

Covid-19 Update

Total cases 3.54m
Recovered 2.71m
Deaths 63,498

INSIDE COPY

Metro to start from Sept 7:
Centre's Unlock 4 Norms P2

Amit Shah Has Recovered, To Be Released From "Post Covid Care": AIIMS P2
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NEWS DIGEST

No E-Pass Needed: Unlock 4 Opens Inter-State Travel For All

New Delhi: Starting September 1, people will no longer need to get e-passes or register their details on government websites to travel anywhere within the country, rules issued by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs as part of Unlock 4 state. Unlock 4 rules, however, do not say anything about the quarantine policy which state governments been altering in keeping with their Covid caseload. P2

Cricketter Suresh Raina's Uncle Killed By Robbers In Pathankot

Chandigarh: A 58-year-old uncle of cricketer Suresh Raina died while four members of his family sustained injuries allegedly in an attack by robbers in Punjab's Pathankot district. The man has been identified as Ashok Kumar, a government contractor. According to police, the incident took place at Thariyal village on the night intervening August 19 and 20. P8

Centre orders immediate withdrawal of 10,000 troops from J-K

A total of 100 CAPF companies have been ordered to be withdrawn "immediately" and revert to their base locations from where they were mobilised to the UT post the abrogation of Article 370

ISHITA NIRBHAVNE

New Delhi: Around 10,000 paramilitary forces personnel will be immediately withdrawn from the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, the Central government said in an order on Wednesday evening. The forces were deployed in Jammu and Kashmir in August last year as a precautionary measure when the Centre ended the state's special status and bifurcated it into two Union Territories.

This is the biggest de-induction of these forces after additional troops were rushed to the UT post the abrogation of the Article 370 of the Constitution that gave the erstwhile state a unique status.

They said the decision was taken after the Ministry of Home Affairs reviewed the deployment of the Central Armed Police Forces (CAPFs) in the union territory (UT). The Home Ministry had last withdrawn 10 CAPF companies from the UT in May, while 72 such units were taken out in December last year.

A senior official told PTI that a total of 100 CAPF companies have been ordered to be withdrawn "immediately" on Wednesday and they have been asked to revert to their base locations in the country.

As per the directions, a total of 40 companies of the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and 20 each of the Central Industrial Security Force, the Border Security Force and the Sashastra Seema Bal, will be taken out from Jammu and Kashmir by this week.

The CRPF has been asked to make arrangements for air lifting of these units to Delhi and other locations, they said.



Immediate withdrawal of around 10,000 troops from J&K ordered by centre

Photo: Indian Express

A CAPF company has an operational strength of about 100 personnel.

"The units that are being withdrawn are deployed both in Jammu and Srinagar. It was felt that the counter-insurgency and counter-terrorist grid is intact in the UT and these additional units that were sent in last year can be de-induced giving them the much required rest, recuperation and training," a senior CAPF officer said.

Also, he said, with the winters soon setting in, it would have been an onerous task to keep these units in make-shift and temporary dwelling units especially in the Kashmir valley region.

With the latest de-induction, the lead counter-terrorist force CRPF will have a strength of about 60 battalions (about 1,000 personnel in each battalion) in the Kashmir valley apart from very few units of the other CAPFs. According to the order, of the 100 companies, 40 will be from the Central Reserve Police Force and 20 each of the Central Industrial Security Force, the Border Security Force and the Sashastra Seema Bal. The companies will now go wherever they were deployed before being moved to Jammu and Kashmir.

In May, the home ministry had withdrawn 10 CAPF companies from Jammu and Kashmir. A CAPF company has an operational strength of around 100 personnel. Jammu and Kashmir was placed under a strong security

blanket last August after the Centre's move to prevent a possible backlash. The other precautionary measures included imposition of prohibitory orders banning large gatherings, withdrawal of phone and internet services and detention of hundreds of political leaders. Over the last months, these measures are being gradually lifted with regular evaluation of the security situation. But even with the latest withdrawal of forces, a chunk of security forces remain in the Valley.

The CRPF will have a strength of about 60 battalions – each battalion has 1,000 personnel – in the Kashmir Valley alone. Some other units of paramilitary troops will also be there.

P12

India negotiating with 13 countries to establish bilateral air bubble arrangements: Hardeep Singh Puri

SALONI JAIN

Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Twitter, "We are now taking these efforts forward & are negotiating with 13 more countries to establish such arrangements." India is negotiating with 13 countries, including Australia, international flight operations, Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said on Tuesday. Under a bilateral air bubble pact, airlines of both the countries can operate international flights with certain restrictions.

Since July, India has established such bubbles with the following countries – the US, the UK, France, Germany, the UAE, Qatar and the Maldives.

Puri said on Twitter, "We are now taking these efforts forward & are negotiating with Australia, Italy, Sweden, England, The United States, Japan, New Zealand, Nigeria, Bahrain, Israel, Kenya, Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Philippines, France, the Netherlands, Denmark, South Korea & Thailand," he added.

Puri said air bubbles have also been proposed with our neighbours Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Nepal and Bhutan.

According to *The New York Times*, European Union is also likely to reopen air travel in order to revive their economies. American citizens are blocked from entering their borders because US has failed to contain the virus.

Chinese actions reflect disregard of our various bilateral agreements, says Rajnath Singh

ALISHA BARETO

On the fourth day of the Monsoon Session of Parliament on Thursday, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh is making a statement in Rajya Sabha on the military standoff with China along the Line of Actual Control in Ladakh, and will take a couple of questions from Opposition MPs, it is learnt. This comes two days after he addressed the Lok Sabha on the border tensions between India and China. Other bills which will be laid on the table in the lower house today are – The Farmers' Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020 and The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020 by Narendra Singh Tomar.

According to *The New York Times*, European Union is also likely to reopen air travel in order to revive their economies. American citizens are blocked from entering their borders because US has failed to contain the virus.

JINAL MEHTA

An FIR has been filed against Facebook's policy chief in India Ankhi Das by a Chhattisgarh-based journalist for allegedly hurting religious sentiments and inciting communal violence. Two people who allegedly posted threatening comments against the journalist have also been named in the FIR.

The case was lodged on the complaint of Awesh Tiwari, a Raipur-based journalist and also a member of the Congress government's fake news committee.

"I am the state head of Swaraj Express and we had put up a post regarding the Wall Street Journal's expose of how Ankhi Das at Facebook pressured her juniors to not implement hate speech clause on political posts to keep her relationship



Photo: PTI
Hardeep Singh Puri negotiates arrangements with 13 countries

Japan and Singapore, to establish separate bilateral air bubble arrangements for

established such bubbles with the following countries – the US, the UK, France,

FIR filed against Facebook India public policy director Ankhi Das

JINAL MEHTA

against any other class or community), 506 (criminal intimidation), 500 (defamation) and 34 (common intention).

Das who is at the center of the controversy, in her complaint, Das said: "Since August 14, I have been receiving violent threats to my life and body, and I am extremely disturbed by the relentless harassment meted out to me by the accused persons. The content, which even includes my photograph, is evidently threatening to my life and body and I fear for my safety as well as that of my family members. The content also maligns my reputation based on a news article and I am subjected to name-calling, cyber bullying and even teasing online."

The WSJ had reported

that Facebook India's Public Policy Director Ankhi Das told staff members that "punishing violations" by BJP politicians "would damage the company's business prospects in the country, Facebook's biggest global market by number of users". Following the post, Tiwari said he started getting threats over calls and messages. Tiwari has alleged that Das, Sahu and Sinha were trying to defame him by spreading religious hatred due to which his life is under threat and he is living in constant fear.

"Ankhi Das at Facebook pressured her juniors to not implement hate speech clause on political posts," Tiwari said in the FIR



Facebook India policy head Ankhi Das with Mark Zuckerberg

Photo: PTI

Punjab will burn if forced to share water with Haryana, says Captain Amarinder

At SYL meet, Centre proposes to go ahead with canal construction; Khattar hopes for 'amicable solution'

RATIKA PATEKAR

Punjab: "Punjab will burn if

it is asked to share water with Haryana and the issue has the potential

to

"disturb nation's security", Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh told the Centre Tuesday as he opposed the Sutlej-Yamuna Link (SYL) canal project and staked claim to Yamuna's waters.

We maintained our stand that the SYL should be constructed. The Supreme Court too has said that," he told reporters after the meeting.

Shekhawat,

who joined the video conference from Delhi, was "of the view that carriers could be constructed and SYL canal could also be completed and

kept ready while discussions on water sharing continue and the final formula could be decided later."

"Punjab remains at risk from all ends," a government statement quoting Amarinder said.

The Punjab CM said

Pakistan was continuing with attempts to foment trouble and was trying to revive the separatist movement through the banned Sikhs for Justice (SFJ) organisation.

"The water issue could further destabilise the state."

"Punjab had a right to Yamuna water, in which it did not get a share at the time of 60:40 division of assets with Haryana during the state's bifurcation in 1966," Amarinder said, even as he expressed his willingness to sit across the table with his Haryana counterpart to discuss the 'emotive' issue.

Khattar hoped for an

amicable solution to the dispute. "We maintained our stand that the SYL should be constructed. The Supreme Court too has said that," he told reporters after the meeting.

The meeting was convened

on the directions of the Supreme Court, which asked the Centre on July 28 to mediate between the two states on the decades-old issue.

Both states stuck to

their stands at the meeting, but the two CMs also described the interaction – the first such meeting between them on the SYL project – as "cordial" and agreed to talk again.

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The construction began in

P9

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The construction began in

P9

Don't just race people.
Race history.

Just do it.



NATION

Unlock 4.0 guidelines: Metro to start September 7, no state lockdowns outside containment zones

The Centre's step-by-step opening up post-coronavirus lockdown is set to see major relaxations in Unlock 4.0, which was unveiled on Saturday.

KAREENA MENGHANI

New Delhi: Metro services will start from September 7, larger gatherings will be allowed in a limited manner from September 21, while senior students can come to schools on a voluntary basis. The Centre's step-by-step opening up post-coronavirus lockdown is set to see major relaxations in Unlock 4.0, which was unveiled on Saturday.

The guidelines issued by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs say that states can no longer impose lockdowns outside containment zones without the Centre's permission and must not seal borders.

Metro trains will run for the first time since March starting September 7, "in a graded manner" while social, academic, sports, entertainment, cultural, religious and political functions can be held with a maximum 100 people from September 21. The Centre has also allowed operation of open air theatres from September 21. Read in Malayalam, Tamil.

While schools and colleges will remain shut till September end, they can call in 50% of their teachers for facilitating online teaching. Students of classes 9 to 12 can visit schools on a "voluntary basis" to clear their doubts.



The guidelines issued by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs say that states can no longer impose lockdowns outside containment zones without the Centre's permission

There shall be no restriction on inter-state and intra-state movement of persons and goods.

On Metro services, the guidelines say, "Metro rail will be allowed to operate with effect from 7th September 2020 in a graded manner." It says the Ministry of Railways and Urban Affairs will run the trains in consultation with the

MHA, and the Urban Affairs Ministry will frame a Standard Operating Procedure.

In May, the Ministry had shared a detailed SOP with all Metro operators across the country, including a proposal to link QR code-based tickets with the Aarogya Setu app, mandatory masks, limited entry, thermal scanning of passengers, to link QR code-based tickets with the Aarogya Setu app, mandatory masks, limited entry, thermal scanning of passengers, longer opening of gates of coaches to let in fresh air, and social distancing of

passengers through alternate vacant seats.

"State/UT Governments shall not impose any local lockdown (State/ district/ subdivision/ city/ village level), outside the containment zones, without prior consultation with the Central government.

No separate permission/approval/e-permit will be required for such movement," the guidelines say.

International air travel of passengers, except as permitted by the MHA, and train services will remain restricted.

Loan moratorium can be extended for 2 years:
Centre to Supreme Court

NIYATI SHAH

The central government on Tuesday informed Supreme Court that loan moratorium period can be extended by two years as per the Reserve Bank of India's circular. However, on the question of waiving interest on interest during the moratorium period, the government said that let centre, RBI and bankers association sit together to bring a solution on waiving of interest on interest.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta representing the central government told Supreme Court to allow Centre, RBI and bankers association to discuss and arrive at a solution on issue of waiving interest on interest during the loan moratorium period. He added that, "There are more issues involved, GDP is down 23 per cent and economy is stressed."

The Supreme Court had last week sought the government's stand on waiving interest on loan repayments during the moratorium and said it "cannot hide" behind the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

The RBI had informed the court earlier that there cannot be an interest waiver during moratorium.

The Supreme Court was hearing a public interest litigation (PIL) for waiving of interest on interest for deferred payments of instalments of loan during moratorium period.

The moratorium period by the RBI ended in August.

Amit Shah has recovered, to be released from "Post Covid Care": AIIMS

Amit Shah, who had tested negative for coronavirus earlier this month, had been admitted to AIIMS in Delhi on August 18.

NEIL BARETO



Mr Shah was taken to private hospital Medanta in Gurgaon after testing positive.

New Delhi: Union Home Minister Amit Shah, who had been admitted to Delhi's premier All India Institutes of Medical Sciences or AIIMS for "post-covid care", has recovered and will be released soon, the hospital said in a statement on Saturday.

The 55-year-old BJP leader, who had tested negative for coronavirus earlier this month, had been admitted to AIIMS in Delhi on August 18.

The Home Minister had been "complaining of fatigue and body ache for last three-four days", the hospital had said.

Mr Shah was taken to private hospital Medanta in Gurgaon early this month after testing positive.

On August 14, he had tweeted that he would be in home isolation for a few

more days on the advice of his doctors he had tweeted that he would be in home isolation for a few more days

on the advice of his doctors. A day later, he was seen taking part in Independence Day

celebrations and raising the

national flag at his official residence. Concerns about the minister's health were compounded because he had taken part in a cabinet two weeks ago before he was tested positive for the highly infectious virus.

The meeting was attended by all top ministers, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

All safety norms, including social distancing, were followed at the meet, where the National Education Policy or NEP was approved, government sources said. Coronavirus cases have been rising steadily across India, at around 70,000 new infections every day, with the total number of cases crossing 34 lakh behind the United States and Brazil. More than 62,000 people have died in the country so far.

Over the last four days, there was been an uptick in the number of daily new cases, the positivity rate and the "R" or reproduction rate - the measure of how many people are infected by one infected person.

Weerushka on the way!

Pinjra Tod's Devangana Kalita gets bail in Northeast Delhi violence

Justice Suresh Kumar Kait gave the relief to JNU student Devangana Kalita on furnishing of a personal bond of ₹ 25,000 and a surety of the like amount.

RAJEEV GAIKWAD

New Delhi: The Delhi High Court on Tuesday granted bail to a member of Pinjra Tod, a women's collective, in a case related to the communal violence in northeast Delhi during protests against the Citizenship Amendment Act in February. Justice Suresh Kumar Kait gave the relief to JNU student Devangana Kalita on furnishing of a personal bond of Rs. 25,000 and a surety of the like amount. The court directed that she shall not directly or indirectly influence witness or tamper with the evidence. Devangana Kalita and another member of the group Natasha Narwal were arrested in the case in May by the Crime Branch of the Delhi Police and booked under various sections of the Indian Penal Code including rioting, unlawful assembly and attempt to murder.

It had said that considering the investigation so far and the nature of the offence and the role being ascribed to the accused, there were no reasons at all to grant bail. The trial court was informed that the charge sheet has been filed against 10 persons in the case and investigation qua the accused persons was still being done. Kalita has also challenged the trial court's order denying her bail and the high court has reserved its decision on the plea.

Pinjra Tod was founded in 2015 with an aim to make hostels less restrictive for women students.

Amul Butter for beta or beti

Assam doctor on the run with wife after pouring hot water on 12-year-old boy

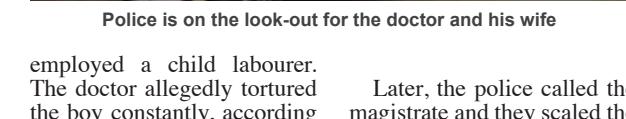
MAAHIKI PORECHA

Guwahati: A 12-year-old boy who had been working at the house of a doctor in Assam's Dibrugarh was found tortured and suffering from injuries. The doctor, Siddhi Prasad Deori, working with Assam medical College, 500 km east of main city Guwahati, allegedly poured hot water on a boy, who he had kept as a domestic help for the last one year.

According to police sources, the minor was sleeping on the floor on August 27 when Mr Deori poured hot water on him.

The boy was later rescued by a joint team of the non-profit Childline, the Dibrugarh Child Welfare Committee and the police from the house of the doctor on August 29.

Residents had first informed the district child welfare committee on August 29 that the doctor had



Police is on the look-out for the doctor and his wife

employed a child labourer. The doctor allegedly tortured the boy constantly, according to the residents.

A police case against the doctor has been filed.

When the police went to arrest Mr Deori at his house today, they had to wait for some time since no one opened the doors.

Later, the police called the magistrate and they sealed the walls of the house and entered the building, police sources said.

The doctor and his wife, who is a principal at Moran College, were not found there, police sources said.

A search is on for them.

PERSPECTIVE

How to read China's increasing aggression with India

KENDALL ROY

The Defence Ministry has revealed that it thwarted a fresh attempt by Chinese troops (PLA) to alter the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh on the south bank of the Pangong Tso or Lake on the night of August 29. The Chinese military angrily asserted that India had "violated the previous consensus". A spokesman for China's Foreign Ministry claimed that Chinese forces had never crossed the LAC and India had made "illegal incursions".

The new developments are not surprising as Indian frustration was mounting with the PLA using

dialogue to stall any further disengagement while they expand - or try to expand - their intrusions. Chief of Defence Staff General Bipin Rawat had cautioned on August 24 that the military option is available to India if dialogue fails. India reacted quickly and proactively to protect its interest in this latest incident. However, the reason for the flare-up needs study.

Both countries have domestic and international factors influencing their strategic calculus; the Covid pandemic has globally distorted markets, economies and China's relations with major nations. China, instead

of being defensive about its role in pandemic's spread, has re-started its economic juggernaut and ratcheted up its territorial ambitions on land and in seas along its periphery. After opposing the abrogation of Article 370 in Kashmir a year ago, which changed the status and boundaries of Jammu and Kashmir, it caught India unawares when it started multiple intrusions into India, the first of which took place in May.

President Xi Jinping's accumulation of more power than anyone since Mao Zedong, and China's military and economic strength, are shaping its international

conduct. It has chosen belligerence to consolidate maritime and continental territorial claims, while unfurling a Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to create a Sino-centric spoke-and-hub system, linking its factories to large new markets and sources of raw material. This neo-colonial framework with the potential for building debt bubbles and Chinese control in exchange for debt write-offs was resisted mainly by the US and India. European nations (EU) appear to have treated China as a benign trading power with a huge market and surplus capital, while China merrily poached advanced technology from

companies in EU and Israel. In handling India, President Xi did stun the Modi Government with the intrusions in Ladakh. The government first acted as if it were in denial. The standoff began at a time when the extended lockdown had stalled the economy and eliminated jobs.

(The writer is a former ambassador to Iran.)

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed within this article are the personal opinions of the author. The facts and opinions appearing in the article do not reflect the views of India Chronicle.

India's Gen Z risks losing out on formal jobs in Covid crisis: Study

RASIKA DESHPANDE



Photo: Bloomberg

India's economy posted its worst contraction last quarter. India has been struggling with an unemployment problem and the coronavirus pandemic is making it even more difficult for its youngest workers to earn a decent living, shows an analysis by the London School of Economics. Workers in cities in the age group of 18 to 25 years were already much less likely to be in formal jobs and more likely to be employed informally and paid less, wrote Shania Bhalotia, Swati Dhingra and Fjolla Kondiroli, the authors of the report 'City of dreams no more: The impact of Covid-19 on urban workers in India.'

"The youngest workers were

much more likely to want a job guarantee, primarily for the livelihood and security that they provide in these hard times," they wrote. Prime Bhalotia, Swati Dhingra and Fjolla Kondiroli, the

authors of the report 'City of dreams no more: The impact of Covid-19 on urban workers in India.' Minister Narendra Modi imposed one of the world's most restrictive lockdowns from March 25,

COVID IMPACT

leading to a loss of about 122 million jobs. Narendra Modi imposed one of the world's most restrictive lockdowns from March 25, leading to a loss of about 122 million jobs.

The impact was felt more severely in urban centers where most workers didn't have a social security net or a bsiu, while businesses remained shut for weeks.

Workers in cities in the age group of 18 to 25 are less likely to be employed.

The result: India's economy posted its worst contraction last quarter. -- the biggest among major economies.

Livelihood Crisis: One of the worst the nation has ever seen

ARYAN JUVEKAR

While the country already runs the world's biggest jobs program, under which workers can earn a guaranteed minimum daily wage of 202 rupees (\$2.8) for at least 100 days a year, the program is limited to those living in the hinterland.

In urban areas, the survey shows that 31% of individuals have a guaranteed number of days of work. But among those who do not, an overwhelming 70% reported needing a guarantee of a minimum 100 days of work,

falling into urban poverty," said Dhangra. "Their aspirations of a prosperous life have already been shattered by the pandemic."

Some of the findings of the survey are: About 52% of urban workers in India didn't have work and income for at least a month at least a month during the lockdown. Financial assistance from the government or employers was available to just a quarter of the workforce but among those who do not, an overwhelming 70% needing work guarantee.

Federal and state governments recognise the livelihood crisis, but their recovery packages fall short.

outlays to overcome it, the authors wrote. "It may finally be time to revive old ideas, such as a universal job guarantee, to protect the livelihoods of many informal workers who are at risk of

falling into urban poverty," said Dhangra. "Their aspirations of a prosperous life have already been shattered by the pandemic."

Some of the findings of the survey are: About 52% of urban workers in India didn't have work and income for at least a month at least a month during the lockdown. Financial assistance from the government or employers was available to just a quarter of the workforce but among those who do not, an overwhelming 70% needing work guarantee.

Federal and state governments recognise the livelihood crisis, but their recovery packages fall short.

MUMBAI

No Maratha quota in jobs, admissions this year, says Supreme Court; BJP calls it 'black day' for community

However, admissions already made under the quota in post-graduate medical courses will remain unaffected. The apex court was hearing petitions challenging the Maharashtra law that grants reservation to Marathas in jobs and admissions.

ESHA SATISH

The Supreme Court, in an interim order Wednesday, ruled that Maratha quota would not be applicable in jobs and admissions this year. The court has also referred the matter to the Chief Justice of India to constitute a larger bench for further hearing.

However, the bench headed by Justice L Nageswara Rao said that admissions already made under the quota in post-graduate medical courses will remain unaffected. The apex court was hearing petitions challenging the Maharashtra law that provides reservation to Marathas in jobs and admissions.

The petitions had challenged the Bombay High Court order of June 2019 which, while upholding the law, had also held that 16 per cent reservation was not justifiable and added that the quota should not exceed 12 per cent in employment and 13 per cent in admissions to government-run educational institutes.

The High Court in its verdict had relied heavily on findings of the 11-member Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission (MSBCC). In its reports submitted on November 15, 2018, the MSBCC had said that the Maratha community is socially, economically, and educationally backward.

Mumbai air quality deteriorates slightly as AQI reaches 100

On Sunday, a thin layer of haze was also reported across the city's skyline, indicating a rise in air pollution.

YUKTI JOSHI

For the first time this monsoon, the Air Quality Index (AQI) in the city on Sunday reached 100, or moderate category. The city's AQI, according to System of Air Quality Forecasting and Research (SAFAR), has been under 50 since the lockdown began in March, with isolated days of 'satisfactory' AQI after partial relaxation in restrictions. SAFAR has forecast a similar AQI for Monday.

On June 30, Mumbai recorded its best AQI for this year at 12. The AQI has been ranging between 17 and 29 in April and May.

An AQI up to 50 is considered as good, 51 to 100 satisfactory, and 101 to 200 as moderate. An AQI between 201 and 300 is considered poor, 301 and 400 very poor, and 401 and 500 severe. If the AQI exceeds 500, it is considered a severe plus category. On June 30, Mumbai recorded its best AQI for this year at 12. The AQI has been ranging between 17 and 29 in April and May. On Sunday, a thin layer of haze was also reported across the city's skyline, indicating a rise in air pollution. The city and its suburbs witnessed recurrent flashes of lightning and loud claps of thunder in the morning and afternoon. The India Meteorological



The HC in its verdict had relied heavily on findings of the 11-member Maharashtra State Backward Class Commission

government, saying neither CM Uddhav Thackeray nor NCP chief Sharad Pawar paid attention to the matter.

State BJP president Chandrakant Patil said matters referred to the larger bench in the past have remained pending for years. "This means the stay will continue till the bench gives an order. Now there is no point in the community protesting either, because nobody knows when the ruling will come. Therefore, it is a black day for the community," PTI quoted Patil as saying.

Former Maharashtra

Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis said the efforts taken by the previous BJP-led government for the "all-round development" of the community had been "undone". "The (MVA) government could have kept the quota intact had it taken steps by taking everyone into confidence. But this government has not been serious about the issue from the beginning," he alleged.

Party MP Narayan Rane accused the state government, led by Shiva Sena and NCP of not willing to give the quota to the community.

Mumbai: Retail chain director crushed to death under lift in Worli

The deceased had gone to Buena vista building on Sir Pochkhanwalla road to visit a doctor as he was suffering from a toothache.

PRATIKSHA JAISWAL

The Director of the electronics retail chain Kohinoor Electronics was crushed to death under an elevator in a Worli building on Sunday.

The deceased, Vishal Mewani (46), had gone to Buena vista building on Sir Pochkhanwalla road in Worli to visit a doctor as he was suffering from a toothache.

The police said that an elevator with a wooden door had been installed less than a decade ago in the 97-year-old two-storey building as many senior citizens live there. "The deceased pressed the button to go to the second floor and wrenched the door open assuming that the elevator was on the ground floor. The door was not easy to open but the deceased had used a lot of force," said Sukhral Varpe, senior inspector, Worli police station. Upon stepping inside, Mewani realised the elevator was not on the ground floor. He did not succeed. "The deceased was crushed when the elevator descended to the ground floor," said Varpe.

The building's residents rushed Mewani to Breach Candy Hospital, where he died soon after admission, police said. Varpe said that the police would speak to the company which installed the elevator to understand what went wrong. "The elevator shaft is level with the ground floor. There is glass mounted on the rear wall of the shaft. This may have given the deceased the impression that the elevator was on the ground floor," he added. He added that the watchman rushed to the elevator and tried to pull open the door but did not succeed. "The deceased was crushed when the elevator descended to the ground floor," said Varpe.

The building's residents rushed Mewani to Breach Candy Hospital, where he died soon after admission, police said. Varpe said that the police would speak to the company which installed the elevator to understand what went wrong. "The elevator shaft is level with the ground floor.

Mewani lived with his family on Pedder Road.

International passengers attempting to pass through Mumbai will have to undergo the RT-PCR test at airport, wait 7 to 8 hours

The state government has advised passengers to book connecting flights preferably with a time gap of at least 8-12 hours, as an RT-PCR test takes 7 to 8 hours to generate the report.

PRATIKSHA NAIR

International fliers, who have to take connecting flights from Mumbai, will have to undergo reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) tests for Covid-19 at the airport on arrival, fresh guidelines issued by the state government on Sunday said.

"They (passengers) can get tested and will be allowed to take connecting flights on having a negative test report," the guideline states. Those found positive may not be allowed to take the connecting flight and sent for institutional quarantine in Mumbai, it further reads.

The state government has also advised passengers to book connecting flights accordingly, preferably with a time gap of at least 8-12 hours, as an RT-PCR test takes 7 to 8 hours to generate the report.

The charges for the RT-PCR tests have been capped at Rs 2,200 and will be borne by passengers. Currently, the testing facility is available only for transit passengers who want to take an onward connecting flight and do not have Covid-19 test reports.

On Sunday, the process of collecting samples for RT-PCR tests began at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj



The required RT-PCR test takes 7 to 8 hours to generate the report.

Gandhi International Airport in Delhi.

On September 2, the Civil Aviation Ministry had allowed international passengers to take onward flights after landing in India, and issued guidelines for entry airports to conduct RT-PCR tests for passengers who did not have Covid-19 negative test reports.

Meanwhile, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) Sunday revoked its decision on

mandatory institutional quarantine for Covid-19 patients aged above 50 years. The decision was taken at a review meeting headed by

the age of 50 years will be persuaded not to observe home quarantine in the interest of their own well-being".

If further said asymptomatic patients above 50 years would be allowed to observe quarantine at home "if they wish to" do so.

Now the civic body has directed all ward officials to keep a track of Covid-19 patients aged above 50, and consult family physicians to ensure that such patients got immediate medical attention when needed. "The decision to admit all patients above 50 years was taken to monitor them from the beginning and screen them daily. There are several patients who are seeking admission when their condition turns critical," a health officer said.

On Sunday, the process of collecting samples for RT-PCR tests began at Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, officials said. Mumbai airport is only second to Delhi.

The state government has also advised passengers to book connecting flights accordingly, preferably with a time gap of at least 8-12 hours, as an RT-PCR test takes 7 to 8 hours to generate the report.

Maharashtra Monsoon Session from today: Two MLAs, 37 govt staffers test positive

Sources said that while around 2,200 people, including legislators and government officials, have been tested since Saturday, the reports of some are yet to come in.

SANSKRITI ZAMBRE

At least two MLAs and 37 government staffers who were to attend the Monsoon Session of the Maharashtra legislature from Monday have tested positive for Covid-19.

Sources said that while around 2,200 people, including legislators and government officials, have been tested since Saturday, the reports of some are yet to come in. Maharashtra's legislators are set to converge at the Vidhan Bhavan in Mumbai for a two-day Monsoon Session – the first since the pandemic – amid strict safety measures placed by the Legislative Secretariat Editorial Masking the question.

The number of those infected may increase further as some MLAs have tested themselves at their district headquarters and the reports are yet to be compiled," said an official, adding that the final figure of how many have been infected would be known on Monday.



Many staffers who were to attend the session have tested positive for Covid-19.

Assembly Speaker Nana Patole had tested positive on Friday. Sources said that in Patole's absence, Deputy Speaker Narhari Zhirwal is expected to chair the proceedings in the Vidhan Sabha. The Business Advisory Committee of the state legislature, which comprises Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Devendra Fadnavis among others, had made Covid-19 tests compulsory for all who would be a part of the Monsoon Session, including

MLAs and government officials. Only those who test negative will be allowed entry inside in both the Assembly and the Legislative Council.

The committee, which had met which had met on which had met on September 25, had decided that only bills, unstarred questions and supplementary demands will be discussed during the session. In all, 14 government bills and one appropriation bill will be taken up. Also, Question Hour and calling attention motion would not be taken up.

"The business of the state legislature has been finalised after discussions with Opposition parties," said Parliamentary Affairs Minister Anil Parab.

For the two-day session, the Legislature Secretariat has put in place a slew of safety measures. Inside the Legislative Assembly and the Legislative Council, germicidal ultraviolet machines and ozone generators have been installed to maintain a sterile environment. A special disinfectant coating is being applied on the furniture and other equipment to avoid any spread of the infection.

All legislators will be handed a safety kit, which will include a face shield, masks, hand gloves and sanitisers. Due to the pandemic, the customary tea party was not hosted by the ruling coalition on Sunday.

In Mumbai, homegrown apps thrive as education moves online

When the Covid-19 pandemic struck in March, founders of Pune-based NGO Vowels of the People Association decided to create a free website (ssc.vopa.in) for Class X students, especially those studying in Marathi and semi-English medium schools.

AKSHATA UIKE

With education across schools, colleges and coaching classes moving to virtual platforms amid the coronavirus pandemic, homegrown mobile apps, many created by young tech entrepreneurs in Maharashtra, have found an opportunity in adversity.

When the Covid-19 pandemic struck in March, founders of Pune-based NGO Vowels of the People Association decided to create a free website (ssc.vopa.in) for Class X students, especially those studying in Marathi and semi-English medium schools.

Teachers of Beed Zilla Parishad were trained to create qualitative content, subject-wise and chapter-wise, in a simple-to-use format that could be viewed with limited Internet bandwidth.

The app – created by youngsters Akash Bhor, Rutuja Seema and Prafulla Sashikant – has been funded by teachers themselves and a few volunteers. It was officially launched on June 11 by Beed administration. "We had received some calls from people saying that learning platforms in the local language were close to none. When we tried available apps to deliver education, we found that free educational apps made available by the government can be monotonous because

of the long videos, and have proved to be less engaging to students. Most are also designed keeping English medium students in mind. On

using social media platforms. The foundation provides subsidised coaching to students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds.



"Our live sessions on the app are automatically recorded, and the app is easy to use."

the other hand, companies providing qualitative content are expensive," said Bhor.

While four lakh users have registered on the site, one lakh among them are regular users, said Bhor. The creators are now in the process of designing a relative app, and a similar platform for classes I to IX. For Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), Maharashtra Public Service Commission (MPSC) and other aspirants of competitive exams in rural Marathwada and other parts of the state, Jalgaon-based Dari Foundation has subscribed to an app 'Classplus', apart from



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THE WORLD

International Relations

Indians in Singapore returning home due to job losses, says Envoy

Donald Trump admits downplaying threat of coronavirus

In public, Donald Trump claimed early on that the virus would disappear, predicting in February that by April, "when it gets a little warmer, it miraculously goes away."

MEREDITH GREY

More and more Indian workers are returning home as Singapore businesses cut down on workforce following the severe impact of the novel coronavirus pandemic, an official said.

"On an average, about 100 Indian nationals in Singapore continue to register daily with the High Commission here for flights back home, with over 11,000 having registered so far," Indian High Commissioner P Kumaran said on Wednesday.

"This is deadly stuff," Trump said on Feb. 7 in one of 18 interviews with Woodward for his coming book, "Rage."

"You just breathe the air and that's how it's passed," the president told Woodward in audio recordings made available on The Washington Post website. "And so that's a very tricky one. That's a very delicate one. It's also more deadly than even your strenuous flu." But three days after those remarks, Trump told the Fox Business anchor Trish Regan: "We're in very good shape. We have 11 cases."

And most of them are getting better very rapidly. I think they will all be better." A little less than two weeks later, he told reporters on the South Lawn that "we have it very much under control in this country." By Feb. 26, the president was publicly dismissing concerns about the lethality of the virus. "It's a little like the regular flu that we have flu shots for," he said at a White House news conference. "And we'll essentially have a flu shot for this in a fairly quick manner."

And by Feb. 28, at a rally in South Carolina, Trump denounced Democrats for their concerns about the virus as "their new hoax," after the Russia investigation and his impeachment.

The audio recordings show that as Trump was absorbing in real time the information he was given by health and national security experts, he made a conscious choice not only to mislead the public but also to actively pressure governors to reopen states before his own government guidelines said they were ready.



The virus that has killed nearly 190,000 people in the US and affected the lives of millions more.

By March, Trump was straightforward with Woodward about his tactics.

"I wanted to always play it down," the president said in an audio recording of an interview on March 19. "I still like playing it down, because I don't want to create a panic." "This is deadly stuff," the president repeated for emphasis.

Despite the president's own words in the recordings, the White House press secretary, Kayleigh McEnany, told reporters on Wednesday that Trump had never publicly played down the virus. The Post and CNN were given advance copies of the book and published details on Wednesday. The New York Times obtained its own copy.

As part of the White House's effort at damage control, Trump told reporters that his recorded remarks to Woodward were vastly different from what he was telling the public because he was worried about frightening people. "We don't want to instill panic," the president said on Wednesday. "We don't want to jump up and down and start shouting that we have a problem that is a tremendous problem" and

"I wanted to always play it down," the president said in an audio recording of an interview on March 19.

Young people too — plenty of young people." And yet in an interview broadcast by "Fox and Friends" on Aug. 5, Trump asserted: "If you look at children, children are almost, and I would say almost definitely, but almost immune from this disease. I don't know how you feel about it, but they've got stronger immune systems than we do somehow for this." When pressed on why he did not do more in February and March, knowing what he knew, Trump maintained that he had not expected the virus to spread as far and as fast as it did. "You didn't really think it was going to be to the point that it was," Trump said. Democrats were quick to slam Trump for his comments. Sen. Chuck Schumer of New York, the Senate minority leader, said that the book offered "damning proof that Donald Trump lied and people died."

Relatives urge China to return 12 detainees to Hong Kong

At an emotional news conference, the group said their relatives should be allowed to meet with lawyers they themselves have hired, not those appointed by Chinese authorities.

GERRI KELLMAN

Relatives of 12 Hong Kong activists detained at sea by Chinese authorities called Saturday for their family members to be returned to the territory, saying their legal rights were being violated.

At an emotional news conference, the group said their relatives should be allowed to meet with lawyers they themselves have hired, not those appointed by Chinese authorities.

They also said they should be provided with needed medications, be allowed to call their families and eventually be allowed to return to Hong Kong.

The relatives wore masks, hoods, sunglasses, jackets and hats to hide their identities in front of the television cameras.

Chinese law. The detention of the 12, who include a 16-year-

old boy, follows China's imposition of a sweeping new national security law on the

according to mainland laws" who include a 16-year-old boy, follows China's imposition of a sweeping new national security law on the former British colony.

Which was wracked by months of anti-government protests last year.

Critics say the law amounts to a major crackdown on free speech and political activity by the opposition and further erodes the civil liberties promised to Hong Kong under the "one country, two systems" principle in place since it reverted to Chinese rule in 1997.

The 12 were reportedly seeking to make it to the self-governing island of Taiwan by speedboat when they were caught by the Chinese coast guard and detained in the southern city of Shenzhen on August 23. They have been held incommunicado since then.

Thousands were arrested during the protest movement and others continue to be sought by Hong Kong and mainland authorities.

The new security law bans secessionist, subversive and terrorist activities, as well as collusion with foreign forces, with penalties of up to life imprisonment.

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Photo: HKTV

Relatives wore masks, hoods, sunglasses and hats to hide their identities

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US 2020 Presidential Elections Update: Trump rallies in the West, aims to boost support, raise funds

SELINA MYERS

Trump looks west, eyeing paths to White House

Pushing for new roads to reelection, President Donald Trump is going on the offense this weekend in Nevada, which hasn't supported a Republican presidential candidate since 2004. Trump is defying local authorities by holding public events Saturday and Sunday after officials blocked his initial plans for rallies in Reno and Las Vegas because they would have violated coronavirus health guidelines. It's the kind of fight that Trump's team relishes and underscores the growing importance of Nevada in Trump's quest for

270 electoral votes as the race against Democrat Joe Biden looks tight in a number of pivotal states. Trump narrowly lost Nevada in 2016 to Hillary Clinton, and the state has trended further toward the Democrats in the past decade. But Trump's campaign has invested heavily in the state.

Biden audio shared by 'Russian agent' goes viral

The apparent phone conversations between Joe Biden and Ukraine's then-president largely confirm Biden's account of his dealings in Ukraine. But the choppy audio, disclosed

by a Ukrainian lawmaker whom US officials described Thursday as an "active Russian agent" who has sought to spread online misinformation about Biden well as his supporters.

Trump heads to Nevada, supporters, raise cash

President Donald Trump Saturday headed to Nevada, trying to drum up more support in a state where polls show Democratic rival Joe Biden leading, and to raise money for a campaign that is facing a possible cash crunch. In the national polls, Trump is trailing Biden in Nevada. He also narrowly lost Nevada to

Trump nominee elected to head Latin American development bank becoming the first US citizen to do so

Mauricio Claver-Carone, Trump's senior Latin America adviser on Saturday won election as president of the Inter-American Development Bank, becoming the first US citizen to lead the institution in its 61-year history. The Inter-American Development Bank is the region's main economic development lender making him the first US citizen to lead the institution in its 61-year history. Carone told the bank's governors before voting began that

Peru Congress approves Vizcarra impeachment motion over leaked tapes

Lawmakers in Peru's Congress, heard recordings of two private conversations between Vizcarra and government officials about meetings with Richard Cisneros, a little-known singer.

Lawmakers revealed Vizcarra attempting to downplay his meetings with Cisneros.

ROMAN ROY

Peruvian President Martin Vizcarra faced a fresh challenge to his leadership on Friday after Congress approved a motion to start impeachment proceedings against him over leaked audio tapes and alleged ties to a singer involved in a fraud case.

Whether to remove Vizcarra from office for "moral incapacity" is due to be debated and voted upon in the next week, which risks plunging the world's second-largest copper producer further into crisis as it battles one of the worst coronavirus outbreaks globally amid its deepest recession in decades. Vizcarra vowed not to resign.

Fifty-two votes from the 130-member Congress were needed to approve the start of impeachment proceedings, and impeachment itself needs 87 votes in order to remove Vizcarra from office.

Friday's vote was 65 in favor, 36 opposed and 24 abstentions. Lawmakers in Peru's Congress, a mosaic of parties from the left and right with no overall majority, heard recordings of two private conversations between Vizcarra and government officials about meetings with Richard Cisneros, a little-known singer.

Cisneros, who goes as



Whether to remove Vizcarra from office is due to be voted upon next week.

Richard Swing, was awarded government contracts for motivational talks worth 175,400 soles (\$49,500), which are being investigated by Congress and Peru's auditor general along with claims of alleged links to the presidency. Lawmakers said the recordings revealed Vizcarra attempting to downplay his meetings with Cisneros.

Presidential elections are due to be held next year. "We now hope Vizcarra will come. We now hope Vizcarra will come to give his justifications," said lawmaker Edgar Alarcon, head of the congressional oversight commission who shared the audios in Congress. Alarcon added that the date for the debate.

"If this continues to escalate, it could have an effect on recovery," Ruiz said. He told reporters on

Iran executes 27-year-old after Donald Trump requests to 'spare the young man's life'

"To the leaders of Iran, I would greatly appreciate if you would spare this young man's life, and not execute him," Trump wrote last week.

BARRY BLOCK

Iran's state TV is reporting that the country's authorities has executed a wrestler for allegedly murdering a man after US President Donald Trump asked for the 27-year-old condemned man's life to be spared. State TV quoted the chief justice of Fars province, Kazem Mousavi as saying on Saturday:

"The execution sentence against Navid Afkari, the killer of Hassan Turkman, was carried out this morning in Adelabad prison in Shiraz."

Afkari's case had drawn the attention of social media

Iran broadcast the wrestler's televised confession last week. The segment resembled hundreds of other suspected coerced confessions aired over the last decade in the Islamic Republic.

The case revived a demand inside the country for Iran to stop carrying out the death penalty. Even imprisoned Iranian human rights lawyer Nasrin Sotoudeh, herself nearly a month into a hunger strike over conditions at Tehran's Evin prison amid the coronavirus pandemic,

Iran responded to Trump's tweet with a nearly 11-minute state TV package on Afkari. It included the weeping parents of the slain water company employee, Hassan Torkaman. The package included footage of Afkari on the back of a motorbike, saying he had stabbed Torkaman in the back, without explaining why he allegedly.

"Trump is worried about the life of a murderer while he puts many Iranian patients' lives in danger by imposing severe sanctions," the agency said.

The 12 were reportedly seeking to make it to the self-governing island.

Taiwan by speedboat when they were caught by the Chinese coast guard and detained in the southern city of Shenzhen on August 23.

They have been held incommunicado since then.

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BUSINESS

GST compensation: 12 states pick Rs 97,000-crore borrowing option, one picks option 2

Only one state, Manipur, has so far opted for Option 2 which involves borrowing the entire compensation deficit from the market.

CHEAT NIRBHAVNE

A fortnight after the Centre detailed two options for states to borrow to meet the compensation deficit of Rs 2.35 lakh crore this fiscal under the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime, a total of 12 states, mostly consisting of BJP-ruled states, have opted for Option 1 — borrowing of Rs 97,000 crore through a RBI-facilitated special window.

Bihar, Gujarat, Haryana, Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, Meghalaya, Tripura, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand are the states ruled by BJP and its allies that chose Option 1, while three non-BJP ruled states — Odisha, Andhra Pradesh and Sikkim — have also picked Option 1.

Other non-BJP ruled states including Kerala, Punjab, West Bengal, Delhi, Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh — instead of expressing an option preference — have submitted their views to the Finance Minister, who is also the Chairperson of the GST Council, and are yet to decide on the options, Finance Ministry officials said.



Illustration: Sanjeeda Singh

Only one state, Manipur, has so far opted for Option 2 which involves borrowing the entire compensation deficit from the market, while six more states — Goa, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Mizoram and Himachal Pradesh — will enlist their option in a day or two, the officials said.

Several non-BJP ruled states have been at loggerheads with the Centre for asking them to borrow to bridge the compensation deficit.

Chief ministers of non-BJP ruled states of West Bengal, Kerala, Delhi, Telangana, Chhattisgarh and Tamil Nadu have written

to the Centre opposing the options which require states to borrow to meet shortfall and have instead asked the Centre to borrow. States have also raised concerns that the distinction of revenue loss for GST implementation and Covid-19 pandemic was unconstitutional.

The Centre has, however, stated that it is unlikely to borrow given the impact it would have on yields of its government securities and also indicated that since the repayment has to be made from compensation cess receipts, it cannot borrow since cess is a resource dedicated to states.

The pending compensation

issue is expected to be discussed in the upcoming 42nd GST Council meeting, which was earlier scheduled to be held on September 19.

It has now been deferred to the first week of October. In the previous GST council meeting held on August 27.

The Centre had proposed two options to the states: to either borrow Rs 97,000 crore (shortfall only on account of GST implementation) from a special window facilitated by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

The complete shortfall of Rs 2.35 lakh crore (including Rs 1.38 lakh crore shortfall due to Covid-19 pandemic from the market).

Other non-BJP ruled states including Kerala, Punjab, West Bengal, Delhi, Tamil Nadu and Chhattisgarh — instead of expressing an option preference preference — have submitted their views to the Finance Minister, who is also the Chairperson of the GST Council, and are yet to decide on the options, Finance Ministry officials said.

Banks directed to appoint chief compliance officer

RUE BENNETT

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday directed banks to set up an independent corporate compliance function headed by a designated chief compliance officer (CCO) selected through a suitable process with an appropriate 'fit and proper' selection criteria to effectively manage compliance risk.

It said the CCO should be appointed for a fixed tenure of not less than three years.

The audit committee of the board (ACB) and managing director and CEO of the bank should factor this requirement while appointing CCO. "The CCO may be transferred or removed before completion of the tenure only in exceptional circumstances with the explicit prior approval of the board after following a well-defined and transparent internal administrative procedure," the RBI said in a notification to the commercial banks.

The CCO should be a senior executive of the bank, preferably in the rank of a general manager or an equivalent position (not below two levels from the CEO). The CCO could also be recruited from market, the central bank added.

Infosys to acquire GuideVision for up to 30 million euros

"GuideVision's training academy and nearshore capabilities in Czech Republic, Hungary and Poland will strengthen Infosys' ServiceNow capabilities for its clients in Europe," Infosys said in a statement.

SANJAY GAIKWAD

IT services major Infosys on Monday said it will acquire Czech Republic-based GuideVision for up to 30 million euros (about Rs 260.4 crore).

The acquisition is being carried out by Infy Consulting Company Ltd, a step-down subsidiary of Infosys Ltd, a regulatory filing said. "GuideVision's training academy and nearshore capabilities in Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, and presence in Germany and Finland will strengthen Infosys' ServiceNow capabilities for its clients in Europe," Infosys said in a statement.

GuideVision's end-to-end offerings, including SnowMirror — a proprietary smart data replication tool for ServiceNow instances — enables over 100 enterprise clients to simplify complex business and IT processes.

ServiceNow is an enterprise software firm that develops cloud computing platforms to help companies manage digital workflows.



The acquisition is being carried out by Infy Consulting Company Ltd

As per the regulatory filing, the cost of acquisition is "up to 30 million euros including earn-out and bonuses". The

and reported revenue of 12.9 million euros in 2019. "The combination of scalable and agile nearshore capabilities of GuideVision in Europe, and their unmatched delivery excellence, complements our own effort to help global enterprises navigate their next. We are excited to welcome GuideVision and its leadership team into the Infosys family," Infosys President Ravi Kumar said.

Narsimha Rao Manepalli, EVP and Head - Cloud and Infrastructure at Infosys, said GuideVision's addition is another significant step towards strengthening Infosys Cobalt offerings portfolio, bringing the combination of services, solutions and platforms that acts as a force multiplier for cloud-powered enterprise transformation.

"The global Infosys footprint is an exciting opportunity for both GuideVision customers and employees," he added.

CCI concludes Amazon is not dominant in online fashion, dismisses antitrust complaints

KAITLYN HIVE

The competition regulator has dismissed allegations of abuse of dominance against Amazon in the online fashion retail space, finding that the company is not dominant in the relevant market.

The Netherlands-based Lifestyle Equities had alleged that Amazon had leveraged its dominance in favour of its own labels and preferred sellers by giving them higher search ranking and positive customer reviews to the disadvantage of other sellers.

If the fiscal push is through infrastructure projects, let's not forget that even the most 'shovel-ready' of projects take time to get off the ground. Policymakers need to factor in a lag between expenditures and the payoff in terms of higher demand. The time to bolster fiscal support is right now.

(The writer is chief economist, HDFC Bank.)

Disclaimer: The opinions expressed within this article are the personal opinions of the author. The facts and opinions appearing in the article do not reflect the views of India Chronicle.

Flipkart was around 35 per cent, citing a Redseer report from 2019.



Amazon had leveraged its dominance in favour of its own labels

lower price compared to genuine products.

The CCI noted that while the online sale of counterfeit goods was a legitimate concern for brands, it needed to be taken up with other regulatory authorities and not the CCI.

"Though it is understood that online sale of counterfeits could be."

A matter of concern for brands and consumers alike, given that OP-1 (Amazon).

Not dominant in the relevant dominant in the relevant market, the issue does not lend itself to antitrust scrutiny," the Commission concluded.

The Netherlands-based Lifestyle Equities had alleged that Amazon had leveraged its dominance in favour of its own labels and preferred sellers by giving them higher search ranking and positive customer reviews to the disadvantage of other sellers.

PERSPECTIVE

SADANAND P.

Now that most of us are over the initial shock of the April-June quarter GDP contraction, it may be time to ponder over a couple of things. First, it is possible that with unlocking, the worst is over. Indeed, a bunch of indicators ranging from diesel consumption to highway toll collections are looking a lot better than they did in April-May. But how much comfort should we draw from this?

Second, going by the International Monetary Fund (IMF), India saw the sharpest fall in this quarter.

No doubt unlocking has paid off, in terms of renewed activity. Japanese investment bank Nomura's Business Resumption Index shows that, save for a plateau in July, business activity has been steadily picking up since early May. This illustrates that the lockdown did not disrupt supply chains or labour supply so severely that the economy could not get back on its feet on unshackling. While we averted this 'worst case', there may still be a lot to worry about. The rise

in business activity could partly be a response to the pent-up demand that built up during the lockdown. As this declines, the 'bounce' in the economy that came with unlocking may dissipate. Output is simply the flip side of income. If we trust the GDP numbers for Q1, it is telling us that incomes in the economy fell by 24%. If demand depends on income, isn't it likely that the demand contraction that resulted from this precipitous income fall will overshadow the boost from pentup demand?

In terms of some of the long-term consequences, the current consensus among forecasters after the Q1 numbers came out seems to be that in 2020-21, the economy will contract by 7.5-8% in real terms, and 2.5-3% in money (nominal) terms. Thus, Covid-19 has set us back quite considerably on the path to becoming a significantly larger economy.

The challenge is to not only make up for the loss in output this year, but also to get back to the run rate that takes us

closer to our long-term goal. Even an apparently healthy growth next year of 8% will simply take us to what we had produced in 2019-20. We will have to accelerate a lot more to get close to our target. Clearly, a lot of heavy lifting is left, this brings us to the related question of the comparison with other economies and a checklist of what they are doing to fight economic decline. Take the case of Brazil, an emerging economy with a large population and whose Covid-19 count is similar to India's. Going by IMF's metric, Brazil contracted by 9.7% in April-June, compared to 25.6% for India. Yet, while Brazil provided a fiscal support of about 7.5% of GDP, India's total fiscal support was just about 2%. India hasn't compensated for this 'fiscal' shortfall through larger credit provision. The credit package to distressed sectors is roughly the same as the percentage of GDP for both economies.

This stark difference in the heft of fiscal support is not true of Brazil alone but holds for most other comparable economies. The somewhat obvious lesson for us here is the need for another round of fiscal support. This may not just be a booster shot to aggregate demand by pushing through large-scale projects. The fiscal template of other economies includes diverse things like cash transfers to the most vulnerable (poor urban households in India are strong candidates) and wage support to small enterprises that stops them from retrenching workers.

Where will the money come from? While parsimony may be a virtue for households going through a crisis, it doesn't quite work that way when it comes to national economies. In a crisis of this magnitude, GoI needs to borrow as much as it needs. If the markets are cold to its cash calls, it really doesn't matter if it borrows from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

Finally, it is difficult to see merit in waiting for the infection rate to subside to give a fiscal push. For one,

the fear that households will save cash transfers instead of spending and boosting demand is irrational. A 24% decline in incomes means that household budgets have shrunk drastically. The first thing they are likely to do if their bank accounts are credited with a government transfer would be to spend on essential items that they are scrimping on now.

If the fiscal push is through infrastructure projects, let's not forget that even the most 'shovel-ready' of projects take time to get off the ground. Policymakers need to factor in a lag between expenditures and the payoff in terms of higher demand. The time to bolster fiscal support is right now.

(The writer is chief economist, HDFC Bank.)

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TECH TALES

DANIELLA SMITH

ByteDance drops TikTok's US sale, to partner with Oracle



Photo: Bloomberg

spokesperson said Sunday that the company "continues discussions with ByteDance leadership and other interested parties. We know that any approved deal must satisfy all regulatory and national security concerns."

ByteDance was negotiating bids for TikTok's U.S. operations under orders from the Trump administration, which has said the company's Chinese ownership threatens national security. TikTok

intends to bring a proposal to the White House ahead of a mid-September deadline imposed by Trump, a person with knowledge of the matter said, and any bid will also need the blessing of government officials in Beijing.

Talk of a corporate restructuring harkens back to ByteDance's original intentions earlier in the summer to sell a partial stake in TikTok's operations or restructure the company with

An upcoming decision about TikTok's potential ban in the US is to be announced.

Jobs app for poor workers used by Amazon, BigBasket raises \$8 million

RANIA O.

Apna, an app startup that aims to connect millions of bottom-of-the-pyramid workers to employers amid the devastation of India's lockdown, has raised \$8 million from a clutch of investors. The funding, from new investors Greenoaks Capital, Rocketship VC as well as existing backers Lightspeed India and Sequoia Capital, will help the app expand to more cities. Apna said in a statement published on Tuesday. It also wants to grow across verticals such as accounting, customer service and nursing. Currently, Apna is in five cities.

The startup, founded by Apple Inc. alumnus Nirmit Parikh, is a sort of LinkedIn for non-English-speaking, poorer Indians. The app helps first-time internet users access

job opportunities by entering their name, age, and skills to generate a virtual "business card" that's shared with potential employers.

Less than a year after its December launch, Apna has 1.2 million users. It generated over a million job interviews in the last month for workers such as carpenters, painters and field sales agents, growing over 3X

product where users quickly come together in professional communities, an unmet need so far."

Apna, an app startup that aims to connect millions of bottom-of-the-pyramid workers to employers amid the devastation of India's lockdown, has raised \$8 million from a clutch of investors. The funding, from new investors Greenoaks Capital, Rocketship VC as well as existing backers Lightspeed India and Sequoia Capital, will help the app expand to more cities. Apna said in a statement published on Tuesday.

"There are over 1.2 million blue and grey collar workers in India," Harshit Sethi, principal at Sequoia Capital India, said in a note announcing the funding. "Apna has built a unique

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SPORTS

PV Sindhu undecided about playing Denmark tour event

With the second Denmark Masters tournament cancelled, the Denmark Open will be a one-stop while the Asian leg is still being firmed up with multiple locations under consideration.

SURABHI PORE

Indian shuttlers are reconsidering their plans to travel to Denmark and play in the one-off Denmark Open, with PV Sindhu likely to decide closer to the last date of entries. With the Thomas Uber Cup (TUC) deferred to an undecided date in 2021, Sindhu is still contemplating if travelling to Odense will be feasible.

Large scale withdrawals from top nations had marred the TUC lead-up, and Indonesia's pullout was seen as the final tipping point for organisers to call off the tournament in October.

While the world reacted with disappointment at badminton struggling to take off at the TUC in Aarhus scheduled for early October, hopes of a resumption are alive with Denmark Open on schedule. However, with the team unlikely to head to Aarhus, top Indian shuttlers are rethinking their travel.

"See, we need to look at all aspects and will decide only on September 27. We'll look at the Covid-19 situation in Odense closer to the tournament date while carefully weighing it against points that we can gain by winning. We'll also see who else is playing the Denmark tournament and sit with coaches and BAI. There is no need to act reckless with Olympics next year. That's the big medal," PV Ramana, Sindhu's father, said. Sindhu played the second round at Denmark last time, and is defending those points, which are not part of the Olympic qualification or seeding process.

Lakshya Sen confirmed he would travel to Denmark as originally planned, while Saina Nehwal and Parupalli Kashyap (unfunded), were yet to decide on their travel. "Not yet decided," doubles shuttler Sikki Reddy too said.

With the second Denmark Masters tournament cancelled, this will be a one-venue pitstop, while the Asian leg is still being firmed up with multiple locations under consideration. While players' consent is being sought on indemnity and waivers forms, it is learnt that a few more withdrawals are likely from the Denmark event.

Meanwhile, BWF were left with little choice but to cancel after reluctance from Asian powerhouses to travel. While Indonesia and Korea as well as Thailand struck a body blow to chances of the sport resuming, the growing cloud over Japan and China's participation pushed the event to the brink.

"The decision comes following the withdrawal of a number of participating teams from the TOTAL BWF

With the Thomas Uber Cup (TUC) deferred to an undecided date in 2021, Sindhu is still contemplating if travelling to Odense will be feasible.

Thomas and Uber Cup Finals and the European leg of the adjusted HSBC BWF World Tour. BWF in collaboration with Badminton Denmark, has for many months been preparing for a safe return to international badminton. This includes going to extreme lengths to preserve the health and safety of all participants such as implementing a bubble system to create a safe badminton ecosystem.

However, in view of the recent COVID-19 related developments around the world, a number of teams and individual players have elected not to travel to Denmark for tournaments in Aarhus and Odense; a choice the BWF has to respect and acknowledge. These are exceptional circumstances we find ourselves in and while a return to international badminton remains a priority for the BWF, the health and safety of the entire badminton community is of utmost importance," a statement

read.

Badminton Association of India's general secretary Ajay Singhania, said: "BAI has been supporting BWF in its efforts to restart international badminton."

However, we stand by this decision taken by BWF considering the challenges in the ongoing time and the health and safety of all concerned."

While Danish top player Anders Antonsen said badminton risks withering and dying if no competition is held, Nozomi Okuhara quipped that 2021 was likely to be busy with 4 Majors: Olympics, Sudirman Cup, Thomas Uber Cup and World Championships.

While Indians like PV Sindhu were relieved they wouldn't need to risk travel, men's singles shuttler Subhankar Dey said it defied reason that badminton couldn't take off while football and tennis had resumed.

Photo: INSA

**Lionel Messi becomes football's second billionaire after Cristiano Ronaldo**

After Lionel Messi's this year are \$126 million, Cristiano Ronaldo (\$117 million) comes in second. Following them are Neymar (\$96 million) and Mbappe (\$42 million).

SHAWN MATTHEWS

Lionel Messi was denied a potentially money-spinning move away from Barcelona this month after a contract-dispute but the Argentine maestro remains the world's richest soccer player. According to a list compiled by Forbes, Messi's total earnings this year are \$126 million — \$92 million from his salary and \$34 million in endorsements.

Not surprisingly Cristiano Ronaldo comes in second although earnings of \$117 million will soften the blow for the Juventus forward, as will his status as the most followed soccer player in the world on social media. Neymar comes in third on the Forbes list (\$96 million) with his Paris St Germain teammate, 21-year-old Kylian Mbappe, up in fourth spot (\$42 million).

The Premier League remains the world's richest domestic soccer league but only two of its outfield players feature in the top 10 of the wealth



ker Robert Lewandowski, the only Bundesliga player, in ninth. Messi reluctantly agreed to stay at Barcelona for another season this month, despite saying in the wake of an 8-2 Champions League defeat by Bayern Munich that he wanted out.

He argued that a clause in his contract stating that a 700 million euros release fee

would need to be met for him to join another club was

no longer active and that he could leave on a free transfer — a situation that would have allowed him to command astronomical wages from the likes of Manchester City. Messi, 33, is in the final year of his contract so could leave for club, Messi is in line for an \$83 million loyalty bonus so it is likely he will continue to top the money charts.

Steve Smith on track to return for Australia after head knock

Steve Smith will bat in the nets on Tuesday and is "definitely tracking in the right direction" to play in the deciding one-day cricket international against England. Australia coach Justin Langer said Australia's star batsman, missed the first two matches of the ODI series after getting hit on the head from a throwdown by a member of the coaching staff in practice. Smith was back running on Monday and has "ticked every box" so far in his recovery, Langer said. Provided he gets through an eve-of-match net session, Smith seems primed to return for the Australians at Old Trafford on Wednesday.

"Fingers crossed," Langer said. "We have been going through all the concussion protocols and he is definitely tracking in the direction. Hopefully he will be alright for tomorrow." "If he doesn't come up again, we will keep his like all of our players' health in mind." The series is tied at 1-1. It is Australia's last match on its limited-overs tour of England.

Nepal cricketer Lalit Bhandari stable after motorcycle accident

Nepal international men's cricketer Lalit Bhandari, who was injured in a motorcycle accident near his hometown Kanchanpur on Sunday, is currently in a stable condition and recuperating in a hospital. The 24-year-old was hit by a truck while he was travelling with one of his relatives from Mahendranagar to Dhangadhi. The incident happened on the East-West highway near Jhalari market on Sunday evening. According to the Cricket Association of Nepal, after initially undergoing treatment at Nisar Hospital in Dhangadhi, Bhandari was transported to Kohalpur Medical College in Banke for further treatment. Lalit Bhandari is in Kohalpur Medical hospital and in stable condition now. He has to undergo operation on both his hands and leg and as per doctors he is out of danger now," former Nepal captain Paras Khadka tweeted.

Suresh Raina's absence a concern for CSK: Dean Jones

Former Australian cricketer Dean Jones reckons Suresh Raina's absence from the IPL would be a major concern for three-time champions Chennai Super Kings, who open their campaign against holders Mumbai Indians on September 19. Both Raina and senior CSK spinner Harbhajan Singh have pulled out of IPL due to personal reasons. "Raina's absence is a major concern this time and he is in the top 5 run getters in IPL. He is a left hander and plays spin very well and the weakness for CSK could be that majority of their players are right handed," Jones told Star Sports.

Jones feels the team needs a like for like replacement for left-handed Raina. "They need some left-handers or they could get stuck and particularly, if they are playing to leg-spinners and the ball is going away. So, whether to go with Sam Curran or Jadeja or Tahir," Khadka tweeted.

Rajasthan Royals not sure about Ben Stokes' availability during this IPL season: Andrew McDonald

Ben Stokes pulled out of the three-match series against Pakistan in August before the second Test to be with his father in New Zealand, who is diagnosed with brain cancer.

ROHAN GHAI

Rajasthan Royals head coach Andrew McDonald says the franchise is "not sure" about the availability of star all-rounder Ben Stokes in the upcoming IPL as he is tending to his ailing father in New Zealand.

Stokes, hero of England's World Cup triumph last year, is going through a tough phase. He pulled out of the three-match series against Pakistan in August before the second Test to be with his father, diagnosed with brain cancer.

"First and foremost, thoughts with the Stokes family. It's a difficult scenario, so we're giving him as much time as he needs, and connecting with him as best we can," McDonald was quoted as saying by ESPNCricinfo.

"So yeah, we're not sure where Stokes is at right now, but once it has played out, then we can make our decisions from there. But I don't want to second-guess what will happen with him just yet."

Since the first Test against Pakistan, the top all-rounder has not played any cricket. Instead, he travelled to New Zealand, where his parents are settled.



Stokes' father was admitted to hospital last year with a serious illness.

Stokes' father Ged, a former New Zealand rugby league international, was admitted to hospital in Johannesburg two days before Christmas last year with a serious illness.

(they will) see him out there again on Wednesday (for the third ODI against England in Manchester)." Appointed last year as the team's head coach, McDonald is optimistically gearing up for his first IPL, the presence of a few promising players giving him reasons to hope. "We've added some depth in terms of our left-hand batting, in particular in (Anuj) Rawat and (Yashashvi) Jaiswal among the home-grown players, so we think we've got some options there."

"The way we set up at the auction, we feel we can structure our side up to three or four different ways."

The coach also spoke about South African recruit David Miller, who is known for his finishing skills.

South African recruit David Miller, who is known for his finishing skills.

"He's got great flexibility. He was at Kings XI (Punjab) for a long time, so I'm hoping that change of environment sparks his best form. He's really fitted into our environment well."

"He was the first overseas player to land, which is great because usually you don't get access to the overseas guys until 10 days out or sometimes less."

"He's been nothing but fantastic so far for the group, helping our young left-handers in particular, and just creating energy around the group. And his fielding is second to none."

Appointed last year as the team's head coach, McDonald is optimistically gearing up for his first IPL, the presence of a few promising players giving him reasons to hope.

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Published for the proprietors Chronicle Ltd. by Shyam Krishnamurthy at the India Chronicle building, SV Road, 400001, Tel. No. 25894444 and printed by him at Chronicle Print City, Plot No. 4, I.C.N Industrial Area, Navi Mumbai and Thane.

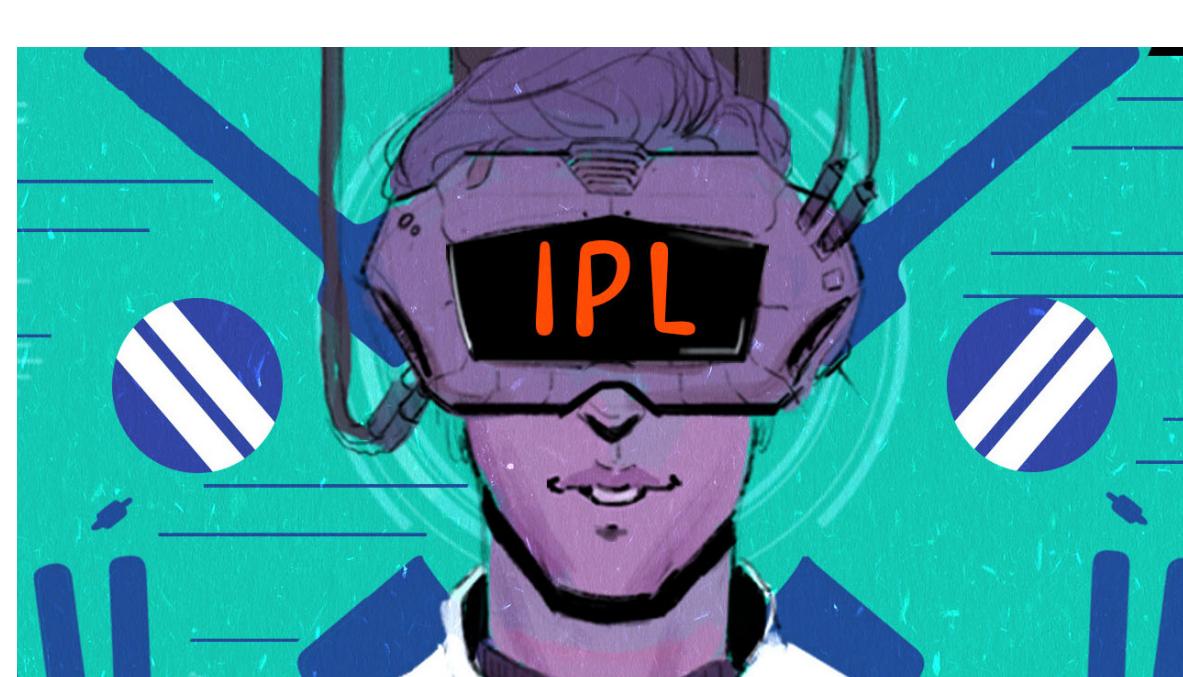
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PERSPECTIVE**IPL : An over-estimation of cricket's healing power & the under-estimation of a crisis?**

Considering the modern-day reality of commerce being the engine that drives sports, the push to switch on the stadium floodlights is expected.

ISHITA NIRBHAVNE

Who could have imagined that tracking the resumption of sports around the world would also make one wiser about the ups and downs of the global happiness index. Politicians, officials, sportspersons and assorted influencers, without the help of science or surveys, have predicted the sprouting of smiles once stadiums get unlocked. They point to the floodlights at the end of the pandemic tunnel as they talk up the magical power of sports to dilute the tragedies unfolding at over-crowded hospitals and under-utilised workplaces. So here's the smile schedule. In England, the country with the worst COVID-19 death count at over 40,000, the collective mood is rumoured to change in the next couple of weeks. According to their Foreign Secretary, Dominic Raab, the resumption of the Premier League later this month would "lift the spirits of the nation". Germany might be still grappling with close to 1,80,000 positive cases



on this national pastime has exponentially increased. Over the years, cricket in India has been tasked with varied duties. It's expected to be

diplomatic negotiations. And now, they want it to go into a bio-secure bubble and become a corona warrior too. This is as much about the over-estimation of cricket's healing power as it is about under-estimating this once-in-a-century crisis that is responsible for close to 4,00,000 plus deaths. Can cheerleaders with pom-poms, high-decibel ever-smiling commentators, Bravo's dance moves, Dhoni's final-ball six distract you enough to forget stories of the 1,200 km-journey of the bicycle girl from Darbhanga, or the Ghanaian footballer's 73-days-long ordeal outside Mumbai airport or the ultimate sacrifice of the nameless nurses on the frontline? Not really. An evening of T20 cricket can't even lessen the dread of bumping into some asymptomatic super spreader at the milk booth next morning. Even if you tried, the sight of empty stands, umpires in gloves, socially distanced batsmen and bowlers suspiciously handling the sanitised balls will keep reminding cricket fans of the lurking virus beyond the closed stadium gates. The IPL, at best, is a healthy distraction after a bad day at the office, an ice-breaker in awkward situations and the consensus background score

at spirited get-togethers. Let the devil in coloured clothing get its due. The IPL is more real than reality television and has better drama than daily soaps and that makes it the best prime-time television option. Nothing less, nothing more — it is no mental COVID-19 vaccine; not even a placebo. Those who float this theory about sports being a Prozac pill or the ultimate elixir also talk about history, they and talk. Don Bradman. If the unprecedented success of the underdog racehorse and working-class batting hero motivates economically countries to rise and walk again, why can't sports do an inspirational encore again?

(The writer is the former editor-in-chief of Sportsstar magazine)

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