting completely a few years later after I got married. I had no time for anything with eight children, their children... Once my grandchildren were also grown up, I had time on my hands. I enjoy giving a helping hand with the household work. But as age advances, there are difficulties. About 16 years ago, I picked up the threads of my hobby and began crocheting again. Then I learnt on my own. It proves that you can achieve anything with hard work and dedication. In fact, you will find my work in all my children's and grandchildren's houses. Time just flies when I am with my threads. During the lockdown and even otherwise, I am



happiest when I am crocheting.

Somehow books and I never got together. I fall asleep the moment I pick up a book, then and now. I was not a good student. It was embroidery and threadwork that I was interested in. Till 11 pm, I am with my threads. No, I don't have any problem with my fingers or eye sight. Both my eyes were operated upon a few years ago for cataract. My belief is that my health improves with more and more crochet. For my 93rd birthday on August 2, my grandson Aswin Kumar gifted me a basket of coloured threads; just what I wanted. I have been gifted a couple of times but this gift filled my heart. So far, I have only worked with white threads. But now I am working with the coloured threads, a little more style, eh..?

However, none of my four daughters or my granddaughters have shown any interest in learning crochet. They are happy to learn everything but crochet. Once I am gone, there will be no one to crochet anything in my family.

As told to Saraswathy Nagarajan

History in hairpin bends

A heritage gallery showcases Coonoor over the last two centuries



K JESHI

History begins with a road in the planters' town of Coonoor in the Nilgiris. The Ghat Road, which connected the railhead at Mettupalayam with Udhagamandalam (Ooty), passed through what was then no larger than a Badaga village. Today, that village, about 20 kilometres from the popular hill station Ooty, is Coonoor with a population that has crossed 50,000.

"The need for a proper road arose when Udhagamandalam gained popularity as a military sanatorium and a summer retreat, and that is when Coonoor came into existence in 1833," says Dr PJ Vasanthan, trustee of the NGO, Clean Coonoor. The NGO, with the municipality, recently inaugurated a Coonoor Heritage Gallery. Set in a municipal building near Bedford, it has a rare and fascinating collection of painstakingly sourced



A vibrant past A watercolour work of the Coonoor bridge and 'chettrum'; Nehru's visit to the Pasteur Institute • SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

maps, sketches, lithographs, watercolours and photographs that trace the history of the town: how it evolved into a municipality with hundreds of plantations, and grew into the hub of natural history and ornithology it is today.

In the 1870s, Lieutenant Colonel

GV Law, who was part of the Madras Sappers and Miners regiment, undertook the massive task of transforming the modest track meant for cartloads, tongas, and people on horseback into something that was motorable.

"The alignment was faulty and the gradient so steep that it had to be relaid with 14 hairpin bends," explains Vasanthan. Visitors can get an idea of what the track looked like from a lithograph made by Captain Stephen Ponsonby Peacocke in 1847. A watercolour by Edward Lear in 1870s captures the new ghat road in all its glory.

The total population of Coonoor in 1847 included 30 Europeans and 250-plus Indians. Two hundred and fifty acres of land were under coffee and mulberry cultivation. The Europeans were enterprising and developed coffee plantations. Vasanthan culled out this information from a survey report by Lt Col J Ouchterlony. He says a panoramic sketch of Coonoor made by Lieutenant Burton is the most valuable as it is one of the earliest ones to show the town with nine European residences, a local shandy, 'chettrum' for Indians and the Davison's hotel built in the 1800s, which was destroyed in a fire. A new building was erected in its place in 1987 which is today home to the United Planters' Association of South India, the apex body of planters of tea, coffee, rubber, cardamom and pepper in the southern states of India.

Plantation hub

"It was primarily a coffee town which later moved to tea cultivation. We have documented the data to ensure that the next generation knows its history," says Samantha Iyanna, managing trustee of Clean Coonoor. Among the exhibits are rare finds such as a map of the district sketched by Captain BS Ward in 1822. "Christopher Penn from the UK donated photographs taken by his great grandfather, ATW Penn, a pioneering photographer in the Nilgiris

between 1860 and 1880. Water colour sketches and lithos were sourced online from the British Library website while we got the maps from gazettes and manuals," says Vasanthan.

There is also a section devoted to Ornithology. The first documentation ever of birds in the Nilgiris is credited to TC Jerdon, a pioneering ornithologist, who observed, identified and described bird species in sketches. Jerdon was active in the district between 1839 and 1845. "Species like the Nilgiri flycatcher, Nilgiri laughing thrush, black and orange flycatcher and Malabar lark that are endemic to the Western Ghats can be seen in Coonoor," says Vasanthan, a physician-turned-bird watcher.

William Ruxton Davison (an analytical chemist of the Nilgiri Cinchona Plantations at Naduvattam), listed over 200 bird species during a trip covering the Nilgiris, Wayanad, South Karnataka and Coorg. The section also showcases a series of bird paintings by Miss Margaret Cockburn, considered the first bird-woman of the Nilgiris.

The gallery narrates landmark moments including Mahatma Gandhi's visit. Besides heritage buildings such as the Church of All Saint's and Pasteur Institute, the town is well known for its UNESCO World Heritage site, the Nilgiri Mountain Railway.

Many buildings that still stand today are testimony to history, says K Balu, Municipal Commissioner, Coonoor. For example, the first traveller's bungalow is where the Magistrate Court functions today. He adds, "The gallery informs the public about modern settlements, historical milestones and heritage structures. We want to inspire the younger generation to protect and preserve them. We plan to bring in more exhibits. We have also appealed to the public to contribute rare photos or other artefacts that they may have."

There will be a virtual tour of the gallery soon.



Supriya Cherian, 95, Chennai

I drove till I was 90. Then my children stopped me saying it is not safe any more. When I was 80 I did a road trip from Trivandrum to Alleppey. Now at 95, I am mostly at home because there aren't too many people my age to talk to. But there is enough to keep me busy even during this lockdown. And no, I never put on the television.

Music keeps me going. I try and play the piano as often as possible, to see if I still remember the tunes. Lately, I have been playing a lot of Rabindra Sangeet and singing along. I was told after 95 people can't really sing (*laughs*). But I will sing a line for you, you be the judge of that. This song is called 'Bhubaneshwar He'. When I sang this in Mogadishu and in Trivandrum, both cities where I used to live earlier, even people who did not understand the lyrics came up to me and said it made them cry.

I learnt to play the piano when I was in school in Calcutta. I did not have one at home so I used to play the tunes on an electric harmonium. I was able to play English music. My sister used to play the violin and together we would perform duets. Songs like 'It's a long way to Tipperary' and 'Oh my darling' were my favourites back then. Those songs are evergreen. I can also play the sitar and the esraj. After marriage I had four children and I did not find the time to play the piano. Now I have a lot of time to catch up on it. I wonder where my music books are, though.

Recently, I was part of a music video titled 'Livin Like It's Me.' Sometime in the next couple of months I have a video session with students of music therapy from the Berklee College of Music, Boston. I will be talking to them about how music has helped me and continues to.

My other interest is reading *The Hindu* everyday. Every page of it, top to bottom. Some of the news items that I find interesting, I read them again so that I don't forget. And I love stitching, especially darning. If you have anything, bring it over (*laughs*).

As told to Priyadarshini Paitandy

Vimala Ramamurthy, 93, Chennai

I got married at the age of 13, so I studied up to Class VIII. My husband was a banker. We lived in various cities in South India as he had a transferable job. We have three sons and three daughters.

When I was in my late 60s, my daughter suggested that I learn art in order to ward off boredom, and enrolled me in a postal art class where I would receive materials through post. The course helped me a lot and I started sketching cows and temples, themes I was familiar with.

Four years ago my grandson GV Raman, presented me with a book of sketches by Manohar Devadoss, *Multiple Facets of Madurai*, and he explained to me how in spite of being visually challenged, he had made such intricate work. He encouraged me to try something like that and gave me all the materials that I required.

When I opened the book, I was spellbound by the work. As I had spent a substantial part of my life in Madurai, his sketches of that city caught my attention and rekindled memories of my younger days. Two years ago I started replicating his work, I would observe the work and recreate it. It has now become an obsession, day and night I keep working. During lockdown, I completed almost four sketches,



and in total completed 30 works of art. I am now sketching the Maiya Mandapam in the Vaigai River in Madurai, and it is my wish to gift this to my maanaseega guru Manohar Devadoss on September 10, his birthday.

I have met and interacted with him twice and it was such an unforgettable experience. I spent a long time with him at his residence in December 2019, I asked him many questions and he answered them all patiently. What I do is just scribble like a child and copy his work. It gives me much joy to sketch iconic locations of Madurai such as Naikar Mahal, Madurai Sandhai and Pudhu Mandapam.

I am a dog lover, especially stray dogs and I collect money from my grandchildren and use it to educate underprivileged girls and boys. I can call myself tech-savvy, as I have learnt to use smart phones. I periodically send voice messages to my family members, and weekends are packed as I make video calls to my 11 grandchildren and 13 great grandchildren who are in different parts of the world. I love to browse YouTube and choose content that I like to watch.

I hope I will be able to complete the sketch which I intend to give to my guru. Will lockdown end by that time? Will I be able to meet him personally and hand it over to him?

As told to Chitradeepa Anantharam

Hands on the keypad

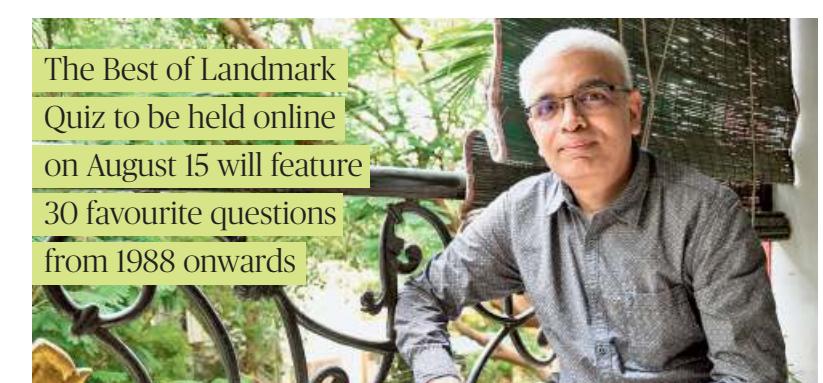
The Best of Landmark Quiz

Quiz to be held online

on August 15 will feature

30 favourite questions

from 1988 onwards



Get, set, go

Quizmaster

Dr Navin

Jayakumar;

the

registration

card for the

first edition

of the quiz

• RAVINDRAN

AND SPECIAL

ARRANGEMENT

DEEPA ALEXANDER

When we speak on phone, ophthalmologist and quizmaster Dr Navin Jayakumar is sifting through a box of memories from 30 years ago. "I found the registration card for the first Landmark Quiz of 1988 in pristine condition," he laughs. Alongside, he also found a bunch of slides and a sheet of paper bearing the "very first quiz".

The annual quiz held on Independence Day draws nearly 1,500 gladiators of general knowledge who battle for top honours, putting their omnivorous reading to good use.

Held to mark the first anniversaries of the Landmark bookstore and the Quiz Foundation of India (QFI) in 1988, it brought 180 teams to Narada Gana Sabha hall; it grew to become a Chennai landmark when it resumed in 1994 and moved to The Music Academy premises to accommodate more people.

Hemu Ramaiyah of Landmark said 'let's pick a date that will allow everyone to participate'. Except for the year when Landmark changed ownership, and this year when the event has moved to September because of COVID-19, it has been held on Independence Day. In Chennai, it has taken on a life of its own; now everyone knows what the afternoon of August 15 is meant for," says Navin, who has been its quizmaster except for two breaks in between.

While the 27th edition of the quiz will be held

online for three-member teams on September 13, the event on August 15 is for individuals and will feature video clips of classic moments from previous quizzes. It is anchored by author-journalist and quizzer Samanth Subramanian who, from London will be in conversation with the quizmaster, special guests and participants. Quizzers will answer on a form online and the early correct answers will be announced.

The first 13 editions were published as books by Penguin, but Navin says sifting through thousands of questions from three decades – some from the years the quiz was conducted in other centres simultaneously – has been quite a task. "There is the problem of riches. The final mix is from all topics culled from different years, periods and locations that indicate its range. Sometimes, the questions have been memorable because of fantastic answers. They have also been interesting add-ons to those earlier questions." This version resembles a friendly information mela and is non-competitive; there are no prizes. "We want participants to have fun; want it to be educational and nostalgic," says Navin. "We want it to be a Chennai tradition."

The Best of Landmark Quiz is presented by QFI, in aid of The Banyan (a Chennai-based NGO that enables access to mental health care for persons living in poverty and homelessness), on August 15, 5 pm. For details and registration, visit BOL.quizfoundation.com

CM

YK

IN OUR BACKYARD

ABHISHEK GULSHAN

Isn't it odd that in a city that's increasingly concretised, the Plain Tiger butterfly is thriving? That's because their choice of larval host plants (food for caterpillars) – milkweed (aak in Hindi).

These plants contain toxins – cardenolides in the case of milkweed – that make the caterpillar as well as the butterfly unpalatable. This plant also aids in the survival of the Painted Grasshopper and other insects. In fact, tribes across the world use the poison in the plant on arrow-heads to aid in hunting.

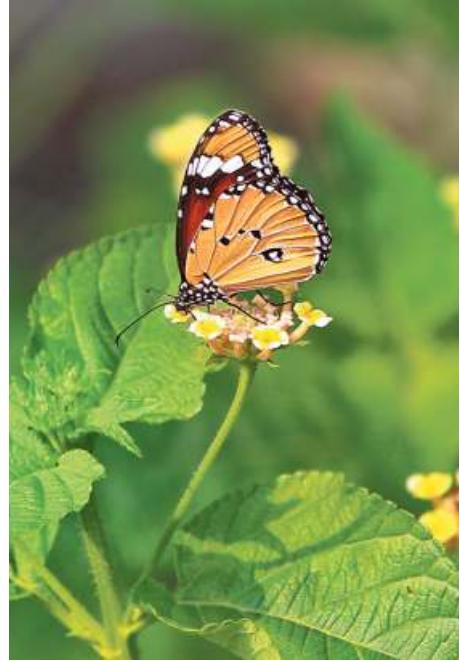
The vibrant colouration of the Plain Tiger sends a warning signal to its predators – birds, lizards – that they could be toxic. This defence mechanism is known as aposematism. The colouration is mimicked by other species like the female Danaid Eggfly butterfly that often move with Plain Tiger butterflies to avoid being eaten alive. This is another of nature's defence mechanisms, called Batesian Mimicry. Yet another survival mechanism is the haphazard zig-zag flight that the butterfly has, to avoid capture.

The Plain Tiger (*Danaus chrysippus*) is a medium-sized vibrant butterfly with orange on the upperside with wings edged with black and white. The segmented body (head, thorax and abdomen) is black. The underside of the wings are a lighter shade of orange.

The Plain Tiger belongs to *Nymphalidae*, the largest family of butterflies with over 6,000 species. It is capable of adapting to a wide variety of habitats across the country: arid, open areas, deciduous forests, urban territory, and others.

The butterfly next door

It's pretty and profuse, but this one's a tough survivor



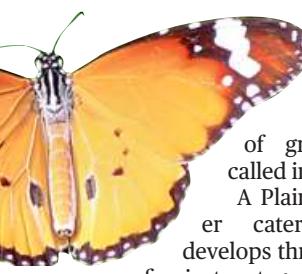
THE NATIONAL BUTTERFLY PHOTOGRAPHY CONTEST

September is Butterfly Month, and for the first time in four years, it's going all-India, organised by Bombay Natural History Society, in collaboration with NINOX - Owl about Nature, and the Delight Factory from Delhi, partnering with 26 organisations dedicated to the cause. Get in touch with us at ninox.edu@gmail.com for guidelines on how to submit your entries.

The Plain Tiger butterfly
■ ASHKA TALREJA

Soon after mating, the female Plain Tiger butterfly lays ridged dome-shaped eggs singly on the underside of the larval host plant, to avoid detection by predators. Depending on the weather conditions, the egg may hatch between three and five days. When ready to hatch,

the larva inside the egg busts open the shell and comes out before devouring it. The caterpillar feeds voraciously on all parts of the plant and rapidly grows too big for its outer skin. During this process, a layer of newer skin is formed under the old skin, thereby entering the next stage



of growth called instar. A Plain Tiger caterpillar develops through five instar stages with varying sizes and the differences in physical appearance at least until the third instar.

Once the larva reaches the final instar, it stops eating and looks for a convenient place to pupate. It spins a silk pad, suspends itself from it and remains motionless for a couple of hours before shedding its skin one last time, then forming a pupa. Initially the pupa of the Plain Tiger is green with a black line with golden circles on it.

A day before the butterfly is ready to emerge, you can see the colours of the butterfly from the outside. It then splits open the pupa, slowly coming out, clinging to the branches of the plant, dries off completely, and makes its first flight.

Regardless of the stage the butterfly is in, it deals with several dangers for survival, considering that it is prey for a plethora of predators around. Their toxic nature, due to their diet, makes them one of the commonest butterflies in India.

The writer is the founder of NINOX - Owl About Nature, a nature-awareness initiative. He is the Delhi-NCR reviewer for Ebird, a Cornell University initiative, monitoring rare sightings of birds. He formerly led a programme of WWF India.

leave a comment on a random video: 'Binod' with no subsequent explanation. The video then moves onto discuss other types of comments.

Then one day, Mumbai Police tweeted about Binod and Gautami recalls panicking, wondering why the police were getting involved. "But we saw they had tweeted something creative and fun. Then when it started trending on Twitter, we realised it had taken a turn." The duo admit there is no way to track the analytics now. "It's just gone wild," she exclaims.

So, do you Binod like the rest of the Internet?

Popular on Twitter

Twitter • MumbaiPolice
Mumbai Police

Dear #binod , we hope your name is not your online password. It's pretty viral, change it now! #OnlineSafety

the start of the video, Abhyudaya admits to reading comments sections as a pastime and recalls seeing a commenter Binod Tharu

Did you Binod yet?

DIVYA KALA BHAVANI

Log onto any online platform and you cannot miss it. Binod is everywhere, from the comments section and headlines to newly-crafted memes.

If you are subscribed to YouTube channel Slayy Point, you would already know that the channel's creators Abhyudaya Mohan and Gautami Kawale are behind this Internet implosion. Speaking over the phone, the

YouTubers recall the video – 'Why the Indian comments section is garbage (Binod)' (more than seven million views) – that, in the channel's signature hilarious way, narrates the Internet's way of subconsciously taking on weird trends.

Binod as a comment went viral, which was odd for the two. After all, Binod took up barely 20 seconds in the nearly-nine minute video, describing the nonsensical vitriol of YouTube comments. At

PANCHAL AND SURYANSH

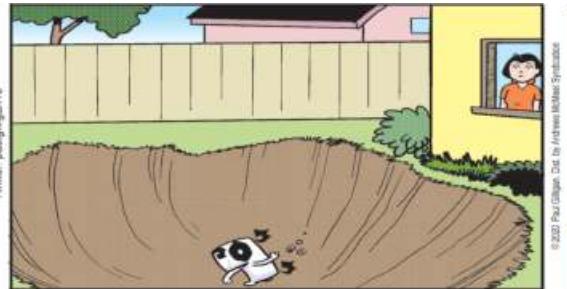
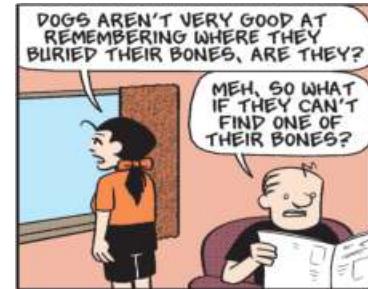
Hungama Artist Aloud is hopping on to the Independence Day online concert bandwagon. Their Independent Together #StayAtHome #StayEntertained concert is a part of Event Capital and BookMyShow's Festival of Festivals. The lineup comprises famous names like Parikrama, Manasi Scott, Shibani Kashyap, Aabha Hanjura, Eka, Jasleen Aulakh, Prarthana Choudhury, Vipul Panchal and Suryansh from The Suryansh Project. The headliners of the Hungama Artist Aloud Discovery - Gen Next series will also be performing. The show streams live on the bookmyshow website, for those who buy passes.

We would love to know how you are keeping busy at home. Tell us who you are watching live, at metro@thehindu.co.in.

Abhilasha Sinha

Abhilasha is the latest among a pan-India string of indie talent, both established as well as up-and-coming, to have been hosted through the lockdown by House Concerts India on Instagram. New York-based Delhi girl Abhilasha, who goes live in a closed online session at 9.30 pm on August 15, released her latest single 'Honey Bee' earlier this month. The track, which is as much a mix of sunshine and summer rain as the rest of her heartfelt English-Hindi repertoire, will be the focus of the session. For details and to book passes, check out the @houseconcertindia Instagram handle.

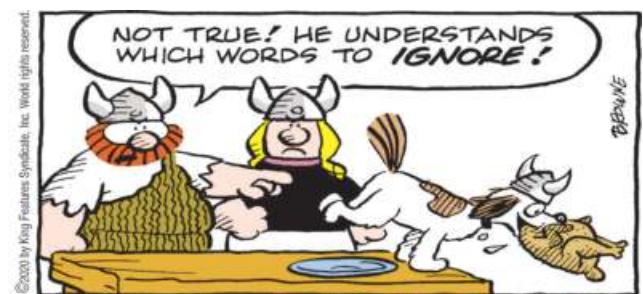
POOCHE CAFE



PEANUTS



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



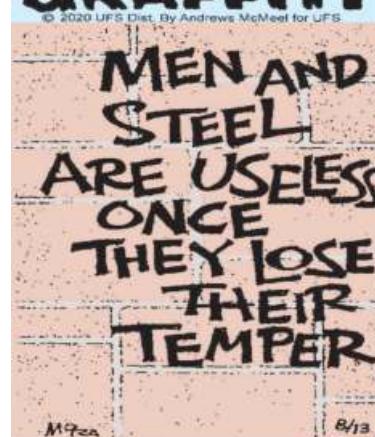
CALVIN AND HOBBES



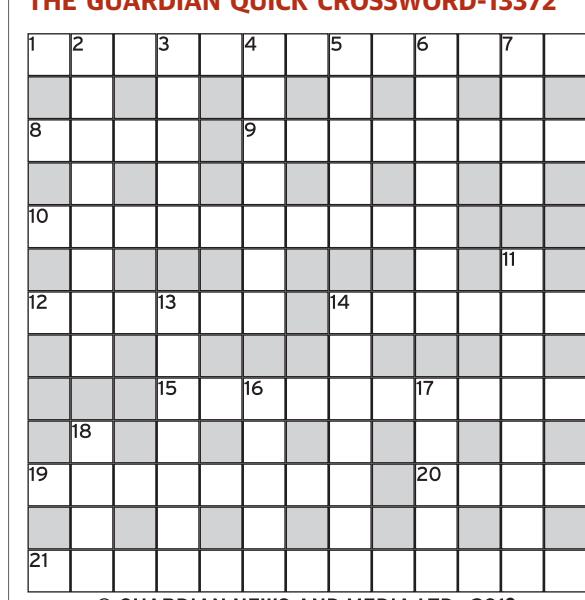
TIGER



GRAFFITI



THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13372



To play the Guardian Quick Crossword, The Hindu Cryptic crossword, Sudoku & other puzzles online, scan the QR code.

speciality (4)

11 Timetable (8)

13 Eyeglass (7)

14 Bird that booms (7)

16 Intense sorrow (5)

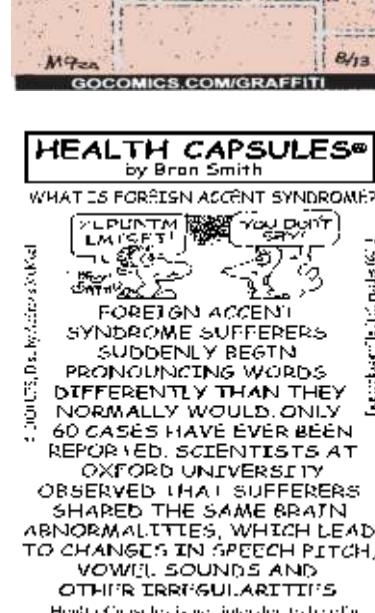
17 Copious (5)

18 South African of Dutch ancestry (4)

WUMO



HEALTH CAPSULES



THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD-13372



The solution will appear on August 20, 2020

Solution No. 13371

PEARLS BEFORE SWINE



CM YK

A supporter of criminal justice reform

During Democratic primaries, Harris called for abolishing death penalty and banning private prisons

SRI RAM LAKSHMAN

Presumptive Democratic Vice Presidential candidate Kamala Harris's connect with the African-American and Indian-American communities will be scrutinised as her campaign advances. In a country that is in the throes of a debate on race and policing, Ms. Harris's African-American heritage but also her former role as a prosecutor is expected to come to the fore.

During the Democratic primaries, Ms. Harris had outlined her plans for criminal justice reform that included legalising marijuana, abolishing the death penalty and banning private prisons. However, her record as California Attorney General had been criticised, especially by the progressive wing of the Democratic party, for continuing with establishment policies which, for instance, disproportionately incarcerated African Americans.

Sanders welcomes move
On Tuesday, however, other former presidential candidates, progressive Senators Bernie Sanders and Elizabeth Warren, welcomed the announcement that Ms. Harris would be on the ticket. "She understands what it takes to stand up for working people, fight for health care for all, and take down the most corrupt administration in history. Let's get to work and win," Mr. Sanders tweeted.

More recently, following the death of George Floyd, the unarmed black man killed in Minneapolis by police, Ms. Harris co-sponsored legislation in the Senate for justice reform. In April, she introduced legislation to address the impact of COVID-19 on minority communities, whom the disease affects dis-



Finding common ground: Democratic U.S. presidential candidate Joe Biden, right, and Senator Kamala Harris in Detroit, Michigan, in March. ■REUTERS

proportionately. Last year, Ms. Harris was a lead co-sponsor for legislation (which ultimately did not pass) whose impact would be to increase the number of green cards that could go to countries like India and China, which normally max out their annual resident visa quotas.

Indian culture
On the topic of her ethnicity, Ms. Harris has said she has not spent a lot of time trying to categorise herself. "You might need to figure it out, but I'm fine with it," she had said in an interview to the *Washington Post*.

In her book *The Truths We Hold*, she talks about being raised with a "strong awareness and appreciation" for Indian culture. Her Indian mother, who was also a civil rights activist, knew that American society would view Kamala and her sister Maya Harris as black, so raised them to be "confi-

dent, proud black women". Around 1.3 million Indian Americans are likely to vote in November – a small but rich and increasingly politically active demographic.

The Biden-Harris ticket is likely to mobilise funds from Indian Americans.

"Indian Americans have already become a source of support and funding as evidenced by the 2020 primaries where several million dollars were raised by all the presidential candidates," said M.R. Rangaswami, founder of diaspora organisation Diaspuras. "Kamala Harris is an incredibly charismatic person who will resonate with our community," Mr. Rangaswami told *The Hindu*. Fundraisers are already being organised for her to raise "several millions [of dollars] more", he said.

Impact, an advocacy group and Political Action Committee (PAC) that describes itself as helping Indian Americans run and win

political office, announced that it plans to raise \$10 million for "candidates who share our values like Senator Harris".

Mr. Biden's choice of Ms. Harris as running mate is likely to impact funding more than voting choice, according to Devesh Kapur, a professor of South Asia at the Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies. "Given how polarised the country is, most voters have already made up their minds. They will not change their vote. Her nomination will make a difference only to the relatively small number of undecided (Indian-American) voters," Mr. Kapur told *The Hindu*.

With many Indian-American voters are in deep-blue (highly Democrat) States and the Northeast, shifts in their votes will not have a major impact, as per Mr. Kapur. While the number of Indian Americans has been growing in Florida, Georgia, Texas,

their relatively small numbers (many are non-citizens) will not have an impact unless the elections are close in those States.

Responding to the announcement, U.S. President Donald Trump said he was "a little surprised" that Mr. Biden picked Ms. Harris and characterised as "extraordinarily nasty" Ms. Harris's questioning of the then-Supreme Court nominee Brett Kavanaugh during his Senate confirmation. Ms. Harris had questioned the candidate Justice on multiple sexual assault accusations and any links he might have had with the Mueller probe into Russian meddling into the 2016 U.S. elections.

'Very happy'

Ms. Harris's maternal uncle G. Balachandran, speaking to *The Hindu* from New Delhi, said he was not surprised by the news but was "very happy" to hear it. As a follower of U.S. politics, Mr. Balachandran said he thought his niece "was one of the best" of all the VP candidates being considered.

"Anybody who has listened to a Senate hearing would know, she can grill them like nobody's business," Mr. Balachandran, an academic and one time journalist with *The Hindu*, said. A second reason for his not being surprised was Ms. Harris's middle-of-the-road approach to issues. "She's not very dogmatic," Mr. Balachandran said.

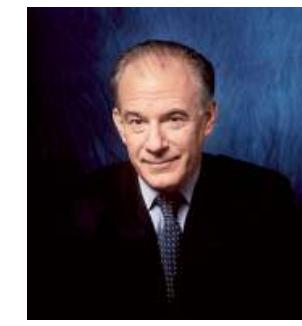
"My sister Shyamala would have been extremely happy... and my parents [Ms. Harris's grandparents] would have been very happy," Mr. Balachandran said. Ms. Harris is married to Douglas Emhoff, an attorney, and has two step-children through him.

'Harris's appointment could drive 2020 poll campaign'

U.S. policy focus might shift to multilateralism, says expert

ANANTH KRISHNAN
CHENNAI

Wednesday's announcement of Kamala Harris being named as the running mate of Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden could become one of the key drivers of the 2020 campaign given the ongoing immigration debate in the U.S., according to *Washington Post* columnist David Ignatius.



David Ignatius, who spoke at a virtual forum held by the Synergia Foundation.

said, speaking at a virtual forum held by the Synergia Foundation, a strategic affairs think-tank. "It was an agreement that created momentum that would have been undesirable for the Chinese. Perhaps there will be a way to find a new version of that."

"We are coming from a Trump administration that is very much looking inward, at 'America First', and in some instances an outspokenly anti-immigration administration. Now, we have in a ticket in the VP [Vice President] slot somebody who directly embodies the strengths of [our] diverse culture."

"Anybody who has listened to a Senate hearing would know, she can grill them like nobody's business," Mr. Balachandran, an academic and one time journalist with *The Hindu*, said. A second reason for his not being surprised was Ms. Harris's middle-of-the-road approach to issues. "She's not very dogmatic," Mr. Balachandran said.

"My sister Shyamala would have been extremely happy... and my parents [Ms. Harris's grandparents] would have been very happy," Mr. Balachandran said. Ms. Harris is married to Douglas Emhoff, an attorney, and has two step-children through him.

He expected "new attention" on allies and partners including India. "We will turn to India for conversations on the shape of Asia, we will turn to Japan too. If the U.S. is sensible and doesn't go about alienating allies that it is lucky to have, it begins with an enormous advantage [vis-a-vis China]."

He said the "degree of Chinese assertiveness will be a driver" in shaping India-U.S. relations, and the "fact that the U.S. and India talk with such clarity and shared interest with China" was itself a recent development.

"The inability to politically carry through the TPP was one of the biggest mistakes of American foreign policy in the last few decades," he said. "Today's problem is anarchy and opportunism, rath-

er than a fixed bipolar world where we are operating," he said. "Our primary congruence with the U.S. is really maritime."

While the "time is ripe for a much more active U.S. involvement" in Asia, Mr. Menon said the economic aspect should be one focus, with the region "looking like China's economic sphere" with the U.S. withdrawal from the TPP and India also walking away from the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) deal.

"It would make sense if the U.S. re-engages economically, with the TPP or a version of it that brings the Indo-Pacific together," he said.

Traditional values
On the likely foreign policy priorities of a possible Biden administration, Mr. Menon expected "a return to some traditional values like democracy, human rights and fundamentally to more multilateralism" and working with institutions.

Both agreed there would, however, be some continuity in dealing with China, with a "consensus" emerging in the U.S. on a harder line in dealing with China's rise.

Mr. Menon noted that approval ratings of the U.S. were higher than he could ever remember in India. "What China's behaviour has done is revitalise the Quad [the U.S.-India-Japan-Australia grouping], and has got those of us on China's periphery working together in ways that would not have been possible years ago," he said. "If the U.S. comes back looking for allies, she will find willing partners."

Belarus police crack down on protesters

REUTERS
MINSK

Belarus said on Wednesday that police had fired live rounds at protesters in the city of Brest and arrested more than 1,000 people nationwide, intensifying a crackdown that has prompted the European Union to weigh new sanctions on Minsk.

Security forces have clashed with protesters for three consecutive nights after strongman President

Alexander Lukashenko claimed a landslide re-election victory in a vote on Sunday that his opponents say was rigged.

Hundreds of protesters took to the streets again on Wednesday. Women dressed in white formed a human chain outside a covered food market in the capital Minsk, while a crowd also gathered outside a prison where protesters were being kept.

The Belarusian Interior Ministry said 51 protesters

and 14 police officers had been injured in clashes on Tuesday night.

In Brest, a city in south-western Belarus on the Polish border, police fired live rounds after some protesters said they were armed with metal bars ignored warning shots fired in the air, the Ministry said. One person was injured. Mr. Lukashenko has accused the protesters of being in cahoots with foreign backers from Russia and elsewhere.

Data on Russia vaccine not transparent'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TAIPEI

Washington's health chief on Wednesday expressed scepticism about Russia's claim of developing the world's first safe COVID-19 vaccine, pointing to the lack of data from its trials.

Moscow said on Tuesday that its vaccine offered "sustainable immunity" against the virus, but scientists have previously raised concerns about the development speed of Russian treatments, suggesting that researchers were cutting corners.

U.S. Health Secretary Alex Azar echoed those concerns on Wednesday as he wrapped up a three-day visit to Taiwan. "It's important that we provide safe, effective vaccines and that the data be transparent..."

This is not a race to be first," he told reporters.

"I should note that two of the six U.S. vaccines that we've invested in entered the phase three clinical trials weeks ago that the Russian vaccine is now only beginning," he added.

"The data from the initial trials in Russia have not been disclosed, it's not transparent."

Russian President Vladimir Putin said the vaccine was safe, and that one of his daughters had received a dose.

Significantly, former President Maithripala Sirisena, who was elect-

China warns U.S. against 'playing with fire'

'We firmly oppose official exchanges between U.S. and Taiwan under any pretext'

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
TAIPEI

China warned Washington not to "play with fire" on Wednesday as a U.S. delegation wrapped up a historic trip to the self-ruled island of Taiwan.

Beijing has been infuriated by the highest-profile visit in decades to Taiwan, which it sees as part of its territory, as U.S.-China relations

plunge to a record low over a range of issues from trade to military and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Health chief Alex Azar finished a three-day visit to Taiwan, during which he criticised China's handling of the pandemic and visited the shrine of a former Taiwan President hated by the Communist Party leadership.

Beijing slammed the visit

Taiwan authorities not to be... subservient to others, to rely on the support of foreigners, and to be bent on pursuing independence, which is a dead end," Mr. Zhao said. On the last day of the trip, Mr. Azar visited a shrine to Taiwan's late President Lee Teng-hui on Wednesday, praising his role in steering the island's transition to democracy.

Sri Lanka Cabinet sworn in

President Gotabaya takes defence portfolio

MEERA SRINIVASAN
COLOMBO

Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Wednesday appointed a 26-member Cabinet and a team of junior Ministers, following the ruling party's resounding victory in the election.

The Cabinet was sworn in at a festive ceremony held at the famed 'Temple of the Sacred Tooth Relic' in the central Kandy district. The symbolism, which speaks to the brothers' core Sinhala-Buddhist support base, was in line with that of President Gotabaya Rajapaksa's own swearing in ceremony, following his big win in November, near the Ruwanwelisaya, a Buddhist shrine in the historic city of Anuradhapura. On Sunday, Prime Minister Mahinda Rajapaksa took the oath of office at the Kelaniya Raja Maha Vihara, a famous Buddhist temple near Colombo.

5 from family
The newly installed government has three Rajapaksa brothers and two of their sons holding ministerial positions. According to a press release issued by the Presidential Media Divi-



Big responsibility: Namal Rajapaksa, who took oath as Sports Minister, with President Gotabaya Rajapaksa in Kandy on Wednesday ■ AFP

ed to Parliament from Polonnaruwa district, was not on the list.

Meanwhile, some Sri Lankans on social media questioned the legality of President Rajapaksa holding a ministerial portfolio, citing the 19th Amendment, a 2015 legislation that sought to clip the President's executive powers. When contacted, a senior official in government said it was because the 19th Amendment was "convoluted", that the current administration wants to repeal it. "The basis for the President assuming charge of the Defence Ministry is Article 4 of our Constitution," the official told *The Hindu*, citing the Article which says: "the executive power of the People, including the defence of Sri Lanka, shall be exercised by the President."

Significantly, former President Maithripala Sirisena, who was elect-

Sundram Fasteners Limited

CIN: L35999TN1962PLC004943

Registered office: 98-A, VII Floor, Dr Radhakrishnan Salai, Mylapore, Chennai - 600 004

Tel: +91 - 44 - 28478500 | Fax: 91 - 44 - 28478510

Email: investorhelpdesk@sfl.co.in | Website: www.sundram.com

STATEMENT OF UNAUDITED (STANDALONE & CONSOLIDATED) FINANCIAL RESULTS FOR THE QUARTER ENDED 30TH JUNE 2020

Sl. No.	Particulars	Standalone		Consolidated	
		Quarter ended 30.06.2020	Year ended 31.03.2020	Quarter ended 30.06.2020	Year ended 31.03.2020
1	Total Revenue from Operations	276.73	945.35	3,124.57	373.17
2	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before tax and exceptional items)	(31.40)	134.55	387.70	(31.95)
3	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (before tax after exceptional items)	(31.40)	134.55	376.40	(31.95)
4	Net Profit / (Loss) for the period (after tax)	(23.48)	93.11	314.04	(25.43)
5	Total Comprehensive Income for the period [Comprising Profit / (loss) for the period (after tax) and Other Comprehensive Income (after tax)]	(23.03)	94.77	290.64	(22.15)
6	Equity Share Capital (Face Value of Re 1 each fully paid up)	21.01	21.01	21.01	21.01
7	Earnings Per Share (EPS) (for continuing and discontinued operations) (Face value of Re 1/- each) (not annualised) (in Rs.)				
	(a) Basic	(1.12)	4.43	14.95*	(1.27)
	(b) Diluted	(1.12)	4.43	14.95*	(1.27)
	* Annualised				

Notes:

- The above is an extract of the detailed format of the standalone and consolidated financial results filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of the SE

MARKET WATCH

	PRICE	CHANGE
Sensex	38,370	-0.10
US Dollar	74.83	-0.07
Gold	52,946	-3.32
Brent oil	45.36	-0.31

NIFTY 50

	PRICE	CHANGE
Adani Ports	341.20	+6.20
Asian Paints	1797.25	+7.70
Axist Bank	451.10	+3.10
Bajaj Auto	3023.00	+15.55
Bajaj Finserv	6357.20	+83.15
Bajaj Finance	3418.25	+39.15
Bharti Airtel	547.70	+3.40
BPCL	421.80	+7.45
Britannia Ind	3809.75	+69.80
Cipla	762.10	+15.90
Coal India	128.70	+1.40
Dr Reddys Lab	4518.15	+77.75
Eicher Motors	22116.65	+67.40
GAIL (India)	98.05	+0.75
Grasim Ind	626.15	+1.90
HCL Tech.	717.10	+33.30
HDPC	1814.20	+12.55
HDPC Life	608.75	+0.00
Hero MotoCorp	2774.00	+61.15
Hindustan	175.80	+3.15
Hind Unilever	2195.10	+15.55
ICICI Bank	366.85	+0.50
IndusInd Bank	520.65	+1.35
Bharti Infratel	194.65	+0.35
Infosys	954.95	+6.50
Indian Oil Corp	85.85	+1.20
ITC	204.20	+1.15
JSW Steel	256.80	+3.05
Kotak Bank	1335.10	+29.50
L&T	949.75	+12.15
M&M	634.95	+5.40
Maruti Suzuki	6730.30	+81.10
Nestle India Ltd.	16540.85	+81.95
NTPC	88.70	+0.45
ONGC	78.10	+0.35
PowerGrid Corp	178.05	+1.20
Reliance Ind	2127.60	+6.20
State Bank	203.30	+8.25
Shree Cement	21378.90	+172.70
Sun Pharma	532.15	+8.90
Tata Motors	125.35	+3.05
Tata Steel	414.50	+1.95
TCS	2257.35	+22.55
Tech Mahindra	692.05	+17.25
Titan	1056.35	+9.90
UltraTech Cement	3999.65	+30.90
UPL	487.15	+5.25
Wipro	276.20	+3.45
Zee Entertainment	161.25	+1.50

EXCHANGE RATES

CURRENCY	TT BUY	TT SELL
US Dollar	74.63	74.95
Euro	87.87	88.28
British Pound	97.32	97.78
Japanese Yen (100)	69.84	70.14
Chinese Yuan	10.75	10.79
Swiss Franc	81.72	82.09
Singapore Dollar	54.34	54.58
Canadian Dollar	56.17	56.42
Malaysian Ringgit	17.79	17.88
Australian Dollar	53.27	53.50

Source: Indian Bank

IN BRIEF



Aurobindo reports 23% rise in net profit

HYDERABAD
Aurobindo Pharma has posted a consolidated net profit of ₹780.68 crore for the quarter ended June 30, an increase of 22.81% from the year earlier period's ₹635.68 crore. Revenue from operations at ₹5,924.78 crore (₹5444.60 crore) is an increase of 8.81%, while total income at ₹6,040.37 crore is 10.62% higher compared to ₹5,460.38 crore in the same period of the previous fiscal.

Tata Power Q1 net rises 10%, revenue down 17%

MUMBAI
Tata Power Ltd. on Wednesday announced its first-quarter consolidated net profit increased 10% to ₹268 crore from ₹243 crore in the year earlier period. Revenue slid 17% to ₹ 6,455 crore, from ₹7,767 crore in Q1 FY20. "This is mainly due to lower power demand, delay in solar EPC businesses on account of COVID-19 and lower coal FOB prices," the company said in a filing to the stock exchanges.

Big wilful defaulters owe ₹37,020 crore to PNB

NEW DELHI
Winsome Diamond & Jewellery, Gitanjali Gems and ABG Shipyard are among the big wilful defaulters who together owe over ₹37,000 crore to Punjab National Bank as of the end of Q1 of 2020-21. As many as 1,787 big wilful defaulters owe outstanding loans of ₹37,020.27 crore at June end, according to the list of wilful defaulters with outstanding of ₹25 lakh and above as of June 30, uploaded on PNB's site. PTI

Mphasis gets U.S. patent for AI system to use data

BENGALURU
Information technology solutions provider Mphasis announced on Wednesday that it had recently been granted a U.S. patent for its artificial intelligence system for tracking, managing and analysing data from unstructured data sources. The patent relates to optimised data aggregation and analytics across physical and digital data sources, the company which is headquartered in Bengaluru said in a statement. PTI

Economic disruption to rural economy less severe, says Birla

UltraTech plans ₹1,500 cr. capex; group head sees 6-8% GDP growth next fiscal

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

The economic impact of the lockdown to combat the pandemic has been severe in urban India, while the rural economy appears less badly hit, Aditya Birla Group chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla said on Wednesday.

Observing that the gradual unlocking of the economy was reflecting in improvement in some economic indicators like GST collections and electricity consumption, Mr. Birla told shareholders of the group's UltraTech Cement Ltd. that these markers were, however, not yet back to pre-COVID-19 levels. "While FY21 will be a chal-



Ramping up: UltraTech also plans to raise its consolidated cement capacity to 118 MT, from 114.8 MT. ■REUTERS

lenging year, I remain confident that the economy will revert to the 6-8% growth trajectory in the next fiscal."

Mr. Birla said the cement maker had used the lockdown period to strengthen its position.

"Periods of turmoil have historically presented an opportunity for industry leaders to emerge as champions... with unmatched capacity, leadership across markets and a robust balance sheet, your company is

one such champion," he asserted.

Spending plans

India's largest cement maker has also lined up capital expenditure of ₹1,500 crore for the current fiscal. This would include installing 66 MW of waste heat recovery systems, adding 1.2 million tonnes (MT) per annum brownfield cement capacity in West Bengal and Bihar, undertaking work on phase 2 of the Bara grinding unit in Uttar Pradesh and coal block development in Madhya Pradesh, Mr. Birla said.

UltraTech also plans to raise its consolidated cement capacity to 118 MT, from 114.8 MT, Mr. Birla said.

India to face economic challenges for many years'

Potential growth has slowed: UBS

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

vive Gupta Jain, economist, UBS Securities India Pvt. Ltd. "This implies difficult economic challenges for many years to come."

For example, near-term challenges (reduced household income and hit to corporate bottom lines) may inflict longer-lasting damage to household consumption and fixed investment.

"The government could also face debt-sustainability concerns if the depth and the duration of the crisis worsens," she added.

However, UBS Securities asserts that India can still achieve 7% plus growth over the next 3-5 years through policy changes.

Sundram Fasteners slips into the red

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI

Sundram Fasteners Ltd., a part of the TVS Group, has reported a standalone net loss of ₹23.48 crore for the first quarter ended June against a net profit of ₹93 crore in the year-earlier period.

Revenue from operations plunged to ₹277 crore from ₹945 crore. Export sales dropped to ₹135 crore from ₹348 crore.

The company recorded positive earnings before depreciation and taxes (EBDT) despite challenging market conditions due to stringent cost control measures. EBDT stood at ₹5 crore (₹167 crore).

Do not cut import duty on tea: UPASI

MINI TEJASWI
BENGALURU

As a forerunner to the introduction of an advertising code in the country, the Ministry of Consumer Affairs will soon release a draft regulation aimed at checking misleading advertisements, for consultation and comments from stakeholders, including industry watchdog Advertising Standards Council of India, consumers and advertisers, said Leena Nandan, Secretary, Consumer Affairs.

"The regulation for misleading advertisements will be notified after the due process of consultations," she told *The Hindu*. The draft, which will be uploaded on the Ministry's website, will be the first step towards this. The government will notify the regulations

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
COIMBATORE

The United Planters' Association of Southern India (UPASI) has appealed to the Union government to retain import duty on tea at 100%.

The current import duty on tea is 100%. However, under the ASEAN agreement, import tariff for tea from the ASEAN countries is 45%, said AL RM Nagapan, president of the Association, in a statement.

"The tea production segment for the past many years now has been witnessing either stagnant or declining prices on the one side and the increasing cost of production due to high input wage cost on the other. Any changes in the duty structure will have a telling effect on this sector," he said.

Do not cut import duty on tea: UPASI

on misleading ads under the Consumer Protection Act while the Central Consumer Protection Authority will be the enforcing agency."

The authorities, she said, had taken up the advertising code earlier as well. However, the law was not stringent enough for consumer protection until new regulation brought in legal backing for action to be taken against misleading advertisements.

Leena Nandan

on misleading ads under the Consumer Protection Act while the Central Consumer Protection Authority will be the enforcing agency."

The authorities, she said, had taken up the advertising code earlier as well. However, the law was not stringent enough for consumer protection until new regulation brought in legal backing for action to be taken against misleading advertisements.

From carats to peanuts: how a pandemic upended the global diamond industry

As supply chains are convulsed by COVID-19, polishers switch to farming

REUTERS
JOHANNESBURG/MUMBAI

As the coronavirus pandemic upended the global diamond industry, shuttering mines from Lesotho to Canada and disrupting supply chains, Rajesh Patel swapped diamond polishing for peanut farming.

Mr. Patel, who worked for a decade in Surat where about 80% of the world's diamonds are polished, joined the exodus of gem workers leaving the city as cases of the virus shot up. After taking up farming in his home village, he has no plans to return in the coming months. "I won't earn as much as I was earning in Surat, but I won't starve and there is no fear of getting infected with coronavirus," he said.

Demand for diamonds has plummeted during the pan-

one-carat diamonds are rising steadily and are currently around 12% higher than at the start of the year, in contrast to still-depressed prices for lower-quality stones of the same size, data from trading platform RapNet shows.

But only a few miners are lucky enough to have deposits of large, high-quality diamonds, leaving some producers at risk.

COVID-19 has forced miners to cancel or delay sales, with major diamond shows scrapped due to health and travel restrictions. The few sales that have taken place showed rough diamond prices down between 15% and 27%. "What has happened in the second quarter, I have never seen in my life," De Beers Chief Executive Bruce Cleaver told *Reuters*.



Silver lining: The lone bright spot has been steady demand for large, high-quality diamonds from affluent investors. ■AP

U.K. economy shrinks by record 20%, in recession

Unemployment expected to rise

REUTERS
LONDON

Britain's economy shrank by a record 20.4% in the second quarter when the COVID-19 lockdown was tightest, the most severe contraction reported by any major economy so far, with a wave of job losses set to hit later in 2020.

The scale of the economic hit may also revive questions about Prime Minister Boris Johnson's handling of the pandemic, with Britain suffering the highest death rate in Europe. More than 50,000 U.K. deaths have been linked to the disease.

"Today's figures confirm that hard times are here," Finance Minister Rishi Sunak said. "Hundreds of thousands of people have already lost their jobs, and sadly

in the coming months many more will."

The data confirmed that the world's sixth-biggest economy had entered a recession, with the low point coming in April when output was more than 25% below its pre-pandemic level.

Subsequently, capital adequacy ratio has further strengthened to well above the minimum required.

"The incremental capital being injected into our India franchise is a strong validation of our confidence in our business model and potential in this country, and is demonstrative of our intent to further deepen our presence here," said Kaushik Shaparia, chief country officer, Deutsche Bank India.

Deutsche Bank adds ₹2,700 cr. into India arm

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI

TV PICKS

Champions League: Sony Ten 1 & 2 (SD & HD), 12.30 a.m. (Friday)
NBA: Sony Six (SD & HD), 6.30 a.m. & 4 a.m. (Friday)
England vs Pakistan: 2nd Test, Sony Six (SD & HD), 3.30 p.m.
Magnus Carlsen Chess Tour Finals: Eurosport (SD & HD), 8.30 p.m.

IN BRIEF



Hafeez in isolation after breaching protocol

SOUTHAMPTON
Pakistan's former skipper Mohammad Hafeez, in the touring party for the T20I series, has been forced to self-isolate after breaching coronavirus protocols by meeting a member of the public while playing golf ahead of the second Test against England, team management said on Wednesday. AFG

Aditi, Diksha, Tvesa for Ladies Scottish Open

NORTH BERWICK (SCOTLAND)
In a first for Indian women's golf, Aditi Ashok, Diksha Dagar and Tvesa Malik will tee up at an LPGA event together, the Ladies Scottish Open, later this week. The Scottish Open, a premier event on the Ladies European Tour, has been co-sanctioned with the LPGA since 2017 and this is the fourth time the two Tours are coming together. PTI

Easy for Germany as women's cricket restarts

DUBAI
Germany posted a facile 82 run-win over host Austria in the first of five T20Is at Seeben Cricket Centre, Lower Austria, as women's international cricket returned after the T20 World Cup final seven months ago.
The scores: Germany 165 for two in 20 overs (Christina Gough 72, Anuradha Doddaballapur 40 n.o.) bt Austria 83 in 19 overs (+ Andrea-Mae Zepeda 35 n.o., Emma Bargna 3/13, Asmita Kohli 3/18).



Tyson, Jones fight put off to November

LOS ANGELES
Former world heavyweight champion Mike Tyson's exhibition bout against Roy Jones Jr. originally set for next month has been pushed back to November, organisers said on Tuesday. In a statement, promotional company Triller said the fight in Los Angeles would now take place on November 28 to coincide with the Thanksgiving holiday weekend. AFG

Paris Marathon joins the list of cancellations

PARIS
This year's Paris Marathon has been cancelled because it is impossible to hold the race during the coronavirus pandemic, organisers said on Wednesday. The race through the French capital, moved from its original date of April 5 to November 15, joins a long list of elite marathons cancelled this year. AFG



Shakib could return from ban for Sri Lanka tour

DHAKA
Serving a ban for not reporting corrupt approaches, Bangladesh's premier allrounder Shakib Al Hasan is likely to return to the national fold for a three-match T20 series in the proposed tour of Sri Lanka later this year, with his suspension ending on October 29. The southpaw was banned for two years, one year of it was suspended, for failing to report corrupt approaches by an alleged Indian bookie during the Indian Premier League. PTI

Selection issues cloud England in Stokes' absence

Uncapped seamer Ollie Robinson drafted in as replacement; Pakistan has fitness concerns around its pacers

PAKISTAN IN ENG.

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
SOUTHAMPTON

England may have won the series opener against Pakistan, but the absence of Ben Stokes leaves it with a selection headache going into Thursday's second Test at Southampton.

The star all-rounder, who will miss the rest of the series as he has travelled to New Zealand to be with his ill father, has been replaced by uncapped seamer Ollie Robinson.

Jos Buttler underlined his skill in a run-chase last week but the wicketkeeper had a poor match with the gloves. England does have the option to recall Ben Foakes, regarded as a better 'keeper, and play Buttler purely as a batsman.

Recovery possible
Pakistan coach Misbah-ul-Haq insisted his side could recover from the agonising loss.

Match starts at 3.30 p.m IST.

"We need to improve 10 to 15% and deal with pressure situations a little better but we shouldn't be mentally down," said Misbah.

Should Pakistan have concerns about the fitness of the pace trio of Mohammad Abbas, Shaheen Afridi and Naseem Shah, it could bring in another quick, Sohail Khan.

The teams (from):

England: Joe Root (Capt.), James Anderson, Jofra Archer, Dominic Bess, Stuart Broad, Royston Burns, Jos Buttler (wk), Zak Crawley, Sam Curran, Ollie Pope, Ollie Robinson, Dom Sibley, Chris Woakes and Mark Wood.

Pakistan: Azhar Ali (Capt.), Babar Azam, Abid Ali, Asad Shafiq, Fawad Alam, Imran-ul-Haq, Kashif Bhatti, Mohammad Abbas, Mohammad Rizwan (wk), Naseem Shah, Sarfaraz Ahmed (wk), Shadab Khan, Shaheen Afridi, Shan Masood, Sohail Khan and Yasir Shah.

Umpires: Richard Kettleborough and Michael Gough; **TV umpire:** Richard Illingworth; **Reserve umpire:** Martin Saggers; **Match referee:** Chris Broad.

History favours England

Winning a three-Test series after suffering a reverse in the opener is a tough proposition. There have only been 13 instances so far, with England achieving it five times. South Africa (3), India (2), Sri Lanka (2) and Pakistan (1) are the other teams to do it

■ With Root's side 1-0 up after the win at Old Trafford, Azhar's men have everything to play for in order to keep the series alive. History is also stacked against them as England has never lost a series after tasting victory in the opening match of a three-Test series

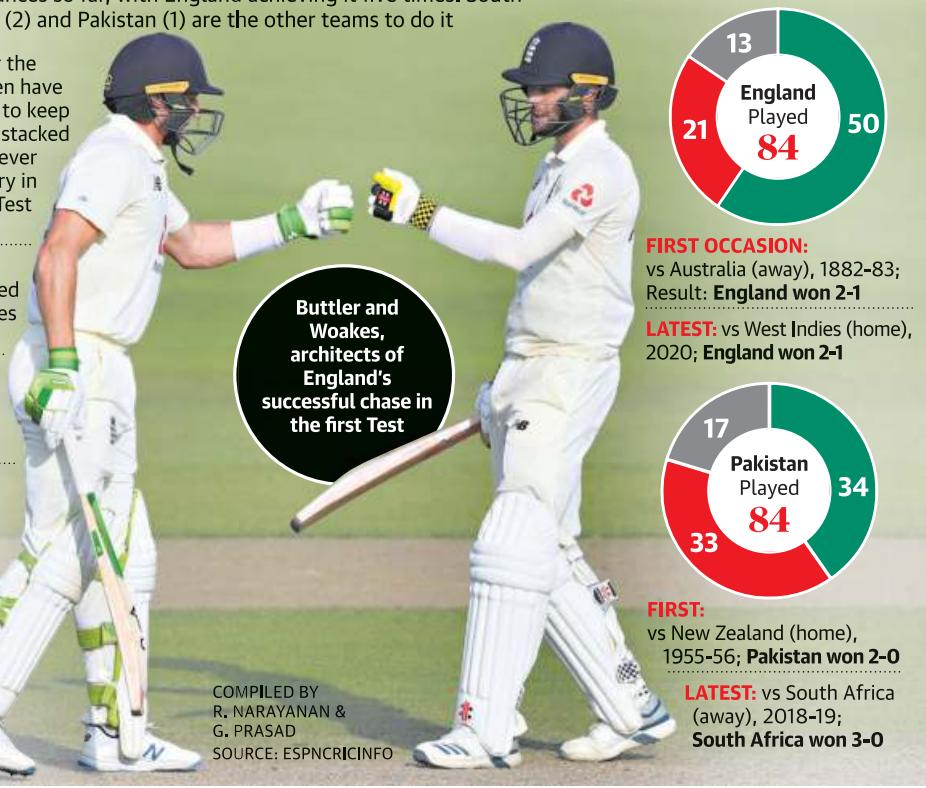
32 The number of times England has triumphed in a three-match series after winning the first Test

1 Only once has Pakistan clawed back from a 1-0 deficit to clinch a series (vs Zimbabwe in 1994-95, away)

3 There have been three occasions when England has lost the second game after prevailing in the first (three Tests). However, it went on to win the series by taking the third

1896 vs Australia (home)
1982 vs Pakistan (home)
2017 vs West Indies (home)

COMPILED BY R. NARAYANAN & G. PRASAD SOURCE: ESPNCRICINFO



Question Jimmy's ability at your peril'

AYAN ACHARYA

England captain Joe Root is confident that Jimmy Anderson will soon return to form.

"You question Jimmy's record and his ability at your peril," Root said, ahead of the second Test against Pakistan that starts on Thursday. "He is still as dedicated as ever, working very hard and looking very good in practice. I don't think it will be long before he has another five-for."

Anderson has averaged 41.16 in three Tests this summer, and Root insisted on looking beyond the 38-year-old's wickets and averages.

"There have been occasions this summer where he [Anderson] has created pressure and wickets have come at the other end. It just shows that the greats of the game still have days when it doesn't come naturally to them," said Root.

The England-Pakistan second Test will be aired live on Sony Six channels from August 13.

Carlsen leads Ding in fourth

RAKESH RAO
NEW DELHI

Magnus Carlsen continued his remarkable run by taking the first game of the fourth set against a fighting Ding Liren to inch closer to a place in the title-clash of the \$300,000 Magnus Carlsen Chess Tour Finals on Wednesday.

On Tuesday, Hikaru Nakamura became the first finalist by completing a 3-0 victory over Daniil Dubov in the other best-of-five-set encounter. Nakamura's 2.5-1.5 victory came after he came out stronger in the third game, the only decisive game of the day.

The results: Set four, Game One: Magnus Carlsen (Nor) bt Ding Liren (Chn). Set three:

Carlsen bt Ding 2.5-0; Hikaru Nakamura (USA) bt Daniil Dubov (Rus) 2.5-1.5.

Royals fielding coach tests positive

Yagnik will not leave for the UAE next week, ahead of the IPL

COVID-19

AMOL KARHADKAR
MUMBAI

Rajasthan Royals fielding coach Dishant Yagnik has tested positive for COVID-19 and will not join the rest of the contingent in Mumbai ahead of their departure to the United Arab Emirates for the Indian Premier League's 2020 edition.

While the former Rajasthan wicketkeeper confirmed his test results through a tweet, the franchise issued a detailed statement.

Additional test
According to the statement, Yagnik's was an additional test besides the two mandatory tests prescribed by the BCCI before departing for



Dishant Yagnik ■ FILE PHOTO

UAE "to ensure as robust a process as possible".

"Dishant is currently in his hometown Udaipur and has been advised to get admitted to hospital for his 14-day quarantine. Post 14 days, Dishant will be undergoing two tests as per the protocols of BCCI."

On return of two negative reports, he will be allowed to join the team after self-isolating for six days and receiving three further negative tests upon his arrival in the UA," the statement added.

Yagnik thus becomes the first member to be tested positive for COVID-19 ahead of the IPL tournament.

The pandemic has resulted in the BCCI rescheduling the T20 league's 2020 edition to UAE from September 19 to November 10. Considering lack of training since March and quarantine protocols, all the eight participating teams are set to leave for UAE between August 19 and 22.

While Yagnik sought "blessings" from his well-wishers, he advised individuals who have come in close contact with him in the last 10 days to get tested for the virus as a preventive measure.

Utilise the expertise of former players, says Rahul Dravid

NCA head makes the suggestion at a BCCI webinar

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA
MUMBAI

NCA chief Rahul Dravid wants the expertise of former players to be used as much as possible in the State teams' set-up. The legendary India batsman made this suggestion while interacting with members of affiliated units during a webinar organised by the BCCI.

The secretaries and cricket operation heads of many State units joined a webinar which was attended by Dravid, BCCI-NCA head of Education Sujith Somasundar (also a former India ODI opener) and trainer Ashish Kaushik.

"Rahul never said that it



Rahul Dravid. ■ FILE PHOTO

If they can be integrated in the set-up, their experience will not go waste, feels Dravid

up, their experience and expertise will not go waste."

According to the official, NCA was planning a two-phased training resumption – virtual and physical.

"Virtual training will be the way forward. In the current circumstances, it will be difficult for 25 to 30 players to train together. So the State team's trainers and physios will have to help players 'virtually', and a few can come and train physically phasewise," he said.

Hockey camps to restart from Aug. 19

Six players will join after recovery and quarantine: Reid

UTHRA GANESAN
NEW DELHI

The Sports Authority of India (SAI) has decided to go-ahead with both the men's and women's hockey camps, despite the COVID-19 positive tests among men, from August 19 after completion of the mandatory 14-day quarantine period, observing the SOPs and social distancing norms.

The players had reached Bengaluru on Aug. 4 after a 45-day break, prior to which they had been stuck at the SAI Centre, mostly without training, for more than 100 days due to the lockdown.

Six players had tested positive and were moved to a multi-speciality hospital as a precautionary measure late on Tuesday. The decision was taken after Mandip Singh was hospitalised late on Monday night when his oxygen levels dropped below normal.

The other five – captain



Graham Reid. ■ FILE PHOTO: BISWARANJAN ROUT

a statement. Men's coach Graham Reid said the six players would join the camp after recovery and quarantine. The women, however, will all begin training immediately on resumption.

"I say it on behalf of the whole squad that we are very happy to be back resuming sports activities and feeling safe. Having spoken to all the players, I have received a positive response from each of them," women's chief coach Sjoerd Marijne said. There have been no COVID-19 cases among the women probables.

Logistical support
"We will provide all logistical support, as required by the chief coaches of both teams in accordance with SOPs, and ensure that the teams can train in a safe environment," SAI Regional Director Capt. Ajay Bahl said in a statement.

Current form points to Atletico Madrid

The team has been unbeaten in 11 games after resumption

AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE
MADRID

Atletico Madrid's triumph over Liverpool in March was a throwback to a more celebrated past under Diego Simeone, but five months on and the Champions League offers it a very real opportunity in the present.

Knocking out the holder at Anfield may prove to be the first glimpse of a new era under Simeone.

Or it could be a last hurrah for the Simeone project, which some believe will never again scale the heights of the incredible La Liga title win in 2014 or the run to the Champion League finals in 2014 and 2016.

Atletico has been unbeaten in the 11 games after resumption. It won seven matches and drew four, one of them against Barcelona.

Atletico faces Leipzig on Thursday in a tournament that has gifted it the significantly kinder half of the draw.



It will be Atletico and Leipzig's first meeting in a competitive fixture

This is Leipzig's maiden appearance in the quarterfinals of the Champions League (CL), and second in European competitions. The German side had reached the last-eight stage of the Europa League in 2017-18 before losing 5-3 on aggregate to Marseille.

Leipzig has not conceded a goal in three of its last five CL games.

Number of times Atletico has faced a German team in the knockout stages of the CL. It has won all three, getting past Bayer Leverkusen in the round of 16 in 2014/15 and 2016/17 and Bayern Munich in the semifinals in the 2015/16 season.

Kilometres covered by Diego Simeone's team in this season's CL, the second-lowest among the sides still in the fray. Lyon (11) has the lowest while Leipzig has 14 goals so far.

Goals scored by Diego Simeone's team in this season's CL, the second-lowest among the sides still in the fray. Lyon (11) has the lowest while Leipzig has 14 goals so far.

942.8 Kilometres covered by Atletico during this season's CL campaign, the highest among the teams remaining in the competition. Leipzig is second (917.5 km) and Bayern third (906.7 km)

COMPILATION BY ANANTAJITH RA

Rejuvenated Bopanna raring to go

Will partner Shapovalov at the US and French Opens